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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
*Group Processes*  
& *Intergroup Relations*

JOHN M. LEVINE | MICHAEL A. HOGG | editors

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
*Group Processes*  
*& Intergroup Relations*

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# Introduction

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Scarcely anyone would quarrel with the assertion that humans are social animals or with the corollary assumption that, in order to understand people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, it is necessary to understand the role that *groups* play in human affairs. We all are members of large social categories based on such criteria as race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, and most of us also belong to a range of groups and organizations (e.g., families, friendship cliques, work teams, religious congregations, political parties). These various social aggregates (which will be collectively referred to as "groups") profoundly affect our well-being and life trajectory through their impact on such basic needs as physical survival, belongingness and intimacy, accurate knowledge about the world, and sense of self and identity. The groups that people belong to vary on several dimensions, including size, voluntariness of membership, composition (the types of people who belong), structure (e.g., norms, roles, status systems), collective goals, level of conflict, rewardingness, relations with outgroups, and so on. Notwithstanding this diversity, groups matter, and matter a great deal, to their members.

Before discussing the goals and organization of this encyclopedia, two definitional issues need to be considered. First, what do we mean by a group? As suggested above, groups can vary in many ways, and so providing a succinct definition is no easy task. In fact, some observers have suggested, only partly in jest, that there are as many definitions of groups as there are researchers who study them. Rather than adding our imprimatur to one of these definitions, we will mention some of the major criteria that group researchers have emphasized in defining groups (all of which are used, either explicitly or implicitly, by some authors in this encyclopedia). These criteria include the presence

of particular structural features (e.g., norms or roles); group members' agreement on shared goals; patterns of interaction between members (e.g., communication, reciprocal influence, coordinated action); members' emotional bonds to the group as a whole and/or one another (cohesiveness); and members' identification with the group. Which criterion, then, is the most important? As suggested by the eminent group theorist Joseph McGrath, this question assumes that the goal is to distinguish groups from all other social aggregates (non-groups), which may be a futile exercise. He argues, and we agree, that it is more productive to construe groupness as a continuum, such that a given social aggregate is more or less "groupy" depending on how many of the above criteria it satisfies.

The second definitional issue is raised by the title of the encyclopedia. What do we mean by "group processes" and "intergroup relations"? In general, the term group processes refers to what happens *within* groups, that is to how members of a group think, feel, and act toward others who belong to the *same* group. Topics that are typically subsumed under the heading of group processes include the impact of member diversity on team performance, the development and operation of group norms, the conditions under which numerical minorities can produce innovation, the characteristics of effective leaders, the factors that influence whether negotiators reach mutually acceptable agreements, the conditions under which team members fail to work hard on collective tasks, and the causes of poor decision making in groups that are under stress. Defining intergroup relations is more complex. In most cases, this term refers to what happens *between* groups, that is to how members of a group think, feel, and act toward others who belong to a *different* group. Topics that are typically subsumed under the heading of intergroup

relations include the role of categorization in stereotyping and prejudice, the impact of social roles on gender stereotypes, the function that language serves in maintaining stereotypes, the conditions under which members of stigmatized groups engage in collective action against those who discriminate against them, the circumstances under which intergroup contact does and does not reduce prejudice, and the justifications that dominant groups use to rationalize discrimination against subordinate groups. However, the term intergroup relations is not restricted solely to what happens between groups. It can also apply to what happens within groups (i.e., to how members of a group think, feel, and act toward others who belong to the same group) *as long as* these responses are influenced by the broader context of intergroup relations. An example is the black sheep effect, in which group members respond more negatively toward ingroup members who deviate from group norms (and more positively toward ingroup members who conform to these norms) when the ingroup feels threatened by an outgroup than when it does not. Moreover, the term intergroup relations can also apply to some forms of *self-directed* thought, feeling, and action. An example is the phenomenon of stereotype threat, in which group members who are reminded that outgroups hold negative stereotypes of their ability in certain domains then perform poorly in these domains.

### Development of the Encyclopedia

Over the past 75 years, there has been a tremendous amount of theoretical and empirical work on group processes and intergroup relations by scholars from various disciplines. Until recently, these two lines of work were quite distinct, and few efforts were made to bring them together in a single volume (or, as in the present case, pair of volumes). This situation began to change in the 1980s due in large part to the influence of the social identity approach to groups championed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. A major indicator of and impetus for the integration of group processes and intergroup relations was the establishment of a journal by this name in 1998, co-founded by Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg. In an important sense, then, this encyclopedia is a reflection of the growing (though still far from complete) integration of

what were formerly two distinct perspectives on groups.

When we (John Levine and Michael Hogg) were approached by Michael Carmichael of Sage with the idea of editing an *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, we were initially reluctant to take on a task of this magnitude. Nevertheless, a combination of M. Carmichael's persistence and charm and our propensity to overcommit ourselves eventually led to a round of handshakes and then a contract. We knew that the only way to make the venture a success was to convince other overcommitted colleagues to help. We had three criteria for choosing associate editors—disciplinary background (we wanted people from the three key disciplines of social psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior), substantial expertise and visibility in their respective fields, and excellent judgment. With only a little arm twisting, we were able to assemble a Dream Team of associate editors, which included Linda Argote, Marilynn Brewer, Jack Dovidio, Norb Kerr, Dick Moreland, and Cecilia Ridgeway. With their help and guidance, we developed a set of approximately 300 topics for inclusion in the encyclopedia and then selected experts to write the relevant entries. Almost all of these people accepted our invitations, and those who did produced excellent entries. Either we or one of the associate editors evaluated each entry and provided feedback to the author(s). Many entries were revised to increase their accessibility to the general reader. The invitation and reviewing process was orchestrated by our superb managing editor, Danielle (Dani) Blaylock, who was a PhD student at Claremont Graduate University and is now a postdoctoral fellow at Queens University in Belfast, Ireland.

### Intended Audience

In choosing topics for inclusion, selecting authors, and editing entries, we were mindful that the encyclopedia is *not* intended for professionals or experts with extensive knowledge of social psychology, sociology, or organizational behavior. Instead, it is intended for general readers who want state-of-the-art information about group processes and intergroup relations that is presented in a clear and accessible manner. Our instructions to authors were designed to achieve these goals.

We stated that, “The main target audience is undergraduate students in various disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, business, political science, education), but the encyclopedia should also prove useful to graduate students and faculty as well as high school students . . . entries must accurately convey what behavioral scientists know about how people think, feel, and act toward ingroup and outgroup members . . . entries must be written so that readers with little or no behavioral science background can understand what is being said.” Thanks to the hard work of the authors and the editorial team, we believe that these goals were accomplished.

### Organization of the Entries

The entries are listed in alphabetical order, beginning with Action Research and ending with Xenophobia. The lengths of the entries reflect our judgment regarding topic breadth and importance. The longest entries are approximately 4,000 words, and the shortest are about 1,500 words. Many of the shorter entries provide detailed discussions of topics that are only briefly covered in the longer entries. To help readers locate the topics in which they are most interested, we prepared a Reader’s Guide (see below) that organizes the entries into 12 general categories. Note that many entries appear in more than one category. At the end of each entry, readers will find cross-references to other entries and a short list of Further Readings.

#### *Reader’s Guide Headings*

Cognitions and Feelings  
 Conflict and Cooperation Within Groups  
 Group Decision Making  
 Group Performance and Problem Solving  
 Group Structure  
 Identity and Self

Influence and Persuasion  
 Intergroup Relations in Society  
 Methodology  
 Organizations  
 Theory  
 Types of Groups and Subgroups

### Acknowledgments

We owe a great debt to the people at Sage who encouraged and assisted us at each stage of the project. We thank Michael Carmichael for his enthusiastic support at the beginning and Rolf Janke for clearing obstacles that arose as we went along. Diana Axelsen did an excellent job of keeping our feet to the fire when progress lagged, Kate Schroeder was extremely patient during the copyediting phase (as were our two fine copy editors—Bonnie Freeman and Jamie Robinson), and Carole Maurer made the “end game” as pleasant as possible. Finally, Leticia Gutierrez and Laura Notton were very helpful with the Sage Reference Tracking system, which greatly facilitated our work.

We also want to thank the people who worked most closely with us during the process of editing the encyclopedia. They include our associate editors—Linda, Marilyn, Jack, Norb, Dick, and Cecilia—who devoted a great deal of time to the project, and our managing editor—Dani—who was efficient and good humored even when we were not. Finally, we want to express our gratitude to the authors of the entries. They met or exceeded our expectations for both the quality and clarity of their entries, and we appreciate their efforts.

Last but not least, we thank Jan and Alison for their patience and support as we worked on the encyclopedia.

*John M. Levine  
 Michael A. Hogg*



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## ACTION RESEARCH

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*Action research* is a process of participatory inquiry aimed at generating knowledge to guide action in pursuit of the participants' goals. It can be compared with traditional scientific research, which seeks to find the "truth" through methods that are highly controlled by the researcher. Action research, in contrast, seeks to generate knowledge that solves specific problems and enables the actors in the situation to achieve their goals. It is carried out collaboratively by these actors, including researchers, who engage in a mutual inquiry process that takes into account the perspectives, knowledge, and purposes of all involved. Thus the conduct of action research is heavily dependent on the process through which the various people involved in the action research project interact to create new ways of understanding their situation and new paths forward. Action research may include traditional, scientific data-gathering and analysis approaches. But it is more generally characterized by inquiry approaches that build on and create the knowledge of practice. It employs different knowledge-generating approaches—approaches that place practitioners and their knowledge front and center. The ultimate test of the knowledge that is generated through action research is whether the action taken because of the knowledge accomplishes the purposes of the participants.

This entry provides a short history that illustrates the varieties of action research and discusses

the role of the researcher. It also shows how action research differs from traditional scientific research, exploring the common elements and core processes of action research as well as the nature of the knowledge that is created and applied.

### History and Forms of Action Research

Action researchers trace their philosophical roots to Aristotle's notion of goal-directed action (*praxis*) as one of the key activities of human beings, distinct from theorizing (*theoria*), and crafting things (*poiesis*). They also refer to his notion of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), that is, the ability to reflect and determine the appropriate ends to which to direct one's life. This combination of reflecting on appropriate purposes and learning how to achieve them is central to all forms of action research. Action research involves groups, or communities, of individuals reflecting and learning for action. Individuals represented in the action research group may have different perspectives and goals, thus, effective action research requires group processes for reflection, learning, and consensus building.

The modern philosophical roots of action research may be traced to John Dewey's early 20th-century discussions of learning through a cycle of reflective thinking about problems, formulating hypotheses about what might solve them, and testing them through practical action. The term *action research* as an approach to social science research is often traced to the field research tradition begun by Kurt Lewin during the Second World War. In this approach, people in various

real-life settings such as work organizations participate in research to discover better ways to accomplish their goals. This action research tradition emphasizes the formulation of theory that can be tested and refined through experiments whose results have an impact on practice—so that the requirements of practice are met and systematic knowledge is furthered. Lewin’s belief that the best way to understand something is to change it has been echoed by action researchers ever since.

Lewin’s approach sponsored the development of the *sociotechnical systems* (STS) tradition for improving work systems. Early STS research discovered that productivity is enhanced by leadership styles and work systems that empower employees to be actively involved in making decisions about how to run their own work units. These core STS ideas were expanded and refined through many action research projects in which the participants in a work setting such as a factory or a mine collaboratively designed their own work setting to be technically and socially effective. Researchers involved in this stream of action research provide theoretical input and a process for design and planning. They study the group processes through which the diverse members of the setting—managers, supervisors, and workers—develop a new way of working together, the choices they make about how to organize themselves, and the outcomes of putting these choices into action.

Since the 1980s, the Norwegian democratic dialogue approach has emphasized the gathering of various stakeholders (including management, the workforce, government, and unions) in conferences in which they can speak with each other as equals about how to move forward on issues such as work organization. The underlying principle is to move from traditional adversarial approaches to cooperation through democratic dialogue, and the purpose is to build relationships and establish a new way of making decisions that take the interests of all parties into account. At about the same time, throughout the world, social justice has become the focus of action research activities that emphasize gender and race issues, and of emancipatory work in poor nations that is based on empowering ordinary people by helping them develop the capabilities to generate their own knowledge as a basis for action.

### Differences From Traditional Social Science Research

There are several ways in which action research differs from more traditional research. These include the purpose of the research—whether the researcher is out to discover scientific “truth,” or whether the researcher aims to help people accomplish their purposes. Other differences concern where the research is conducted, and the methodologies that are used. These differences have implications for the relationship between the researcher and the people in the real-life settings being studied.

#### *Purposes*

Traditional social science research is based on a search for the “truth” about the phenomena being investigated—whether they are aspects of the physical world, investigated by hard scientists, or aspects of the social world, investigated by social scientists. Scientific truths, as scientists have been able to discover them, are embodied in theories that yield predictions for further investigations to confirm and expand theoretical understanding. In traditional social science research, the quest is to find the truth about the social behavior of individuals, groups, organizations, and societal institutions. The social entities being studied are treated as the objects of the research and it is considered poor form to engage with them, as the scientist is expected to remain disinterested in outcomes and purposes and to retain objectivity in explaining behavior.

Purposes are central to action research, as the quest of action research is to create knowledge that can help participants accomplish their purposes. Various traditions of action research differ in the extent to which they emphasize the use of academic theoretical knowledge in the processes through which purposes are defined and action is crafted. At one extreme are action researchers who believe there is no generalizable truth, and that all knowledge is created in specific situations. Their purpose is not to discover truth, but to introduce frameworks for interaction that enable participants to gather information, make choices, and take action to accomplish their purposes. This is the position of the Norwegian democratic dialogue advocates. The action researcher’s role in the conversation is as a member of the group who brings



knowledge of how to set up dialogues, reflection, and learning. Yet even these action researchers are guided by their own values and purposes, such as achieving democratic dialogue or emancipation.

Other action researchers, such as STS researchers, have as their purpose contributing to knowledge that is generalizable across settings, in addition to helping participants in an action setting learn how to generate actionable knowledge. These researchers bring relevant theoretical constructs and the cumulative knowledge of the social sciences—sometimes called *content knowledge*—to bear in the processes by which participants define and solve problems. The researchers' knowledge of theory and the participants' knowledge of practice are combined to yield solutions to problems and designs for action. Through the action research, the practical knowledge of the participants and the theoretical knowledge of the social sciences are both expanded. These action researchers bring expertise to diagnose problems and to intervene in a way that helps participants solve them. They may train, educate, and facilitate the group, thus assuming a central position in the group.

#### *Research Conducted In Situ*

Traditional researchers carrying out studies in the field try to avoid focusing on only one organization. They seek random selection of the populations being studied—sometimes into treatment and control groups—in order to randomly distribute external factors that might otherwise distort the findings. Action research, in contrast, always is situated in and generates knowledge about a particular social system that has expressed interest in engaging in action research—for example, a work unit, an industry, a community, or a subpopulation. It focuses on creating the knowledge-generating and action-taking capability in that particular system. An action research project enables researchers to learn about one system, and to test and expand theory in only that system. Action researchers who are interested in building widely applicable knowledge do so through a succession of action research projects in different settings. For example, STS researchers created cumulative knowledge about the participative design of manufacturing systems for high performance through a succession of action research interventions in different factories. Each

successive setting presented different challenges and different opportunities for learning. The participants in each setting were interested in creating their own solutions, yet the action researcher brought useful experience and knowledge from previous research. For the action researcher in a new setting to establish enough trust for the other participants to learn from this previous work, he or she has to be open to the uniqueness of each setting and of the group of participants engaged in the participative design process—and open to different design choices and resulting action. Only in this way can the research be truly participative and the researcher learn how the unique factors of the setting contribute to general knowledge.

#### *Research Methodologies*

Beyond differences concerning randomization versus in situ focus, action research methodologies differ from traditional social science research in other ways, including the amount of control the researcher has over the research and the data-gathering methods. Traditional researchers conduct research in a carefully controlled manner to eliminate alternative explanations for the results that they find. This generally means that the objects of the research are unaware of the purpose of the research, the research questions, and the hypotheses being tested. This is believed to be necessary so that they do not behave in a manner that distorts the findings—either by trying to act in a manner that fits the expectations of the researcher or by trying to prove the opposite. Highly controlled approaches fit a model where the researcher is seen as having a privileged knowledge-creating role in society and is given permission to study others. People and organizations may agree to be part of such research to further science, but often do not believe that it will yield knowledge useful to their personal purposes.

The members of the action research community are, in contrast, co-investigators. Purposes are transparent and they are codetermined by the action researcher and other participants. The research questions are often co-defined by the participants, because these questions have to do with their real-life situation. If there are hypotheses guiding the research, these also will be formulated and influenced both by the researchers' knowledge

from theory and the other participants' knowledge from practice. Finding common purposes and hypotheses to guide the inquiry and action planning process entails finding a process to come to agreement despite differing experience bases, knowledge, and preferences.

The action researcher is one of the participants in this community of co-investigators. Like all participants in any group, action researchers face challenges in defining and achieving perceived legitimacy for their role in the group. The group members are being guided to behave in ways they may not be used to—putting aside rank and biases and listening to and building on the perspectives of all. The members of the group may only appreciate the power of a truly participative inquiry process after experiencing it. Only then may they understand collaboration and appreciate the researcher's contribution.

The action researcher who claims to have content expertise relevant to the group's purpose, and who aims to further that knowledge through the action research, faces the additional challenge of achieving legitimacy and trust for that expert role within the group. Theoretical knowledge is likely to be rejected unless the researcher engages with the group, and accepts the importance of combining theoretical knowledge with the group members' knowledge of practice, to yield an approach that is tailored to the situation and purposes at hand.

Traditional social science research is often characterized by data-gathering methods such as surveys, questionnaires, and structured observations that are coded, counted, and analyzed statistically to discover patterns of relationships between variables predetermined by the researchers. For example, researchers may be interested in whether the purposes of low-status group members are less likely to be voiced and achieved in an action planning process; they may measure the status of each member and ask the group members individually to what extent they felt their ideas were taken into account. Although such traditional methods may be part of an action research project, action researchers generally feel that these methods are insufficient to capture the complexity of human interaction. These researchers are likely to introduce a variety of ways of understanding the system and to encourage the consideration of rich data,

including the feelings and experiences of participants and the meanings they attribute to their interactions.

Interpretation of these rich and diverse data is central to the inquiry process. The group members attach meaning not only to systematically collected data but also to their interactions, including those between the researcher and the practitioners. Academic interpretation is only one perspective in the process of attributing meaning. Given that the group is working to agree on different ways of operating and different outcomes, the academic interpretation may have the least impact because the participants' criteria are usefulness and relevance. Both the process and content knowledge brought to the group's collective sense-making process by the action researcher will be interpreted in conjunction with the full set of knowledge brought by the members of the group.

### Common Elements in Action Research

The broad assortment of approaches that are labeled action research share some defining attributes: a discourse-based learning cycle, an expanded definition of knowledge, and an inherently political nature. Each of these places strong requirements on the action research group's interaction patterns.

#### *A Discourse-Based Learning Process*

Action research is a discourse-based inquiry and reflection process through which stakeholders and participants in the real-life situation come together to make choices, plan, and take action. If the action research group is able to establish itself as an ongoing learning community, the action and its consequences feed back into the learning of that community, establishing a cycle of experiencing, reflecting, planning, and action taking. Common steps include:

- establishing the group to collectively engage in communication designed to raise consciousness and increase mutual understanding and to create a sense of common purpose
- inquiring by gathering relevant data and knowledge from each other and other sources, sometimes including scientific knowledge and a

formal data-gathering process applying formal scientific approaches

- interpreting and reflecting on the meaning of the information and knowledge assembled, and its relationship to purposes
- deciding on and planning action focused on solving the problems being addressed and achieving the purposes that the group has collectively defined
- reflecting on the results of the action that feed back into an ongoing inquiry, reflection, and action-taking cycle

A major role of the action researcher is to facilitate that process while modeling it, thereby increasing the capacity of the group to develop knowledge. When this capacity has been developed, all members will function as action researchers.

### *An Expanded Nature of Knowledge*

Scientific knowledge deals with the theoretical connections between variables—and is aimed at answering questions such as whether carrying out a particular action will lead to a particular outcome. A more diverse set of knowledge is required to define effective practice, and making decisions regarding practice requires the group to interpret patterns of information and pull together diverse knowledge sets. Even with a firm grasp of what is objectively known, and even with deep know-how about how to achieve particular outcomes, the group is still faced with the challenge of how diverse participants who may not start out knowing or trusting each other can find consensus about how to proceed.

Beyond objective knowledge, two other kinds of knowledge are required for effective action research. One is the knowledge participants develop of each other—relational knowledge—that enables them to understand and feel empathy for the others' points of view. This is the knowledge that allows the group members to go beyond their experience of the world and engage in reflection and action planning that incorporates the views and purposes of others. The second kind of knowledge is the reflective knowledge that comes from a truly collaborative interchange, and that equips the group to be critical of the status quo and to reformulate purpose. It enables the group to get beyond a problem-solving

orientation and collectively describe and create their real-life situation as they would like it to be.

Different action research groups and their members may begin the process with different competencies in and orientations to these different kinds of knowledge. In work settings, managers and technical employees may be heavily steeped in technical knowledge, and may see relational and reflective knowledge as unimportant to achieving their purposes. First-line employees, however, may orient themselves to these latter forms of knowledge, which determine their trust in the process and focus them on creating a workplace where they experience meaningful interpersonal relationships and where their purposes are taken seriously. Inherent in effective action research is developing an appreciation for these different forms of knowledge that allow a community of participants to move forward together.

### *Political Processes*

Integral to action research is the capacity of the group to create power dynamics where the members of the action research group are all heard, and their knowledge, preferences, and perspectives are taken into account. Words like *participative*, *equal*, *democratic*, *social justice*, and *emancipation* are used by action researchers in different kinds of settings. All of these terms carry the notion that the formerly disempowered will become empowered to influence the choices made and directions taken. Achieving this requires a process where those with formerly privileged knowledge and power, including the action researchers themselves, do not dominate the process. Ultimately the choice of action is politically determined. The goal of action research is to ensure that the political process is participatory and builds on the knowledge and purposes of the members.

*Susan Albers Mohrman*

*See also* Cooperative Learning; Group Learning; Lewin, Kurt; Process Consultation

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## AFFECT CONTROL THEORY

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*Affect control theory* (ACT) is a mathematical theory of social interaction developed by David Heise in the 1970s. Based on symbolic interactionist ideas, ACT explains how interpersonal interactions are constrained by the symbolic culture contained in language and the meanings it associates with things. The theory describes how actors cognitively and affectively negotiate these cultural meanings to maintain a “working definition” of the situation. It also makes predictions about behaviors, emotions, and identity attributions that occur in culturally situated interactions. Thus affect control theory helps us understand both inter- and intragroup processes.

ACT proposes that interactions confirming cultural meanings require minimal cognitive processing because such situations feel normal and expected. In contrast, when an interaction does not confirm standard cultural meanings, people attempt to cognitively interpret it, while being signaled by their emotions that the situation is unexpected. A core proposition in the theory is the *control principle*, which says that people attempt to restore the meanings in a situation after deviation from the cultural standard, typically by generating new social behaviors.

### Cultural Sentiments

ACT assumes that individuals understand social events by labeling their elements—including

identities, behaviors, settings, and emotions. The labels in turn evoke affective meanings that are shared with a larger culture. These affective meanings are conceptualized and measured using three universal dimensions of meaning that Charles Osgood found to account for a substantial amount of the variation in the lexicons of over 20 language cultures. First, *evaluation* is a measure of a concept’s goodness or badness measured on a continuum from *bad, awful* to *good, nice*. Second, *potency* is a measure of a concept’s power and ranges on a continuum from *powerless, weak, small* to *powerful, strong, big*. Third, *activity* is a measure of a concept’s liveliness or quietness and ranges from *slow, quiet, old* to *fast, loud, young*. ACT refers to the affective meanings measured on these dimensions as sentiments. *Sentiments* are trans-situational, generalized affective responses to specific symbols that are widely shared in a culture (or subculture).

These three fundamental dimensions of meaning serve as cultural abbreviations that describe important affective information about all elements of an interaction—identities, behaviors, emotions, and settings. These dimensions are core to our understanding of intra- and intergroup processes. The evaluation (good–bad) dimension helps characterize processes like status and affiliation at the interpersonal level and solidarity and cohesion at the group level. The potency dimension characterizes power relations between social actors and between social groups. The activity dimension characterizes the expressiveness of identities and interpersonal behaviors as well as feelings of excitement or quiet.

The three dimensions of meaning operate cross-culturally, but the sentiments associated with particular labels are specific to a culture or subculture. ACT researchers have empirically compiled sentiments associated with hundreds of identities, behaviors, setting, emotions, and traits into cultural dictionaries. Cultural dictionaries have been compiled for the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Germany, and Northern Ireland, and in the future this work will be extended to include other cultures. All elements of an interaction (identities, behaviors, settings, emotions, traits) are indexed along the same three dimensions of meaning. This provides a common metric for use in the theory’s equations that describe social interaction. Every

label evokes culturally specific amounts of goodness, powerfulness, and activity. In the U.S. cultural dictionary, for example, the identity of *outlaw* is quite bad, slightly powerful, and somewhat active. The behavior *reward* is extremely good, quite powerful, and slightly active.

### Interaction

Although all social concepts evoke cultural sentiments, the meaning of a particular element of an interaction may change as the interaction develops. ACT proposes that individuals label elements of a social interaction with concepts common to their culture, and those concepts have sentiments associated with them. In addition, these concepts provide a reference point throughout the interaction, allowing any observer of the interaction to determine if the interaction deviates from culturally normal behavior. ACT contains equations that specify how each social element of an interaction will contribute to altering the sentiments of those elements. For example, if an outlaw rewards a sheriff, observers will change their impressions of that particular outlaw, that particular sheriff, and that particular rewarding behavior. On the evaluation dimension the outlaw will no longer be seen as bad, but much closer to neutral, and the rewarding will be seen as only slightly good. The element's altered sentiments in a situation are referred to as *transient impressions*.

Differences between the cultural sentiments and the transient impressions reveal the degree to which a situation is culturally normative. In affect control theory, differences are called *deflection*; higher levels of deflection suggest less culturally normative events. An example of such an event is an outlaw rewarding a sheriff, because according to the affect control equations it is not normal for a bad person to do something good for a good person. The theory suggests that when an interaction is not harmonious with cultural expectations, people experience unusual emotional, behavioral, and cognitive responses.

First, actors will experience this deflection, or incongruence in meaning, emotionally—with larger incongruencies generally producing more intense emotions. An actor's emotion will be positive or negative depending on both how positive the event is and whether the incongruence is more positive than that actor's identity. An outlaw rewarding a

sheriff is engaging in an interaction that suggests that the view of this outlaw should be better than the typical cultural view of an outlaw. This incongruence in the direction of increased goodness means the outlaw will experience positive emotions, such as being thankful or relieved in response to the interaction.

Second, actors experiencing this deflection, which was initially signaled by emotions, will try to restore the normative definition to the situation through additional interaction. The theory predicts that actors will strive to restore the definition of the situation even if the emotion experienced was positive. Thus, in the example of the outlaw who rewarded the sheriff, the outlaw could yell at the sheriff or the sheriff could convict the outlaw to restore cultural sentiments. ACT suggests that behavioral responses are often the easiest method for controlling the inconsistencies created during interaction.

Third, for interactants who cannot restore the definition of the situation behaviorally and for observers who are not participating in the interaction, the situation can be resolved cognitively. For a mild deflection, accepting the transient impression may restore a working definition of the situation (in this case, deciding that this outlaw is not as bad as other outlaws). For more extreme deflections, relabeling elements of the situation is another possibility (e.g., the actor is not an outlaw but merely a rival, or the behavior was not really rewarding but taunting). ACT does not make specific predictions about when a behavioral or cognitive approach to resolving the incongruency will take precedence, but it does suggest that a working definition of the situation must be restored for individuals to make sense of their interactions and the larger social world.

### Mathematical Foundation

ACT is a mathematical model with the theoretical principals encoded in equations. *Impression-formation equations* specify the transient impressions of elements after an interaction occurs. Similarly, *labeling equations* can indicate how elements of interaction could be redefined by an observer. *Behavior-prediction equations* lead to predictions of what actions interactants might take to restore a working definition to the situation. *Emotion equations* predict emotions the

interactants are likely to experience as the result of an interaction.

All of the ACT equations are generated from empirical data for a particular culture. These equations as well as the cultural dictionaries have been implemented in computer programs such as INTERACT (<http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/ACT>), which allows simulations and predictions of interactions with all the ACT equations. These predictions can then be used to make specific hypotheses about emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions that are then subject to empirical testing.

Researchers have made fruitful use of affect control theory to study stereotyping and intergroup relations, the dynamics of therapeutic support groups, leadership structures within task groups, political identification and action, and responses to injustice. This research relies on a variety of methodological approaches, including laboratory experiments, formal cross-cultural comparisons, ethnographic studies, and survey research.

*Dawn T. Robinson and Daniel B. Shank*

See also Leadership; Social Identity Theory; Support Groups; Symbolic Interactionism

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## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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*Affirmative action* refers to efforts to provide equal opportunities for all in employment and education. This entry focuses on affirmative action in the United States because it has been the primary site for social science research on the issue. Affirmative action policies and programs take measures to increase the representation of women and racial/ethnic minorities in employment and higher education through the use of targeted recruiting and training, formalizing personnel practices, preferential treatment in hiring and educational admissions, and sometimes the use of quotas. The motivation for affirmative action is to redress historical inequalities between social groups by “leveling the playing field” for groups that are disadvantaged by past and current discrimination. Affirmative action has led to important changes in intergroup relations, and its history serves to highlight both the effectiveness and limitations of laws aimed at changing existing relations between social groups that differ in power and status.

### History

Throughout its 45-year history, affirmative action has been met with controversy and debate. While presidential committees since the 1940s had been wrestling with nondiscrimination clauses in federal contracts, the first mention of the term *affirmative action* came in 1961 from Executive Order 10925 issued by President John F. Kennedy. Executive Order 10925 was the first legal mandate requiring organizations that do business with the federal government (federal contractors) to “take affirmative action” to ensure that hiring and promotion practices are free of discrimination. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11246 (E011246) in 1965, creating the first affirmative action policy to be enforced enough to provoke controversy and debate. E011246 applies to the federal government

and to federal contractors with a contract of at least \$50,000 and 50 or more employees. Initially, the policy was targeted at eliminating discriminatory barriers for racial/ethnic minorities, but it was modified in 1967 to protect groups based on color, religion, sex, and national origin. While E011246 only requires that the federal government and the businesses that contract with the government have affirmative action plans, many noncontracting organizations have adopted policies that enhance diversity and provide evidence against potential discrimination lawsuits.

Affirmative action can be distinguished from equal opportunity policies that simply prohibit discrimination by its call for actions to eliminate barriers to equal opportunity. The presumption behind affirmative action is that even race- and gender-neutral policies can operate in ways that advantage some groups over others. As Johnson relayed in his speech justifying E011246, "You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: 'now, you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please' . . . and still justly believe you have been completely fair." This inequality in access may be the result of current and past discrimination, institutional forms of racism and sexism that bias measures of merit, and/or the tendency of people to hire those they know or who have similar backgrounds.

To ensure that equal opportunity exists, affirmative action policies require employing organizations and schools to allocate resources toward (1) evaluating workforce and enrollment statistics and (2) taking proactive measures to balance the representation of women and racial/ethnic minorities with respect to their availability for hire or admission. In evaluating statistics, employers and educational institutions evaluate the proportion of qualified women, African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos/as, and Asian Americans and compare this proportion to the number employed or admitted and retained. When any target group is underrepresented relative to their availability, federal contractors are required to develop affirmative action plans that include goals and timetables for making good-faith efforts to remedy the problem. Goals for meeting affirmative action plans include targeted recruitment and

training, formalizing job posting procedures to promote equal access to hiring information, and in certain cases, giving additional weight or assigning extra points to race- and gender-disadvantaged applicants in hiring and admissions decisions.

While much of the controversy surrounding affirmative action has focused on the use of quotas, the law forbids the use of quotas except in circumstances in which courts order it as a remedy for cases of blatant discrimination. In 1978, the Supreme Court ruled against the use of explicit quotas in the case of the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*. In this case, Allan Bakke, a White applicant who was not admitted to the medical school at the University of California, Davis, sued when several minority applicants were accepted to the medical school despite having lower grades and test scores than he did. In this case, the university was reserving 16% of admissions spots for minority applicants and evaluating the qualifications of the White students separate from the minority students. The Supreme Court ruled that this was unconstitutional, but in addition wrote that schools could treat the minority status of applicants as one among other characteristics in making admissions decisions. This ruling, then, made explicit quotas illegal but certain forms of preferential treatment permissible.

Since the *Bakke* case, there have been a number of other important legal cases that have limited the methods by which colleges and universities can implement affirmative action plans. Appellate courts ruled that the admissions plans for the University of Texas Law School and the University of Georgia violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. In a landmark case in 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the University of Michigan's point system for undergraduate admissions made race too prominent of a factor, but the law school's practice of considering race, but not assigning a specific weight to it, was permissible. This case was important because the justices affirmed that broad social value can be gained from diversity in the classroom. In addition to the court rulings, California and Washington have passed propositions banning any form of preferential treatment based on race, color, sex, or national origin, and Florida has banned race-based preferential treatment in college admissions.

### Impact of Affirmative Action on Workplace Composition

Has affirmative action been effective at increasing the number of women and people of color in the workplace? To answer this question, many studies have compared the proportion of women and people of color in the federal workforce, where affirmative action is required, to that in the private workforce, where affirmative action is not required. Several studies have consistently shown that the percentage of women, Hispanics, and Blacks in the government workforce is higher than the percentage in the private workforce. In addition, research studies have shown that women and minorities are more likely to advance to management in the public sector, and that occupational advance has led to smaller race- and gender-related earnings gaps in the public sector. While these studies suggest that affirmative action may increase workplace diversity, the broader differences between private and public sector jobs make it difficult to draw conclusions about the independent effect of affirmative action.

There are other studies that more successfully isolate the impact of affirmative action by comparing the growth of women and minority employment among organizations with federal contracts to that among similar organizations with no affirmative action requirements. Studies of changes in the period in which affirmative action was most stringently enforced (1974–1980) showed the employment of Black men and women growing at a faster rate and the employment of White men growing at a slower rate among federal contractors than among similar establishments without federal contracts. Studies also showed that compliance reviews are an important form of enforcement. Federal contractors that had undergone a compliance review had twice as much Black male employment growth as such businesses that had not been the subject of a compliance review. Another important factor in understanding the impact of affirmative action is employment growth more generally. Federal contractors that had many job openings were more likely to increase their representation of Black employees than contractors with less growth in the early years of affirmative action. A number of studies have also shown that affirmative action raised the occupational levels of

people of color, which in turn reduced the earnings gap between Whites and people of color. In addition, federal contractors have granted more promotions to people of color than have noncontractors.

Early studies comparing federal contractors to noncontractors underestimated the effectiveness of affirmative action because many noncontractors implement voluntary affirmative action plans. More recent studies have accounted for this by comparing the workplace composition of firms that report having an affirmative action plan to those that report not having one. The results are consistent with previous research, showing that organizations with an affirmative action plan have more women and minorities, a higher proportion of women and minorities in high prestige jobs, and a smaller earnings gap.

One of the major controversies surrounding the debate about affirmative action involves the claim of reverse discrimination. Opponents of affirmative action argue that in giving advantages to women and people of color, qualified White men are discriminated against. To assess the validity of this argument, some researchers have looked for evidence that when women and minorities are hired through affirmative action plans, their qualifications for the job are less than what is needed to perform well. Economists have approached this question by examining whether the redistribution of workers has come at the expense of quality and productivity. While the difficulties in assessing productivity across organizations limits the available evidence, econometric studies conducted during the late 1970s and late 1980s, when affirmative action was most strictly enforced, showed that the industries under the most pressure to comply with affirmative action plans were no less productive than other industries. In addition, company-level analyses showed that affirmative action obligations and changes in workplace composition had no negative effect on company profits. In fact, more recent research has shown that companies that employ the highest proportion of women and minorities enjoy higher returns on their stocks than the market average, while those that employ the lowest proportion of women and minorities had stocks that underperformed relative to the market average.

One of the most commonly relied upon ways that opponents of affirmative action assess whether



affirmative action results in reverse discrimination is to compare the qualifications of employees who benefit from affirmative action to the qualifications of those who do not. While this approach enjoys the most media attention, it is poor science because measures of merit are often intrinsically tied to institutional forms of sexism and racism. Subjective measures are subject to implicit and explicit race and gender bias, while objective measures like standardized testing have been shown to be culturally biased and poor predictors of performance. Research using data from employers in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Boston, and Detroit has revealed that among employers most committed to affirmative action plans, women and minorities had lower average qualifications than White males, but their performance on the job was no different.

### **Impact of Affirmative Action on Diversity in Higher Education**

Affirmative action in education has been even more controversial than in employment, experiencing more legal challenges on charges of reverse discrimination. The appellate and supreme courts have ruled in favor of plaintiffs charging reverse discrimination, and in so doing have effectively eliminated quotas and severely limited race-based preferences in college admissions.

Research has suggested that prior to the current restrictions, affirmative action led to more diversity in higher education. Recent empirical research analyzing student data from 28 elite colleges and universities in 1951, 1976, and 1989 showed that race-based affirmative action significantly increased the number of Blacks admitted to and attending elite institutions. In addition, findings showed that ethnic minorities graduated at the same rate as Whites. Another recent study of the University of Michigan Law School showed similar findings. As in the employment arena, the evidence—that students admitted as a result of race- and gender-sensitive policies graduate at the same rate as those admitted without affirmative action—seriously hampers claims of reverse discrimination. While most studies have provided this evidence, one study has found that Blacks admitted to elite law schools entered with lower average credentials than White students and were less likely to graduate and pass the bar. This study has sparked a great

deal of controversy and has been criticized in a number of publications for its methods and the author's interpretations. In any case, research has shown that even when students do not finish law school, simply attending increases annual earnings and thus serves to boost the life outcomes of people of color.

One of the factors that the Supreme Court has taken into account in ruling on affirmative action is the social value gained by diversity. A large body of research has shown that diversity leads to positive learning outcomes for both Whites and people of color. Research has shown that interactions in diverse settings improve the ability to take the perspective of others, and that heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups when members perceive their contribution to be important. In addition to the direct benefit of diversity, ethnic minorities are more likely than Whites to use their education to benefit society—professionally and through civic engagement. Thus, increasing the representation of minorities in higher education institutions has been shown to have long-term positive social outcomes.

### **Impact of Affirmative Action on Intergroup Relations**

Because affirmative action is unique in its proactive approach to reducing inequality, there are a number of important ways in which attitudinal responses to the law and its impact expand our understanding of intergroup relations. Attitudes about affirmative action vary significantly according to how it is defined. Research has shown that people tend to be the most supportive of outreach programs and formalized job postings, while there is greater resistance to preferential treatment practices. Attitudes about affirmative action also vary according to the gender, race, political ideologies, and prejudice levels of individuals. Research has shown that women, people of color, political liberals, and those who hold the least prejudiced attitudes tend to be more supportive of affirmative action. The popular press has characterized affirmative action as a racially polarizing policy that divides Whites and Blacks. Research has shown that Whites do tend to be less supportive of affirmative action than are Blacks, but the extent of polarization has been exaggerated. Both Blacks and Whites tend to oppose quota

systems and support outreach programs. Though Whites resist preferential treatment practices more than do minorities, there is a significant proportion of Whites and minorities who support and oppose such forms of affirmative action.

People express opposition to special preferences in hiring and admissions because such preferences are perceived to violate norms of fairness and justice. While attitudinal survey research has shown that people who oppose affirmative action believe it is unjust, it has also shown that such a concern affects opposition differently depending on the race and gender of the group benefiting from the policies, as well as the race and gender of the respondents. For example, concerns about justice drive resistance to race-based affirmative action more than sex-based affirmative action. In other words, people's social locations and attitudes about other groups have greater explanatory power regarding resistance to affirmative action than do people's adherence to fairness and justice norms. One study also found that prejudice levels mediated people's tendency to misconstrue affirmative action programs as justice violating when they were explicitly designed not to advantage certain groups over others.

In moving beyond explanations rooted in principles of fairness, social psychologists have developed a number of different theories for understanding variations in attitudes about affirmative action. Scholars who place primary importance on the role of racial prejudice have theorized that individualist values, which lead to resentment against Blacks for their struggles to succeed economically (symbolic racism), conflicting interests between social groups, and the preference for social dominance, drive resistance to affirmative action. All of these theories differ in important ways, but they share the basic notion that dominant groups oppose affirmative action because it threatens their privileges. These theories provide the most purchase for understanding why Whites and males resist affirmative action, but the theories do not adequately address why groups that stand to benefit from affirmative action policies sometimes also oppose them.

Given the controversy surrounding affirmative action and the widely publicized complaints about reverse discrimination, those who benefit from affirmative action may be concerned about perceptions that their success is not merit based. A number of laboratory studies have provided support for this

concern, showing that when affirmative action is mentioned to people prior to their being asked to evaluate women and men job applicants, women are rated as less competent. In addition, laboratory research has shown that when people believe they have been granted preferential treatment or are led to believe others believe this, their general and task-specific performance is lower. Recent research has linked this disempowering effect to resistance to affirmative action, showing that when political ideology, support for gender-based affirmative action, symbolic racism, and perceived discrimination are accounted for, racial minorities are more likely to oppose special hiring preferences for their own group when they have a close friend who is White. This finding suggests that when the perception of the dominant society is close to home, resistance to affirmative action is greater.

The history and impact of affirmative action serve to highlight the nature of modern race and gender relations. Efforts to eliminate barriers to equal opportunity have improved the educational and labor market outcomes of women and minorities. In spite of these gains, affirmative action faces a formidable battle in winning over the support of those who stand to gain from the current system of inequality. So long as Whites and males oppose equalizing policies like affirmative action, those who benefit from the policies also incur the costs by being perceived as less worthy than others of their successes. This lag in attitudinal change is both a reason for affirmative action and an unfortunate consequence of laws aimed at forcing changes in existing status hierarchies.

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*See also* Civil Rights Legislation; Discrimination; Group Position Theory; Justice; Racism; Sexism; Symbolic Racism

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## AGEISM

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When we perceive other people, there are three primary criteria upon which we automatically and initially categorize them: race, gender, and age. This categorization process follows from the natural tendency of the mind to categorize objects in its environment to facilitate everyday cognition and action. The categorization of others on these dimensions becomes so well learned that it is automatic in social perception. Unfortunately, while categorizing people according to these characteristics does indeed facilitate social cognition, it is also the first step in stereotyping of, and prejudice toward, groups. While researchers have long studied racism and sexism, they know comparatively little about prejudice against someone based on their age, referred to as *ageism*. While it is certainly true that people have prejudices and stereotypes about virtually any age group, the vast majority of research on age prejudice has focused on the most common form of ageism: prejudice toward older people, particularly those over 74 years of age.

One reason that ageism has been underinvestigated by researchers is that it is institutionalized within American and many other Western cultures. In other words, negative views of older people are very much a part of our everyday shared experiences and lives, and older adults tend to buy into the truth underlying the stereotypes, that those who experience ageism are not perceived as “victims.” An example of how ageism is institutionalized can be found in greeting card stores. In the birthday card section, the basic message (though

jokingly presented) is “I’m sorry to hear you’re another year older” and that it is bad to get old.

### Forms of Ageism

Ageism takes many forms. It affects how some people speak to older adults. This language style, though grounded in good intentions, is experienced by many older people as patronizing and condescending. On the basis of stereotypes about the loss of cognitive abilities as we age, younger adults will often be overly polite, speak louder and slower, exaggerate their intonation, speak in a higher pitch, and use simple sentences. This “baby talk” has been found to be the same type of speech style that people use to talk to children, pets, and even inanimate objects. Interestingly, some older adults don’t mind being spoken to in this way. Research has shown that older adults who are not functioning at a healthy level (physically, emotionally, or cognitively) actually prefer this speech style because it communicates a feeling that the younger person perceives them as needing to be taken care of, and this dependency relationship is comforting to the older adult. Older adults who are healthy, however, may find such speech styles offensive.

Research has indicated that people have very negative attitudes toward aging and adults over 55, and particularly over 75. However, when asked about their attitudes toward their elderly boss, or grandfather, or neighbor, respondents in research studies have a positive attitude toward the specific older adult. This led to confusion among some early researchers who were not really sure if prejudice against older adults existed. As it turns out, it does, and people have many different and at times contradictory views of the older adult (for example, sometimes as a “sage” or “perfect grandparent,” and sometimes as “impaired” or a “shrew” or “curmudgeon”). One contributing reason for this may be that we tend to think about stereotyped outgroups along two dimensions: warmth and competence. We tend to view older people with whom we are familiar (such as family, friends, coworkers) as warmer but less competent than other older people. Research indicates that we regard other elderly people as cold and either incompetent or competent.

These divergent ways of treating older people according to age stereotypes also can be linked to

two different types of ageism. With *benevolent ageism*, the perceiver believes that older people need help and are dependent, and that younger people have an obligation to care for older people. The motivation and attitude toward older people is kind, helpful, and positive. In contrast, *malignant ageism* rests on the belief that older people are worthless, negative, and a burden on society. The motivation and attitude of these perceivers are quite negative and hostile toward older adults. These very different attitudes toward older people can lead to different perceptions of their warmth and competence, and those perceptions, in turn, can lead to very different beliefs, stereotypes about, and behavior toward elderly people.

### Motivation for Ageism

A fundamental question is, “*Why* are people ageist?” Older people are a unique group for prejudice researchers to study because, just by living long enough, these people move from the ingroup to a stereotyped outgroup. Given this fact, why would a younger person be motivated to insult and denigrate a group to which he or she will eventually belong? Though there are many potential, contributing motivations, one theory has shown substantial and compelling empirical evidence supporting the idea that ageism is motivated by *fear*. Terror management theory suggests that culture and religion are creations that impose meaning and order on our world. This order helps us keep at bay our feelings of fear about our mortality and the random nature of the universe. According to the theory, as we go through childhood, we associate good behavior with being rewarded and protected by our parents. This good feeling about ourselves, our self-esteem, therefore forms a buffer against fears of our eventual death. Research on terror management theory consistently has shown that when people are reminded about their mortality, they feel more anxiety. Because older people remind us of our mortality, we may avoid or even denigrate them to help us deny the possibility that we too will eventually get old (and die). Several studies therefore have shown that older people are stereotyped and discriminated against by younger people so they can cognitively distance themselves from their elders and blame them for their “sorry state” (being old). In so doing, young people deny

that such a fate will befall them, and their anxiety recedes.

Though more research is needed on the motivations behind age stereotypes and prejudice, this theory has the most current empirical support and is highly regarded by many ageism researchers.

### Internalization of Ageism

If a whole society is communicating to you that old age is bad, that it is something to be feared, that your cognitive and physical abilities are declining with every day, and that your worth to society is fairly low (because you are no longer working), you, as an older person, may start to believe it. This can have negative effects on self-concept and self-esteem and may even influence a person’s longevity. One study found that older adults who had more positive self-perceptions of aging lived an average of 7.5 years longer than those with a more negative view of their aging. Interestingly, research has shown that the self-esteem of older people is not affected by ageism in society and age stereotypes and prejudice. In fact, some studies have shown the self-esteem of older adults to be double that of those of high school age. Again, if older adults believe that the ageist behavior of others is not prejudicial, but rather is merely communicating a societal, commonly understood “truth” about older adults, then older adults may not perceive anything negative about their ageist treatment by younger people.

This is an important point to discuss in a bit more detail. Researchers have found utility in distinguishing between the “young-old” (ages 55–74) and the “old-old” (ages 75 and higher). Most of the negative stereotypes about aging and older people are derived from our perceptions of the old-old. These two groups of older adults react to ageist treatment very differently. In a recent survey of over 850 older adults, respondents were asked about their experiences with ageism and how it made them feel. The young-old noted several incidents of ageist behavior directed at them, and it made them very angry (because they do not think of themselves as “old”). The old-old, however, were either unwilling to admit they’d experienced ageism, or they just did not interpret that behavior as ageist (because, as mentioned earlier, they perceived it as reflecting a true state of affairs—they *were* dependent and they

were failing in their cognitive and physical abilities). If they did mention they experienced ageism, they said they were not bothered by it.

### Pervasiveness of Ageism

Research has found that ageism is so pervasive in society that even those who work in helping professions show ageist attitudes. In medical schools, little training has typically been devoted to gerontology or geriatrics, because it is not seen as an exciting field in which to specialize. Older people are viewed by some doctors as rigid, depressed, senile, or untreatable. Some doctors view treating older patients as futile or as a waste of time, because they are going to die soon anyway. Indeed, studies have shown that some doctors are less willing to pursue expensive treatments and aggressive procedures or therapies with older patients, and are more likely to order pain medication to stabilize them until they die. Other studies have shown that doctors regard the same disease (e.g., cancer) as a surprise and a tragedy in a 5-year-old but not in an older adult. Researchers have referred to this as “healthism.” Some mental health professionals may shy away from accepting older clients because they view older people as not really having serious problems, but rather as just feeling lonely and wanting to talk to someone. On a positive note, these biases in the medical and psychological professions are indeed changing as increasing attention is devoted to training doctors and psychologists in gerontology, in response to the growing demand for such training brought about by the retiring baby boomers.

At the extreme, malignant ageism can result in exploitation, neglect, or abuse of older adults, and even in violent behavior toward them that leads to their injury or death. Unfortunately, this type of abuse is on the rise, and it tends to be overlooked because (1) physicians have, until only fairly recently, been less acquainted with this form of abuse and (2) the elderly victim is too embarrassed or afraid to report it. Elder abuse is not restricted to the United States, as researchers have uncovered such abuse in Japan, Puerto Rico, and other cultures.

Though ageism is most prevalent in the United States (with exceptions such as traditional Hawaiians, who revere their elders) and other Western nations, other countries around the world are increasingly

becoming more ageist. Recent research suggests that as Eastern cultures become more industrialized, and more like the West—due to trade, tourism, and increasing global connectedness—they may tend to adopt more Western views of death, aging, and the role of the older person in society.

### Reducing Ageism

How then can ageism be reduced? From an early age, children must learn that getting older does not mean one will eventually be a witch or a bad or grumpy person (as most fairy tales suggest). Society needs to educate children, employers, policymakers, and health care professionals about the pervasiveness of ageism and how it has very real, harmful effects on older adults. Opportunities for older people to contribute to their community should be created, and contact between younger and older people should be encouraged. Older people should be regarded with respect. In so doing, society will enhance the quality of life for older adults and enhance intergenerational interactions.

Todd D. Nelson

*See also* Discrimination; Perceived Group Variability; Prejudice; Stereotyping; Stigma; Terror Management Theory

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## ALLPORT, GORDON (1897–1967)

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Gordon Willard Allport is renowned for his work on the psychology of prejudice and his formulation

of the highly influential *contact hypothesis*. His work pioneered a focus on the cognitive antecedents of prejudice; it demonstrated how social psychological research can address important social issues and have a tangible impact on policy and practice. This entry looks at his life and works.

Allport was born in Montezuma, Indiana, in 1897. His father was a physician, and his mother was a former schoolteacher. When he was 6 years old, his family moved near Cleveland, Ohio, where he spent all his school years. Allport had three older brothers, one of whom, Floyd, was also a social psychologist and contributed to the establishment of modern experimental social psychology. Gordon Allport completed his bachelor's degree at Harvard in 1919, and he then spent a year teaching English and sociology at Robert College, in Istanbul, Turkey. Returning to Harvard, he was awarded a PhD in 1922; his doctoral dissertation was entitled "An Experimental Study of the Traits of Personality: With Special Reference to the Problem of Social Diagnosis."

Following completion of his PhD, Allport was awarded a fellowship to study in Europe. He spent one year in Berlin and Hamburg, Germany, where he was introduced to the Gestalt theory of mind. He then spent a year in England at Cambridge University before returning to United States and eventually becoming a faculty member of Harvard University from 1930 to his death in 1967. Allport also served as president of the American Psychological Association.

### Allport's Work

Opposed to the strictly one-sided psychoanalytic and behaviorist approaches to the study of personality, Allport emphasized the uniqueness of the individual and argued that problems need to be treated in terms of present circumstances instead of childhood experiences. His theoretical views on personality resulted in two books, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (1937) and *Pattern and Growth in Personality* (1961). In *The Individual and His Religion* (1950), Allport discussed the development of religious attitudes and ideologies, as well as the relationship between religion and intergroup attitudes and behavior. This work led to what is perhaps Allport's most important contribution to social psychology.

### *The Nature of Prejudice*

Allport's 1954 book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, contains his most influential theoretical contribution to social psychology. Focusing on intergroup conflict and in particular on interracial relations in the United States, the book provides a broad perspective on defining, explaining, and reducing prejudice.

Allport was one of the first theorists to focus on the cognitive antecedents and processes that contribute to expressions of prejudice. He argued that stereotyping and categorization per se are functional aspects of people's thinking processes, but that when combined with social inequalities they can propagate biased attitudes and evaluations of others. Thus, through social comparison with outgroups, people locate themselves and their group in the world. Allport's analysis suggests that although the cognitive mechanisms involved in social categorization and stereotyping may sometimes lead to negative intergroup attitudes, this is not inevitably the case.

This led to the important observation that if more general psychological processes relating to categorization are involved in the formation of negative intergroup attitudes, then encouraging people to shift their conceptualizations of group membership from strictly defined criteria, such as race, to more inclusive categories, like common humanity, may weaken antagonistic relations and prejudice between ethnic groups.

### *The Contact Hypothesis*

A milestone theoretical contribution of *The Nature of Prejudice* was Allport's formulation of the *contact hypothesis*. Allport considered whether simply bringing together members of groups that differ in terms of race, religion, or national origin could reduce stereotyping and prejudice. He argued that, in many cases, contact on its own might not be sufficient to improve intergroup attitudes. Rather, there are prerequisite situational conditions that enable intergroup contact experiences to result in positive attitude change. The "four necessary conditions" Allport identified were equal status during contact, the existence of common goals, cooperation in achieving such goals, and institutional support (e.g., laws, authorities, customs).

Over the past 50 years, a great deal of research has been devoted to testing and amending the basic principles of the contact hypothesis, and contact is now one of the most widely used psychological interventions for reducing prejudice and improving intergroup relations. Much of this research initially focused on extending Allport's four key conditions for positive contact outcomes, leading some to suggest that the approach had too many such conditions to prove workable.

A recent meta-analysis conducted by Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp directly addressed this criticism. The meta-analysis identified 515 studies conducted between 1949 and 2000 with 713 samples and a total of 38 participating nations. The result of this meta-analysis was a robust and statistically significant negative effect of contact on prejudice, an effect that remained even for contact that did not meet any of Allport's initial four conditions. Contemporary research on contact has, therefore, begun to examine other issues, including which *forms* of contact best reduce prejudice. For instance, researchers have found that a unique form of contact, cross-group friendship, is more effective at improving outgroup attitudes than less intimate forms of contact. They also have discovered that indirect forms of contact, where contact is experienced vicariously through others or through simply imagining a positive outgroup encounter, can have a positive effect on outgroup attitudes.

More than 50 years after the first publication of *The Nature of Prejudice*, its core ideas continue to inspire and guide scholars and policymakers focused on the assessment, explanation, and attenuation of prejudice, and this is Allport's enduring legacy.

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See also Discrimination; Intergroup Contact Theory; Prejudice

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## AMBIVALENT SEXISM

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*Ambivalent sexism*, a subtle but effective method of keeping the gender equality gap from shrinking, contains two complementary belief systems about women that have the contrasting valences of subjective benevolence and hostility. Benevolent sexism masks the more overt hostile sexism by giving seemingly caring reasons for discriminatory behaviors toward women. Thus, ambivalent sexism can be a difficult prejudice to root out.

Historical conceptions of sexism assume the hostile belief that women are inferior to men and unfit for positions of leadership, especially those involving power over men. In this view, women who adhere to traditional roles are undervalued and viewed with contempt, while those who challenge such ascribed codes of behavior are resented as overstepping natural and cultural boundaries. While this notion of sexism has prevailed for a long period of time, a more recent conceptualization reveals that traditional beliefs about women may be more complicated than previously assumed.

Rather than depicting women in only openly hostile ways, more recent depictions show that most people (both men and women alike) tend to hold dual conceptions about women: benevolent and hostile sexism. Acting together, these aspects of ambivalent sexism reward women for avoiding situations that make them seem nonfeminine and for choosing situations that make them seem feminine. Or, as Glick and Fiske have described, the two components act as “carrot and stick” to encourage women to “remain in their place.” Women receive rewards (i.e., the carrot) when they follow the rules, but are punished (i.e., receive the stick) when they do not.

### Components

Hostile sexism is the belief that women are by nature inferior and thus unfit for and incapable of

holding positions of authority, especially over men. Hostile sexists tend to see a power struggle between the sexes and express resentment of women for manipulating men—whether by bludgeoning men with “feminist demands” or controlling men through sexual seduction. Accordingly, hostile sexists (both men and women) may experience anger toward “feminist” women who challenge prescribed gender roles and/or shirk “their moral and biological duty” of acting as a subordinate to a presumably stronger male counterpart. Because laws, organizational policies, and norms of social desirability often serve to protect women, expressions of hostile sexism may have diminished in recent years.

Benevolent sexism also works against the promotion of women as equals, but in a very different way. This construct idealizes women as mothers, wives, and caregivers. In addition, benevolent sexism assumes that women both have a purity that men do not and also need protection, as they are too weak and good to defend themselves against those who might otherwise do them wrong. Rather than lowering the status of women by directly characterizing them as less competent, benevolent sexism subtly reinforces the idea that women are more fragile and should be protected and provided for by men. In return, women are expected to confine themselves to a social sphere in which they can nurture the next generation, serve as counterparts to their adoring husbands, and create comfortable homes.

Hostile and benevolent sexism work to balance each other and together function (more effectively than hostility would alone) to relegate women to a second-class status. Benevolent sexism may be more palatable to most people (especially women) than hostile sexism because it appears to reflect good intentions rather than antagonism. That is, women who allow themselves to be patronized reap some benefits and earn the adoration of their male protectors, while women who do not conform to the model are subjected to the negative consequences provided by hostile sexism, including censure, hate, and resentment.

### Sources

Three structural foundations underlie ambivalent sexist beliefs. The first is acceptance of a patriarchal

system. Benevolent sexism is patronizing care taken of someone assumed to be unable to make decisions or act as an independent adult; it is related to paternalism and the presumed benevolent authority parents exercise over their children. This implicitly treats women as children, advocating that men be guardians of women’s minds and bodies, exerting a protective influence over women because of their alleged vulnerability. In a complementary fashion, hostile sexism reinforces patriarchal assumptions that men should be in charge. However, hostile sexism more directly asserts women’s presumed inferiority (e.g., viewing them as too emotional to lead).

A second component reflects biological and social gender differentiation. Men’s physical power is often equated with social power. Sex is a fundamental biological and social category that tends to foster sharp social distinctions in most societies (e.g., gender stereotypes), forming the basis for a division of labor. Women (due to their greater biological ties to reproduction) are associated with nurturing and domestic life, whereas men are associated with more powerful societal roles and leadership positions. These roles reinforce both benevolent sexism (e.g., viewing women as warm and expressive—traits linked to the nurturing role) and hostile sexism (e.g., viewing women as less competent because they less often occupy leadership roles).

A third component of ambivalent sexism is heterosexuality, the premise that both sexes need a heterosexual romantic relationship to be fulfilled. Sexuality affords women a dual role. On one hand, women may be viewed as good wives and mothers, or agents and targets of intimacy and affection (i.e., benevolence). On the other hand, women may be viewed as seductresses, using their sexual power to take control over men and attempting to emasculate them (i.e., hostile). The presumption that women use sex as a tool by which to control men elicits hostile resentment and attitudes that sexually demean women. However, because sex is rewarding and fosters emotional intimacy, subjectively benevolent views romanticize women (e.g., as fair and pure princesses). Thus, ambivalent sexism encourages polarized categorizations of some women as “sluts” and others as “angels.”



### Measuring Ambivalent Sexism

The most commonly used measure of ambivalent sexism is the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, which separately assesses each component of sexism. The measure was created by Glick and Fiske in 1996, and since then it has been widely validated in more than 25 countries (e.g., the U.S., Turkey, Brazil, the Netherlands) with samples ranging from 200 to 2,000. The measure goes beyond previous boundaries by examining sexism as more than the traditional, hostility-based view in which sexist behaviors are solely motivated by a dislike of women. Thus, an example of benevolent sexism is: "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess." And an example of hostile sexism is: "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men." The ambivalent nature of sexism can be seen in the duality of women's roles expressed here. Women are described as both pure beings and power-hungry creatures.

Research using the measure has shown that the constructs of benevolent sexism and hostile sexism are positively correlated with each other (correlations range across samples from .37 to .74), and tend to be more highly correlated in women than in men. Hostile sexism is also correlated with other measures, such as "protestant work ethic" and "social dominance," while benevolent sexism has been correlated with "right wing authoritarianism." When hostile sexism is statistically controlled, benevolent sexism is often no longer a significant predictor for constructs like modern sexism or traditional sexism. Such an effect may be taken as further evidence that benevolent sexism is a unique construct that gives sexist behaviors a protectionist aura. In these studies, men tend to score higher than women on the hostile components of sexism, but there are rarely gender differences on the benevolent sexism component, with both groups at least partially endorsing this behavior.

### Consequences

The consequences of ambivalent sexism can be severe. As with most forms of subtle discrimination, the slow buildup of unfair treatment over time exacerbates the impact of any one sexist interaction. Any belief system that systematically keeps one group from living and working at its full

potential limits everyone in society. When women are forced out of the workforce by prejudice, beaten in their homes for expressing ideas contrary to those of their husbands, and treated as second-class citizens on the basis of gender, an environment is created where neither women nor men can thrive. While the process of change involves a cultural shift in attitudes toward women, recognizing the consequences of sexist behavior is an important first step in achieving equality. Ambivalent sexism complicates the prospects for exposing the negative effects of sexism because of its subjectively positive component, which leads many people to view sexism as not as bad as other forms of prejudice. Specifically, women are more accepting of benevolent sexism (due to its apparent favorability toward women) and, in turn, are more willing to accept hostile sexism because it is "softened" by benevolent sexism.

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*See also* Discrimination; Leadership; Prejudice; Racism; Sexism

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## ANTICONFORMITY

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*Anticonformity* refers to behavior that is deliberately designed to go against the position advocated by one or more others. Also known as *counterformity*, anticonformity most typically occurs in group settings when an individual rebels against the dominant or majority opinion. It conjures up the image of the maverick or deviant who purposefully disagrees publicly with the positions of others in the group, even when he or she agrees privately with these same positions.

Anticonformity stands in contrast to two other important types of response to social pressure:

conformity and independence. Conformity and anticonformity are essentially opposites. Whereas with *conformity*, an individual is motivated to cooperate, follow, and fit in with the group, with anticonformity, he or she is motivated to disagree with, disrupt, and oppose the group. In research settings, conformity is usually measured by movement toward the majority opinion, and anticonformity by movement away from it. Independence can look like anticonformity, but its motives are different. With *independence*, the goal is simply to be true to one's self, regardless of how one's views might be received by others. The term *non-conformity* encompasses both anticonformity and independence.

A real-life example of anticonformity was widely reported in the American media during the Christmas season in 1994. A man from Little Rock, Arkansas, was served with a court injunction, raised at the behest of his neighbors, ordering him to remove some of the over 3 million lights from the Christmas display at his home. The display was attracting too many sightseers and too much traffic to his exclusive residential neighborhood for his neighbors' liking. The man could have conformed to his neighbors by removing some of his lights. He could have shown independence by neither adding nor removing any lights. Instead, the man chose to anticonform. Soon after the injunction was served, he defied it by increasing the number of lights in his display. This entry examines the origins of anticonformity, describes some theories, and offers a few examples.

### Background and History

In 1957, British psychologist Michael Argyle published what was probably the first study to demonstrate anticonformity under controlled conditions. Argyle asked male students to evaluate a painting by Marc Chagall, *Poète Allongé*, which was chosen deliberately because of its "unusual and ambiguous character." Participants were told that they were working with a student partner, when in fact their partner was Argyle's confederate. In one condition, each student learned that his opinion of the painting had been rejected by his partner (e.g., "What you say is trivial, for the picture is so meaningful as a whole"). Participants were then given an opportunity to rate the painting a second time,

and social influence was measured by the change in participants' ratings toward or away from the rating given by the "partner." Argyle found that most participants, 58%, were uninfluenced by their partner; they showed independence by sticking with their original opinion. Another 35% showed conformity by moving toward the partner's position. The remaining 8% of participants, however, showed anticonformity; they became even more extreme in their disagreement with their partner.

In the early 1960s, Richard Crutchfield and Richard Willis published the earliest theoretical work on the distinction between anticonformity, conformity, and independence. Working independently, both proposed that although anticonformity and conformity are opposites in terms of underlying motives and measurement, they are, ironically, quite similar conceptually in that both are determined by the group's position. Thus, both are properly regarded as forms of *dependent* behavior. Both stand in contrast to independence, therefore, where the individual is not influenced one way or the other by social forces. Crutchfield and Willis concluded that anticonformity, conformity, and independence should not be conceptualized and measured merely by different degrees of positive or negative movement along a single-dimension line segment, the standard practice of Argyle and other early researchers. Rather, the three responses should be seen as falling at the vertices of a triangle.

### Theories of Anticonformity

Social scientists have proposed a number of motives that attempt to explain why anticonformity may occur in certain situations. One motive, first formally identified by Jack Brehm, is known as *psychological reactance*. It is based on an individual's perceived rights and freedoms. When people are members of a group, they can come to believe that their rights as individuals are being eliminated or threatened with elimination. Under such conditions, Brehm proposed, people may react by taking steps to restore their freedom.

One clear way to reclaim a freedom is to do the *opposite* of what the source of the threat suggests; that is, to anticonform. So if people in a neighborhood group say to one of their members, "Surely,

you must agree with us that we have too much traffic at night in our neighborhood. You need to take down some of your Christmas lights,” the target individual might respond in words or deeds, “Who gave you the right to tell me what to do on my own property? Actually, I think my display would benefit by adding even more lights.” Another example of anticonformity consistent with reactance motivation is known as the *Romeo and Juliet effect*. As in Shakespeare’s tragic drama, attempts by parents in Western cultures to restrict their teenagers’ freedom to date may backfire, leading to increased dating.

Other recognized motives for anticonformity include the desires to (a) promote change and innovation; (b) establish or project one’s individuality or uniqueness; (c) avoid bad group decisions (i.e., *groupthink*); (d) avoid the appearance of sycophancy; (e) disconfirm another’s negative expectations regarding one’s skills, attributes, or abilities; and (f) distance oneself or group from dissimilar, disliked, or unattractive others.

An example of this distancing occurred in the 1930s following the rise of Nazism. Prior to World War II, a type of swastika had been the official insignia of the U.S. Army’s 45th Infantry Division. The swastika of the 45th was chosen initially because it had been an ancient cosmic and religious symbol in many cultures (e.g., Navajo Indian culture). After a mirror-image swastika was adopted by Hitler and the Nazis in 1935, however, ranking officers in the 45th Division felt obliged to change their insignia in order to dissociate the 45th from anything related to Nazism. The division’s swastika was replaced in 1939 by a thunderbird.

### Anticonformity by Overconformity

Another probable example of anticonformity based on disassociation from the Nazis was demonstrated by Freud following the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938. According to a biographer, the 82-year-old Freud was allowed to emigrate to England, but only after he had signed an affidavit stating that he had been under no pressure from Nazi authorities. After signing, Freud offered to add “I can recommend the Gestapo to anyone,” but his offer was turned down. Given that the intent of Freud’s offer was to register his disagreement with

and opposition to the Nazis, in perhaps the only way available to him under the circumstances, his offer reflects anticonformity.

This example is important because it illustrates that although anticonformity is usually measured by movement away from a group’s position, it can sometimes be indicated, ironically, by movement toward the group, provided that such movement is excessive. This brand of anticonformity was first identified by Willis and dubbed *overconformity*.

### The Anticonformist

Anticonformity refers to a type of behavior. Yet, a person who consistently engages in anticonformity across time and settings can be regarded as a type of person—the anticonformist. Most evidence supporting the existence of anticonformists is anecdotal. Nevertheless, there have been a few systematic attempts to identify the characteristics and etiology of anticonformists. One provocative account was offered by historian of science, Frank Sulloway. Based on archival records, Sulloway found significant evidence that innovators, iconoclasts, and rebels in the history of science, religion, and politics tend to be later-borns.

To explain these findings, Sulloway proposed that because of firstborns’ typical role as surrogate parents, and through the normal process of sibling competition for parental attention, firstborns generally identify with their parents. Firstborns, therefore, are predisposed to conformity and conventionality. Later-born children, in contrast, are outsiders to an established group from birth—their parents and older siblings. Thus, they are primed to rebel against the establishment, particularly against the seemingly arbitrary authority that is typically exerted over them by elder siblings, and hence tend toward anticonformity.

The primary force that drives change in history, therefore, is not located between families divided by social class, as Marx proposed. Rather, Sulloway argued, it is located within families divided by birth order, a function of small-group dynamics.

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*See also* Conformity; Groupthink; Innovation; Minority Influence; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Social Deviance

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## ANTI-SEMITISM

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*Anti-Semitism* is prejudice toward Jews and Jewish culture. From a social psychological perspective, it is a devaluation of the group of Jews and their culture or a devaluation of a Jewish person, because she or he is a member of the social category. A common definition refers to anti-Semitism as hostile beliefs—expressed by attitudes, myths, ideology, folklore and imagery, discrimination, and violence—which destroy the worth of Jews and Jewish culture. In its most comprehensive sense, it is hostility toward Jews as “Jews,” and thus an expression of devaluation and of inequality between groups. Anti-Semitism is expressed by individuals, groups, or institutions against Jewish people, groups, or culture through the categorization of Jews as negatively different or Jewish culture as strange. Jews are seen not as individuals but as a collective that brings problems to a community, often in a secret way.

The group-focused nature of anti-Semitism links it to other expressions of prejudice, such as anti-immigrant prejudice, prejudice against Muslims, and sexism, all within a syndrome of group-focused enmity. The special importance of anti-Semitism is derived from two features. First, anti-Semitism has occurred worldwide for centuries. Second, its most destructive expression has been reflected in persecution: the German Crusade

of 1096, the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290, the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497, and the Holocaust of Nazi Germany.

Anti-Semitism seems to be prototypical of a number of prejudices. It encompasses nearly every aspect of prejudice toward an outgroup. Anti-Semitism has many individual-level facets, ranging from subtle anti-Semitic stereotyping and antipathies to blatant expressions of anti-Semitic racism and discrimination. In many societies, the collective memory has retained anti-Semitic racial stereotypes (Jewish character or appearance), religious stereotypes (Anti-Christ), secular stereotypes (profiteer), and political anti-Semitic stereotypes (Jewish conspiracy). Some modern expressions of anti-Semitism, which have been a subject of controversy since the 1990s, are Islamist anti-Semitism and a critique of Israeli policies that is fed by anti-Semitic prejudices.

### Psychological Foundations

Stereotypes and images of the “collective Jew” are very persistent. Cultures transport and transfer anti-Semitic stereotypes and myths through social representations that are part of the collective memory. The social psychology of anti-Semitism focuses on individual causes within social contexts, reaching from prejudices to genocide.

Early psychodynamic approaches attribute its causes to intrapsychic crises and conflicts, resulting, for example, from feelings of guilt or infirm ego strengths. The Frankfurt School’s project on the authoritarian personality by Theodore Adorno and his colleagues had a particularly significant influence on research on anti-Semitism. This personality approach refers to psychodynamic processes and explains anti-Semitism by reference to the individual trait of an authoritarian personality, which is developed through punitive socialization and characterized by obedience. The researchers believed that this personality primes individuals to be persuaded by propaganda and anti-Semitism. Several studies have shown that authoritarianism predicts anti-Semitism. Current studies also demonstrate that dominance-orientated people are prone to be anti-Semitic. Social dominance theory criticizes the psychodynamic approach of the Frankfurt School. Authoritarianism is a pathological condition that

does not explain institutional behavior and ideological processes in society. Prejudices are legitimizing ideologies for social hierarchies between groups within a society, and people who are high in social dominance orientation are motivated to keep groups like Jews in lower status positions.

The social identity approach taken by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues gives a clearer picture of the link between individual and contextual causes of prejudices. From this perspective, anti-Semitism is explained as a group-focused devaluation in the context of intergroup relations. The social-cognitive categorization of Jews and Jewish culture as an outgroup is thought to be responsible for the development of some anti-Semitic sentiments. Primary reference groups (ingroups), which define the social identity of an individual group member, communicate anti-Semitism. Members of an ingroup differentiate themselves from Jews and Jewish culture and demand conformity to the ingroup's norms and ideologies. The ingroup's social-cognitive characterization of Jews as an outgroup is thought to be responsible for the development of anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes. Anti-Semitic sentiments in extremist groups clearly show this dynamic, but it can also be detected in anti-Semitism of peer groups or familial socialization.

The satisfaction of several overlapping needs and motives by anti-Semitism is linked to its group-focused nature. Five such needs and motives are:

1. Anti-Semitism functions to reinforce self-esteem derived from group membership. Anti-Semitism can strengthen social identities, such as those defined by the ideology of a homogeneous nation. Difference and differentiation can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem through social identity processes, and may trigger prejudices—especially if social identities are felt to be threatened. Anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jewish conspiracies keep such threats alive.
2. Anti-Semitism fulfills the function of legitimizing devaluation of those who compete or are perceived to compete with the ingroup, contributing to the suppression of outgroups and the superiority of the ingroup. Racist images of Jews serve this function.
3. Anti-Semitism can bind individuals to groups and their opinions. Anti-Semitism links people

to a “group of regulars.” People gain recognition by others through expressing the normatively “correct” opinion of the group.

4. Anti-Semitism fulfills a knowledge function. It explains what is going on, and why things happen. For example, a belief in Jewish conspiracy explains why some groups suffer. Myths about the Zionist threat and the conspiracy of Judaism that wants to rule the world are extreme examples. These functions are fed by anti-Semitic stereotypes, which bind these beliefs together and relate them to other prejudices.
5. Anti-Semitism may alleviate feelings of guilt about matters of historical fact. An often-reported expression of anti-Semitic sentiments is blaming the victims.

In addition to such cultural and individual causes, several other contextual factors permit or promote anti-Semitism. Studies show that stereotypical media presentations of Jews and Jewish culture over time, a denial of collective anti-Semitism by political and cultural elites, and lack of contact and experiences with Jews and Jewish culture also are critical causes of anti-Semitism. The power of the old anti-Semitism can be evoked by those who rely on threats to groups and sentiments that can be linked to stereotypes kept in the historical memory. Studies in Europe show that anti-Semitism is a regular part of right wing populism, together with xenophobia and authoritarian orientations. These attitudes are especially exerted by populists who make use of freedom of speech and rely on the assumption that the majority feels and thinks the same way. Right wing populists frequently challenge and break laws against anti-Semitism, and anti-Semitic racism is a core element of right wing extremism. However, groups and individuals who are aware of the norm against anti-Semitism also sometimes fall back on anti-Semitic stereotypes, for example, in the manner in which they criticize Israeli policies.

### New Anti-Semitism

Current research on anti-Semitism is characterized, in particular, by controversies about the difference between the old and new forms of anti-Semitism.

The old or classical anti-Semitism is an overt devaluation of Jews that refers to negative, racist stereotypes (e.g., racist images or stereotypes associated with the Anti-Christ or Devil) and is often tabooed and outlawed. The new anti-Semitism is based on traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes that are expressed in claims about current societal events such as a worldwide Jewish conspiracy or Israeli terror, which is interpreted to be Jewish. For example, the new anti-Semitism is represented by a specific Islamist, anti-Zionist anti-Semitism founded on myths of conspiracy. Several studies show that since 2000 (the Second Intifada), anti-Semitism has been on the increase in Muslim communities. Large parts of this Islamist anti-Semitism are being justified by claims that Muslims are victims of Israeli policies, which are represented and mythologized as Jewish. Another facet of the new anti-Semitism is the “secondary anti-Semitism,” occurring in Germany and other European countries, that involves denying historical anti-Semitic events, such as the genocide at Auschwitz, and demanding a *Schlussstrich* (“final closure”) to the history of the Holocaust. Other facets of the new anti-Semitism are the positions that Jews benefited from exploiting their suffering during the Holocaust and that other communities suffered more from World War II than the Jews did. These arguments entail denying the persecution of the Jews and their status as victims. Polls show that this secondary anti-Semitism is increasingly spreading into the mainstream of many civil societies.

Often anti-Semitism is hidden by a critique of Israel. This new expression of anti-Semitism is found in right wing populism, Islamist propaganda, and sometimes left wing ideologies. Israeli policies against Palestinians are sometimes defined as “Jewish” and are thus attributed to religious rather than nationalistic causes. This anti-Semitic critique is linked to two other themes: first, a comparison of Israeli policies to the crimes of the Nazis in the Third Reich; and second, a separatist ideology categorizing Jews as a strange community that is not part of society. A topic causing serious disputes and ideological debate is the question of which criticisms of Israeli politics represent anti-Semitism. For example, some argue that any criticism of Israel represents anti-Semitism, whereas others claim that virtually no criticism of Israel has anti-Semitic roots.

The German study group on “group-focused enmity” proposes that the presence of one or more of the following four criteria indicates that a criticism of Israel may be considered anti-Semitic:

1. The denial of the right of Israel to exist and the right of its self-defense (i.e., anti-Zionism);
2. a historical comparison between Israeli policy concerning Palestine and the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany;
3. the evaluation of Israeli policy with double standards (i.e., political measures are criticized in Israel but not in other countries); and
4. the transference of anti-Semitic stereotypes to Israel and, in turn, the transformation of Israel into the myth of “the collective Jew.”

If criticism of Israel does not meet any of these criteria, it is not considered anti-Semitic. Criticism of Israeli policies in Palestine is possible without anti-Semitic sentiment, but analyses show that it seems to be very difficult to criticize Israel without referring to one of these components of anti-Semitism.

### Implications

The group-focused enmity criteria mentioned earlier give a basis for detecting new expressions of anti-Semitism from a nonideological point of view. Unfortunately, the discourse on anti-Semitism has always been charged by ideological positions. This partly explains why current surveys show that it is difficult for people to speak about Jews and Jewish culture without referring to stereotypes. In many societies, such anti-Jewish sentiments are misused for propaganda. In Europe, anti-Semitism has become a critical part of right wing populism.

Additional elements tied to anti-Semitism are anti-immigrant prejudices and authoritarian orientations, which are often precursors of attacks on Jews, synagogues, and Jewish schools. In many European cities, Jewish buildings still have to be protected by police. Also, innumerable efforts are being made to combat traditional and modern anti-Semitism. Above all, programs focus on the education of schoolchildren and young adults, but anti-Semitism is still prevalent among elderly people. However,

although many organizations and countries support campaigns against anti-Semitism, evidence about the effectiveness of these approaches is rare. Social psychological research offers evidence showing that actions that promote positive intergroup contacts and self-esteem, lower intergroup threats, and strengthen empathy and perspective taking can reduce prejudices like anti-Semitism. However, evidence is needed to establish the effectiveness of such interventions specifically with anti-Semitism. In addition to analysis of interventionist approaches, more substantive research on other aspects of anti-Semitism is needed. Although many scientists agree that anti-Semitism still exists and poses a severe threat to democracy, some fundamental questions have to be answered. For example, rising anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe has to be explained more exactly. The rise and dissemination of anti-Semitic stereotypes, anti-Semitism in elderly people, Islamist anti-Semitism, the anti-Semitism of elites, and many more phenomena need to be understood. And over and over again, we have to explain the unexplainable: Auschwitz.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Genocide; Prejudice; Racism; Scapegoating; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## APARTHEID

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*Apartheid* is an Afrikaner word that means “separateness” or “apartness.” It represents a cluster of policies that were designed to achieve “total separation” between races in South Africa, the effect of which was to preserve the economic and political privilege of the White minority. The application of apartheid led to a vast program of social engineering that lent constitutional legitimacy to the subjugation of the non-White majority. In this entry, the theory, practice, demise, and legacy of apartheid will be discussed, with a focus on its effects on intergroup thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

### Historical and Theoretical Context

Apartheid in South Africa cannot be understood without being placed in its historical context. For centuries, descendants of the Dutch settlers (the Afrikaners) coexisted uneasily with native African tribes who were being displaced by Afrikaner territorial expansion. Afrikaners also found themselves increasingly in competition with the British, who began to assume political and economic control of much of southern Africa. The tension between the two imperial forces reached a head during the Boer Wars, which entrenched British influence and extinguished the political independence of the Afrikaner republics. The period after this defeat was marked by the growth of a distinct Afrikaner identity, which gradually reasserted itself culturally, linguistically, and politically under British rule.

As South Africa became increasingly urbanized, Afrikaners began drifting into the cities, where they perceived themselves to be the victims of British racism and cultural imperialism. A new class of urban Afrikaner poor emerged that had to compete with cheap labor from Black migrants. Traditional racial hierarchies were realigning around class, and many poor White Afrikaners found their traditional privileges to be under threat. The fear was that British capitalist imperialism would result in Afrikaners being “lumped together” with other minority ethnic groups and afforded the same kind of

second-class citizenship that Black, Colored, and Indian South Africans had received. Political sympathies began drifting toward segregationists, who worked to revive the fortunes of the Afrikaners relative to the British colonizers and the ethnic minorities.

The policy that became known as apartheid was designed to entrench Afrikaner power relative to these two traditional threats. The model for race relations in South Africa (and many other nations) in the early 20th century was a British imperialist model, in which Blacks and Whites were geographically segregated within a single polity. Whites ruled over Blacks politically, and Blacks were expected to assimilate to White culture in order to become competitive within the socioeconomic system.

Apartheid theorists in the 1940s argued that this horizontal system of White supremacy was unsustainable because it would breed frustration, violence, and rebellion from the ethnic minorities. Under apartheid, Afrikaners, Anglos, Coloreds, and various Black tribes would be given separate homelands, which would coexist within the nation of South Africa. By giving each ethnic group its own political and cultural space, it was argued that racial conflict would be reduced because each ethnic group would be free to develop its own political and cultural identity independent of the others.

As an intellectual abstraction, apartheid is consistent with “dual identity” models of intergroup relations, whereby subcultures are encouraged to foster a distinct identity while at the same time embracing what they share at the superordinate (national) level. Indeed, much of the rhetoric that was used to promote apartheid focused on its potential to liberate Afrikaners from British domination and to reduce interracial conflict.

In reality, though, the implementation of apartheid reinforced the type of horizontal White supremacy it defined itself against. Rather than reducing racial conflict, it dramatically deepened inequities between White and Black South Africans, and intensified the frustration, violence, and rebellion that it was designed to diminish. Rather than allowing for subcultures to flourish, apartheid became an intellectual masquerade that allowed both Afrikaners and British descendents to maintain their traditional racial privilege.

### How It Worked

In practice, the policy of apartheid comprised two separate programs: “grand apartheid” and “petty apartheid.” Grand apartheid involved an ambitious and brutal process of social engineering. Black immigration into White areas was halted, and many Black migrants considered “surplus” to economic requirements were deported to “homelands.” Mass relocations of ethnic minorities in South Africa resulted in hundreds of thousands of people being forcibly removed from their homes. The “homelands” offered Blacks were disproportionately small and arid.

Slums that had grown up after World War II were demolished and replaced with “townships,” where Blacks had no permanent property rights. Many of the townships were placed just inside Black homeland borders, and White-run industrial plants were relocated just outside the borders. This was designed to encourage Blacks to migrate to the homelands, at the same time as offering South African industrialists access to “foreign” labor that was not entitled to the same rights offered to those in Afrikaner areas.

Services for Black people were boosted in the Black homelands but dramatically cut in “White areas,” a strategy designed to coax Blacks to settle in the Black homelands. This epic program of relocation required that Blacks be under close surveillance and that their movements be closely regulated. Black workers needed permits to leave the homelands to seek work and to live in Black townships: Hundreds of thousands of Blacks were imprisoned for not having a pass or for traveling to a place without permission. Institutions were manipulated to prevent the desegregation of the races. For example, school curricula were redesigned to actively discourage economic assimilation of Blacks. Interracial marriage and even sexual relations between races were prohibited by law.

Those Black and Colored South Africans who remained in White areas were segregated from the White population. This policy—known as petty apartheid—involved racial segregation of services and facilities such as parks, public transportation, and restaurants. The policy was essentially a formalized version of the segregation policies that existed in many countries in the early- to mid-20th



century, such as those used in the United States during the Jim Crow era. “Grand apartheid” was the most dramatic and distinctive manifestation of the policy of total separation, but for outsiders, it was “petty apartheid” that came to symbolize the injustices of South African race relations. Although the complexities of grand apartheid were difficult to capture and communicate to international audiences, the “White only” signs associated with petty apartheid provided images that pricked the consciences of liberal Whites around the world.

South Africa’s policy of institutionalized segregation (masquerading as the defense of cultural identity) emerged at about the same time that racist practices were being actively contested and overthrown in many parts of the Western world. As a result, South African apartheid became a high-profile cause among international activists who campaigned for civil liberties and the dismantling of institutionalized racism.

### Opposition and Demise

For Black South Africans, the introduction of apartheid resulted in economic marginalization, disempowerment, humiliation, and organized resistance. Intellectuals such as Steve Biko drew inspiration from the Black Power movement in the United States and worked to develop Black pride and nonviolent opposition to apartheid in Black South Africans. Advocates of Black consciousness reinforced the notion that Blacks must stop their psychological subservience to and economic dependency on Whites, and that Blacks should ultimately rule South Africa. The psychological transformation was buttressed by a military operation, largely coordinated by the African National Congress (ANC). Led by Nelson Mandela, the ANC coordinated underground cells of militia who carried out sabotage attacks and assassinations.

In response, White South Africa was galvanized in their antipathy toward what they perceived to be agents of terrorism and communism. An army of police, intelligence agents, and conscripts was built up to crush resistance. A covert civil war developed between Black militias and the Broederbond, a secretive society of pro-Afrikaner advocates who engaged in their own military resistance with the blessing of the South African government.

From the mid-1970s, a number of insurrections broke out in poor Black townships. These expressions of people power were often poorly organized and easily crushed. But images of Black protest and heavy-handed attempts by police to quell the revolts increased pressure on the international community to coerce South Africa into reform. In the 1970s, economic sanctions and sporting boycotts turned South Africa into a pariah state. A gulf developed between mainstream Whites within and outside South Africa. To outsiders, apartheid was illegitimate, irredeemable, and morally repugnant. In contrast, many Afrikaners perceived themselves to be a misunderstood last line of defense against chaos, communism, terrorism, and godlessness. The apartheid debate became severely polarized within and outside South Africa.

In the 1980s, the energies of the ANC gradually moved from armed resistance to collective protest and mobilization. South Africa experienced an unprecedented wave of marches, riots, and boycotts, this time with significant support from Indian South Africans and international media and activists. In the face of social and economic decline, the National Party diluted some of the more interventionist aspects of apartheid, before formally negotiating ways to resolve the 40-year conflict. In 1994, multiracial elections were held for the first time, and Mandela became the first Black president of South Africa.

Since then, apartheid has been morally and intellectually discredited within South Africa as well as outside it. Morally, it is considered indisputable that governments need to protect the rights of all its citizens, not just those of racial elites. The intellectual case for apartheid has been dismantled by social psychological work on the *contact hypothesis*, which argues that intergroup relations are best managed when members of different cultures are allowed to interact with equal status, and with support from norms and institutional authorities that protect against racism. Today, the term *apartheid* lives on as a metaphor that is occasionally invoked to describe and condemn any policy that is seen to segregate and promote inequities between social groups.

Matthew J. Hornsey

*See also* Aversive Racism; Civil Rights Movement; Desegregation; Discrimination; Intergroup Contact Theory; Minority Groups in Society; Prejudice; Racism

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## ASCH, SOLOMON (1907–1996)

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Solomon Asch was born in 1907 in Warsaw, Poland, and emigrated in 1920 to the United States. He remains one of the most influential social psychologists of the 20th century. His research on *impression formation* and *social influence* constituted innovations that revolutionized the field of social psychology. The questions he sought to answer, namely how people form impressions of others and when they are influenced by others, continue to inspire research to this day.

His ideas about impression formation and social influence, borrowed from the domain of vision, are examined in this entry and illustrated with some of his most famous experiments. The importance of his work for the subfield of group processes and the more general field of social psychology is also discussed.

### Impression Formation

Asch's research was based on German Gestalt theory, which can be translated as the theory of the "whole." According to Gestalt theory, when we see a face, we do not first perceive one eye, then the other eye, then the mouth, and so on. Instead, we immediately see the entire face (a gestalt), and this face is more than the sum of its parts (e.g., if an eye and the mouth changed places, we would perceive a very different face).

Asch was not the first psychologist to be interested in how people perceive others, but his approach was radically different from that of previous researchers. Earlier scholars were interested primarily in perceptual accuracy—whether people could accurately guess the personalities of other individuals, whereas Asch was more interested in process—in learning *how* people form impressions of others. He conducted research designed to answer three questions about impression formation, which were derived from Gestalt theory. First, when people receive items of information about an individual, do they form a coherent and unified impression of that individual? Second, do some items of information organize the overall impression? And third, do early items influence how later items are interpreted?

### Fundamental Questions

To answer his first question, Asch gave participants the following list of traits characterizing a fictitious "person X": *intelligent, a hard-worker, skillful, warm, determined, practical, and cautious*. Participants then wrote a sketch of person X and answered questions about other characteristics (e.g., *generous, friendly*) of that person. Asch found that participants formed a coherent and positive impression of person X based on the traits they were given.

To answer his second question, Asch gave participants another list of traits with a single change: *warm* was replaced by *cold*. This time participants formed a negative impression of person X. When Asch replaced the traits *warm* and *cold* with *blunt* and *polite*, nothing happened. Thus, in regard to his second question, Asch found that certain traits (*warm* and *cold*) were central for organizing participants' impressions of person X, whereas other traits (*blunt* and *polite*) were not.

To answer his third question, Asch gave participants one of two lists in which the order of the traits was reversed (either *intelligent, hard-worker, impulsive, critical, envious* or *envious, critical, impulsive, hard-worker, intelligent*). He found that participants' impressions of person X were more favorable when they received the first list than the second, revealing a primacy effect in which early traits in the list guided participants' interpretation

of later traits (e.g., *impulsive* may be understood to mean spontaneous in the first list and aggressive in the second list).

### *Explaining Attitudes*

The results Asch obtained suggest that people have implicit theories about others. For instance, we may believe that if someone is warm, then he or she is also generous. Such implicit theories may help to explain certain stereotypes. For example, we may believe that if X is a gypsy, then he or she is also a musician. Asch's theory-driven approach to impression formation did not go unchallenged. For example, Norman Anderson argued that when forming an overall impression of an individual, people use a data-driven approach in which they evaluate each trait associated with the individual (*intelligent, hardworking, etc.*) and then combine (e.g., through adding or averaging) these evaluations.

The controversy between theory-driven and data-driven impression formation went on for some years, but was finally resolved by Susan Fiske and Steven Neuberg in 1990. According to these scholars, people's first tendency is to place others into a familiar category (e.g., French). If the categorization does not fit the evidence, and if people are motivated to obtain a better fit and have the cognitive capacity (and time) to do so, they will go through additional steps. First, they will try to confirm their initial categorization. If this fails, they will try to recategorize the person in a way that makes sense of most of his or her characteristics. Finally, if this fails, they will default to "piecemeal integration," which involves simply adding or averaging all of the person's characteristics.

### **Social Influence**

Social influence is another domain in which Asch had an indelible impact. Imagine a sentence asserting that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing and is as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical world. In addition, imagine that this sentence is attributed either to U.S. President Thomas Jefferson (the real author) or to Vladimir Lenin, one of the leaders of the Communist Revolution in Russia. Not surprisingly, Asch found that participants in the United

States were more likely to agree with the sentence when it was attributed to Jefferson than to Lenin. One could interpret this result as evidence that admiration for Jefferson generalized to the sentence when it was attributed to him, whereas disdain for Lenin generalized to the (same) sentence when it was attributed to him.

This is not the best explanation for what Asch found, however. Rather than terminating his study after participants expressed their level of agreement with the sentence, Asch also asked them the meaning of the sentence. He found that this meaning differed depending on the ostensible author. When Jefferson was the author, rebellion was interpreted to mean peaceful political change. When Lenin was the author, rebellion was interpreted to mean violent revolution. In line with the Gestalt perspective, Asch concluded that changing the ostensible author of the sentence did not change participants' attitude toward the statement, but rather the meaning of the statement.

### *Surprising Results*

In all the experiments summarized so far, the stimuli that participants judged were rather ambiguous (i.e., there were no clear-cut right and wrong answers). In subsequent studies, Asch sought to determine whether he could obtain the same results using unambiguous stimuli. In these studies, he showed two cards to participants. One card contained three lines of different lengths (a, b, and c). The other card contained a single (standard) line that was the same length as one of the lines on the first card. Participants' task was easy: They simply had to say which line on the first card was the same length as the standard line. The stimuli were unambiguous, as indicated by the fact that participants tested alone hardly ever made errors.

Asch was interested, however, in whether participants tested in a group situation where other people made incorrect judgments about the line lengths would still answer correctly. So, he created a situation in which a single naïve participant was confronted by several people (experimental confederates) who gave unanimously incorrect answers on several trials of the line judgment task. Asch expected that the incorrect majority would have little or no influence on participants' judgments, but his prediction turned out to be wrong.

Participants conformed to the erroneous majority answer about one third of the time. This finding surprised Asch, but turned out to be one of the most influential findings in social psychology.

Asch did subsequent experiments to clarify the conditions under which people do and do not conform to group pressure. For instance, he varied the number of confederates and their level of unanimity. He found, for example, that the presence of a single confederate who gives correct answers substantially reduces the group's tendency to yield to the majority. Later research by others demonstrated that conformity can also be affected by such factors as the publicness of participants' responses and their liking for other group members. The impact of these variables has often been explained in terms of two motives: the desire to respond accurately and the desire to be liked. Asch's research on conformity also inspired other important work on social influence. Two examples are Stanley Milgram's studies on obedience to authority and Serge Moscovici's research on minority influence.

### His Legacy

The enduring legacy of Asch's work is due to several factors. His theoretical perspective was elegant, and his results were clear-cut. More important, the two phenomena he studied—impression formation and social influence—are everyday occurrences and play a major role in interpersonal and intergroup relations. Although Asch was not a highly prolific writer during his lifetime, the fact that his 1952 textbook is still widely cited provides strong evidence for his influence in the field.

*Jacques-Philippe Leyens*

*See also* Anticonformity; Conformity; Informational Influence; Minority Influence; Normative Influence; Obedience to Authority

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## ASSIMILATION AND ACCULTURATION

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During much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the term *assimilation* was used to describe the process by which immigrants inevitably gave up their culture of origin for the sake of adopting the mainstream language and culture of their adopted country. However, by the late 20th century, the term *acculturation* was adopted by scholars to describe the more fundamental process of bidirectional change that occurs when two ethnocultural groups come into sustained contact with each other. From this latter perspective, assimilation is only one of the many acculturation strategies that immigrant and national minorities may adopt as they strive to adapt to mainstream society.

Such strategies have become more and more necessary as immigration, legal or illegal, has become increasingly common across the globe. Through immigration and the recognition of the rights of indigenous and national minorities, most 19th-century nation-states have been transformed from being more or less unicultural to being multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual states. Following the height of nation building in 19th-century Europe, the term *host majority* was ascribed to the “core founding members” of a nation who constituted the dominant ancestral community in control of the state.

Traditionally, host majorities expected immigrants to assimilate to the culture and values of the receiving society. Host majorities have found it easier to assimilate immigrants when their cultural differences were reduced to exotic manifestations such as ethnic restaurants, music, and dance. However, host societies have found it difficult to share jobs, housing, and welfare with immigrants, whom they often see as unentitled to compete for such limited resources and as contributing to the growing cultural and physical insecurity of the society. At stake is whether or not host communities

wish to accept, nurture, assimilate, or reject the distinctiveness of immigrants as members of cultural communities. Ultimately, will dominant majority members allow immigrant minorities not only to maintain their distinctive culture and language, but also to transform the institutions, culture, and values of the host society?

This entry examines various models of acculturation and how strategies of acculturation may be linked to political views, socioeconomic characteristics, and personality traits.

### Acculturation and Deculturation

From the cross-cultural psychology perspective, acculturation implies that both immigrants and host majority members are influenced and transformed by their intercultural contact and are expected to modify some aspects of their respective cultures. Host majority members enjoy some control over the degree of contact they have with immigrants and may experience acculturation either through direct interpersonal contacts in school and at work or through indirect contacts via mass media portrayals. However, relative to dominant majorities, cultural minorities are more likely to be transformed by such intergroup contacts. Immigrants and national minorities have in common their vulnerability to the tolerance or intolerance of dominant host majorities, whose demographic strength, prestige, and institutional power within the national state can result in much acculturative pressure.

The following types of minorities are likely to experience much acculturation pressure: first- and second-generation immigrants, sojourners, refugees, asylum seekers, and national minorities. An extreme case of acculturation pressure was that of South and North American aboriginals in the 17th through 19th centuries, as they had no control over the unwanted, massive, and sustained immigration of Northern Europeans whose demographic, economic, technological, and military supremacy physically decimated their indigenous communities while causing acculturation pressures that often resulted in outright deculturation. The term *deculturation* is used to describe the cultural, linguistic, religious, psychological, and health breakdown that occurs in minority communities that experience sustained contact with a dominant

majority, which by ignorance, indifference, or design has sought to subjugate immigrant or indigenous communities through forced assimilation, segregation, cultural genocide, ethnic cleansing, or extermination.

### From Uni-Dimensional to Bi-Dimensional Models of Acculturation

In Western societies, much of the early acculturation research focused on the adaptation strategies of immigrant minorities as they interacted with the dominant host majority. This almost exclusive focus on the acculturation process of immigrants imposed a form of “collective dispositional bias,” which often blamed immigrants for not sufficiently or successfully adapting to the culture, habits, and values of the receiving society. Furthermore, traditional models of immigrant acculturation were uni-dimensional, as they proposed that during immigrants’ lifetime, they shifted from exclusive grounding in their culture of origin to a bicultural phase reflecting maintenance of the heritage culture and adoption of the host culture, to complete assimilation to the dominant host majority culture.

Criticisms of the uni-dimensional model led to the development of bi-dimensional models of acculturation. In his bi-dimensional model, John Berry proposed that the maintenance of the immigrant culture and adoption of the host majority culture could be portrayed as independent dimensions instead of contrasting points on a single continuum of cultural change. Thus, whether immigrants achieve competence in the host majority language could have little to do with their maintenance of their heritage language. An adaptation of the Berry model asserts that immigrants and national minorities may endorse five acculturation orientations, including the assimilationist strategy proposed in traditional uni-dimensional models. Immigrants with an *integrationist* orientation want to maintain certain aspects of their culture of origin while also adopting key features of the culture of the host community. Those with a *separatist* perspective seek to maintain their language and culture of origin while rejecting key aspects of the host community culture. Immigrants who adopt the *assimilationist* strategy want to abandon their culture and/or language of origin

for the sake of adopting the culture and/or language of the host community. The *marginalized* feel alienated from their culture of origin and experience sustained rejection by members of the dominant host majority, a double jeopardy often leading to anomie. Immigrants may also endorse an *individualist* acculturation orientation as they define themselves and others on the basis of their personal characteristics and achievements rather than on their group membership. Such individualists are not concerned with maintaining the immigrant culture or adopting the host culture, as they are more involved with achieving their personal goals in their country of adoption.

### The Interactive Acculturation Model

It is only in the last decade that researchers have focused their attention on the acculturation orientations held by host communities, which by virtue of their dominant position and control of immigration and integration policies have a substantial impact on the acculturation orientations adopted by immigrant and national minorities. The interactive acculturation model (IAM) was proposed by Richard Bourhis to better account for the intergroup processes that characterize relations between host majority members and cultural minorities. The IAM framework includes the following elements: (a) immigration and integration policies that can affect the climate of intergroup relations between immigrant and host communities, (b) acculturation orientations adopted by host community members toward specific groups of immigrants, (c) acculturation orientations adopted by immigrants within their country of adoption, and (d) interpersonal and intergroup relational outcomes that are the product of combinations of immigrant and host community acculturation orientations. As a complement to other acculturation frameworks, the IAM focuses on the cultural adoption strategies of immigrant and host majority members rather than on their dual group identities or desires for intergroup contact.

The IAM takes into account how public policies regarding immigration and integration relate to the acculturation orientations endorsed by host majority and immigrant group members. While most democratic states have formulated and applied immigration policies regulating the national

origin, type, and rate of immigration accepted within their boundaries, public policies designed to facilitate the integration of immigrants and national minorities within mainstream society remain the exception rather than the rule. State integration policies consist of the approaches adopted by national, regional, and municipal governments to help immigrants and host communities adapt to the growing ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of modern states.

The IAM proposes four clusters of ideologies that can shape the integration policies adopted by democratic governments of multiethnic states. As a heuristic for analyzing integration policies, these four clusters can be placed along a continuum ranging from the pluralism and civic ideologies at one end of the continuum to the assimilationist and ethnist ideologies at the other end. Depending on political, economic, demographic, and military events occurring at the national and international levels, state integration policies can shift from one ideological orientation to the other. The IAM proposes that adoption of state integration policies may reflect and also shape host community acculturation orientations, as well as more general opinions concerning the ideal or preferred ways of integrating minorities within mainstream society. Political tensions may emerge between factions of the host majority holding rival ideological views on immigration and integration issues. The polarization of ideological positions regarding such issues may lead to the formation of political parties whose main platform is to change state policies on immigration and integration issues. While left wing parties may endorse public policies at the pluralist pole of the ideological continuum, right wing nationalist or religious parties may advocate integration policies situated at the assimilationist or ethnist side of the continuum.

The IAM proposes that the acculturation orientations of dominant host majority members can have a major impact on the acculturation orientations of immigrant minorities. Dominant host community members may endorse five acculturation orientations they wish immigrants to adopt: integrationism, assimilationism, segregationism, exclusionism, or individualism. These acculturation orientations are measured using the validated Host Community Acculturation Scale (HCAS).

*Integrationism* is endorsed by host community members who accept that immigrants maintain

some aspects of their heritage culture, and also accept and value that immigrants adopt important features of the host majority culture. Integrationists value a stable biculturalism/bilingualism among immigrant communities, which, in the long term, may contribute to cultural and linguistic pluralism as an enduring feature of the host society. *Assimilationism* corresponds to the traditional concept of absorption, whereby host community members expect immigrants to relinquish their language and cultural identity for the sake of adopting the dominant culture and language of the host majority. *Segregationism* is exemplified by host community members who accept immigrants' maintenance of their heritage culture, as long as the immigrants keep their distance from host members, as they do not wish immigrants to transform, dilute, or "contaminate" the host culture and value system. Host community members who adopt this orientation discourage cross-cultural contacts with immigrants, prefer immigrants to remain together in separate urban or regional enclaves, and are ambivalent regarding the status of immigrants as rightful members of the host society. *Exclusionism* is adopted by members of the host majority who deny immigrants the right to adopt features of the host community culture. Exclusionists also deny immigrants the choice to maintain their heritage language, culture, or religion and believe that some immigrants have customs and values that can never be socially incorporated within the host community mainstream. *Individualism* is an orientation endorsed by host community members who define themselves and others as individuals rather than as members of group categories such as immigrants or host community members. Because it is personal qualities and individual achievements that count most, individualists will tend to interact with immigrants in the same way they would with other individuals who happen to be members of the host community.

The IAM proposes that acculturation orientations endorsed by host community members may be concordant or discordant with those held by members of specific immigrant communities. The degree of concordance between the acculturation orientations of host community members and immigrants may result in harmonious, problematic, or

conflictual relational outcomes. Intergroup relational outcomes include cross-cultural and bilingual communications, interpersonal and intergroup misunderstanding, prejudice and stereotyping, social and institutional discrimination in employment, housing, education and interpersonal relations. Harmonious relational outcomes include optimal intergroup understanding and can be expected when immigrants and host community members both adopt the integrationist and individualist acculturation orientations. Problematic relational outcomes are expected when the acculturation orientations of host majority members and immigrants are partially concordant or discordant. For instance, problematic outcomes, including intergroup misunderstanding and miscommunication, may emerge when immigrants endorse integrationism while host community members endorse assimilationism for immigrants. Problematic outcomes may also emerge when host majorities represent immigrants as endorsing mainly separatism, while immigrants perceive the host majority to be mainly segregationist or exclusionist. Conflictual relational outcomes including discrimination, hate crimes, and intergroup violence can be expected from host majority members who endorse segregationism or exclusionism, especially for immigrants perceived as threatening. Faced with systemic discrimination and hostility from host majority members who are segregationist and exclusionist, immigrants who adopt separatism or marginalization may eventually resort to outright conflict strategies through civil disobedience, rioting, criminal activity, armed struggle, or terrorism.

### Studies of Host Community Acculturation Orientations

Numerous empirical acculturation studies have been conducted with dominant host community undergraduates, thus controlling for the educational and socioeconomic status of respondents in urban centers such as Los Angeles, Montreal, Paris, Brussels, Geneva, and Tel Aviv. These studies have shown that individualism and integrationism are the most strongly endorsed acculturation orientations toward immigrants. Endorsement of welcoming acculturation orientations such as individualism and integrationism may reflect the meritocratic

and individualistic university organizational culture, which favors the equal treatment of individuals, regardless of race, color, or creed. Studies have shown that assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism are the least endorsed acculturation orientations among college students, though in recent years endorsement of segregationism by students has increased somewhat in both Québec and France.

Overall, undergraduates endorsed more welcoming acculturation orientations toward “valued” immigrants than toward “devalued” immigrants or national minorities. For instance, undergraduate students in Tel Aviv more strongly endorsed the individualism and integrationism orientations toward Jewish immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia than toward the devalued Israeli Arab national minority in Israel. Conversely, Jewish undergraduates more strongly endorsed the segregationism and exclusionism orientations toward Israeli Arabs than toward Jewish immigrants from Russia and Ethiopia.

Does left wing versus right wing political affiliation influence acculturation orientations toward devalued groups? In Israel, left wing Labour identifiers more strongly endorsed the individualism and integrationism orientations toward Israeli Arabs than did Likud party identifiers. Conversely, Likud Party identifiers more strongly endorsed the segregationism and exclusionism orientations toward Israeli Arabs than did Labour party identifiers. Most important, right wing Likud Party identifiers were unique in more strongly endorsing the segregationism and exclusionism orientations than the individualism and integrationism orientations toward Israeli Arabs. Political parties are created and remain popular to the degree that they offer “solutions” to the fears and aspirations of their electorate. The right wing Likud Party platform nurtures a sense of threat to the vitality and national security of the Jewish majority in Israel. Threats felt from the presence of Israeli Arabs make it particularly difficult for Likud Party sympathizers to accept any type of relationship with Israeli Arabs, and “justifies” keeping Arabs segregated and excluded from the Jewish dominant majority.

Right wing nationalist parties in other settings, such as France and Québec, also nurture feelings

of threat and cultural insecurity toward devalued immigrants as a way of maintaining mobilization in favor of their respective nationalistic causes. Right wing nationalist parties gain much of their support from host majority electorates by nurturing feelings of symbolic and realistic threats especially from the presence of “devalued” immigrants whose demographic presence is often portrayed as overwhelming and out of control.

Even though host majorities may endorse each acculturation orientation to a different degree cross-culturally, the social psychological profile of each acculturation orientation remains similar regardless of the national background of respondents. Study results obtained in Montreal, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Brussels, and Tel Aviv suggest that this is the case. Individualism and integrationism are two “live and let live” acculturation orientations the correlates of which were quite similar cross-culturally. Individualists and integrationists felt comfortable with immigrants, wanted close relations with both valued and devalued immigrants, including as best friends, and felt that immigrants in general wanted good relations with members of the host majority. Individualists and integrationists did not endorse the authoritarian or social dominance orientation and ethnocentric ideologies, and they were more likely to identify with “left of center” political parties in their respective sociopolitical settings.

Assimilationists, segregationists, and exclusionists all rejected immigrants and their culture, endorsed the social dominance orientation and authoritarian and ethnocentric ideologies, and were more likely to identify with right wing political parties. Importantly, they were more likely to feel that their ingroup identity was threatened by the presence of immigrants, especially “devalued” ones. They were also more likely to feel insecure culturally, linguistically, and economically as members of their own group, while wishing to avoid immigrants as colleagues at work, as neighbors, or as best friends. In each cultural setting, specific social psychological variables differentiated the assimilationist, segregationist, and exclusionist acculturation orientations. Taken together, these social psychological correlates of acculturation orientations attest to the construct validity of the HCAS and also support some basic premises of the IAM.



### Studies of Immigrant Acculturation Orientations

Empirical cross-cultural studies have examined acculturation orientations endorsed by immigrants and national minorities using variants of the Immigrant Acculturation Scale (IAS) developed by John Berry and his colleagues. In many cultural settings, immigrants endorse integrationism to a greater degree than assimilationism and separatism, and marginalization is rarely endorsed. Exceptions to these findings are Turks in Germany, lower economic status Turks in Canada, and some indigenous minorities in various parts of the world, who endorse separatism more than integrationism. Overall, feelings of being the victim of prejudice and discrimination are the most important correlates of separatism and marginalization. While newly established immigrants may at first adopt integrationism or assimilationism, sustained experience of discrimination and exclusion in the host society may shift acculturation orientations to separatism or marginalization. Acculturation orientations can also be endorsed differently in the public and private domains. In the public domain, immigrants may endorse linguistic integration through bilingualism and assimilation at work, whereas in the private domain they may practice separatism through religiously and ethnically endogamous marriages.

Acculturative stress may be experienced as a result of intercultural contacts that highlight differences between the heritage culture of immigrants and that of the dominant host majority. This is more likely to occur when the “cultural distance” between the heritage culture of immigrants and that of the receiving society is large. As proposed by Anthony Richmond, immigrants may suffer more acculturative stress when their migration was involuntary (*reactive emigration*) than in cases where individuals voluntarily chose to emigrate to a country to which they were attracted (*proactive emigration*). For most immigrants, acculturative stress is related to the experience of culture loss and anxieties about how to adapt to the country of settlement.

While higher education is associated with less acculturative stress, immigrants who suffer an important drop in occupational status can suffer much acculturative stress, especially when their

foreign diplomas are not recognized in the country of settlement. Immigrant women who seek more egalitarian sex roles in their country of settlement are more likely to experience acculturative stress than men, especially when sex roles in the country of origin were quite traditional. While acculturative stress is more likely to be experienced by immigrants who settle at an older age in their country of adoption, personality factors such as introversion or extraversion, internal or external locus of control, and degree of self-efficacy have also been linked to acculturative stress.

As developed by Colleen Ward, ethnocultural identity conflict (EIC) stems from identity conflict occurring when the multiple social identities developed as a result of emigration become incompatible with each other. EIC can be prevalent for immigrant youth, who experience difficulties in harmonizing the traditional values of their parents with the modern values of their host majority age peers. Infrequent contact with host majority peers, interethnic tensions, threats to cultural continuity, and perceived discrimination are aggravating factors that contribute to EIC. Furthermore, immigrants who endorse the separation, assimilation, and marginalization acculturation orientations are more likely to experience EIC than those who endorse integrationism.

Despite the pressures of acculturative stress and ethnocultural identity conflict, immigrants can be quite resilient in their psychological and sociological adaptation to their country of adoption. While psychological adaptation refers to good mental health and a sense of well-being, sociocultural adaptation involves a set of social competencies that enable minority individuals to live successfully in their intercultural world. Studies with immigrants showed that the relationship between psychological and sociocultural adaptations increased over time and tended to be stronger in cases where the cultural distance between the immigrant culture and that of the host community was small rather than large. The complementary link between psychological and sociocultural adaptation was stronger for immigrants with the integrationism and assimilationism orientations than for those with the separation and marginalization acculturation orientations.

A recent comparative study of immigrant youth from 13 countries showed that better psychological

and sociocultural adaptation was related to endorsement of the integrationism orientation but not very related to endorsement of assimilationism and separatism, and least related to the marginalization acculturation orientation. Results also showed that perceived discrimination against ingroup members was the single strongest predictor of poor psychological and sociocultural adaptation. The 13-country study showed that immigrant youth who endorsed the integration orientation experienced less ethno-cultural identity conflict, less anxiety and depression, and fewer psychosomatic symptoms than their peers who endorsed assimilationism, separatism, and especially the marginalization acculturation orientation. Immigrant endorsement of integrationism was also shown to be positively correlated with the traits of extraversion, emotional stability, sociability, agreeableness, sensation seeking, and open-mindedness. In addition, endorsement of integrationism was found to be related to higher self-esteem, which in turn was a strong predictor of immigrant adaptation. Immigrant youth who endorsed integrationism were those whose social identification was dual, who were more likely to be bilingual, and who had both ingroup and outgroup peer contacts. Conversely, separatism was positively correlated with neuroticism, anxiety, impulsivity, sensation seeking, and aggressiveness, and negatively correlated with extraversion, sociability, self-assurance, and self-esteem.

Studies found that assimilationism is positively related to task-coping and emotion-coping orientations, and thus contributes to the reduction of emotional distress associated with stressful situations. Personality traits that were associated with assimilationism were agreeableness and sociability, as well as neuroticism, anxiety, closed-mindedness, and field dependence. In immigrants' quest to endorse integrationism and assimilationism, they may also adopt the less desirable habits and customs of the host majority. For instance, one study showed that immigrant youth who endorsed integration and assimilation were at higher risk than separatists of adopting health-compromising behavior such as smoking and drinking alcohol. In line with the IAM, immigrants who are confronted by mainly segregationist and exclusionist host majority members may reduce acculturative stress and avoid conflictual

relational outcomes by adopting separatism rather than integrationism or assimilationism.

Finally, marginalization is the acculturation orientation associated with the least desirable psychological and sociocultural correlates. Marginalization is associated with neuroticism, anxiety, closed-mindedness, and unsociability. Similarly, a link has been found between marginality, alienation, anomie, deviance, and psychosomatic stress. Being a victim of discrimination was found to be the single most important predictor of marginalization.

### Conclusion

Much fundamental and applied research remains to be done to do justice to the complexity and subtlety of immigrant–host community relations in multi-ethnic settings. In line with the interactive acculturation model (IAM), more empirical studies are needed to explore how concordant and discordant acculturation orientations between immigrant and host communities can result in harmonious, problematic, or conflictual relational outcomes, not only in regard to intercultural communication and prejudicial attitudes but also in behavioral outcomes such as prosocial behaviors, employment equity, discrimination, intergroup conflicts, and hate crimes.

Emerging research is currently exploring the acculturation orientations of immigrant communities toward coexisting, competing, or rival “other” immigrant communities, either long established following earlier immigration cycles or more recently arrived as a result of current immigration waves. Likewise, in culturally divided societies, acculturation orientations endorsed by national minorities toward the dominant majority are being explored. More acculturation research should be conducted with sojourners, refugees, and asylum seekers as they adapt to increasingly multi-ethnic and multilingual receiving societies. Multiple identity research dealing with the interplay of subnational, national, supranational, and transnational identities across the world also calls for more complex elaborations of current acculturation models. The very premise of considering host societies as being composed of single or dual host communities may already be an oversimplification, both conceptually and empirically. Host societies of the future may well be constituted of multiple host

communities, all of which are ethnic and linguistic minorities sharing two or more official national languages but no obvious core founding majority.

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*See also* Culture; Desegregation; Discrimination; Diversity; Immigration

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## ATTACHMENT THEORY

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*Attachment theory* was developed by John Bowlby to explain personality and social development from the cradle to the grave. The theory focuses on the experience, expression, and regulation of emotions at both normative (species-typical) and individual difference (person-specific) levels of analysis. This focus is not surprising given how important emotions and affect regulation are to interpersonal functioning in all types of close relationships.

Bowlby believed that the attachment system serves two primary functions: (1) to protect vulnerable individuals from potential threats or harm and (2) to regulate negative affect following threatening or harmful events. The normative component of attachment theory specifies the stimuli and contexts that normally evoke and terminate different kinds of emotions, as well as the sequence of emotions usually experienced following certain relational events. The individual difference component addresses how an individual's personal history of receiving care and support from attachment figures

shapes the goals, working models (that is the interpersonal attitudes, expectancies, and cognitive schemas), and coping strategies that she or he uses when emotion-eliciting events happen in relationships. This entry examines Bowlby's original ideas and the evolution of his theory among later researchers.

### Normative Features of Attachment Theory

Bowlby's fascination with the emotional ties that bind humans to one another began with an astute observation. In all human cultures and indeed primate species, young and vulnerable infants display a specific sequence of reactions following separation from their stronger, older, and wiser caregivers. Immediately following separation, infants protest vehemently, typically crying, screaming, or throwing temper tantrums as they search for their caregivers. Bowlby believed that vigorous protest during the early phases of caregiver absence is a good initial "strategy" to promote survival, especially in species born in a developmentally immature and very dependent state. Intense protests often draw the attention of caregivers to their infants, who would have been vulnerable to injury or predation during evolutionary history if left unattended.

If loud and persistent protests fail to get the caregiver's attention, infants enter a second stage, known as despair, during which they usually stop moving and become silent. Bowlby believed that from an evolutionary standpoint, despondency is a good second strategy to promote survival. Excessive movement could result in accident or injury, and loud protests combined with movement might draw predators. According to this logic, if protests fail to retrieve the caregiver quickly, the next best survival strategy would be to avoid actions that might increase the risk of self-inflicted harm or predation.

After a period of despair, infants who are not reunited with their caregivers enter a third and final stage—detachment. During this phase, the infant begins to resume normal activity without the caregiver, gradually learning to behave in an independent and self-reliant manner. Bowlby believed that the function of emotional detachment is to allow the formation of new emotional bonds with new caregivers. He reasoned that emotional ties

with previous caregivers must be relinquished before new bonds can fully be formed. In terms of evolution, detachment allows infants to cast off old ties and begin forming new ones with caregivers who might be able to provide the attention and resources needed for survival. Bowlby also conjectured that these normative stages and processes characterize reactions to prolonged or irrevocable separations in adult attachment-based relationships, which might also have evolutionary adaptive value in terms of maintaining, casting aside, or forming new romantic pairs.

In addition to identifying the course and functioning of these three distinct stages, Bowlby also identified several normative behaviors that infants commonly display in attachment relationships. Such hallmark behaviors include sucking, clinging, crying, smiling, and following the caregiver, all of which serve to keep the infant or child in close physical proximity to the caregiver. Bowlby also documented unique features of the caregiver and his or her interaction with the infant that are likely to promote attachment bonds. The features include the competence with which the caregiver alleviates the infant's distress, the speed of responsiveness of the caregiver to the infant, and the familiarity of the caregiver. These behaviors and features are also believed to be critical to the development of adult attachment relationships. Debra Zeifman and Cynthia Hazan, for example, have noted that most romantically attached adults repeatedly engage in hallmark attachment behaviors such as sucking, clinging, prolonged eye contact, and extensive belly-to-belly body contact. Mario Mikulincer and Phillip Shaver have documented the importance of the responsiveness of romantic partners in the formation of attachment security.

### Individual Difference Features of Attachment Theory

Attachment theorists after Bowlby have proposed that different attachment patterns (in children) and attachment styles or orientations (in adults) reflect different ways of regulating affect, particularly controlling or dampening negative affect in stressful, threatening, or overly challenging situations. Individual differences in patterns of attachment in 12- to 18-month-old children were first documented by Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues

using the Strange Situation. The Strange Situation involves a sequence of separations and reunions of caregivers (usually mothers) and their children. It assesses how children regulate negative emotions vis-à-vis their caregivers when the children are upset. Even though most children are distressed when left alone at this age, securely attached children tend to reduce their negative emotions by using their caregivers as a "secure base," and they resume other activities fairly quickly after reuniting with them in the Strange Situation. Anxious-resistant children, by comparison, remain distressed and often exhibit anger or resentment toward their caregivers during reunions episodes. Anxious-avoidant children, who display fewer overt signs of distress but usually have elevated heart rates, remain distant and emotionally detached from their caregivers during reunions, opting to calm themselves in a self-reliant manner.

During later stages of development, one of the key differences between secure and different types of insecure individuals is how their negative emotions are regulated and controlled based on their specific beliefs and expectancies about the availability of comfort and support from their attachment figures. Highly secure individuals have learned from past caregiving experiences to follow "rules" that permit distress to be acknowledged and motivate them to turn toward attachment figures as sources of comfort and support. Highly avoidant adults, in contrast, have learned to follow rules that limit the acknowledgment of distress and encourage the use of self-reliant tactics to control and reduce negative affect when it arises. Highly anxious people have learned to use rules that direct their attention toward the possible source of distress, to ruminate about it, and to worry that their attachment figures will never fully meet their persistent needs for comfort and support.

Mikulincer and Shaver have recently proposed a process model that outlines the sequence of events that underlie the emotional coping and regulation strategies of people who have different attachment histories. For example, when stress or a potential threat is perceived, highly secure individuals remain confident that their attachment figures will be attentive, responsive, and available to meet their needs and help them lower their distress and anxiety. These beliefs, in turn, should increase their

feeling of security, which should deactivate their attachment systems, allowing them to use constructive, problem-focused coping strategies that over time are likely to solve their problems.

Highly insecure individuals follow different pathways. When highly anxious individuals encounter attachment-relevant stress or threats, they are uncertain as to whether their attachment figures will be sufficiently attentive, available, and responsive to their needs. Such worries should sustain their distress and keep their attachment systems activated, resulting in the use of emotion-focused coping strategies such as hypervigilance to signs of possible relationship loss and ruminating over worst-case scenarios. When highly avoidant individuals feel stressed or threatened, they experience—but may not consciously acknowledge—anxiety at a physiological level. To keep their attachment systems deactivated, highly avoidant persons work to inhibit and control their emotional reactions by using avoidant coping strategies.

These three emotion regulation/coping strategies—problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance-focused strategies—are the source of many of the interesting cognitive and behavioral outcomes that have been discovered in people who have different attachment styles or orientations. More securely attached individuals, for instance, typically experience more intense and mild positive emotions in their romantic relationships and fewer intense and mild negative emotions, whereas the reverse is true of more insecurely attached persons. Recent longitudinal research has also documented connections between an individual's early attachment pattern (being classified as secure or insecure in the Strange Situation at age 1) in relation to his or her mother and emotions experienced and expressed with a romantic partner 20 years later. In addition, individuals classified as insecure (either anxious-avoidant or anxious-resistant) in the Strange Situation at age 1 are rated by their teachers as less socially competent during early elementary school. Lower social competence, in turn, predicts greater likelihood of being rated as insecurely attached to same-sex friends at age 16, which in turn predicts both the experience and expression of greater negative affect in relationships with romantic partners when individuals are in their early 20s. Thus, indirect but theoretically meaningful links exist between

early attachment experiences and later attachment-based relationships in early adulthood, just as Bowlby anticipated.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, attachment theory was developed to account for different patterns of personality and social development across the entire life span. According to Bowlby, understanding the experience, expression, and regulation of emotion—particularly negative emotion in response to events that activate the attachment system—is essential to understanding how and why individuals with different attachment histories behave as they do in their close relationships.

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*See also* Dyads; Families; Interdependence Theory; Levels of Analysis; Need for Belonging; Social Relations Model; Trust

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## ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN SCALE

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The *Attitudes Toward Women Scale* (AWS), developed by Janet T. Spence and Robert Helmreich in the early 1970s, measures attitudes about the rights and roles of women—relative to men—in occupational, educational, and relational domains. As an *attitude* measure focusing on gender *roles*, the AWS assesses opinions about the behavioral

patterns deemed appropriate for men and women in society. Examples include believing that men should be more responsible for supporting their families, whereas women should be more responsible for nurturing their children.

Spence and Helmreich created versions of the AWS with 55 items, 25 items, and 15 items, which were published in 1972, 1973, and 1978, respectively. Sample items on the AWS are as follows: "There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted" and "Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry." Respondents indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a four-option scale. A summary score is created across all scale items such that higher numbers indicate more egalitarian gender-role attitudes. More than three decades of research have demonstrated all three versions of the AWS to be reliable, consistently yielding the same results, and valid, accurately measuring what they are intended to measure. These properties have added to the usefulness and importance of the scale.

This entry addresses the background of the AWS, the significance of the scale, changes over time in gender-role attitudes, and new directions in their measurement.

### Background and History

When discussing the history of the AWS, it is interesting to note the relevance of the career history of its primary founder, Janet Spence. Earning her PhD in 1949, Spence was a pioneering figure for women in psychology at a time when the field was largely dominated by men. In 1984, with the American Psychological Association approaching its centennial, she served as its sixth female president, and in 1988, she served as the first member-elected president of the American Psychological Society (now the Association for Psychological Science).

In the 1970s, during the second wave of the feminist movement, Spence's research interests turned to gender. In response to research findings that people liked competent, academically successful males more than incompetent ones, Spence became interested in how people would perceive

competent *women* in stereotypically masculine domains and whether this would relate to their gender-role attitudes. Although there were gender-role attitude measures already in existence, such as Clifford Kirkpatrick's Belief-Pattern Scale for Measuring Attitudes Toward Feminism published in 1936, the items were relatively outdated. In need of a more contemporary means of measuring gender-role attitudes, Spence, along with her colleague Robert Helmreich, developed the original 55-item version of the AWS. They then discovered, to their surprise, that male and female college students, even those with more traditional gender-role attitudes, formed positive impressions of competent women with masculine interests.

### Significance of the AWS

Though neither the first, nor the most recent, measure of gender-role attitudes, the AWS is the most widely cited and used, serving as a reference point for more recently developed measures. Spence has attributed the popularity of the AWS to its emergence as one of the first gender-role attitude measures in the early 1970s, when interest in gender research was growing exponentially in psychology.

Because the AWS has been used so widely to measure gender-role attitudes, comparisons of these attitudes can be made across time (as discussed in the next section) and across cultures. Investigators have used the AWS in at least 15 different countries (including Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, India, Philippines, South Korea, and Spain) on five different continents (Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America). In addition, the AWS used on college students has also been adapted for use with adolescents and with the general population in the United States. Although findings from these studies are diverse, consistent patterns emerge. For example, women and female adolescents typically report more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than their male counterparts. Though the gender-role attitudes of parents and their children show a moderate degree of association, students consistently report more egalitarian attitudes than their parents or grandparents. In addition, more traditional gender-role attitudes are reported by those lower in socioeconomic status and those stronger in religious affiliation.

### Change Over Time

The consistent use of the AWS over a period of more than three decades has allowed gender researchers to track changes in gender-role attitudes over time. It is interesting—and no accident—that the AWS appeared at a time when women in the United States were more forcefully asserting their rights to attain the same educational and employment status as men. Given that the actual behaviors and roles of U.S. women were changing as they increasingly entered traditionally male-dominated domains, it became important to examine whether there were corresponding changes in societal attitudes about male and female gender roles. Research does, indeed, indicate that gender-role attitudes are becoming less traditional over time, especially among college students in the United States. For example, Janet Spence and Eugene Hahn compared gender-role attitudes (using the AWS) in four different student cohorts assessed at the same university in 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1992, finding the most egalitarian attitudes in 1992 and the least egalitarian attitudes in 1972. In a more comprehensive examination of changes in gender-role attitudes that included 71 different samples of U.S. college students, Jean Twenge found that gender-role attitudes became steadily more egalitarian in both male and female students over a 25-year period from 1970 to 1995. In addition, although males had more traditional attitudes than females at every point in time, these gender differences decreased in size from 1986 to 1995.

### Limitations and New Directions

Despite its usefulness, the AWS has limitations. Certain items on the scale appear outdated (e.g., “It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks”). Another criticism levied against the scale, which applies particularly to more recent samples of female college students, is that it shows *ceiling effects*. Ceiling effects occur when most or all responses on a measurement scale cluster around the high (or, in the case of the AWS, the more egalitarian) end. This lack of variability in scale responses can lead to difficulty in determining what relationships the scale shows with other variables (e.g., educational level or religiosity), an important goal of research. Despite

this problem, these ceiling effects are, in and of themselves, a phenomenon of interest. That is, because these ceiling effects are a more *recent* phenomenon occurring mostly on certain AWS items in *female* college students, researchers can gain a better understanding of change over time in gender-role attitudes and can also make interesting comparisons between male and female students.

Over time, it has become less socially acceptable in the United States to express negative attitudes toward women openly. Because the AWS is an overt measure of attitudes, it could be argued that some of the egalitarian responses on the AWS might not accurately reflect the respondents’ true beliefs. This has led to the construction of more subtle measures of gender-role attitudes, such as the Modern Sexism Scale developed by Janet Swim and her colleagues. This scale assesses the extent to which respondents deny that discrimination against women still exists, and it has been shown to be a different kind of gender-role attitude measure than more overt measures. It might seem sensible, therefore, to discontinue the use of overt measures of gender-role attitudes in favor of more subtle measures; however, this action would be short-sighted in the end. Both overt and subtle gender-role attitude measures are vital because they serve distinct research purposes. Most importantly, because the AWS has been used consistently in research since the early 1970s, its continued use will allow gender researchers to examine how gender-role attitudes change over time well into the future.

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*See also* Ambivalent Sexism; Feminism; Gender Roles; Modern Sexism; Sexism

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## ATTRIBUTION BIASES

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*Attribution* refers to the way in which people explain their own behavior and that of others. An *attribution bias* occurs when someone systematically over- or underuses the available information when explaining behavior. There is evidence that when we are making judgments about the behavior of our own group (the ingroup) and that of other groups (outgroups), we show attributional biases that favor the ingroup. Specifically, where ingroup members are concerned, we explain positive behaviors in terms of internal characteristics (e.g., personality) and negative behaviors in terms of external factors (e.g., illness). Conversely, where outgroup members are concerned, we explain positive behaviors in terms of external characteristics and negative behaviors in terms of internal characteristics. The study of attribution biases is an essential aspect of group processes and intergroup relations because these biases can fuel negative relations between opposing groups. Understanding how and why attribution biases arise, however, facilitates the development of interventions to reduce them.

This entry outlines the basic theory, discusses how it applies in individual and group contexts, and describes research showing how attribution bias may be mitigated.

### Attribution Theory

Following the pioneering work of Fritz Heider, Harold Kelley developed a theory of causal attribution based

on a scientific analysis of how people should explain, or attribute, their own or others' behavior by using the available information in a systematic manner. Heider and Kelley investigated the *locus of causality*, whether behavior is caused by something internal or external to the actor (the person performing the behavior). Later work, by Bernard Weiner, identified three further causal dimensions in terms of which attributions can be classified: *stability*, the extent to which causes are stable and permanent versus temporary and fluctuating; *controllability*, the extent to which causes can be influenced by the actor; and *globality*, whether a cause is global in nature or specific to a given situation.

Of most relevance to the issue of intergroup attribution biases is locus of causality. An *internal* attribution is any explanation that locates the cause as being internal to the person, such as personality, mood, abilities, attitudes, and effort. An *external* attribution is any explanation that locates the cause as being external to the person, such as the actions of others, the nature of the situation, social pressures, or luck. Thus, if people see a mother shouting at her child and decides that she is doing this because she is an aggressive person, they are making an internal attribution. In contrast, if they decide that she was reprimanding the child for behaving badly, they are making an external attribution.

### Individual Attribution Biases

Kelley's model is a rather idealized account of how people make causality judgments. Given that we normally have limited time and resources, we have a tendency to use heuristics, or shortcuts, when making social judgments, rather than taking into account all of the available information. As a result, researchers have observed a number of systematic biases that are made when people are assessing the causes of behavior.

There are three well-documented attribution biases. The *correspondence bias* refers to the fact that behavior is often viewed as a reflection of an actor's corresponding internal disposition even when it was actually caused by situational factors. The *actor-observer bias* arises when we attribute other people's behavior to internal causes and our own behavior to external causes. Both of these effects can be explained by perceptual salience.



The people being observed are the most salient aspect of the situation, as they are actually performing the action—they and their behavior appear to go together, so an internal attribution is made. In contrast, when making self-attributions, we are focused outward and the situation is salient, and thus we attribute causality for our behavior to external factors.

The *self-serving attribution bias* refers to our tendency to make internal attributions for our successes and external attributions for our failures. If students excel in an exam, for example, they are likely to think this is because they are very intelligent, but if they fail, they may attribute this to the poor quality of their teacher. In contrast to the *perceptual* processes underlying correspondence and actor–observer biases, the self-serving attribution bias has a *motivational* basis. We are motivated to view ourselves in a positive light, to have high self-esteem. Attributing success to internal causes boosts our feelings of self-worth, whereas attributing our failures to external causes protects us from feeling bad when we do not do well. Together, these processes enable us to maintain and enhance our self-esteem. Extending these findings, research has shown that as well as making attributions that favor the self, we are also motivated to make attributions that favor *groups* to which we belong over groups to which we do not.

### Intergroup Attribution Biases

*Intergroup* attribution refers to the ways in which members of different social groups explain the behavior of members of their own and other social groups. A person attributes the behavior of another person not simply to individual characteristics, but also to characteristics associated with the group to which the other person belongs. Moreover, the group membership of the perceiver, or attributor, can also affect the intergroup attribution process.

Social psychologists have investigated how we make attributions in an intergroup context. Hindus (a minority group) and Muslims (a majority group) in Bangladesh read scenarios about an individual from either their ethnoreligious group or the other group, and they were instructed to imagine that this person had behaved in either a positive or a negative way toward them (e.g., a passerby either

helped or failed to help the participant when he or she had fallen off a bike). Among Muslim participants, positive behavior of a Muslim (an ingroup member) and negative behavior of a Hindu (an outgroup member) tended to be attributed to causes rated as internal, stable, uncontrollable by others, and global. In contrast, positive behavior of a Hindu and negative behavior of a Muslim were typically attributed to causes rated as external, unstable, controllable by others, and specific. Notably, Hindu participants showed considerably less intergroup bias in attributions, suggesting that these biases are stronger among majority groups than minority groups.

Research has also considered whether there are biases in attributions made for the historical actions of entire outgroups. (Non-German) Jewish and (non-Jewish) German participants were asked why they thought Germans mistreated Jewish people during the Second World War. Jewish participants were more likely to attribute the behavior of the Germans to internal characteristics such as German aggression than were German participants. In a further study, Dutch participants were asked to make internal or external attributions for behavior in two historical contexts: Dutch behavior toward Indonesians during the colonization period (negative ingroup behavior) and German behavior toward the Dutch during the Second World War (negative outgroup behavior). Participants were more likely to make internal attributions about negative outgroup behavior than negative ingroup behavior, and more likely to make external attributions about negative ingroup behavior than negative outgroup behavior.

Finally, there is evidence for *linguistic* intergroup attribution biases. People tend to use relatively abstract terms to describe the negative behavior of an outgroup member and the positive behavior of an ingroup member, because this implies that the behavior is generalized to the personality of the actor. In contrast, people use relatively concrete terms to describe the negative behavior of an ingroup member and the positive behavior of an outgroup member because this implies that the behavior is specific to a particular context.

To summarize, in an intergroup context, we tend to make attributions regarding locus of causality that favor the ingroup over the outgroup.

This is a form of self-serving attribution bias, but instead of enabling us to view ourselves in a positive light compared to other individuals, it enables us to view the groups to which we belong positively compared to other groups. Specifically, we tend to explain the positive behavior of ingroup members in terms of internal characteristics but the positive behavior of outgroup members in terms of external characteristics. In contrast, we tend to explain the negative behavior of ingroup members in terms of external characteristics, but the negative behavior of outgroup members in terms of internal characteristics. We also have also a tendency to make biased intergroup attributions based on linguistics, globality, stability, and controllability.

So why do we make these intergroup attribution biases? According to social identity theory, we tend to favor our own group over other groups to maintain a positive perception of the ingroup and therefore maintain a high level of self-esteem. We make intergroup attribution biases to ensure that our group is perceived in a positive light compared to other groups. Three findings support this social identity explanation. First, making group membership salient prior to completing an intergroup attribution task increases the extent to which participants show intergroup attribution biases. Second, intergroup attribution biases are stronger among participants who highly identify with their ingroup. Third, it has been demonstrated that making internal attributions about ingroup members and making global attributions about the negative behavior of outgroup members predicts higher self-esteem.

### Reducing Intergroup Attribution Biases

According to social identity theory, making our group membership salient increases intergroup bias, as we are motivated to maintain a positive perception of our own group relative to other groups. To reduce attributional bias, it is therefore necessary to change the nature of categorization. One way of doing this is *cross-categorization*, which involves crossing a dichotomous categorization with a second categorization. In the case of Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh, for example, it is possible to introduce a second categorization, the distinction between Bangladeshi and Indian

nationality. This cross-categorization creates four groups. For a Bangladeshi Muslim, the double ingroup refers to those who share both group memberships (other Bangladeshi Muslims), the partial ingroups are those who share one group membership (Bangladeshi Hindus and Indian Muslims), and the double outgroup refers to those who share neither group membership (Indian Hindus). People tend to favor double ingroup members and show the greatest discrimination against the double outgroup. Intergroup bias against partial ingroup members, however, is reduced compared to the double outgroup. Thus, seeing an outgroup member as being an ingroup member on a second dimension has benefits for intergroup relations. Research on intergroup attribution biases mirrors these findings. Bangladeshi Muslim study participants made the most positive attributions about a Bangladeshi Muslim protagonist and the most negative attributions about an Indian Hindu protagonist. Attributions made about Bangladeshi Hindus and Indian Muslims were, however, significantly more positive than those made about Indian Hindus.

In sum, intergroup attributional biases arise because of our motivation to maintain a positive social identity, and these biases contribute to the maintenance and exacerbation of conflict between groups. Research has shown, however, that changing our perceptions of intergroup categories through cross-categorization can lead to reductions in intergroup attribution biases. This research therefore makes an important contribution to our understanding of how intergroup relations can be improved.

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*See also* Cross-Categorization; Discrimination; Social Identity Theory

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## AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

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Why would a progressive society line up behind a ruler who invades other nations unprovoked? What would lead ordinary people to carry out orders that risked their nation's future in order to commit genocide? Nazi Germany posed such questions to many social scientists. *Authoritarian personality theory* (APT), based in psychodynamic theory, was developed to explain these behaviors and their psychological underpinnings. Studies based on APT have shown that prejudice is related to the outlook of the people who hold such views rather than to characteristics of the groups they disdain. Thus the social significance, testable hypotheses, and intellectual ambition of APT has drawn much attention and criticism and inspired a wide variety of new research. In addition, the cross-culturally robust association of authoritarianism with prejudice, stereotyping, political attitudes and behavior, and social and political values continues to inspire research in personality and social psychology, political science, sociology, and political psychology. This entry examines the concept, supporting evidence, criticisms, and responses to these critiques.

### Historical and Theoretical Context

During World War II, scholars Theodor Adorno and Elsa Frenkel-Brunswik, who were German refugees, joined American psychologists Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford at the University of California, Berkeley. The group was given funding from the American Jewish Committee to research the psychological roots of anti-Semitism. However, their study became substantially broader, representing the intellectual ambition to solve major societal problems by understanding the interplay of human development, psychology, and societies. Their theorizing incorporated two predominant schools of thought: psychodynamics, and culture and personality, and it addressed relations within families, between groups, and between leaders and their societies. Participants in this research included professional men and women,

homemakers, longshoremen, civic volunteers, veterans, psychiatric patients, and prisoners, among others, from the West Coast of the United States. For this reason, the research taught Americans much about their own authoritarianism and prejudice.

The Frankfurt/Berkeley school, as the group was called, viewed following hateful authorities as being at least as problematic as hateful leadership itself, for without assent and cooperation, what power does a leader have? Their approach was thus one of the first to prioritize understanding mass political psychology. According to the authoritarian personality theory (APT) that Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford published in *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950, three elements are necessary to produce an authoritarian personality: (1) being raised in a culture that vilifies certain groups (e.g., European anti-Semitism and U.S. racism), (2) needing to be loved by one's parents, and (3) having parents who are punitive and unaffectionate.

The psychodynamic process states that when parents scorn their children, children adopt the prejudices of their parents and society in an attempt to become pleasing to their parents. As children try to gain moral acceptability by obeying authorities who are prejudiced, they adopt the predilections for conformity, blind submissiveness to authority, and intolerance of difference. This makes them especially vulnerable to messages from authorities that denigrate the weak and the deviant. In expressing such prejudices, children can view themselves as acceptable. Hence, the combination of psychological motivations, the cultural context of prejudicial ideologies, and particular family practices account for how cultures transmit prejudice across generations.

### Evidence of the Authoritarian Personality

Interview studies of adults by Elsa Frenkel-Brunswik attempted to explicate these psychodynamic processes. Such evidence is now met with skepticism because of concerns about retrospective memory and interviewer biases. However, the existence of an authoritarian "personality," or syndrome of traits, including conformity, submission, and intolerance, was demonstrated with standard personality techniques, including interviews, projective tests, and extensive scale development.

Adorno and his colleagues' research, especially that of Daniel Levinson, showed that people differ reliably from one another in the general tendency to be prejudiced. That is, those scoring high on the F-scale (fascism scale) also tended to score high on anti-Semitism scales; on generalized ethnocentrism scales that tap prejudice against "Negroes," Mexicans, Japanese, "Okies," immigrants, and foreigners; and on scales measuring patriotism and political-economic conservatism. In fact, prejudiced individuals are likely to endorse logically contradictory statements, so long as the statements indicate culturally normed disdain for members of excluded groups. For example, Adorno and his colleagues found that authoritarians are likely to endorse both of these anti-Semitism scale statements: "Districts containing many Jews always seem to be smelly, dirty, shabby, and unattractive" and "Jews seem to prefer the most luxurious, extravagant, and sensual way of living." Such findings suggest that authoritarianism does not stem from rational beliefs, but rather from motivation or cognitive style.

Prejudiced people often feel that their perceptions and feelings about denigrated groups stem from qualities of denigrated groups themselves. But research on authoritarianism has documented that people prejudiced against one group tend to be prejudiced against other groups who are disrespected in their societies. This finding provides a completely different interpretation of the cause of prejudice than that of naïve psychology. Rather than prejudice being due to properties of the vilified group, such as their immorality or crudeness, it means that prejudice stems from the psychological outlook of the perceiver. This finding therefore provides psychology with an agenda to research what, exactly, that outlook is and how it works.

### Criticisms of Authoritarian Personality Theory

In fact, the finding that certain individuals are more robustly prejudiced, conservative, insecure, and punitive than others had been empirically documented early in the 20th century by pro-Nazi researchers (e.g., Jaensch) and anti-Nazi (e.g., Lenski) researchers in Europe and the United States. APT attracted both more attention and more criticism than that research. This may be because both world wars showed the costs of intergroup hate,

but also because of APT's moral and political implications and of developments in psychological theorizing and research methods.

One major criticism of APT concerns the validity of its personality measures. Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda, among others, have noted that the scales developed by Adorno and his colleagues are not balanced with equal numbers of protrait and contrait items. That is, the scales contain only items with which someone highly authoritarian would agree. For this reason, it is unclear whether the scales simply measure authoritarianism as *response acquiescence* (the tendency to simply agree with statements), or whether the contents of the scales matter. Further, this measurement problem can inflate correlations among different scales because if some participants are "yay-sayers" and others are "nay-sayers," that would produce positive correlations among different scales regardless of item content.

Another kind of criticism is both political and theoretical. People who view patriotism and conservatism as prosocial and moral may be discomfited by the finding that patriotism and conservatism correlate strongly with forms of prejudice the West came to disapprove of following the Nazi genocide, such as anti-Semitism and anti-Black racism. Scholars including Edward Shils and Milton Rokeach think that extreme intolerance could be exhibited on both ends of the political spectrum, and they believe that communists, for example, should score high on intolerance. In fact, Adorno and his colleagues had postulated the same idea, but they found no empirical evidence for left wing authoritarianism. In 1960, Milton Rokeach proposed the D-scale (dogmatism scale) as an alternative to the F-scale in an attempt to capture intolerance among both right and left wingers, but found comparable empirical results for the F-scale and the D-scale.

Another criticism of APT is that there is very little evidence for the psychodynamic processes it posits. In fact, there is evidence against the hypothesis that punitive parents produce authoritarian children. From the 1950s on, as psychology came to insist on empirical evidence and experimentation and reject the unobservable unconscious processes associated with Freudianism, more psychologists were ready to disregard Elsa Frenkel-Brunswick's psychodynamic research and Theodor Adorno's rejection of positivism.

Finally, the research focus of APT on individual differences produces a logical contradiction: How can normative prejudice in a society be explained by features that only some people in that society have? Tom Pettigrew's 1958 dissertation examined racism among South African and American Whites and showed that authoritarianism does little to explain racist behavior when racism is normalized in a culture. This criticism led many social psychologists to reject consideration of individual differences in prejudice. It can also be said that APT does not answer important questions about the culture of prejudice, such as why particular groups get vilified in the first place, why prejudice against the same group rises and falls, nor how prejudicial ideologies may change or spread outside of socialization, although answers to such questions are still being generated. Despite including some progressive theorizing about gender, *The Authoritarian Personality* shares a cultural shortcoming with its contemporaries: It did not develop a sexism scale as an aspect of group prejudice.

### Responses to Criticisms

After decades of neglect, the major questions raised by authoritarian research concerning the normativity of prejudice, how psychological motives lead to prejudice, how prejudice is socialized, and the relation of culture to intergroup relations have been reconsidered by a wide variety of scholars.

#### *Scale Redevelopment*

Canadian psychologist Bob Altemeyer reviewed research on authoritarianism and determined that the most central elements of the authoritarian syndrome were authoritarian submission, conventionalism, and authoritarian aggression. He developed balanced scales called Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) that include all three concepts and are reliable, valid, and widely used around the world. RWA corresponds to the public's political behavior, including voting in many societies. The scales have distinguished among the voting records of North American legislators, evidence that connects authoritarianism with national leadership.

#### *Scale Balance and Left Wing Authoritarianism*

Altemeyer also tried to develop a left wing authoritarian measure, but in convenience samples

it does not show parallel patterns with RWA. Reviews by William Stone corroborate the fact that authoritarianism and the tendency to be prejudiced against groups characterizes conservatives more than liberals. In the Soviet Union and satellite nations, Walter Stephan and his colleagues have shown that those higher on RWA were more likely to endorse communism and the Communist Party, consistent with the idea that authoritarians conform to the norms promoted by authorities in their societies. Recently, Alain van Hiel and his colleagues found that extreme left wing activists in Western Europe have very high scores on a new left wing authoritarianism scale, and this correlates with liberal economic views.

#### *Psychodynamics and Personality Development*

Consistent with the psychodynamic view, but also with other socialization and genetic development theories, Altemeyer showed that people within families have similar levels of authoritarianism. More recently, Christopher Weber and Christopher Federico have shown that RWA corresponds with anxious attachment. In terms of general personality, studies in several countries show that RWA correlates with being less open to experience and more conscientious. Thus, although APT appears wrong in the particulars concerning socialization, authoritarianism does correspond with people's orientations toward close relationships and their temperament.

#### *Other Conceptualizations*

Rather than accept the description of authoritarianism as a prejudice *syndrome* or as essentially *political*, theorists have sought to identify its core psychology by emphasizing either a socioemotional or cognitive orientation. Those with a socioemotional orientation have conceived of authoritarianism as whether an individual is tough-minded or tender-minded (Ted Goertzel, Hans Eysenck), is easily threatened (David Winter, Bill Petersen), is uncomfortable and unsuccessful with personal autonomy (Detlef Oesterreich), sees conformity as the means to social order (Stanley Feldman), or perceives the world to be a dangerous place (John Duckitt). The psychological habits that may underlie generalized conservatism and prejudice may include fear of uncertainty (Michael

Hogg), intolerance of ambiguity (Glenn Wilson), cognitive rigidity (Richard Christie), need for cognitive closure (Arie Kruglanski), and closed-mindedness (Milton Rokeach). John Duckitt's conception of authoritarianism also addresses how different elements of cultural context may be important in the development of authoritarianism. Duckitt argues that in more collectivist societies, conformity is emphasized, and along with the presumption that the world is threatening, this context should especially lead to the development of authoritarianism. Correlational models in several countries are consistent with this theory. Finally, Phil Tetlock and Jim Sidanius have each developed approaches to political cognition to account for extremes on both the right and the left.

### Authoritarianism and Culture

Authoritarianism in individuals correlates robustly across nations with their right wing political affiliation and voting, prejudice against women, gays, immigrants, foreigners, and subordinated ethnic and religious groups. Cultures can also be considered more or less authoritarian, and can become more or less authoritarian depending on how insecure they are. For example, cultures that privilege conformity and hierarchicality are considered by some to be more authoritarian, and periods of war may produce more authoritarian behavior, as seen in content analyses of popular culture, endorsement of leaders, and voting patterns. Authoritarianism may be conducive to certain aspects of group living, such as cooperation and ingroup identification.

*Felicia Pratto*

*See also* Conservatism; Dogmatism; Need for Closure; Prejudice; Right Wing Authoritarianism

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## AVERSIVE RACISM

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*Aversive racism* is a form of bias that is not overtly expressed but may reflect the attitudes of a substantial portion of people in societies that have strong egalitarian traditions and norms. Much of the research on aversive racism has focused on the orientation of Whites toward Blacks in the United States, but similar attitudes have been found among members of dominant groups in other countries with strong contemporary egalitarian values but discriminatory histories or policies. In contrast to the traditional form of racism, which is expressed openly and directly, aversive racism operates in subtle and indirect ways. For example, the negative feelings that aversive racists have toward Blacks do not manifest themselves in open hostility or hatred. Instead, aversive racists' reactions may involve discomfort, anxiety, and/or fear. That is, they find Blacks "aversive," while at the same time rejecting any suggestion that they might be prejudiced. Despite its subtle expression, aversive racism has consequences that are as significant and pernicious (e.g., the restriction of minorities' economic opportunities) as those of the traditional, overt form. This entry provides a fuller description of aversive racism and its expressions, then looks at strategies for combating it.

### Nature of the Attitudes

A critical aspect of the aversive racism framework is the conflict between aversive racists' denial of personal prejudice and underlying unconscious negative feelings toward and beliefs about particular minority groups. For example, because of current cultural values in the United States, most Whites have strong convictions concerning fairness,

justice, and racial equality; however, because of a range of normal cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural processes that promote intergroup biases, most Whites also have some negative feelings toward or beliefs about Blacks. They may be unaware of these feelings or try to deny them to retain a self-image as unprejudiced, but when engaged in social categorization, for example, they will find that their cultural stereotypes are spontaneously activated.

### *Identifying Aversive Attitudes*

Generally, aversive racists may be identified by a constellation of characteristic responses to racial issues and interracial situations. First, aversive racists, in contrast to old-fashioned racists, endorse fair and just treatment of all groups. Second, despite their conscious good intentions, aversive racists unconsciously harbor feelings of uneasiness toward those of other races (e.g., Blacks) and thus try to avoid interracial interaction. Third, when interracial interaction is unavoidable, aversive racists experience anxiety and discomfort, and consequently they try to disengage from the interaction as quickly as possible. Fourth, because part of the discomfort that aversive racists experience is due to a concern about acting inappropriately and appearing prejudiced to themselves and others, aversive racists strictly adhere to established rules and codes of behavior in interracial situations that they cannot avoid. Finally, their feelings will get expressed, but in subtle, unintentional, rationalizable ways that disadvantage minorities or unfairly benefit the majority group. Nevertheless, in terms of conscious intent, aversive racists intend not to discriminate against people of color—and they behave accordingly when it is possible for them to monitor the appropriateness of their behavior.

Recent research in social cognition has yielded new techniques—such as the Implicit Association Test, which uses response times to pairs of stimuli—for tapping the “implicit” stereotypic or evaluative (e.g., good–bad) associations that people have toward other groups, but possibly without full awareness. These techniques are very useful for distinguishing between aversive racists, who endorse egalitarian views and unprejudiced ideologies but harbor implicit racial biases, and unprejudiced people, who also endorse egalitarian values

but do not have significant implicit prejudice or stereotypes. Consistent with the aversive racism framework, whereas the majority of Whites in the United States appear “nonprejudiced” on self-report (explicit) measures of prejudice, a very large proportion of Whites also demonstrate implicit racial biases. Overall, studies have found that Whites’ generally negative implicit attitudes and stereotypes are largely dissociated from their typically more positive overt expressions of their attitudes and beliefs about Blacks.

The aversive racism framework also helps to identify when discrimination against Blacks and other minority groups will or will not occur. Whereas old-fashioned racists exhibit a direct and overt pattern of discrimination, aversive racists’ actions may appear more variable and inconsistent. Sometimes they discriminate (manifesting their negative feelings), and sometimes they do not (reflecting their egalitarian beliefs). Nevertheless, their discriminatory behavior is predictable.

### *Predicting Aversive Behavior*

Because aversive racists consciously recognize and endorse egalitarian values and because they truly aspire to be unprejudiced, they will *not* act inappropriately in situations with strong social norms when discrimination would be obvious to others and to themselves. Specifically, studies have shown that when they are presented with a situation in which the normatively appropriate response is clear, in which right and wrong are clearly defined, aversive racists will not discriminate against Blacks. In these contexts, aversive racists will be especially motivated to avoid feelings, beliefs, and behaviors that could be associated with racist intent. Wrongdoing of this type would directly threaten their image of themselves as nonprejudiced.

Aversive racists still possess unconscious negative feelings and beliefs, however, which will eventually be expressed in subtle, indirect, and rationalizable ways. For instance, discrimination will occur in situations in which the normative structure is weak, the guidelines for appropriate behavior are vague, or the basis for social judgment is ambiguous. In addition, discrimination will occur when an aversive racist can justify or rationalize a negative response on the basis of some factor other

than race. Studies show that under these circumstances, White aversive racists may engage in behaviors that ultimately harm Blacks, but in ways that allow the racists to maintain their self-image as unprejudiced and that insulate them from recognizing that their behavior is not color-blind.

Evidence in support of the aversive racism framework comes from a range of paradigms. For instance, White bystanders who are the only witnesses to an emergency (and thus are fully responsible for helping) are just as likely to help a Black victim as a White victim. However, when White bystanders believe that others also witness the emergency (distributing the responsibility for helping), they are less likely to help a Black victim than a White victim. In personnel or college admission selection decisions, Whites do not discriminate on the basis of race when candidates have very strong or weak qualifications. Nevertheless, they do discriminate against Blacks when the candidates have mixed qualifications. In these circumstances, aversive racists weigh the positive qualities of White applicants and the negative qualities of Black applicants more heavily in their evaluations, which provide justification for their decisions.

Analogously, aversive racists have more difficulty discounting incriminating evidence that is declared inadmissible when evaluating the guilt or innocence of Black relative to White defendants in studies of court decisions. In interracial interactions, Whites' overt behaviors (e.g., verbal behavior) primarily reflect their expressed, explicit racial attitudes, whereas their more spontaneous and less controllable behaviors (e.g., their nonverbal behaviors) are related to their implicit, generally unconscious attitudes.

### Combating Aversive Racism

Traditional prejudice-reduction techniques have been concerned with changing conscious attitudes—old-fashioned racism—and obvious expressions of bias. Attempts to reduce this direct, traditional form of racial prejudice have typically involved educational strategies to enhance knowledge and appreciation of other groups (e.g., multicultural education programs), emphasize norms that prejudice is wrong, and involve direct (e.g., mass media appeals) or indirect (dissonance reduction) attitude change techniques. However, because aversive racism is pervasive, subtle, and complex, the traditional techniques for eliminating

bias that focus on the immorality of prejudice and illegality of discrimination are not effective for combating it. Aversive racists recognize that prejudice is bad, but they may not recognize that *they* are prejudiced.

Nevertheless, aversive racism can be addressed with techniques aimed at its roots at both the individual and collective levels. At the individual level, strategies to combat aversive racism can be directed at unconscious attitudes. For example, extensive training to create new, counterstereotypical associations with social categories (e.g., Blacks) can inhibit the unconscious activation of stereotypes, an element of aversive racists' negative attitudes. In addition, aversive racists' conscious attitudes, which are already favorable, can be instrumental in motivating change. Allowing aversive racists to become aware, in a non-threatening way, of their unconscious negative attitudes, feelings, and beliefs can stimulate self-regulatory processes. Such processes not only elicit immediate deliberative responses reaffirming conscious unprejudiced orientations (such as increased support for policies that benefit minority groups), but also produce, with sufficient time and experience, reductions in implicit negative beliefs and attitudes.

At the intergroup level, interventions may be targeted at processes that support aversive racism, such as ingroup favoritism. One approach, represented by the *common ingroup identity model*, generally proposes that if members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves more as an alternative single, superordinate group rather than as two separate groups, attitudes toward former outgroup members will become more positive through processes involving pro-ingroup bias. Thus, changing the basis of categorization from race to an alternative dimension can alter who is grouped as "us" and who is grouped as "them," undermining a contributing force for contemporary forms of racism, such as aversive racism.

For instance, Black interviewers are more likely to obtain the cooperation of White respondents when they emphasize their common group membership (such as shared university identity, as indicated by insignia on their clothes) than when they do not. Intergroup interaction within the guidelines of the contact hypothesis (i.e., the idea that contact between groups improves intergroup relations) and antibias interventions with elementary schoolchildren that emphasize increasing their circles



of inclusion can also reduce bias through the processes outlined in the common ingroup identity model.

The manifestations of aversive racism are more subtle than are those of old-fashioned racism, but aversive racism has consequences as significant as blatant bias. Even though it is expressed in indirect and rationalizable ways, it operates to systematically restrict opportunities for Black members of other traditionally underrepresented groups. In addition, because aversive racists may not be aware of their implicit negative attitudes and only discriminate against Blacks when they can justify their behavior on the basis of some factor other than race, they will commonly deny any intentional wrongdoing when confronted with evidence of their bias. To the extent that minority group members detect expressions of aversive racists' negative attitudes in subtle interaction behaviors (e.g., non-verbal behavior) and attribute the consequences of aversive racism to blatant racism, aversive racism also contributes substantially to interracial distrust, miscommunication, and conflict.

Nevertheless, aversive racism can be addressed by encouraging increased awareness of unconscious negative feelings and beliefs, emphasizing alternative forms of social categorization around common group membership, and providing appropriate intergroup experiences to support the development of alternative implicit attitudes and stereotypes and reinforce common identities.

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*See also* Common Ingroup Identity Model; Discrimination; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Modern Racism; Prejudice; Racial Ambivalence Theory; Racism; Symbolic Racism

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## BANALITY OF EVIL

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A recent morning's newspaper had a charming snapshot of a laughing soldier playing an accordion, surrounded by equally cheerful, laughing women, all clearly having a carefree time of it. But the reader soon discovers a shocking fact. It is a photo of a playful off-duty moment for the staff of the Auschwitz death camp, which came from a photo album documenting many such ordinary moments. The article's author, Neil Genzlinger, comments that "yes, the genocide was conducted by real human beings who kicked back after a day's work, flirted with the ladies, shared a joke, played with the dog" (2008, B14).

The reader's shock is much like the reaction that Hannah Arendt had observing the war crimes trial of the Nazi Adolph Eichmann. Arendt was surprised, disconcerted, deeply unsettled. She expected the man, who had sent countless Jews to their deaths, to look and act evil, to embody "evilness." But instead she was struck by his *ordinariness*, his *depthless normality*. Her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* characterized this as the "banality of evil."

The book initially generated a storm of controversy from those who thought Arendt was trivializing the evils that the Third Reich committed. Now it is read as calling attention to the fact that when acts of evil are committed by an organization, the various actors in the organization will not show all, or even many, of the personal characteristics that a single individual perpetrating similar

evil actions would manifest. They seem like rather ordinary people.

Assume that this realization is true. The disturbing consequence of this realization is that large-scale actions of evil, such as genocide, do not require large armies of evil individuals to carry them out. Instead, ordinary people can become entrained in the processes that produce the evil outcomes and thereby make those terrible outcomes possible. Two questions need to be asked here: How is it that these ordinary people become enlisted in the process, and what are the consequences for them of their enlistment? Psychological theory and research provide at least partial answers to both of these questions.

In psychology, the "banality of evil" notion has become linked to the famous experiments by Stanley Milgram, which are described in the entry "Obedience to Authority." Coincidentally, both *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and the first reports of the Milgram research appeared in 1963, so the world faced the ordinariness of the Nazi functionary Eichmann at about the time it faced the fact that, if ordered to do so, many ordinary citizens of New Haven, Connecticut, were willing to administer presumably dangerous, perhaps life-threatening, shocks to another person in a learning experiment. (The use of *presumably* here is important. Many descriptions of the Milgram experiment ignored various cues that it was, in fact, acceptable for the respondent to continue giving the shocks because the experimenter had asserted that the shocks would be painful "but cause no permanent damage.") Later, Philip Zimbardo's well-known

Stanford prison experiment (described in the entry of that name) was read as showing that undergraduate students, role-playing prison guards in a realistic simulation of a prison environment, were also willing to engage in quite cruel actions toward other students who were in the prisoner role. This added a distressing new element to the findings of the Milgram studies. In the Milgram studies, the respondents' actions were those that they were directed to take by the experimenter, who was present to see that they obeyed his orders. In contrast, the students in Zimbardo's experiment themselves designed and then independently enacted many of the cruel actions that were taken. That evil actions were within the repertoire of at least many people seemed well established.

Certainly Milgram thought so. In a letter to the sponsor of his research, Milgram wrote:

In a naïve moment some time ago, I once wondered whether in all of the United States a vicious government could find enough moral imbeciles to meet the personnel requirements of a national system of death camps, of the sort that were maintained in Germany. I am now beginning to think that the full complement could be recruited in New Haven. A substantial proportion of people do what they are told to do, irrespective of the content of the act, and without pangs of conscience, so long as they perceive that the command comes from a legitimate authority. (quoted in Blass, p. 100)

For Americans, this unpleasant conclusion has received intermittent confirmation: My Lai and Abu Ghraib are familiar names. However, many social psychologists would contest a generalization about the ease with which people could be brought to harm others. They would point to some more particular aspects of the Milgram experiments that perhaps allowed the respondent to continue to administer the shocks because those shocks were not going to do permanent harm to the person receiving them. One key to understanding the Milgram situation is this: When the learner protested and asked that the experiment be stopped, the experimenter heard this as well as the respondent, and the experimenter instructed that the experiment continue. Respondents would probably read this as telling them that the learner wasn't

really being hurt, and this sort of reassurance from a person who was assumed to have expertise about this enabled some respondents to continue. The importance of this expert reassurance was demonstrated by Milgram himself. In one condition, Milgram arranged to have the regular experimenter called out of the room while the earlier shocks in the series were given. The experimenter asked another respondent, who had been doing a record-keeping job, to take his place and continue the experiment. That person, who was actually a confederate of Milgram's, told the teacher to continue administering the shocks. At some point in the learner's protests, the typical respondent refused to continue; this experimenter did not have the expertise to provide valid assurances that continuation was safe. A further interesting response was shown by several of these respondents. The replacement experimenter stepped to the shock generator, announcing that if the respondent would not continue the process, then he would. These respondents moved to restrain the experimenter from doing so, thereby protecting the learner from harm! Suddenly a very different image of the respondents emerges. In a similar fashion, one could point to several elements of Zimbardo's study that were critical to producing the disturbing behavior of his student guards.

So it is possible to contend that the Milgram and Zimbardo studies' subjects were not displaying the sort of full-blown evil behavior that Eichmann displayed. This said, a disturbing possibility remains. Had those individuals remained in the experimental contexts over longer time periods, they might have become habituated to what they were doing, and their ethical concerns might have faded away as they adapted to their tasks. Or they might have dehumanized the victims by attaching labels such as "rodents" to them. Or they might have cast them as members of outgroups who threatened the existence of the ingroup. By means of these mechanisms, they would eventually do voluntarily and independently what they were coerced to do by the situations in which they found themselves. They might, in other words, have moved toward becoming evil-doers.

An insight can be drawn from this. The hierarchical social components of organizations can be structured in ways that bring about tremendously destructive harm to individuals. Of course, we

know that this is possible when the organization's leaders seek to bring about this harm. That is what the Nazi regime of Adolph Hitler and his collaborators has shown us. What we must now realize is that organizations can drift into harm-doing practices even without most individuals in the organizations desiring that this come about.

How this occurs is a topic that social psychologists are now studying, both experimentally and in observational studies. They begin with the understanding that people seek to discover how to conduct themselves in organizations by observing the actions of the people around them. This is a version of what social psychologists call the *situational perspective*. In the organizational instance of this perspective, people look to other, more experienced people to "see how we do things here." When they do this, how others behave may lead them ethically astray, and they may not become aware of it. Organizations can fragment tasks and parcel them out among different individuals so that no one individual is aware that the sum of the fragments produces harmful outcomes. Also, contagion phenomena can exist. Suppose others are "making their numbers" by committing actions that the new person thinks are ethically bad. But suppose that the new person also sees that these rule-bending individuals are getting bonuses and promotions from their superiors. It will be very hard for the new person to resist the temptation to bend the rules. This in turn may lead to escalating pressures in which rule bending turns to rule breaking.

*John Darley*

*See also* Conformity; Dehumanization/Infrhumanization; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Intergroup Violence; Minimal Group Effect; Obedience to Authority; Stanford Prison Experiment

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## BLACK SHEEP EFFECT

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In everyday language, a "black sheep" is a group member who is undesirable and stands out from the group in such a way as to attract disapproval from the rest of the group. In social psychology, the term *black sheep effect*, coined by José Marques, refers to a more specific phenomenon in which someone who is socially undesirable (unlikable) is liked less if he or she is a member of your group (an ingroup member) than if he or she is a member of a group to which you do not belong (an outgroup member). Conversely, someone who is socially desirable (likable) is liked more if he or she is a member of your ingroup rather than a member of an outgroup. Put another way, socially desirable ingroup targets are judged more favorably than socially desirable outgroup targets, while socially undesirable ingroup targets are judged less favorably than socially undesirable outgroup targets. Likable and unlikable ingroup members are judged more extremely than likable and unlikable outgroup members.

The black sheep effect usually emerges in association with a more favorable evaluation of the ingroup than the outgroup as a whole (*ingroup bias*). The black sheep effect is also more pronounced (a) if the person doing the judging identifies strongly with his or her ingroup, (b) if the dimension on which the target is evaluated is highly relevant to establishing an overall favorable evaluation of the ingroup in comparison to a relevant outgroup, and (c) if the situation is one in which intergroup differentiation in favor of the person's ingroup is important.

### Social Identity and Ingroup Favoritism

Explanation of the black sheep effect draws on social identity theory and self-categorization theory. One basic assumption of these theories is that, with few exceptions, when group membership is salient (when it is the psychological basis of information processing, self-conception, and behavior), people engage in ingroup-serving perceptual and judgmental biases and hold partisan intergroup attitudes. This ingroup favoritism generates ethnocentrism and leads people to prefer ingroup members and features to outgroup members and features. It is not surprising, then, that people evaluate ingroup members in general, and socially desirable ingroup members in particular, more favorably than similar outgroup members.

From this, one might suppose that overall one would favor a socially desirable or undesirable ingroup member over a socially desirable or undesirable outgroup member; after all, ingroup members should be favored over outgroup members. This is where the black sheep effect is counterintuitive and in conflict with social identity theory—as indicated above, socially undesirable ingroup members are disliked more than socially undesirable outgroup members.

Proponents of the black sheep effect believe that this conflict is only apparent. They argue that socially desirable ingroup members support the ingroup's overall positive image and thus attract positive reactions from other members of the group, whereas socially undesirable ingroup members undermine such an image and thus attract negative reactions. Rather than being in contradiction to the social identity framework, the black sheep effect corresponds to a more sophisticated form of ingroup favoritism. By derogating unlikable ingroup members, people are protecting, and thus promoting, the positive image of the ingroup as a whole.

### Subjective Group Dynamics

José Marques, Dario Paez, and Dominic Abrams have recently developed the subjective group dynamics model to explain the cognitive and motivational antecedents of the black sheep effect. This model proposes that people's reactions toward socially undesirable (or deviant) ingroup members involve two interrelated processes.

First, and as proposed by social identity theory, people attempt to establish a clear-cut difference

between ingroup and outgroup categories. In pursuit of positive differentiation of the ingroup as a whole from the outgroup, people adopt a *descriptive focus*, in which they focus on and emphasize intergroup differences and pay little attention to intragroup differences. A descriptive focus directs attention to those characteristics of a person (e.g., born in Lisbon, Portugal) that allow category assignment (e.g., this person is more likely to be Portuguese than British) rather than to characteristics that allow one to determine whether the person is likable or unlikable.

However, in some situations, there may be salient ingroup members who display behaviors that conflict with the expectations associated with a positive ingroup image—for example, dishonest members of a political party, traitors, or otherwise socially undesirable ingroup members. In this context, people adopt a *prescriptive focus*. This focus directs attention to characteristics that are imbued with value but are not associated with a particular social category (e.g., being dishonest). Thus, a prescriptive focus allows one to determine whether a person is socially desirable or undesirable but does not allow one to determine the social category to which he or she belongs (e.g., whether the person is British or Portuguese).

While adopting a prescriptive focus, people react favorably toward ingroup members whose behavior supports their conviction that the ingroup is “right” or is “better than” the outgroup. Concomitantly, people react negatively toward “deviant” ingroup members because their behavior departs from standards that sustain the perceived relative superiority of the ingroup (i.e., the ingroup's subjective validity). Outgroup members, whether socially desirable or socially undesirable, are much less relevant to the definition of the ingroup's identity, and thus they invite less extreme reactions. The black sheep effect, therefore, ensues from an internalized social influence process in which people subjectively reinforce their confidence in the ingroup by upgrading normative members and derogating deviant members in an attempt to reestablish the group's positive social identity.

### Empirical Evidence

Research has supported the above analysis. For instance, in one study it was found that Belgian

students, presented with likable or unlikable Belgian or North African target students, judged the likable Belgian targets more positively than the likable North African targets and the unlikable Belgian targets more negatively than the unlikable North African targets. Also, law students evaluated a good performance by another law student more positively than a similar performance by a philosophy student and evaluated a poor performance by a law student more negatively than a similar performance by a philosophy student.

In a similar vein, high school students evaluated likable students from their own school more positively than similar students from a rival school and evaluated unlikable students from their own school more negatively than similar students from a rival school. In addition, the black sheep effect generally co-occurred with more favorable evaluations of the ingroup than the outgroup as a whole.

Research has also shown that the black sheep effect occurs only when what defines group members' social desirability is deemed relevant for generating positive differentiation between the ingroup and outgroup. For example, if the ingroup is a soccer team, being a good athlete will matter more to its members than being a good musician. Other research has shown that participants who identify strongly with their group are more favorable toward likable and less favorable toward dislikable ingroup members than toward similar kinds of outgroup members. This is not the case with participants who either identify weakly with their group or are allowed to subjectively leave that group by disidentifying with it.

Other research directly supports tenets of the subjective group dynamics model. For example, there is evidence that people upgrade likable others and derogate unlikable others when these others are perceived as ingroup members. The effect does not occur when the targets are described as simply interpersonally similar to, or different from, the participants or are described as outgroup members. This supports the idea that the black sheep effect indeed emerges as a consequence of the perceived interdependence of self and ingroup members for the maintenance of a positive social identity.

In a similar vein, there is evidence that evaluations are particularly extreme in the case of norms that are central to and legitimize the group's existence—in comparison to outgroup members,

ingroup members who uphold such norms are particularly favorably evaluated, while those who deviate from the norms are particularly unfavorably evaluated.

*José M. Marques*

*See also* Conformity; Deviance; Group Cohesiveness; Group Socialization; Norms; Opinion Deviance; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Subjective Group Dynamics

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## BOUNDARY SPANNING

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Every group or social system has a boundary that separates it from other groups or systems and defines who is in the group and who is outside of it. *Boundary spanning* represents the actions that are taken by members of a group to manage those

boundaries, particularly interactions with outsiders. Boundary-spanning activities may be a formal part of some individuals' jobs or informally carried out by members of the group. How a group manages its boundaries has implications for other group processes and the performance of the group.

Early research on groups within organizations identified two broad functions of boundary spanning—information processing and external representation. *Information processing* involves gathering and assessing data from outside the group and providing summaries and conclusions to members of the group. *External representation* has to do with providing information to outsiders and trying to shape their perceptions of the group. More recent research has divided these broad categories into specific functions, such as *mapping* (building a model of the external environment), *filtering* (keeping troubling information from the group), and *negotiating* (developing goals and schedules). Scholars have argued that the optimal amount of boundary spanning is related to the uncertainty of environment in which the group operates and the nature of the technology it uses.

One of the important effects of boundary spanning concerns the permeability of the boundary of the group. *Permeability* refers to the ease with which information and resources can pass into and out of the group. The permeability of the group's boundary can affect the group's processes and potentially its performance. On the one hand, if a group has too few or overly restrictive interactions with outside groups, the group can become "overbounded." If this is the case, the group may become isolated and detached from the environment. This can lead to isolation, inaccurate perceptions of other groups, and ineffective internal group processes, such as "groupthink." On the other hand, if a group becomes "underbounded" by having such a porous boundary that interactions with outsiders become predominant, the group may have difficulty developing cohesiveness, establishing shared commitments, and agreeing on a common course of action.

Not surprisingly, much of the research on boundary spanning has been conducted with groups in organizations. For many such groups, such as engineering groups or product development teams, interactions with other groups are critical for successfully performing their tasks;

thus, some of the most fine-grained analyses of boundary-spanning activities have been conducted with these groups.

One comprehensive study of boundary-spanning activities in product development teams identified four categories of activities. One set of activities, termed *ambassador activities*, was directed primarily toward upper levels of the organization and focused on protecting the team from outside pressure, persuading others to support the team, and lobbying for resources. The second set of activities, labeled *task coordinator activities*, included such things as resolving product specifications, obtaining feedback on the new design, and negotiating solutions for coordination problems. The third set, described as *scout activities*, related to general scanning of the external environment as opposed to interactions aimed at addressing a particular issue. In product development groups, examples of scout activities included collecting general technical information and investigating broad market trends inside and outside the organization. The final set of activities, termed *guard activities*, represented internal activities designed to prevent information from leaving the group.

Product development teams that concentrated on ambassador and task coordinator activities and displayed relatively low levels of scout activities were most successful in completing their tasks. Groups with other profiles of activities were less successful. These results illustrate two important points about boundary spanning. First, it is not simply the amount of external interaction that contributes to successfully managing interdependencies. Second, some types of external interactions may contribute to success, while others may not. In particular, very general and unfocused interactions that continue throughout the group's life may make it difficult for the group to concentrate on the specific external interactions necessary to complete work that is highly interdependent.

Some jobs within organizations have formal boundary-spanning responsibilities. The boundaries may be between different groups within an organization or between the organization and outside entities. These types of jobs frequently involve simultaneous negotiations with both entities. A number of factors can influence the approaches boundary spanners take in dealing with their responsibilities, including the boundary spanner's



relations with his or her own group or organization (for example, how much latitude the boundary spanner is given), the relationship between the boundary spanner and the outsider (for example, the history of the interactions between the entities), and the personal characteristics of the boundary spanner (for example, his or her sensitivity to social cues and ability to adapt to different situations).

Research has shown that individuals who hold boundary-spanning positions often experience stress and dissatisfaction because of the conflicting and ambiguous demands they face. However, such positions offer benefits to individuals in terms of career advancement and the opportunity to build relationships within the organization.

*David F. Caldwell*

*See also* Group Boundaries; Group Cohesiveness; Group Performance; Groupthink; Work Teams

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## BRAINSTORMING

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*Brainstorming* is a technique for idea generation in which the focus is on generating as many ideas as possible on a topic in a noncritical fashion. The term is often used for any interaction that involves sharing of ideas, but formal brainstorming typically

follows a set of guidelines or procedures. Research on brainstorming has focused on comparing the effectiveness of group brainstorming and individual brainstorming. This has led to the development of theoretical models of the social and cognitive processes involved in group idea generation. These models have relevance for an understanding of creative processes in a wide range of groups and teams. Research has also provided much useful information for improving the practice of brainstorming in organizations.

Brainstorming provides an interesting example of the various factors that may influence group task performance. One of the major issues in studying groups has been comparing the functioning of groups to appropriate individual performance baselines to determine whether groups are beneficial or harmful for performance. This has been one of the focal issues in group brainstorming research. The research has also provided important insights for optimizing work team performance that involves the sharing of information or ideas.

Brainstorming research has three major goals. One is to discover the causes of production losses in groups. Another is to develop theoretical models of the group creative process. The third is to generate ways to enhance brainstorming in groups and overcome productivity losses. After discussing the foundations of brainstorming, this entry describes all three areas of research.

### History and Background

Brainstorming was initially popularized by Alex Osborn, an advertising executive who published several books in the 1940s and '50s on the creative process. In these books, Osborn highlighted the use of brainstorming in coming up with novel ideas. He argued that it is important for creativity that one refrain from being critical during the idea generation process. To be creative, one has to let one's ideas flow in an unrestrained manner without concern for quality. Expressing a lot of ideas no matter how wild they are increases the likelihood that good ideas will be generated. Any type of negative or evaluative feedback might kill the motivation for unbridled creativity.

Osborn also assumed that group brainstorming is effective because it allows individuals to build on the ideas of others. Osborn's various books helped

popularize brainstorming, and it is still the foundation for much of what passes as group creativity exercises or procedures. For example, IDEO corporation, a top product development company, bases its product development sessions on the principles outlined by Osborn.

Osborn's ideas were based on his own intuitions and experiences of working with groups and individuals in the advertising field. He was also well versed in the general literature on the group creative process, and many of his ideas still have merit. However, controlled studies have challenged one of his claims. He suggested that group brainstorming would be twice as effective as individual brainstorming. At first glance, this prediction seems sensible, because several individuals are likely to be able to generate more ideas than a single individual can. However, a fairer comparison involves a group of people who generate ideas together versus the same number of people who generate ideas by themselves (what is known as a *nominal group*). Research has consistently revealed that interacting groups generate fewer ideas than do nominal groups. For example, a group of four brainstormers might only generate half as many unique ideas as the total number of unique ideas generated by four individual brainstormers. The poorer performance of interacting groups in comparison to nominal groups is termed a *production loss*, because interaction is associated with a loss of productivity relative to the potential of the group members working alone.

### *Explanations for Production Losses*

A variety of factors have been implicated as responsible for productivity losses in brainstorming groups. Research by Michael Diehl, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Bernard Nijstad has supported the role of *production blocking*. These researchers propose that the major problem in group brainstorming is that only one person can speak at a time, blocking the others from sharing their ideas. While one group member is speaking, the other group members may forget their ideas, or they may become less motivated to share these ideas because of the blocking experience. Studies have examined different aspects of this blocking effect and have concluded that not being able to present ideas as they occur is a critical factor to the relatively poor performance of interacting groups.

Another factor that may be important in inhibiting performance in groups is concern about others' reactions to one's ideas, or *evaluation apprehension*. Although brainstorming rules specify that group members should not criticize each other's ideas and should withhold judgment about their quality, individuals in groups may still be concerned about the impression they make on others. People generally have a desire to make a positive impression and hence often censor what they say to maintain such an impression. This kind of behavior is another reason why group brainstorming may be less effective than individual brainstorming.

### *Social Comparison and Brainstorming*

One inevitable feature of group brainstorming is that it allows individuals to compare their rate of performance and overall quality of ideas with those of others. Several studies have highlighted some interesting consequences of this social comparison process. One result of such a process is that the performance of group members may converge in both rate and quality. That is, group members may become more similar over time in their pace of idea generation and the types of ideas they generate. Such convergence is, of course, contrary to the goal of encouraging a wide range of ideas and divergent thinking. The social comparison process can also be involved in production losses. In laboratory groups there appears to be a tendency for social comparison to lead individuals to reduce their efforts and thus lower the overall performance of the group. Another interesting result of social comparison is that group members may perceive their performance as more positive than it really is. Whereas people working alone do not have a reference point for evaluating their performance and thus may feel uncertain about the quality of their performance, people working in groups may discover that they are doing at least as well as others. This in turn may cause them to have an inflated view of their performance.

Research by Bernard Nijstad has suggested that another reason for this inflated perception of performance is the general flow of ideas in groups. In individual brainstorming there is likely to be periodic difficulty in coming up with ideas. In contrast, in groups there are fewer times when no ideas are

being generated since there are multiple potential contributors to the process. Several researchers have sought to demonstrate that group idea exchange can stimulate a higher level of creativity than just individual brainstorming. These researchers generally assume either that social-motivation factors or cognitive stimulation can overcome the inhibiting effects of group interaction.

## Models of Brainstorming

### *Social-Motivational Strategies*

Whenever group members collaborate on generating ideas, various social pressures may motivate them in their search for more creative ideas. Although, as noted above, social comparison can reduce performance, the tendency of individuals to compare their performance with that of others can also motivate them to work harder. Several studies have found that when individuals feel individually accountable or are aware of how well they are doing in comparison to other group members, there is increased motivation and increased generation of ideas. Group members can also be motivated by intergroup competition when they find out that the performance of their group is lower than that of some referent group.

An important factor in the success of groups is the extent to which they set high goals. When someone in authority sets high goals, these goals significantly increase the brainstorming performance of both groups and individuals. One practice that may also be helpful to groups is the use of trained facilitators or explicit rules that can serve as a substitute for facilitators (such as encouraging full participation and discouraging talking about non-task-relevant issues). Although it has been found that group creativity can be enhanced by various motivational factors, similar benefits accrue for individual brainstormers. No studies have found that the level of motivation in groups allows them to exceed the performance of nominal groups.

### *Cognitive Models*

The prediction that group brainstorming should be more effective than individual brainstorming derives from the notion that ideas shared in the group should stimulate group members to think of

additional ideas. This assumption underlies several cognitive models of group brainstorming. Paul Paulus and Vincent Brown have proposed a semantic network model to explain the potential benefits of brainstorming. This model assumes that concepts are stored in long-term memory and are related in a network so that some concepts are more strongly related to one another than to other concepts. Ideas that are shared and have some degree of relatedness to a concept can stimulate that concept and thus make it available for additional ideas.

Some concepts may be more accessible than others and may thus be more easily retrieved during the idea generation process. As a result, it is likely that the initial phases of idea generation will focus on these. However, once these concepts have been tapped to some extent, individuals may increase efforts to search their knowledge base, leading to exploration of somewhat less accessible concepts or categories of ideas. This cognitive model assumes that both attention to shared ideas and memory of these ideas are critical for continued generation of creative ideas in groups.

Several studies have demonstrated the importance of both of these factors in enhancing the stimulating potential of shared ideas. For example, when ideas are presented that are relatively common or typical for a topic, they are remembered better and stimulate the generation of additional ideas more than do relatively unique or atypical ideas. This model also suggests that some of the real benefits of group brainstorming may only be evident after individuals leave the group and have some time to reflect on the shared ideas. The memory of these ideas may stimulate additional ideas during such a time of solitary reflection. This type of effect is sometimes called *incubation*, since it is presumed that ideas stimulated in group interaction may not be fully realized until the individual has had time to let this stimulating effect continue throughout his or her semantic network.

Bernard Nijstad and Wolfgang Stroebe have also developed a cognitive model of brainstorming that focuses on search for ideas in associative memory (SIAM). These researchers emphasize the important role of both long-term memory and working memory—a temporary storage system where one deals with the stored material. This involves a central executive system that actively searches for cues

(the idea retrieval phase) that can then be the basis for a flow of ideas (the idea production loop). When blocking occurs in groups, this may interfere with both stages of this cognitive process.

Although it has some conceptual overlap with the Paulus and Brown model, the SIAM model makes some unique predictions. The SIAM model assumes that transitions from one idea to another within a category will be quicker than transitions from one category to another. Therefore, external stimulation should be helpful for facilitating the change to a new category but not for within-category ideation. This has been found. Also, when individuals experience failures in the search process (by having difficulty coming up with new ideas), they may become dissatisfied with the process and stop. This is less likely in groups in which individuals have fewer failures in coming up with new ideas and therefore enjoy the process and stay with it.

### Ways to Enhance Brainstorming

Based on the two cognitive models, it is not surprising that approaches to brainstorming that limit cognitive interference and maximize attention to ideas from others are most beneficial. That would explain the positive results obtained with brainwriting, which involves the exchange of ideas on pieces of paper. For example, in one study participants in groups of four sitting around a table wrote ideas on pieces of paper. Participants passed each piece of paper to the person on their right for reading and the addition of another idea. When each piece of paper contained four ideas, it was placed in the center of the table. Paul Paulus and Huei-Chuan Yang found that this procedure increased the number of ideas generated by groups by 40% compared to nominal groups of participants who wrote ideas alone. Even more striking, when group participants continued writing ideas in a subsequent solitary session, the group brainstorming experience led to 89% more ideas than the nominal experience. So instead of showing a production loss due to group brainstorming, this study demonstrated a significant production gain.

A more popular approach to overcoming the production loss of group brainstorming has been *electronic brainstorming*, which involves generating ideas by exchanging them on a computer network. The advantage of this system is that it can be

programmed to function in a variety of ways and can include voting and decision-making features. This is sometimes labeled a *group decision support system*. For example, one system provides participants with a window at the bottom of the computer screen in which to generate an idea and then send it to the pool of ideas. Another window at the top displays ideas generated by the group. These ideas are arbitrarily divided into folders, and participants are exposed to the ideas in one of these folders each time they generate an idea. Several studies have found that this kind of exchange of ideas in groups avoids the productivity loss problem. This is not difficult to explain, since there is little production blocking using this procedure—participants can type ideas as they occur. In fact, as groups increase in size, there tends to be an enhanced productivity compared to similar-size nominal groups. Most studies indicate that this enhancement occurs when group size reaches eight or more.

Although the reduction of production blocking appears to be a straightforward explanation for part of the benefit of brainwriting and electronic brainstorming, it cannot explain the production gains. However, these gains can be explained by social motivational and cognitive mechanisms. The brainwriting procedure enhances the degree of accountability and may produce a sense of competition in groups, which in turn may motivate group members to work harder and persist longer than solitary brainwriters. Electronic brainstormers are typically anonymous, so the accountability factor cannot explain their productivity. There may, however, be an increased sense of competition as group size increases with the larger number of ideas being shared in the folders.

In most of these studies, the participants were in the same room, so social facilitation may have increased the motivation level in the larger groups. It is also possible that the shared ideas in brainwriting and electronic brainstorming provide cognitive stimulation. With increased group size, there is increased exposure to novel ideas. A factor that may be important is the extent to which the procedure insures attention to the shared ideas. The brainwriting procedure encourages attention because it requires participants to monitor the ideas. In electronic brainstorming this is not necessary. Participants can ignore the shared ideas and focus only on generating their own.

When participants are encouraged to attend to others' ideas because they expect to be tested on their memory of these ideas, electronic brainstorming with only four participants leads to the generation of more ideas than nominal groups generated. This benefit is maintained in a subsequent solitary ideation session, just as in the case of brainwriting. Thus far, research has not clearly determined the relative importance of the motivational and cognitive factors in brainwriting and electronic brainstorming. It seems likely that both factors contribute to their benefits.

Paul B. Paulus

See also Group Performance; Social Comparison Theory; Social Facilitation; Social Loafing

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## BYSTANDER EFFECT

The *bystander effect* refers to the inhibiting influence of the presence of others on a person's willingness to help someone in need. Researchers have found that, even in an emergency, a bystander is less likely to extend help when he or she is in the real or imagined presence of others than when he or she is alone. Moreover, the number of others is important, such that more bystanders lead to less assistance, although the impact of each additional bystander has a diminishing impact on helping. The bystander effect is well illustrated by the events surrounding the brutal murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964, which had a major impact on bystander intervention research in particular and helping research in general. After summarizing the Kitty Genovese story, this entry reviews the sequence of decisions a bystander may engage in when encountering a person in need of help, as well as the processes of social influence and diffusion of responsibility that may affect these decisions.

### Kitty Genovese and Bystander Intervention

In the early morning on March 13, 1964, a woman named Kitty Genovese was returning home late from work when a man with a knife viciously attacked and sexually assaulted her in the parking lot of her apartment complex. As reported in the *New York Times*, for over half an hour 38 respectable, law-abiding people heard or saw this man attack her three separate times. The voices and lights from the bystanders in nearby apartments interrupted the killer and frightened him off twice, but each time he returned and stabbed her again. None of the 38 witnesses called the police during the attack, and only one bystander contacted authorities after Kitty Genovese died.

While some details of this story as initially reported have since been contradicted by evidence, the story has become a modern parable for the powerful psychological effects of the presence of others. The story serves as an extreme example of how people sometimes fail to react to the needs of others and, more broadly, how behavioral tendencies to act prosocially are greatly influenced by the situation. Moreover, this tragic event sparked a good deal of research on prosocial behavior,

which examined when people do and do not extend help (referred to as *bystander intervention*). The seminal research on bystander intervention was conducted by two social psychologists, Bibb Latané and John Darley. These researchers, and subsequently others, found that bystanders do care about those in need of assistance, but nevertheless often do not help them. Whether they extend help depends on how they make a series of decisions.

### Bystander Decision Making

The circumstances surrounding an emergency in which an individual needs help tend to be unique, unusual, and multifaceted. Most people have never encountered such a situation and have little experience to guide them during the pressure-filled moments when they must decide whether or not to help. Latané and Darley's decision model of bystander intervention elaborates the sequence of decisions leading to a bystander's response.

According to Latane and Darley, before helping another, a bystander progresses through a five-step decision-making process. A bystander must notice that something is amiss, define the situation as an emergency or a circumstance requiring assistance, decide whether he or she is personally responsible to act, choose how to help, and finally, implement the chosen helping behavior. Failing to notice, define, decide, choose, and implement leads a bystander not to engage in helping behavior. Examinations of the bystander effect have focused mainly on the role social influence plays in individuals noticing something is wrong and defining the situation as an emergency and on how the presence of others can cause diffusion of the responsibility to help. Research indicates that social influence and diffusion of responsibility are the fundamental processes underlying the bystander effect during the early steps of the decision-making process.

### Informational Social Influence

If a bystander is physically in a position to notice a victim, factors such as the bystander's emotional state, the nature of the emergency, and the presence of others can influence his or her ability to realize something is wrong and that assistance is required. In general, positive moods, such as happiness and contentment, encourage bystanders to notice

emergencies and provide assistance, whereas negative moods, such as depression, inhibit helping. However, some negative moods, such as sadness and guilt, have been found to promote helping. In addition, some events, such as someone falling down a flight of stairs, are very visible and hence attract bystanders' attention. For example, studies have demonstrated that victims who yell or scream receive help almost without fail. In contrast, other events, such as a person suffering a heart attack, often are not highly visible and so attract little attention from bystanders. In these latter situations, the presence of others can have a substantial impact on bystanders' tendency to notice the situation and define it as one that requires assistance.

In situations where the need for help is unclear, bystanders often look to others for clues as to how they should behave. Consistent with social comparison theory, the effect of others is more pronounced when the situation is more ambiguous. For example, when other people act calmly in the presence of a potential emergency because they are unsure of what the event means, bystanders may not interpret the situation as an emergency and thus act as if nothing is wrong. Their behavior can cause yet other bystanders to conclude that no action is needed, a phenomenon known as *pluralistic ignorance*. But when others seem shocked or distressed, bystanders are more likely to realize an emergency has occurred and conclude that assistance is needed. Other social comparison variables, such as the similarity of other bystanders (e.g., whether they are members of a common ingroup), can moderate the extent to which bystanders look to others as guides in helping situations. In sum, when the need for help is unclear, bystanders look to others for guidance. This is not the case when the need for assistance is obvious.

### Diffusion of Responsibility

If a person does notice a situation and defines it as requiring assistance, he or she must then decide if the responsibility to help falls on his or her shoulders. Thus, in the third step of the bystander decision-making process, diffusion of responsibility rather than social influence is the process underlying the bystander effect. *Diffusion of responsibility* refers to the fact that as the number of bystanders increases, the personal responsibility

that an individual bystander feels decreases—and as a consequence so does his or her tendency to help. Thus a bystander who is the only witness to an emergency will tend to conclude that he or she must bear the responsibility to help, and in such cases people typically do help. But bystanders diffuse responsibility to help when others are present. In the case of Kitty Genovese, it seems that all the bystanders made the assumption that others were present and would intervene, and so they felt little or no personal responsibility to help. Diffusion of the responsibility to help is reduced, however, when a bystander believes that others are not in a position to help. For example, in one study, participants who believed that the only other witness to an emergency was in another building and could not intervene were much more likely to help a victim than were participants who believed that another witness was equally close to the victim.

Diffusion of the responsibility to help is increased when others who are viewed as more capable of helping (e.g., a doctor or police officer) are present. Research suggests that in emergency situations where a victim will suffer greatly if help is not forthcoming, bystanders relieve themselves of responsibility by asking “experts,” such as firefighter or paramedics, for assistance, thus indirectly helping. But when the costs of helping and not helping are both high, bystanders feel a strong conflict between the desire to act and the fear of helping. For example, in the case of Kitty Genovese, bystanders may have felt the need to help because the cost of not helping would be her death, but the possibility of being hurt or killed themselves deterred them from acting. Bystanders often resolve this conflict by concluding that someone else will help (i.e., diffusing responsibility), thereby psychologically reducing the perceived cost of not helping the victim.

### Normative Social Influence

A bystander’s decision regarding his or her personal responsibility to help may be affected by situational norms and expectations for behavior. For example, in a library patrons are expected to be quiet and in a classroom students may speak up in a respectful and orderly way, but at a party people may be much less inhibited. When bystanders in an emergency situation assess their personal responsibility to act, social expectations for behavior may

influence their decision. Researchers have demonstrated the effect of situational expectations on helping behavior by presenting people with an emergency in an area they have been told not to enter. Bystanders previously warned not to enter an area where an emergency was occurring were far less likely to help than were those told they could enter the area. Thus, when an emergency occurs, the social context can be a powerful determinant of bystanders’ decision to intervene.

### Conclusion

The bystander effect refers to the socially inhibiting presence of others on helping. When it is unclear whether there is a need for help, the presence of others tends to influence the first two steps of the bystander decision-making process (i.e., noticing something is wrong and defining the circumstance as requiring assistance). Whether or not a bystander will feel personally responsible to help is influenced by the number of others actually present (or assumed to be present) and their ability to help. Latané and Darley’s initial investigations of the bystander effect sparked a wealth of research on helping behavior, which has expanded beyond emergency situations to include everyday forms of helping. By illuminating the power of situations to affect individuals’ perceptions, decisions, and behavior, study of the bystander effect continues to influence the course of social psychological theory and research.

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*See also* Conformity; Crowds; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Norms; Pluralistic Ignorance; Social Comparison Theory; Social Facilitation

### Further Readings

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## CATEGORIZATION

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*Categorization* is the process of understanding things by knowing what other things they are equivalent to and different from. It is a process that is widely studied in cognitive and social psychology and in philosophy and linguistics. This entry offers an overview of categorization and outlines its functions, then describes the major views on category structure and representation and on category learning, formation, and use (drawn mainly from cognitive psychology). It also examines social psychological perspectives on biased stimulus processing and sense making, and concludes by considering a range of ongoing debates and controversies in the field.

### Describing the Process

The categorization process could also be called classification or grouping, but it is helpful to preserve the term *classification* for the formal, behavioral process of separating things and *categorization* for the psychological process and experience. Thus a biologist who separates life forms into different species is engaged in a formal scientific process of classification (taxonomy), but the psychological process that the biologist uses to perform this task is categorization. Importantly, it is also the same process people use to decide that the person doing the classification is a biologist and not a psychologist, physicist, or astrologer.

As the previous example illustrates, categorization is widely regarded as the cognitive process

that is central to the way people understand things in the world. Indeed, some writers use the term *category* in almost the same way they use *concept*. Categorization takes on an added importance in social psychology, since people categorize themselves and other people. In fact, discussions of categorization are central to discussions of group processes and intergroup relations because groups are based on categories of people.

The major contemporary theories of group processes and intergroup relations—social identity and self-categorization theories, along with more specific models such as the common ingroup identity model, optimal distinctiveness theory, and the ingroup projection model—therefore all address the process of categorization quite directly.

Fundamentally, categorization is about attaining knowledge or understanding. The central concerns of social psychology relating to social norms, influence, attitude change, and socially shared cognition suggest that knowledge and understanding develop consensually. That is, different people tend to develop related understanding of the same things. In large part, this rests on their developing compatible ways of categorizing the self and other people and things.

People can also categorize the same things in radically different ways. Other people could see your furniture as their firewood or your pet dog as their lunch. This potential for disagreement, however, actually points to the success of members of human societies in coordinating their categorizations in harmonious ways. The triumphs and achievements of human civilization (and not just

social ills and conflict) rest upon the widespread consensus that emerges in categorization, despite the infinitely variable number of ways that any object (let alone sets of objects) can be categorized.

Categorization can be understood as a blend of three elements, including *background knowledge* (i.e., expectancies and explicit or implicit beliefs), *perceived equivalence* (i.e., how objects are seen to be the same as some other objects but different from others), and *category use* (i.e., explicit labeling). These three things can be understood as elements that constrain each other. Thus it is possible that explicitly using a category label like “Black” or “men” may affect the degree to which we see people as equivalent to each other. This can in turn affect our store of knowledge about relations, so that after using or developing an explicit category label, we may not only come to see those people as equivalent but also come to know that Blacks or men are similar to each other in certain ways. This knowledge may constrain our future perceptions of equivalence and use of labels.

### The Functions of Categorization

There are two major views on the functions of categorization. The first is the view of categorization as a sense-making process that involves overlaying meaning on elements. This approach is most famously associated with Jerome Bruner, who developed seven principles of veridical perception.

#### *Bruner’s View*

Bruner argued that perception is a decision process and that decisions involve discriminating between stimuli and between categories of stimuli. This decision process follows a chain of inference from detecting cues to determining the categorical identity of the stimulus (which could lead to the search for further cues). These categories comprise sets of specifications about which stimuli can be grouped as equivalent. A category is most likely to be used when it is accessible to perception (because it matches the perceiver’s past experience or current goals) and where there is high degree of fit between the category and the stimuli viewed. Veridical perception involves the perceiver’s taking stimulus input and forming categories, and then using those categories to form

new inferences and predictions about events and objects that he or she is likely to encounter. In this way, categorization allows perceivers to go beyond the information given in order to develop an understanding, rather than an exact reproduction, of the world.

More than 50 years after their publication, these principles remain fresh and vitally applicable, even though categorization is intensely researched and the research undergoes rapid change. In the field of intergroup relations, part of this vitality stems from the incorporation of the ideas of veridical perception into self-categorization theory and into social cognitive work on construct accessibility.

#### *Allport’s Analysis*

The other key contribution that has remained fresh and vital for a similar period of time has been Gordon Allport’s analysis of categorization as a simplification process involving the reduction of information. Allport argued that categorization is a response to the overwhelming burden of information that confronts perceivers (especially when they perceive other people). Following his thinking, we have so many daily encounters that we are forced to group or type others in order to cope. We therefore tend to group stimuli into the largest categories that we can get away with. That is, according to Allport, we tolerate abstract, imprecise categories as a response to a complex world.

In the process of simplification, many of these abstract, imprecise categories, such as group memberships, can end up being highly irrational and distorted. They may contain a “kernel of truth,” but they have a high probability of being wrong—and such irrational, errant categories can form just as easily as more rational, truthful categories. According to this view, and later adaptations of it, categorization can be seen as an errorful process that is used in preference to more accurate individuated or piecemeal perception only due to the limitations of our processing capacity.

Allport’s view was subsequently championed in the social cognitive approach to intergroup relations that was dominant in the latter part of the 20th century. It starkly contrasts with Bruner’s view, which has been championed by self-categorization theorists and others. One way of highlighting the contrast between these views is to consider an

everyday interaction such as waiting for and then getting on a bus.

In the Brunerian view, when we are confronted with stimulus cues such as people sitting on a bench and someone in a uniform driving a bus, we are likely to search for cues that suggest the existence of known categories, or to form new categories to make inferences and predictions. One such categorization might involve distinguishing between bus passengers and the bus driver to make accurate inferences about the roles and actions of members of each group. The Allportian view would suggest that it is the presence of a large number of people that leads us to form categories that allowed us to treat the members of those categories in identical ways, but at the cost of inevitable error.

### The Structure of Categories

Cognitive psychologists have identified three major long-standing approaches to category structure and representation: the classical view of categories, the prototype approach, and the exemplar view. There are also more recent mixed and variable structure approaches, and all of these views can also be observed in social psychology, including in analyses of phenomena such as outgroup homogeneity and stereotype change.

#### *Classical View*

The classical view of categories is that they have all-or-none defining features. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein illustrated the implausibility of this view through the example of the category “game.” He demonstrated that despite the fact that people have no trouble using this type of category in everyday life, it is actually very difficult to come up with a set of all-or-none defining rules for the category “game” that includes things as diverse as children’s amusements and the Olympic games.

In the 1970s, the classical view was also demonstrated to be inconsistent with evidence that many categories are fuzzy and share relatively vague family resemblances with others. Furthermore, category members vary in the degree to which they are typical of a category. Thus, a hijacker is an atypical example of the category “criminal,” and a bank robber is a typical (good) example, yet they are both criminals in an absolute sense.

#### *Prototype View*

The prototype view of the nature of categories was popularized in the work of Eleanor Rosch, who argued that categories are based on an abstract summary or prototype. Thus, less typical examples of a category are more different from the prototype than are more typical examples. Rosch also argued that categorical systems are hierarchically organized into a system of levels, where more abstract or general categories include more specific categories. That is, there is a basic level of categorization for a category system.

The basic level for a category system is the level at which the instance is spontaneously named and recognized most rapidly (e.g., when we are shown a picture of a dining chair and then asked to identify what it is, we say “chair” rather than “piece of furniture” or “dining chair” because “chair” is the basic level for this system). The idea of category abstraction is central to self-categorization theory and the common ingroup identity model, but the idea of a fixed basic level that can be applied to social categories is more controversial.

#### *Exemplar View*

The exemplar view of category structure is that categories are stored as a collection of instances of the larger category. According to this view, there is no abstract summary, but merely a set of stored representations or exemplars of the category. Thus, a social category such as men or Blacks would be stored in the memory of the perceiver as a set of traces about the members of that category who had been encountered.

There has been a great deal of debate in cognitive psychology about the merits of the exemplar and prototype views, but there are more recent attempts to show that categories can have both exemplars and prototypes (in particular for dealing with exceptions). There is also research that suggests that categories can vary from having a form that is closer to an exemplar to one that is closer to a prototype representation.

### Category Learning, Formation, and Use

The major approaches to category learning, formation, and use have been based on the ideas of similarity-based formation and theory-based

formation. The purely similarity-based approaches will not be discussed in this entry, as they seem inadequate as accounts of the ways that categorization takes account of meaning and experience. Category formation appears to be based on internally coherent theories about the function and nature of things rather than just on the basis of surface appearances or gross similarities.

Indeed, cognitive researchers have shown that objects could be seen as similar or different depending on the order in which they are presented. Thus Mexico might be seen as like the United States, but the United States might be seen as different from Mexico. Evidence such as this can lead us to ask, as Douglas Medin did, if something is said to be similar to something else in certain respects, then where do those respects come from?

The answer that has had the most extensive implications for the study of social groups is contained in psychological essentialism, the idea that categories may have a coherent core or essence that binds category members together. This idea has been applied to social categories in research over the last two decades. Psychological essentialism for social categories is often equated with the notion that some categories are natural and have a biological (e.g., genetic) core, while other categories lack this core. The belief in the psychological essence of a group or category has therefore been linked to analyses of race and racial prejudice.

Psychological essentialism complements and is sometimes confused with Donald Campbell's concept of entitativity. This is the idea that social groups may be perceived to a greater or lesser degree as entities or things (a point rejected by individualist stances that claim only individual things are real). Entitativity was developed from the gestalt principles of perception to argue that a group is perceived to be more real and coherent to the extent that its members are perceptually alike, are close together, share a common fate, and form a coherent figure or form. Much of the research effort in this area has focused on seeking to demonstrate that certain types of groups (e.g., families or sporting teams) are more entitative than others (e.g., people waiting at a bus stop and sports crowds).

Social psychologists have been more interested than cognitive psychologists in categorization effects on judgment (e.g., in research on multiple categorization). These effects, first studied by

Henri Tajfel and his colleagues, include the intraclass (assimilation) effect (i.e., increased perceptions of similarity within categories) and the interclass (contrast) effect (i.e., increased perceptions of difference between categories). In social psychological terms, categorization effects are applied by group members through the development of standards and norms that are different from the ones developed by other relevant groups. Within the group, members converge on those standards and norms (usually through the processes of social influence). The nature of these effects remains debatable. In particular, the question is whether categorization effects are distortions and/or biases or accurate but contextually variable reflections of reality.

The dominant social cognitive approach has argued that categorization is used because limited capacity leads to biased processing, which in turn creates distortions. Categorization is seen as an application of selective attention to both stimuli that occur spontaneously and constructs that are already stored in our cognitive systems. In other words, it is believed that categorization takes place because of the need to be selective when detecting stimuli, and categorization is in fact designed to make stimulus information that is overwhelming for the system (or too diffuse) manageable.

However, self-categorization and other sense-making approaches argue that categorization is a veridical, context-dependent, sense-making process that produces accurate perceptions from a current perspective (which follows from the process of salience). Henri Tajfel argued that categorization allows perceivers to derive meaning by making different classes of stimuli (social and non-social stimuli) coherent. In self-categorization theory, perceptions about the self are organized in hierarchical categories that are contextually activated through the process of salience (the extent to which a particular self-categorization becomes psychologically prominent).

It is important to note that self-categorization theorists believe that variations in self-perceptions reflect real changes, as experienced from the point of view of the perceiver. The sense-making approaches share the idea that categorization is a process that helps perceivers understand their surroundings, but in each of these treatments, there is a particular key construct that plays the major role: coherence (in optimal distinctiveness theory),

explanation (in the social judgment approach), and assimilation and contrast (in approaches based on categorization effects and construct activation).

### Ongoing Debates

The contrast of these perspectives sets the scene for some debates and unresolved issues. The first debate revolves around how information-processing capacity affects categorization processes. The idea of capacity limitations is of central importance to social cognitive approaches to categorization. Here, categorization and stereotyping are viewed as necessary but imprecise shortcuts for people overloaded with information from their environments. Accurate judgments are only considered possible when people have time and are willing to put in the effort to attend to the unique features of the individuals they encounter.

This understanding of categorization has been challenged by the alternative meaning-seeking view espoused by self-categorization theorists. From this perspective, instead of leading to errors, the process of categorization is seen to provide a meaningful framework for understanding and predicting the behavior of people in different social contexts.

The second major debate regarding these two approaches revolves around the issue of whether categorizations produce distortions or accurate reflections of reality from a perspective. The selective attention model suggests that categorization and stereotyping produce distortions of reality because these processes are seen to lead people to exaggerate equivalences of members of particular groups. In this view, the accuracy of group judgments can only be determined with reference to the characteristics of the unique individuals who make up the group.

Alternatively, several accuracy-oriented approaches propose that stereotypes are based on real characteristics of social groups. The reflection-construction model argues that beliefs about categories reflect, modify, and influence the construction of reality. According to this model, the accuracy of particular stereotypes will determine whether categorization enhances, or reduces, the accuracy of perception. An alternative accuracy-oriented approach to stereotyping has been derived from self-categorization theory, in which it is proposed that appropriate categorizations always serve to

increase the match between perception and reality. According to this model, all perception is categorical, and categorization allows people to represent reality from their particular point of view. Thus self-categorization theorists argue that apart from the perceiver's belief in the accuracy of his or her perception, accuracy of perception can only be established with respect to the degree to which some relevant ingroup member agrees with the judgment.

The third debate revolves around whether categories are stored and retrieved from memory (when they are accessible) or spontaneously created anew for each situation. The self-categorization theory version of the sense-making account tends to assume that categories are constructed on the spot for each new social encounter. What is assumed to be relatively stable is long-term background knowledge about the world that is used to help construct an infinite number of possible categorizations to suit each new social context. It is less clear from this perspective what form this long-term background knowledge takes if it is not categorical. The alternative view put forward by the selective attention perspective argues that categories are stored and retrieved from memory. This approach can more easily explain why categories that have recently been activated, or are chronically accessible, are more likely to be used than older, less chronically accessible categories. To resolve this debate, it will be necessary to determine whether remembering a category is the same as reusing it.

The fourth debate relates to whether some categories are pervasive and constantly applicable or whether all categories are utterly context dependent. Many social cognitive researchers argue that there are a small number of basic and primary categories, such as gender, ethnicity, and age that are automatically and unconsciously activated in interaction. Alternatively, self-categorization theorists argue that there is no basic level or set of categories that is primary. Indeed, self-categorization theory emphasizes that categorization is highly variable and context dependent and that it would be a mistake to suggest that gender, ethnicity, or any other category will always be used to categorize others in interactions. A possible resolution of this issue is to view basic and primary categories as operating at a background level of perception and intruding into judgments about members of those

categories even when those categories are not explicitly salient.

One final issue that social models of categorization will need to resolve is whether categories are based on hierarchical structures much like those shown in tree diagrams. The assumption of hierarchical structures is adapted from cognitive research and appears in self-categorization theory, the common ingroup identity model, and the ingroup projection model. Some recent evidence from cognitive psychology suggests that the idea of hierarchical structures does not seem to capture the way people make inferences about natural object categories. This raises similar questions about social categories that often do not have clear tree-like structures. For example, Texas is part of America, but we know that not all Texans are Americans.

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*See also* Common Ingroup Identity Model; Cross-Categorization; Decategorization; Entitativity; Essentialism; Optimal Distinctiveness; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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social and historical context, has received an enormous amount of attention over the past several decades. In this entry, charismatic leadership is defined, along with the conditions conducive to its appearance and typical features of its communication. An illustrative example is then presented, followed by some of the limitations of this form of leadership.

### Defining the Concept

First introduced by German sociologist Max Weber, the word *charisma* comes from the Greek word *χάρισμα* (*kharisma*), meaning “gift” or “divine favor.” Following this original definition, charisma refers to an extraordinary quality of a person that allows him or her to charm and influence others. In the common vernacular, charisma is often treated as a powerful personal appeal or magnetism that captivates others. The charismatic leadership approach emphasizes heroic leaders with forceful, dramatic personalities and widespread appeal; recent examples include leaders such as Jack Welch, Bill Clinton, and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

However, charisma is very much in the eye of the beholder, suggesting that charismatic leadership is more accurately understood as a *relationship* between leaders and followers. Charismatic leadership emphasizes the importance of symbolic behaviors, emotional appeals, and the role of the leader in making events meaningful for followers. It focuses on understanding how a leader can influence followers to make sacrifices, commit to difficult or seemingly impossible objectives, and achieve much more than was initially expected. Charismatic leadership is, therefore, not solely a property of the leader’s charisma, and focusing on the leader alone ignores the unique circumstances that are crucial in each instance of charismatic leadership. While a leader with extraordinary gifts and qualities is a critical element in this relationship, aspects of the followers and the situation are also important in understanding why some leaders are viewed as charismatic and others are not.

A significant element is that followers who are frightened, threatened, or uncertain are more likely to view a leader as a charismatic savior. Followers are more susceptible to a charismatic leader and his or her vision if they are insecure, alienated, and fearful about their physical safety or economic

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## CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

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*Charismatic leadership*, combining a leader with powerful personal magnetism and a particular

security, or if they have low self-esteem or a weak self or social identity. Therefore, charismatic leadership is more likely to emerge during a crisis or during a situation of desperation or uncertainty. The leader presents a vision or set of ideas promising a solution to the crisis and a better future (whether achievable or not), and followers are attracted to this gifted person and come to believe in his or her exceptional powers and vision for a better future.

To retain his or her followers, however, the leader must also demonstrate or convince others of his or her ability to deal with the crisis or threat and move followers in the direction of a better future. Accordingly, charismatic leadership is a process that resonates in the exceptional personal attributes of the leader, as well as the fit between those attributes and the needs of followers, against the backdrop of a crisis or undesirable state of affairs.

Research has emphasized the critical importance of the charismatic leader's vision, including aspects of both the content and delivery style of the leader's message. Charismatic leaders are able to distill complex future ideals into simple messages with widespread and emotional appeal, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. They also use a variety of communication techniques to appeal to their followers, such as using colorful, vivid language and imagery rooted in shared values.

Charismatic leaders also frequently employ symbols to their advantage, including the site of their speech, visual symbols, props, music, and lighting to enhance the appeal of their message and increase the level of excitement and emotion in followers. Similarly, they use tone of voice, inflection, pauses, and gestures to increase the intensity and emotional meaning of their message. Charismatic speeches frequently incorporate analogies, repetition, metaphors, and stories to bring the vision "alive" for followers, and communicate optimism that, together, group members can achieve the promise of a better future if they are willing to support the leader and are prepared to make sacrifices for his or her cause.

### A Historical Illustration

A familiar example of an admired leader, Mohandas Gandhi, illustrates the ingredients of the charismatic leadership relationship. First, Gandhi's followers often credited him with possessing extraordinary

gifts, and his flare for dramatic gestures such as fasting, simple dress, and spiritual rituals produced a heroic persona that challenged current norms and conventional behavior of the time. Second, Gandhi came to power in response to a desperate situation: the crisis in India in the wake of British colonization and oppression. Third, Gandhi offered a powerful vision of a better future, including a self-governing India where its citizens would live under their own laws free from outside interference. Fourth, Gandhi's vision, rooted in the basic values of Indian culture, attracted a tremendous following. His dynamic vision created a contagious atmosphere that inspired his followers to seek independence. Gandhi's followers were also motivated by his repeated smaller successes along the way to independence, including tax reforms and the recognition of non-Christian marriages. Finally, Gandhi led the country to independence from the British, although his ultimate vision of Hindus and Muslims living in peaceful cohabitation was never achieved. His principles of nonviolence transformed his own country and inspired future leaders all over the world.

Overall, Gandhi's followers realized many of the beneficial outcomes of charismatic leadership, as Gandhi is credited with broadening and elevating the interests of his followers, generating awareness and commitment to the mission of the group, and motivating followers to go beyond their own interests and sacrifice for the good of the Indian people as a whole. This example illustrates that charismatic leadership involves the actual characteristics of the leader as well as characteristics that are attributed to leaders by followers within a given situation. If the leader's extraordinary qualities do not clearly resonate with the values and needs of followers, he or she is likely to be rejected as a radical or mocked as delusional. However, if the leader's extraordinary qualities provide a good fit for, or proposed solution to, followers' needs and anxieties, followers may even exaggerate how exceptional their leader is and idolize him or her. In this way, a charismatic leader may attain a seemingly magical or superhuman persona in the eyes of his or her followers.

### Limitations and the Darker Side

Charismatic leadership has been defined as a rare form of leadership in which the leader is often

irreplaceable because of followers' dependence on the leader's skills. Therefore, social movements and change processes are often difficult to maintain once the charismatic leader is gone, and followers struggle to carry on the momentum of change. In addition, because charismatic leadership often results in unquestioning obedience to the leader's directives, followers themselves may be less likely to develop leadership skills and experience that will sustain the change process after the leader is gone.

In addition, charismatic leadership also has a darker side. None of the ingredients of the charismatic leadership relationship guarantee that the leader's vision will be morally defensible or ethical, nor do they prohibit followers from carrying out unethical or violent behaviors in pursuit of the leader's vision. Charismatic leaders of the past such as Adolf Hitler and Jim Jones were able to create widespread appeal for their visions of racial superiority and revolutionary suicide, respectively. Due to the extraordinary, even heroic qualities that followers may attribute to such charismatic leaders, these leaders may begin to believe that they really are exceptionally qualified to determine the fate of their followers, resulting in increasingly autocratic, manipulative, dictatorial leadership that is intolerant of dissent or alternate points of view.

In addition, due to their often powerful appeal and nonconventional or radical visions for the future, charismatic leaders are often extremely divisive figures that create bitter enemies as well as devoted followers. In some situations, the charismatic leader may prove so divisive that he or she paralyzes the change process. In other situations, charismatic leaders become public targets for the opposition, and consequently leaders such as Gandhi, King, and John F. Kennedy were ultimately assassinated for their beliefs.

Finally, it is important to note that charismatic leadership is often a fleeting phenomenon that can be gained or lost as circumstances change. Charismatic leadership can be lost if the crisis ends, or if followers become more confident and feel that they are capable of solving problems on their own. Also, charismatic leaders may make decisions that result in failure, seem to betray their core vision or followers' needs, or focus more on obtaining power and influence for themselves than on supporting the greater cause for followers'

benefit. Other more attractive and credible leaders may challenge the vision or the effectiveness of the current leader.

In addition, charismatic leaders may become victims of their own success. As the change movement grows larger and more powerful, or as their organizations expand in scope and influence, charismatic founders may become increasingly irrelevant or lack the expertise to deal with new challenges. There is also the possibility that their unconventional behaviors may become distracting or counterproductive as the focus shifts from creating change to implementation and performance.

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*See also* Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## CHILDREN: STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE

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*Prejudice*, the holding of negative attitudes toward others based on the groups to which they belong and the stereotypes attached to these groups, continues to be a major source of strife and conflict throughout the world. Do children show prejudice and have stereotypes? If so, how do stereotypes and prejudice arise in early life? What are the different ways that prejudice and stereotypes emerge in childhood, and what forms can they take? These are the questions that are addressed in this entry.

People commonly think that young children are innocent and devoid of stereotypes and prejudice. However, research in developmental and social psychology has shown that children exhibit many types of biases at an early age. These can be based, for example, on someone's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, or body type. The findings suggest that understanding the origins and nature of prejudice in children should be a high priority if we are to establish effective policy for combating its negative consequences. Given that stereotypes and prejudice are hard to change in adulthood, most psychologists agree that interventions must be implemented early in life to be successful.

### Origins of Prejudice

Developmental and social psychologists have suspected that prejudice in children may originate from the child's early ability to categorize the social world. Children develop the ability to recognize characteristic features of people from their own group and other groups, and then use this information to cluster individuals together in social categories. Adults are known to be more accurate at recognizing a face from their own racial group than from an unfamiliar racial group. That this type of face processing is not present in infants at 3 months of age suggests that it is not innate. In fact, it emerges by 6 months in infants living in an environment with little racial diversity (i.e., a racially homogeneous environment). This indicates that facial input from the infant's visual environment is a key contributing factor. Therefore, at an early age children show categorization ability based on race.

Evidence suggests that such social categorization can result in preference for one's own group. Psychologists have investigated this in studies using a visual preference task. In this task, infants are presented with examples from two racial categories simultaneously, and how long they look at each example is used to indicate preference. Studies using this task show that by the time they are 3 months old, infants prefer to look at faces of their own racial group rather than those of other racial groups. This preference is not typically shown by newborns and is only present in 3-month-old infants living in a predominantly racially homogeneous environment. These findings suggest that the early development of own-race preference in infancy is linked to living in an environment that exposes the children only to own-race individuals.

Developmentally, infants have social categorization ability and, depending on their environment, this may result in certain group preferences. However, at this stage they do not have the ability to express prejudice or stereotypes due to their limited cognitive and linguistic abilities. As infants become young children, they often express biases directly or explicitly in the words they use to describe different social groups, or more indirectly or implicitly by forming mental associations linking their own group (rather than other groups) with positive experiences, emotions, or attributes (i.e., showing implicit biases).

### Implicit Biases in Children

Recent studies have provided evidence for when implicit biases emerge in childhood. Using the Implicit Associations Test (IAT), researchers have shown that adults have biases toward others, which they are not aware of, based solely on race. This is evidenced by the fact that White adults more quickly associate negative words with out-group (Black) faces than with ingroup (White) faces. These findings have spawned an industry of IAT studies, with much debate about the extent to which such associations reflect prejudice or bear on behavior, such as discrimination toward others.

Some developmental studies have examined implicit bias in childhood using IAT-type methodologies. One study of White British children, using a child-friendly pictorial IAT, found that implicit racial and national biases were present from 6 to

16 years of age. This children's version of the IAT measured the relative strength of association between a concept (e.g., "White British" or "Black British") and an attribute (e.g., "good" or "bad"). Implicit bias was judged to be present if the children showed faster reaction times for stereotypical (e.g., "White British" and "good") than counter-stereotypical (e.g., "Black British" and "good") associations. Studies have also found that these implicit biases remain in older children who typically show reduced *explicit* bias. This research suggests that implicit biases based on associations made between different categories and their attributes (either positive or negative) are established early in life and remain stable, relatively hard to change, and less open to conscious control.

Other studies have looked at how children evaluate the intentions of an individual from a different racial group, in an ambiguous but familiar everyday peer encounter, to determine whether children have implicit biases. The studies found that 6- to 9-year-old European American children attributed more positive intentions to a White child than to a Black child in potential "pushing" and "stealing" peer encounters on the playground.

Does this suggest that implicit biases are automatic in children? The answer would appear to be "no"—since these biases were found only among European American children in racially homogeneous schools; European American children of the same age, in the same school district, but enrolled in heterogeneous schools did not attribute more positive intentions to their ingroup than the outgroup; in fact, race was not used to attribute negative intentions.

### Explicit Prejudice in Children

Prejudice takes many forms in childhood. This is not surprising, given that what counts as prejudice changes as children develop both cognitively and socially. The nature and complexity of a 5-year-old child's group-related attitude will be manifestly different from a 14-year-old adolescent's attitude. So implicit biases are only one form of childhood prejudice, and there is an extensive history of research in developmental psychology revealing other forms of prejudice in childhood that provides a broader picture.

Developmental research has examined prejudice in the form of explicit preference for one social group over another. Early work on this form of explicit bias included the doll test, which showed that Black American children in segregated schools preferred White dolls to Black dolls. This research was influential in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court case that outlawed school segregation in the United States. Other measures have examined explicit forms of prejudice by asking children to attribute positive (e.g., "clean," "smart") and negative (e.g., "mean," "dirty") traits to a White child or a Black child or to both children. Explicit forms of ethnic prejudice based on the above measures are known to develop from 4 to 5 years of age among ethnic majority children. Unlike implicit prejudice, which remains relatively stable once it appears in childhood, explicit ethnic bias typically declines in ethnic majority children from approximately 7 years of age.

Some psychologists explain this developmental trend in ethnic majority children's prejudice by attributing it to young children's poor cognitive ability to judge people from different groups using individual characteristics (e.g., friendly, hard-working). Instead, these researchers argue that cognitively immature children judge an individual based on the group to which he or she belongs (e.g., boys or girls). Thus, according to this analysis, children show prejudice because they cannot see the similarities between individuals in different groups and the differences between individuals in the same group. However, recent studies have found a weak relationship between this cognitive ability and children's prejudice, and there is an extensive literature showing that cognitively mature adults can still show prejudice. So a cognitive explanation does not seem adequate for explaining why explicit prejudice declines during middle childhood.

### Self-Presentation and Explicit Prejudice

Some researchers have argued that the developmental decline in explicit ethnic prejudice reflects children's concern about social desirability, in particular their increasing awareness of how others might perceive them and how they can promote a positive impression of themselves to significant others. This self-presentation account contends that children develop the ability to strategically

control their expression of prejudiced attitudes and behavior. Developmental research certainly indicates that by middle childhood, children have the social-cognitive capacity to understand self-presentational motives and engage in self-presentational behavior.

Importantly, children's self-presentation of prejudice requires attention to prevalent social norms about the explicit expression of prejudice. Social norms prescribe cultural expectations regarding attitudes, values, and behavior. These expectations may be specific to social groups or more widespread within society. Once children understand these social norms, they may strategically present themselves as acting in accordance with them, thereby giving a positive impression of themselves to relevant and significant others.

In support of this argument, developmental psychologists have recently shown that group norms affect the self-presentation of young children's explicit ethnic prejudice and the development of children's prejudiced exclusion of peers. This research has found that increasing children's *accountability* to their peer group, in that their actions are visible and may have to be defended, causes children to increase or decrease their prejudiced judgments in line with the dominant norm in their group.

For example, one study found that 5- to 16-year-old White British children who were highly aware of the social norm against expressing explicit racism spontaneously showed little explicit racial prejudice. In contrast, children with little awareness of this norm inhibited their racial prejudice *only* when their group's antiprejudice norm was made salient by increasing their accountability to the group. Still other studies have shown that children can increase rather than inhibit their prejudice based on national group membership when they are made accountable to their national ingroup. This finding fits with studies showing that national prejudice is often seen as more legitimate or acceptable than racial prejudice. These studies show that the self-presentation process operates to encourage prejudice in the domain of nationality, whereas with race, children typically self-present by inhibiting their prejudice.

The next section describes another facet of prejudice recently studied by developmental scientists, namely explicit judgments about social exclusion,

which often show a different developmental pattern from the explicit forms of prejudice described earlier.

### Explicit Judgments About Social Exclusion

Researchers have recently begun to assess children's evaluations and reasoning about the exclusion of ingroup and outgroup peers within everyday group settings. This research provides a broader insight into the development of prejudice and use of stereotypes in childhood. Developmental research has demonstrated that from a young age, children emphasize moral reasoning (e.g., fairness) when judging social exclusion based on group membership, such as gender or race, in straightforward or unambiguous situations (e.g., "Is it all right or not all right to exclude a boy from a ballet club?"). However, children often resort to stereotypes to justify exclusion when complexity or ambiguity is added. For example, who should a ballet group pick when only one space is available and two children want to join—one who matches the stereotype or one who does not? Moreover, this research has found that with age, children also begin to use more socially conventional reasoning (e.g., the need to adhere to social norms or stereotypes, concerns about effective group functioning) to justify exclusion of their peers based on either race or gender. Such referencing of social norms and group functioning may serve as a proxy for prejudice and stereotypes.

For example, one recent study found that, when asked to make decisions about exclusion in complex situations, the majority of children between 6 and 12 years of age increasingly justified racial or gender exclusion using socially conventional reasons, such as mentioning how an individual challenges the gender stereotype ("It will be weird to have a boy wearing leotards, so they should choose the girl."). Moreover, a range of studies have shown that children's identification with the person who is the excluder is related to their justifying racial or gender exclusion based on socially conventional reasons. These findings indicate that older children, who are less likely to show the explicit biases described in the previous section, are nonetheless willing to condone prejudice and social exclusion using stereotypical reasoning. Together, these studies suggest that with age, children in

everyday situations find less direct and more subtle ways of showing bias and stereotyping.

Other recent developmental research has documented age-related increases in social exclusion judgments, with older children excluding peers who challenge both moral principles and their own group norms about loyalty to the group. This increased social exclusion of deviant (i.e., “black sheep”) peers by older children reflects the growing importance of group identity as children age and advance their understanding of how groups operate. Specifically, this research has found that younger children evaluate the actions of their peers only in terms of morality, that is, adherence to moral norms such as fairness or equality, or as selfish, that is, acting out of self-interest. Older children, however, judge peer group members in terms of both their morality and their adherence to group norms about what a genuine group member should do in different settings.

### Conclusion

Research indicates that children develop prejudice and stereotypes from an early age. The foundation of this prejudice and stereotyping is the development of social categorization during infancy. Infants begin to show categorization ability in the domain of race and also show a visual preference for faces from their own group. Implicit biases are known to appear around 6 years of age and remain relatively stable through childhood into adolescence, though some evidence suggests implicit racial attitudes are more negative in ethnically homogenous environments. Explicit racial prejudice measured through preference or trait attribution tasks appears around 4 to 5 years of age in racial majority group children, but generally decreases from middle childhood. In contrast, children’s reasoning and judgments about social exclusion can become more biased with age, as children begin to use stereotypes and conventional reasons to justify social exclusion in everyday complex situations. Psychologists have typically explained developmental trends in children’s prejudice using either a cognitive development or self-presentational account.

Prejudice and stereotyping begin in early childhood, often making it difficult to change these attitudes in adulthood. For this reason, we need to take

seriously attempts to reduce these problematical phenomena in childhood. Indeed, research suggests that reducing prejudice in children can be accomplished through a variety of methods, including the promotion of intergroup contact, social–cognitive skills, empathy, moral reasoning, and tolerance.

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*See also* Black Sheep Effect; Categorization; Children’s Groups; Discrimination; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Inclusion/Exclusion; Prejudice; Stereotyping; Subjective Group Dynamics

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## CHILDREN'S GROUPS

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Peer groups constitute the primary source of children's socialization outside of the family. Competence in the peer group is critical for many aspects of children's development, including cognitive development and school achievement as well as social, emotional, and personality development. Within their groups, children are more or less accepted by their peers, more or less visible, more or less dominant, and more or less connected to other group members. These individual differences in peer group experiences are associated with different socioemotional outcomes later in development. As a result, much of the scholarship concerning children's peer groups has been devoted to measuring and explaining the sources of individual differences in children's integration into the peer group and the developmental consequences of these differences. More recent and less extensive research literature addresses questions about children's attitudes toward their own group and groups of other children.

### History

Contemporary research interest in children's peer relationships is usually traced to the discovery by Harry Harlow in the 1950s that infant rhesus monkeys reared with their mothers but without exposure to other young monkeys failed to acquire the social skills necessary for successful adaptation to group living. Harlow and his students also discovered that the profound social and emotional deficits resulting from early maternal deprivation could be largely overcome by "peer therapy" provided by extended play with younger monkeys.

Later, psychologists studying the origins of adult psychopathology began to find that difficulties in childhood peer relations were a regular antecedent of serious problems later in life. Thus, children's functioning in the peer group appeared to be formative in the development of competence and to have long-lasting consequences. Since the 1970s, scholars have worked to measure and characterize development and individual differences in children's peer group experiences; to identify the correlates and causes of differential success in the peer group; to determine the origins in family

experiences and in the peer group itself of children's behavior, skills, and social understanding that contribute to such individual differences; and to explain peer group processes that contribute to development and adjustment.

### The Peer Group in Development

Observations of children in family, child care, and laboratory settings, as well as cross-culturally in small villages of hunter-gatherer societies, show that peer relationships emerge late in the second year of life and become increasingly complex and a more regular part of children's social experiences over the course of childhood. By middle childhood, children spend a third or more of their time in the company of their peers and begin to express a preference for spending time with peers. Peer relationships are more egalitarian than those with adults, feature more play and more conflict, and tend to be less stable and enduring than relationships in the family. Hence, children's peers provide unique experiences not available in the family and unique opportunities for acquiring a wide range of social and emotional competencies.

Perhaps one of the most interesting characteristics of children's peer groups is that even with children as young as 3 or 4 years of age, whenever children assort themselves voluntarily, these groups are composed almost exclusively of same-sex children. The amount of time children spend with opposite-sex peers declines over childhood and remains short until adolescence. Sex segregation begins early and trumps any other characteristic on which children self-segregate, including race. Girls precede boys in preferring to play with their own sex during the toddler and early preschool years, but by childhood boys are more exclusionary. Children of both sexes establish and police the boundaries of their sex-segregated groups, teasing or rejecting peers who play with children of the opposite sex. Perhaps as a result, children who spend larger amounts of time in opposite-sex peer groups than is typical for their age tend to be less popular and well adjusted than children who prefer same-sex group play.

Because sex segregation appears early, is robust, and appears to be universal, scholars have endeavored to explain why it occurs, how experiences

differ in boys' and girls' groups, and the functions of sex-segregated play for development. Eleanor Maccoby's work has been influential in promoting and studying such questions. Maccoby has proposed that sex segregation occurs because of incompatibilities in boys' and girls' play and interaction styles. Boys' play is predominantly active, physical, rough, and competitive and occurs in large groups, whereas girls' play is characteristically quiet, social, verbal, and cooperative, occurring in dyads or small groups. Therefore, to understand sex segregation, researchers must explain how sex differences in play style develop as a function of biology and socialization. This is currently an active area of inquiry in developmental psychology.

Researchers have also documented that boys' and girls' groups differ in the structure and thematic content of their interactions, the density of their social networks, their relationship goals and concerns, the types and amount of peer stress encountered in the group, and group members' interpersonal qualities (such as trust, validation, and closeness). There is much less research on how these different experiences relate to development. Some research suggests that the amount of time children spend in same-sex peer groups influences how sex-typed their behavior is, and substantial research points to sex differences in adjustment, especially in adolescence. For example, boys are more likely to exhibit behavior problems, whereas girls are more likely to exhibit anxiety and depression. One reasonable hypothesis is that different experiences in boys' and girls' peer groups contribute to sex differences in developmental outcomes. Research is currently addressing this hypothesis.

### Individual Differences in Peer-Group Acceptance

Jacob Moreno's work in the 1930s on the interpersonal forces of attraction, repulsion, and indifference set the stage for much of the research in the latter part of the 20th century on children's acceptance by their peer group. This work has emphasized that different children are perceived differently by their peers, with some children being well liked and widely accepted, while others are rejected, and still others are ignored.

### Measurement

Children's peer group acceptance is most commonly described using sociometric classifications. A frequently used method for indexing sociometric status was developed by John Coie in the 1980s. In this procedure, children are asked to select among their peers those they like most and those they like least from a roster of children in their group (e.g., in a class or camp cabin). Children are then classified into categories based on how preferred they are by their peers. *Popular* children are liked by many peers and disliked by few. *Rejected* children are disliked by many peers and liked by few. *Controversial* children are liked by many peers but disliked by many others. *Neglected* children are seldom singled out as being either liked or disliked. *Average* children are those who are liked by some and disliked or ignored by others, and generally do not fit any of the other categories.

There is some debate about whether such selections should be limited to same-sex peers or should include both sexes, how large the reference group should be (e.g., classroom vs. school), and the type of cut-off score that should be used for creating the categories. Different methods yield more or less extreme groups, which are, in turn, more or less stable over time and may be more or less predictive of optimal or problematic outcomes.

Another frequently used procedure is to ask children to rate each of their peers on a single scale that varies from "like very much" to "dislike very much." The average rating a child receives from his or her peers reflects how accepted the child is in the peer group. This method does not yield different sociometric categories, but because it permits children to evaluate all of their peers, and not only those liked most and least, some investigators argue that it provides a more valid measure of peer group acceptance.

### Causes and Correlates

Regardless of the method used, children who differ in peer group acceptance have been found to have different behavioral profiles, self-perceptions, socioemotional adjustment, patterns of school achievement, and attitudes and cognitions about their peers. Initially, research identified broad dimensions of social behavior such as aggression, withdrawal, and prosocial behavior as correlates

of various sociometric status groups. For example, rejected children tend to be more hostile and aggressive toward their peers, whereas popular children tend to be more friendly and cooperative. Experimental studies of playgroups formed by combining previously unacquainted children have shown that such behavioral differences shape children's sociometric status.

In more recent years, researchers have uncovered substantial complexity both in the sociometric categories themselves and in the kinds of behavior, cognitions, and attitudes associated with children's sociometric status. There are thus subtypes of rejected children, such as withdrawn children and especially aggressive children. Interestingly, not all types of aggression are associated with rejection. Indeed, only about half of aggressive children are rejected by their peers. Experimentally constructed groups of rejected and "unrejected" children have shown that in early childhood, peer rejection is associated with higher rates of instrumental aggression to obtain desired objects or positions. Among older children, angry, impulsive aggression in response to provocation, as well as unprovoked, person-centered aggression, is also associated with rejection.

Furthermore, different types of aggression are associated with rejection in girls' groups and in boys' groups. Whereas physical aggression is often characteristic of rejected boys, relational aggression in which children use nonphysical means such as gossip to exclude, harass, or threaten others is more characteristic of rejected girls. In addition, the extent to which aggression causes peer rejection depends on how normative it is in the peer group; in peer groups where aggression is more frequent, it is less likely to result in rejection. Likewise, shyness and withdrawal are associated with rejection only in later childhood when they become nonnormative, although the picture is more complicated for children from non-Western cultures (e.g., China).

Similar distinctions have been made among popular children. For example, some children perceived as popular by their peers are more domineering, assertive, and manipulative than they are prosocial and cooperative. Prosocial behavior tends to be associated with peer acceptance in groups where positive peer-directed behavior is relatively common.

In addition to differing in social behavior, children from different sociometric groups also exhibit distinct patterns of social information processing. In the 1980s, Kenneth Dodge formulated an influential model of individual differences in how children encode, interpret, and act on social information during interactions with peers. Empirical research has largely confirmed the basic tenets of this model. For example, rejected children tend to perceive and interpret ambiguous social behavior by their peers as hostile, a characteristic termed the *hostile attribution bias*. They also endorse hostile goals and coercive solutions to social problems, evaluate aggressive solutions positively, and overestimate how well liked they are by peers.

Popular children, in contrast, more accurately encode social cues, attribute benign intentions to ambiguous behavior by peers, and generate prosocial solutions to social problems. Research has shown that such differences in social information processing originate in representations or schemas that are automatically activated during encounters with peers. Attempts to alter children's social perceptions and cognitions and/or their social problem-solving strategies have produced some limited changes in peer acceptance. This suggests that how children encode and interpret others' behavior, and their goals and solutions when they encounter conflict or difficulty with peers, may be causally related to their peer group status.

### Outcomes

A lack of acceptance by peers has been regularly shown to predict a host of negative developmental outcomes for children, including poor school attitudes and achievement, psychological maladjustment, and delinquency. Longitudinal studies have shown that such associations are especially robust for children who are stably rejected by their peers over time, particularly for those who are aggressive and disruptive. It is as yet unknown to what extent these associations are driven by the negative peer experiences these children encounter, by their failure to acquire important skills from peer group socialization because of their lack of integration in the group, by exposure to the socializing influences of other deviant peers, or by some underlying quality of the children themselves or experiences outside the peer group that feed both peer rejection

and other social and emotional problems. There is empirical evidence for each of these potential mechanisms, as well as evidence for more complex theoretical models that posit multiple, interacting influences.

For example, existing vulnerabilities in the child that might predispose him or her to poor outcomes (such as aggression or hyperactive, impulsive behavior) appear to be exacerbated by negative experiences with peers, such as rejection or victimization. Some research has found that children's reputation in their peer group is self-perpetuating and that peers are likely to discount information about a child when it runs counter to the peer group's prevailing perceptions of the child. This contributes to the stability of children's sociometric status as well as their social and emotional experiences in their peer group, and makes it difficult for children with low social status to improve their standing.

### Children's Social Networks

Children's immediate peer groups are embedded in larger social networks of peer relationships that provide unique experiences as well. Social network analysis identifies and examines patterns in children's specific peer affiliations. This contrasts with the sociometric approach, which focuses on children's acceptance by their larger peer group. Research on children's social networks is comparatively recent and has been influenced by conceptual frameworks from sociology.

To identify their social networks, children are asked questions such as who "hangs around with" whom, who belongs to which groups, and which children do not belong to any group. Rosters are not used so that children are limited to reporting on peers about whom they are knowledgeable. Because of the verbal and cognitive demands of this procedure, it is typically used only with children past third grade. By combining children's responses statistically, researchers can create a map of children's affiliations with one another based on shared perceptions across respondents. A child is typically considered to belong to a particular group or network if so identified by 50% or more of his or her peers. On average, network size tends to increase between elementary school and middle school, then decrease over high school.

Additional measures are often derived to index how central, visible, or influential such affiliative networks or cliques are. Some are considered *nuclear*, others *secondary*, and others *peripheral*. Higher centrality groups tend to be larger than groups on the periphery. Children themselves can also be identified as more or less central within their own affiliative networks. The correlates of centrality are different for boys and girls. For boys, athletic ability, leadership, dominance, and perceived popularity tend to be important for high network centrality. For girls, academic skills and achievement, leadership, and perceived popularity tend to be correlated with network centrality. There is little research as yet concerning how group processes such as norm establishment and maintenance, leadership, and cohesion might vary as a function of group size or centrality.

In addition to declining in size with age, peer networks become less exclusive and more permeable so that children increasingly belong to more than one clique and the interconnections increase among different groups. Boys' groups generally tend to be more interconnected and less exclusive than girls' groups, possibly because they are larger overall. Across short periods of time, up to 6 weeks, affiliative networks remain stable with relatively little change in members. Instability increases over periods of a year or more, and younger children's groups are generally less stable than high school groups.

Theory and empirical research have focused on the factors and processes that underlie children's affiliative group formation and influence. Factors important to group formation include propinquity, familiarity, and similarity. Children are most likely to affiliate with classmates and other close associates than with children in their school or neighborhood with whom they have less systematic contact. This appears to be especially true for younger children, whose classrooms are more likely to be self-contained. Familiarity is also an important determinant of group affiliation, often more important than dissimilarities in academic performance or socioeconomic status.

Nevertheless, a key force in peer group affiliation is similarity based on features such as age, race, physical characteristics, academic achievement, parents' income, and qualities such as aggressiveness or popularity. Some scholars have



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

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

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

An independent research literature on children's attitudes toward their own groups versus other groups has shown that, like adults, children have more positive attitudes toward their own group (ingroup favoritism) and more negative attitudes toward other groups (outgroup prejudice). The developmental picture is not yet clear, in part because of measurement limitations, but it appears that ingroup favoritism develops by age 5, whereas

outgroup prejudice may be weaker until middle childhood. Also like adults, children's ingroup favoritism depends on factors such as the status of the child's group; children in low-status and/or minority groups are less positive about their own group and sometimes even favor the outgroup. This research area has been concerned primarily with explaining the childhood roots of social stereotyping and racial prejudice. It would be interesting and productive to integrate research and theory on children's peer group affiliation, acceptance, and socialization with work on the formation and maintenance of their intergroup attitudes.

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

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## CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

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

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

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

### Historical Background

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

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

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

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

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

### Related Controversies

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

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

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

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

What is a “civil right” in the first place is also a point of controversy and is reflected in the language used to discuss civil rights. For example, distinctions have been made between “civil rights” and “special rights,” with the term *civil rights* describing proposed legislation to protect groups

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

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

### Effects of Civil Rights Legislation

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

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

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

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

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

### Monitoring Activities

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

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

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

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

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## CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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

expand intergroup contact and facilitate the development of improved intergroup relations.

From a broader perspective, the struggle for civil rights in the United States did not begin or end with the events of this period. A more thorough examination of the civil rights movement among Blacks would take into account a history of Blacks' efforts to secure civil rights from the moment of their arrival in this country as slaves. It would also include modern-day efforts to secure equity in education, housing, health care, and all areas of economic life. Moreover, civil rights efforts by other groups include the women's movement, the Chicano movement, the Native American movement, and the gay liberation movement, and civil rights efforts continue to this day and throughout the world. This entry focuses first on the narrower meaning of the term *civil rights*, looking at the history and impact of the efforts to claim Black Americans' civil rights, and then touches briefly on related efforts.

### Background and Context

After the Civil War, many states passed a number of racially discriminatory laws, and racial violence against Blacks was both brutal and widespread. In 1896, the Supreme Court held in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that legalized segregation was constitutional as long as separate but equal public facilities (e.g., schools) were provided to Blacks. Organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, which engaged in concerted and organized acts of violence against Blacks that included murder, flourished in the early part of the 20th century. In this context, civil rights efforts on the part of Blacks and other groups were focused primarily on legal efforts to overturn racially discriminatory laws and congressional lobbying to secure legislative assistance at the federal level. These efforts made some progress, culminating in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* and held that separate schools for White and Black Americans could never be equal and thus were not constitutionally permissible.

Although the Court ordered the desegregation of all public schools "with all deliberate speed," school desegregation efforts at the elementary, secondary, and college levels were difficult to enforce. Federal military personnel were required to enforce

desegregation orders in places such as Little Rock, Arkansas, as well as at the University of Alabama and the University of Mississippi, and many cities in the South chose to shut down their public school system for a year or longer rather than integrate the schools. Years later, Thurgood Marshall, the lead attorney who brought *Brown v. Board of Education* to the Supreme Court, quipped: "Now I know what 'deliberate speed' means—it means 'very slowly.'" Impatience with the slow progress of the use of legislation and the courts to effect change led directly to the civil rights movement.

### Historical Highlights

The civil rights movement was distinguished by a shift away from the use of litigation as the prime strategy for winning new rights toward a focus on the use of direct action—civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, and mass mobilization—to effect social change. Rather than seeking support primarily from legislators and judges, civil rights activists sought broader support for the cause and demanded the enforcement of laws that already existed.

#### *The Montgomery Bus Boycott*

Trained in nonviolent civil disobedience, Rosa Parks was arrested on December 1, 1955, for refusing to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, to a White male passenger. In response, the Women's Political Council and the NAACP organized a bus boycott in Montgomery to protest both Rosa Parks's arrest and segregation and discrimination in the bus system. The boycott was tremendously successful, and the Montgomery Improvement Association was formed to continue the boycott. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected to lead the Montgomery Improvement Association, which sought broad change in Montgomery, including but not limited to its bus system. The bus boycott lasted for a year, culminating in 1956 in a Supreme Court ruling in *Browder v. Gayle* that outlawed segregation in public buses.

King and other leaders of the Montgomery Improvement Association joined the group to other civil rights organizations in other areas of the South, leading to similar boycotts and eventually to

the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in January 1957. King's leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Montgomery Improvement Association, the success of the efforts in Montgomery, and the expansion of those efforts across the U.S. South made King a national figure.

During the early 1960s, organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee engaged in broad efforts to end desegregation laws. Sit-ins were used effectively in many areas to protest and challenge laws enforcing racial segregation in public facilities. In 1964, four organizations together (the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) engaged in a broad voting rights campaign by bringing college students from around the country to Mississippi to register voters.

This activism was met with strong resistance. Civil rights activists were subjected to beatings and brutal treatment and arrest by police, headquarters and meeting sites were bombed, and individual activists were murdered. The strength of this resistance played a role in the success of the civil rights movement. Television images of police attacking nonviolent demonstrators with weapons, fire hoses, and attack dogs, as well as images of government officials attempting to bar Black students from schools and colleges, played an important role in changing broader public opinion.

### *The 1963 March on Washington*

In August 1963, a number of civil rights groups and leaders collaborated on the March on Washington that took place at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The march was organized to push for greater civil rights protections, including greater legal protections in the South, fair housing and employment, a federal employment program, and voting rights. With more than 200,000 demonstrators participating, it was a tremendous success and widely televised. King delivered his most famous speech, "I Have a Dream," at the Lincoln Memorial during this demonstration.

After the march, King and other leaders met with President John F. Kennedy in the White

House to push for passage of civil rights legislation. Kennedy agreed to support the legislation, but it was not clear he had the votes to pass it. The bills that comprised this legislation—the Civil Rights Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965), and Fair Housing Act (1968)—were passed not during the Kennedy Administration, however, but during the succeeding Johnson Administration. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or sex in schools, public facilities, government, and employment, effectively ending Jim Crow segregation in the South. Initially fairly weak in enforcement capabilities, the law was strengthened in subsequent Civil Rights Acts (e.g., Civil Rights Acts of 1968 and 1991).

The Voting Rights Act prohibited literacy tests to register to vote and provided federal oversight of voting registration in areas where there had been evidence of discrimination in voter registration. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 is commonly referred to as the Fair Housing Act, in that it provided clearer enforcement provisions against discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.

### **Aftermath and Ongoing Struggles**

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and Executive Order 11246 of 1965, which ordered the use of affirmative action to ensure the lack of discrimination in employment and federal contracting, gave many the sense that the issues for which the movement had fought most strongly—voting rights, antidiscrimination laws in employment, housing, and education, and increased attention to and therefore consequences for violent acts against Blacks—had been largely resolved. Optimism was high that the changed legal and social climate would lead to effective changes in the lives of Blacks. However, 1968 was also significant because it was the year in which both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated, thereby depriving the movement of its most visible leader and of an important political ally.

The optimism of the 1960s civil rights movement victories gave way to the slow erosion of the hard-won gains over the coming decades. School desegregation efforts slowly dissolved beginning in the 1980s, as federal courts released pressure on

districts to continue those efforts. Schools have slowly resegregated in many places, and today schools in many areas are as segregated as they were before *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 2007, a more conservative Supreme Court overturned school desegregation efforts in Seattle and Louisville in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*. In their decision, the justices effectively turned *Brown v. Board* on its head and argued that taking race into account in assigning students to schools was unconstitutional.

Affirmative action policies designed to improve the access of underrepresented groups to colleges, employment, and federal contracting have also lost favor among many people, and recent legislative efforts and court rulings have resulted in many affirmative action policies becoming illegal in several states.

The civil rights movement, as a formal, national struggle, may have ended in the late 1960s, but many groups have continued and expanded civil rights efforts to the present day, both in the United States and throughout the world. In the United States, efforts continue to create racial equity in health care, employment, primary and secondary education, and access to higher education.

### Related Efforts

Moreover, other movements have persisted in pursuing civil rights for other groups. Examples include efforts to pursue employment rights by the United Farm Workers of America, and recent demonstrations of support for undocumented workers in the United States.

The gay rights movement has been one of the longest standing civil rights movements in the United States. The movement began in New York with the Stonewall Rebellion, a series of rebellions that emerged from frustration over police raids on gay bars to arrest gay men for illegal sexual activity. Over a period of decades, these efforts have succeeded in decriminalizing homosexual sexual activity across the United States. Efforts to secure the right to same-sex marriage have been stronger in recent years, and recent court cases have been examining antigay marriage statutes across the country. One of these cases will likely go to the Supreme Court in the coming years.

Transnationally, social change efforts, and particularly the use of nonviolent protest and direct action to secure civil rights, have been modeled on the civil rights movement. Examples of such movements include the successful efforts to end apartheid in South Africa, the efforts of students and other activists to secure human rights in China and Myanmar, and movements to secure human rights and create economic change in the Soviet Union and the eastern European nations in the late 20th century.

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See also Affirmative Action; Civil Rights Legislation; Collective Movements and Protest; Desegregation; Intergroup Contact Theory; Racism

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## CLIQUES

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A *clique* is a small, exclusive, tightly knit group of people. Membership in such groups usually depends on social status and can have negative connotations (e.g., “Goths,” “geeks,” or “nerds”). However, the term need not be negative; for instance, *clique* is used to refer to close groups of friends like those commonly seen in high schools, organizations, and neighborhoods. This entry looks at some of the research related to this phenomenon.

### Cliques as Social Hierarchies

In early research, Warner argued that cliques are intimate informal groups of friends that represent a triumph of class over democratic values in the American school system. According to this perspective, cliques are part of the social structure that prevent people of lower social status from socializing with those of higher social status. At the same time, the clique functions to include members of the higher class with others of their kind. In other words, the clique system ordinarily helps reward those who are higher in class and punish those of a lower class.

Subsequent research has focused on the formation of cliques among children and in organizations, and on the impact of cliques within larger social structures on individuals' satisfaction with those structures. In development, adolescents from all social classes form cliques. However, students from middle-class backgrounds tend to switch friendship groups with shifting interests, whereas students from working-class backgrounds place more emphasis on loyalty and stability.

Furthermore, perhaps surprisingly, while positive perceptions of self and other are important determinants of interaction, personality characteristics are unrelated to clique formation. In contrast, IQ, social class, and how favorably children are perceived by their teachers predict clique formation in classroom settings.

### Gender Differences

Cliques may have different meanings and functions for adolescent boys and girls. In adolescence, girls appear more interpersonally competent and are more concerned with intimacy and exclusivity in their friendships than are boys. These differences are reflected in friendship patterns, with preadolescent girls tending to form exclusive dyads or triads, and boys forming larger, more loosely knit groups. Being in a clique can have negative effects on girls' self-esteem, with the clique encouraging expressions of jealousy and competition. In contrast, there can also sometimes be positive effects of clique membership for girls, with recent research by Henrich and his colleagues reporting its helpful effects on peer relationships and school adjustment.

### Related Constructs

Among adults and adolescents, cliques are characterized by high levels of conformity. Research suggests that cliques exemplify homogeneity in academic performance, showing remarkable consistency in academic achievement, substance use, and aggression. These findings seem to reaffirm the popular conception that cliques are breeding grounds of peer pressure and conformity. However, research suggests that conformity can also result from selection processes, with similar individuals choosing to associate with one another.

High levels of conformity go hand in hand with the tendency for cliques to be highly cohesive groups. Cohesive groups tend to exert more social influence, and their members are typically more committed to the group. There is an inverse correlation between group size and cohesiveness. As more and more members join a group, it becomes more difficult to maintain cohesion. This is consistent with the characterization of cliques as typically small groups.

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*See also* Conformity; Group Cohesiveness

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## COALITIONS

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A *coalition* is defined as two or more individuals or groups who act jointly to affect their own and others' outcomes. Coalitions, which can be found at every level of human organization, arise in situations where people are in conflict over the allocation of scarce outcomes but need each other to reach an agreement. This entry begins by describing the game approaches used to study coalition formation, and then examines some of the predominant theories used to explain coalition-building behavior.

### Coalition Games

To understand coalition formation as a group process, social psychologists have adopted an approach that has its roots in game theory. In this approach, parties (individuals or groups) are called players, and the format in which these players negotiate about forming a coalition is called a coalition game. Moreover, the outcome that is obtained when forming a coalition is usually a quantitative measure such as money or points. The two main questions that are addressed in this research are "Which players will be included in the coalition?" and "How will they distribute the outcomes of the coalition?"

Coalition games have been categorized in a number of ways. One distinction between coalition games is whether all coalitions that are allowed to form also yield the same reward or whether each possible coalition yields a different reward. The first type of game is called a *simple game*. The second type of game is called a *multi-valued game*. Another distinction between coalition games is whether the individual parties are assigned resources or not. These resources are comparable to votes in a political convention. Resources are assigned in most simple games but are not assigned in most multivalued games.

The coalition games most often investigated by social psychologists are simple games in which three or more people are each assigned a number of resources (e.g., votes), and learn that they need a certain total number of resources to obtain a positive outcome. Because this number exceeds the number of resources of any individual, they can

only obtain the positive outcome if they join forces. For example, in a three-person group, the members A, B, and C can be assigned two, three, and four votes, respectively. They may then learn that \$100 will go to the members of any coalition that controls at least five votes.

### Static Theories of Coalition Formation

The resources that people control are important in two distinct ways. First of all, the resources have a *strategic function* in that they determine people's power position or bargaining strength. For example, people's resources may determine how many alternatives they have to form a coalition. In general, people or parties with many resources will have more opportunities to form a winning coalition. Second, the distribution of resources also has a *normative function* in that they determine how parties prefer the outcomes of the coalition to be distributed. For example, the *minimum resource theory* assumes that the coalition members will want to distribute the coalition outcomes in proportion to their initial resources, such that members with twice as many resources should obtain twice as much from the coalition outcomes.

The essence of most theories of coalition formation is that the selection of coalition partners and the distribution of the coalition outcomes across its members are strongly related. The preferred distribution of coalition outcomes thus determines who people prefer as their coalition partner. Combined with the assumption that people want to maximize their own outcomes, minimum resource theory for example predicts that people want to be part of a coalition that contains as few resources as possible. In the example above, with five votes needed for a winning coalition, this means that the members with two and three votes will team up because this would yield each of them a higher share of the coalition reward than would teaming up with the member controlling five votes. The members of the coalition with two and three votes would obtain 40% and 60%, respectively. When teaming up with the member controlling four votes, their shares would be lower—33% (2/6) and 43% (3/7), respectively. Controlling many resources may thus not always be an advantage, a finding that is also referred to as the *strength-is-weakness effect*.

Whereas minimum resource theory assumes that people take the distribution of resources as a basis for the distribution, other theories stress the importance of alternative dimensions. *Minimum power theory* assumes that people primarily focus on the power dimension (i.e., on whether members are really needed to form a winning coalition). A person's pivotal power is defined by determining how many winning coalitions would turn into losing coalitions if the member withdrew. This theory assumes that members want to distribute coalition outcomes in proportion to the power of their positions. Based on reasoning similar to minimum resource theory, this leads to the prediction that people want to be part of a coalition that is minimal in terms of total pivotal power.

### Dynamic Theories of Coalition Formation

Static theories assume that members agree on the basis for distribution. This gives the impression that coalition formation is a process where members take the dimension for distribution as a given and simply calculate which coalition will then yield them the highest outcomes. Dynamic theories of coalition formation are more process oriented and acknowledge that members may disagree about the dimension that should be used to distribute coalition outcomes. By assuming that people are mainly self-interested and that their primary aim is to maximize own outcomes, dynamic theories of coalition formation resemble static theories. The main difference between these theories is that dynamic theories also assume that self-interest colors the selection of dimensions for distribution.

*Bargaining theory* assumes two possible distribution rules; the proportionality rule (that also forms the basis of minimum resource theory) and equal distribution. According to this latter rule, the outcomes of the coalition should be distributed equally to all members of the coalition. Self-interest may shape the preference for distribution rules. Group members with many resources will prefer to distribute outcomes in proportion to the resources each member possesses. Such a rule would be to the disadvantage of members with few resources; they would obtain higher outcomes if the coalition outcomes were distributed equally.

Bargaining theory states that self-interested members may initially disagree on which rule to

follow. To solve the disagreement, members are expected to subsequently meet each other half-way. Bargaining theory thus sees coalition formation as a dynamic bargaining process that starts off with disagreement, and after bargaining, results in settling and agreement. When members outside a coalition make a competing offer to tempt the coalition members to leave it and form a new coalition, the situation becomes even more dynamic, and new distributions will emerge during the process.

A final theory to consider here is *equal excess theory*, which places greater emphasis on bargaining strength. This theory assumes that the distribution that members of a coalition initially demand is determined by what they can reasonably expect to receive in their best alternative coalition. The excess that the current coalition can offer over this best alternative will then be divided equally. Suppose, for example, that two members, A and B, bargain over how to distribute the coalition outcomes of \$100, while knowing that the best alternative for A pays \$50, and for B pays only \$30. Because the best alternatives of A and B add up to \$80, the total excess in this case would be \$20 (\$100 - \$80). The expected distribution after an equal split of the excess would then be \$60 for A (\$50 + \$10) and \$40 for B (\$30 + \$10). Similar to the process of counteroffers that underlies bargaining theory, other members may subsequently tempt the coalition members into forming a new coalition, which implies that standards for distribution will change during the bargaining process.

### Empirical Support and Theoretical Limitations

The emphasis of coalition research has traditionally been to determine which of the proposed theories most accurately provides the answers to the questions of who will be the members of the winning coalition and how the coalition outcomes will be distributed over the members. In general, the dynamic theories have obtained more empirical support than the static theories. Situational characteristics and personal characteristics may, however, strongly affect how people bargain. Such factors may therefore affect the predictive accuracy of the theories. For example, experienced bargainers seem less likely than inexperienced

bargainers to distribute the coalition outcomes equally, and women appear to show a greater preference for equality than do men.

A related and more general issue concerns the primary motivation of bargainers. The theories cited above—whether static or dynamic—all agree on one thing: The primary motivation is self-interest. Parties are first and foremost assumed to strive to maximize their own outcomes, and this in the end determines which coalitions will be formed and how the coalition outcomes will be distributed to the coalition members. This focus on self-interest fits with the game-theoretic foundations of these theories and research on coalition formation. However, social psychology also acknowledges motives other than self-interest.

As social beings, we also care for the other people's outcomes. The *social utility model* of coalition formation has formalized this broader perspective on human motivation by distinguishing fairness as a separate motivator. The basic tenet of the model is that people assign a positive value to both self-interest and fairness, but that situational and personal characteristics may affect the weights of each of these motives. With this model, it is now also possible to explain why sometimes people want to include others in a coalition even if the coalition would be winning only if these others were left out. Self-interest alone could not explain such behavior, because coalition members obtain higher outcomes if they share the coalition payoff among few members rather than among many members. People may, however, consider it to be unfair if others are left out. This view accords with the notion that people are reluctant to exclude and ostracize others. People with a more prosocial motivation appear especially sensitive to what happens to those who are excluded.

In a similar vein, research has shown that it matters whether outcomes are positive or negative. Whereas most research on coalition formation has focused on positive outcomes, some research has studied how coalitions form when the winning coalition can allocate a negative outcome and so determine which parties have to pay. Because people assign a greater weight to fairness when outcomes are negative, people are more likely to include all parties in the coalition agreement.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Distributive Justice; Group Formation; Mergers; Need for Belonging; Ostracism; Power

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## COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY

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*Cognitive consistency theory* encompasses a broad group of theoretical statements whose central core is that people prefer consonance among their cognitions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. These theories seek to explain individuals' discomfort with inconsistency in their social lives. Although theories of cognitive consistency initially focused on individuals as the unit of analysis, research has recently shown that cognitive consistency is a central component of intergroup and intragroup relationships as well. This entry looks at a precursor theory and then examines the development of cognitive consistency theory and its application to both groups and intergroup processes.

### Balance Theory

Most influential of the early cognitive consistency models was Fritz Heider's balance theory. The

principle of psychological balance can be applied to any set of cognitions, but it is described most easily as a set of relations between a reference person (P), another person, perhaps a friend (O), and an attitude object (X). These relations were said to be balanced when they were consistent. For example, if P likes O and both P and O like the object X, the cognitions are said to be consistent or balanced.

However, if person P likes O but they differ in their evaluation of X, then the relationships are imbalanced or inconsistent. The perception of cognitive inconsistency produces a strain toward balance in which P attempts to restore consistency by changing his or her attitude toward the object X or toward the friend O. The steak lover who is friends with the vegetarian experiences tension whenever their food preferences are discussed; as much as these two people like each other, there is tension over their food preferences and a drive to establish balance.

Much foundational research was conducted under the rubric of balance theory. Balanced relationships are viewed more positively than imbalanced ones, imbalanced relationships cause more tension than balanced ones, and there is a desire to bring imbalanced relations into balance. But balance theory had very little to say about the characteristics of P, O, and X that would make imbalance most troubling or about the methods people would use to attempt to restore balance to dissonant relationships. It was in part to address this void that, in the late 1950s, there arose a new theory: cognitive dissonance.

### Cognitive Dissonance

In 1957, Leon Festinger published *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. In some ways, dissonance theory is similar to balance theory. The state of cognitive dissonance occurs when people believe that two of their psychological representations are inconsistent with each other. Put another way, a pair of cognitions is inconsistent if one cognition follows from the obverse of the other. For example, some people believe that they should give money to the poor but refuse to give change to someone who asks for it. These two cognitions are dissonant because not giving alms follows from the obverse of these people's belief. Had they believed that giving money to the poor was either wasteful

or counterproductive (the opposite of their actual beliefs), the action of passing by without giving would have logically followed. As things are, the action is dissonant.

Holding two or more inconsistent cognitions arouses the state of cognitive dissonance, which is experienced as uncomfortable tension. This tension has drive-like properties and must be reduced. One of the major innovations of dissonance theory compared to prior models of consistency such as balance theory, however, is that it speaks in terms of magnitude. Most dissonance research does not compare how people respond to consonant and dissonant relationships among cognitions, but rather how they respond to cognitions that are dissonant to varying degrees.

Perhaps the most famous study in dissonance research makes this point very well. Festinger and his colleague, J. Merrill Carlsmith, asked research participants to perform a series of boring tasks: turning pegs clockwise, then turning them counterclockwise, taking the pegs out of the peg board, putting the pegs back into the board. After an extended period, the experimenter thanked the participants, telling them that the task was completed.

The study was about expectations and performance, he said, and some participants had been told that the task was interesting and exciting, while others had been given no expectation. This explanation of the study's purpose was false, but it was a necessary component of the real experiment. The experimenter then said that the research assistant who was supposed to tell the next participant that this dull, boring task was actually interesting and exciting had failed to arrive. Would the participant be willing to help out and take the assistant's place?

The participant knew that the task was actually boring and dull and that it was generally wrong to lie to people to raise their hopes. However, the experimenter was doing important work and was even offering to pay the participant for this relatively trivial task. Almost all participants agreed to lie to the waiting stranger (actually a research assistant), and they then rated the pleasantness of the peg-turning task. The researchers were interested in how participants who were highly paid to lie rated the study compared to those who were poorly paid. They found that those paid \$20 to tell the lie rated the study as having been more boring

than those only paid \$1. This counterintuitive finding was well explained by dissonance theory: Those paid \$1 had less justification for lying to the waiting stranger and thus more need to distort their impressions of the task to match their attitude-inconsistent statement.

This experimental paradigm was later refined and simplified into an “induced compliance” method. In this method, participants are persuaded to make a counterattitudinal statement under conditions in which (1) they believe they are free to refuse (i.e., there are no prohibitively large inducements or punishments for refusal) and (2) the statement, if made, will have some aversive consequences. A classic example is advocating a noxious political position in an essay that will be shown to impressionable high school students. Compared to those who either are not free to refuse or believe their actions will have no consequences or lesser consequences, those who act under these conditions come to agree more with their counterattitudinal position.

### Application to Groups

Shortly after the pioneering study described above, Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills applied dissonance theory to aspects of a social group. They tested whether an unlikable group would become better liked if it had been difficult to join. They recruited female participants for a “sexual discussion group.” After an initial screening, participants were supposedly connected via speakers and microphones to a discussion of sexual behavior. In reality, participants were made to listen to a tape of people having a boring conversation about the secondary sexual characteristics of various insects. Participants then rated how enjoyable the conversation had been.

As in the peg-turning study, the key variable of interest was something unexpected. Before allowing participants to listen to the discussion, the experimenters explained that many people found discussions of sexual topics disturbing, and to show that they were comfortable discussing such topics, participants would have to read a list of words. For some participants, the list was fairly mundane, for others, lurid and obscene. Those participants given the more extreme screening task were more likely than the others to report that the subsequent

discussion group (which was intentionally made as boring as possible) was in fact interesting.

After having been made to suffer so intensely, participants who had read lurid words to this stranger needed to justify their effort by claiming that the experience had been worth it. Their dislike of the discussion group was in conflict with the effort they had expended to enter it, and they resolved this dissonance by changing their impression of the group to be more consistent with their effort. They came to like the discussion better and to like the group members better than those who had not suffered to join the group. This work is relevant to hazing and initiation rituals, as making a group difficult to join apparently increases that group’s attraction.

Other studies have shown that groups can alter the magnitude of cognitive dissonance and the direction that its resolution takes. One study showed that people in groups can diffuse responsibility for their inconsistent actions and experience less dissonance. Individuals who were engaged in a group project to write an essay inconsistent with their attitude apparently convinced themselves that their own portion of the inconsistency was less than that of the group, and therefore, they experienced less discomfort as a result of the group project. Another study in a group context showed that people who act in a manner inconsistent with a fundamental attitude of their group respond to inconsistency not in the usual manner of changing their attitudes toward the issues, but rather by derogating the outgroup. For example, members of the Republican Party in the United States who wrote an attitude-inconsistent essay advocating the Democratic candidate for president resolved their inconsistency by derogating the outgroup—that is, Democrats.

### Intergroup Processes

A more recent expansion of cognitive inconsistency research has taken it in a direction relevant to intergroup processes. Working from both cognitive dissonance theory and social identity theory—which describes when and why individuals identify with, and act as members of, social groups—researchers have begun to investigate what is termed *vicarious dissonance*. They have found that, in addition to experiencing personal cognitive dissonance when

we make our own choices or act in ways that are counterattitudinal, we may also experience dissonance vicariously whenever members of our social groups make choices or act in ways that are inconsistent with their attitudes. Because we are in many social groups, the opportunities to experience dissonance on behalf of fellow group members are numerous. The conceptual proposition that is at the core of vicarious cognitive dissonance is that dissonance brought about by the actions of a prototypical member of a social group will lead us, as fellow group members, to change our attitudes, even though we have no direct responsibility for the dissonance-inducing behavior.

In a typical vicarious dissonance study, a person is induced to evaluate speeches made by other group members, typically members of the same group or school as the participant. The participant overhears the group member agree to make an attitude-inconsistent statement under conditions that classically evoke dissonance. If the speechwriter and the actual participant share a common group identity, then the participant too experiences attitude change, despite having done nothing that should provoke dissonance. Moreover, the magnitude of the dissonance is a function of the strength of the social identification that participants feel with their social group.

This finding has broad implications for intergroup processes. For example, in cultures that emphasize group harmony and cohesiveness, the experience of vicarious dissonance should be quite high. One recent study in that area found that East Asians, who often do not show personal dissonance effects, strongly experienced vicarious dissonance when a fellow group member acted in an inconsistent manner. This finding was the latest in a series that has shown that, while personal inconsistency is dissonance provoking primarily in Western cultures, interpersonal dissonance also occurs in collectivist cultures such as those of Japan and Korea.

A representative study conducted with Japanese and Canadians of European descent showed that European participants experience dissonance when making difficult choices for themselves as individuals but that Japanese experienced dissonance only when making choices for fellow group members. These results suggest that group-based dissonance processes may be universally pervasive and therefore relevant to a wide range of people and situations.

Cognitive consistency research began in an individual context, with occasional research studies examining people as members of social groups. This research on individuals focused on their suffering from imbalanced relationships or dissonant cognitions as a function of mental representations inside their heads. The current interest in social identity and cultural psychology, however, has led to an explosion of research examining consistency from the perspective of the embeddedness of people in their cultures and within the social groups that comprise those cultures.

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*See also* Collective Self; Culture; Festinger, Leon; Social Identity Theory

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## COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

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The emergence of the Internet over the past 40 years has created a rich new arena for group activity. Specifically, where physical collocation was once a requirement for both group membership and communication, computer networks now create the opportunity to form and maintain groups independent of time and space. These are often called *distributed groups*. Tools for supporting distributed group work and play are collectively referred to as *collaboration technology*.

Early forms of collaboration technology emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as by-products of the first computer networks, such as the ARPAnet. Over time, many applications (e.g., electronic mail, or e-mail) designed to support remote computer operations came to be valuable on their own and

have become nearly ubiquitous as communication tools. The emergence of the Internet in the 1980s, and the explosion of network use associated with the rise of the Web in the 1990s, have accelerated the development of collaboration technology. Today, this technology spans a wide array of applications and services. Some of these would be recognizable to the builders of the ARPAnet (e.g., e-mail and instant messaging), but others probably could not have been imagined by them (e.g., virtual worlds, such as Second Life, and social networking sites, such as Facebook).

The development, adoption, and use of collaboration technology raise key questions about group processes and intergroup relations. Specifically, in traditional groups, physical proximity plays a central role in group formation, maintenance, and communication. In contrast, distributed groups mediate their activity through collaboration technology. Therefore, the success of distributed groups depends, to a large extent, on the ability of collaboration technology to allow distributed groups to perform as well, or maybe even better than, collocated groups. Much of the history of collaboration technology can be understood as attempts either to mimic the benefits of collocation (“being there” technology) or to exploit certain features of collaboration technology to create new benefits (“beyond being there” technology).

### “Being There” Technology

An important thrust in collaboration technology is an emphasis on real-time interaction that allows distributed participants to engage in activity at a distance as if they were collocated. Landmark instances of “being there” technology include (a) applications to share common views and control of documents and drawings, now common in the form of data conferencing tools such as WebEx; (b) applications that provide greater awareness of distant group members (e.g., “busy” or “away from desk”), now popular in the form of instant messaging tools such as MSN Messenger; and (c) applications to see and hear distant group members, such as videoconferencing. More recent instances of “being there” technology include virtual worlds such as Second Life, which provide simulated geographies and built environments in which individuals interact via computer-generated avatars.

Some “being there” technologies have achieved tremendous success and have come to define entirely new genres of interaction and affiliation. Consider, for example, adolescents’ use of text messaging and the proliferation of “textese.” Other forms of “being there” technology, such as data conferencing, have received broad adoption in certain contexts, such as within corporations to support distributed work teams. And even more novel “being there” technologies, such as virtual worlds, in some cases have attracted large numbers of users (e.g., the hundreds of thousands using Second Life) who have created vibrant “inworld” economies. Despite this growth, virtual worlds remain outside the mainstream of collaboration technology use.

### “Beyond Being There” Technology

An equally important thrust in collaboration technology is an emphasis on asynchronous interaction. This allows people who are not in the same place at the same time to engage in a collaborative or collective activity. Landmark instances of “beyond being there” technology include (a) applications to collect, process, and distribute user-contributed content—Wikipedia is the best known example; (b) applications to exploit, analyze, and visualize links and ties among individuals, such as the social-networking site Facebook; and (c) applications to process and distill patterns from collective behavior, such as the pagerank algorithm used by Google to sort the results of searches in terms of the frequency of pointers to a site. More recent instances of “beyond being there” technology include applications to aggregate small increments of human attention and labor into large-scale efforts, such as von Ahn’s “games with a purpose” (e.g., tagging all extant images on the Web), Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, NASA’s “clickworkers” (e.g., classifying craters from photographs of the Martian surface), and “crowdsourcing” (e.g., attempting to harness expertise that is dispersed and difficult to locate, such as use of the Innocentive Web site).

Some “beyond being there” technologies have achieved tremendous success and have come to define entirely new modes of production and work organization, such as Wikipedia or open source software projects. Similarly, pagerank and Google have redefined how people seek information—“to

google” is now a recognized verb form. Other forms of “beyond being there” technology, such as crowdsourcing, have also produced notable successes. For example, Mechanical Turk was used to accelerate the search for Jim Grey, a famous computer scientist who was lost at sea. Grey’s colleagues used Mechanical Turk to get thousands of volunteers to prescreen tens of thousands of satellite images of open ocean searching for evidence of Grey’s boat. Figuring out how to use crowdsourcing to integrate closely coupled, cognitively complex work has proved more elusive.

### New Directions in Collaboration Technology

Current research suggests important directions for the development of the next generation of collaboration technologies. In terms of “being there” technology, for example, continuing increases in network bandwidth, combined with advances in video resolution, have resulted in videoconferencing systems that show life-sized views of distant group members with sufficient clarity to reveal subtle nuances of communication, such as gaze direction and body language. Researchers have known for some time that users dislike videoconferencing due to the fuzziness of remote images, poor audio quality, and “choppiness” in video and audio transmissions. Modern systems, such as Cisco’s Telepresence, address these concerns by combining high definition video, spatially located audio (i.e., voices come from the direction of the speaker’s image on screen), and uniform room furnishings to create the illusion that distant group members are all together in the same space. The success of these systems may depend as much on their technical performance as it does on successful elaboration of group procedures and practices to accommodate the systems. Specifically, scheduled use of videoconferencing (e.g., formal meetings) does not create opportunities for spontaneous encounters. By contrast, continuous video links between remote public spaces do allow for chance meetings, which are an important way of coordinating work.

In terms of “beyond being there” technology, advances in productivity and performance will require a better understanding of what motivates individual contributions to contribution-based production systems. For instance, the success of recommender

systems, such as those used by Netflix and Amazon, depends on users rating or evaluating a sufficient number of movies or books. Motivating these contributions involves system designs that reduce free riding. In particular, people are more likely to make contributions when they feel that others, especially similar others, are also making contributions. In the future, the design of these “choice architectures” will be as significant to the success of “beyond being there” technologies as the design of the underlying technologies and interfaces.

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See also Communication Networks; Computer-Mediated Communication; Virtual/Internet Groups

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## COLLECTIVE GUILT

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Guilt is an unpleasant emotional reaction that occurs with the perception of having committed



some type of moral violation. Historically, psychological research on guilt has focused on the feelings of guilt that arise when people feel personally responsible for causing illegitimate harm to others. Recent research has revealed that people can have similar feelings of guilt when their *group* is perceived to be responsible for illegitimately harming members of another group. This *collective guilt* results from sharing a social identity with others whose actions represent a threat to the positivity of that identity. Thus even though others were responsible for the harm or moral violation, and the individual is not directly implicated in the harm-doing, the individual can still have feelings of collective guilt.

A wide range of intergroup inequalities can elicit these feelings, from the receipt of unearned benefits or privileges that members of other groups do not receive to more extreme forms of harm-doing, including genocide. Given the aversive nature of collective guilt, people are motivated to avoid or decrease its intensity. There are several methods for doing so; these generally involve distorting perceptions of the ingroup's behavior (e.g., minimizing the extent of harm done, denying the harmful actions entirely) or justifying its actions (e.g., because the victims deserved their outcomes or the ingroup had legitimate reasons for causing the harm it inflicted). Use of all of these options can help to maintain a positive social identity when even the gravest of ingroup harm-doing is confronted.

Despite its aversive nature, feeling collective guilt can lead to positive social outcomes, such as reducing negative attitudes toward the harmed outgroup and promoting intergroup reconciliation through apologies or reparations. These benefits are particularly likely when repairing the harm done is perceived to be not too difficult or costly, so that correcting the wrongs committed by the ingroup seems both feasible and worthwhile.

### What Causes Collective Guilt?

Several factors influence whether, and how much, collective guilt is experienced in response to reminders of ingroup harm-doing. First, one's social identity must be salient. For one to experience collective guilt, one must perceive oneself as a member of a social group that has committed illegitimate harm

against an outgroup. This produces a perceptual shift from thinking of oneself in terms of "I" or "me" toward thinking of oneself in terms of "we" or "us." In this way, the self can be linked with past or present ingroup harm-doing. For instance, contemporary Americans can certainly claim that they personally did not participate in slavery or the colonization of indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, when contemporary Americans think about themselves as part of the historical legacy, from which they may even benefit in the present, they can experience collective guilt based on the past actions of the larger "we."

The second factor that influences the extent to which collective guilt is experienced is collective responsibility. In order to feel collective guilt, it is important for people to perceive their group as responsible for the harm done to the outgroup. One basis for attributing responsibility to a group is perceiving that group as having benefited from the harm done to the outgroup. For instance, existing racial inequality can be framed in terms of the consequences that it has for outgroup members, or in terms of the consequences that it has for ingroup members. Thus researchers framed racial inequality in the United States in terms of Black disadvantage or White privilege. The framing of racial inequality as "Black disadvantage" allowed White participants to feel less collectively responsible for the harm done to the outgroup, which lessened collective guilt. Framing racial inequality as "White privilege" increased White participants' feelings of collective responsibility for the harm done to the outgroup, leading to greater collective guilt.

The third factor that influences the experience of collective guilt is the perception that the ingroup's actions toward the outgroup were illegitimate. Collective guilt requires that people see their ingroup's actions as unjustified, immoral, or wrong based on existing ingroup norms. Because it is threatening to conclude that one's group has acted unjustly, people will employ a number of strategies that are aimed at justifying the ingroup's actions. To the extent that the ingroup's harmful actions can be interpreted as legitimate and reflecting noble intentions—especially those that can be construed as protecting the ingroup from harm—collective guilt for even the most severe harm will be lessened.

The experience of collective guilt is not simply a function of empathy for those harmed. Rather, the

experience of collective guilt reflects the distress that is aroused when the ingroup's morality is questioned. Two studies have directly tested whether empathy for the victims or distress about one's own social identity determines the extent to which collective guilt is experienced. In these studies, perceiving the ingroup (i.e., men) as responsible for the inequality that harms the outgroup (i.e., women) was found to increase collective guilt via self-focused distress and not by empathy for the outgroup. This not only discounts the view of guilt as stemming from empathy, but it also supports the notion that guilt is a self-conscious emotion.

### What Reduces Collective Guilt?

There are numerous means by which collective guilt can be undermined. For this reason, collective guilt has been described as a fragile emotion. Collective guilt can be lessened in at least four ways.

First, people can deny the ingroup's harmful actions, or downplay the severity of the harm done to an outgroup. Perceiving fewer victims or even fewer ingroup members as involved in the harm-doing can lessen collective guilt.

Second, people can deny the ingroup's responsibility for harm done to an outgroup. For example, men could blame women who are raped by suggesting that women somehow encourage the perpetrators, whether through their appearance or behavior. By blaming female victims for the harm done to them, men can escape feeling any collective guilt for their group's harmful treatment of women. Moreover, people can deny the existence of collective responsibility, choosing instead to claim that only individuals are responsible for their behavior. For instance, American soldiers who served in Vietnam could deny collective responsibility for the harm done to Vietnamese civilians by suggesting that such harm was committed by a few bad ingroup members and those alone should be held responsible. When individual members of the ingroup are singled out for blame, then people can escape feeling collective guilt for the group's harmful actions.

Third, people can claim that their group's behavior was legitimate. For instance, Jewish research participants have reported that Israel's harm to Palestinians is justified because it is in response to Palestinian terrorist attacks against

Israel; such claims undermine feelings of collective guilt. The same is true of Americans. When Americans are reminded of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, they are less likely to feel collective guilt for subsequent harm done to Iraqis—U.S. actions in Iraq are seen as a legitimate response to al Qaeda-sponsored terrorism. Another way to legitimize the ingroup's harmful treatment of outgroups is to dehumanize the victims. By portraying members of outgroups whom we harm as either animals or machines, we can make our ingroup's behavior appear natural and even necessary. Such perceptions allow people to escape feeling collective guilt for harm-doing that is intentionally inflicted.

Fourth, people can focus on the benefits of the harm done to outgroup members, rather than the costs. For instance, Dutch research participants who read a benevolent description of their ingroup's historical colonization of Indonesia (e.g., "they built roads and schools") experienced less collective guilt than those who read a less benevolent description of their ingroup's colonization (e.g., "they annexed land and killed natives"). When the harmful treatment of the outgroup is portrayed as turning out positively, then people can escape collective guilt for their group's harmful actions.

People's feeling collective guilt may not be sufficient to translate into their reconciliation with the outgroup and future positive behavior toward outgroup members. In order to initiate action, people must also feel some amount of efficacy to bring about desired changes and believe that it is possible to make up for the harm done. For instance, when men were led to believe that the difficulty of making reparations to women for the harm done to them (e.g., the economic disadvantages women have suffered due to institutionalized sexism) would be very costly, collective guilt was lower than when the cost was deemed to be more moderate and therefore potentially manageable. Thus, when people believe they can bring about change that will result in more positive relations between groups, feelings of collective guilt are most likely to encourage reparations for past harm.

Although collective guilt is an aversive emotion, it is predictive of a number of positive social consequences. A variety of studies have shown that the more White Americans feel collective guilt for

racial inequality, the more they support affirmative action programs for the harmed group. Feelings of collective guilt also predict support for apologies to the harmed group, as well as financial reparations. Perhaps most important, feeling collective guilt for racial inequality can decrease racism.

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See also Intergroup Emotions Theory; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## COLLECTIVE INDUCTION

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*Collective induction* is the cooperative search for rules and principles. For example, members of a scientific research team observe patterns and regularities in some domain (e.g., biology), propose a theory to explain them, derive hypotheses from the theory, and use experiments or controlled observations to test the hypotheses. If the results of their research support the hypotheses, team members become more confident in their theory. If the results fail to support the hypotheses, team members revise or reject their theory. This entry discusses research on collective induction that models the behavior of scientific research teams and similar cooperative groups, such as auditing teams, air crash investigators, and art experts.

### An Experimental Procedure for Research

In studies of collective induction, group members are gathered around a table and informed that their objective is to induce a rule based on standard playing cards with four suits (clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades) of 13 cards each. Aces are given the numerical value 1, deuces 2, and so on up to kings, which are given the value of 13. The rule may be based on any of the characteristics of the cards, such as suit (e.g., “diamonds”) or number (e.g., “eights”), or any combination of numerical and logical operations on suit and number (e.g., “red queens,” “even diamonds alternate with odd spades,” “red queens or black jacks”). The experimenter then places a card that is an example of the rule (e.g., the eight of diamonds for the rule “diamonds”) on the table.

Each trial consists of three stages: (1) each group member records his or her hypothesis about the rule, (2) the group proposes a hypothesis, and (3) the group plays any one of the 52 cards. As cards are played, the experimenter arranges them on the table in a way that provides information about what the correct rule might be (with cards that are examples of the rule placed beside one another, and cards that are not examples placed below the last card played). This procedure continues for 10 trials, at which point the group makes a final hypothesis and is informed whether it is correct or incorrect.

### Collective Versus Individual Induction

Groups solve these rule-learning problems better than the average individual (e.g., 20 four-person groups versus 20 individuals). Beyond this, groups have been compared to the best of an equivalent number of individuals (e.g., 20 four-person groups versus the best 20 of 80 individuals). In this research, the group or individual solves the problem from one array of hypotheses and card plays (as described above), or from two, three, four, or five arrays of hypotheses and card plays. In all cases, card plays can be viewed as “evidence” regarding the correct rule. Including two or more arrays is useful, because this group models the procedure of a team of scientists conducting two or more simultaneous experiments in a particular domain (e.g., synthesizing a compound).

With one, two, three, or four arrays of hypotheses and card plays, groups perform at the level of the second-best individuals. With five arrays, however, groups perform at the level of the best individuals. This is interesting, because it is relatively uncommon for groups to perform at this level. Studies varying both the number of hypotheses and the number of card plays (or evidence) demonstrate that card plays are relatively more important than hypotheses in helping groups determine the correct rule. Although group members are generally able to generate and propose an adequate number of hypotheses, they need sufficient evidence to test and evaluate them.

### Simultaneous Collective and Individual Induction

Many scientific research teams conduct experiments and also exchange hypotheses and/or evidence with independent individual scientists who are working on the same problem. For example, a team of virologists at the Centers for Disease Control may exchange hypotheses and experimental results with independent researchers in other laboratories. In research on such simultaneous collective and individual induction, a group and one or more individuals solved the same problem at the same pace in separate rooms.

In four conditions, the group and individual(s) (1) exchanged hypotheses and card plays on each trial, (2) exchanged hypotheses only, (3) exchanged card plays only, or (4) solved the problem independently without exchange. Groups performed better than the individuals, and both exchange of hypotheses and exchange of card plays improved group and individual performance. Moreover, group performance was improved relatively more by exchange of card plays, whereas individual performance was improved relatively more by exchange of hypotheses. This again shows that groups are able to generate sufficient numbers of hypotheses but need evidence to test and evaluate them. Additional analyses indicated that, across successive pairs of trials, groups influenced individuals more than individuals influenced groups.

### The Processes of Collective Induction

After the correct rule is chosen by the experimenter and an initial example is designated, all proposed

hypotheses are either plausible (consistent with the evidence to that point) or “nonplausible” (inconsistent with the evidence to that point). Research indicates that groups use an interesting and orderly process of choosing group hypotheses from members’ individual hypotheses. If at least two group members propose correct and/or plausible hypotheses, the group selects one of them. However, if only one member or no member proposes a correct or plausible hypothesis, the group selects among all the proposed hypotheses (correct, plausible, or nonplausible). If a majority of members proposes the same hypothesis, the group chooses this hypothesis, but if there is no majority, the group takes turns in choosing each member’s hypothesis over successive trials. On approximately 20% of the trials, the group proposes an emergent hypothesis that no member has proposed, but these emergent hypotheses are rarely correct.

If one group member proposes the correct hypothesis on a trial, the final group hypothesis will be correct with a very high probability (.99), but if no group member proposes the correct hypothesis, the final group hypothesis will be correct with a very low probability (.01). Thus, groups are remarkably good at recognizing and adopting a correct hypothesis if it is proposed by a member, but they are remarkably poor at forming correct emergent hypotheses that no group member has proposed.

### Conclusion

Research on collective induction yields several general conclusions. Collective induction is superior to the induction of the average individual and equal to the induction of the best individual when the group is given a large amount of information from many arrays of hypotheses and card plays. Group induction benefits more from increasing evidence than from increasing hypotheses. Groups influence individuals more than individuals influence groups in simultaneous collective and individual induction. Groups follow an orderly process in forming hypotheses from the hypotheses of their members. And finally, groups rarely form correct emergent hypotheses that no member has proposed, but groups can eventually recognize and adopt correct hypotheses if they are proposed by a member. These results increase our understanding of how

cooperative groups, such as scientific research teams, auditing teams, air crash investigators, and art experts, engage in collective induction.

*Patrick R. Laughlin*

*See also* Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making

#### Further Readings

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## COLLECTIVE MOVEMENTS AND PROTEST

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The study of *collective movements and protest* has roots in the 19th century and has long been part of the social sciences curriculum. In the 1970s, new theoretical approaches and new empirical methodologies revitalized the field. The next several decades witnessed an efflorescence of research by practitioners of various social science disciplines—especially sociology, but also political science, history, and anthropology. Some researchers focused on the internal dynamics of collective mobilizations, including interpersonal processes; others addressed the ways broad social and political contexts shaped movements and were shaped by them. Building on the scholarly advances of the previous 30 years, researchers in the early 21st century have been raising new questions.

### Historical Background

Social and political transformation in the recent past and anticipated future led Americans and Europeans in the 19th century to reflect on collective movements and social protest. The social sciences emerged at this time, in the wake of the American and French Revolutions. Industrialization

and urbanization had brought increasing numbers of people together in new ways and added new tactics and modes of organization to long familiar forms of popular protest. The emergence of democratic politics impelled the educated and well-off to try to understand the thinking of the large numbers of their fellow citizens who were acquiring the right to vote, and to understand popular participation in transgressive as well as routinized forms of political action.

One very influential interpretation of popular collective action came to be known as the “collective behavior school” by virtue of its emphasis on the ways in which the actions of people in collectives seemed to defy what one would expect of a rational individual. This approach was developed by several important writers in late-19th-century France and continued by U.S. writers well into the 20th century. Writers in this tradition saw unusual fads, senseless panics, riotous crowds, and even social revolutions not merely as separate curiosities but as phenomena with common properties subject to common explanation. Some writers in this tradition stressed the ways in which the interactions of people could lead to a surrender of the capacity for realistic assessment of the consequences of action. In this line of thought, group members would uncritically imitate each other, buoyed up by group approval, with collectively irrational results. This variant made social psychological processes central to their explanations. The French writer Gabriel Tarde was one of the foundational figures with his stress on the sources and consequence of “contagion” as otherwise puzzling actions spread from one person to another. In the United States, a major figure was Herbert Blumer, who classified crowds into distinctive varieties and for whom crowd behavior went through a succession of lawlike stages.

A second approach was to stress the significance of social context. A very common argument in this tradition was that social transformations in the modern world, especially rural to urban migration, industrialization, and access to mass communications, broke down the traditions that had held people in their conservative grip. Consequently, they disrupted the networks of family and village that had socialized the young and monitored the actions of adults, and exposed people to an unfamiliar social world in the growing towns and the new

routines of an industrializing order. As people moved from village to town, such processes both removed the inhibitions that had been built into rural life and exposed the urban newcomers to messages from manipulative elites that they were unable to evaluate. The combined result of such processes was dangerously irrational behavior. This argument about modernizing contexts as a source of collective irrationalism could be combined with the social psychological properties of collectives by contending that those shorn from the familiar and customary order were prone to seek companionship in mass organization and to listen to leaders promising simple solutions to the ills of modern life. Pioneering French sociologist Émile Durkheim influentially described modernizing change in Europe as a breakdown of customary norms and practices. The notion of breakdown seemed to several generations of social scientists to explain why contemporary Europe and North America fostered apparently irrational movements despite the advances of science and technology. In the 1960s, American sociologist Neil Smelser synthesized this line of thinking in his book *Theory of Collective Behavior*.

Other approaches were also being developed, both in theory and in empirical observation. Students of European labor movements, including Marxists as well as others, thought at least some kinds of protest derived from accurate understandings of material conditions on the part of workers in the modern industrial sectors. Investigations into labor movements sometimes drew upon considerable empirical research both on the contexts of work and on such collective actions as strikes. Labor movements acquired a rather special position for some observers. This was especially so in Europe, where it became common to distinguish two classes of collective phenomena, the “social” movement and the “national” movement, the former stressing actors whose common class interests infused their self-representation, identity, and action and the latter acting on the basis of real or imagined commonalities of history, language, culture, and geography. This mode of classification suggested on the one hand that labor movements were the core of social movement studies, and on the other that nationalism was the proper subject matter of other scholars with other tools.

Nonetheless, the general sense that there was a range of phenomena that suggested collective

irrationality was intuitively appealing to those afraid of riotous crowds, bemused by odd fashions and fads, saddened by the erosion of valued traditions, and/or appalled by revolutions. The rise of fascist movements after World War I seemed to lend additional credence to this picture, since these movements were seen as both irrational and popularly supported, and since they were commonly understood as originating in modern, mass societies battered by the shock of war followed by economic crises. The general notion that collective behavior was a type of temporary psychopathology remained strong.

### New Evidence and New Ideas

During the 1960s, the accumulation of a wide variety of new evidence called into question some of the prevailing theories, and new theoretical approaches were soon developed. Over the next several decades, there was an explosive growth in research in the field. Good research into the participants in the so-called ghetto disturbances in many U.S. cities strongly indicated that the events tended to involve long-time residents of those cities, not newcomers torn loose from some other way of life. New research by social historians of France and England revealed that participants in many urban disturbances in the 18th and 19th centuries were people without criminal records, with stable occupations, and with families. Research by social historians and anthropologists on migrants from countryside to town in the past and present showed strong propensities to maintain ties to village life rather than to experience complete ruptures. Protest began to seem a form of political action rather than a collectively induced bout of irrationality, more to be thought of among other political phenomena than in the company of fads and crazes, and deserving of more scrutiny by political scientists and less scrutiny by students of mental aberration.

At about the same time, social scientists were suggesting four new models for the explanation of protest, drawing on extensive empirical investigation for support and building conceptual bridges to other fields of social research.

### *Resource Mobilization*

To the pioneers of this approach, John McCarthy and Meyer Zald, the core actors in protest and

other forms of collective action were organizations engaged in the strategic deployment of available resources, rather than individuals committed to irrational actions. Such organizations had actual and potential access to such resources as the time of supporters of organizational goals or the funds supplied by sympathizers. They might be constrained in various ways by resource deficits; an organization that could rely on the time of passionate enthusiasts might well make different strategic decisions from one that relied on donations from cooler sympathizers. One organization might launch street protests and another hire lobbyists. One might develop mechanisms to arouse and sustain commitment to highly risky personal actions, while another recruited professional specialists in making fundraising appeals. McCarthy and Zald paid a good deal of attention to the ways in which movement organizations might permit a professionalized stratum to make a career in the movement. The ways in which movements might “frame” issues and actions could be seen by adherents of this model as rational strategies for inducing commitments of resources from actual or potential contributors of time or money or as devices to achieve various goals in dealing with opponents, other movement organizations, or the public. Through the resource mobilization model, social movement theory was able to appropriate ideas drawn from the sociology of organizations.

### *Political Process*

Emerging at about the same time, the political process model looked at movement organizations as engaged in strategic interactions with their environment, including potential allies and opponents, governments, and the public. Movement organizations were seen as modifying their strategies and tactics in light of the responses of their environments and of their successes and failures in attaining goals. For organizations that were engaged in extremely contentious causes or that embraced forbidden tactics, simply surviving in the face of opponents’ counteraction was likely to be among the key goals. As researchers came to chart the ways in which organizations altered their actions in response to success and failure and to other actions by allies and opponents, phenomena that had to earlier generations seemed instances of irrational belief and

action seemed explicable as evolving organizational strategy. When Suzanne Staggenborg and David Meyer analyzed social conflicts through the lens of movement–countermovement interaction, they were drawing on this young, lively theoretical tradition. Social movement organizations could be seen as one kind of contender for influence, along with the interest groups that had long been noted by students of democracy. The concept of “opportunity” became central to such interpretations, since movements were seen as adapting to available possibilities. Through the political process model, social movement theory was able to draw on ideas developed by political scientists.

### *New Social Movement (NSM) Theory*

Scholars, at first particularly in Europe, were paying attention to what protesters were demanding and noted a reduced emphasis on the class-based themes with which certain branches of social movement scholarship had been preoccupied. A variety of new concerns seemed to dominate recent protest politics—feminism, human rights, critiques of consumer culture, concerns over alternate lifestyles—and these concerns were often carried by less hierarchically structured and less centrally controlled organizations than the long-familiar unions and socialist parties, and with significant middle-class participation. The new movements seemed as much about expressing identities as about satisfying interests, and as much aimed at altering cultures as at altering the distribution of material well-being, often describing themselves as something new. Scholars like Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci saw the explanation in broad changes in European social context after World War II. The achievement of working-class prosperity in postfascist Europe not only reduced the intensity of the class-based conflicts of the past, but also incorporated working-class politics within the framework of securely democratic political processes and extensive social welfare institutions. But new issues emerged and energized a different kind of social movement activism on behalf of other goals.

Critics who took a broader historical or geographical view were quick to point out that the sorts of identity issues that postwar new social movement (NSM) theorists held to be new could be

found in the working-class mobilizations of the industrializing era or that environmental issues had emerged not only among the well-off citizens of prosperous democracies but in the slums of places like Rio de Janeiro. While some social movement scholars tended to be simply dismissive of NSM theorists, however, their attention to identity, culture, the diversity of participants, and the ways goals and organizational forms shift in response to long-term broad changes in economy and polity were drawn on by many others, even if specific claims about novelty and geography proved empirically untenable. In addition, through new social movement theory, the study of movements was able to draw on ideas from the sociology of culture.

### *Collective Action*

This fourth innovation took the rational individual actor as central. The “collective action problem,” as understood by economists like Mancur Olson, was explaining how individual human beings could manage to come together for collective goals. This was initially only incidentally a question of how they could come together in social movement activism in particular.

This could be thought of as several separable problems.

- *The free rider problem.* Why should a rational individual participate in collective action for a collective objective (even if that individual were to benefit from success), rather than sit back and let others take the risks and pay the costs?
- *The problem of trust.* In circumstances under which the participation of many would be essential to achievement of the goal, why should a rational individual trust those essential others to participate, especially if the risks of failure would be to leave one significantly less well off than before (for example, dead, imprisoned, fired, or poorer)? This can be formulated in terms of the well-known game prisoner’s dilemma.
- *The problem of personal efficacy.* To the extent that one could trust that many others would participate, why would one pay the costs and run the risks of participation unless one thought that one’s own addition to the collective action would be the crucial difference between success and failure?

Since it is evident that there is a great deal of social movement activism, either these dilemmas are in practice solved in some way or the issues are poorly posed. Some social movement scholars essentially accept the agenda of trying to explain how rational individuals come to participate in social movement activism. Some argue that there are many ways of resolving these dilemmas and that participants do not invariably experience them as a problem to be overcome. (If, for example, people experience the solidarity of shared danger as a reward, then the apparent cost of risky collective action is simply an observer’s error.) Through collective action theory, whether embraced, modified, or rejected, social movement scholars came to refine their sense of the rewards and costs of action.

### **The Standard Agenda**

Since the 1960s, these four approaches, separately or in combination, have informed the interpretation of data gathered by an increasingly numerous body of researchers using a wide array of empirical materials. Archival research, statistical analyses, sample surveys, ethnographies, and other techniques have been used in the study of social movements. Even more than by the embrace of new theories, social movement scholarship for the past several decades has been distinguished from that of the 19th century and earlier 20th century by drawing on superior research.

Together these approaches constituted an agenda for the study of protest movements that became the main line of approach for the next several decades. The standard agenda saw movements as episodes in which actors of various sorts developed strategies and tactics that made the best of available resources, reacted to threats or seized opportunities they for the most part did not themselves create, and struggled to frame issues in ways that would energize supporters, attract allies, neutralize opponents, appeal to powerholders, or justify their actions to themselves. Different elements of this agenda appealed variously to scholars committed to “structuralist,” “culturalist,” or “rationalist” modes of explanation, who invested much energy debating whose mode of explanation was more fundamental. For those of a more structuralist bent, a good explanation



would be one that would delineate the institutions that endowed various actors with differing interests and resources; culturalists tried to grasp prevailing values within which movement activists maneuvered to demonstrate the worthiness of their purposes and methods; and rationalists tried to show how actors endowed with particular interests would hit on particular strategies to defend and advance them.

Other researchers, however, found the standard agenda too constraining and in increasing numbers were urging the field to move into new directions.

### Recent Directions

#### *Expanded History*

Increased attention to the interactions of movements with their contexts, including other organizations and especially governments, moved beyond short-term studies of particular episodes or campaigns to long-term historical change. Movement scholars explored the ways patterns of mobilization, expression of demands, targets, tactics, and modes of movement organization changed in response to large social, economic, and political changes like urbanization, the growth of effective states, democratization, or, in the late 20th century, globalization. Charles Tilly argued that there are “repertoires of contention” that are available to participants in conflict and that these repertoires are formed at particular historical junctures. The “demonstration,” for example, entered the repertoire of contention in Europe in the early 19th century and then spread far and wide. So the ways in which people engage in conflict tends to be situated within a limited array of culturally available forms, although at important moments new forms are invented or old forms stop being used. Historians have made enormous contributions to the study of particular forms, such as the “food riot” that was of great importance in English and French history from the 17th century into the 19th century. By extending the terrain of research back before the era of democracy, it became possible to conduct empirical research into how subsequent democratization reshaped social conflict. These forays into the past by social movement scholars dovetailed with the movement among historians to write “history from below.”

#### *Expanded Geography*

In addition to shining the light of scholarship into the past of the countries that became wealthy democracies, scholars took note of the great geographic concentration of high-quality empirical research within the wealthier parts of the world. These were places where data collection was easier, and they were the places social movement scholars lived and worked. But this meant a restriction on the range of social contexts within which protest and collective action more generally were being studied. Beginning in the 1970s in Mediterranean Europe, the greatest wave of democratization in history opened up new opportunities to conduct research and posed an array of interesting comparative questions for students of protest and collective action. Spanish and Portuguese scholars explored the role of protest mobilizations in those countries. The role of social movements in the termination of military regimes in the 1980s was one important focus of new study in Latin America. With the development of the ensuing democratizing regimes, students of that region’s protest patterns were examining which sorts of movements, grievances, and actions were continuing those of the military period and which were new. They were addressing as well which aspects of mobilizations grew weaker in the democratic period. With the fall of European Communist regimes in 1989 and beyond, the democratic transition in South Africa of the 1990s, and democratic movements and transitions in Asia, similar sorts of questions were framing research in those places as well. Those aiming at large theoretical statements were coming to have a much greater range of well-researched cases on which to draw, and this was as much a challenge to generalization as it was a spur to new theory. Some scholars were arguing for a broader geographical extension still, bringing together into a comparative framework the forms of social movement activism of wealthy democracies and the forms of protest characteristic of non-democratic regimes.

#### *Transnational Processes*

One rather special aspect of the geographic expansion of protest studies was attention to movements that themselves moved on a large geographic stage. Students of protest and collective

action were paying a lot of attention to movements that in some sense crossed borders, which could come in many guises:

- participants traveling to distant sites for concerted action
- organizational ties that crossed national frontiers
- protesters targeting institutions of transnational governance like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank
- immigrants becoming involved as participants or as objects of protest
- transnational institutions having an impact on national politics (which became increasingly common within the European Union)
- transnational identities playing a conspicuous role in social conflict (for example, in Islamicist movements)
- protesters in one part of the world learning from protesters far off through vivid television footage and exchanging ideas through e-mail and the Internet

### *Bringing Back Emotion*

In rejecting the older collective behavior model of irrational action induced by collective processes, some scholars were suggesting that the field had gone too far in the direction of seeing movement organizations and individual participants engaged in consciously calculated behavior toward specified ends. Some scholars were now arguing that protest and activism were as much matters of the heart as of the head. In considering the claims of injustice that so often were a part of movement life, could one do without taking into account situations that elicit anger, disgust, and humiliation? Could one explain why one appeal succeeds in mobilizing participation and another does not without taking into account the ways in which shame can become pride? Could one understand how social activism was sustained over time without considering the pleasure social activists sometimes take in the fellowship formed in working together for a common purpose?

### *Microprocesses in Context*

Researchers were using varied methodologies to address the interpersonal mechanisms that brought

people into protest, studying recruitment into a very wide variety of organizations and causes, from peaceful protest carried out in public view to violent acts prepared by clandestine organizations. Participants were interviewed while demonstrations were taking place, in prison after arrest, or years after various events took place. Researchers collected participants' accounts of the processes that led them to activism and of their lives while they were activists. This research suggested that recruitment was frequently a network phenomenon. People often went to their first meeting or first demonstration because a friend was going. Although people sometimes chose movements out of deep affinity for a cause, it also often happened that deep ideological affinity only developed as a consequence, not a cause, of participation. Particularly in the subset of causes known as "high risk activism," participation itself led to increased trust in fellow activists and increased distance from previous acquaintances outside the movement. Activist groups could thus develop distinctive subcultures.

### *Beyond Organizations and Beyond the State*

Following the standard agenda, a great deal of research had accumulated on the ways in which organizations recruited members, crafted strategies and tactics, and dealt with each other in forming alliances, competing for resources, and opposing one another as they struggled to shape state policies. Thus the *movement organization* and the *state* became central concepts for the analysis of protest. Some researchers aimed at reconceptualizing the study of protest in ways that made one or both of these concepts less central.

#### **Movement Subcultures and Milieu**

Some scholars, like David Meyer, suggested that there were movement subcultures formed around adherents of change, who took their propensity to protest from cause to cause, and from organization to organization, and whose careers as protesters and activists were an important object of study. The formation and sustenance of such subcultures seemed a new subject matter not exhausted by the study of the strategies of movement organization. Others suggested that one could identify venues where activists, potential activists, and nonactivists

met and created protest-oriented places that functioned as sources of protest identity and recruitment, yet were distinguishable from the organizations into which they fed. Particular bars, cafes, concerts, parks, or neighborhoods could be places strongly flavored by certain social and political attitudes and outlooks, shaping and nurturing protest but readily overlooked by an exclusive focus on organizations that acted.

### Reconsidering the State

Some held that the same sorts of processes that protesters deployed in relation to states occurred in relation to other defined sites of hierarchical power. Others went further, suggesting that if the structures that sustain social hierarchies are located inside each of us through beliefs taken in as children or fostered by social interactions as adults, then one could think of action directed at changing such attitudes, socialization processes, and interactions as crucial sites of change. In this perspective, a group of people meeting in each others' homes for the purpose of mutual support in inner change could be thought of as participating in social activism even if no publicly visible protest against public policies ensued. The field of protest studies, in fact, has significant disagreement over how to define a social movement. For some, the existence of publicly visible actions in interaction with a state is critical, but for others any concerted action, whether publicly visible or hidden away somewhere, and whether directed at a state or not, constitutes a sign of social movement activism.

### Consequences

While much of protest and movement activism involves claims of acting on behalf of change, the study of the effectiveness of collective action in bringing about change has emerged as a relatively neglected area of research. The difficulties are of several sorts:

- *Conceptual.* What sorts of change should be looked for? And on what time scale?
- *Analytic.* Since movements are generally happening at the same time as many other things, demonstrating the precise impact that movements have had on policy changes can be a difficult task.

- *Relevant data.* Since data on policy change are generally going to be quite different from data on movement actions, the incorporation of appropriate data will often mean a very much larger research endeavor.

Despite these difficulties, scholars were recognizing the study of movement impact as a necessary addition to the research agenda.

### Conclusion

Four decades after new theory and superior empirical research challenged the kinds of analysis that had developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the study of protest, collective action, and social movements is livelier than ever, moving in new directions, and with the kinds of disagreements among practitioners that, in raising basic questions, inspires new research.

*John Markoff*

*See also* Civil Rights Movement; Crowds; Free Riding; Ideology; Multiple Identities; Nationalism and Patriotism; Organizations; Relative Deprivation; Virtual/Internet Groups

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## COLLECTIVE SELF

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*Collective self* is a term used in social psychology to refer to those aspects of self that derive from the groups a person identifies with or belongs to as a member. When the collective self is active, a person construes the self as “we” based on attributes that are shared with other group members, rather than simply as “I” based on attributes that are uniquely personal. Viewed historically, this psychological focus on a social self rather than an individual self has been slow in coming, though the concept has long been recognized in sociology. The collective self taps into group membership and is activated when a particular group becomes salient at a moment in time. When this happens, the person draws on a relevant group membership to make inferences of self-worth and sometimes to take action in concert with others. Research and theory in this field is at the intersection point of social psychology and sociology, though there have been some recent contributions within political psychology.

### Two Kinds of Self

The idea that the self-concept develops exclusively from individual experience held sway in social psychology for many years, ignoring much of what early sociologists such as G. H. Mead and Charles Cooley had to say about the interplay between individuals and their society, and about how the self is socially constructed. More recently, social psychologists have come to accept that in characterizing the self as a purely individual entity a great deal of psychological meaning is lost. Many contemporary

scholars have argued that there are two kinds of self, the individual self and the collective self. Each has its peculiar body of self-knowledge and both provide a means of self-definition.

The individual self is organized around a set of personal attributes that, like a fingerprint, are unique and differentiate a person (“I”) from all others (“you”). So, for example, if I am kind but fastidious, hardworking but temperamental, shy but reliable, then such attributes are what make me a different person from you. In contrast, the collective self is constructed from attributes that are shared with other members of the ingroup. Its function is to differentiate the person from others who are not group members, thus distinguishing “we” from “they.”

People belong to a variety of groups, some of which are important in defining a number of collective selves, such as ethnicity, race, gender, and nationality. One’s membership in groups can vary in salience at different times. If someone is Swiss and crosses into Italy, it is highly likely that nationality, in this case based on attributes shared with others who are Swiss, will be highly accessible (i.e., easily brought to mind).

By learning to identify with a particular group, a person acquires a specific collective self and a set of group norms that can guide how to think and act appropriately.

### Collective Action

Because the individual self and the collective self are aspects of the self-concept, both are located within the person and function at that level. Unlike the individual self, the collective self provides the person with a mechanism for responding to a social situation in unison with others. It can both motivate and guide behavior in one-on-one encounters with members of outgroups, or when a person is acting as part of a larger group (e.g., as in a political demonstration). The collective self can therefore serve as a platform for *collective action*, which social identity theory (SIT) equates with *social change*.

As conceived by Henri Tajfel, social change is predicated on a belief system in which intergroup boundaries are thought to be impermeable to “passing,” for example, the Hindu caste system in India. As a result, a lower status individual can

improve his or her self-esteem defined by caste only by challenging the legitimacy of the higher status group's position. Whether or not some form of group action is possible depends on how the status quo (the existing status and power hierarchy) is perceived. Is it secure or insecure? If lower status individuals think it is stable, legitimate, and therefore secure, it may be impossible to imagine a different world—an alternative social structure.

In such circumstances there is no path for collective action. However, there are socially creative strategies that groups can use to foster a positive self-image for the collective self:

- Subordinate groups can make intergroup comparisons on novel or unorthodox dimensions that favor their group. For example, in a French study by Gerard Lemaire, children took part in an intergroup competition to build the best hut. Lemaire found that when groups were provided with poor building materials, and therefore could not win, they became creative by emphasizing how good a garden they had made.
- Groups can try to change the consensual value attached to ingroup characteristics (e.g., scientists with insufficient funds to purchase sophisticated equipment can highlight the conceptual advances of their work).
- They can compare themselves favorably with other groups also of lower status (e.g., working-class Hispanics pinpointing ways in which they are superior to working-class Whites).

The contexts in which collective action occurs require a belief system with distinctive features. First, lower status people need to believe that the status quo is illegitimate, unstable, and thus insecure. Second, they need to have cognitive alternatives (i.e., conceive of a different and more promising social order). If both of these conditions are met, direct *social competition* is likely. This manifests itself in actual intergroup conflict. Such conflict could take several forms, including civil rights action, political lobbying, public demonstrations, and even terrorism, revolution, or war. As Stephen Reicher has observed, social movements typically emerge under these circumstances.

SIT incorporates both social psychological concepts and social structural (macro) concepts, as does *system justification theory*. John Jost and his

associates developed this theory to bring ideology to center stage—an ideology that favors the status quo, even when this conflicts with the interests of the individual or of the group. Ironically, lower status group members sometimes subscribe to this ideology even when it legitimizes their current status and maintains their position of disadvantage. Members of a subordinate group may do this to reduce uncertainty by assuming that it is better to live in disadvantage and be certain of one's place than to challenge the status quo and enter unknown territory.

### Collective Self-Esteem and Ethnicity

A group-based definition of the self can lead to depressed self-esteem, for example, among members of disadvantaged minorities. Studies of young children's ethnic identity in the United States and elsewhere have provided supporting evidence. A series of American studies of ethnic choices made by children from the late 1930s to the early 1960s showed that

- White children identified with and preferred to be with White children;
- Black children identified with and preferred to be with White children;
- Black children had lower self-esteem.

In 1954, the eminent Black American researcher Kenneth Clark appeared as a witness in the landmark United States Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. He testified that generations of Black children's self-esteem had been extensively damaged over time. Flowing from this case, the legal decision to outlaw school segregation was instrumental in legitimizing the civil rights movement in the United States.

Clark's research was criticized for its assumption that doll preferences reflected children's self-esteem levels. However, Graham Vaughan found two stable trends in international ethnic identity studies that are consistent with Clark's conclusions: (1) ethnic minorities that are disadvantaged (educationally, economically, politically) are typified by lowered self-esteem when intergroup comparisons are made and (2) social change in the status relationship between ethnic groups leads to a significant improvement in minority pride and

individuals' feelings of self-worth. By 1970, the ethnic choices made by Black children in the United States reflected the phenomenon of "Black Is Beautiful" that followed the success of the American Black Power movement in the late 1960s. There was a similar trend in a series of New Zealand studies of cohorts tested in different time periods. Young Maori children switched from pro-White choices to pro-Maori choices against the backdrop of a Brown Power movement.

Findings from ethnic identity research testify to the power of the collective self as a focal point in the processes of social movements and social change. Collective self-esteem can be linked to psychological health. A heightened sense of pride in one's ethnicity or gender, or any other valued social category, can contribute significantly to a positive view of oneself defined in group terms.

*Graham M. Vaughan*

*See also* Civil Rights Movement; Collective Movements and Protest; Collectivism/Individualism; Ethnicity; Self-Esteem; Social Identity Theory; Symbolic Interactionism; System Justification Theory

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## COLLECTIVISM/INDIVIDUALISM

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*Collectivism* is a societal orientation toward promoting the well-being of the collective, whereas *individualism* is a societal orientation toward the well-being of individuals. Collectivism and individualism are important concepts in group processes and intergroup relations because these concepts capture two fundamental motivations of homo sapiens: "getting along" and "getting ahead." Because humans are social animals living in a group that often has complicated internal structures (e.g., an organization), we must get along with other group members while simultaneously trying to get ahead of them.

Collectivism and individualism can be understood as two significant ways to deal with these two fundamental human needs at the level of society. Society consists of multiple groups that compete with one another for resources for survival. Thus, in addition to an individual's need for survival, the group has its own need for survival. Collectivism can then be considered a solution that attempts to maximize harmony and solidarity among group members (i.e., "getting along"), while minimizing the potentially destructive effect on the group as a whole of egotistic behaviors on the part of individual group members. In contrast, individualism can be considered as a solution that attempts to maximize the pursuit of self-interest (i.e., "getting ahead"), while minimizing the oppressive effect of the group on individuals.

When faced with competition from other groups, a group is likely to adopt a collectivistic approach because intergroup competition requires a degree of solidarity among members within the group. When a group does not face significant competition from other groups and has sufficient resources to share, it should be more receptive to an individualistic approach. Ultimately, collectivism and individualism are two adaptive approaches to the prevailing intra- and intergroup conditions. This entry looks at the history of these two social orientations and describes different ways that each may be expressed in society.

### Historical Background

The Confucian system, which developed in China around the 5th century BCE, represents a collectivistic solution to the potential tension between

“getting along” and “getting ahead.” Under this system, harmony within five cardinal relationships is emphasized: father–son, husband–wife, elder–younger, emperor–subject, and friend–friend. The emphasis is placed on understanding one’s roles, fulfilling one’s duties, and showing deference to authority. These, in turn, strategically reduce within-group competition, smooth interpersonal relationships within a group, and maintain group solidarity.

The Greek philosophers of the 5th century BCE were some of the earliest individualist philosophers. Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* is mainly concerned with how an individual can live a virtuous life and attain the highest possible human goal of *eudaimonia*, or personal well-being. This is in stark contrast with the Confucian emphasis on societal well-being and how to create a nation characterized by cohesion and interpersonal harmony. Although some Western philosophers have endorsed a form of collectivism (e.g., Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim), many other Western philosophers explicitly endorse various forms of individualism (e.g., Adam Smith, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes).

Geert Hofstede’s 1980 book, *Culture’s Consequences*, ignited an interest in collectivism and individualism in psychology. In this book, Hofstede examined work-related values of IBM workers from 40 nations and identified four important cultural dimensions: “masculinity,” “power distance,” “uncertainty avoidance,” and “individualism.” In this survey, the United States ranked ahead of all other nations on individualism. In the 1980s, Harry Triandis and his colleagues conducted numerous cross-cultural studies comparing the United States with so-called collectivist nations such as Japan, China, and Korea, and legitimized the study of collectivism and individualism in academic psychology.

In 1991, two prominent social psychologists, Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, published an influential paper that specified systematic psychological differences between collectivist and individualist nations in terms of people’s self-concept, motivation, cognition, and emotion. This work rendered collectivism and individualism one of the most popular research topics in social psychology in the 1990s.

Two related constructs, individualism–collectivism and independent and interdependent self have

provided, over the past two decades, powerful frameworks for understanding cross-national variations in the self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and various other social behaviors. However, these constructs have also been subject to some criticism, including the charge of conceptual ambiguity and problems over the existence of various subtypes. Most notably, Daphna Oyserman and her colleagues published a meta-analysis (i.e., quantitative analysis of all the published studies on self-reported individualism–collectivism) in 2002, which concluded that the difference in individualism–collectivism of North Americans and East Asians is negligible. Since the publication of the meta-analysis by Oyserman and her colleagues, many prominent researchers in the field have called for alternative conceptual frameworks and methodologies to be adopted in cultural and cross-cultural psychology. However, it should be also noted that when response sets are statistically controlled, self-reported individualism scores were highly correlated with Hofstede’s original results.

An additional critique of individualism–collectivism research revolves around its relatively static view of culture. With globalization and increasing international immigration, there is substantial cultural fusion. Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues collected survey data on values and attitudes from around the world for the last 20 years, concluding that, in many parts of the world, people’s values have shifted from traditional attitudes (akin to collectivism) to self-expression (a feature of individualism) as a reflection of modernization. However, some of the cross-national differences have remained relatively unchanged over the last two decades. For instance, although Japanese have become more individualistic during that time, so have Americans. Thus, the magnitude of cultural difference between Japan and America has not decreased.

### Varieties of Collectivism

The Confucian style of collectivism is primarily concerned with how to maintain harmonious relationships at various dyadic levels. Because of its emphasis on dyadic relationships, the idea is that group members tend to have strong ties with other members, and their interpersonal relationships are as important as each member’s relationship with

the group as a whole. Whereas the Confucian style of collectivism emphasizes hierarchy and dyadic relationships (i.e., hierarchical and relational collectivism), other forms of collectivism emphasize collective actions and cooperation in general (i.e., horizontal and group collectivism).

For instance, in an agricultural society that requires an irrigation system, a large number of members have to work together to accomplish one common goal. In this context, one's identification with the entire group becomes more important than dyadic relationships between group members. In addition, in a situation in which collective action and cooperation are required, a large proportion of group members share the same status, and therefore, relationships are not as hierarchical as a Confucian-style collective organization. Sports teams (e.g., football, soccer) represent this type of collectivism. The distinction between relational and group collectivism is similar to Ferdinand Tönnies's distinction between a small village-like community (*gemeinschaft*) and an association-based society (*gesellschaft*).

In relational collectivism, relationships are the self's defining features, and either personal goals are deemphasized in favor of interdependent goals or no distinction between personal goals and significant others' goals is made. Similarly, in group collectivism, the fluidity of the self in its relationship to the group as a whole is expressed as a sense of sharing a common fate with other group members and in the belief that the experience of one ingroup member affects all other members of the group. The fulfillment of one's collective responsibility by promoting the interest of one's group or significant others is of primary concern in both forms of collectivism. The emphasis on group goals and interdependence is associated with greater exertion of effort and higher levels of cooperation among group members, who not only identify closely with their groups but also regard their individual contributions as vital to their groups' accomplishments and overall well-being.

Instead of striving explicitly to actualize a "true" self, collectivist individuals strive to cultivate and maintain deep bonds with significant others and/or important ingroup members. This involves maintaining harmony and adjusting to others' (or the group's) needs, which in turn affects the type of emotions (e.g., calm, contentment) that are idealized

and experienced. Because harmony is emphasized, similarity rather than uniqueness is valued. The private self—its desires, opinions, inclinations, and so on—may be kept cleanly separate from and seen as irrelevant to public interactions (e.g., in Japan, this is expressed by two terms: *honme*, the private self, and *tatema*, the public self).

The context-dependent nature of the self is apparent here. While an individualist might make a context-independent claim such as "I am hard-working," a collectivist might say "As a teacher, I am outgoing, but as a husband, I am quiet." The self in collectivist societies is experienced as part of a network of social roles and obligations, and friendship is no exception. Opportunities to create friendships tend to be fewer in collectivist societies, as they are created based on preexisting networks. In fact, friendships are not "created" so much as "given" in collectivist societies such as Ghana. In contrast to individualist cultures, where it is more common and desirable to have many friendships, with various levels of personal intimacy, friendships in collectivist cultures tend to be more binding, with a variety of obligations. The depth and obligation of collectivist friendship also limits the sheer number of friends one can maintain. In Ghana, most people view having many friends as "foolish" or naïve, given the impossible level of commitment and strain that they place on one's resources.

As indicated above, collectivist groups tend to be less permeable: They are difficult to freely enter and exit. As people's social ties are relatively set, social goals focus on maintaining the relationships one already has instead of forming new relationships. Consequently, people in a collectivist society tend to draw a sharper distinction between members of one's ingroup and strangers than people in an individualist society, where strangers are regarded as potential future friends. Indeed, in collectivist cultures, the emphasis on harmony, cooperation, and cohesion tends to be limited to ingroup relationships. Interactions with strangers and outgroup members may be characterized by a lack of concern or even hostility and discrimination during intergroup conflicts. Furthermore, differences between ingroup and outgroup communication have been noted in collectivist societies, where generally speaking communication with ingroup members is more effective than communication with outgroup members.



Another area where collectivists pay greater attention to distinctions between an ingroup and outgroup than do individualists is in the allocation of available resources. Given that relationships with ingroup members are of great importance, material resources tend to be shared equally within collectivist groups: A tribe's catch can be distributed and shared among its members; a dish bought at a restaurant can be distributed among those at the table. However, when the task involves distributing material resources to strangers, decisions are based on the recipient's level of contribution, which is more typical of exchanges among individualists. Collectivists also behave more like individualists in favoring contribution over membership when goals of productivity and competition take precedence over goals of interdependence and solidarity.

In terms of work-related behaviors within collectivist contexts, working with ingroup members tends to result in better performance than working alone. Individual performance of collectivists is also enhanced when respected ingroup members are involved in assigning specific goals and tasks. Compared to their individualist counterparts, leaders and superiors in collectivist cultures are more likely to provide nurturance and guidance to subordinates, who are expected to show loyalty and devotion in return.

Collectivism also has important implications for group decision making and conflict resolution. For example, the focus on maintaining ingroup cohesion and harmony means that relationships among ingroup members may be valued more than the tasks themselves during the decision-making process. Also, greater attention is paid to the goals and concerns of the collective than to the needs of individual members. Conflicts within the ingroup tend to be avoided whenever possible. When such conflicts do arise, attempts are made to reach agreement or consensus within the group. This often requires willingness on the part of group members to modify their own preferences in order to conform to the group's position.

### Varieties of Individualism

The defining characteristic of individualism is the priority it accords to individual goals over group goals. This worldview features the individual as a self-contained entity with a well-defined self–other

boundary. Personal goals are defining characteristics of this autonomous entity and may be in opposition to the social world. In such cultures, importance is placed on self-reliance, personal cultivation, personal choice, uniqueness, and self-expression.

Like collectivism, individualism manifests in different forms. One common typology that has been used to describe different types of individualism is horizontal versus vertical individualism. Both types of individualism are characterized by the emphasis on the autonomy and uniqueness of individuals. However, horizontal individualism tends to stress equality between individuals, whereas vertical individualism emphasizes competition and being the best in comparison to others.

Although some forms of individualism are considered antagonistic toward society (e.g., rugged individualism), the pursuit of self-interest can be beneficial both to individuals and society. For instance, in the 19th century Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans, despite their individualism, help strangers much more willingly than do the French, precisely because Americans understand that many others do not have anyone else to rely on; he called this “the doctrine of self-interest properly understood.” In other words, when self-interest is pursued with moderation, individualism does not necessarily interfere with the well-being of society.

The emphasis on the development and expression of one's unique, “true” self constitutes a cornerstone of the formation and experience of friendship in individualistic societies. According to most forms of individualism described above, friendship involves the meeting of two distinct and fundamentally separate beings, whose connection must be created via a mutual sharing of unique and authentic selves and/or common interests. Romantic companionship should also be a celebration and exploration of exciting and unique traits in this context. With different friends reserved for the sharing of specific interests, friendships in such societies also become more compartmentalized.

True individualist friendship, like the true self, should be genuine and spontaneous. Friendships should feature spontaneous acts of affection, should not arise out of obligation, and may involve but should not be predicated on practical or material support. Friendships have varying degrees of intimacy, and those that require self-censorship or

too much obligation can easily be deemphasized or even left. This ideal is reflected in the high American divorce rate. Indeed, many Americans show a permissive, noncommittal view of love.

Relationships with groups and associations also reflect the above model of low-cost, low-commitment, personally expressive relationships. Groups in individualist cultures are more permeable. That is, they are easy to join and leave, requiring little obligation (e.g., a book discussion group). With high intergroup mobility, there are many potential ingroups, and it is relatively easy to stay with those that meet one's personal needs and leave those that do not. Intergroup mobility is supported by Americans' high level of general trust in others, and this facilitates social exploration and making friends.

With the primary focus of attention on the pursuit of personal goals, needs, and desires, the distinction between ingroup and outgroup does not take on the same degree of importance in individualist cultures as it does in collectivist cultures. In other words, people who are individualist oriented tend to treat friends and strangers more equally. Their communication with ingroups and outgroups tends to be similar, not varying much in overall effectiveness. Also, because individualists experience greater opportunities and need to interact with outgroup others, they tend to be more skilled than collectivists are at communicating with strangers.

Research also indicates that an individualist orientation is associated with a phenomenon known as social loafing, which refers to the tendency of individuals to exert less effort when working as part of a group than when working alone. The higher occurrence of social loafing among individualists may partly be due to the greater value being placed on personal outcomes as opposed to collective welfare. It is also known that individualists perform better when they are given a choice in the type of tasks that they will undertake.

Individualism also affects how important group decisions, such as the allocation of material resources, are made. In most situations, people in individualist cultures are inclined to allocate rewards based on group members' individual contributions rather than their membership because, in their view, group achievement reflects the sum of individual inputs. In individualist cultures, where

connections between people are loose, task concerns prevail over relationship concerns when making group decisions. Without having to worry as much about harmony and cohesion within the group, members tend to be more outspoken about their feelings, attitudes, and opinions. It is considered acceptable for individuals to place personal goals ahead of group goals. When disagreements arise within the group, maintaining one's own views and problem solving via open and direct communication is seen as helpful, whereas conforming to group pressure is considered a personal weakness.

In addition to particular views toward friendships and groups, individualism has been associated with specific emotional experiences. For example, pride, a socially disengaging emotion, clearly sets the self apart from surrounding others. Among individualists, positive emotions are desired, regardless of whether they are socially engaging or disengaging. This is not the case among collectivists, because pride signals a disruption in harmony with others.

The ethos of individualism is liberating to the individual, but it is also associated with anxiety and identity crises. In the United States, for instance, increased personal freedom to choose one's occupation, spouse, and system of values over the last 50 years has been accompanied by an increased anxiety; this has been referred to as the age of the "me" generation and as an "age of anxiety." Young Americans report experiencing significant pressures to actualize their potential and define their identity, and they are plagued by the impending fears and guilt of failing to choose the best opportunities available to them. In this sense, the personal autonomy and independence that is central to American individualism has its downside.

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*See also* Collective Self; Common-Identity/Common-Bond Groups; Culture; Diversity; Group Socialization; Group Structure

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## COMMON-IDENTITY/ COMMON-BOND GROUPS

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Some group memberships are based on sharing a category membership (e.g., women), while others are based on attraction to fellow group members (e.g., groups based on friendships). Based on this distinction, in 1994 Deborah Prentice, Dale Miller, and Jenifer Lightdale identified two primary types of groups to which people may belong. This typology allows researchers to make predictions of how behaviors differ between the two types of groups. *Common-identity groups* comprise members who share a social category and are attracted to the group as a whole as well as its overarching identity. More specifically, members of common-identity groups are attracted to the group's norms, goals, activities, and other defining features. In contrast, *common-bond groups* comprise members who are attracted to one another as individuals.

## Background

The distinction between common-identity and common-bond groups is reflected in the two primary and competing approaches to the study of groups within social psychology. Twentieth-century social psychology heavily emphasized the study of the individual. The focus of much of this research was how the person impacted his or her group. Kurt Lewin defined a group as the sum of its interpersonal bonds, implying that attraction to group members forms the basis for groups. The social identity perspective challenged this definition, arguing that groups can be formed under minimal circumstances and members can identify with groups based on shared attributes. Thus, the social identity perspective asserts that attraction to a group can involve attraction to its identity rather than to its individual members.

The distinction between common-identity and common-bond groups is relevant to the distinction between the individualistic and social identity perspectives. Research on common-identity and common-bond groups focuses on the different functions that each kind of group provides for its members as well as the different processes that occur within each kind of group.

## Differences Between the Two Kinds of Groups

The distinction between common-identity and common-bond groups has been applied to a variety of real-world groups (e.g., college eating clubs, online communities). In their original study of attachment to different types of groups, Prentice and her colleagues speculated that common-identity and common-bond groups differ in terms of fairness, longevity, and conflict. Recent research has demonstrated that these groups may also differ in members' responses to group norms and the factors they use in forming impressions of themselves, other group members, and their social identity.

### *Fairness*

Prentice and her colleagues predicted that members of common-identity and common-bond groups would differ in their preferences for how rewards should be distributed among members. They argued that, from a social identity perspective, group

members who are made aware of their social identity should perceive members as interchangeable and homogeneous. Hence, within common-identity groups, members should demonstrate a preference for resources to be distributed equally among all members. In contrast, people in common-bond groups, who are attached to individuals within the group, should prefer equity relationships in which members receive rewards in proportion to their contributions (i.e., each individual gets what he or she deserves on the basis of his or her inputs).

In a later study, Sonja Utz and Kai Sassenberg found that members of common-bond groups operate according to an egocentric principle of maximizing their rewards and minimizing their costs with respect to their own contributions. This suggests that in common-bond groups, personal goals are more salient than group goals. In contrast, Utz and Sassenberg found that members of common-identity groups operate according to an altruistic principle of maximizing the group's rewards and minimizing its costs through their own contributions. Thus, consistent with a social identity perspective, these results suggest that in common-identity groups, group goals are more salient than personal goals because the group provides an important source of identity.

### *Longevity*

Another difference between common-identity and common-bond groups is related to the longevity of the group. Common-identity groups should last longer than common-bond groups because members' commitment to the former is determined by their attraction to the group's identity and norms rather than to their interpersonal relationships with other members. Commitment to common-identity groups should be stronger than commitment to common-bond groups because identity and norms tend to fluctuate very little, whereas interpersonal relationships frequently change and even dissolve, and members may leave the group. Using observations of real-world groups, researchers have found that lasting communities have strong group identities and discourage members from having strong interpersonal relationships that could negatively affect allegiance to their group. For example, Elizabeth Seeley and her colleagues found sex differences in preferences for

group type that may have consequences for the longevity of the group. These researchers found that women were attached to groups in which they felt close to the other members, while men rated groups as important when they were attached to individual members and the group as a whole. If the common bonds in a group disappear, the group may no longer be valuable for women, whereas the common identity of the group would allow men to remain attracted to it. Thus some men's groups may last longer than women's groups because of the greater importance of group identity.

### *Conflict*

Prentice and her colleagues also suggested that members of common-identity and common-bond groups may differ in how they react to conflict. They reasoned that if there is internal conflict within the group, common-identity groups might be less affected by it than common-bond groups because the former are not dependent on harmony among members. Conflict within common-bond groups, however, can have serious implications for the group's existence. But common-bond groups are not always damaged by internal conflict. Prentice and her colleagues suggested that external threat to a common-bond group may encourage members to come together for a common cause and thereby transform the group into a common-identity group. Indeed, in field studies, Simon Bernd and his colleagues found that people with a common identity are more likely to participate in group activities, such as collective action, and less likely to leave the group than are members of groups that are based on mutual attraction among members.

### *Group Norms*

Research on chat rooms by Sassenberg and his colleagues elucidated some differences in the precursors of norm adherence within common-identity and common-bond groups. This work demonstrated that individuals in common-identity groups exhibit higher levels of identification with their chat rooms than do individuals in common-bond groups. Moreover, identification predicted individuals' adoption and expression of group norms, implying that differences in common-identity and

common-bond group members' adherence to group norms are explainable by identification with the group. This research demonstrates the importance of identification processes in adopting and expressing group norms. Identification with the group appears to be a key component in understanding when and why members of these two types of groups adopt group norms. Further, identification processes may differ due to the reasons people join groups, affecting a variety of group behaviors and group norms.

### *Impression Formation*

How group members form impressions of themselves and others is another distinguishing feature of common-bond and common-identity groups. Related to social identity theory, self-categorization theory posits that people's tendency to categorize themselves as group members is influenced by the social context (e.g., the extent to which their group identity is made salient through comparison with a relevant outgroup). According to self-categorization theory, when categorized as members of a group, people see themselves in terms of their group's shared attributes. Accordingly, members of common-identity groups should describe themselves in terms of their similarity to other group members and to shared group attributes. This should not be true for members of common-bond groups, which emphasize members' personal identities rather than their shared identity. Russell Spears and his colleagues developed the social identity model of deindividuation effects, or SIDE model, which predicts that because common-bond groups are based on mutual attraction of members, people in these groups should be concerned with distinguishing themselves from other members. These differing motivations, in turn, should produce differences in how members of common-identity and common-bond groups form impressions of other members. More specifically, while members of common-identity groups use group attributes and the group identity to form impressions of one another, members of common-bond groups use information about individual members to form impressions.

Studies of common-identity and common-bond groups clarify two differing perspectives on the sources of people's attachment to groups (i.e., attachment to individual members versus attachment to

the group identity) and demonstrate important differences in processes that occur within these two types of groups.

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*See also* Collectivism/Individualism; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Identity Theory

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## COMMON INGROUP IDENTITY MODEL

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The *common ingroup identity model* represents a strategy for reducing prejudice that assumes that intergroup biases are rooted in fundamental, normal psychological processes, particularly in the universal tendency to simplify a complex environment by classifying objects and people into groups or categories. This process of categorization often occurs spontaneously on the basis of physical similarity, proximity, or shared fate. When people or objects are categorized into groups, actual differences between members of the same category tend to be perceptually minimized, and differences between members of different groups become exaggerated and overgeneralized.

### Social Categorization and Bias

Social categorization, the categorization of people into different groups, has another unique feature. When a person categorizes others into groups, these categories are fundamentally differentiated between groups to which the perceiver belongs (ingroups) and groups to which the perceiver does not belong (outgroups). Because people derive their self-esteem in part from the prestige of groups to which they belong, members are motivated to regard their ingroup in a positive light compared to other groups. Upon social categorization, people typically express more positive beliefs, feelings, and behaviors toward ingroup members than toward outgroup members. Hence, social categorization can enable ingroup favoritism to service ego-enhancing motivations as long as the situational context reinforces the importance of the categorical distinction between the groups.

Although a preferential ingroup orientation can evolve into a more destructive, anti-outgroup attitude (i.e., prejudice), the mechanisms of ingroup favoritism can also provide a means to reduce prejudice and discrimination. This latter assertion is the essence of the common ingroup identity model.

### Social Categorization and Recategorization

The common ingroup identity model recognizes the fluidity of social categorization processes and the reality that people belong to a variety of groups that are hierarchically organized in terms of inclusiveness. For example, people are members of families, neighborhoods, cities, regions, and nations. Modifying goals, motives, expectations, or factors within the immediate situation provides the opportunity to shift the level of category inclusiveness that will be dominant. This fluidity of social categorization, and consequently, the salience of a particular social identity, are important because of the implications for altering the way people think about others in terms of their ingroup or outgroup membership, and therefore, how positively they feel about them. Specifically, the common ingroup identity model proposes that inducing people to recategorize ingroup and outgroup members within a common boundary inclusive of both groups (e.g., a school, a city, a nation, humanity) redirects the cognitive and motivational

forces that drive ingroup favoritism to increase positive attitudes toward others who were previously seen primarily in terms of their outgroup membership.

The development of a common ingroup identity does not necessarily always require each group to forsake its less inclusive group identity completely. It is possible for members to conceive of two groups (for example, parents and children) as distinct units within the context of a superordinate (i.e., family) identity (as “subgroups within one group” or a “dual identity” representation). When group identities and the associated cultural values are central to members’ self-identification or when they are associated with high status or highly visible cues to group membership, it may be very threatening for people to be asked to relinquish these group identities or, as perceivers, to be “color-blind.” Indeed, demands to forsake ethnic or racial group identities to adopt a color-blind ideology would likely arouse strong reactance and result in especially poor intergroup relations. There is support, however, for the idea that if people continued to regard themselves as members of different groups—*but all playing on the same team* (i.e., part of the same inclusive entity), intergroup relations between the “subgroups” would be more positive than if members only considered themselves “separate groups.”

The common ingroup identity model acknowledges that other approaches to addressing social categorization can also affect intergroup relations. For instance, *deategorizing* people—seeing them in an individuated or personalized way instead of as members of a group—can also reduce intergroup bias. However, whereas recategorization of people within a common ingroup identity reduces intergroup bias by enhancing evaluations of original outgroup members, deategorization reduces intergroup bias by reducing positive regard to original ingroup members through eliminating the forces of social categorization that promote ingroup favoritism in this circumstance.

### Functional Relations, Categorization, and Bias

The common ingroup identity model recognizes that although social categorization can be sufficient to produce intergroup bias, intergroup threat,

competition, and conflict can further contribute to negative relations between groups. In particular, realistic group conflict theory argues that the major cause of intergroup bias and prejudice involves zero-sum competition between the groups over valuable resources. More broadly, whether relations between groups are conflictual or harmonious is determined by the functional relations between the groups. When the relationship is primarily competitive, intergroup relations would be expected to be prejudice-ridden and conflictual, whereas when the relations between groups are primarily cooperative, relations between the groups would be harmonious.

In the classic Robbers Cave study, for example, Sherif and his colleagues studied 12-year-old, middle-class boys at a 3-week summer camp in an experiment about the creation and reduction of intergroup bias and conflict. These boys were initially assigned to two groups. To permit time for group formation within each group (e.g., norms and a leadership structure), these groups were kept completely apart for the first week. During the second week, the investigators introduced intense competitive relations between the groups in the form of repeated competitive athletic activities—centering on tug-of-war, baseball, and touch football—in which only members of the winning group received rewards. As expected by the functional relations account, the introduction of competitive activities generated derogatory stereotypes and very physical, hostile conflict between these groups. In the third week, only after the functional relations between the groups were altered by introducing a series of goals (e.g., finding leaks to the camp's water supply, collecting money to watch a popular movie, and moving a stalled truck carrying lunch up a hill to the dining area)—goals that could not be achieved without cooperating with each other—did the relations between the groups become more harmonious.

Although there was no formal assessment of the psychological processes involved in just *how* cooperation between these groups reduced intergroup animosity, from the perspective of the common ingroup identity model, intergroup cooperation likely reduced intergroup conflict because working together toward their common goal changed the boys' perceptions of their intergroup boundaries from an "us" and "them" orientation to a more inclusive "we" (i.e., common ingroup) orientation.

This process was particularly exemplified when one of the boys exclaimed after the achievement of moving the truck, "We won the tug-of-war against the truck." Subsequent laboratory studies offer support for this interpretation of how cooperation reduces intergroup biases by producing recategorization within a common ingroup. In addition, other bias-reducing interventions that rely on related principles of the functional approach (e.g., techniques such as the jigsaw classroom and some forms of cooperative learning) may operate psychologically through common identity as well as through functional relations directly.

### Empirical Support for the Common Ingroup Identity Model

Formally, the common ingroup identity model identifies potential antecedents and outcomes of recategorization, as well as mediating processes. The general framework specifies the causes and consequences of a common ingroup identity. Specifically, different types of intergroup interdependence (e.g., cooperative or competitive relations) and cognitive, perceptual, linguistic, affective, and environmental factors can alter individuals' perceptions of the different groups. These resulting cognitive representations (i.e., one group, two-subgroups within one group—a dual identity, two separate groups, or separate individuals) are then proposed to result in specific cognitive, affective, and overt behavioral consequences involving intergroup attitudes. Thus, the causal factors that include features specified by contact theory (i.e., cooperation, equal status, opportunity for self-revealing interaction, and egalitarian norms supported by local authorities) are proposed to influence members' cognitive collective representations of the memberships that then, at least in part, mediate the relationship between the causal factors and intergroup attitudes (i.e., feelings, beliefs, and behaviors). In addition, a common ingroup identity may be achieved by increasing the salience of existing common superordinate memberships or by introducing factors (e.g., common goals or fate) that are perceived to be shared by the memberships.

The common ingroup identity model has received considerable empirical support. In an early exploration of the causal role of common ingroup identity in reducing bias, members of two

separate laboratory-formed groups of American college students who were homogeneous with respect to sex and racial composition were induced through various structural interventions (e.g., seating arrangement, dress) to maintain their original group identities (i.e., conceive of themselves as different groups), recategorize themselves as one group, or decategorize themselves (i.e., to conceive of themselves as separate individuals). The manipulations to encourage recategorization and decategorization each reduced bias, and as predicted, did so in different ways. Specifically, recategorizing the memberships into one group reduced bias by increasing the attractiveness of former outgroup members, whereas decategorizing members of these groups reduced bias by decreasing the attractiveness of former ingroup members. Identical findings were obtained when the recategorization and decategorization manipulations were implemented with Black and White Portuguese children, who have different social status and a shared history of intergroup conflict.

Also, manipulations that have been demonstrated to reduce prejudice, by inducing cooperative interaction or structuring positive intergroup contact in ways specified by contact theory, have been shown in laboratory research to reduce bias by changing intergroup cognitive representations from two separate groups to one group. Specifically, intergroup cooperation leads to stronger inclusive, one-group representations, which in turn predicts more favorable outgroup member evaluations. In addition, investigations across a variety of intergroup settings offer converging support for the idea that the features specified by contact theory (i.e., cooperation, equal status, opportunity for self-revealing interaction, and egalitarian norms supported by local authorities), reduce intergroup bias because they transform members' representations of the memberships from separate groups to a single, more inclusive group. Participants in these studies included students attending a multi-ethnic high school, banking executives who had experienced a corporate merger involving a wide variety of banks across the United States, and college students from blended families with households composed of two formerly separate families trying to unite into one.

Common ingroup identity not only increases positive evaluations of others, but also increases cross-group friendship selection, helpfulness, trust,

confidence in suggestions for innovation, and even forgiveness. In addition, creating a common ingroup identity has been found to increase positive forms of behavior, such as self-disclosure and helping, across original group lines and to be effective for improving relations between groups, such as ethnic and racial groups, that have extended histories of intergroup bias. In a particularly dramatic example, emphasizing common humanity increased Jewish students' willingness to forgive Germans for the Holocaust.

### Conclusion

Overall, the research evidence reveals consistent support for the key principle of the common ingroup identity model: Successfully inducing ingroup and outgroup members to adopt a more inclusive, one-group representation inclusive of both groups reduces the groups' bias toward one another. Furthermore, this fundamental principle has been supported across studies that used a variety of methodological approaches, involving participants of different ages, races, and nationalities. Consequently, this model can inform the development of powerful prejudice-reducing interventions.

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*See also* Categorization; Cooperation and Competition; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Jigsaw Classroom Technique; Prejudice; Sherif, Muzafer; Stereotyping

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## COMMON KNOWLEDGE EFFECT

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The *common knowledge effect* describes the impact on group decision making of whether knowledge relevant to a decision is shared by all group members prior to discussion. Specifically, laboratory studies have shown that information known by everyone prior to discussion has a more powerful influence on decisions than information not shared by everyone. The common knowledge effect demonstrates that an irrelevant factor—the number of members who know a particular piece of information—can affect group decisions. If a piece of unshared information is crucial to making a correct decision, the result may be an incorrect decision. This entry looks at the common knowledge effect and some possible explanations for such outcomes, then discusses what research has shown about promoting better decisions.

### The Decision-Making Process

When a group comes together to make a decision, the members must combine and process the information that is relevant to the decision. Typically, the group has a discussion during which members mention information that they believe is relevant to the decision. The information that the members bring to the discussion may initially be known by all of the members (shared) or known by only one or a few members (unshared). A primary goal of group discussion is to inform members of information that they did not know prior to the discussion, that is, to discuss the information that was initially unshared.

Ideally, in the end, the group's decision should reflect all of the relevant information, whether that information was initially shared or unshared. However, research shows that information that was shared prior to the discussion tends to influence group decisions more than information that was unshared prior to the discussion. Thus, the same fact will likely have more influence on the group's final decision if it is initially known by all of the group's members than if it is initially known by only one group member, regardless of how pertinent the fact is to the decision at hand. This is known as the *common knowledge effect*.

The common knowledge effect can negatively affect the quality of group decisions. A group may

reach a different decision depending on whether important information is initially shared or unshared. This difference is especially problematic when the shared information favors an incorrect decision alternative and the unshared information favors a different, correct decision alternative. In such a case, known as a *hidden profile*, groups are unlikely to discover and decide on the correct alternative. Instead, even after discussion, groups are likely to decide on the incorrect alternative that was favored by the information shared by all of the members prior to discussion.

### Theoretical Explanation

Why does information have more influence on the group decision when all members know it prior to the group discussion than when only some members know it? One explanation focuses on the content of group discussion, that is, which information group members actually tend to discuss. Arguably, discussion of unshared information is more important than discussion of shared information because unshared information may alter the opinions of members who lacked the information prior to the discussion. Discussion of initially shared information is less important because all of the group's members have had the opportunity to consider that information prior to the group discussion.

In decisions involving both shared and unshared information, however, group discussion tends to focus on the shared, rather than the unshared, information. A particular piece of information is more likely to be mentioned if all group members know about it prior to the discussion than if only one or a few group members know about it prior to the discussion. Initially unshared information is often not mentioned at all. In hidden profile tasks, for example, groups tend to discuss the shared information, which favors the incorrect alternative, whereas they often fail to mention the unshared information, which would allow the group to discover the correct alternative. Consequently, if the group bases its decision on the information that is actually discussed, that decision will be affected more by the initially shared information because the group discusses more shared than unshared information.

But the tendency of groups to discuss more shared than unshared information does not fully

explain the relatively strong influence of shared information on group decisions. Even when the group discusses unshared information, that information does not necessarily affect the group's decision. For example, in hidden profile tasks, groups that discuss more unshared information are not always more likely to discover the correct alternative. Although the tendency of groups to discuss more shared than unshared information is an important factor in the common knowledge effect, it is not the only factor.

The group members' prediscussion opinions are another factor in the common knowledge effect. In addition to affecting a group's decision directly, through group discussion, information also affects a group's decision indirectly, by affecting the initial opinions of the group's members. When members first consider decision-relevant information, prior to any discussion, they tend to form opinions about the correct decision. During group discussion, a member learns the opinions of the other members. In fact, the members' opinions are often the first thing the group discusses, prior to the discussion of any specific information. Those initial opinions, in turn, often have a strong influence on the group's final decision.

Groups often appear to use relatively simple methods of combining their members' initial opinions into a group decision, such as averaging those opinions or choosing the alternative that is initially favored by a majority of the members. Initially shared information can affect all of the members' prediscussion opinions. Initially unshared information, however, can only affect one member's opinion prior to the group discussion. When the group combines all of its members' opinions into a group decision, the shared information will tend to have more influence on the group decision because it has influenced the opinions of more group members.

Why do groups base their decisions primarily on their members' initial opinions, even when unshared information is revealed during the group discussion? After all, when several members learn new facts, they should realize that their initial opinions were based on an incomplete subset of the relevant information and change their opinions. However, when unshared information is discussed, it tends to come up late in the discussion, after the group has already discussed some amount of shared information. That early discussion of

shared information may bolster members' confidence in their initial opinions. Members may also interpret new information to be consistent with their opinions.

In addition, unshared information cannot be confirmed by other members, so members who hear the new information may doubt its validity. Individuals who discuss shared information are evaluated more positively by other group members, and members who know a large amount of shared information tend to have more influence on the group decision. Moreover, full consideration of new information requires time and cognitive effort. Groups may be motivated to process unshared information superficially to reach consensus more quickly, particularly if they do not believe that more effortful processing of that information will lead to a significantly improved group decision.

Thus, the common knowledge effect seems to be explained primarily by two phenomena: the tendency to discuss more shared than unshared information and the tendency to base the ultimate decision heavily on the group members' initial opinions, which are based on the information members have prior to discussion. Groups do, however, sometimes overcome the common knowledge effect. To do so, they must both discuss and carefully consider their unshared information.

### Fostering Better Decisions

Research has identified a number of conditions that increase the likelihood that groups will discuss and be influenced by information that is unshared prior to the discussion. For example, groups are more likely to decide on the correct alternative in a hidden profile task if they rank order all of the alternatives, rather than simply choosing the single alternative that they think is best. Rank ordering forces the group to consider all of the alternatives, which may lead to the discussion of unshared positive information about an initially rejected alternative.

Groups that believe they are making a decision that has an objective correct answer tend to discuss more unshared information and make better decisions than groups that believe they are making a decision that does not have a single correct answer. Groups whose members initially disagree about the correct decision are also more likely to discuss and use unshared information. All of these factors

encourage a group to discuss more information, including information that was unshared prior to discussion, and to base its final decision on all of the relevant information, rather than settling too quickly on a decision that was favored by the group members' initial opinions.

But laboratory research may overestimate the severity of the problem posed by the common knowledge effect. In everyday decisions, shared and unshared information may generally favor the same alternative, or the most relevant information might typically be shared. In such cases, the additional time and effort that would be required to discuss and consider unshared information might not result in a better decision. Moreover, real groups may be more motivated and have more time than experimental groups to discuss and consider more of the available information before committing to a decision. Further research is needed to understand the impact of the common knowledge effect on important real-world decisions.

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*See also* Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Hidden Profile Task; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Social Decision Schemes; Socially Shared Cognition

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## COMMONS DILEMMA

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The *commons dilemma* is a specific class of social dilemma in which people's short-term selfish interests are at odds with long-term group interests. The commons dilemma, also known as the *common pool resource* (CPR), the *resource dilemma*, or the *take-some dilemma*, was inspired by the metaphor of the Tragedy of the Commons that Garrett Hardin discussed in his seminal 1968 *Science* article. This story describes a group of herders with open access to a common parcel of land on which to let their cows graze. It is in each herder's interest to put as many cows as possible onto the land, even if the commons is damaged as a result. The herder receives all the benefits from the additional cows, but the damage to the commons is shared by the entire group. Yet if all herders make this individually rational decision, the commons is destroyed and all will suffer.

The commons dilemma stands as a model for a great variety of resource problems in society today, such as water, land, fish, and nonrenewable energy sources like oil and coal. When water is used at a higher rate than the reservoirs are replenished, fish consumption exceeds its reproductive capacity, or oil supplies are exhausted, we face a tragedy of the commons.

In the 1980s, researchers created an experimental game version of the commons dilemma involving a common resource pool (filled with money or points that could be converted into money or lottery tickets) from which a group of individuals could harvest. If the sum of their harvests per round of the game is lower than the replenishment rate, the pool is maintained. The individuals are each tempted to harvest as much as possible, but if they do, all suffer and the resource is depleted, upon which the game ends.

#### Factors Promoting Conservation in Commons Dilemmas

Commons dilemma researchers have studied conditions under which groups and communities are likely to under- or overharvest the common resource in both the laboratory and field. Research programs have concentrated on a number of

motivational, strategic, and structural factors that might be conducive to commons management.

### *Motivational Solutions*

The research shows that some people are more motivated than others to manage the common resource responsibly. Using the commons dilemma game, researchers found that people with prosocial value orientations harvest less from a resource during a period of scarcity. Prosocial individuals are also more inclined to engage in sustainable environmental behaviors such as taking public transportation (instead of the car) and conserving energy and water, as well as to explain their decisions in terms of environmental impact.

Motivation to conserve a common resource is also promoted by people's group ties. When people identify with their group, they are more likely to exercise personal restraint, as well as to compensate for greedy harvest decisions of ingroup members more than for those of outgroup members. Similarly, in the field strongly knit communities are usually better at managing resource shortages than communities with weak social ties. It might be that group identity promotes a long-term perspective on resource management that makes it easier for people to sacrifice their immediate interest on behalf of their local community. It could also be that group identification increases the social interdependencies between community members so that they care more for the social rewards and punishments of their community. This needs further investigation.

The state of the common resource can also shape motivations. One motivational factor is people's attributions of the state of the commons. Research has manipulated the reasons people were given for resource overuse. When greedy people were seen as causing the depletion, participants were greedier than when there was deemed to be a natural cause (like a sudden drought). Resource uncertainty further contributes to overharvesting. In commons dilemmas, uncertainty about the pool size tends to increase individual harvesting and expectations about how much other people harvest. When there is uncertainty, people overestimate the size of the resource and perceive greater variability in how much other people take. Similarly, uncertainty about the replenishment rate of the

pool also increases harvesting. The most likely explanation is that people have an optimistic bias.

### *Strategic Solutions*

Strategic factors also matter in commons dilemmas. One often-studied strategic factor is the order in which people take harvests from the resource. In simultaneous play, all people harvest at the same time, whereas in sequential play people harvest from the pool according to a predetermined sequence—first, second, third, and so on. There is a clear order effect in the latter games: The harvests of those who come first—the leaders—are higher than the harvest of those coming later—the followers. The interpretation of this effect is that the first players feel entitled to take more. Whereas with simultaneous play, people may adopt an equality rule, with sequential play, individuals adopt a “first come, first served” rule. Another strategic factor is the ability to build up reputations. Research found that people take less from the common pool in public situations than in anonymous private situations. Moreover, those who harvest less gain greater prestige and influence within their group.

### *Structural Solutions*

Much research has focused on when and why people would like to structurally rearrange the commons to prevent a tragedy. Hardin stated in his analysis of the Tragedy of the Commons that “freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.” One of the proposed solutions is to appoint a leader to regulate access to the commons. Not surprisingly, groups are more likely to endorse a leader when a common resource is being depleted and when managing a common resource is perceived as a difficult task. Interestingly, groups prefer leaders who are elected, democratic, and prototypical of the group, and these leader types are more successful in enforcing cooperation. There is a general aversion against autocratic leadership—although it is quite an effective solution—possibly because of the fear of power abuse and corruption.

Another structural solution is the privatization of the commons, and this has been shown in experimental and field research to be very effective. However, it is difficult to imagine how common movable resources such as fish, water, and

clean air can be privatized. Privatization also raises concerns about social justice, as not everyone may be able to get an equal share. Finally, privatization might erode people's personal and social motivations to cooperate in preserving a resource.

The provision of rewards and punishments might also be effective in preserving common resources. Selective punishments for overuse can be effective in promoting domestic water and energy conservation, for instance, through installing water and electricity meters in houses. Selective rewards also work, provided that they are open to everyone. An experimental carpool lane in the Netherlands failed because car commuters did not feel they were able to organize a carpool. Hence, they showed a reaction against this pro-environment intervention.

There has been much field research on commons dilemmas that has combined solutions obtained in experimental research. The seminal work of Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues is worth mentioning. They looked at how real-world communities manage communal resources such as fisheries, land irrigation systems, and farmlands and came up with a number of factors conducive to successful resource management. One factor is the resource itself. Resources with definable boundaries (e.g., land) can be preserved much more easily than can resources without such boundaries. A second factor is resource dependence. There must be a perceptible threat of resource depletion, and it must be difficult to find substitutes. The third is the presence of a community. Small and stable populations with a thick social network and social norms promoting conservation do best. A final condition is that there are appropriate community-based rules and procedures in place with built-in incentives for responsible use and punishments for overuse.

### Conclusion

As populations grow and resources become scarcer, there is a need for policies to avoid commons tragedies. It is encouraging that commons dilemma research is increasingly applied to local and global environmental problems. The emphasis is shifting from pure laboratory research toward research testing combinations of motivational, strategic, and structural solutions.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Leadership; Prisoner's Dilemma; Social Dilemmas; Social Identity Theory; Trust

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## COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

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The term *communication networks* describes the structure and flow of communication and information between individuals within a group. Within many groups (e.g., a typical office), formal and informal communication patterns are often determined in a top-down, hierarchical fashion, where members direct communication to others at the same level or below but not above. Much of the research on the effects of communication networks was conducted in the 1950s; after a long hiatus, researchers are again exploring the effects of communication networks. The primary foci of classic research on communication networks had been to measure how network structure affects information flow, and how position within the networks may affect an individual's status within the group. More recent work has focused on how communication networks affect group-level properties. This

entry discusses both classic and more recent approaches to the study of communication networks within groups.

### Why Study Communication Networks?

The overwhelming majority of research on group dynamics has studied interacting groups in which communications from each member are sent to the entire group, with no constraints on communication (a prototypical example would be a jury sitting around a table). This type of communication network is common in many small real-world groups, such as juries; however, it is not common in larger groups and institutions. In larger groups communication is likely asymmetrical, where different individuals receive and transmit information heterogeneously across the entire group. First, many groups do not necessarily meet in a specific location at the same time, but rather consist of a number of asynchronous communications within subsets of group members. Second, as group size increases, there may be evolutionary constraints on the optimal number of group members performing any given task. Robin Dunbar has speculated that as groups increase in size, the brain's processing capacity may constrain the number of individuals with whom one can optimally communicate. This evolved constraint likely leads to recurrent and structural patterns across all groups in terms of communication networks. Therefore, it is important to study the development and effects of communication networks within groups, especially among larger groups (for example, within organizations).

### Classic Research

The first systematic research on communication networks was conducted by Harold J. Leavitt of MIT and Alex Bavelas of Bell Laboratories in the 1950s. This work was stimulated by formal mathematical models derived from graph theory. By placing partitions between participants seated at a table, Leavitt and Bavelas manipulated communication structures within groups of varying sizes. For example, in a five-person group, members could communicate within a *circle* structure, in which each person can only share messages with those on either side of him or her. Alternatively,

communication could take place within the structure of a *wheel*, with one central member (the hub) through which all communications must pass. One consistent result in such early research was that the centralization of a communication network (i.e., the degree to which some members of the group had more communication partners than others; e.g., the wheel is more centralized than the circle network) was a strong predictor of the efficiency of problem solving; that is, the more centralized a network, the more efficient the group was at solving problems. Later research by Marvin E. Shaw qualified this finding to show that centralized groups solve relatively simple problems better than decentralized groups, but when problems become more complex, centralization can hamper problem solving. Another consistent finding of this research was that more centralized group members are more satisfied with the group process than are more peripheral members.

### Recent Advances

Most of the research on small group decision making in the 1950s through the 1980s was conducted in groups with symmetrical communication networks, in which each member's communication was received by the entire group. Therefore, there were few advances within the field of communication networks during this time period. Bibb Latané and his colleagues revived interest in communication networks in the late 1980s, pointing out that in large groups, individual group members cannot necessarily communicate with the entire group at the same time. Latané's dynamic social impact theory includes a principle of immediacy, which assumes that influence between any two members in a group is predicted by the likelihood that they can easily share communications.

Latané and his colleagues tested the implications of his dynamic social impact theory by conducting computer simulations, in which agents were situated in a two-dimensional space, where the strongest influence between agents occurred with immediate neighbors. Each agent was randomly assigned a binary opinion on an issue (e.g., Republican vs. Democrat). Following from other assumptions of dynamic social impact theory, individual agents in the simulations also varied in strength (i.e., some were more influential than others), and agents were

influenced by the number of other agents sharing or opposing their preferences.

After simulating a number of rounds of communication, in which each agent's opinion was compared to the opinions of fellow agents, the researchers found that opinions either were maintained or changed as a function of the strength, immediacy, and number of other agents, and several group-level phenomena emerged. Opinions in the group typically consolidated (or polarized); that is, whichever opinion was most commonly held within the group became even more common after simulated communication. Because communication networks constrained communication, opinions also became regionally clustered, such that agents shared opinions with other agents who were physically close to them in the two-dimensional space, and who were thus able to exert greater influence over them. Latané and his colleagues then tested whether these phenomena that emerged in simulations also occurred within actual groups discussing issues in communication networks configured via e-mail exchanges. Both group-level phenomena observed in the computer simulations—consolidation and clustering—also emerged within groups of people discussing issues. Subsequently, Latané and his colleagues have shown that the “geometry” of communication networks—how they are organized—can determine the extent to which groups' opinions will consolidate and cluster as a function of communication. For example, as communication networks become more “clumpy” or hierarchical, consolidation and clustering of opinions tend to increase.

Mathematicians and physicists have also recently shown interest in using computer simulation to test some of the implications of constrained communication networks within large groups. One recent line of evidence was provided by Duncan Watts and his colleagues. Watts used computer simulation to solve the “small-world problem” posited by Stanley Milgram: If most people communicate with others within local networks (as social impact theory assumes), how can any two randomly chosen people within the larger group be connected by a surprisingly small number of links (“six degrees of separation”)? Watts showed that simply adding a small number of random communication links between people can create such small world networks even within extremely large

groups. Recent empirical research has provided further support for the “six degrees of separation” idea popularized by Milgram.

Another solution to the small-world problem involving computer simulation with communication networks has been provided by Albert-Laszlo Barabasi and his colleagues. Barabasi has shown that communication networks within large groups share properties with what are known as “scale-free” networks. In a scale-free network, some individuals within the larger group have many more communication partners than others; in the terms of earlier work on communication networks, such members can be said to be more centralized. Scale-free networks are another way to solve the small-world problem; when a small number of members within a large group have a large number of communication partners, it takes a relatively small number of links to join any two randomly chosen group members.

### Conclusion

The field of communication networks, a classic area of research within group dynamics, recently has been reactivated, partly as a function of advances in computer science. The fact that many group decisions are made by subsets of members, without all group members present at any given time, creates a need for more research in this area.

*Martin J. Bourgeois and Nicholas G. Schwab*

*See also* Culture; Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Polarization; Social Impact Theory; Social Networks

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## COMPLIANCE

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*Compliance* is one of a variety of ways in which people can be influenced by others. Two meanings have been attached to the term. Investigators such as Leon Festinger, Herbert Kelman, and Paul Nail define compliance as a change in public behavior without private acceptance. (As discussed below, when others influence both public behavior and private acceptance, the form of social influence is called *conversion* or *internalization*.) More recently, Robert Cialdini has offered a second definition of compliance that ignores the distinction between public and private. He defines compliance as *acquiescence* to a request. Each definition has generated a different set of questions and research findings. This entry examines both definitions.

### Compliance as a Change in Public Behavior

Research on compliance as a change in public behavior has addressed such questions as (a) What causes people to comply? (b) Why is it important to distinguish between compliance and private acceptance? and (c) Can compliance lead to private acceptance?

#### *What Causes People to Comply?*

Research shows that for people to comply, two conditions must be present. First, people must believe that the influencing agent has the ability to reward them for compliance or punish them for noncompliance. And, second, they must believe that the influencing agent has the ability to monitor their compliance or failure to comply. As an example, consider a worker's decision to comply with her supervisor's request to work faster. While

she may not agree with her supervisor, she is likely to comply because the supervisor controls important rewards (e.g., salary) and punishments (e.g., the power to have her fired) and is able to monitor her response.

Groups may represent another source of compliance, such as when a holdout juror yields to group pressure despite privately disagreeing with the verdict. In this instance, "going along to get along" reflects *normative influence*. In contrast, if the individual believes that the verdict is correct, the influence would reflect *conversion* because his private beliefs would be consistent with his public behavior. The influence in this case would reflect *informational influence*.

#### *Why Is It Important to Distinguish Between Compliance and Private Acceptance?*

By knowing the basis for someone's acceptance of influence—compliance versus conversion—one can better predict when the response is likely to be performed. In the case of compliance, the influencing agent (e.g., a group) must retain control of resources valued by the target person and be able to monitor whether or not the person complies. However, if the person privately accepts the influencing agent's position, the agent's ability to reward or punish the person and to maintain surveillance are unnecessary for the response to be performed. The person will perform the behavior because it is internalized, that is, it is consistent with her private beliefs.

#### *Can Compliance Lead to Private Acceptance?*

Numerous studies have shown that compliance can lead to private acceptance via a variety of mechanisms. Perhaps the best documented mechanism is the one proposed by Leon Festinger in his theory of cognitive dissonance. According to this theory, inconsistency between public behavior and private beliefs produces a tension known as cognitive dissonance. This tension motivates people to reduce their discomfort by changing their private beliefs to be more consistent with their public behavior. Studies show that belief change is most likely to occur when there is minimal pressure to comply and the compliance is public. When too much force is used to gain compliance, there will



be less cognitive dissonance and therefore less pressure to change private beliefs to be consistent with public behavior.

Another theory that can account for the impact of compliance on private beliefs is Daryl Bem's self-perception theory. According to this theory, people use their behavior to infer their private beliefs, particularly when they are uncertain about these beliefs. For example, when a group subtly induces a member to contribute to a charitable cause and the individual is later questioned about his feelings about the charity, he might reason that, because he made the donation, he must have positive beliefs about the charity.

A third explanation for how compliance produces private acceptance relates to the finding that compliance can provide people with the opportunity to gain new information that could change their private beliefs. Evidence for this mechanism can be found in studies of role playing where individuals were induced to write an essay favoring a position counter to their beliefs. Results show that this experience modifies individuals' private beliefs in the direction of the position taken in the essay, because writing the essay forces them to acquire new information that can potentially change their beliefs. In sum, then, there are multiple ways in which compliance to pressure can ultimately lead to private acceptance.

### Compliance in Response to a Request

Research on compliance with a request has focused on the strategies often used by professionals to gain compliance from potential clients. These professionals include fund-raisers, salespeople, advertisers, political lobbyists, and recruiters, to name a few. Their requests may be explicit, such as an invitation to donate to a charitable cause, or implicit, such as an advertisement touting the advantages of owning a brand of clothing without directly asking for a purchase.

Relevant research has addressed two questions: (1) What underlying motives of people do compliance professionals attempt to capitalize on? (2) Based on these underlying motives, what specific compliance strategies do professionals employ? According to Robert Cialdini, those who employ compliance-gaining strategies capitalize on three basic motivations of the target audience: (1) to

form accurate perceptions of reality, (2) to develop and preserve meaningful social relationships, and (3) to preserve a positive self-concept.

#### *Motivation to Form Accurate Perceptions of Reality*

People want to be effective decision makers. To meet this goal, they need to have accurate perceptions of reality because inaccurate perceptions are likely to produce poor decisions. Capitalizing on this motivation, compliance professionals have developed several effective strategies for gaining compliance. One such strategy involves presenting oneself as an authority or expert on the subject matter under consideration. The strategy relies on targets' tendency to rely on *heuristics*, or simple rules of thumb, to make decisions. In this particular case, target persons would be relying on the heuristic "experts know what's best." Examples of this strategy include an advertisement showing a NASCAR driver recommending a brand of motor oil and a waiter informing dinner guests that *coq au vin* is his favorite item on the menu.

To increase the perceived value of their product, compliance professionals also make use of the notion of scarcity. They attempt to capitalize on the belief in many people's minds that the quality of a product is a function of its scarcity—the less available the product, the better its quality. Examples of this strategy include stating that there is a "limited supply" of the product, or it is available only to the first 50 callers, or "it's a limited time offer."

Another tactic used by professionals to increase the perception that a product is a "good deal" involves the "that's-not-all" technique. The compliance agent first makes an offer and then immediately sweetens the deal by lowering the price or increasing the benefits. Sometimes this tactic is used in combination with the scarcity tactic, as when the target is informed that the special carving knife can be purchased for \$30, but if "you respond in the next hour you will also receive a free set of paring knives and cutting board."

#### *Motivation to Develop and Preserve Meaningful Social Relationships*

People often want to form new relationships and maintain existing relationships. It is therefore

not surprising that people are more likely to comply with a request from someone they like than from someone they dislike. The positive feelings underlying compliance may be based on the similarity or attractiveness of the person making the request. A compliance tactic based on the motivation to preserve meaningful social relationships is used by the American Cancer Society. This tactic involves enlisting group members, such as neighbors, to solicit donations from fellow neighbors. Evidence for the effectiveness of such tactics was obtained in a study showing that attractive solicitors for the American Heart Association produced almost twice the amount of compliance as unattractive solicitors.

Norms, or agreed upon rules of conduct, are an important part of maintaining social relationships. Compliance professionals frequently make use of one such norm, the norm of reciprocity, to elicit compliance. The strategy involves providing the target person with a gift, such as address labels, greeting cards, or a calendar, accompanied by a request for a donation. The recipient, feeling indebted to the donor, feels obligated to reciprocate by making a donation.

Another compliance tactic that capitalizes on the norm of reciprocity is the “door-in-the-face” strategy. A requester makes an extreme request (e.g., a \$200 donation), which is certain to be rejected. This is followed by a more moderate request (e.g., a \$25 donation). Target persons, feeling obligated to make a reciprocal concession, tend to comply by agreeing to the more moderate request. A substantial amount of research documents the efficacy of this strategy. While the prevailing view is that reciprocal concessions are the mechanism that makes this work, some researchers contend that the key mechanism is “perceptual contrast.” That is, the more moderate request is accepted because, in comparison to the extreme request, it appears to be a very minimal request.

#### *Motivation to Preserve a Positive Self-Concept*

Finally, people desire to maintain a positive view of themselves, and compliance professionals often attempt to capitalize on this motivation. Viewing oneself as a person who is consistent and who adheres to commitments contributes to one’s positive self-perception. One well-documented

compliance strategy, “the foot-in-the-door” strategy, capitalizes on the need for consistency. People are first asked to comply with a small request, which is usually granted. This is followed by a larger request.

Research shows that complying with the smaller request makes people more likely to comply with the larger request. For example, one study showed that people who first agreed to put a small sign in their window were more likely to agree to a subsequent request by a different solicitor to place a large sign on their lawn than were people who were not first given the small request. Presumably, people complied with the larger request because they wanted to be consistent with their image of themselves as helpful. Groups often employ this tactic when socializing new members. For example, the group may initially request that the new member make only a minimal contribution to group effort, which is followed by escalating demands.

A second compliance strategy, known as “lowballing,” capitalizes on targets’ desire to view themselves positively by adhering to commitments. Take the case in which a customer in an auto showroom makes an initial commitment to purchase a car. Lowballing occurs when the salesperson initially agrees to sell the car at a lower price than she intends to get. Subsequently, after “consulting” with her manager, she ups the price by informing the customer that features that were supposedly included in the original offer, such as undercoating and power steering, will cost extra. Customers often comply with the additional request, presumably because they want to view themselves as the type of person who adheres to commitments.

### **Conclusion**

Groups commonly pressure members to comply with their wishes. This entry examined two meanings attached to the term *compliance*. Early researchers defined compliance as public behavior without private acceptance. Research in this tradition has produced important insights about the conditions under which compliance leads to private acceptance. More recently, researchers have employed a definition of compliance that ignores the distinction between public behavior and private acceptance. Instead, compliance is defined simply as acquiescence to a request. This definition has

stimulated a great deal of research on the motivational underpinnings of compliance and the tactics that groups and individuals use to induce people to comply. Research resulting from these two lines of inquiry has enriched our understanding of social influence in both dyadic and group contexts.

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*See also* Cognitive Consistency; Conformity; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Norms; Obedience to Authority

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## COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

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*Computer-mediated communication* (CMC) refers to the exchange of messages via computer technologies, as opposed to face-to-face communication. It includes familiar technologies, such as e-mail or telephony; less common, but also popular technologies, such as video conferencing, instant messaging (IM; exchanging short text messages), and blogging (writing in an online diary);

and a wide variety of less familiar tools. CMC allows people to communicate at a distance, across both space and time. These technologies can alter the ways that people converse with one another in both positive and negative ways. It is important to group processes and intergroup relations in two ways: First, the use of CMC instead of face-to-face conversation can alter the ways that people interact with each other, affecting such things as group performance and people's liking for one another. Second, CMC itself makes it possible for people to interact with a more diverse set of individuals, spanning many time zones and countries. Thus, CMC technologies can broaden social networks, helping people to know individuals from around the world.

The appropriateness of any particular CMC tool for group communication will depend on what the group is trying to accomplish. Researchers are continuously working to create newer and better CMC technologies that will better support group processes and intergroup relations. This entry examines the various types of CMC technologies, their effects on the conversational process, and their impact on social networks.

### CMC Technologies

There are many types of CMC technologies, each of which can have different effects on group processes. These technologies can be differentiated along several dimensions. First, CMC technologies vary according to the *mode of communication* supported, such as typing, voice communication, facial expressions, or gestures. A common way of talking about this is in terms of richness—the more aspects of face-to-face communication (words, intonation, facial expressions, etc.) available in a CMC technology, the richer that technology is said to be. Thus, video is richer than telephony, which in turn is richer than instant messaging. Second, CMC technologies vary according to the *type of social group* they are intended to support. Some, such as IM, are used predominantly by pairs of colleagues, friends, and family members. Others, such as teleconferencing and online chatrooms, can support small groups. Yet others, such as blogs and e-mail distribution lists, can support communication among hundreds, thousands, or even millions of people. Third, CMC technologies vary according

to whether they are intended to support real-time (*synchronous*) communication, in which speakers and listeners are both present at the same time and can respond immediately to each other's messages, or whether they are intended to support different-time (*asynchronous*) communication, such as when someone reads and responds to an e-mail that was sent the day before.

The characteristics of a given type of CMC (mode of communication, type of social group, synchronous vs. asynchronous) have implications for the types of group processes that can be supported. For example, e-mail can be a good method for exchanging documents or notifying others of an upcoming event such as a party or presentation, but it is not as effective as the telephone for making rapid decisions. Instant messaging can be slower than a telephone call, because people typically type more slowly than they speak, but it provides a written record of the discussion that can be referenced in the future.

### Effects of CMC on Conversational Processes

Face-to-face conversation is an essential part of most all group processes; it is the basic mechanism by which people exchange ideas, come to agreement, negotiate outcomes, and perform other group tasks. Three key aspects of conversational processes are often altered when people communicate via CMC: the types of communicative behaviors people perform, the role of conversational context, and turn taking.

### Words, Intonation, and Nonverbal Behavior

In conversations, listeners attend to the words being spoken, but they also listen to *how* these words are spoken, and they watch facial expressions, hand gestures, and other nonverbal behaviors for insight into what the speaker means. Imagine, for example, hearing someone say, "I'm so happy!" versus "I'm so happy." With the rising intonation suggested by an exclamation mark, the speaker sounds much happier. Similarly, listeners' nonverbal behaviors are important sources of information for speakers. Speakers monitor listeners' gaze and facial expressions to assess whether or not they are listening and understand the message.

How well CMC supports group activities depends in large part on the type of task people are doing. When the goal is informal chitchat, most any kind of synchronous communication will suffice, including the telephone and IM. The reasoning here is that nonverbal and vocal cues are less important for such conversations than they are for tasks requiring more social delicacy, such as negotiations. For these more delicate tasks, richer media like video conferencing are more appropriate (in some cases people may actually travel long distances to conduct these conversations face-to-face). Tasks that involve talking about physical objects, such as maps, architectural diagrams, or pieces of technology, also benefit from CMC tools that include video. Here, however, the kind of video that is most useful does not show a partner's face, but rather a view of the work space, so that people can share a view of the objects they are talking about.

At the level of conversational processes, researchers have found that specific attributes of media influence how people communicate with one another. For example, when people can't see their partners, they are more likely to say things that are impolite, a phenomenon known as *flaming*. A common explanation for this is that when people can't see a partner they feel less constrained by social norms that prohibit rude behavior. They don't have to look at a partner's upset facial expression or listen to him or her yell in response. Flaming is particularly likely when people are anonymous—for example, when they use fictitious screen names in chat rooms—and thus cannot be held personally accountable for what they say.

Communication via CMC has also been studied with respect to interpersonal deception. In text-based media like e-mail or IM, not only are visual cues missing (e.g., "shifty eyes") but also the person who is lying has more time to carefully compose falsehoods. In fact, police agencies can create entirely false personas in text chat rooms, as is the case when agents pretend to be young girls in order to catch sexual predators. The lack of visual cues to the typist's identity and the additional time available to carefully craft typed messages create opportunities to deceive on a much larger scale than that commonly available in face-to-face groups.

Perhaps because lying is easier when text-based media are used, members of groups that interact

virtually often show less trust in each other than do members of collocated groups. Trust among members of virtual groups can be increased if people interact informally with one another first, either face-to-face or via CMC. Once people get to know one another, trust levels in virtual and collocated groups are similar.

### Context

Conversations take place within a larger setting, such as a workplace, school, or home, and this setting helps shape what kinds of messages are appropriate and how they should be understood. In CMC, the sender of a message may not know the context of the recipient, and thus accidentally violates social norms. One example of this is sending jokes or other personal IM messages to recipients who are projecting their computer screen to an audience. In such circumstances, the entire audience will see the possibly inappropriate message.

The absence of context also affects people's interpretations of events. It becomes easy for people to misinterpret others' responses or failures to respond. If someone fails to respond to an e-mail message, it could be because he or she is intentionally ignoring it, or it could be because the person is very busy. When cell phones become disconnected in the heat of an argument, it could be because the signal was dropped or it could be because the other party hung up in anger. Several studies have found that when context is lacking, people tend to make what social psychologists call the *fundamental attribution error*: They overattribute the causes of events to their partner's dispositional characteristics (e.g., laziness, lack of interest) when those causes actually involve situational constraints, such as the quality of the technology (e.g., bad connection).

A flip side of the ambiguity of CMC is a phenomenon known as *plausible deniability*. People are aware that their communication partners can't see what they are doing, and they can thus pretend to miss messages when they really just don't want to respond. Plausible deniability is risky, however, for the reasons stated above: The sender of the message is most likely to assume that a nonresponse is due to partner characteristics, not the situation. The ambiguity of context in CMC also enables

people to multitask, switching between multiple conversations or between a conversation and some other activity. Because of the invisibility of the context, conversational partners can't see that they do not have a person's undivided attention.

When context is lacking, the careful negotiation of engagement in an interaction is disrupted. When people are face to face, they use a series of nonverbal cues (looking at the other person from a distance to see if he or she is busy, establishing eye contact, moving into speech range, etc.) to initiate a conversation. In virtually all types of CMC, the information needed for this engagement process to go smoothly is missing. As a result, it is easy to interrupt people when they are busy. For example, when making a telephone call there is no way to determine if the called person is sleeping, cooking, painting, or otherwise engaged—the person is simply interrupted in the middle of whatever he or she was doing. The same holds true for senders of IM messages, although some IM clients allow people to indicate their availability for communication (e.g., setting their status as "away"). E-mail spammers take advantage of this lack of context by sending hundreds or even thousands of unwanted messages each day.

### Turn Taking and Conversational Participation

In a typical conversation, people take turns speaking and listening in an orderly fashion, using turn-taking signals such as tone of voice; questions like, "What do you think, John?"; and eye gaze. In CMC, many if not most of these cues are missing. This has both negative and positive effects on group interaction. On the negative side, it can be more awkward to change speakers in CMC, especially in large groups such as multiparty audio conferences. On the positive side, however, shier people find it easier to speak up when they do not have to attend to these turn-taking cues. In fact, one of the earliest goals of text-based CMC tools was to increase the evenness of participation among members of group by making everyone anonymous. That way, it was reasoned, people of lower status or with greater fears of speaking would contribute more. These systems were fairly successful, but as one might imagine, people did not like having anonymous partners and the tools were never used to any great degree.

### Using CMC to Broaden Social Networks

In addition to its effects on individual conversational processes, CMC can help grow people's *social networks*—the set of people they know and who those people know. But CMC can also introduce problems into these new social relationships.

#### *Meeting New People*

When people are all collocated in the same physical area, they tend to bump into one another in common areas such as cafeterias, hallways, or coffee shops. Social norms dictate greeting acquaintances in such settings, so unplanned conversations often arise. These conversations strengthen interpersonal bonds. The majority of CMC technologies do not support this kind of informal communication, though there are some exceptions. For example, there are thousands of online chat rooms where one can go to discuss topics of common interest with people one has never met in real life. In some cases, longer term friendships and even marriages have developed from chat room interactions. Another place that people encounter new potential friends is in virtual social environments such as Second Life, which even includes large (virtual) public events like concerts or presentations to bring people together. Social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace also allow people to extend their networks by facilitating connections between friends of friends. At the same time, these sites allow people to maintain existing close relationships after life changes, such as moving away for college.

One of the values of meeting new people online is that these people tend to be more diverse than those one would meet in one's neighborhood. In one chat room, for example, a typical discussion included people from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Australia. Over time, many of these people became close friends and some even traveled to other countries to meet face-to-face. Interaction across cultures brings interesting new challenges for many people, because cultures differ in communication styles, politeness norms, opinions about what topics are appropriate versus inappropriate, and norms for who should take the lead in discussions. Most of what we know about CMC is the result of studies conducted in Western

cultures, particularly the United States, Canada, and Europe. An important area for future work is to understand how CMC changes group process among different cultural groups and in intercultural communication.

#### *Longer Term Relationships*

An intriguing aspect of virtual relationships is that people are more likely to disclose personal information about themselves to those they meet online than they are to disclose such information to face-to-face acquaintances. This can have both benefits and costs. On the positive side, disclosure of personal information, especially when reciprocated, can speed up the development of deep and long-lasting relationships. On the negative side, however, disclosure of personal information to unfamiliar others can be risky and in some cases has led to serious consequences such as identity theft or predatory behavior.

Although CMC can broaden social networks and lead to deep friendships, it can also introduce problems into social relationships. Earlier, this entry discussed phenomena that surround a single interaction, either face-to-face or via CMC. These phenomena have a way of adding up over time, shaping the quality of the interactions among a group of people and influencing the outcomes of their activities. The erroneous overattribution of problems to others' personal characteristics rather than technological limitations is one example. When failures to respond are attributed to ill will or laziness on the part of one's partners, this can't help but negatively impact future interactions. Similarly, confusions that arise because visual or auditory cues are missing in CMC may not be noticed until much further down the line, when they have already had significant consequences. Perhaps for these reasons alone, social interactions via CMC are often less successful than those among collocated individuals, at least in the short run. With more time and experience with CMC, groups are often able to overcome these problems.

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*See also* Culture; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Virtual/Internet Groups; Work Teams

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## COMPUTER SIMULATION

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*Computer simulation* uses the computational and storage capacity of computers to model complex and dynamic systems of behaviors. In a typical application, a model of group process includes:

- *agents* (group members) who act and interact;
- *attributes* that describe these agents;
- behaviors that the agents can display (*behavioral repertoire*); and
- *functional rules* that specify how agents' attributes affect their behaviors and how other agents' behaviors affect these attributes.

Through a series of computational steps, the model generates the interaction of agents as it unfolds over time. At any point, the state of the interaction is described by the current values of agents' attributes. Such a computational model is a theory. It symbolically represents a real-world process, and its

validity can be evaluated by comparing its output to empirical observations. Structurally, the theory is embodied in the choices of attributes and behaviors that are included in the model. Dynamically, the theory is captured by the functional rules. These rules describe how agents' attributes (knowledge, mood, etc.) affect their behaviors and how the behavior of each agent changes the attributes of others, and thus their subsequent behaviors. Using the capacity and flexibility of computational modeling, one can combine many theoretical ideas across different levels of analysis (individual, small group, organizational, and community) into a unified and coherent working model.

### An Example: Mate Selection

Consider modeling how potential mates choose partners. Suppose the domain of interest is mate selection in a heterosexual, monogamous community of unattached agents. Characterizing the domain in this way implies that mating occurs when a female and a male agree to form a union and leave the pool of unattached agents. Hence, each agent's gender is a necessary attribute and a necessary functional rule is that same-sex agents will not mate. These structural components of the model are necessary but often are not of primary theoretical interest. For example, one might develop the model based on the following propositions:

*Attractiveness proposition:* Each agent has a level of attractiveness that summarizes her or his value as a mate.

*Process assumptions:* (1) a meeting is a temporary pairing of two agents, (2) a proposal to a mate may occur if the two parties in a meeting are of the opposite gender, (3) either party may initiate a proposal, and (4) for a proposal to result in mating, the recipient of a proposal must accept.

*Proposal proposition:* The probability that a person initiates a proposal is positively related to the level of attractiveness of her or his partner in a meeting.

*Acceptance proposition:* The level of attractiveness of the proposer is positively related to the probability that a proposal will be accepted.

*Rejection proposition:* The more often a person's proposals are rejected, the more likely the person will be to initiate and accept a proposal.

These propositions and assumptions comprise a simple model of mate selection. The simplicity is imposed for exposition purposes. For example, the model as outlined assumes that unions once formed remain intact. More realistically, some attached partners may reenter the pool, but the process that determines this reentry would have to be specified. Moreover, representing attractiveness as one-dimensional is simplistic. In practice, attractiveness is determined by many attributes, which are weighted differently by different agents. Also, the domain of interest could be expanded to include homosexual and bisexual agents. This expansion would require adding additional attributes and functional rules to the process. Adding such complexity is limited primarily by the creativity and ingenuity of the modeler. The medium of computer simulation easily accommodates complexity.

Even within this simple model of mate selection, translating the theoretical propositions into computational steps adds complexity. Consider the proposal proposition. Two agents, M and F, meet. Each has a specified level of attractiveness and these are stored in the variables  $M_{attr}$  and  $F_{attr}$ . Does F propose a union? There are two general approaches to translating attributes into behavior. One might define a *deterministic* functional rule: If  $M_{attr}$  exceeds a critical threshold of attractiveness, then F will propose. This approach requires an additional attribute, namely an attractiveness threshold for each agent. Alternatively, one might define a *stochastic* rule that adjusts the probability of F proposing as a positively increasing function of  $M_{attr}$ . This stochastic approach requires that the program complete three steps: (1) compute the probability of the event as a function of relevant attributes, (2) sample a value from a probability distribution, and (3) compare the sampled number to the computed probability of the event. If the sampled random number is greater or equal to the probability of the event (in this case, F proposing), then the event occurs; otherwise, it does not. A stochastic approach implicitly recognizes that variables other than those represented in the computational steps may determine whether the event of interest occurs, and these extraneous contributions are modeled as

random processes superimposed on the processes that are explicitly incorporated in the model.

### Computational Models in Social Psychology

In the 1968 *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Robert Abelson reviewed the early history of computational modeling in social psychology. His and subsequent works include many examples of computer simulations of group behavior. In 1988, Thomas Ostrom edited a special edition of the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* that featured computational models of social behavior. Ostrom characterized computational models as the "third symbol system" for theorizing—verbal language and mathematical systems being the other two. He argued that computational models combine the precision and deductive power of mathematical systems with the flexibility and complexity of verbal expression. In the 2000 *Handbook of Research Methods in Social and Personality Psychology*, Reid Hastie and Garold Stasser presented two examples that illustrate the process (and possible pitfalls) of computational modeling: the IMP (impression and memory processor) model of impression formation and the DISCUSS model of small group discussion and decision making. Each model is presented in sufficient detail to illustrate how one constructs and evaluates models and how computational models interact with verbal and mathematical theories and empirical observations. In 2000, Daniel Ilgen and Charles Hulin compiled a set of papers that describe applications of computational models and commentary on these applications. Their book documents the richness and variety of models in organizational and group behavior.

### Computational Modeling of Group Process

An attractive feature for the study of group process is that a model can represent multiple levels of analysis: the individual, the small group, the organization, the community, and society. Bridging levels of analysis permits scholars to explore the implications of what happens at one level for what is observed at another level. For example, S. M. Kalick and T. E. Hamilton used a model similar to the foregoing example, in which individuals prefer attractive mates, and showed that such a process resulted in mates that were similar in attractiveness.



They concluded that similar levels of attractiveness within couples does not imply that people seek mates who are similar to themselves in attractiveness. It is possible that an apparent preference for matching attractiveness is an emergent feature of the process, not a preference of the individual agents. Bibb Latané and his colleagues provided another example of bridging levels. A major tenet of social impact theory is that the influence exerted on a person increases as the number of sources of influence increases. One implication is that majority positions are more likely to gain than lose adherents. As a result, it seems that minority dissent would disappear over time, causing opinions in a group or community to converge on a shared position. However, Latané and his colleagues demonstrated that another major tenet of social impact theory modulates the process of majority influence: The impact of a source depends on its psychological immediacy. One component of immediacy is proximity in a communication network. They modeled communities of agents that were connected by various configurations of communication channels. Over the course of several rounds of “talking,” agents learned their neighbors’ opinions and adjusted their individual opinions toward the opinions expressed by their neighbors. Latané and his colleagues noted three emergent features at the level of the community. First, the number of agents holding minority opinions decreased (*consolidation*). Second, neighborhoods of agents who agreed emerged (*clustering*) and disparity of opinions survived across neighborhoods (*continuing diversity*). That is, neighborhoods of minority opinion survived within an overall pattern of majority influence. Third, when multiple issues were tracked simultaneously, opinions across issues became increasingly correlated over time (*correlation*), an unintuitive by-product of consolidation and clustering. Thus, the dynamics of social impact, modeled as communication and influence between individuals, generated neighborhoods of like-minded people, pockets of minority dissent, and characteristic belief profiles across multiple issues.

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*See also* Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Minority Influence; Research Methods and Issues; Social Impact Theory

### Further Readings

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## CONFORMITY

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*Social influence*, defined as changing one’s perceptions, opinions, or behaviors in response to real or imagined pressure from others, is a fundamental aspect of group life. Various forms of social influence have been identified, including *compliance* (going along with a direct request from others), *obedience* (following the orders of a legitimate authority figure), and *conformity* (changing one’s perceptions, beliefs, or actions in the direction of a perceived group norm). This entry focuses on conformity, examining some of the definitional and measurement issues that researchers face, the motivations that lead people to conform, the impact of having a partner (social supporter) on resisting group pressure, and the role of individual differences in determining conformity.

### Classic Studies

Two lines of classic research had a great impact on how social psychologists think about conformity. In one set of studies published in 1935, Muzafer Sherif demonstrated the power of social influence to change people’s perceptions of highly ambiguous stimuli. Sherif made use of a perceptual illusion called the *autokinetic effect*, which occurs when people are asked to concentrate on a stationary

point of light in a dark room. Under these circumstances, people (who are not informed the light is actually stationary) perceive movement in the light. Some think it moves only a little; others think it moves a lot. Sherif found that, when groups of three people were brought together and asked to say out loud how far the light moved, their judgments gradually converged over trials. In other words, they developed a group norm about the distance the light moved. Moreover, this norm had a lasting impact on participants' perceptions. When later asked to make estimates alone, their responses continued to be influenced by the group estimate. Subsequent research demonstrated that conformity to the norm group was still evident a year later. It is important to note that, in these studies, there was initially no norm to which participants could conform. Instead, they created this norm through mutual social influence, and it then influenced their private responses.

A second set of studies, published by Solomon Asch in 1951, demonstrated the power of social influence to change people's perceptions of highly unambiguous stimuli. Thus, in contrast to Sherif, Asch was interested in the conditions under which people would yield to group pressure even though the group was obviously incorrect. To answer this question, Asch assembled groups of seven to nine people for a study on visual perception. The experimental task, which involved matching the length of a standard line against three comparison lines, was quite easy. Each group contained one naïve participant who answered next-to-last. The remaining "members" were confederates of the experimenter and gave unanimously incorrect answers on 12 of 18 trials. Asch found, to his surprise, that conformity occurred even in a situation where the majority gave clearly erroneous answers. Participants' responses agreed with the erroneous majority approximately one third of the time, and 27% of participants conformed on at least 8 trials. In contrast, control participants (who made judgments privately) gave incorrect answers less than 1% of the time. Although the level of conformity that Asch obtained may seem surprising, it is worth noting that participants' responses were correct approximately two thirds of the time and 24% of participants never conformed.

Together, Sherif's and Asch's studies stimulated a tremendous amount of interest in when and why

groups elicit conformity from their members. Scores of studies have been conducted on this topic in the years since their groundbreaking research was published, and much has been learned.

### Definitional and Measurement Issues

As noted above, we define conformity as change in a person's perceptions, beliefs, or actions in the direction of a perceived group norm. Although seemingly straightforward, this definition masks several complexities regarding how conformity is conceptualized and measured.

#### *Movement Versus Agreement Conformity*

Defining conformity in terms of change is useful, because it allows us to differentiate conformity from *behavioral uniformity*, which involves independent agreement in the absence of perceived group pressure. Simply knowing that a person agrees with a group norm at one point in time does not allow us to make a confident judgment about the source of that agreement. Perhaps the person independently arrived at the group's position without any knowledge of the group norm or any desire to adhere to it—an instance of behavioral uniformity. In contrast, knowing that the person disagreed with the group at Time 1 and then shifted toward it at Time 2 would increase our confidence that the group exerted influence on the person—an instance of conformity. This is especially true if others who shared the person's initial position, but were not exposed to group pressure, failed to change their position.

Although the criterion of movement is useful in defining conformity, it has potential pitfalls. For example, in some cases a person who independently agrees with a group norm but is tempted to abandon it may fail to take this action because of group pressure. Here, conformity is revealed by *refusal to change*. Response inhibition as a reaction to group pressure has also been discussed under the rubric of "conformity by omission," which is contrasted with the more commonly studied "conformity by commission." In the commission case, conformity involves performing a behavior because of group pressure that one would not otherwise perform (e.g., saying a prayer one does not believe in because classmates are saying

it). In the omission case, conformity involves failing to perform a behavior because of group pressure that one would otherwise perform (e.g., not saying a prayer one does believe in because classmates are not saying it).

Another potential problem with the movement criterion involves the temporal relationship between exposure to group pressure and response to this pressure. We have implicitly assumed that conformity occurs immediately after pressure is exerted, but this is not always the case. One counter example is *anticipatory conformity*, in which a person expects future group pressure and responds to it by moving toward the group norm before the pressure is applied. Another counter example is *delayed conformity*, in which a person experiences group pressure, is unable or unwilling to conform immediately, but moves to the group norm at some later time. In both cases, there is a causal link between pressure and conformity, but this link is hard to detect.

### *Public Versus Private Conformity*

Our discussion so far has emphasized overt (behavioral) responses to group pressure. However, conformity can involve covert (attitudinal or perceptual) responses as well. Two general categories of conformity have therefore been distinguished—*public agreement (compliance)* and *private agreement (acceptance)*. If conformity is defined as movement toward a group norm, then compliance refers to overt behavioral change in the direction of that norm, whereas acceptance refers to covert attitudinal or perceptual change. For example, if an individual initially refused to sign a petition advocating abortion rights, learned that a group advocated these rights, and then signed a petition favoring these rights, the person would be showing compliance. In contrast, if an individual privately believed that abortion should be outlawed, learned that a group advocated abortion rights, and then changed his or her private opinion about these rights, the person would be showing acceptance.

The relationship between compliance and acceptance is potentially complex. An individual could exhibit compliance but not acceptance (e.g., because he or she fears group reprisal for deviance but does not privately accept the group's position), acceptance but not compliance (e.g., because he or she privately accepts the group's position but fears

sanctions from outgroup members for taking a public stand agreeing with the group), or both compliance and acceptance (e.g., because he or she accepts the group's position and wants to encourage others to adopt this position). Whether conformity reflects compliance and/or acceptance has implications for how a person will behave when the group is absent. For example, a person who conforms at the public but not at the private level is unlikely to endorse the group's position when responding privately. In contrast, a person who conforms at both levels is likely to endorse the group's position even when the group is absent.

The distinction between compliance and acceptance is applicable to *nonconformity* as well as conformity. Several forms of nonconformity can be distinguished, but two of the most important are independence and anticonformity. *Independence* occurs when a person initially disagrees with a group and exhibits neither compliance nor acceptance after being exposed to group pressure. In other words, the person stands fast when faced with disagreement. In contrast, *anticonformity* occurs when a person initially disagrees with a group and moves even further away from its position (at the public and/or private level) after being exposed to pressure. In other words, the person becomes more extreme in his or her initial position when faced with disagreement. Ironically, then, anticonformers are just as responsive to group pressure as are conformers, but they manifest their susceptibility in a very different way (by moving away from, rather than toward, the group).

### **Motivational Bases of Conformity**

People conform to group pressure because they are dependent on the group for satisfying two important goals. One is the desire to have an accurate perception of reality, and the other is the desire to be accepted by other members.

### *Informational Influence*

There is a great deal of evidence that people want to hold correct beliefs about the world, because such beliefs lead to actions that maximize the probability of rewarding outcomes. Some of our beliefs about the world (e.g., oatmeal cooks better in hot water than cold water) can be verified

by using objective tests (e.g., leaving oatmeal in hot vs. cold water for 5 minutes and then tasting it). In contrast, other beliefs (e.g., the U.S. should maintain its nuclear arms capability; the federal government should institute stronger environmental regulations) cannot be verified using objective standards and hence must be verified using social tests, namely comparing our beliefs to those of other people whose judgment we respect. If these others agree with us, we gain confidence in our beliefs. If they disagree with us, we lose confidence. Because disagreement is disturbing, we are motivated to eliminate it, and one way to do so is to conform to group norms.

According to this analysis, people sometimes conform to groups because they are uncertain about the correctness of their beliefs and believe the group is more likely to be correct than they are. This kind of conformity reflects what Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard labeled *informational influence*. In general, informational influence produces private acceptance as well as public compliance. This is illustrated in the work of Muzafer Sherif, discussed earlier. His research indicated that people judging an ambiguous stimulus exhibited both compliance (when they made judgments in others' presence) and acceptance (when they later responded privately).

Because informational influence is based on insecurity about one's beliefs, we would expect it to be more common when an individual feels dependent on others for information. Consistent with this assumption, people conform more when they are working on ambiguous tasks than on unambiguous tasks. In addition, they conform more when they have doubts about their own task competence and when they think other group members are highly competent on the task.

### *Normative Influence*

In addition to wanting to hold correct beliefs about the world, people are motivated to be accepted by other group members. The desire for social acceptance is very powerful in a wide range of situations and explains why people are typically quite uncomfortable if they think others currently reject them or are likely to do so in the future. For example, the results of one study indicated that, of 25 people who conformed very little or not at all,

19 expected negative group evaluation. In contrast, of 24 people who conformed a great deal, 17 expected positive evaluation from other group members. Additional evidence demonstrates a factual basis for nonconformers' fear of punishment. Many studies of reaction to deviance show that group members do indeed reject people who deviate from group consensus, depending on such factors as the extremity and content of the deviate's position, the presumed reason for the deviate's behavior, and the deviate's status in the group. Because actual or anticipated rejection is so disturbing, people try to minimize it by conforming to group norms.

According to this analysis, people sometimes conform to groups because they are motivated to be liked (or at least not disliked) and believe that other members will feel more kindly toward them if they conform to rather than deviate from group norms. This kind of conformity reflects what Deutsch and Gerard labeled *normative influence*. In general, normative influence produces public compliance but not private acceptance. This is illustrated in the work of Solomon Asch, discussed earlier. Few of Asch's participants reported changing their perceptions of the experimental stimuli during the group pressure situation, and subsequent studies indicated that participants' private responses after leaving the situation often differed from their public responses in that situation.

Because normative influence is based on insecurity about one's acceptance, we would expect it to be more common when an individual feels threatened for deviating from group norms. Consistent with this assumption, group members conform more when working for a common goal rather than individual goals, presumably because they believe that deviance on their part will be punished more severely in the former case. As might be expected, however, conformity in common goal groups is substantially reduced if members believe that this behavior will lower the group's probability of attaining a positive outcome. Another factor that increases normative influence is surveillance by other group members. People who are concerned about others' evaluations ought to conform more when their behavior is public rather than private, and conformity is in fact higher in the former condition.

### Mixed Cases

Although informational and normative influence have been discussed here as though they are mutually exclusive, they occur simultaneously in at least some group situations. This is a major premise of *social identity theory*, which seeks to explain a range of social influence phenomena, including conformity. This theory assumes that disagreement with others produces uncertainty only when one expects to agree with these people. For this reason, disagreement with ingroup members produces more uncertainty than disagreement with outgroup members. In addition, the theory assumes that some ingroup members are more influential than others. More specifically, a member's influence depends on how much his or her position embodies what is unique about the group—the norm that differentiates the ingroup from outgroups. Members who are closer to this norm are more influential than those who are further from it. Finally, the theory assumes that conformity involves private acceptance as well as public compliance, because people believe that ingroup norms provide valid evidence about reality. A substantial amount of research is consistent with the social identity explanation of conformity.

### Social Support and Conformity Reduction

Asch investigated the impact of group unanimity on conformity by having a single confederate dissent from the erroneous majority by giving correct answers on the line-judging task. The presence of this *social supporter* reduced conformity dramatically, from 33% to 6%. In later research, Asch found that participants who were opposed by an eight-person majority and had a supporter conformed far less than participants who were opposed by a three-person majority and did not have a supporter. Subsequent work by other researchers demonstrated the generalizability of the social support effect by showing that it reduces conformity on a wide range of stimuli (e.g., visual perception items, attitudes) and for a wide range of people (e.g., male and female adults, normal and mentally retarded children). In addition, social support remains effective even after the supporter leaves the situation, as long as participants continue to judge the same type of stimulus and the supporter does not repudiate his or her dissenting position.

The effectiveness of social support can be explained in terms of the supporter's ability to reduce informational and/or normative influence. In the case of informational influence, social supporters can lower participants' dependence on the majority for information about reality. For example, in one study, participants received support from a partner who either had normal vision (and hence could see the stimuli clearly) or wore extremely thick glasses and failed a "vision test" in the participant's presence. Consistent with an informational influence explanation, the competent supporter was more effective in reducing conformity. In the case of normative influence, social supporters can lower participants' fear of punishment for deviation from the group norm. Research indicates that people who dissent from majority consensus with a supporter are much less apprehensive about being rejected than are those who dissent alone. The presence of a supporter may reduce participants' fear of retaliation because they believe the supporter will absorb some of the majority's anger toward deviates. This should not be the case, however, if majority members are assumed to dislike the supporter, for example because they are prejudiced against his or her racial group. In such cases, participants may expect that a perceived alliance with the supporter will increase, rather than decrease, the majority's hostility toward them and hence may continue to conform.

### The Role of Individual Differences

Does everyone who enters a group pressure situation respond in exactly the same way to it? Of course not. Every conformity experiment that has been conducted has found that some people conform more than others. This universal finding challenges conformity researchers to discover characteristics of participants that reliably affect how they respond to group pressure. A variety of such characteristics, including age, race, sex, cultural background, and personality, have been studied in an effort to meet this challenge. To illustrate the impact of individual differences on conformity, participants' sex and cultural backgrounds are discussed next. In both cases, the behavioral predispositions that people acquire prior to entering a group pressure situation can affect how they respond to that situation.

For many years, the conventional wisdom was that females are more susceptible to group pressure than are males. Today, we know that the relationship between sex and conformity is more complicated. Using meta-analytic techniques that combine the results of many studies, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli found that women were indeed more influenceable than men. However, the overall size of this effect was small, and it depended on the setting in which the research was conducted. Sex differences in influenceability were strongest in group-pressure situations where participants were under surveillance by other group members. In contrast, women were only slightly more influenceable than men in conformity experiments that did not involve surveillance and in attitude change studies where participants listened to persuasive communications. Several explanations for sex differences in conformity have been offered. The most plausible is based on the different social roles that men and women are taught to play in our society. According to this explanation, men are taught to be more dominant and assertive than women, and people of both sexes are more likely to exhibit gender-consistent behavior in public (group-pressure) settings than in private settings.

Just as men and women who grow up in the same culture have different socialization experiences that can affect their responses to group pressure, so people who grow up in different cultures may learn different ways of responding to group pressure. To investigate this possibility, Michael Bond and Peter Smith examined cultural differences in conformity using a large meta-analysis involving participants from 17 countries (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, Holland, Hong Kong, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Portugal, the United States, Zaire, and Zimbabwe). These researchers measured the relationship between the individualism–collectivism of the countries and the amount of conformity that residents displayed on Asch's line judgment task. Individualism is a cultural orientation that emphasizes independence, autonomy, and self-reliance. Collectivism is a cultural orientation that emphasizes interdependence, cooperation, and social harmony. Bond and Smith found that cultural values were indeed related to conformity—people in collectivist cultures displayed more conformity than did people in individualist cultures. Although

the interpretation of these results is not completely clear, it is plausible that collectivists conform more than individualists because they give greater weight to collective goals and are more concerned about how other people view their behavior and are affected by it.

So far, this entry has focused on how cultural differences *between* societies affect conformity, but cultural shifts *within* societies may also be important. To examine this possibility, Bond and Smith examined the impact of intracultural change on conformity in the Asch paradigm, using data from the United States. They found that conformity levels generally declined from the early 1950s to the mid-1990s. These findings are intriguing, but hard to interpret. Were cultural changes the only (or even the primary) cause of the reduced conformity, and, if so, which of the many cultural changes that occurred in the U.S. were responsible?

### Conclusion

Some 75 years after Sherif's classic work using the autokinetic effect, social psychologists continue to be intrigued by the causes and consequences of conformity. Since the 1980s, much of the work on conformity has shifted from an exclusive interest in majority influence to a focus on similarities and differences between majority influence and its mirror opposite, minority influence (or innovation). The lively debate that has ensued has greatly extended our understanding of the nature of social influence in groups.

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*See also* Anticonformity; Asch, Solomon; Compliance; Deutsch, Morton; Deviance; Informational Influence; Innovation; Minority Influence; Normative Influence; Obedience to Authority; Opinion Deviance; Sherif, Muzafer; Social Identity Theory

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## CONSERVATISM

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As used in popular discourse, the term *conservatism* typically refers to a political ideology. Political conservatism is often contrasted with liberalism, and the two are often conceptualized as occupying opposite ends of a single ideological continuum. Conservatism comprises two primary dimensions: (1) a preference for tradition over change and (2) promotion (or tolerance) of inequality. These two dimensions often (though not always) are correlated with one another. This is partly attributable to the fact that, throughout history, nontraditional social systems have tended more toward egalitarianism than traditional ones. Interestingly, in cognitive psychology, the term *conservatism* is used in reference to the insufficient updating of judgments and estimates in the light of new information.

Such cognitive conservatism is conceptually related to the resistance to change and traditionalism characteristic of conservative political ideologies. However, this entry is concerned with political rather than cognitive conservatism.

Among the first to present a psychological theory of political conservatism, Wilson proposed that conservatism constitutes a general psychological dimension that can be useful in explaining people's attitudes across a broad spectrum of social issues. Building on this notion, an accumulation of research over the past few decades has uncovered a number of psychological variables associated with conservatism. This entry will discuss these variables, as well as the three motivational categories into which they can be grouped, to present a comprehensive overview of the psychological mechanisms and correlates of political conservatism.

In addition to the two core aspects of conservatism (resistance to change and tolerance of inequality), conservatism has a number of peripheral aspects, including the desire for order and stability, idealization of authority figures, preference for gradual versus revolutionary change, and conformance to traditional social norms. Some of these factors are directly associated with the core dimensions of the conservative ideological belief system; some are not.

Because conservatism (like liberalism) encompasses numerous goals and pervades multiple facets of life, people adhering to conservative ideologies can endorse different views and beliefs that may occasionally conflict with one another. For example, it is not uncommon for conservatives to support *both* increased military spending and the push for smaller government. The matter is further complicated by the fact that manifestations of conservatism are in constant flux depending on the social issues that present themselves to individuals and societies at different points in time; for example, today's neoconservative (or neocon) movement bears limited resemblance to mainstream American conservatism of just a few decades ago. Accordingly, the specific meaning of what constitutes conservative attitudes and beliefs inevitably changes and evolves over time. Nonetheless, even with this unavoidable fluctuation, identifying major social and psychological factors related to the core values of conservative ideology is feasible and valuable.

### Motives Associated With Political Conservatism

Numerous theories of conservatism have stressed the role of motivation in explaining individuals' adherence to conservative ideology. Nonetheless, to date, no single theory of conservatism has been able to fully explain all of conservatism's many manifestations. A recent review of research on conservatism suggests that the key to developing a comprehensive understanding of the psychology of conservatism lies at the intersection of several psychological theories that highlight the cognitive and motivational factors involved in conservatism. This comprehensive review identifies a specific set of social-cognitive motives significantly associated with political conservatism and classifiable into one of three categories: epistemic concerns, relating to knowledge and belief structures and their acquisition; existential concerns, relating to the meaning and transience of a person's existence; and ideological concerns, relating to the collection of social and political ideas (i.e., ideology) that shapes a person's worldview.

#### *Epistemic Motives*

An epistemic motive is a motive relating to cognition, or thought, and the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs. The accumulation of research evidence strongly suggests that political conservatives tend to be more closed-minded and rigid in their thinking than people on the opposite end of the ideological spectrum. In other words, individuals who subscribe to conservative ideologies are more likely than those who do not to have a high degree of need for cognitive closure. This does not mean that no liberals possess that need, or that the thinking of political liberals is never rigid or dogmatic in nature. Nonetheless, an extensive review of the available evidence indicates that conservatives are significantly more likely than their liberal counterparts to have this need for closure.

Individuals who have a high need for closure tend to be intolerant of ambiguity. Indeed, conservatives are more likely to be more intolerant of ambiguity than liberals and, as compared to their liberal counterparts to prefer "black and white" delineations of reality to "shades of gray." Related to the intolerance of ambiguity is the absence of integrative complexity. Integrative complexity

refers to the differentiation and synthesis of multiple perspectives, or dimensions. Generally speaking, conservative ideologues have been found to be less cognitively complex than their liberal ideologies. Authoritarianism, political-economic conservatism, and possession of right wing opinions have all been found to correlate positively and consistently with psychological dogmatism (the steadfast adherence to a belief or attitude with limited willingness to entertain evidence that conflicts with that view).

One assumption of Wilson's theory of conservatism is that people who hold politically conservative attitudes are less predisposed to seek out stimulating experiences than are liberals. This theoretical assertion is substantiated by correlational evidence that conservatives are, in fact, generally less open and receptive to novel and exciting experiences of various kinds and in a variety of domains. For example, compared to liberals, conservatives are less likely to volunteer for psychology experiments that require openness to experience, they place less value on having an exciting life, are less imaginative, and score lower on openness to experience and sensation-seeking scales.

#### *Existential Motives*

Existential motives are motives related to the person's very existence, its meaning, and the threat of its termination. In this category belong needs of self-esteem and self-actualization, but also fear, the perception of threat, and consequent anger directed at the threatening parties. Because the concepts of conservatism and authoritarianism are closely linked (with the latter considered a specific manifestation of the former), research on authoritarianism has provided a number of insights into the psychology of conservatism, with specific reference to existential motives.

Contemporary as well as classic theories of authoritarianism have suggested that factors such as low self-esteem, fear, and aggression may contribute to a person's willingness to adhere to a politically conservative ideology. Although there is relatively scarce evidence suggesting that political conservatism and lowered self-esteem are, in fact, related, there is considerable research evidence supporting the notion that fearfulness is related to conservatism, as is the perception of threat.



Theories of authoritarianism have also suggested that conservatives are particularly aversive to potential losses, which might help explain their general preference for maintenance of the status quo over change. Findings suggesting that this is the case include data showing that negatively framed persuasive messages (which emphasize potential losses) motivate changes in the behavior and behavioral intentions of authoritarians more effectively than positively framed persuasive messages (which highlight potential gains). Fear of death is also correlated with conservatism, along with increased tendency to hold views of women and minority-group members that are congruent with traditional stereotypes.

### *Ideological Motives*

In addition to individual differences in social and political attitudes associated with authoritarianism and conservatism, early theorizing also postulated that threats levied at the level of the political system are more menacing to individuals who are highly authoritarian. This hypothesis is also set forth by Jost's recent theory of system of justification, which suggests that there is an ideological motivation to defend the existing social system against instability and threat and this motivation is strongest among those on the right wing of the ideological spectrum. Considerable experimental and archival research supports the idea that in times of societal turmoil, people are more prone to make more politically conservative decisions and judgments, and to defer to authoritarian leaders in order to regain social stability and security. Such findings highlight the fact that conservatism is not solely an individual-difference variable; situational factors can also play an important role in inducing the tendency to embrace conservative ideologies.

### **Conclusion**

As discussed in this entry, political conservatism is related to a number of different epistemic, existential, and ideological motives. It has been suggested that virtually all of these can be thought of as originating in attempts to manage feelings of uncertainty and fear, which, in turn, are closely linked to (1) resistance to change and

(2) endorsement of inequality—the two core dimensions of conservatism.

Resistance to change is beneficial to the management of uncertainty in that it prevents the introduction of the unknown and disruption of one's present reality. Fear, however, is inextricably intertwined with the promotion of inequality, since it can both precipitate the endorsement of inequality (as a means of keeping less powerful, revolutionary segments of society at bay) and arise from it (by breeding discontent, turmoil, and even violent struggles).

Epistemic motives facilitate the acquisition of stable and firm beliefs, which in turn provide guidance and help people navigate their often complicated and ambiguous realities. Existential motives also encourage achieving and maintaining stability and certainty, and opposing change and avoiding entry into the novel and insecure terrain that inevitably accompanies it. Both epistemic and existential motives, thus, are inherently served, to a certain extent, by resistance to change. Finally, ideological beliefs (as to the inevitability and justice of the status quo) can help reduce uncertainty and feelings of threat and worthlessness by providing those who embrace them with a sense of conviction and purpose.

Because ideology is instrumental in shaping people's worldviews, and worldviews have important consequences for interpersonal interaction at the individual, group, and societal levels, understanding the forces that attract individuals to particular ideologies is of great value to society. This entry traced the accumulation of more than half a century of psychological research on conservative ideology. The results of this labor provide illuminating insights into the specific cognitive motivational factors that underlie political conservatism.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Dogmatism; Ideology; Need for Closure; Right Wing Authoritarianism; System Justification Theory

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## CONSPIRACY THEORIES

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*Conspiracy theories* are sets of often erroneous beliefs that people use to explain malevolent and/or unlawful acts that are perceived to be directed by and in favor of a small and powerful group that works in secret against a larger group of unwitting victims. This entry describes research on conspiracy theories as well as closely related phenomena. It starts by considering the association between conspiracy theories and rumors and the social functions of stereotypes. Next, it describes the research findings on conspiracy theories—when they are most likely to be conceived, the nature of the people who subscribe to conspiracy theories, and the theories' effects. The entry concludes by describing explanations for the existence of conspiracy theories and conspiratorial thinking.

### Conspiracy Theories and Related Phenomena

Given that there is little research on conspiracy theories, it is worthwhile to consider the properties that most conspiracy theories share: Conspiracy theories are usually conceived as explanations for events that provoke widespread social anxiety and

uncertainty, conditions under which people are eager for explanations; the content of conspiracies is emotionally laden and their discovery can be gratifying; the evidentiary standards for corroborating conspiracy theories is typically weak, but conspiracies that survive in the public consciousness are resistant to falsification; the survivability of conspiracy theories is aided by psychological biases and distrust of official sources; and conspiracy theories of one form or another are held by most people.

Conspiracy theories and rumors are examples of informal social communications. As such, they share several properties. First, rumors are particularly likely to flourish during periods of social uncertainty and anxiety. Indeed, rumor research began in the 1940s as rumors came to the attention of government officials who were concerned that they would undermine the war effort. Second, the definition of rumor, proposed by Robert Knapp as "a proposition for belief of topical reference disseminated without official verification," is similar to but more general than the definition of conspiracy theories. Third, Knapp noted that the content of rumors expresses and gratifies collective emotional needs. This emotional dimension differentiates rumor from news. So, for example, the news that *Churchill is now in Washington* is likely to elicit little emotion compared with the rumor that *the Jews are avoiding the draft*. It is, of course, a small step to conclude that the latter rumor could blossom into a conspiracy.

Knapp showed that rumor content can be coded with respect to its emotional content. A sample of 1,089 rumors collected in 1942 showed that 2% were wish based (e.g., *the Japanese do not have enough oil to last 6 months*), 25% were fear based (e.g., *the entire Pacific Fleet was lost at Pearl Harbor*), 66% were hostile (e.g., *that Churchill blackmailed Roosevelt into provoking war with Japan*), and 7% escaped categorization. It is noteworthy that of all the rumors, 50% concerned intergroup tensions, and they were mostly anti-administration (i.e., government, army, and navy), anti-British, or anti-Semitic. The emotional content of rumor is suspiciously similar to that in conspiracy theories, and is predominantly focused on intergroup relations. Rumors are often slanderous, express intergroup hostilities, and scapegoat minority groups.

In 1981, Henri Tajfel proposed a functional account of stereotyping: Stereotypes provide positive images for ingroups, justify actions committed or planned, and provide explanations for widespread social uncertainties. In fact, many of the stereotypes identified by Tajfel fulfill all of these functions simultaneously. For example, Nazi propaganda depicted Jews as child molesters, explained German hyperinflation in the 1920s as the result of Jews controlling the banking system, and explained that Jews were plotting world domination. In this case, the accusations were depictions of Jews that were intentionally diffused by Nazi propagandists in an attempt to forge a common outgroup to promote German unity and serve Nazi aspirations for further power.

Conspiracy theories, rumors, and stereotypes have existed for centuries. Historical accounts demonstrate that tens of thousands of women accused of being witches were tortured and killed in Europe from the 15th through 17th centuries. The identification of women as witches was largely driven by rumor and religious superstition, and appears to have been more likely to occur during crop failures. In the modern world, rumors and conspiracies are now easier to diffuse than at any time in the past. While this is true, there is reason for optimism. On a historical time line, superstition is in decline; skepticism, rationality, and the scientific method are on the increase; and perhaps most importantly, it is possible to combat false rumors using the same technology that aids their spread.

## Research on Conspiracy Theories

### *When Do Conspiracy Theories Arise?*

Conspiracies often originate in government propaganda that is designed to manufacture support for war. Enemies are said to be conspiring to launch an attack, are developing weapons, or are implicated in an attack on the homeland. For example, in the lead up to the Iraq war in 2003, polls showed that 22% of the American population believed that Iraq was directly involved in the attacks on September 11, 2001, while a further 35% believed that Iraq was not directly involved, but had given substantial support to Al Qaeda. Further, 32% claimed that it was very likely, and 37% believed it somewhat likely that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September

11th attacks. Over time, 21% to 24% of Americans believed that weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq. These false beliefs developed independently of political affiliation, and were more far more prevalent for viewers of some news sources (e.g., Fox News) than others (e.g., PBS). The more of these false conspiracy beliefs that people possessed, the more they were in favor of war with Iraq. Like stereotypes, conspiracies can be used to justify planned actions.

Conspiratorial thinking increases in prevalence when there are widespread social uncertainties, as found during war or in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, and when there are natural disasters like tsunamis or earthquakes or outbreaks of lethal disease. This fact is evidenced by the profusion of documentaries, books, movies, and magazine articles dedicated to explaining events like the September 11th terrorist attacks, and the more than 2,000 volumes on John F. Kennedy's assassination. This suggests that conspiratorial thinking is driven by a strong human desire to make sense of social forces that are self-relevant, important, and threatening.

### *Who Subscribes to Conspiracy Theories?*

While there is some evidence for individual differences that lead people to be more or less susceptible to belief in conspiracy theories, it is also true that some conspiracy theories are believed by large majorities of the population. For example, there is evidence that approximately 90% of the American population believe that President Kennedy was assassinated by a conspiracy of one or more of the following: Cuban exiles, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Mafia, the Dallas police, pentagon officials, and/or Lyndon Johnson, as opposed to the official lone suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald. In fact, polling data suggest that most people believe in at least some conspiracies.

Research suggests that in general people tend to either believe in conspiracies or not. It shows that general belief in conspiracies has several correlates. First, while there is no evidence for associations with gender, education level, or occupation, there is evidence that Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to believe conspiracies than are Whites. The association between ethnicity and belief in conspiracies appears to be mediated by anomie (a sense of social dislocation) and lack of trust in

other people, the police, and government. Further, people are also particularly likely to believe in conspiracies that they feel are directed at their group. Blacks, for example, are particularly likely to believe that the federal government plants drugs in their communities.

### *Outcomes of Belief in Conspiracy Theories*

Exposure to media that endorse conspiracies increases belief. There is evidence that viewing the Oliver Stone movie *JFK* increased belief in the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy and decreased belief in the official account that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. A further outcome was that compared with people who were about to view the movie, those who had seen it expressed less interest in political participation. It may be that distrust of those in power predicts and is caused by belief in government conspiracies.

Given relatively high rates of incidence of AIDS and sexual transmitted infections among Blacks, researchers have investigated belief in AIDS conspiracies—that AIDS was created by the federal government to kill Blacks—and attitudes toward condom use. This research has shown that the more male Blacks believe in this conspiracy, the less favorable their attitudes toward condom use are, and in turn the less likely they are to use condoms. There is also evidence that these beliefs lead to distrust of research institutions and are a significant barrier to getting Blacks to participate in AIDS clinical trials.

An alternative possibility is that Blacks have developed these beliefs because of real discrimination. For example, starting in 1932 and continuing for 40 years, the Public Health Service working with the Tuskegee Institute studied the effect of syphilis on the bodies of 399 Black men by withholding treatment and allowing them to die, despite the discovery of penicillin as a standard cure in 1947. It is clearly worth noting that governments do at least occasionally conspire against their own citizens.

## Explanations for Conspiracy Theories

### *Hofstadter and the Paranoid Style*

Richard Hofstadter's work in history explored the emergence of conspiracy theorizing within

American democracy. Hofstadter's vision was a consensus view of democracy; competing groups would represent the interests of individuals, but would do so within a political system that everyone agreed would frame the bounds of conflict. For Hofstadter, people who felt unable to channel their political interests into representative groups would become alienated from this system, which would make them vulnerable to charismatic rather than practical and rational leadership, and would eventually undermine democracy and lead to totalitarian rule. Those so alienated from the system would not trust the statements of opposition parties as being a fair disagreement, rather, differences in views would be regarded with deep suspicion. Such people alienated from the system would develop a paranoid fear of conspiracy.

According to Hofstadter, the paranoid style is not individual pathology, rather, it originates in social conflict that raises fears and anxieties, leading to status struggles between opposed groups. The paranoid style and resulting conspiracy theorizing derives from a collective sense of threat to one's group, culture, way of life, and so on. Extremists on either side of the political spectrum could be expected to develop a paranoid style. On the right, McCarthyism represented the paranoid style—paranoid notions of rife communist infiltration of American institutions; on the left are examples such as the conspiracy of slaveholders against abolitionists or fears of international bankers.

Hofstadter's approach is notable because it places the root of conspiracies in intergroup processes, which means that his theory can account for the ebb and flow of conspiracy theories over time. Since Hofstadter's theory was conceived, however, there have been a number of advances in social psychology that can account for the role of biases in information processing.

### *Psychological Biases*

*Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization.* John McHoskey provided an explanation for the difficulty of falsifying conspiracy theories. McHoskey gave advocates and opponents of the JFK conspiracy a balanced description of arguments for and against the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. His proposal was that people

who favored or opposed the conspiracy theory would regard the statement as evidence in favor of their position. This would occur because proponents on both sides engaged in biased assimilation. According to this phenomenon, information that supports one's position is uncritically accepted, whereas contrary information is scrutinized and discredited. Further, because of attitude polarization, when people encounter ambiguous information, they tend to endorse their original position even more strongly than they did prior to encountering the information. This proved to be the case for both advocates and opponents of the JFK conspiracy.

*The Fundamental Attribution Error.* Philosopher Steve Clarke proposed that conspiratorial thinking is maintained by the fundamental attribution error. According to the fundamental attribution error, people overestimate the importance of dispositions (e.g., individual motivations or personality traits) and underestimate the importance of situational factors (e.g., random chance, social norms, and so on) in explaining the behavior of other people. Clarke pointed out that conspiratorial thinking typically makes this error, asserting that devious, self-interested, or malevolent people conspire to make some event come to fruition, such as an assassination, terrorist attack, or elaborate cover up. People maintain adherence to their conspiratorial thinking because to dispense with the conspiracy would be to discount human motives in events. Research provides much evidence that people commit the fundamental attribution error.

Further, Clarke suggests that the ultimate reason that people make the fundamental attribution error is because we are evolved to do so. His reasoning is that we evolved in tightly knit groups where understanding the motives of others was critical for the detection of malevolent intentions. Clearly, the cost of making an error in identifying others' insidious motives is small relative to the cost of not identifying such motives, and so we are psychologically attuned to discount situational factors over dispositional factors in explaining others' behavior.

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*See also* Cults; Nationalism and Patriotism; Rumor; Social Representations; Stereotyping; Terrorism

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## CONTINGENCY THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

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What makes leadership effective in a group or organization? Scholars have been preoccupied with addressing this key question perhaps since the inception of leadership as a formal field of scientific inquiry. One classic approach that gained prominence during the 1970s and 1980s is contingency theories of leadership. *Contingency theories* hold that leadership effectiveness is related to the interplay of a leader's traits or behaviors and situational factors.

### History and Background

The contingency approach to leadership was influenced by two earlier research programs endeavoring to pinpoint effective leadership behavior. During the 1950s, researchers at Ohio State University administered extensive questionnaires measuring a range of possible leader behaviors in various organizational contexts. Although multiple sets of leadership behaviors were originally

identified based on these questionnaires, two types of behaviors proved to be especially typical of effective leaders: (1) *consideration*, leader behaviors that include building good rapport and interpersonal relationships and showing support and concern for subordinates and (2) *initiating structure*, leader behaviors that provided structure (e.g., role assignment, planning, scheduling) to ensure task completion and goal attainment.

About the same time, investigators from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center conducted interviews and distributed questionnaires in organizations and collected measures of group productivity to assess effective leadership behaviors. The leadership behavior categories that emerged from the University of Michigan were similar to the consideration and initiating structure behaviors identified by the Ohio State studies. The University of Michigan investigators, however, termed these leadership behaviors *relation-oriented behavior* and *task-oriented behavior*. This line of research was later extended by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton in 1964 to suggest that effective leaders score high on both of these behaviors (high-high leaders).

Although research consistently supported the dichotomy between task and relations leadership behavior, little evidence suggested that these leadership behaviors were related to increased leadership effectiveness in group performance. Inconsistent findings characterized the bulk of research in this area, and soon the focus of attention on leadership behaviors as direct predictors of leadership effectiveness shifted. However, researchers did not abandon the task versus relations dichotomy altogether. Instead, an alternative approach was developed that emphasized the potentially critical role of the situational context in linking leadership behaviors or traits to effective outcomes. This alternate approach became known as the *contingency theories of leadership*.

## The Contingency Approach

### *The Contingency Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*

In the 1960s, Fred Fielder advanced the first theory using the contingency approach, the *contingency theory of effectiveness*. The main idea of this

early theory is that leadership effectiveness (in terms of group performance) depends on the interaction of two factors: the leader's task or relations motivations and aspects of the situation. The leader's task or relations motivation is measured through the Least Preferred Coworker scale (LPC). This scale asks leaders to recall a coworker (previously or currently) they work with least well and to characterize this individual with ratings on a series of 8-point bipolar adjectives (e.g., distant-cold). High LPC scores reflect more positive descriptions of the least preferred coworker, whereas low LPC scores evidence more negative perceptions. Fielder argued that an individual with a high LPC score is motivated to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships, whereas an individual with a low LPC score is motivated to focus on task accomplishment.

The interpretation of exactly what high and low LPC scores mean has been the subject of much controversy and debate. For example, Robert Rice suggested that scores on the LPC represent values and attitudes, whereas other scholars have drawn linkages between high and low LPCs and task versus relations leadership behaviors. Fielder contended that task and relations motivations are stable traits that are not easily amenable to change. Therefore, attempts to encourage a high or low LPC leader to adapt to changing situations would be difficult, if not altogether futile. To optimize the possibility of an effective group outcome, this model advocates matching a high or low LPC leader to the right type of situation.

The model purports that task or relations motivations are contingent on whether the leader can control and predict the group's outcome (i.e., situational favorability). Situational favorability depends on three assessments: (1) whether the leader perceives cooperative relations with subordinates (leader-member relations), (2) whether the task is highly structured with standardized procedures and measures of adequate performance (task structure), and (3) whether the leader's level of authority is punishing or rewarding group members (position power). The combination of leader-member relations, task structure, and position power creates eight different situational types, known as octants 1–8, that have been more broadly categorized as favorable situations, intermediate situations, and unfavorable situations. Each different situational type is most

effectively handled by either a high or low LPC leader. Specifically, high LPC leaders are most effective in influencing group performance in intermediate situations, and low LPC leaders are most effective in favorable or unfavorable situations.

Fielder's contingency model has been used in training programs and has received a lion's share of research attention. A large number of studies and three meta-analyses more or less support the model's postulations. However, almost half a century after its introduction, further clarifications and future studies may be warranted to iron out both theoretical and methodological issues associated with the model. Nevertheless, many scholars consider the work by Fielder and his colleagues a classic contribution that inspired consideration of person and situational aspects in leadership.

### *Path-Goal Theory*

*Path-goal theory* was originally developed by Martin Evans in 1970 and expanded by Robert House in 1971 into a more complex contingency theory. Drawing on expectancy theory and the Ohio and Michigan leader behavior studies, House suggested that a leader should help elucidate the path for followers to achieve group goals. This involves the leader employing particular behaviors in specific situations to increase follower satisfaction and motivate efforts toward task accomplishment. The theory identifies four types of leader behavior that include supportive (relations oriented), directive (task oriented), achievement oriented, participative leader behavior, as well as two aspects of the situation, namely, follower characteristics and task characteristics.

In situations where the task is dull or taxing, the theory predicts that supportive leadership behaviors may increase followers' interest in task accomplishment and encourage followers' expectations of a successful outcome. In turn, this may motivate followers' efforts to achieve the task. In situations where the task is ambiguous or complicated, directive behaviors such as clarifying the task at hand and stressing rewards contingent on good performance could increase followers' positive expectancies. This may consequently motivate followers' efforts to achieve designated goals.

A large number of studies have examined postulates derived from path-goal theory. Overall,

these studies provide mixed support for the theory. Various scholars have argued that it may be premature to draw any firm conclusions regarding the validity of the theory because of methodological limitations associated with past research and sparse empirical attention to various variables outlined in the model. For example, little empirical research has investigated participative and achievement-oriented leadership styles. However, path-goal theory has made an important contribution in highlighting the potential influence of leaders on followers' motivation and performance. Moreover, it has informed the development of subsequent leadership theories, such as the *substitutes for leadership theory* by Steve Kerr and John Jermier and the *self-concept-based theory of charismatic leadership* by Boas Shamir, Robert House, and Michael Arthur.

### *Normative Decision Model*

Many contingency theories define leadership effectiveness in terms of group performance or team satisfaction. However, the normative decision model is a unique contingency theory in its exclusive focus on providing prescriptions to optimize the leader's decision-making process. The normative decision model, originally developed by Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetton in 1973 and later revised by Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago, emphasizes situational factors more than leadership behaviors. It outlines a set of five different decision-making strategies that range on a continuum from directive to participative decision making. These strategies include two types of autocratic styles (the leader decides alone), two types of consultative styles (the leader consults followers but decides alone), and a group decision-making option (group consensus).

The optimal strategy for decision-making situations may be reached by answering "yes" or "no" to seven questions on a decision tree that may or may not characterize the decision-making situation. Some examples of these situational considerations include the importance of decision quality, the likelihood that followers' would accept and implement the decision, and the amount of available information needed for the decision. The decision tree takes into account seven decision rules or heuristics that eliminate decision options that

would jeopardize decision quality or hinder decision acceptance. In this way, decision-strategy options are realized from a feasible set that purports to optimize effective decision making.

A number of field studies and experiments conducted in various countries provide support for the model. For instance, in 1988, Vroom and Jago reported accumulated evidence that decisions following the decision tree were almost twice as likely to be successful than decisions that did not use the prescriptions advocated by the model. Furthermore, leaders who make decisions following the decision tree tend to receive favorable ratings from subordinates. Despite solid empirical evidence validating the model, scholars have noted various limitations. For example, while acknowledging the utility of the model, Sternberg questioned whether leaders are able to accurately answer the questions posed by the decision tree (e.g., forecasting follower acceptance). Overall, the normative decision model contributes an understanding of decision-making processes that underscores the significance of the situation.

### *Situational Leadership Theory*

The situational leadership theory put forth by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1969 proposes that leadership effectiveness depends on the leader's ability to tailor his or her behavior to the demands of the situation, namely, the subordinate's level of maturity. This theory builds on the earlier Ohio and Michigan studies and extends Blake and Mouton's work in emphasizing a combination of task and relation behaviors (but here task and relation behaviors are called directing and supporting). Hersey and Blanchard highlight four different types of leadership behavior based on combining directive and supportive behavior: telling (high directive, low support), selling (high directive, high supporting), participating (low directive, high supportive), and delegating (low directive, low supportive).

The leader's function is to continually evaluate and adapt his or her behavior to each follower's task maturity (i.e., ability) and psychological maturity (i.e., willingness) to complete the task at hand. For instance, when a follower has lower maturity, it prescribes that a leader should tell the follower how to get the job done. When a follower is more mature, he or she does not need as much

direction or significant support in accomplishing the task. In this case, it would be best to delegate the task to the follower.

Although intuitively appealing, the situational leadership theory has not received extensive research attention. Studies support the theory's postulate that low maturity followers benefit from directive behavior, but more empirical verification of the remaining postulates is warranted. The theory has been criticized for its narrow focus on only one situational variable, but it has contributed to the understanding of leadership effectiveness by underlining the need for leaders to adapt their behavior to different situations.

### Conclusion

Fred Fielder's seminal work helped to springboard the development of a series of notable contingency theories that account for both leader and situational variables. The complexity of contingency theories, however, has drawn criticism for a lack of parsimony. Furthermore, contingency theories have been viewed as a more mechanical approach that neglects considerations of instances of extraordinary leadership and group processes. Nevertheless, contingency theories of leadership remain an important contribution to the understanding of leadership effectiveness.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

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Group members are generally expected to cooperate with one another. In fact, groups exist precisely because their members cooperate to achieve shared goals. If this cooperation mutates into competition, groups often fall apart or suffer a schism. In contrast, groups as a whole are often expected to compete with one another. This competition can take the form of friendly rivalry (e.g., two baseball teams trying to win a game), but all too often it is hostile and destructive (e.g., two nations trying to obtain scarce resources). Clearly, then, *cooperation* and *competition* are fundamental aspects of the social psychology of groups.

### Defining Cooperation and Competition

Based on early research by the social psychologists Morton Deutsch and Muzafer Sherif, *cooperation* can be characterized as overt or verbal behavior that is intended to help another person achieve his or her goals at the same time as one achieves one's own goals. It is behavior aimed at “doing well together”—at maximizing outcomes for oneself and others. Cooperation is usually associated with a perception of “non-zero-sum” goal relations (achieving one's own goals helps others achieve their goals, and vice versa) and promotive interdependence (one's own behavior is affected by the behavior of others, and vice versa, in ways that advance both parties' goals).

*Competition* is overt or verbal behavior that is intended to hinder another person from achieving his or her goals at the same time as one achieves one's own goals. It is behavior aimed at “doing better than others”—at maximizing outcomes for oneself relative to others, that is, securing an advantage for oneself. Competition is usually associated with a perception of “zero-sum” goal relations (achieving one's own goals hinders others from achieving their goals, and vice versa) and competitive interdependence (one's own behavior is affected by the behavior of others, and vice versa, in ways that impede each other's goals).

Individualism is a third class of behaviors in which people act as though, in effect, others did not exist. It is behavior aimed at “doing well for oneself”—at maximizing one's own outcomes with no regard for others' outcomes. It is associated with a lack of perception of any goal relations and any interdependence. Individualism can sometimes look like cooperation and sometimes look like competition, but psychologically it is neither.

### Evolution and Genetics

The theme of cooperation and competition is prominent across a wide variety of disciplines, probably because it speaks to fundamental assumptions about human nature and the kinds of human society that are possible. The British political philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his classic 1651 book *Leviathan* promulgated a very pessimistic view of human nature in which competition ruled supreme. He proclaimed that the natural state of humankind is a “war of all against all” in which lives are “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

More recently, Darwin's theory of evolution, first published in 1859, set the stage for a scientific explanation for the primacy of human competitiveness. According to Darwin, life is all about gaining competitive advantage in promoting one's own genetic makeup. Indeed, in 1976, Richard Dawkins famously coined the term *selfish gene* to convey the biogenetic imperative responsible for the essential competitiveness and dog-eat-dog nature of human life.

Others, however, have argued that competition is not always adaptive. For example, it has been suggested that natural selection may operate at the group level, whereby individuals sacrifice their

own genetic makeup for the inclusive fitness of the group or the species to which they belong. According to this position, cooperation can be beneficial in promoting genetic fitness.

### Game Theory and Rational Choice

Biogenetic and evolutionary debates aside, social and behavioral scientists have generally assumed that humankind is rationally self-interested. This rational self-interest, in turn, is assumed to cause people to behave uncooperatively. However, accumulating evidence shows that people can be extraordinarily irrational and impetuous in the decisions they make about whether to compete or cooperate with others.

The classic research paradigm for studying cooperation and competition is the prisoner's dilemma and a variety of related "experimental games." The prisoner's dilemma is a "two-person, mixed-motive, non-zero-sum game." This means that two people are involved, they each experience a conflict between being motivated to cooperate and motivated to compete, and the outcome of their interaction can be that both parties gain or that both parties lose. In contrast, a zero-sum game is one in which one party's gain is always the other's loss.

The general set up is that you play a game with another participant in which you are confronted with a payoff matrix, usually representing monetary outcomes. One of four things can happen. If both you and your opponent are cooperative, then you both get a good payoff, but if you are cooperative and your opponent is competitive, then you do very badly and your opponent does very well. If you are competitive and your opponent is cooperative, then you do very well and your opponent does very badly, but if you are both competitive, then you both do disastrously. Literally thousands of studies have shown that players in this game tend to make competitive choices that lead to mutually disastrous outcomes, over and over again.

However, choices become more cooperative if the players are allowed to speak to one another—this opportunity is typically not available, as most experimental games are noninteractive. Players are also more cooperative when rules of fairness are made explicit or the game is construed as an investigation of human interaction or conflict resolution; otherwise players' default assumption is that

it is a competitive context in which one should be selfish and competitive.

There are also individual differences in the propensity to be cooperative or competitive. Some people (*prosocials*) are more inclined to make cooperative choices than are others (*individualists* and *competitors*), who are more likely to make generally more selfish choices. This variable of *social value orientation* is relevant to understanding cooperation in everyday life. Prosocials are more likely to be self-sacrificing in their close relationships, are more likely to help others, and are more likely to make donations to noble causes. Prosocials also tend to be older and have more siblings, especially sisters, than people who are more self-oriented. Some people also are simply more trusting of others—not surprisingly, because they believe that others are honest and cooperative, they themselves are more likely to be cooperative.

### Social Dilemmas

Of more direct relevance to the study of groups is research on group-level social dilemmas—such as the *commons dilemma* and *public goods dilemmas*. These dilemmas involve crises of trust in which individuals fail to behave cooperatively to benefit the collective because they do not trust other members of the collective to behave cooperatively. The commons dilemma describes a situation in which a resource can be sustained only if people who use the resource show restraint in using it. An example is fisheries—if people fished responsibly, the fishery would be sustained indefinitely and everyone would benefit, but if people selfishly overfish, the fish would disappear forever and everyone would suffer. A public goods dilemma describes a situation in which a resource can be sustained only if people who use the resource make a sufficient contribution to it. An example is public radio—if people who listen to public radio make a contribution, it thrives and benefits all users, but if people free ride by listening to public radio without contributing, it goes off the air and everyone suffers.

Research on social dilemmas finds that when self-interest is pitted against the collective good, the usual outcome is competition and resource destruction. The problem is exacerbated when different groups access a limited resource. International competition over limited resources such as rain

forests, whales, and wetlands tragically accelerates their disappearance.

Dilemmas are very difficult to resolve. Often, *structural solutions* are required to force people to cooperate, conserve, and behave unselfishly. Structural solutions include measures such as limiting the number of people accessing the resource, limiting the amount of the resource that people can take, facilitating free communication among those accessing the resource, and shifting the payoff to favor cooperation over competition. Structural solutions ultimately rest on being able to hand over management of the resource to a powerful authority to implement measures, manage the bureaucracy, and police violations. This can be difficult to achieve.

Two factors that have been shown to engender cooperation and resource preservation in social dilemmas are communication between group members and feelings of group identification. Communication can be effective for several reasons. For example, it can involve explicit promises of cooperation, allow group members to coordinate their actions, or promote feelings of group identification. Group identification, which can also be based on factors other than communication, has been shown to build mutual trust among group members—people tend to trust ingroup members and therefore are more likely to sacrifice self-interest for the greater good of their group. Leadership plays a critical role in this process because a leader can transform selfish individual goals into shared group goals by building a sense of common identity, shared fate, interindividual trust, and joint custodianship of the collective good.

### Interdependence and Realistic Conflict

In the early 1950s, Muzafer Sherif conducted a classic series of studies of cooperation and competition among individuals and groups—the boys' camp studies. These were naturalistic studies conducted at boys' summer camps, in which Sherif and his associates were able to set the boys' goals that required individuals to cooperate and goals that required groups to cooperate or to compete—the goals generally involved tangible resources, for example being able to show a movie at camp. His main findings from these studies were that the boys' perceptions of their goal relations to one

another determined whether they would compete or cooperate, and that the competitive/cooperative nature of the behavior determined the way in which individuals and groups more widely perceived and treated each other.

Sherif promoted an influential theory, *realistic conflict theory*, to explain the relationship between goals and individual and group behavior. It is called *realistic* conflict theory because Sherif focused on real tangible goals (e.g., money, land) rather than symbolic goals (e.g., status, prestige). He argued that individuals who share goals that require interdependence for their achievement cooperate and form a group, whereas individuals who have mutually exclusive goals (i.e., if one person achieves the goal the other does not) compete. Interindividual competition prevents group formation or contributes to the collapse of an existing group. At the intergroup level, mutually exclusive goals produce intergroup conflict and ethnocentrism, while shared goals requiring intergroup interdependence for their achievement (what Sherif termed *superordinate* goals) reduce conflict and encourage intergroup cooperation.

Other researchers have emphasized different aspects of realistic conflict theory. For example, Morton Deutsch focused in great technical detail on the nature of the goal relations rather than on cooperative/competitive behavior; Chester Insko, John Scholpler, and Jaap Rabbie and their colleagues focused on the role played by interdependence in producing cooperative group behavior and competitive intergroup behavior; and others focused on negotiation and bargaining and on the role of shared superordinate goals in resolving conflict and building social harmony.

### Minimal Groups and Social Identity

The role of shared goals, interdependence, and cooperative behavior in group formation and intergroup behavior was challenged by a famous series of laboratory experiments published in 1971 by Henri Tajfel and Mick Billig and their associates. Participants were placed in ad hoc groups ostensibly on the basis of a trivial criterion—there was no group interaction, membership was anonymous so no one knew who was in the group, and the group had no past and no future. All that the participants had to do was allocate points between an anonymous

ingroup member (not the self) and an anonymous outgroup member. The remarkable finding was that even such minimal groups produced competitive intergroup behavior in which participants favored their ingroup over the outgroup. Since this original study, thousands of minimal group studies have replicated the basic finding that social categorization alone can produce competitive behavior toward outgroup members and cooperative behavior toward ingroup members.

The results of the minimal group studies contributed to the development of *social identity theory*, which argues that people define and evaluate who they are in terms of the groups they belong to—in other words, they derive a social identity from the groups with which they are affiliated. Because the self and the group are psychologically “fused,” group evaluations (i.e., the group’s status and prestige in society) become self-evaluations. According to this analysis, then, intergroup relations are a competition over the scarce zero-sum resource of status. Hence, intergroup relations are marked by distrust and are intrinsically competitive. In contrast, intragroup relations are generally cooperative—members pull together in an atmosphere of mutual trust to cooperate to achieve group goals that secure a relative advantage for their group over other groups. Cooperation and competition are thus consequences of group membership; though they can act as cues to whether someone is a member of one’s own group or a member of a rival outgroup.

Subsequent work has suggested several complexities in intergroup and intragroup relations. Although intergroup relations are intrinsically competitive, the way that competition is expressed can vary as a function of people’s perceptions of the nature of the relations. For example, members of low-status groups who see little realistic possibility of social change tend to pursue creative and indirect forms of competition, such as choosing different dimensions of comparison with the dominant group or simply comparing themselves with other low-status groups, whereas those who sense the real possibility of social change are more likely to directly compete with the dominant group. Relatedly, members of dominant groups who feel secure in their high status often behave generously to lower status groups, whereas those who feel insecure often use their power in a harsh manner.

Although intragroup relations are generally cooperative, this is not always the case. Within groups, particularly those that are central to members’ identity, people are highly vigilant about what the group stands for and what its prototypical norms and practices are. In these cases, people continually assess how prototypical they and others are of the group, which leads to competition over actual and perceived prototypicality. This competition can be extremely fierce, leading to marginalization of competitors and suppression of dissent. It is not unusual for subgroups to form to promote their own image of the group that casts them as more prototypical than others—this can lead to schisms that destroy the group.

### Superordinate Goals and Social Harmony

As discussed above, Sherif believed that superordinate goals can reduce competition between groups and thus improve intergroup relations. Not surprisingly, substantial research has been conducted to explore this idea. Sherif’s argument was that if two groups recognize a shared and valued goal that cannot be achieved by unilateral action, then the goal structure is transformed from zero-sum to non-zero-sum. This transformation encourages cooperative interdependence and interaction between the groups, which in turn generates mutual goal satisfaction and hence favorable intergroup attitudes.

There are a number of potential limitations to this analysis, stemming from the social identity idea that groups define who members are and that members therefore have a vested interest in protecting and promoting the distinctiveness of their group and social identity. One problem with superordinate goals is that they may abolish competition only as long as the goal is in place—once the goal is satisfied, the groups fall back into their old ways. An example of this is the World War II strategic alliance between Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union to defeat Germany and Japan. As soon as the common enemy was defeated, the superordinate goal was satisfied and mutually exclusive goals of global dominance generated 45 years of a highly competitive cold war between the Soviet Union and the West.

It is plausible that superordinate goals involving superordinate identities should produce a more

enduring transformation of competition into cooperation—after all, such goals should create a common ingroup and shared identity within which trust and cooperation should prevail. This is a nice idea, but it can backfire. One problem is that groups may disagree about the extent to which the superordinate identity reflects their attributes. For example, numerical minorities often feel that superordinate identities are being “imposed” on them and their own attributes are underrepresented in the identity. They therefore feel they do not really fit the superordinate identity—they are not prototypical of it and therefore do not belong. Another problem is that, because groups cherish the distinctiveness of their own identity, a superordinate identity can represent a profound identity threat. An example is the view held by some British people that membership in the European Union (EU) will destroy what is unique about British identity.

However, many researchers believe that a superordinate identity can transform intergroup competition into cooperation under certain conditions. They argue that, in order to be effective, a superordinate identity must have a balanced representation of each subgroup’s attributes, explicitly recognize and maintain the distinctiveness and integrity of each subgroup, and place value on each subgroup’s contribution to the superordinate identity. Overall, this set of conditions allows subgroups to see themselves as distinct and valued groups, with complementary roles, all working together toward shared goals.

### Negotiation

Cooperation is very important when two individuals or representatives of two groups are negotiating to reach an agreement. If both sides adopt a staunchly competitive orientation (according to Chester Insko and John Schopler’s discontinuity effect, this is more likely to be the case in intergroup than interpersonal encounters), the process of reaching an agreement can be very time consuming at best or a total failure at worst.

Intergroup negotiations are particularly difficult when the negotiators feel they are being observed by their groups. In such cases, they often feel that they need to be highly competitive to protect and promote their group and to signal their loyalty to it. One way to combat this competitive mind-set is

to conduct the negotiations in a setting away from public scrutiny and to have a mutually trusted third party act as mediator. A trusted mediator can encourage cooperation by reducing emotional heat, rectifying misperceptions, proposing novel non-zero-sum compromises, facilitating graceful retreats, and inhibiting unreasonable claims. For example, in the late 1970s, U.S. president Jimmy Carter sequestered Egypt’s president Anwar Sadat and Israel’s prime-minister Menachem Begin at Camp David near Washington, D.C., and acted as a mediator between the two men. After 13 days, an agreement was reached that ended a state of war that had existed between Israel and Egypt since 1948.

In the absence of mediation, groups that genuinely want to reach a solution have to take the initiative themselves. One effective strategy, first suggested in 1962 by Charles Osgood, is called *graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction* (GRIT). This strategy capitalizes on the universal human norm of reciprocity and is designed to build trust. One party announces its cooperative and conciliatory intent (allowing clear attribution of a nondevious motive), clearly specifies a small concession it is about to make (activates reciprocity norm), and invites its opponent to do likewise. The initiator then makes the concession exactly as announced and in a publicly verifiable manner. There is now strong pressure on the other party to reciprocate. In this way, the two parties slowly resolve their differences through reciprocal concessions.

### Conclusion

Cooperation and competition play critical roles in how people behave within and between groups. Within groups, people generally have a shared sense of self and a shared interest in promoting group welfare. Members trust each other and work cooperatively to achieve objectives that cannot be achieved alone. In contrast, relations between groups are often competitive. This competition can involve tangible resources, as emphasized by realistic conflict theory, or status and prestige, as emphasized by social identity theory.

One of the great challenges for society is to transform competitive intergroup relations into harmless rivalry or respectful and trust-based

cooperation in pursuit of shared goals and a shared sense of self. This is not easy to achieve, but can be accomplished under certain conditions. For example, respected authorities can help to resolve social dilemmas and facilitate intergroup negotiations. Superordinate goals can temporarily transform intergroup competition into cooperation and, under certain conditions, lay the groundwork for a more enduring change in intergroup perceptions and self-conceptions.

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*See also* Common Ingroup Identity Model; Commons Dilemma; Deutsch, Morton; Free Riding; Interindividual/Intergroup Discontinuity; Interdependence Theory; Minimal Group Effect; Prisoner's Dilemma; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Schisms; Sherif, Muzafer; Social Dilemmas; Social Identity Theory; Trust

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## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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*Cooperative learning* refers to instructional methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn. There are many quite different approaches to cooperative learning, but in general, groups are composed of high, average, and low achievers and contain from two to four children.

Cooperative activities have been common for as long as education has existed, and research on cooperative learning goes back to the early days of the 20th century. However, development, research, and use of more formalized cooperative learning methods began in the 1970s, when various groups in the United States and Israel, in particular, initiated ambitious programs of research and development intended to create cooperative learning models that could be used in a broad range of elementary and secondary schools. In one form or another, cooperative learning has been used and studied in every major subject, with students from preschool to college, and in all types of schools. It is used at some level by hundreds of thousands of teachers. One national survey in the 1990s found that 79% of elementary teachers and 62% of middle school teachers reported regular use of cooperative learning.

There have been hundreds of studies of cooperative learning focusing on a wide variety of outcomes, including academic achievement in many subjects, second-language learning, attendance, behavior, intergroup relations, social cohesion, acceptance of classmates with handicaps, attitudes toward subjects, and more. This entry focuses primarily on research on achievement outcomes of cooperative learning in elementary

and secondary schools and on interpersonal and affective outcomes.

### Theoretical Perspectives on Cooperative Learning and Achievement

Although there is a general consensus among researchers about the positive effects of cooperative learning on student achievement, there remains a controversy about why and how cooperative learning methods affect achievement and, most importantly, under what conditions cooperative learning has these effects. Different groups of researchers investigating cooperative learning effects on achievement begin with different assumptions and explain the achievement effects of cooperative learning quite differently. The following sections review research on cooperative learning methods derived from the three most widely known of these perspectives.

#### *Motivational Perspectives*

Motivational perspectives on cooperative learning presume that task motivation is the most important part of the process. Other processes are believed to be driven by motivation. Therefore, these scholars focus primarily on the reward or goal structures under which students operate. From a motivationalist perspective, cooperative incentive structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their own personal goals is if the group is successful. Therefore, to meet their personal goals, group members must both help their groupmates to do whatever enables the group to succeed and encourage their groupmates to exert maximum efforts.

Not surprisingly, motivational theorists build group rewards into their cooperative learning methods. In methods developed at Johns Hopkins University, students can earn certificates or other recognition if their average team scores on quizzes or other individual assignments exceed a pre-established criterion. Methods developed at the University of Minnesota often give students grades based on group performance, which is defined in several different ways. The theoretical rationale for these group rewards is that if students value the success of the group, then they will encourage and help one another to achieve.

#### **Empirical Support for the Motivational Perspective**

Considerable evidence from practical applications of cooperative learning in elementary and secondary schools supports the motivational position that group rewards are essential to the effectiveness of cooperative learning, with one critical qualification. Use of group goals or group rewards enhances the achievement outcomes of cooperative learning if, and only if, the group rewards are based on the individual learning of all group members. Most often, this means that team scores are computed based on average scores on quizzes that all teammates take individually, without teammate help.

For example, in Student Teams-Achievement Divisions, or STAD, students work in mixed-ability teams to master material initially presented by the teacher. Following this, students take individual quizzes on the material, and the teams may earn certificates based on the degree to which team members have improved over their own past records. The only way the team can succeed is to ensure that all team members have learned, so the team members' activities focus on explaining concepts to one another, helping one another practice, and encouraging one another to achieve. In contrast, if group rewards are given based on a single group product (for example, the team completes one worksheet or solves one problem), there is little incentive for group members to explain concepts to one another, and one or two group members may do all the work.

A review of 99 studies of cooperative learning in elementary and secondary schools involved durations of at least 4 weeks and compared achievement gains in cooperative learning and control groups. Among the 64 studies of cooperative learning methods that provided group rewards based on the sum of group members' individual learning, 50 (78%) found significantly positive effects on achievement, and none found negative effects. The median effect size (a way of measuring the strength of an effect) among the studies for which effect sizes could be computed was +.32 (32% of a standard deviation separated cooperative learning and control treatments). In contrast, among the studies of methods that used group goals based on a single group product or provided no group rewards, the median effect size

was only +.07. Comparisons of alternative treatments within the same studies found similar patterns; group goals based on the sum of individual learning performances were necessary to the instructional effectiveness of cooperative learning models.

### *Social Cohesion Perspective*

A theoretical perspective somewhat related to the motivational viewpoint holds that the effects of cooperative learning on achievement are mediated by the cohesiveness of the group. The quality of the group's interactions is thought to be largely determined by group cohesion. In essence, students will engage in the task and help one another learn because they identify with the group and want one another to succeed. A hallmark of the social cohesion perspective is an emphasis on team-building activities in preparation for cooperative learning and self-evaluation during and after group activities. Social cohesion theorists have historically tended to downplay or reject the group incentives and individual accountability that motivational researchers believe are essential.

In social cohesion methods, students generally take on individual roles within the group. In the *jigsaw puzzle* technique, students study material on one of four to six topics distributed to the group members. They meet in "expert groups" to share information on their topics with members of other teams who have the same topic, and then each student presents the topic to his or her own team (in which the members each hold a piece of the puzzle). In *group investigation*, groups take on topics within a unit studied by the class as a whole, and then further subdivide the topic into tasks within the group. The students investigate the topic together and ultimately present their findings to the class as a whole.

#### **Empirical Support for the Social Cohesion Perspective**

The achievement outcomes of cooperative learning methods that emphasize task specialization are mixed. Research on the original form of the jigsaw puzzle method has not generally found positive effects of this method on student achievement. In contrast, there is evidence that when it is well implemented, group investigation can significantly increase student achievement.

### *Cognitive Elaboration Perspective*

Research in cognitive psychology has long held that if information is to be retained in memory and related to information already in memory, the learner must engage in some sort of cognitive restructuring, or elaboration, of the material. One of the most effective means of elaboration is explaining the material to someone else. Cognitive elaboration theorists explain the effectiveness of cooperative learning in terms of the effects of explanation itself, rather than motivation or social cohesion.

#### **Empirical Evidence for the Cognitive Elaboration Perspective**

Numerous studies have found that students working on structured "cooperative scripts" can learn technical material or procedures far better than can students working alone. Although both the "recaller" or explainer and the listener learned more than did students working alone, the recaller learned more. Thus the students who gained the most from cooperative activities were those who provided elaborated explanations to others. Students who received elaborated explanations learned more than those who worked alone, but not as much as those who served as explainers.

### *Reconciling the Three Perspectives*

Although the three perspectives on cooperative learning seem quite diverse, there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to expect that methods incorporating multiple perspectives have particular promise. For example, provision of group goals based on the individual learning of all group members might affect cognitive processes directly by motivating students to engage in peer modeling, cognitive elaboration, and/or practice with one another. Group goals may also lead to group cohesiveness, increasing caring and concern among group members and making them feel responsible for one another's achievement, thereby motivating students to engage in cognitive processes which enhance learning.

### **Outcomes**

Numerous outcomes of cooperative learning beyond achievement have been studied in elementary and



secondary schools. One of the most widely studied is intergroup relations. Studies of cooperative learning methods of many types find that students who have worked in groups with peers of different ethnicities are more likely to make friends who are different from themselves, and to have positive attitudes toward students of other ethnicities.

Beyond intergroup relations, studies have found positive effects of cooperative learning on such outcomes as self-esteem, acceptance of mainstreamed students, attitudes toward school, and attitudes toward the subject being studied in groups.

### The Future of Cooperative Learning

More than 35 years after cooperative learning research began in earnest, cooperative learning remains strong in both research and practice. Cooperative learning is a component of comprehensive school reforms, curriculum and instructional reforms, and programs to improve intergroup relations. More research and further development is still likely to be fruitful, but cooperative learning has as good a record of research and research-informed practice as any approach in the history of education.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Group Cohesiveness; Jigsaw Classroom Technique; Social Identity Theory

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## CROSS-CATEGORIZATION

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Categorization of people into “us” and “them” is a fundamental characteristic of how we perceive social groups. Sometimes, however, this simple dichotomization is not enough to fully capture the complexity of intergroup relations. Cross-categorization takes account of this complexity. *Cross-categorization* (or *crossed categorization*) describes intergroup contexts defined by not one but two dimensions of social categorization. Take, for example, age and race. Instead of comparing oneself with others just according to age (“I’m young, and they are old”) or just in terms of race (“I am White, and they are Black”), in cross-categorization contexts, both of these dimensions are salient and meaningful. In these situations, four possible social category combinations are each defined by two constituents: young and White, young and Black, old and White, old and Black.

This introduces greater complexity into the perceived intergroup relations. Social comparison can no longer simply refer to “us” (the *ingroup*) versus “them” (the *outgroup*), but others are defined in terms of two shared memberships (a *double ingroup*), two nonshared memberships (a *double outgroup*), or a mixture of shared and nonshared memberships (a *mixed membership group*). Cross-categorization is important for the study of group processes and intergroup relations in two key ways. First, it has given researchers greater power in describing, explaining, and improving intergroup relations in more complex categorization contexts. Second, it has proved effective as a way of encouraging less reliance on negative stereotypes

when forming impressions of others. Both of these approaches are described in this entry.

### Modeling Complex Intergroup Relations

With respect to its provision of a richer model for describing intergroup relations, cross-categorization has enabled a greater understanding of the dynamics of prejudice and discrimination for people socially excluded on multiple criteria. Perceiving multiple identities can create convergent bases for discrimination: multiple differences that reinforce existing boundaries. For instance, a White man may feel not quite so different from a White woman but may feel considerably more different from a Black woman, when gender is salient alongside race (creating a double outgroup). Here the salience of an additional categorization has reinforced the differences described by the initial dichotomy. Converging category differences are a problem because they reinforce discrimination experienced by individuals who are already excluded on one criterion. They also characterize many instances of ethnopolitical conflict. For example, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Catholics and Protestants tend to live in different places (e.g., Ardoyne vs. Shankhill Road), espouse different politics (Nationalist-Republican vs. Unionist-Loyalist), and even support different football teams (e.g., Cliftonville vs. Linfield); part of the problem is precisely that there are few social categories cross-cutting the religion dimension.

To capture the sort of complex intergroup relations outlined above, research has identified different patterns of evaluation across the four combined groups formed from crossing categorizations. The patterns can be represented by notation referring to the relative composition of ingroup and outgroup identities (labeled “i” and “o,” respectively). For instance, the *additive pattern* specifies that double ingroups (ii) are evaluated more positively than double outgroups (oo), with mixed membership groups (io and oi) evaluated in between these two extremes ( $ii > io = oi > oo$ ).

The patterns are important because they specify the impact of shifting attention away from converging categorizations that reinforce social divides (e.g., Republican/Catholic vs. Loyalist/Protestant) to dual-identity categorizations that emphasize a common ingroup (e.g., Young-Catholic and

Young-Protestant). Put another way, in contexts defined by converging categorizations (such as religion and politics in Northern Ireland), encouraging perceivers to focus on shared ingroup identities (mixed membership groups), instead of converging differences (double outgroups) can improve intergroup relations. This is because typically, evaluations of mixed membership groups (io or oi) are more positive than evaluations of double outgroups (oo).

There are also certain conditions that can orient perceivers to focus on these mixed membership groups, further increasing their value for improving intergroup relations. A positive mood or encouraging a focus on ingroup identities leads to a *social inclusion pattern* ( $ii = io = oi > oo$ ). This pattern is beneficial because evaluations of mixed membership groups (io or oi) become as positive as they are for total ingroup members (ii). In contrast, negative affect or encouraging a focus on outgroup identities leads to a *social exclusion pattern* ( $ii > io = oi = oo$ ). The social exclusion pattern is to be discouraged because evaluations of mixed membership groups (io or oi) become as negative as evaluations of people defined as double outgroupers (oo).

This research shows us that if we want to tackle bias along converging divisions by emphasizing shared identities (mixed membership groups), then this will be most effective under conditions that orient the perceiver to shared identities (such as a positive mood). It will be less effective when outgroup memberships are emphasized (such as when perceivers are in a negative mood). Where converging identities define conflict, building cross-cutting ties that create mixed membership groups may be an important way to foster more harmonious intergroup relations. Furthermore, mixed membership groups have the additional advantage of emphasizing both shared and nonshared identities simultaneously. This is important because placing too much emphasis only on what conflicting groups have in common (and not what makes them unique) can backfire, eliciting even greater bias. Mixed membership groups strike the important balance between inclusion and distinctiveness.

### Countering Negative Stereotypes

As well as describing complex intergroup relations, and outlining the optimal conditions needed to

promote tolerance and inclusion within these contexts (i.e., focusing on mixed membership groups), cross-categorization also provides a means for more personalized interventions designed to encourage less bias in impression formation. This second line of research examines the impact of exposure to multiple identities on the cognitive style adopted by individuals when forming impressions of others. The idea here is that considering cross-cutting ties can reduce prejudice because rather than applying a negative stereotype to someone just because he or she is a member of a stigmatized group, people come to appreciate that social categories are fluid, flexible, and dynamic and that there are many different (and positive) ways in which any one person can be described. As such, the impact of any one negatively valued identity is reduced.

For cross-categorization to promote a cognitive style less reliant on stereotypic expectations, the perceived categories must form combinations that tend *not to go together* (that is, are surprising or nonoverlapping). Research has shown that encouraging people to form impressions of crossed category groups that tend to go against expectations (e.g., “woman mechanic,” “gay soldier”) leads to a lesser reliance on stereotypes. To achieve this outcome, however, the category dimensions involved must be related (e.g., gender and occupation: most mechanics are men, most soldiers are heterosexual) because it is only under these conditions that perceivers will be surprised by counterstereotypical combinations (and prompted to engage in more systematic thought to resolve the inconsistency with expectations). These processes are not elicited when categories are uncorrelated (e.g., race and gender). One is not, for instance, surprised to meet a Black man or Black woman.

Research has found that participants asked to form an impression of surprising combinations, such as “woman mechanic” and “male nurse,” used stereotypes of the constituent categories less to describe the target than to describe new or emergent (nonstereotypic) attributes. Emergent attributes are typical of neither constituent category and are produced following a mental resolution of the incongruent information. They indicate a cognitive redefinition of the target person that no longer relies on stereotypic expectations.

The less stereotypic approach to impression formation evoked by thinking about crossed

categorizations offers a potentially useful tool for encouraging more flexible approaches to impression formation. Developmental research offers some support for the idea that the model could be usefully applied to education. For instance, primary school children can be taught to classify along multiple dimensions using pictures of men and women engaging in stereotypically feminine occupations (e.g., hair stylist, secretary) and stereotypically masculine occupations (e.g., construction worker, truck driver). Exposure to these correlated categorizations (and the counterstereotypic combinations the children can be encouraged to generate) can lead to significant reductions in gender stereotyping.

In sum, cross-categorization research has been valuable in two important ways. First, it has offered an experimental paradigm that is attuned to the complexity of contemporary intergroup relations. It has helped us understand the dynamics of prejudice and exclusion when people are members of two stigmatized groups, and the conditions that encourage a focus on what people have in common, as well as what makes them different. Second, it has offered a means of encouraging more flexible approaches to impression formation. When perceivers are exposed to crossed categorizations that challenge stereotypic expectations, this can elicit changes in the way people form impressions, reducing reliance on single, divisive categories and encouraging a more complex, differentiated and tolerant view of others.

Richard J. Crisp

See also Categorization; Discrimination; Multiple Identities; Prejudice

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## CROWDING

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*Crowding* can be characterized as the experience of stress due to exposure to too many people in too little space. One constant since the great plagues has been a continual increase in population. The urbanization of civilization has exacerbated dense population growth, and the population of our planet is now close to 7 billion, increasing at a rate of 1% a year. These trends have contributed to conditions of crowding in some countries and cities. Researchers have explored the many factors that influence crowding and how the harmful effects of this experience can be reduced.

Studies have examined the various spatial and social factors that influence the experience of crowding. Any time groups come together, they vary in size and spatial arrangement. These two factors can influence a wide range of social and task behaviors in groups. The literature on crowding involves extensive studies with both humans and nonhuman animals in laboratory settings and real-world contexts. This research has led to the development of a variety of models for understanding the effects of crowding.

Crowding is generally defined as a negative experience related to high levels of physical density (a large number of people per unit of space). Density can be increased by adding people, decreasing space, or both. The type of density most closely related to popular understanding of crowding is *social density*, the number of people in a given space or area. Pure social density variations involve increases in the size of the group while the space is constant. In contrast, *spatial density* involves variation in the area allotted

to a specific group. Density can vary for spaces within a particular building or home (inside density) and for spaces outside (outside density, such as a city's population). Effects of density depend on the type of density involved and the type of measures obtained.

### Research Approaches

There have been many approaches to studying the effects of crowding. Some studies with humans and animals have explored the effects of natural variations in density. Animal studies have examined the effects of group or herd size on social behavior and mortality. Studies with humans have examined how the degree of crowding in different areas of cities relates to these same types of measures. These naturalistic studies are essentially correlational, which means that they examine the relationship between variables without any certainty as to what causes what. A crowded neighborhood could have a higher mortality rate because of crowding, but this also could be because it also has more pollution, noise, and a lower economic status or because it draws people in need of close access to medical services. Experimental studies can provide more conclusive data on the extent to which a crowding variable causes certain effects. Investigators can manipulate different types of density in both laboratory and field settings and determine the extent to which these variations of density affect various measures of performance, behavior, or well-being.

### Density and Animals

Research with animals has been able to investigate links between density and negative outcomes in naturalistic settings. Early study of the growth of a herd of deer marooned on an island in Chesapeake Bay found evidence of stress, social deterioration, and death as density in the herd grew. Studies of mice and rats allowed to reproduce and "overpopulate" their environments found severe negative effects of density in these animal colonies. Several studies housed animals in environments where they were forced to share needed resources with large numbers of other animals. In most of these studies, colonies continued to grow over time until they peaked and the population

declined. Along the way, various types of social pathology emerged and characterized the colony's decline.

These studies found effects of increasing density that may well be more severe than those found in humans. This may be because humans possess more sophisticated ways to deal with the demands posed by crowding. Thus studies of animal density are best used as a platform for the development and evaluation of hypotheses that should be studied in humans.

### *Density and Humans*

Since humans experience density both in short-term situations (as in a subway car) and in long-term situations (e.g., crowded college dormitories), studies have examined density in both. For example, several laboratory studies have evaluated the effects of short-term variations in density on task performance. Increasing either social or spatial density has detrimental effects on task performance, especially if the task is relatively complex.

Density and crowding also seem to have emotional and physiological consequences. High levels are often associated with negative feelings, especially for males with insufficient space. Density has been associated with elevated blood pressure, skin conductance, and levels of stress hormones such as cortisol or epinephrine. These measures suggest that crowding may induce responses related to stress. Thus, extended exposure to the stressful conditions of crowding may affect health. Crowding in prisons has been associated with elevated illness rates and mortality. Illness-related effects have also been observed for those living in other crowded environments, such as college dormitories and naval vessels.

Since crowding is often experienced as unpleasant, it is not surprising that it may lead individuals to become less sociable. Crowded individuals may avoid eye contact, sit farther apart in public spaces, and reduce the frequency of interacting with others. Unfortunately, this tendency to avoid social contact interferes with the ability to seek out social support from others in times of need or, in turn, to provide such social support. This type of support is a critical factor in our ability to cope with stress. The lack of such support systems make us more vulnerable to the negative effects of stress. Another

negative effect of crowding on social behavior is increased aggressiveness.

### **Models of Crowding**

The effects of crowding can most simply be understood from the perspective of environmental stress. Environmental events that threaten harm or challenge one's resources are considered stressors. Lazarus and Folkman and others have proposed that how one perceives or appraises stressful events and how one deals or copes with them are critical determinants of the effects of stressors. Many negative effects of crowding follow from having to deal with unwanted interactions or spatial intrusions. When there are too many people or too little space, these problems increase. The arousal produced by such stress can be related to poorer performance on complex tasks and changes in physiological functions. Long-term exposure to such stress may lead to illness or even death.

The psychological model of stress suggests that effective coping responses may reduce the impact of stressors. The reduction in sociability or social withdrawal observed under crowded conditions can be seen as a means of coping with crowding. However, there is little systematic research on different coping strategies and crowding. For example, men have been found to cope with dormitory crowding by avoiding spending time in their rooms, whereas females may do the opposite, spending more time in crowded dorm rooms and getting more involved with roommates. However, the avoidance strategy used by males could backfire if it undermines the social support system that they need to confront a variety of life stressors other than crowding.

Research on crowding and other environmental stressors has found that perceived control is an important factor in understanding the causes and consequences of stress. Most crowding phenomena can be understood from this perspective. When environmental conditions produce a sense of loss of control, negative effects on health and behavior are likely to result. This loss of control can be caused by feelings of too much stimulation or overload, the experience of more interaction than desired, or feelings of constraint or interference if one is unable to attain one's goals (e.g., privacy, getting to work on time).

Repeated experiences of such loss of control can produce a degree of passivity or learned helplessness in which individuals do not actively assert their options or freedoms (e.g., social withdrawal). Even when people do not become passive or helpless, they may withdraw from other people as a way of regaining control over social interactions. In crowded dormitories where residents reported many unwanted and/or uncontrollable social contacts, coping behavior included reduced sociability and withdrawal and persisted outside the dormitory. The control perspective suggests that if individuals can attain some sense of control in a crowded environment, the negative impact of the crowding experience can be reduced. Studies have shown that if individuals are given some degree of control over their exposure to crowding (e.g., they are allowed to leave the situation any time they wish), the effects of crowding are reduced.

Other research on dormitories and prison housing also supports a control perspective. Paulus and his colleagues found that the number of individuals in a housing unit (social density) rather than the amount of space per person (spatial density) was the most important factor in the effects of crowded housing. Large open dorms with many inmates but considerable space were related to more illness than double rooms with less space per person. Some of this effect may have been due to enhanced contagion, but stress hormones have also been linked to crowding-related health problems. Similarly, architectural designs that varied in the number of people sharing resources in college dormitories (e.g., lounges, bathrooms, hallways) also varied in perceived crowding and social behavior. Hence, high social density seems more likely than high spatial density to lead to social interference and negative interactions.

### Practical Implications

If we assume that the population on the planet will continue to grow, what can we do to reduce the detrimental effects of crowding? The importance of appraisal and coping suggests several strategies. One possibility is to modify people's perception of crowding. If individuals are forewarned about the effects of crowding, they might be able to develop better psychological and behavioral coping strategies to deal with crowding. People can alter their

commuting time, reduce time spent in a crowded room, or develop ways to navigate a crowded store. One interesting issue is whether we eventually habituate and adapt to the experience of crowding, thus reducing its negative effects.

There is some evidence for this type of adaptation effect, but other evidence that exposure to crowding can actually increase one's sensitivity to crowding. Which effect occurs may depend on personal characteristics such as ability to screen out external stimulation, coping style, and the nature of the experiences encountered in crowded conditions (e.g., supportive versus antagonistic). Of course, one way of adapting is to avoid crowding by using the behavioral strategy of social withdrawal. The lack of friendliness and social isolation evident in many crowded cities may reflect this. Although such withdrawal may help an individual to cope, it may ultimately not be beneficial to have many people socially uninvolved or distant in their relationship with one another.

A number of studies have also provided evidence that certain architectural modifications can reduce the impact of crowding. For example, in prison dormitories with open sleeping areas, partitions between beds reduce negative effects. Similar positive effects of partitions can also be observed in office environments. Other architectural features, such as elevated ceilings, more windows, and access to doors, have reduced feelings of crowding. The beneficial effects of such architectural interventions may derive their effects on feelings of control. Adding partitions in a dorm can allow residents to limit and control interactions more effectively. In one study, dividing a long corridor dormitory in half reduced the effects of crowding; a suite design in dormitories that allowed for more effective control of interactions (compared to corridor-style dorms with double rooms) was also associated with less crowding.

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*See also* Group Ecology; Group Performance; Support Groups; Territoriality

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## CROWDS

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Crowd events exemplify the complex two-sided relationship between the individual and social reality. On the one hand, crowd action reflects the structure and culture of the society within which it occurs. On the other hand, crowd action reflects back on society, serving to shape and reshape the world in which we live. In sum, the crowd encapsulates the core paradox of human action: the fact that we both determine and are determined by the social world. It follows that an adequate understanding of crowd psychology will provide general insights into the nature of human sociality.

Yet, both within the academic discipline of psychology and beyond, crowds are seen as asocial and irrational, an aberration from the normal workings of society rather than a reflection of them. This desocialized view did not arise despite the social nature of crowd action, but precisely because of it. Modern crowd psychology arose as part of the response to European industrialization and the rise of a society in which the laboring masses were separated both physically and socially from the ruling elites. In this context, the dominant classes harbored acute fears that the masses would rise up to challenge the social order. These fears coalesced around the figure of the crowd, seen as the masses in action.

Both mass society theories in general, and crowd psychology theories in particular, reflected the ideological perspective of elite progenitors. This perspective, rather than acknowledging that the various forms of mass movement—syndicalism, socialism, anarchism—reflected alternative visions of the social order, held that mass movement was a threat to the very possibility of social order. Mass movements were not based on radical

ideas but on a lack of ideas, in this view; masses and crowds were quite simply mindless. This perspective was exemplified in the work of the most influential of all crowd psychologists, Gustave Le Bon. This entry begins with a look at his classic crowd theory, then turns to more recent theories of crowds, crowd dynamics, and social change.

### Classic Crowd Theory

According to Le Bon, when people become anonymous within a crowd—a process he called “submergence”—they lose their sense of individual self but, in being part of the mass, gain a sense of invincible power. Having lost their selfhood, and hence their ability to think and judge, people become subject to “contagion.” This refers to the notion that ideas, and more particularly emotions, spread automatically and rapidly among crowd members. Sometimes these emotions arise haphazardly, Le Bon said, but more generally they are generated through “suggestion.” That is, Le Bon argued that the loss of selfhood among crowd members is accompanied by reversion to a collective (or “racial”) unconscious—hence, the tag *group mind theory*, which is often given to this approach. The racial unconscious generates the impulses that govern action. Because the racial unconscious is held to be atavistic, the defining characteristics of crowd action are considered to be equally primitive.

Crowds, according to Le Bon, are powerful only for destruction. People, he claimed, descend several rungs on the ladder of civilization by virtue of joining crowds. Or, to cite a passage that reveals as much about Le Bon’s politics as his science: “Many special characteristics of crowds, such as their impulsivity, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgement and of the critical faculty, the exaggeration of emotions, and others besides, can equally be seen amongst inferior forms of evolution such as savages and children” (1895/1947, pp. 35–36).

Le Bon’s ideas have been translated into modern social psychology through the notion of deindividuation. While there are a variety of deindividuation approaches, they share in common the notion that immersion in a group leads to a loss of normal judgment and control over behavior. They can be seen as retaining the negative half

of the concept of submergence—the notion of loss of selfhood, while discarding the positive half—the notion that people gain a sense of power.

Despite its longevity, the group mind tradition was challenged virtually from its inception. Floyd Allport dismissed the notion of a consciousness separate from the minds of individuals as a meaningless abstraction, and he insisted that the individual in the crowd behaves just as he or she would behave alone, only more so. Allport initiated an individualist tradition that sought to explain social behavior in general, and crowd behavior in particular, in terms of the characteristics of the actors. If crowds were violent, it reflected the violent nature of their members. Ironically, this is at odds with Allport's own account of crowd conflict. He argued that the distinctive response profiles that normally govern our individual behavior break down under the arousal of crowd conditions. Instead, a shared instinctual substrate dominates behavior—particularly the urge to destroy whatever stands in the way of satisfying our basic needs.

Behind the apparent opposition between Le Bon and Allport (or, more accurately, the individualist tradition), they share certain key assumptions. First, both assume that the individual self is the sole basis of reasoned judgment and behavioral control. The difference is that group mind approaches see this self as obliterated in the crowd, while individualist approaches see it as accentuated. Second, both traditions see crowd conduct, and specifically, crowd violence, as pathological. However, while group mind theories locate pathology in generic crowd processes, individualist theories characterize individual crowd members as generically pathological. Third, the two approaches explain conduct by processes internal to the crowd and hence ignore the role of social context.

These commonalities are interlinked. That is, if the psychic structure that ensures control over action (i.e., the individual self) is conceptualized in asocial terms, it becomes impossible to understand the social basis of behavioral control. Consequently, both classic traditions of crowd psychology are unable to explain the socially meaningful pattern of crowd action. As many studies have shown, far from being randomly destructive, the nature of collective action and the

targets of crowd violence faithfully reflect the social belief systems of participants.

### Normative Theories of the Crowd

In the 1960s and 1970s, a new wave of collective unrest struck the Western world. This time, however, the demographics of academia were far different from those at the start of the century, and many theorists related to crowd as participants rather than the targets of action. As a result, they were far more attuned to the perspectives of crowd members and the meanings of their action. This gave rise to a variety of models that stressed the normative processes governing crowd behavior.

Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian's emergent norm theory (ENT) examined how crowd norms emerge out of the intense interactions that occur during events. ENT suggests that the homogeneity of crowds is largely an illusion. Rather, as people mill around, prominent individuals (or "keynoters") will seek to define the reality of the situation and propose specific forms of action. Over a period, certain voices will become predominant and hence norms will emerge that may temporarily shape coordinated crowd action. The strength of this approach lies in its close analysis of the microsocial interactions through which shared understandings are formed during events. Its weakness lies in its inability to specify which voices get heard or how the local norms developed within the crowds relate to broader belief systems. ENT may explain the patterning of crowd action, but it does not explain how this patterning comes to be socially meaningful.

Stephen Reicher's social identity model of crowd behavior addresses precisely this point. As the name suggests, this model is based on the social identity tradition in social psychology and, more particularly, on self-categorization theory (SCT). The core ideas here are (a) that the shift from interpersonal to intergroup behavior is underpinned by a psychological shift from personal identity to social identity, and (b) that when any given social identity is salient, we act in terms of the beliefs, values, and norms associated with the relevant category (what it means to be British, a Catholic, a feminist, or whatever). To put it slightly differently, social identifications are both irreducibly social, in the sense that they are historical and cultural products, and



profoundly personal, in the sense that they define who we are and what we count as significant. They therefore provide a psychological process that links the individual to society and explains how the behavior of individual group members is governed by social meanings.

Whereas these processes apply to groups in general, there are two distinctive features of crowds as a particular type of group, both of which have implications for the normative process. First, crowds are face-to-face groups that typically confront ambiguous or novel social situations. Consequently, crowd members are not able to rely on predefined norms that prescribe exactly how they should act. Rather, as ENT suggests, they have to elaborate situationally appropriate norms. However, unlike ENT, SIM proposes that they do so within limits set by their social identity. Thus, situational norms are more likely to be accepted to the extent that they are seen as consonant with the broad category definition. Pacifists confronted by the police may choose from a number of actions: a sit-down protest, a silent vigil, singing songs of protest. However, they are unlikely to throw stones or initiate physical conflict.

How, then, do crowd members translate the general parameters of social identity into specific local norms? It can be done through discussion, although the fast-moving pace of crowd events frequently makes this impossible. Often, then, norms will be inferred from the actions of typical group members, but only as long as those actions are seen as broadly consistent with category norms. This is the so-called inductive aspect of categorization.

The second distinctive aspect of the crowd has to do with the issue of power—which, as discussed, was stressed by Le Bon but then forgotten by his successors. In everyday life, people are often unable to act on those aspects of their social identity that would be repressed by powerful outgroups such as the police. However, when gathered together in the crowd, members have sufficient support to overcome such repression. The important thing is that people will not do just anything with their power. They will do only those things deemed proper in terms of their category beliefs. By the same token, people can fully express only their social identities in crowds. Far from crowd power being associated with inchoate action, as

Le Bon proposed, it allows a uniquely privileged insight into the collective beliefs of social groups. As the French historian Henri Lefebvre has argued, it is only in crowds that people escape their everyday concerns and become the subjects of history.

### Crowd Dynamics and Social Change

The social identity model may be able to explain how crowd action reflects existing social belief systems. However, there is the danger that such a one-sided emphasis on how society shapes crowds leads to a neglect of how crowds shape society. The elaborated social identity model of crowd behavior (ESIM) aims to provide a more two-sided perspective.

ESIM starts by noting that the original social identity model only partially recontextualizes crowd action. Thus it might relate crowds to broader social categories, however, in common with other crowd models, it largely ignores the immediate interactional context of crowd action. That is, crowd events typically involve interchanges between crowd members and another group, typically the police or other authorities. Yet the spotlight tends to rest on the crowd alone, and the explanatory focus tends to be on factors internal to the crowd, such as the group's mind, personality, or social identity. A more dynamic approach begins by examining crowd processes—and, more specifically, social identity processes—within the unfolding interplay between the parties to an event. That is, it must be both historical and interactive.

In order to understand when change will (or will not) occur, ESIM involves another step. That step involves re-envisioning the concept of social identity as people's model of where they stand in a system of social relations and the actions that are proper or possible within that position. It follows that, when people enter into a crowd event on the basis of one social position but are repositioned through crowd interactions, their identities will be changed through the experience. This will happen when two conditions are fulfilled: (1) an asymmetry between the way in which the (police) outgroup construes the social position of crowd members and the way crowd members construe their own position and (2) the (police) outgroup has sufficient power to impose their version of reality upon the situation.

Characteristically, in these events, a majority of crowd members see themselves as liberal subjects who are claiming the right to protest, but who consider their relationship to the police and the state as positive. However, the police see them as oppositional and dangerous. Moreover, the police translate this perception into the concrete reality of cordons, lines of police horses, and even charges to disperse the crowd. The experience of being positioned as the opposition and of being deprived of what they believe to be their rights leads these crowd members to reconceptualize themselves as oppositional, and hence to pay more heed to oppositional forces within the crowd. Such a change of identity alters their sense of what forms of action are appropriate in this newly understood world. Notably, this change legitimates the conflict against police and thereby leads to an escalation of violence among crowd members.

However, this is not the only transformation that occurs. Crowd members also change their sense of how they relate to other groups in society—notably, other oppositional groups that previously were seen as outgroups come to be seen as part of a broader ingroup. They change their feelings of efficacy and their expectations of support from others, their commitment to future action, even their sense of what their action is about and of what counts as success. Often, the act of protest and of revealing the partial nature of the state and its authorities becomes an end in itself. In short, crowd processes can serve to reconfigure the balance of forces in society.

Note that ESIM does not suggest that crowd action always leads to radicalization. It is equally possible that where people consider themselves oppositional but are treated positively by the police and authorities (i.e., perceive that their rights are being protected and facilitated rather than denied), this asymmetry will lead to a process of deradicalization and de-escalation of conflict. More generally, however, the conditions for any sort of change (asymmetries of representation and power) are relatively rare. More often, outsiders share the self-understandings of participants and act in ways that consolidate rather than destabilize identities. In this way, ritualized crowd events such as official ceremonies mourning the deaths of monarch and political leaders may serve a critical role in preserving existing social relations. Overall,

ESIM is not a narrow model of those few crowd events that transform society. Rather, it is a more general model of how identity can simultaneously shape and be shaped by collective action.

### Broadening the Relevance of Crowd Psychology

Thus far, crowd research has concentrated on the way in which participants' experience of events affects them. However, there are two senses in which the relevance of crowds for society is considerably wider: (1) crowd members identify themselves as members of larger social categories and (2) members of the wider community may perceive the crowd as representing them. Especially with categories so large it is inconceivable that everybody could ever get together (nation, religion, "race," etc.), crowds are the "imagined community" made manifest. The fate of the crowd therefore affects category members in general. This is particularly true where events reflect on the relationship between the ingroup and a relevant outgroup. Thus, for instance, the American civil rights demonstrations and urban riots of the 1960s and 1970s were critical for redefining Black identity and reframing overall race relations—and the same could be said for the British urban riots of the 1980s.

Second, although ESIM has been developed to analyze the immediate interactions between parties in crowd events, the logic of ESIM, notably its insistence on a historical and interactive analysis of group processes, can equally be applied to more mundane group phenomena. Thus, instead of treating identity as a contextual given that determines group behavior, it becomes necessary to examine how ingroup identity—or, more precisely, the balance of influence between more or less radical voices in the group in terms of defining the collective position—is framed by the nature of intergroup relations.

In sum, crowds play a critical role in forming the social identities through which people relate to each other in society. The crowd provides a privileged site to investigate the processes of human sociality. Crowd psychology needs to be brought back from the margins of the discipline—an exotic, spectacular, but ultimately peripheral concern—to its core.

*Stephen Reicher*

See also Collective Movements and Protest; Deindividuation; Emergent Norm Theory; Group Mind; Norms; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Identity Theory

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## CULTS

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Organized around a charismatic leader who demands unquestioning obedience, *cults* are strongly cohesive groups of people who are committed to a transcendent worldview that they believe is morally superior. They are rigidly authoritarian, and they are very effective in using common methods of social influence to achieve their goals. Because many people argue that cult influence is coercive and destructive to the psychological well-being and individuality of members, it is important for group researchers to examine the ways in which cults are typical and atypical of other groups.

Cults are not a new phenomenon, but the attention they have received has increased dramatically in the past several decades. Many scholars attribute the presence of cults in the United States, for example, to the culture of change that typified America in the 1960s. Social and political turmoil surrounded America's involvement in the Vietnam War; civil unrest characterized Blacks' and women's struggle for equality; religious influence began to decline as people searched for different ways of understanding. This culture was fertile for groups whose beliefs conflicted with mainstream dogma, giving rise to the number and popularity of cults.

The numbers of cults and their members are difficult to estimate. At the low end, researchers have estimated several hundred cults; at the high end, researchers have estimated as many as 3,000 such groups across the world. One reason that estimating the number of cults is challenging is because most cults do not survive to become mainstream groups and thus may be overlooked. Also challenging is estimating the number of cult members. Data suggest that relatively few people report having personal, direct contact with cult groups; however, such data often conflict with those reported by cults. The members of cults may be motivated to misreport their size, either to appear larger and stronger than they truly are or to avoid scrutiny from skeptical outsiders and law enforcement agents. Estimation is also made difficult by the challenges involved in precisely defining cults. This entry begins with a look at this issue, then discusses cult leadership and structure, concluding with a description of socialization processes cults use.

### Defining Cults

There is no standard, consensual definition of cults among social scientists, but most definitions focus on the importance of a charismatic, living person who leads an essentially elitist group that believes in their own moral and social superiority. Their commitment to the leader and his or her message is so strong that members may become overly dependent on the group to meet basic psychological needs. The strong bonds among members heighten their conformity to behavioral norms and their willingness to be influenced by the leader and each other.

A primary challenge for social scientists is distinguishing cults from other groups with similar dynamics. Some scholars have noted that cultic structure, thought control, and socialization practices are not that different from those in groups like the military and fraternities and sororities. In addition, the term *cult* can be applied so generally that it includes most religious and political groups. Outside the scientific realm, the term is used even more loosely, referring to groups of people who are devoted to a fashion trend, the latest gadget, a popular celebrity, a lifestyle, and so on.

Moreover, the term conjures stereotypes of brainwashed zombies who surrender their possessions to the group, who sexually abuse women and children, and who aggress against mainstream culture. Although such stereotypes are valid for some cultic groups and/or their members, they are not applicable to them all. Indeed, these stereotypes may be largely based on extreme cults whose sensationalized media representation comes readily to mind (e.g., the People's Temple, Branch Davidians, Heaven's Gate, Aum Shinrikyo).

Consequently, some scholars—often labeled cult apologists—have begun to call cults *new religious movements* (NRMs). The term is less affectively charged, but not without problems. For example, not all cultic groups are temporally or even ideologically new; and even established, mainstream religions like Christianity would have been considered cultic at their inception. Further, what is considered to be cultic is sometimes a subjective judgment to describe any ideological or social outgroup.

### Cult Leadership and Structure

Central to most definitions of cults is a self-appointed leader, one who views himself or (less commonly) herself as having a divine calling. Some cult leaders claim to be messianic or prophetic; however, such claims tend to be unverifiable, fueled by members who want to believe in the leader and his or her message. The claims are also fueled by the leader's enigmatic past. Members may know very little about the leader's life, other than what the leader wants them to know. Research suggests that cult leaders tend to have a tumultuous background characterized by crisis, emotional instability, and poor social relationships. Such a

history could influence individuals to crave the power and influence that is associated with leading groups.

These generalizations should be regarded cautiously, however, because the data are usually based on hindsight and cannot be used to confirm causal paths. Regardless, at some point leaders become quite effective in persuading others that they have a special, exclusive hold on Truth. The leader's influence cannot be understated. He or she rules with an authoritarian style, regulating every experience in the members' day, including work, diet, social activities, sex, and marriage. The leader is so important in the lives of cult members that cults often do not survive when he or she dies or moves on.

Like most groups, cults quickly form a structure and goals, which vary considerably across cults. Some groups are organized around the theme of humankind's demise, and their goal is to recruit members to a path of salvation. Others are organized around political and social themes, and their goals may include aggressing against institutions that counter those themes. The degree to which cults are tightly structured around these beliefs and their leader varies, as does the degree to which cults operate in isolation from mainstream society. Some groups allow members to continue living and working in mainstream society, whereas others require members to break away completely from their past life and individuality to embrace a new identity in the cult ("social implosion"). In addition, many cults structure themselves as a family, with the leader occupying the most central position as a loving parent. Those structurally closest to the leader are trusted, loyal, full members who have access to the leader's private teachings. They are the closest to reaching the cult's vision of enlightenment, and they may have special signifiers of their elevated status.

### Socialization in Cults

Once relegated to city streets and airports, recruitment now occurs in more familiar, personal settings. For example, prospective members may be recruited in their homes (e.g., face-to-face, electronically over the Internet) or through their social networks (e.g., family, friends, coworkers). Researchers have found that these personal strategies are very effective in

forming and maintaining cults because they decrease the likelihood that prospective members will respond defensively to cult messages, or that they will process those messages at a deep level.

### *Member Traits*

A common question that arises in the context of cults is, “Who becomes a cult member?” As social psychological studies remind us, we could all be ideal recruits under the proper circumstances. It should not be surprising, then, that researchers have had little success in finding personality traits that reliably predict vulnerability to cult influence. Most prospective members show no signs of substantial psychopathology or intellectual deficits. (Generally, people with severe mental illness are poor members because they do not remain in the group for a long time.)

Recruits tend to be educated young adults from the middle or upper socioeconomic classes—characteristics that enable their curiosity and the search for meaning and identity. Their families are typically intact, but researchers disagree over whether or not these families promote healthy autonomy. Any lack of autonomy may help to explain the appeal of cults that organize themselves like a family.

### *Cultural Context*

Looking at factors outside the individual, sociologists have focused on large-scale cultural patterns that foster cult influence. Cults tend to emerge and flourish during times of societal chaos, disorganization, and change, like when shifts in collective values and worldviews occur. Further, individuals are most likely to join cults when they are experiencing temporary disorganization in their personal lives. Such disorganization may occur when young adults leave the familiarity of home and family for a job or school in an unfamiliar city.

The group’s central message, total love and acceptance, is easy to understand and does not require cognitive elaboration. In fact, deep processing among members is discouraged. Socially disconnected prospective members are showered with love (“love bombing”), given hope that the group can answer all their questions and provide the stability that seems to be missing in larger society.

Once they become new members, individuals find that information is controlled inside the group. Outside information—especially information that is damaging to the group and its message—is blocked from reaching members (similar to the mindguards of groupthink). Information about the group that is communicated externally is also strictly monitored and controlled.

New and full members participate in a variety of activities that raise their commitment to the cult. They are partnered with old timers who serve as benevolent mentors, and they spend much of their day with other members. The relative uniformity in members’ characteristics and worldviews validates the group and its beliefs, and it increases the group’s cohesion. Ritualistic confession is a common activity that exposes the members’ shortcomings to each other, a vulnerability that can enhance trust and solidarity. These activities enable the group to monitor the thoughts and actions of its members, ensuring that members comply with group norms. Long days of working, recruiting, exercising, chanting, and praying exhaust members to the point where they are unable to elaborate on the group’s message.

Eventually, members may be expected to recruit new members, give their assets to support the group’s mission, and renounce outgroups. These physical and socioemotional sacrifices enhance commitment by producing cognitive dissonance that is resolved by forming more positive attitudes toward the cult. In most cases, these sacrifices unfold gradually, operating according to the foot-in-the-door phenomenon. New members are asked a small request (e.g., attend meetings), and their compliance increases the likelihood that they later will comply with larger requests (e.g., sever all ties with family). Intragroup cohesion and commitment to the leader are important in cults, sustaining members’ participation and belief, even when the leader’s vision of truth is invalidated by reality.

### *Exit Strategies*

Not all people who join cults remain in them. There are a variety of reasons for why members leave a cult. They may voluntarily leave because the group no longer satisfies important needs or interests, or because they have external roles that draw them away from the cult. Members may also

leave involuntarily, such as when the group asks marginal members to leave, or when family members forcibly remove members. The reasons members leave a cult and the presence of a supportive postcult support network likely affect cult members' reintegration into mainstream society.

Research generally suggests that former cult members experience an initial period of adjustment difficulties. These difficulties often involve disorientation and discomfort in having to make their own decisions, a sense of shame over being influenced by the cult, problems in relationships that were severed during membership, and the loss of personal property that now belongs to the cult. With the passage of time, former members begin to integrate into society and to overcome these challenges, such that their psychological well-being is comparable to those in the general population.

In today's milieu of political and social unrest, it would not be surprising to see more and newer cults emerge. Group researchers are ideally suited to study cults, focusing particularly on such intragroup processes as information management, the construction of members' shared mental models, and how cults use social influence to achieve their goals. Such intergroup processes as outgroup derogation, impression management, and minority influence would also be viable foci of study. Whether social scientists regard cults as evil, destructive groups who prey on hapless individuals or as ideological minorities whose right to exist and express a different worldview should be protected, these researchers have much to contribute to society's understanding of cults.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Compliance; Conformity; Group Cohesiveness; Group Socialization; Group Structure; Groupthink; Identification and Commitment; Obedience to Authority

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## CULTURE

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To give a single, uncontroversial definition of culture is a difficult task. Any definition of culture is itself an expression of a theoretical stance. With this caveat, this entry offers a definition that conveys a conception of culture widely used in contemporary psychology. Broadly, *culture* is a collection of information (or meanings) that is (a) nongenetically transmitted between individuals, (b) more or less shared within a population of individuals, and (c) maintained across some generations over a period of time.

This definition of culture excludes behavior or artifacts. Artifacts may take a material form, such as tools, machines, and objects, or a more symbolic form, such as stories, poems, and pictures. Social institutions such as rituals, laws, and the like are special kinds of artifacts that combine both material and symbolic forms. Information or meaning may be inferred from overt behavior or artifacts, because it causes the behavior or behavior that produces the artifacts. Behavior and artifacts may act as markers of culture, but they are not part of culture themselves.

### Groups and Cultures

Although a culture is often associated with a large-scale group, such as a nation state, smaller groups (e.g., Little League baseball teams, work groups)

and organizations can have cultures as well. More generally, cultures and groups are conceptually interdependent. The second component of the culture definition offered earlier stated that cultural information is more or less shared among individuals in a population. A population is often, though not always, defined by a group. Here, a group is understood as a collection of individuals who *self-consciously regard themselves as members of the group*, and as an entity with an existence independent from specific members. Therefore, it is possible to speak of the culture of a group as the totality of nongenetic information more or less shared among members of that group. The culture of a group is thus a property of that group.

However, the culture of a group includes what the group means and what it means to be a member of that group. These meanings include information (a) that the group exists (usually in contrast to other groups); (b) that it has a unique past, some current state, and potential continuity into the future; (c) that some individuals (but not others) are group members; (d) that there is a way to determine group membership (and the rules by which membership is determined); and (e) that to be a member of the group means to have certain psychological and behavioral characteristics. In this sense, culture and group are coconstitutive: The constitution of a self-reflective group presupposes the existence of its culture (a definition of the group, at the very least), and the culture of a group presupposes the existence of the group.

The set of meanings (a) through (e) above, about a group and group membership, may be called a *group identity*. Group identity in this sense differs from *social identity*, which was defined by the founder of social identity theory, Henri Tajfel, as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his group membership” (1972, p. 292). In Tajfel’s sense, social identity is an individual’s representation of his or her own group membership, and it presupposes a group identity. That is, given the existence of a group and its meanings, an individual may define himself or herself as a member of the group. This self-definition as a group member, with its attendant emotional and value significance, contributes to the individual’s social identity.

Nonetheless, a population of individuals who share some cultural information does not have to be

a self-reflectively defined group. For instance, social scientists could define a set of individuals as a population purely on the basis of some arbitrary criterion (e.g., geographical location, historical period, age, gender, sexual orientation), regardless of whether those individuals have a self-reflective definition of themselves as a group. Even then, it is possible to speak about their culture, given the definition offered earlier. Culture can thus be described for a set of people who lack a group identity.

### Cultural Transmission and Small Group Processes

Cultural transmission, the process by which cultural information is transmitted from one person to another, is central to the sharing of cultural information in a group and the maintenance of culture over generations. Recent theorizing suggests that cultural transmission often occurs within the context of face-to-face social interactions among people in their joint activities. For instance, children acquire much of their culture through interaction with their parents and teachers in concrete social contexts, such as family activities and classrooms. Workers acquire organizational cultures through everyday interactions with colleagues and supervisors in small work groups. In other words, the locus of much cultural transmission is small face-to-face groups, including dyads.

Some cultural transmission is carried out purposefully, whereas other cultural transmission occurs as an incidental side-effect of other activities. At least one participant in a joint activity should possess some cultural information, and present it to other participants in a form that is understandable to them. In turn, those other participants should provide some (perhaps tacit) feedback regarding their acquisition and appreciation of the cultural information. As a result, the information becomes shared among participants. However, not all those who are present end up with the same information—the cultural information learned by a particular participant depends on that person’s perspective, prior knowledge, and the like. Consequently, no cultural information is uniformly distributed within a group. “Shared” culture in a group is thus often shared only to the extent that is necessary for its use in members’ joint activities.

Cultural transmission can occur among group members, as illustrated by Muzafer Sherif's classic investigation of emergent norms in 1936. In a laboratory setting, he projected a small speck of light onto the wall of a darkened room and asked participants to make judgments about its apparent movement. In this situation, people tend to experience a perceptual illusion called the *autokinetic effect*, in which there is some apparent movement of the light, although it is in fact stationary. In one condition, Sherif had two or three naïve participants report their perceptions of movements individually and privately at first, and then publicly, in a group setting. Although there were individual differences in initial perceptions, the participants' perceptions of the perceived autokinetic movements converged when the participants were in a group. Here, cultural information about a frame of reference—a "usual" or normative range of perceived movements in the light—was transmitted among group members incidentally as a side effect of their joint activity of participating in an experiment.

For information shared within a group to become part of the group's culture, it must be transmitted vertically across generations. In 1961 Robert Jacobs and Donald Campbell showed that a group norm induced by having confederates report arbitrarily large autokinetic movements in Sherif's experimental situation could persist over generations. For instance, in one condition, a naïve participant began the experiment with two confederates, who were instructed secretly by the experimenter to report very large movements in the light. Once everyone had reported their views about the light's movement, one of the confederates was removed from the group and replaced by a second naïve participant. Everyone again reported their views about the lights' movement, and then the last confederate was removed, to be replaced by yet another naïve participant. This pattern of activities was repeated 10 more times. No further confederates were added to the group; after each trial, the "oldest" group member was simply replaced by someone who was totally new to the experiment. This procedure was meant to represent generational changes in society at large. Despite the fact that the two confederates that instituted the original norm were gone by the third trial, that norm persisted in groups until the fifth generation. This suggests that in small groups, as

well as in society, culture can be transmitted from one generation to the next.

When a group continues to exist, despite changes in membership, and information is shared and transmitted across generations, the group develops a culture. In 1982, Richard Moreland and John Levine called *group socialization* the process by which new members acquire a group's culture and go through resulting temporal changes in status and commitment to the group. Newcomers enter a group almost like apprentices; as they acquire the group's culture, they become full members, engage in the group's activities as main participants, and impart their cultural knowledge to "younger" generations. At this point, they are fully committed to the group. Nonetheless, as they approach the time for their departure to other groups, they begin to extricate themselves from group activities, reduce their commitment to the group, and eventually retire from it. An important aspect of group socialization is cultural transmission, and the process by which cultural information is gained and lost by group members over time.

Enduring groups are typically *institutionalized* groups. That is, they are often legally sanctioned organizations within a broader society, or are parts of such organizations. Institutionalized groups are psychologically treated as part of the social reality that transcends particular individuals' perceptions and agreements; this appears to facilitate cultural transmission, and strengthens the tendency for new group members to internalize a group culture. Using Jacobs and Campbell's experimental paradigm, Lynne Zucker examined cross-generational cultural transmission in different settings in 1977. In one setting, the confederates were described as other participants of a psychological experiment. In the other settings, the experiment and the other participants were described as part of an institution, namely a company or a work group within a company. Naïve participants introduced into institutionalized groups internalized their groups' norms about autokinetic movements more strongly, and passed them on to newcomers more fully, than did participants who construed their groups as part of a mere psychological experiment. An institutionalized group and its culture go hand in hand.

### Culture in Large Populations and Groups

Much of the discourse about culture in psychology focuses on large geopolitical regions (e.g., Europe,



Asia), nation states, and ethnic groups. Geert Hofstede's 1980 book, *Culture's Consequences*, provided a broad framework for such research, highlighting individualism and collectivism as the new foci for research in psychology. Hofstede described individualism as a cultural pattern that emphasizes the individual's goal pursuit and well-being, whereas collectivism emphasizes the sustenance of collectives, such as extended families and kinship groups. Individualist and collectivist cultures echo such well-known concepts as Ferdinand Tönnies's *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* and Émile Durkheim's mechanical and organic solidarity, which the founders of social science developed to describe social and cultural changes in the transition from the traditional lifestyle to the modern society in western Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hofstede showed that more individualistic countries tend to be richer, whereas more collectivistic countries tend to be poorer. North America, western Europe (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark), and Oceania (e.g., Australia, New Zealand) are more individualistic, whereas Asia (e.g., Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand) and Latin America (e.g., Venezuela, Colombia, Chile) are more collectivistic.

Related cultural differences have been found in small group processes, suggesting that small groups may be more real social agents, or more entitative in Campbell's sense, in collectivist than in individualist regions of the world. First, in collectivist Hong Kong, people spend more time in small groups than they do in the individualist United States. People with collectivist Chinese cultural backgrounds also tend to work harder in small groups than alone, whereas people with individualist American cultural backgrounds are more likely to loaf in groups. Small groups also exert stronger social influence in collectivist regions than in individualist regions of the world, at least as measured by responses to conformity pressure. And collectivists tend to hold small groups more responsible for wrongdoing than do individualists, attributing equal or greater agency to groups than to individuals for misbehavior.

Linking cultural difference in individualism and collectivism to the self and social behavior, Harry Triandis in 1989 argued that different types of self-concepts are prevalent in different parts of the world, and that culture influences social behavior through the activation of self-concepts. Hazel

Markus and Shinobu Kitayama in 1991 postulated two types of culturally shaped self-concepts. People with an independent self, found mostly in individualistic cultures, regard the self as bounded and separate from others. The independent self is a unitary and stable entity, characterized by private and inner attributes (e.g., honesty, kindness), that motivates people to express their unique selves, promote their personal goals, and assert what is on their minds. In contrast, people with an interdependent self, found mostly in collectivist cultures, regard the self as inherently connected to significant others (e.g., daughter, husband) and to ingroups (e.g., a citizen of a country, a member of a political party). This motivates them to belong and fit in, occupy their proper places, engage in appropriate actions, promote the goals of others, and "read other people's minds." More recently, Richard Nisbett and others in 2001 argued that culture can influence general cognitive styles. An analytical style, associated with individualistic cultures, focuses a person's attention sharply on an object, while largely ignoring its background. In contrast, a holistic style, associated with collectivistic cultures, has a broader focus of attention that includes both the object and its context. Thus, combining the ideas of culture, self, and cognition, the "standard theory" of East-West differences emerged. It suggests that Western individualism promotes independent self and analytic cognition, whereas Eastern collectivism promotes interdependent self and holistic cognition.

Consistent with the standard theory, there is empirical evidence for the prevalence of independent self-concepts in North America and interdependent self-concepts in East Asia. In comparing self-concepts in America, Australia, Hawai'i, Japan, and Korea, it was found that Americans and Australians had more individualist and less collectivist self-concepts than Japanese and Koreans, with Hawaiians in between these two groups. When European Americans, Asian Americans, and Koreans described themselves in their own words, it was found that European Americans' self-descriptions contained the highest proportion of personality trait terms, Koreans the lowest, and Asian Americans in the middle, again suggesting the American tendency to characterize the self using individual-centered descriptors.

One of the cultural differences in cognition involves the fundamental attribution error. Social

psychological research in the 1960s and 1970s, mainly conducted in North America, showed that people have a strong tendency to explain someone's behavior in terms of the person's dispositions, while underestimating the importance of the context in which the behavior occurred. This tendency was said to reflect a basic limitation of the human cognitive system, but it later turned out to be an error observed more often in North America than elsewhere. Cross-cultural comparisons between the United States and India, as well as between the United States and Hong Kong, showed that the "fundamental" attribution error was not so fundamental after all. Indians and Chinese do not exhibit the error as often as their American counterparts.

A cultural difference between North America and East Asia has been found in emotions as well. A large scale, cross-cultural project comparing people's happiness (often called subjective well-being) showed a substantial difference between North America and East Asia—North Americans tended to be much happier than East Asians. Paralleling these findings, cross-cultural comparisons in self-esteem have shown a strong tendency for North Americans to have higher self-esteem than Japanese. A related finding involves the optimism bias—a belief that in the future, one is more likely to experience positive events, but less likely to experience negative events, than the average person. Although this bias is strong in North America and western Europe, it is much weaker in East Asia, especially in Japan, although a recent study suggests that there is a universal tendency toward unconscious positive self-regard. Taken all together, these findings reveal cultural differences in how people think and express their feelings about life and themselves. These differences are typically interpreted as arising from differences in self-concepts—individualists optimistically pursue their happiness, whereas the pursuit of happiness by collectivists is tempered by a sense of obligation to others.

Overall, there is evidence for broad cultural differences postulated by the standard theory of East–West differences.

### Recent Trends in Culture and Psychology

The standard theory of East–West cultural differences has been refined in recent years. First, individualism and collectivism have been found to be

two separable cultural orientations, and independent and interdependent selves are now regarded as distinct self-concepts that can coexist in the same person. This means that some cultures can be both individualistic and collectivistic, whereas others can be neither. Similarly, some people can show both independent and interdependent self-concepts, and others can show neither.

Second, although the culture of individualism and its link to the independent self appears to be strong, empirical support for the link of collectivism to the interdependent self is modest. In a further refinement, the interdependent self has been differentiated into a self connected to significant individuals (relational self) and a self that is socially connected to groups (collective self). In particular, there is some evidence that East Asian collectivism is characterized by a strong interpersonal bond between close people who are connected by reciprocal exchanges of resources, whereas North American individualism often involves large social groups in which people engage in generalized resource exchanges.

Third, although Triandis's original theorizing emphasized the importance of situational variability in the accessibility of different types of selves, situational variability in cultural differences has been generally overlooked in cross-cultural research. Nonetheless, research has shown that cultural information can be "primed" to increase its cognitive accessibility temporarily, and thereby affect psychological processes. Flexible and situated theorizing about cultural differences is especially important in today's globalizing world, where many people are bicultural or multicultural. These individuals can often switch their cultural mind-sets easily and seamlessly, depending on whatever cultural information is salient in a given situation.

### Conclusion

Globalization has increased the exchange of people, resources, and information across human populations in different regions of the world. When people are exposed to information from other regions, they have greater opportunities to compare themselves to those from those regions. With increasing opportunities to compare themselves to others, people have become more aware of their own cultural uniqueness and have self-reflectively differentiated

themselves further from others. In other words, they have become more articulate about their culturally based group identities and attendant social identities. When identity differentiations were based on cultural differences, cultural identities emerged and became more prominent; as a result, identity politics became part of the popular discourse. The 2001 atrocity of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center, arguably a symbol of globalization, highlighted the ideas of cultures and cultural identities because many believed cultural differences were fundamentally involved in this terrorist act. Thus, the concept of culture has now been moved to the center stage of the contemporary academic and popular discourse, with an accompanying sense of urgency.

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*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Collective Self; Collectivism/Individualism; Culture of Honor; Emergent Norm Theory; Immigration; Initiation Rites; Levels of Analysis; Minority Groups in Society; Multiculturalism; Norms; Xenophobia

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## CULTURE OF HONOR

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In cultural anthropology and social psychology traditions, a *culture of honor* is one in which values and behavioral norms place a strong emphasis on status and reputation. Having honor implies being respected by others. For males, this means demonstrating toughness and the willingness to use aggression if one’s reputation is challenged or to avenge a perceived insult. For females, codes of honor often focus on avoiding behaviors that could bring shame or dishonor to oneself or one’s family. This usually means placing a strong emphasis on female modesty and moral (particularly sexual) purity. This entry begins with an overview, then looks more closely at the internal workings of honor cultures, and concludes with a brief summary of related concepts.

### Overview

Cultures of honor often have elaborate informal conventions about politeness, codes of conduct, and proper rules for redressing grievances. Honor cultures also tend to be characterized by extreme sensitivity to insult that must often be met with a violent response. Values associated with honor cultures include social interdependence, collectivism, emphasis on family, modesty (for females), and relatively traditional views about gender roles. Emotions tend to be centered around shame, pride, humiliation, and anger, but also politeness and respect. Thus, honor encompasses many things: It is a set of prescriptive norms outlining acceptable and unacceptable behavior between individuals, families, and social groups; it is a measure of an individual’s social worth and self-esteem; and it is associated with the experience of several moral emotions.

The study of honor has a relatively long history in cultural anthropology, with detailed ethnographies focusing on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern honor cultures. More recently, social psychological research on honor, beginning with work by Richard Nisbett and Dov Cohen in the 1990s,

has had as its main focus the study of aggression in the defense of male honor in the southern United States. Many other cultures around the world have strong honor traditions, including parts of Central and South America and many Islamic cultures.

In addition, certain subcultures such as the military, the Mafia and the world of organized crime, and subcultures within inner cities emphasize honor or related constructs. Thus, honor cultures can exist at the national or regional level (e.g., Spain, the southern United States), or they can exist in smaller units (e.g., military forces, inner-city street gangs). In short, a “culture” arises wherever interdependent groups of individuals share a common frame of reference. As individuals acquire knowledge of the attitudes, values, norms, and behavioral customs of the group, they become socialized members of the culture.

### Development of Cultures of Honor

Cultures of honor tend to develop in places that have little or no formal law enforcement to redress grievances and thus requiring individuals to protect themselves. For example, much of the U.S. South and Southwest remained a largely lawless frontier relatively late in the settlement of the United States. Honor cultures also tend to develop in places where the economy is dependent upon a portable commodity for wealth. For instance, herding-based cultures often place strong emphasis on personal honor, because livestock (and thus, its owner’s wealth) is susceptible to theft. In frontiers and herding-based cultures (as well as subcultures such as criminal gangs that operate beyond the reach of law enforcement), those men who can best cultivate a reputation for toughness and the quick use of aggression in response to challenges are often the most respected and enjoy the greatest social status.

### Honor and Violence

Cultures of honor tend to be characterized by high rates of violence, both among males and by males against females. Ethnographic work, analyses of homicides, laboratory experiments, and field studies have all demonstrated relatively high rates of violence, and endorsement of honor-related violence in cultures of honor.

Analyses of homicides in the United States, beginning in the latter part of the 19th century, have noted that the South has long been a much more violent region than the rest of the country, a trend that continues today. These regional differences tend to be magnified when looking at rural versus urban populations, Whites versus minorities, and violence specifically related to honor concerns (e.g., argument-related homicides, lovers’ quarrels) compared to felony-related violence. Though some of this regional difference may be due to factors such as poverty and higher temperatures in the South, a number of studies have implicated cultural values of honor directly.

In survey research, Dov Cohen and Richard Nisbett found that individuals from the southern United States endorsed violence more than individuals from the northern United States when it was used to protect personal reputation, family, or property, though Southerners did not endorse violence more in the abstract. In laboratory experiments by Cohen, Nisbett, and their colleagues, southern U.S. males were more likely than northern U.S. males to respond to insults with anger, elevated physiological responses suggesting a readiness to aggress, dominant physical behaviors, and actual aggression.

A number of studies have also noted a connection between honor norms and the relative acceptance of male violence against female intimate partners. For example, students from Brazil (a culture of honor) were more likely than northern U.S. students to believe a man loses honor if his wife is unfaithful, and they were in turn more likely to see a husband’s violence in response to suspected infidelity as justified. Similarly, Chilean students (compared to a non-honor-culture sample of Anglo-Canadians) believed a husband to be justified in hitting his wife, but only if the violence was related to a potentially honor-threatening event.

### Mechanisms of Persistence and Change

Despite changes in the initial conditions that give rise to honor cultures, norms about honor may be stubbornly persistent. For example, despite the transition in the U.S. South from a frontier region with a herding-based economy to a region that increasingly resembles the rest of the nation demographically and economically, elements of the culture of

honor remain. Several macro- and microlevel forces can work together to perpetuate cultural norms of honor.

At the macrolevel, norms about honor are sometimes formalized symbolically into the laws or legal traditions of societies. For instance, “honor killings” are still frequently legitimized or excused in parts of the Arab and Muslim world. Similarly, laws about gun control, foreign policy, and national and self-defense often reflect (and reinforce) greater acceptance of violence in cultures of honor.

Place names can also serve as macrolevel symbols that reflect and reinforce cultural norms about violence. For example, southern U.S. towns (e.g., Guntown, Mississippi; War, West Virginia) and businesses (*Shotguns Bar BQ*, *Warrior Electronics*) more frequently contain violent words than northern U.S. towns and businesses.

At the microlevel, psychological processes such as pluralistic ignorance may reinforce cultures of honor by leading men to misperceive the attitudes of their peers. Southern men, for example, are especially likely to overestimate the extent to which their peers would behave aggressively in various hypothetical conflict scenarios.

However, cultural views about honor can change with demographic and economic shifts. Honor norms appear to hold less sway when there are other routes to honor and status besides family name, or where there are other avenues for mobility and advancement. For instance, recent survey data from Saudi Arabia (a culture with strong honor-based traditions) suggests that individuals who self-identify as middle class endorse honor less strongly than those from the upper or lower classes.

### Related Cultural Concepts

Cultures around the world differ in the emphasis they place on individuals’ social standing. For example, the concept of “face” in some East Asian cultures and “machismo” in many Latin American cultures have in common with cultures of honor

a concern with public reputation as a central organizing principle of social life. However, there are also important distinctions between these constructs and cultures of honor.

For instance, in most cultures that emphasize saving face, public image threats usually lead to inwardly directed emotions such as shame and embarrassment, rather than outwardly directed anger and aggression, which are more common in honor cultures. Likewise, while the macho Latin American male is often caricatured as quick-tempered and violent, overly aggressive masculinity in honor cultures is often frowned upon as immature or dishonorable. Thus, honor codes entail specific rules for when anger and aggression may be expressed.

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*See also* Collectivism/Individualism; Culture; Loyalty

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## DECATEGORIZATION

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*Decategorization* refers to a process of reducing the salience of ingroup–outgroup distinctions. An important consequence is that negative behaviors associated with ingroup–outgroup distinctions, such as prejudice, stereotyping, and intergroup discrimination, are also diminished. When a category distinction is particularly salient, people act and think in terms of ingroup–outgroup memberships rather than in terms of personal identities. This type of social categorization has two consequences. First, outgroup members are depersonalized, treated as relatively interchangeable and undifferentiated elements of a social category; their individual characteristics are ignored, and group-based appraisals, such as stereotypes, are used to judge them. Second, intergroup distinctiveness is enhanced, thus facilitating competition and discrimination. Given this situation, decategorization should have beneficial consequences for social interactions.

### Three Aspects of Decategorization: Individuation, Differentiation, and Personalization

Individuation reduces intergroup biases and conflicts because the more that group members are considered as discrete individuals, the less their group membership is likely to be relevant. Deindividuation of group members has several negative consequences, such as disregard, dehumanization, and aggressive

responses. Thus, individuation should promote positive emotions and evaluations. In particular, individuation is likely to (a) dispel the perception of outgroups as homogeneous, (b) facilitate the perception of self–other similarities, and (c) encourage perspective taking and empathy.

Marilynn Brewer and Norman Miller emphasized two other processes fundamentally related to decategorization: *differentiation* and *personalization*. In their model, categorized, differentiated, and personalized interactions are part of a continuum: Categorization represents the extreme in which only groups are salient, personalization the pole in which only individual features are relevant, and differentiation stands in between, characterized by an intermediate level of salience of both categorical and personalized aspects. Thus, according to Brewer and Miller, differentiation does not refer to an elimination of category boundaries, but to their blurring. With differentiation, within-category differences are perceived as relevant, unique, and distinctive information and, as a consequence, can promote the perception of different subgroups within the broader category. The groups remain the basis of social interactions, but perceived internal homogeneity within the categories is reduced.

From a practical point of view, differentiation can be produced in different ways. First, people can be instructed to pay more attention to intra-group differences, partially reducing the salience of group membership. Second, different categorizations can be applied to the same individuals. Crossed categorization, in fact, diminishes the

salience of the original ingroup–outgroup distinction, although alternative categorizations are likely to gain importance. Third, the ingroup and outgroup can be joined in a single category that includes both, as proposed by the *common ingroup identity model*. In this case, the type of judgments generally reserved for ingroups, in which both group membership and individual differences are taken into account, are applied to the individuals previously categorized as outgroup members who are now members of the new broader category.

Personalization, which represents one pole of the continuum described by Brewer and Miller, is related to the comparison between the self and other *individuals*. Group memberships are irrelevant: These interpersonal comparisons cross group boundaries. However, whereas individuation involves primarily perceiving group members as distinct individuals, personalization involves recognizing personal, idiosyncratic information that is relevant for the self and facilitates the recognition of similarities between the self and individuals previously categorized as outgroup members. Information processing is based on individual information collected during the interpersonal interaction, not on category-based preconceptions such as stereotypes and prejudice. As a result, categories become less useful tools because they are not very informative for the perception of self and others.

Miller subsequently proposed an alternative definition of personalization, considering it as a feature generally related to a focus on personal information, involving phenomena such as self-disclosure, mutual trust, and empathy. In this conceptualization, both personal and category-based features can be highly salient at the same time, for instance when individuals who are well aware of their memberships in different groups reciprocally self-disclose or adopt the other's perspective. In general, greater personalization, viewed in this way, creates more positive attitudes toward others.

### The Generalization Process in Decategorized Contact

According to Brewer and Miller, whether an interaction, in which people are in contact with one another, is characterized by categorization,

differentiation, or personalization has important consequences for the generalization process, in which the outcomes of a specific interaction between people are extended to other social contexts.

Category-based contact is likely to lead to a change in attitude toward the entire outgroup: When ingroup members interacting with outgroup members consider all the people involved in that contact situation, including themselves, as interchangeable representatives of their respective groups, the judgments formulated during contact are easily extended to the entire categories. However, according to Brewer and Miller, when contact is characterized by categorization, it is unlikely that interactions will be experienced or perceived as positive; it is more likely that they will be imbued with the negative cognitions, evaluations, and affect generally related to ingroup–outgroup distinctions. Thus, a generalization process will readily occur, but it will most likely focus on negative rather than positive outcomes of contact.

Differentiation, in contrast, creates an enhanced perception of group variability and increases complexity of group judgments. Increased variability and complexity undermine views of the outgroup as monolithic, reducing category-based judgments of its members. Because outgroup members are no longer perceived as interchangeable elements of a category, it is difficult to treat them as identically characterized by stereotypical traits. The risk involved in differentiation is that the perceived distinctions among outgroup members may lead to subtyping of outgroup members. These subtypes can be treated as being inconsistent with the general image of the group, and then treated as exceptions, leaving global perceptions of the category fundamentally unchanged. If subtyping occurs, generalization would be limited.

The generalization process involved in personalization is conceptually different. It is based on the fact that repeated interpersonal interactions are able to disconfirm negative stereotypes of the outgroup because others are seen as unique individuals who are more similar to the self than to the prototype of a category. As a result, individuals eventually become aware that category-based judgments are inaccurate or inefficient for understanding members of the other group. Thus, in future interactions, with the same person or other



members of the group, people will be less likely to base their perceptions on category membership, progressively undermining a cognitive habit that is now seen as misguided, uninformative, and effectively useless. From a practical standpoint, this process should be active in contexts characterized by desegregation, in which people have a range of personalized experiences with individual outgroup members.

### Empirical Evidence

David Wilder examined various experimental conditions in which outgroup members can be individuated and the salience of group boundaries degraded. This happens, for instance, when participants interact with group members who display a variety of different behaviors or who disclose personal, idiosyncratic information. Alternatively, perceivers may be encouraged to adopt a careful, deliberative examination of group members. The effects of these manipulations are clear: When individuation occurs, group-level phenomena, such as perceived outgroup homogeneity and ingroup favoritism, are less prominent. However, in further work, Wilder showed that full generalization from positive contact to favorable attitudes toward the outgroup is possible only when the known individuals are presented as typical members of their category.

Several studies have also been conducted to directly test the decategorization model proposed by Brewer and Miller. The results are generally consistent with the model. Judgments of previously unknown outgroup members are more positive when interactions between ingroup and outgroup members are focused on individual characteristics (a social focus), rather than on the task they are working on (a task focus). This result is amplified when individuals cooperate, rather than compete. However, as Hewstone has noted, group membership was still salient in this research, and thus, interactions were not fully decategorized or individuated. Miles Hewstone, Rupert Brown, and their collaborators have further found, across various settings and adopting different methodologies, that positive effects of contact are generalized to the whole outgroup mainly when interactions involve individuals who are considered typical exemplars of the outgroup or when group memberships are

highly salient during contact. Thus, as Miller noted in his revision of the Brewer and Miller personalization model, some degree of attention to group membership is required for generalization of the benefits of personalization to occur.

### Critiques and Limitations

The decategorization process is generally considered an effective way to create positive interactions in which interactants like one another, but there is the risk that its scope is limited to the specific situation of contact. As acknowledged by Brewer and Miller, positive personalized contact does not automatically generalize to attitudes toward the person's group as a whole. Generalization is more likely to occur if, after personalized contact, people come to believe that the relevant social categories are uninformative and of little use. Under these conditions, people are more likely to renounce the use of these social categories in future interactions.

But there is a problem: Is it really possible for human beings not to use categories? Categorization is a basic process in human perception, which simplifies an otherwise overwhelmingly complex environment. Thus, using categories may not be a question of will, but rather a necessity of human cognition. Moreover, people tend to be socially motivated to use categories in their perceptions and judgments. Group memberships are part of self-definition and thus involve self-esteem appraisals and sentiments such as pride and loyalty. From this perspective, it is unlikely that individuals could sustain complete decategorization. Nevertheless, it is possible to recognize and appreciate the individuated characteristics of people who are members of another group. Furthermore, not only can the development of positive connections through personalization produce more favorable attitudes toward those individuals, but to the extent that social categories are seen as salient, these attitudes can generalize to other members of the group as well.

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*See also* Categorization; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Intergroup Contact Theory; Mutual Intergroup Differentiation Model; Prejudice; Social Identity Theory

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## DEHUMANIZATION/ INFRAHUMANIZATION

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*Dehumanization* occurs when a person or group is perceived as less than human, is likened to a nonhuman, or is treated in a way that disregards the person's or group's humanity. Social psychologists have generally studied dehumanization in contexts of intergroup conflict and violence, such as war and genocide, because the phenomenon appears to be intimately involved in them. In these contexts, dehumanizing perceptions are frequently expressed, and they play a central role in enabling aggressive behavior and freeing aggressors from normal moral restraints.

This entry discusses the concept of dehumanization and presents the different approaches that social psychologists have taken to understand it. After laying out these theoretical perspectives, the entry discusses recent work on more subtle forms of dehumanization, focusing on the phenomenon of *infrahumanization*, in which members of outgroups are denied attributes that distinguish humans from other animals. This phenomenon is intriguing because it can occur in the absence of any intergroup antagonism, it is separate from processes of outgroup derogation, and it takes place unconsciously. Last, other recent perspectives

on subtle forms of dehumanization, in which people are automatically associated with different kinds of nonhumans, such as animals and robots, are presented.

### What Is Dehumanization?

How dehumanization should be defined is rarely made explicit in the social psychology literature, but the term tends to be used in a few distinct but related ways. First, people can be dehumanized by being seen as lacking important human attributes, such as when they are perceived as deficient in intelligence, rationality, or refinement. Patronizing views of “primitive” people or ethnic groups as coarse, stupid, and simple exemplify this sense of dehumanization. Second, people can be dehumanized by being explicitly denied their full humanity, such as when they are openly described as subhuman or as barbarians. A historical example is the way in which Blacks in the United States were once officially declared to be worth three fifths of a human being.

These first two senses of dehumanization focus on what certain people are perceived to lack relative to others: how they are less than human. A third sense involves seeing others as being more like nonhumans. This can take the form of perceiving a group as having more of some nonhuman attribute than other people, or overtly likening the group to nonhumans. For example, certain groups have been attributed bestial qualities or likened to animals. Jews were described by Nazis as vermin, Tutsis were described as cockroaches by Hutus during the Rwandan genocide, and immigrant groups are sometimes likened to germs.

A fourth sense of dehumanization refers to ways in which people are treated. Some kinds of interpersonal behavior can be described as dehumanizing if they harshly violate moral principles about how human beings should be treated. Dehumanization in this sense can be said to occur even if the maltreated person is not explicitly perceived as lacking humanity or as being nonhuman by the perpetrator. Examples of this sense of dehumanizing treatment might include torture, degradation, exploitation, and treating people as instrumental means to ends. A common thread in these examples is that dehumanizing treatment denies human dignity to people.

### Theories of Dehumanization

Psychologists have proposed a variety of ways of accounting for dehumanization. One account, proposed by Daniel Bar-Tal, argues that dehumanization is a form of *delegitimizing belief*. These beliefs are elaborated in culturally accepted ideologies that represent hated outgroups in extremely negative ways, often portraying their members as demons or monsters. In this view, dehumanization is an outgrowth of *demonization*. By removing the legitimacy of the outgroup, beliefs such as these reinforce the superiority of the ingroup and justify its aggressions.

Another theoretical account, associated with the work of Susan Opatow and Albert Bandura, views dehumanization as a form of *moral exclusion* or *moral disengagement*. When people dehumanize others, they place the others outside of the boundary within which normal rules of morality and fairness apply. As a result, moral restraints on inhumane behavior are weakened. For example, nonhuman animals fall outside the boundary of moral concern for many people, and moral rules governing how we should treat our fellow human beings do not apply to them. If members of a group are seen as animallike, we are therefore less likely to apply these moral rules in our dealings with them. Moral exclusion allows perpetrators of aggressive behavior to feel disengaged from the suffering that they inflict and therefore less prone to experience moral emotions such as guilt and shame that inhibit aggression.

A third account of dehumanization, proposed by Shalom Schwartz and colleagues, argues that it hinges on human values. A group is likely to be dehumanized when its members are seen as lacking *prosocial* values that express concern for others and when their values are seen to be dissimilar from those of the ingroup. Values express fundamental cultural goals and ideals, so when others are seen as having discrepant values, their shared humanity is called into question. If *they* do not share in *our* humanity, then they are less than human.

A recent theory of dehumanization, propounded by Lasana Harris and Susan Fiske, links the phenomenon to stereotyping. The content of group stereotypes varies along dimensions of warmth and competence, and researchers have proposed that dehumanization can occur when groups are

stereotyped as both cold and incompetent. Drug addicts and homeless people are often perceived in this way: neither interpersonally agreeable nor personally capable. Research has shown that groups such as these evoke disgust and fail to activate parts of the brain that are involved in social cognition processes, such as the attribution of mental states to other people. By implication, members of groups that are denied competence and warmth are seen as inanimate (and contaminating) objects rather than as human beings with thoughts and feelings.

These alternative accounts of dehumanization share several similarities. They present dehumanization as a phenomenon that mainly applies to extreme outgroups, accompanies very negative perceptions of these groups, and is closely tied to the maltreatment of outgroup members. They tend to see dehumanization as a process that serves psychological or social functions. These may include affirmation of a group's superiority, enablement of violent behavior, justification of past aggression, or blocking of unpleasant feelings such as guilt and vicarious distress at other people's suffering. These theories therefore contribute to our understanding of dehumanization as a factor in human evil.

### Infrahumanization

The theories of dehumanization reviewed here all share the view that it is an intense phenomenon that is closely linked to violence, aggression, and intergroup conflict. Some recent work argues that subtler forms of dehumanization also exist and that these occur in everyday social perception. Members of different groups may unconsciously perceive one another as less than fully human, even when their groups are not in conflict.

This new approach to the study of dehumanization was pioneered by Jacques-Philippe Leyens and his colleagues, who first investigated which characteristics are seen as distinctively human. They focused their attention on emotions, distinguishing between *secondary emotions*, which are unique to humans (e.g., nostalgia, envy, delight), and *primary emotions*, which we share with other animals (e.g., sadness, anger, happiness). Leyens and colleagues found that people often consider secondary emotions to be essential components of humanness and inferred that if outgroups are

subtly dehumanized, they should be seen as having these emotions to a lesser extent than ingroup members. No such ingroup–outgroup difference would be expected for primary emotions, which are not distinctively human.

In many studies, using questionnaires as well as implicit social cognition methods, Leyens and colleagues have confirmed these predictions: Uniquely human emotions are reserved for the ingroup, but other emotions are attributed equally to ingroup and outgroup. By implication, outgroup members are implicitly perceived as closer to animals than ingroup members, and for this reason the effect is dubbed *infracumanization*. People do not merely fail to ascribe uniquely human emotions to outgroup members but actively resist doing so and respond negatively to outgroup members who display them. The *infracumanization* effect is found even between groups that are not in conflict, and it is not simply a product of derogatory views of the outgroup, as both positive *and* negative secondary emotions are attributed to the ingroup.

Recent research and theory have proposed additional subtle forms of dehumanization. Nick Haslam and colleagues have argued that just as people are often denied uniquely human attributes such as secondary emotions (i.e., *infracumanization*), they can also be denied attributes that compose “human nature.” Whereas uniquely human attributes involve refinement, sophistication, and rationality and are seen as products of socialization, human nature attributes involve warmth, imagination, vivacity, and emotion and are often seen as innate. Haslam argues that when groups are denied uniquely human attributes, they are implicitly likened to animals, and when they are denied human nature attributes, they are likened to robots or machines.

Several studies support these claims: Groups perceived as lacking uniquely human attributes were associated with animals, and groups perceived as lacking human nature attributes were associated with robots. Additional studies suggest that similar processes can occur outside the domain of group perception. There is evidence that people tend to see others as having fewer human nature traits than they themselves have, implying that individuals see themselves as more human than others.

Dehumanization is a crucial concept for understanding intergroup conflict and especially for

understanding how conflicts can move from passive hatred and suspicion to active violence and hostility. It can disable people’s usual moral restraints by portraying others as nonhuman or less than human and therefore undeserving of respect, dignity, and protection. However, recent research and theory suggest that milder forms of dehumanization also exist, suggesting that people habitually attribute lesser humanness to other people and implicitly liken them to nonhumans. The implications of these subtle forms of dehumanization for intergroup relations remain to be seen.

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*See also* Categorization; Deindividuation;  
Depersonalization; Essentialism; Prejudice; Stanford  
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## DEINDIVIDUATION

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*Deindividuation* refers to the process whereby people engage in seemingly impulsive, deviant, and sometimes violent acts when they cannot be personally identified (e.g., in groups, in crowds,

when communicating on the Internet). Deindividuated behavior can occur for two reasons. Some deindividuated situations can reduce accountability, meaning that when people are hidden within a group, for example, they cannot be easily traced or blamed for their actions. As such, the effects of deindividuation can sometimes be viewed as socially undesirable (e.g., rioting). However, research has shown that deindividuation also strengthens adherence to group norms. Sometimes these norms conflict with the norms of society at large, but they are not always negative. As such, the effects of deindividuation can be rather inconsequential (e.g., “letting loose” on the dance floor) or even positive (e.g., helping people).

This entry provides an historical view of crowd behavior, examines the issues of accountability and group norms, and discusses the particular instance of computer-mediated communication.

### History and Background: Analyses of Crowd Behavior

Theories of *crowd behavior* provided the origins of modern deindividuation theory. In particular, the work of Gustave Le Bon in 19th-century France promulgated a politically motivated criticism of crowd behavior. At the time, French society was volatile, and protests and riots were commonplace (e.g., the revolutionary crowds of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871—see Émile Zola’s *Germinal* and Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* for literary accounts of the time). Le Bon’s work, which described group behavior in general as irrational and fickle, therefore found much support at the time.

Le Bon believed that being in a crowd allows individuals to act differently than they would act when alone. Being submerged in a large group of people allows an individual to react on impulses that would normally be controlled and perform behaviors that would normally be self-censored. Some of these behaviors, in the words of Le Bon himself, can be “primitive, base and ghastly.”

Le Bon argued that such undesirable behaviors can arise through three mechanisms. First, anonymity prevents people from being isolated or identified from others in a crowd. Being unable to be differentiated from others leads to a loss of personal responsibility, a sense of being untouchable,

and a loss of self-control. Le Bon further argued that this loss of control leads to contagion, in which a lack of responsibility spreads throughout the crowd and everyone begins to think and act in the same manner. Finally, people in the crowd become more suggestible. In other words, being in a crowd leads to blind acceptance of the demands of being in a crowd, and people unquestioningly follow the impulses that emanate from a common unconscious. Le Bon’s analysis suggests that crowds are messy, incoherent, and often dangerous rabbles in which people are not capable of self-control and are the victims of a common and inferior mind.

Le Bon’s work was very influential. For example, in the 1920s, Sigmund Freud argued along similar lines that crowds unlock people’s unconscious impulses. Individuals’ basic impulses (derived from the *id*) are controlled by crowd leaders, who, via a process similar to hypnosis, bring out the animalistic tendencies within all people involved. Similarly, in the 1920s, William McDougall argued that crowds bring out people’s instinctive primary emotions, such as anger and fear. Because everyone experiences these basic emotions and because people are less likely to have more complex emotions in common, the basic emotions will spread rapidly within a crowd as people express them. It was argued that this process, similar to Le Bon’s idea of contagion, leads to deregulated and impulsive behavior.

### Deindividuation and Accountability

Modern theories have applied and extended early principles to understand people’s behavior in smaller groups and in other contexts, such as when people have the opportunity to interact with others while concealing their identity and remaining anonymous. The term *deindividuation* was coined by Leon Festinger and colleagues in the 1950s to describe situations in which people cannot be individuated or isolated from others. According to Festinger and colleagues, being deindividuated brings about a loss of individuality in its members.

Similar to Le Bon, Festinger and colleagues proposed that being deindividuated (in particular within a group) reduces normal constraints on behavior, and people can do things they normally would not do because they are not directly accountable for their actions. They are in a sense liberated

to do what they like. Festinger and colleagues found support for this idea by demonstrating that participants who were engaged in a group discussion about their parents while being dressed alike in a dimly lit room were more likely to make negative comments about their parents than were participants in a control condition. In other words, the deindividuated situation allowed participants to express views that they would normally keep to themselves.

Philip Zimbardo is responsible for the development of the deindividuation theory most commonly known today. Zimbardo was more specific about what variables would lead to a state of deindividuation, as well as the behaviors that should result from deindividuation. Specifically, Zimbardo said that factors leading to a state of deindividuation were anonymity, responsibility (shared, diffused, or given up), group size and activity, altered temporal perspective (so that focus is more on the here and now than on the past or present), arousal, sensory input overload, physical involvement in the act, reliance on noncognitive interactions and feedback, a novel or unstructured situation, and altered states of consciousness (such as those brought about by the use of alcohol and drugs). Zimbardo claimed that all these factors act to minimize self-observation and evaluation, reduce concern for social evaluation, and lead to a weakening of controls based on feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and commitment. Thus, thresholds for expressing inhibited behaviors are lowered, and these behaviors are typically impulsive and often negative and antisocial.

In the 1970s, Zimbardo conducted a series of experiments in which participants were deindividuated by being dressed in Ku Klux Klan-style clothing. In one experiment, female participants were asked to deliver shocks to another female participant (who was in fact a confederate) as a response to incorrect answers in a learning task. Results revealed that the deindividuated participants gave shocks that were twice as long in duration as those given by participants who were not dressed in the deindividuating clothing. Zimbardo and his colleagues also carried out the famous Stanford prison experiment, in which student participants were deindividuated as prisoners or prison guards in a simulated prison setting at Stanford University. The students in the position

of guards were physically brutal to the students who were deindividuated as prisoners, so much so that the experiment had to be terminated early.

Ed Diener provided a theoretical clarification of Zimbardo's theory by introducing the concept of *objective self-awareness*. Objective self-awareness is high when people's attention is drawn inward toward the self and people actively monitor their own behavior. On the other hand, objective self-awareness is low when their focus is directed outward and people monitor their own behavior less or not at all. According to Diener, deindividuation is caused by a reduction in objective self-awareness, and factors that can reduce this self-awareness (e.g., anonymity or being in a group) can bring about deindividuation. Under conditions of deindividuation, attention is therefore drawn away from the self, and people are less capable of monitoring their behavior in relation to internal norms and standards.

To support this idea, Diener and colleagues observed the behavior of more than 1,300 children one Halloween in the 1970s, focusing on 27 homes where, on their visit, the trick-or-treating children were invited to take one candy from a table. Half of the children were asked where they lived and were asked for their names; half were not asked for this individuating information. Results revealed that deindividuated children and children in groups were more than twice as likely to take more than one candy. Diener and colleagues argued that the groups and anonymous children transgressed because the deindividuating conditions reduced their objective self-awareness and freed them from the normal constraints on their impulse to take more candies.

Steven Prentice-Dunn and Ronald Rogers reformulated Diener's theory in the 1980s by introducing the distinction between public and private self-awareness in deindividuated contexts. *Public self-awareness* is said to decrease due to anonymity such that people become less aware of how they appear publicly to others. Anonymous individuals, for example, are less aware about how they present themselves, and as a result, their behavior will tend to be antinormative, or against accepted norms and standards. Also, *private self-awareness*, or awareness of internal norms and standards, was argued to decrease due to the physiological arousal of being in a group and the high levels of group

cohesiveness. People therefore become less aware of their internal standards of behavior, and this will also lead them to behave more impulsively. The unique contribution here is that deindividuation is said to influence behavior by reducing the level of explicit control that people have over their thoughts and actions.

Some archival observations support this view. For example, Brian Mullen conducted a content analysis of the newspaper accounts of 60 lynchings committed in the United States between 1899 and 1946. He found that the larger the lynch mob, the more savagely they murdered their victims. In this case, the arousal of being within a large group with a common purpose increased the extent to which the group performed atrocities. The same principle can apply to anonymity. It has been found that cultures whose members conceal their identities before battle (e.g., by use of face paint) have historically been more likely to commit gruesome acts toward their prisoners than those who do not hide their identities.

### Deindividuation and Group Norms

Much of the theorizing about deindividuation up to this point has focused on how deindividuated states cause antinormative behavior. Although, in general, factors such as anonymity tend to increase antisocial behavior and increase aggression, not all research findings support this view. For example, Zimbardo found that soldiers paradoxically gave electric shocks of shorter duration when they were deindividuated in the Ku Klux Klan-style clothing he used in his earlier study. Furthermore, Robert Johnson and Leslie Downing adopted a similar paradigm but dressed female participants in either the Ku Klux Klan-style clothing or in nurses' uniforms. The participants dressed in the nurses' outfits were significantly less aggressive.

These results suggest that aggression and antisocial behavior are not inevitable by-products of deindividuated situations. In some cases in which norms and standards promote aggressive behavior (e.g., soldiers dressed in uniform may trigger norms associated with fighting and aggression), this may be the case. However, when norms and standards instead promote positive, nonaggressive behavior (e.g., nurses dressed in uniform may trigger norms associated with caring and helping),

behavior may be far from negative. In other words, deindividuated behavior increases adherence to the salient norms of the situation. Gustave Jahoda pointed out a real-life example of this effect of deindividuation. In some Islamic countries, women wear the full-length, dark-colored chador, which, instead of allowing women to engage in antinormative behavior, implies a strong system of norms of behavior to which women adhere.

Following this line of reasoning, some critics of traditional deindividuation theories argue that while group membership can have prosocial and antisocial consequences, these consequences should not necessarily be attributed to a loss of individual selfhood. Steve Reicher, Russell Spears, and Tom Postmes have argued that the notion of a *loss of selfhood* relies, inaccurately, on an individualistic conception of the self. Rational action is equated with the individual self, and group membership is equated with the loss of identity and of rationality. According to Reicher and colleagues, this position limits our understanding of deindividuation phenomena.

Drawing on *social identity theory* and *self-categorization theory*, Reicher and colleagues proposed that group membership does not automatically entail a loss of self. In each individual, there are many levels of the self. The self is not only the individual's personal identity or what separates that individual from other individuals. It also encompasses a range of possible social identities related to group memberships. That is, the self is also determined by properties that are shared with others, such as race, gender, and age. When at any given time a person feels part of a group, he or she will be attuned to the norms of that group. For this to occur, people do not need to be physically present with the group or be physically marked as a group member in any way. In turn, knowledge of the group's norms will guide people's behavior. In their *social identity model of deindividuation effects*, Reicher and colleagues argued that these social identity principles determine how people will behave in deindividuated situations.

Revisiting Zimbardo's paradigm in which participants were asked to wear Ku Klux Klan-style hoods and cloaks, Reicher and colleagues argued that asking people to wear such garments should have different effects on behavior depending on the salient social identity and what is happening in

the deindividuated context. Reicher and colleagues argued that manipulating deindividuation by immersion in a group should reinforce the salience of a prominent social identity (should one be prominent) at the expense of personal identity. So if personal identity is salient, wearing Ku Klux Klan outfits may increase personal focus, and people will rely on their own individual norms to guide their behavior. But if a group identity is salient, the deindividuation manipulation is more likely to have the effect of promoting behavior consistent with the norms of the group that people feel part of at the time, whether they are prosocial or antisocial.

Support for these ideas comes from a range of work on crowd behavior and group behavior in the laboratory. In one study, Reicher asked science and social science students to watch either a provivisection (science norm) or antivivisection (social science norm) video. Half of the participants took part as individuals, and half participated in groups. Further, half of the participants were anonymous via the use of masks. In the group condition, the masks were different colors to mark the different groups. Results revealed that people conformed more to their group norm when they were tested within a group. That is, scientists in groups were more provivisection than scientists tested as individuals, and social scientists were more antivivisection under these same conditions. Further, science students were more provivisection when they were deindividuated and when group membership was salient (the group-anonymous condition) than in the individual-anonymous condition. So when group membership is salient, anonymity can serve to increase adherence to the norms of that group.

### Computer-Mediated Communication

A modern example of deindividuation phenomena in action can be seen in *computer-mediated communication* (CMC; e.g., e-mail, blogs, social networking sites, chat rooms). CMC has provided people with new ways of communicating with each other, and the unique feature of CMC is that unlike many other media, people can communicate anonymously if they so wish. Just as traditional research on deindividuation predicts, CMC is therefore characterized by increased hostile, negative

interactions known as *flaming* and increased levels of personal disclosure.

Theorists typically attribute this type of behavior to the physical anonymity afforded by the medium. It is argued that the anonymity of CMC frees people from normal constraints on behavior, allowing people to behave impulsively and often antisocially. However, some research shows that although the deindividuated context of CMC blurs people's individual characteristics, an important consequence of this is that it also enhances the salience of groups and their associated norms.

As such, some research shows that people who are deindividuated by being anonymous on the Internet often adhere *more* to the norms of their groups than when they and others are identifiable. For example, research by Russell Spears and colleagues shows that group polarization, or the heightened expression of attitudes consonant with ingroup prototypical norms, occurs under anonymous CMC conditions. People's views, expressed anonymously, become more group-like and therefore more normative than antinormative. This is increased further if group identity is made salient.

Investigating the effects of anonymity on behavior in CMC is currently an active area of research in psychology. Therefore, a long tradition of research dating back to the 19th century continues today as individuals and groups find new ways to interact with each other.

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*See also* Computer-Mediated Communication; Crowds; Depersonalization; Deviance; Group Mind; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Identity Theory; Stanford Prison Experiment

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## DELPHI TECHNIQUE

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The *Delphi technique* is a structured forecasting and decision-making method that assesses and summarizes the individually held opinions and judgments of group members with little or no discussion or deliberation among the members. Named for the legendary Delphic oracle, this method involves surveying members repeatedly, with the results of each round of surveys informing the framing of the questions for subsequent rounds. The Delphi technique avoids some of the limitations of traditional group decision-making procedures and is particularly useful when the group members are so widely divided on issues that a face-to-face discussion will not be productive.

### Origin of Delphi

The Delphi method was developed by decision makers at the RAND Corporation, which is a non-profit institute that conducts problem-focused research in public policy, science and technology, international issues, energy, and the environment. Recognizing the inherent difficulty of reaching consensus among experts about future trends and events, the developers named their method after the famed Delphic oracle of Greek mythology. History claims that those who wondered about their future could consult the oracle for guidance and, in some instances, receive accurate if somewhat ambiguous prophecies of what lay in store for them. One king of legend, for example, asked the oracle if he should settle a dispute with a neighboring territory

through warfare. The oracle assured him that such an attack would bring about the fall of a great empire. Only when his army was soundly defeated and his kingdom lost did he realize that the prophecy referred to his own empire.

The modern developers of the Delphi technique turned to groups to reduce the ambiguity of the oracle's prediction about the future and also increase its accuracy. They recognized the value of basing decisions on the collective wisdom of a group. When many individuals examine an issue, the group's decision is informed by more ideas, and novel solutions and insights may emerge from the discussion. A group's scrutiny may also find and correct errors that may go unnoticed by a lone individual. Biases, however, can introduce inaccuracy into the decisions made by groups during face-to-face deliberations. The more rhetorically forceful members of the group may convince others to adopt their position, more through force of argument than through rational persuasion. Members may feel uncomfortable expressing their position in the group context, particularly when they are relatively new to the group and find that they disagree with what seems to be the group's emerging consensus. Members may also be so deferent to those with more authority in the group that they do not air dissenting views. To counter these negative group processes, the originators of Delphi recommended surveying members of the group individually, before any deliberations occurred, to capture their views before they were influenced by others in the group.

### Using the Delphi Method

The Delphi method was initially used for forecasting trends—particularly technological developments—and assessing the relative importance of alternatives. The Delphi method is particularly well suited to handling ill-formed problems, ones that cannot be solved by a systematic review of the available data or the application of a rational decision-making method that will identify the best or most satisfying solution. A group may wish, for example, to identify the economic changes that may result from global environmental and political events; set national priorities for the next decade; explore ways to improve health care; find and rank the causes of employee dissatisfaction; and set

budgetary initiatives. Given the enormity of these issues, the group may begin the process by using a Delphi method to narrow the issues and identify tentative solutions.

The Delphi coordinator would begin the process by developing a short list of questions on the topic and then gathering the answers of a carefully selected group of respondents. Responses are then pooled and communicated back to the respondents, who are asked to restate their responses to the original items, comment on others' responses, or respond to new questions that emerged as important in the first round of surveying. This process is repeated until a solution is reached.

Delphi procedures vary considerably from this basic formula, but most include these basic elements. The method is a highly structured one, for it requires a coordinator who selects the respondents, designs the survey questions, collects the data from respondents, and develops each interim summary and report. By design, respondents usually do not know who else is in the Delphi group. Delphi is a group procedure, but it avoids face-to-face group discussion and deliberation to encourage openness and a free-wheeling flow of ideas. Delphi is also an asynchronous and geographically dispersed decision method, for the respondents respond when they can, at different times, rather than at the same time and in the same place (such as a conference room table).

Delphi is also an iterative procedure in that the question-answer process is repeated several times. On the first assessment, participants list their own solutions to the questions posed, but their responses are summarized by the coordinator, who then feeds the information back to the group. The group members cannot directly discuss any issues or ideas raised in the first round, but they can at this point amend their original answers or offer new points and insights. As this process is repeated, a consensus emerges, and in some cases, participants may be asked to vote on the validity of the conclusions that emerge. The coordinator may stop the process after only one iteration if a solution emerges quickly, but complex, unclear problems usually require many more iterations.

Group composition is a critical determinant of the success of Delphi. In most cases, a Delphi group includes between 5 and 20 respondents because the responses of too many respondents

can be difficult to summarize for subsequent iterations. Originally, the process called for surveying experts who had different opinions on the issue but had neither the time nor the inclination to meet in a traditional face-to-face meeting. If, however, generalizability is desired, then the coordinator should use proper sampling procedures so that the results are representative of the views of those beyond the Delphi group itself. Moreover, and as with most group methods, the quality of the results will be determined by the involvement and motivation of the members. If respondents do not take the time to respond diligently and thoughtfully, then the Delphi will yield little useful information.

### Advantages and Limitations

As a performance technique, Delphi can be very usefully applied when issues need clarification, when the opinions of a wide range of people are important, and when face-to-face meetings are impossible for the people whose input is required. The method also encourages a deep, reflective analysis of an issue because participants can take the time they need to consider the issue. Unlike a face-to-face deliberation, in which the discussion moves at a pace set by the collective, participants in a Delphi can respond after they have considered the issue fully.

The method is not without certain limitations. First, the project planners must clearly conceptualize the question they wish to answer; since the group members will be responding individually, they will not have the opportunity to clarify the question via discussion. The coordinators must therefore make certain that the questions posed are unambiguous so that each individual is responding to the same set of assumptions. Coordinators must also avoid phrasing their questions in a way that might bias the responses of the group members. Second, because it involves repeated assessment of members' opinions via surveys, a Delphi is, as originally conceived, a relatively slow procedure. Time and effort were needed for the organizer to write and send out the surveys, collect responses, and generate the next round of questions. Furthermore, if respondents were not motivated to complete and return the questionnaire, then the process broke down completely.

Despite these drawbacks, the limited evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of Delphi suggests that the technique is more effective than an unstructured problem-solving session. The method is particularly effective when the group has the opportunity to meet in later rounds of the process to deliberate in a face-to-face situation. Also, technology offers some solutions to these drawbacks. The Delphi method was developed as a paper-and-pencil technique; the coordinator developed the questions, mailed them to respondents, respondents mailed back their responses, and the coordinator developed the summative report before starting the next iteration. Modern Delphi methods use computer-based group support systems to coordinate the process.

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*See also* Brainstorming; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Process Gain and Loss; Social Comparison Theory

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## DEPERSONALIZATION

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*Depersonalization* is a concept developed by self-categorization theorist John Turner and his colleagues in the 1980s to refer to the process of thinking of the self at a particular time as a group member rather than as a unique individual. Depersonalization can be seen as a process of stereotyping, but unlike other forms of stereotyping related to perceiving other people as group members, it involves self-stereotyping. To put it another way, depersonalization is the transformation from thinking of oneself as “I” or “me” to “we” or “us.”

*Self-categorization* theorists believe that depersonalization underlies all group behavior, ranging from helping behavior to violent and brutal conduct such as genocide. It is argued that none of these phenomena is possible without people coming to see themselves as members of groups.

Depersonalization is a vitally important concept with an unfortunate name. Depersonalization does not refer to a loss of self but to a change in the self at a particular time, that is, from seeing oneself as an individual with individual attributes, opinions, and so on to seeing oneself as a group member who shares attributes, opinions, and indeed a social identity and is therefore in these ways identical to or interchangeable with fellow group members. Depersonalization is thus very different from the concept of *deindividuation* developed by Philip Zimbardo and colleagues, which involves a loss of individuality, or to the concept of *dehumanization*, which relates to perceptions of other people as nonpeople. This entry describes the process and provides some examples.

### How It Works

Depersonalization is a consequence of the salience of a social category or group identity, in the sense that depersonalization takes place as a consequence of a particular group or social category membership becoming salient (psychologically switched on or activated). For example, when the social category of parent is salient (as in a meeting of parents at a school in order to seek government funding), it is likely that people will have a depersonalized self-perception; that is, they will perceive themselves as more similar to, and to a certain extent interchangeable with, other parents.

In such situations there is likely to be a shared perception of common goals (e.g., improving learning conditions, organizing sporting or social events for children) and normatively valued ways to achieve these goals. Alternatively, in situations in which the social category of parent is not salient, the same people will tend to think of themselves as individuals. The term *depersonalization* has been used in a related but different sense by Michael Hogg and colleagues (e.g., in *uncertainty-identity theory*) to reflect the way in which the perception of self and others is captured in terms of the relevant context-specific category prototype.

Self-categorization theory argues that the depersonalization of self-perception is the basic process underlying group phenomena such as social stereotyping, group cohesiveness, ethnocentrism, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective action, shared norms, and social influence processes. Therefore, in all situations in which people come to think and act together as a group, the process of depersonalization is believed to take place.

### Some Examples

To understand what depersonalization is and is not, it is useful to consider a range of examples. Let us take a chilling but familiar example of extreme forms of collective action. The atrocities committed on September 11, 2001, by Islamic militants who were prepared to commit suicide to maximize the death and destruction they wrought on America (and many visitors from other countries) is an example of depersonalization. The self-categorization analysis of this situation is that the people flying planes into buildings were not acting as individuals but as members of a group in conflict with Americans (and others), and the extent of this depersonalization was so great that these people were prepared to die for their cause while killing others.

Lest it be assumed that this process is wholly destructive and negative, bear in mind that hundreds of emergency service workers also willingly placed themselves in the utmost danger to rescue trapped victims (broadly speaking, members of their American ingroup) from the burning towers. The deaths of these emergency workers can also be explained in terms of depersonalization.

To take a less violent but equally pressing issue, the success of the campaign to halt global warming also depends (according to self-categorization theory) on depersonalization. To the extent that people come to see themselves not as individuals, and not even as citizens of nations or residents of towns, but as human beings who together share a planet (i.e., they “think global”), they are more likely to act (locally) to reduce carbon emissions. A similar idea can be seen in the work on *recategorization* or *common ingroup identity* by John Dovidio, Samuel Gaertner, and colleagues in relation to prejudice reduction.

In the work of Stephen Reicher and colleagues, depersonalization is held to explain instances of collective action such as crowd behavior at a political rally. Mass behavior (many people doing the same thing at the same time, perhaps even in different situations) is difficult to explain in terms of the individual needs, values, or motivations of the many different people involved. Depersonalization is offered as an explanation of the way people not only come to see a cause as their cause (and as an expression of their values and beliefs) but also as an explanation of the way in which appropriate conduct or forms of action are rapidly agreed on (e.g., that a protest should be peaceful).

There are instances in which depersonalization can be confused with individual self-perceptions and processes. The actions of people trapped in a burning building who trample others to death are sometimes interpreted as collective or mob action when they are more properly understood as efforts for self-preservation. If the people trapped in the burning building were genuinely acting in a depersonalized manner, they would be more likely to seek to rescue the other people than to harm them.

The salience of a categorization does not inevitably lead to depersonalization and interchangeability with other group members. In a nightclub, for example, where heterosexual men and women scan the room for attractive potential partners, gender is a highly salient category, and men and women perceive clear differences between those categories. It would be wrong to suggest, though, that men in those circumstances typically see themselves as interchangeable with other men or that women see themselves as interchangeable with other women, but both these things can become possible (perhaps following a conflict between men and women).

Depersonalization is also important for understanding the phenomena of stereotyping and racism, in which people subject members of particular ethnic, cultural, or religious groups to unfavorable treatment on the basis of negative beliefs about those groups. To take an example, attacks on highly identifiable Muslim women increased significantly after September 11, 2001, as non-Muslim Americans began to see all Muslims as responsible for the atrocities that had occurred. As these examples demonstrate, the concept of depersonalization can help explain extreme forms of racism without

resorting to the pathology of certain individuals as an explanation. Depersonalization seems to present in collective behavior that is regarded as both socially desirable and undesirable.

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*See also* Categorization; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects Stereotyping; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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## DESEGREGATION

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*Desegregation* is a political and social process designed to end and reverse the undesirable effects of racial segregation by creating a more balanced representation of members of different groups. Racial segregation, prevalent throughout the world, occurs in many areas of social life, such as schools, workplaces, the military, and housing. In the United States, attempts to combat it centered on school desegregation, which in turn generated considerable social and political upheaval. Because most research on desegregation focuses on school desegregation of Blacks in the United States, that is the main focus in this entry. Specifically, the entry first reviews recent U.S. policy changes that deal with de facto segregation and patterns of resegregation in schools. It then examines school desegregation effects on academic achievement and intergroup relations.

The fight for desegregation of American schools began after realization that segregated Black and White schools created unequal opportunities for Black students. As a result of segregation, Black achievement suffered and relations between the two groups worsened. In infancy, we learn to simplify and categorize people into those belonging to our group (i.e., ingroup) and those belonging to some other group (i.e., outgroup). Simultaneously, we come to prefer our ingroup, while attributing negative stereotypes to outgroups. Furthermore, we treat ingroup members as individuals, whereas we tend to see outgroup members as a homogeneous social category. Desegregation is based on the belief and scientific finding that segregation perpetuates our tendency to ethnically categorize people and discriminate against outgroup members.

### Historical Overview and Policy Changes

Multiethnic societies face many challenges. Although their subgroups often depend on one another for survival, these societies are plagued by intergroup rivalries, and their histories are marked by struggles for equality. Simultaneously, each group needs to preserve its own identity and even independence. As group members gravitate toward their ingroup, while distancing themselves from outgroups, de facto segregation emerges. Occasionally, segregation becomes the law (i.e., de jure segregation), as when Blacks were excluded from White schools in the United States. Although met with harsh criticism and opposition, the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, sought to end and even reverse harmful effects attributed to de jure segregation.

*Brown v. Board of Education* initiated both voluntary and court-ordered attempts to end de jure segregation. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by attempts to end de facto segregation. Specifically, districts voluntarily initiated desegregation, explicitly adopting race-conscious student assignment policies and using either a weighted lottery or a system of tiebreakers to increase enrollments of either Whites or non-Whites. In Seattle, priority was given to students with a sibling in their school of choice. Racial tiebreakers were applied when a school's composition differed more than 15% from that of the district. Thus, in

oversubscribed schools wherein the percentage of Whites exceeded their percentage in the district, Black students received priority, whereas a White student was assigned to a second-choice or lower-choice school. Closeness to school was considered next; the final tiebreaker was a lottery. Other districts, such as Jefferson County, Kentucky, adopted similar systems.

Adoption of race-conscious student assignment policies soon led school districts to face legal hurdles, typically because race was used to determine admissions. Higher education settings made race one among many individualized factors that determined admissions—considerations often not possible in K–12 schools, where admissions cannot be based on prior achievement to the same extent as in higher education settings. Opponents of race-conscious assignment policies noted that these policies counter a color-blind ideal, perpetuating instead the idea that race matters most.

The courts shifted between favoring and opposing race-conscious student assignment policies. Challenges to race-conscious assignment policies succeeded initially. Over time, however, courts began favoring them. Thus, in two influential cases combined in *Parents Involved in Community Schools* (Seattle and Jefferson County), wherein mothers of two White boys challenged their district's rejection of their son's choice of school, both the district courts and circuit courts of appeals ruled that voluntary race-conscious assignment policies not only serve, but are also narrowly tailored to meet, governmental interests. This change in view followed the influential 2003 *Grutter* case, wherein the Supreme Court rejected a challenge to the University of Michigan Law School's affirmative action policy and affirmed *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978. The Court ruled that race can serve as one of many criteria that determine K–12 and college admission decisions. Subsequently, however, the plaintiffs in *Parents Involved in Community Schools*—arguing that higher education contexts differ from K–12 schools—appealed to the Supreme Court, which reversed the application of *Grutter* to lower-level K–12 schools and ruled instead that the Seattle and Jefferson County race-conscious student assignment policies violated the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. This decision ended struggles against de facto

segregation and limited the domain of *Grutter* to higher education contexts.

At the same time, over the past 16 years, courts lifted more than 35 court-imposed desegregation orders by granting school districts *unitary status*, which usually meant a return to neighborhood schools. The landmark 1991 *Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell* and 1992 *Freeman v. Pitts* cases clarified qualifications for unitary status as being (a) compliance with the desegregation order for a limited time, (b) elimination of segregation to the extent practicable, and (c) displayed commitment to the district's constitutional obligations. The principle of *schooling closer to home*, which guided this process of a return to neighborhood schools, leads, unfortunately, to resegregation. In Oklahoma City, the percentage of Whites in Black schools decreased from 34% in 1988 to 21% in 2000—a pattern typical of other unitary districts.

Although some think a return to neighborhood schools will improve their quality by strengthening community attachment and increasing parental involvement and social capital, examination of Nashville public schools showed that racially isolated Black schools were located in zones with few assets and numerous liabilities: impoverishment, with 43% of the residents lacking a high school diploma (compared with 15% in neighborhoods of integrated schools); high crime rates; and a lack of libraries, hospitals, and higher education institutions. Predominately White and racially integrated schools, on the other hand, boasted more affluent neighborhoods.

### Consequences for Achievement

The adequacy of these policies is best evaluated after their effects are considered. Recent shifts from desegregated schooling to growing resegregation would not be important had desegregation failed to improve academic achievement. Indeed, according to a National Academy of Education report, earlier studies and both narrative accounts and a summary of six meta-analytic reviews showed little evidence of benefit. More recent evidence, however, seems more positive. Those who attend integrated schools are more likely to graduate from high school; attend and graduate from college; have higher and more realistic occupational

aspirations and obtain better paying jobs; and exhibit a smaller educational achievement gap. A National Academy of Education committee resolved this discrepancy in outcomes by suggesting that the larger, state-level databases of these later studies increased their sensitivity to beneficial effects.

The magnitude and persistence of desegregation benefits have been debated. Narrative reviews and meta-analyses suggest that voluntary plans benefit Black achievement more than mandatory plans and that younger attendance at desegregated schools yields more benefit. Furthermore, according to the National Academy of Education report, desegregation does not affect achievement of Whites.

Experts argue that achievement differences between minority students attending segregated and desegregated schools reflect differential funding. Until recently, local property taxes funded public schools, enabling districts in wealthier communities to receive more funding and spend more money per student. These disparities also occur within districts. Schools with higher proportions of poor students receive less funding from local sources. Race is marginally related to local funding, which on a local level means that minority schools receive less funding than White schools. Making all this particularly problematic, higher spending promotes achievement. Desegregated schools are presumably wealthier than segregated inner city public schools because districts typically achieve desegregation by busing minority students into existing predominantly White schools. Thus, patterns of local funding perpetuate disparities in wealth and contribute to the achievement gap between inner city and desegregated schools.

Nonetheless, achievement levels of White students in integrated, affluent suburban schools exceed those of their minority counterparts. Contributing to this gap is that these so-called integrated schools, even when balanced in percentages of White and Black students, remain segregated on a more fundamental level—with both outside and inside forces operating to create within-school segregation. First, Blacks, and perhaps other minority students, start at a disadvantage. More White than Black children were enrolled in preschools by 1991. Their home environments likely differed. In integrated affluent suburban schools, although median family income is \$80,000, that of White

students exceeds that of Blacks. Minority students often live in neighborhoods with fewer material advantages, lower family property values, and fewer books and computers in homes.

These differential starting achievement levels promote within-school segregation. To students' misfortune, instead of offering remedial instruction, schools overwhelmingly place minorities in lower tracks, taught by less qualified teachers who, like the rest of the society, have lower expectations for minority students. Moreover, Black students continue their struggle for equal education even after high school. For example, their ability to understand racism and deal with it predicts their achievement in colleges and universities.

Given these considerations, the persisting achievement gap is not surprising. In 2001 the National Center for Educational Statistics found only 1 in 100 Black 17-year-olds able to read and interpret technical data, compared with 1 in 12 Whites. After high school, Black students' reading and math skills match those of White eighth graders. In the 2000 U.S. census, 72.3% of Blacks older than age 24 had completed high school (compared with 83.6% of Whites), and Blacks were only half as likely as Whites to have completed a 4-year college—a difference that holds when controlling for prior test scores and socioeconomic factors. Moreover, standardized test scores and high school graduation rates are even lower in predominately minority schools.

Economic disadvantages among minorities in general and academic tracking in particular have undermined effective desegregation policy. Though it is tempting to blame school boards, schools, and historical and economic patterns for the policy failure, blame also rests on prejudicial attitudes. Burdens of desegregation have often fallen on Black and Latino students. White students frequently have not enrolled when reassigned to Black schools—a resistance that has continued even in high-performing schools with affluent students. Private schools further contribute to segregation. Consistent with *symbolic racism theory*, wherein the negative White racial attitudes that are formed in early childhood are later covertly expressed by opposing busing or affirmative action programs, parents exhibit exaggerated negative reactions to the system-produced negative characteristics of public schools—such as discipline

problems, insufficiently challenging academics, and too few extracurricular opportunities—to justify enrollment of their children in White private schools.

### Consequences for Intergroup Relations

Although initiated primarily to offer equal educational opportunities, school desegregation also impacts intergroup relations. In particular, school racial composition affects intergroup friendships, conflicts, and comfort. *Contact theory* posits that in addition to quantity of racial contact, equal status, authorities supportive of intergroup contact, and cooperative endeavors to achieve common goals augment development of intergroup friendship and reduce conflict. Meta-analytic evidence clearly shows that contact reduces prejudice. Furthermore, this benefit generalizes beyond those in the immediate situation, meaning that integrated schools improve attitudes not only toward outgroup students attending them but also toward other members of those outgroups. This contact effect is particularly strong for children and college students, further emphasizing integrated schooling's importance. Although equal intergroup status, support for intergroup contact by authorities in the situation, and intergroup cooperation toward common goals further augment contact's benefits, contact also reduces prejudice between groups lacking these conditions, perhaps because it induces liking, reduces threat and anxiety, or a combination.

Critics sometimes attribute prejudice-reducing contact effects to selection bias, arguing that unprejudiced people are drawn to contact, whereas prejudiced persons avoid it. Yet experiments and studies that allowed no choice of avoiding contact show particularly beneficial effects. Emphasizing the importance of more personalized contact, White students randomly assigned to roommates of different ethnicities were both more comfortable when interacting with minorities and more likely to develop interracial friendships than were Whites assigned to same-race roommates. Furthermore, programs that encourage cross-racial understanding without providing opportunity for intergroup contact are less effective than those programs providing contact.

Beneficial contact effects are evident by age 3. Whereas Anglo-British children attending majority

White schools favored their ingroup over the outgroup and judged cross-race dyads as less likely to be friends than same-race dyads, those in more diverse schools did not similarly differentiate same-race and cross-race dyads. Childhood contact is particularly important in that prejudice develops early and often becomes resistant to change.

In addition to contact theory, two other theories bear on the development of both friendships and conflicts in multiracial settings. *Macrostructural theory* argues that racially heterogeneous settings are conducive to the development of both many interracial conflicts and many interracial friendships. *Group threat theory* argues that interracial conflict is determined by the relative size of the groups, with equal-sized groups having more overt interracial conflict than numerically disproportionate groups.

Supporting macrostructural theory, a study that measured students' and teachers' perceptions of both interracial friendliness and interracial conflict showed greater schoolwide racial heterogeneity to be linked to both increased interracial friendliness and conflict. Yet tracking, which necessarily reduces within-classroom heterogeneity, was associated with decreased friendliness but increased conflict. Though consistent with contact theory, this conflict effect counters macrostructural theory. Support from authorities in the setting, as measured by schools' proportion of minority teachers, was associated with reduced conflict but was unrelated to friendliness. Consistent with much research, cooperative interracial contact while working on interdependent goals increased friendliness and reduced conflict. When schools required more group work, students perceived more interracial friendliness, and teachers reported less conflict. However, the association between integrated extracurricular activities and reduced conflict did not extend to friendliness. Consistent with group threat theory, lessened friendliness characterized biracial schools with equal-sized groups of students, but contrariwise, their teachers did not perceive more conflict. Students in small racial minorities were more likely to select friends from their own group.

Besides influencing friendships and conflicts, contact influences one's feelings of comfort when one is interacting with outgroup students. Furthermore, racial composition further moderates



comfort. For Blacks, a higher percentage of White students was associated with increased comfort when interacting with other-race students. All other racial or ethnic subgroups displayed a curvilinear relationship, with higher percentages of Whites associated with greater comfort only to a point. The points beyond which subgroups associated higher White percentages with decreased comfort in their intergroup interactions are as follows: Asians, 39%; Latinos, 33%; and Whites, 44%. Thus, when students attend diverse schools wherein Whites are a numerical minority, they are more comfortable in their interactions with outgroup students. Together, these findings indicate that the relationship between heterogeneity and friendliness is curvilinear.

In sum, desegregated schooling benefits intergroup relations. Greater opportunity for interracial school contact increases interracial friendships. These benefits have been shown to be long-lived in that desegregation becomes perpetuated later in life via the increased interracial interaction among adults who attended desegregated schools and their more effective subsequent functioning in desegregated settings. Desegregated schooling augments the development and stability of interracial friendships for both minority and majority groups, leads to more positive intergroup attitudes both in the workplace and in general, contributes to greater civic engagement, and enables students to acquire racial acceptance. White students who attend integrated schools are more tolerant and less fearful of Black peers than are White students attending segregated schools. Likewise, White students assigned Black roommates express more positive attitudes to affirmative action policies. Even though these effects apply to students of all racial groups, recent research shows that contact is less effective at reducing intergroup bias among minority than among majority group members. The prejudiced attitudes expressed by majorities during the contact likely lead minorities to experience intergroup contact more negatively. Researchers need to further investigate this finding and seek ways to improve contact experiences of minorities.

### Conclusion

School desegregation faced enormous challenges from the start and was never fully implemented.

Perceptions that it had failed encouraged courts and policy makers to abandon voluntary race-conscious student assignment policies, creating a return to neighborhood schooling. The racial achievement gap persists and temporally varies, having narrowed between 1970 and 1980 but widened by 1988. Desegregated schools, though deficient, are better than inner-city public schools or neighborhood schools. Integrated schooling better minority achievement and intergroup relations, making the return to segregated or neighborhood schools problematic. Research on implementation of desegregation in other countries, and in other domains, such as the workplace and housing, is needed.

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*See also* Affirmative Action; Civil Rights Legislation; Civil Rights Movement; Intergroup Contact Theory; Racism; Tokenism

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## DEUTSCH, MORTON (1920– )

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Morton Deutsch is a *conflict theorist*. He has made sizable contributions to the body of knowledge on interpersonal and intergroup conflict, social injustice and oppression, and trust and threat.

Deutsch was born in 1920. He completed his undergraduate training at City College of New York, took a master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania, and earned his PhD from the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1948, where he was one of the last students of Kurt Lewin. From 1948 to 1956, he was on the faculty of New York University. He left there to spend 8 years as a researcher at Bell Labs. In 1958, he became a licensed therapist. In 1963, he joined the faculty of Teachers College at Columbia. He retired from Columbia in 1990, but as of this writing remains active in the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR) at Columbia, which he founded. This entry provides an overview of his research.

### Cooperation and Competition

Deutsch's impact was immediate. His doctoral dissertation contrasted the performance of cooperative groups (in which all members received the same reward for an output) and competitive groups (in which magnitude of reward was determined by each individual's contribution to the effort). He found the cooperative group members to be communicative, helpful, friendly, and supportive; oriented toward achievement; able to reach consensus; capable of coordinating efforts; and highly productive. By contrast, competitive group members were obstructionist, disrespectful of others' opinions, and inattentive; had little sense of "we-ness" and little interest in supporting others; were unconfident; frequently lacked consensus; and were uncoordinated and unproductive.

This result led Deutsch to ask how to instigate cooperation within a group. He concluded that *trust* is a key prerequisite. He defined trust informally as "confidence that [one] will find what is desired rather than what is feared" (*Resolution of Conflict*, 1973, p. 148) and formally as the subjective probability of a positive outcome occurring exceeding the subjective probability of a negative event occurring. Immediacy of the outcome also impacts trust—a positive outcome that is very likely to occur, but not for a long time, is unlikely to induce much trust, for example.

If the target of trust is another person, one must try to determine the person's intentions, and the reliability of those intentions, before assigning probabilities to the positive and negative outcomes. Perceived reliability is a function of the person's motivation to perform the intention; the person's commitment to the behavior; the extent to which

the behavior is clearly focused on a target; and the extent to which the desired outcome can be produced only by that one specific behavior.

Under this framework, a person who states an intention to donate money for a good cause can be trusted to follow through on the intention if the money is needed immediately (motivation) and if the cause is important to the person (commitment); is directed toward one specific goal (focus); and needs only monetary support, with no other resources being relevant (specificity). Failure to meet any of these conditions (e.g., the money will be applied to a diffuse set of endeavors) will decrease trust that the person will act.

After developing this model, Deutsch executed some studies examining the conditions under which interpersonal trust is more and less likely to develop. His primary focus was on individual differences and the extent to which they can predict differences in trusting. He found, for example, that highly authoritarian people are less trusting than low-authoritarian people. His notion of *motivational orientation* had even more impact. Deutsch argued that people enter into an interaction with an overarching goal for the outcomes. While many such goals can be stated, three dominate: cooperation, or maximization of outcomes for all individuals; competition, or maximization of the difference between own and others' outcomes; and individualism, or maximization of own outcomes with no concern for others.

Deutsch found cooperators to always be quite trusting; individualists to be trusting when the intended behavior had to be publicly announced or when participants could interact with each other; and competitors to never really be trusting, even if there was public commitment to an intended behavior (although this intervention was most likely to produce some cooperation in competitors) or opportunities for communication (especially harmful; competitors either declined the chance to interact or used the experience to send misleading messages). Motivational orientation has since become a standard variable in the study of *cooperative interaction*.

### The Trucking Game

Deutsch, in collaboration with Robert Krauss, also developed a new paradigm for studying negotiation

behavior. The Trucking Game pits two individuals against each other as owners of rival shipping companies. The opponents are located on opposite sides of a space, and they must move a loaded truck from a warehouse to a delivery site on the other side of the space. The trucks thus travel in opposite directions. Individual profit from the business is a function of how quickly the load gets delivered.

Each person has the option of using either a private, winding road that takes a while to navigate (and hence returns a small profit) or a short, public single-lane road that returns a large profit. The conflict is that if both drivers decide to use the single-lane road at the same time, they will meet in the middle, causing a delay in delivery, and hence a decline in profits, while the conflict is resolved. The optimal strategy is to alternate use of the public and private roads, and an interesting question is how frequently individuals discover that solution.

Deutsch, however, added another component that became the defining feature of this paradigm: At each end of the public road are gates, and each driver controls the gate nearest his or her warehouse. Each person thus has the ability to make the public road nonfunctional for the other. One could, for example, close one's gate after the other person has already started down the public road, forcing him or her to return to his or her warehouse and use the private road, which would produce a loss of money on that round. The gate thus constitutes a threat, and Deutsch was especially interested in how threat impacts cooperation.

In his original studies, neither, one, or both of the truckers had the ability to close a gate. These conditions constitute no, unilateral, and bilateral threat, respectively. The results were striking: In the no-threat condition, both parties ended with net gains; in the bilateral-threat condition, both ended with net losses; and in the unilateral-threat condition, both also ended with net losses, although the losses were not as severe as in the bilateral-threat condition, and the threatener incurred less of a loss than the threatened. The key point, though, is that an individual who could harm with no fear of retaliation nonetheless lost money. Deutsch's conclusion was that it is better to have a weapon than not (and if your opponent has one, it is better for you not to have one), but it is best of all for neither party to be armed.

### Insights

Deutsch's further research into cooperation and competition led him to two important insights. The first he termed his *crude law* of interpersonal relations: The phenomena that result from cooperation or competition themselves produce cooperation or competition. For example, cooperation produces trust, and cooperation results from trust. The law is important because it explains how to produce cooperation or competition rather than what happens when cooperative or competitive behavior occurs. In this way, it complements his original work. Deutsch labeled it a *crude law* because it deals with cause-effect relationships only in passing; its purpose is instead to describe underlying influences (Deutsch himself described it as *genotypical*).

Deutsch's second insight dealt with the nature of *justice*. He came to believe that the negative effects of competition were endemic of a larger societal problem of unjust resource distribution. In his view, cooperation produces people who are good group members, and the hallmark of cooperation is a just system of reward. From the crude law, it follows that rewarding people justly will lead to enhanced cooperation, which in turn makes people more group regarding. Deutsch thus argued that equality or need-based reward schemes will be associated with harmonious relations, and equity-based rewarding will be associated with impersonal relations. Implementing fairer reward schemes would, then, minimize societal conflict. He believed, however, that there are strong social pressures against acknowledging the existence of injustice, and without such acknowledgment, attempts to bring forth new schemes are unlikely to succeed. Deutsch thus called for research into techniques for counteracting these pressures.

The remainder of his career was dedicated to this goal, with a particular emphasis on the efficacy of education. Indeed, the ICCCR was created not only as a place for cross-disciplinary collaboration on issues of conflict and justice but also as an outreach organ for training others in conflict resolution and enhancement of social justice.

Craig D. Parks

See also Cooperation and Competition; Distributive Justice; Justice; Just World Hypothesis; Lewin, Kurt; Trust

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## DEVIANCE

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The term *deviance* describes situations in which people violate social rules and conventions. However, there may be many motives and causes for engaging in deviant behavior, and there may also be causes for defining other people's behavior as deviant. This entry reviews sociological and psychological perspectives on deviance.

### Sociological Perspectives

Sociologists have analyzed how social order is sustained both in society as a whole through laws, institutions, and distribution of wealth, and through microsociological mechanisms of personal relationships, roles, and influence. Most everyday actions, such as buying and selling items, arriving for work in the morning, driving a car, and greeting people, are governed by clear social rules. People's understanding and following of these rules are essential for the smooth running of society.

### Anomie

Émile Durkheim viewed deviance as a *social fact*, an inevitable part of how society functions. He argued that deviance is a basis for change and innovation, and it is also a way of defining or clarifying important social norms. One reason that people engage in deviant behavior may be a state of *anomie*, which is the absence of clear social norms. For people to understand what these norms are, the rules need to be tested occasionally. As an example, among stock market speculators, the boundary between clever dealing and improper dealing is defined by laws. Most of the time, however, inappropriate behavior is likely to be regulated by informal social processes. The groups surrounding these individuals are likely to put pressure on them to behave in line with relevant norms.

Robert Merton's theory of anomie proposed that deviance is often a response to situations in which goals cannot be achieved through conventional behavior. In democratic societies, people from wealthier, better connected, and more privileged circumstances have easier routes to personal success and prosperity. When others realize that routes to achievement are blocked, they experience *strain* and are likely to turn to tactics that will help them get past the blockages. Merton regarded deviance as only one of several possible reactions to frustration, and his ideas have much in common with other theories (see *relative deprivation*, *social identity theory*, and *system justification theory*). Merton proposed five types of reaction: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Both innovation and rebellion are forms of deviance. Whereas innovation is likely to involve breaking rules to achieve normative objectives (e.g., stealing to become rich), rebellion involves challenging the rules or objectives themselves (e.g., campaigns to legalize abortion or criminalize certain types of drug use or protests such as the march in which more than a million people gathered in London to oppose Britain's involvement in the Iraq war).

Various types of social control inhibit deviance. Primary groups such as families, work groups, or teams and close social groups may control deviance through direct or immediate sanctions over their members. If a child is disobedient, a parent can respond immediately, just as a sports referee can immediately exclude a cheating player. In close-knit communities, there is a high level of primary control, so if a member breaks an important rule, that member is in significant danger of exclusion from the group. In some cultures, the family reputations of people may be put at risk if a member engages in a criminal or shaming activity. Extreme reactions such as so-called honor killing of women for committing adultery, or even for having been raped, highlight the fact that deviance is not easily defined in terms of a specific behavior. Instead, deviance is defined by the formal or informal rules imposed by other people in the social context in which the behavior occurs. Social control is also exerted through secondary groups that are more abstract, such as organizations that use formal power and regulations, as well as through membership in larger

social categories such as gender, which are associated with wider social norms. Travis Hirschi, analyzing the causes of delinquency, proposed that social control is based on bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

### *Labeling*

Edwin Lemert distinguished between primary and secondary deviance. *Primary deviance* involves relatively trivial, but generally tolerated, departures from rules. For example, people occasionally take items of office stationery (pens, sticky tape, etc.) for personal use. When committing such acts, most people feel able to sustain the idea that they are still honest and law abiding, acting within the bounds of their roles, and that these acts are minor exceptions. Linked to these forms of primary deviance, sociologists also observe that societies allow certain *norms of evasion*. For example, drivers on freeways often travel a little faster than the official speed limit. It is widely accepted that breaking the limit will be tolerated, but only up to a point. These norms provide fuzzy boundaries. People who show that they conform to most rules are usually given a little freedom to bend some rules, but if authorities so choose, they can impose the rules strictly.

*Secondary deviance* describes a situation in which a person has been publicly identified as deviant, such as by being classified as mentally unstable or criminal. Howard Becker argued, on the basis of his research on marijuana smokers, that deviant behavior is simply behavior that people label as deviant. *Labeling theory* emphasizes that being labeled can generate a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby others behave toward the labeled person in ways that confirm or reinforce the label. A person who is labeled finds himself or herself unable to escape. To understand deviance, we have to also understand why behavior gets labeled as deviant. Critics of labeling theory have argued that it underplays the responsibility of the deviant for his or her own behavior. It is clear that some behavior is so reprehensible or so unusual that intervention is required, such as to protect potential victims (e.g., of school massacres, pedophilia, lynchings).

The gradation from deviance that is merely labeled and deviance that may objectively be a risk

to the group is illustrated by situations of ideological opposition. For example, during the Cold War, different sides applied completely different views of what behavior and indeed which opinions and values were acceptable. During the McCarthy era of the 1950s, the Soviet Union regarded capitalism as despicable, and the United States regarded Communism to be criminal. On both sides, some individuals who sympathized with the opposite side shared information or secrets that posed real threats to the security of each. These individuals were tried and sometimes executed as spies. Regardless of a person's beliefs, merely being labeled as a Communist in the United States meant being at great risk. Similar divergences between Islamic fundamentalism and Western democracy pervaded the period of the U.S. presidency of George W. Bush.

The focus of social control over deviance shifts to different individuals and groups depending on the broader social and historical context. For example, in the 1960s, surveys showed that people in the United States felt greater distance from homosexual and lesbian people than they did from alcoholics, prostitutes, former convicts, and former mental patients. Since then, homosexuality has generally shifted from being viewed as being highly criminal to being viewed as noncriminal.

Sociologists distinguish between deviance at different levels of analysis. Some deviance departs from cultural norms and values, such as women in Catholic countries who decide to use birth control. Other deviance is defined in terms of individual pathology (e.g., psychosis, extreme neurosis). Some deviance is expressed by individuals within a group (for example, a student who wears unusual clothes), and other deviance can be expressed by a group within society (for example a gang or a cult). The idea of *deviant subcultures* is important because it highlights that groups can generate their own sets of norms, and people within those groups feel they are not deviant even though the group as a whole may be viewed as deviant by others.

### Psychological Perspectives

#### *Individual Propensity to Deviate*

Early psychological approaches to deviance emphasized the biological and psychodynamic roots of deviance. For example, theorists such as

William Sheldon argued that criminals had a particular (muscular) type of body shape. Although it is plausible that certain types of crime might require particular body shapes (e.g., a cat burglar may need to be athletic), it is not plausible that there is a generally criminal body type (stock market fraudsters come in all shapes and sizes). A great deal of research tried to predict criminality on the basis of personality traits (e.g., research by Hans Eysenck, who proposed that criminality resulted from high levels of psychoticism, extroversion, and neuroticism).

*Psychoanalytic theory* (e.g., the work of Sigmund Freud and Erich Fromm) emphasizes the role of *socialization*. This perspective argues that parents instill in their children a respect for rules and authority, represented by the superego. This superego is an internalized control system that motivates people to follow social rules, to respect law and order, and so on. That is, conformity is thought to be important for people's self-concepts. However, criminality can be viewed as a product of many forces aside from either biological factors or parental socialization practices. The absence of a stable home and the presence of negative socializing agents may play a role, but all these aspects of socialization may in turn be affected by other factors, such as poverty within the home and in the wider community. Approaches that focus on differences between individuals are useful when explaining why some people break rules more often than others do, but those approaches do not help explain why people are deviant in some situations rather than others, why people label others as deviant, or how they react toward deviant individuals.

Other perspectives on deviance include *evolutionary theory*, which argues that physically stigmatized (deviant) group members may receive hostile and exclusionary reactions from others because they pose a threat to survival of the group. Norbert Kerr has suggested that people may be sensitized to the possibility of being rejected because it has so many consequences for their physical and psychological well-being.

#### *Norms and Conformity Pressure*

The main thrust of social-psychological research into deviance has been on the way that (a) individual

deviants respond to group pressure and (b) groups respond to individual members who deviate from the group norms. Muzafer Sherif's experiments on norm formation in the 1930s illustrated that in ambiguous situations, people quickly form norms. In his *autokinetic effect* experiments, participants viewed an illusion in which an objectively stationary point of light in a dark room appears to move (possibly a consequence of eye movements). The light was shown on a series of trials, and participants were asked to estimate the distance moved on each trial. When people listened to judgments made by others, they quickly converged to make estimates within the same range. Dependency on others was also illustrated by Solomon Asch's conformity experiments. Participants were asked to say which one of a series of lines was the same length as a comparison line. When three confederates gave a unanimous incorrect answer, many of the genuine participants ignored what they could see and agreed with the confederates. These experiments illustrate the pressure to uniformity in groups. People feel that they should be in agreement, especially about the physical world.

Leon Festinger proposed that group uniformity pressure is based on the group's ambition to move toward particular goals (*group locomotion*) and the desire among group members to validate their opinions about the nonphysical world (*social reality*). The social reality function involves the process of both evaluating the accuracy of opinions and validating (confirming) the accuracy of those opinions. A group usually comprises people who are similar in important respects (e.g., sharing a religion, culture, leisure interest, or objective). When a member of the group differs from the modal opinions of others, the group's locomotion is impeded, and its sense of social reality is undermined. The group will therefore engage in communication to deal with the problem. Possible solutions are to evict the deviant from the group, to pressure the deviant to conform, or to change the group's opinion to agree with the deviant. Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander added two further reasons why groups desire uniformity: Uniformity helps define the group's boundaries and distinctiveness from other groups, and uniformity strengthens the cohesiveness of the group.

### *Minorities as Deviants*

An important criticism of Festinger's model is the assumption that people want to compare themselves with others who are similar. Contrary to that assumption, sometimes people prefer to compare with others who are dissimilar (worse) because doing so allows people to enhance their self-concept. People might also find dissimilarity useful because it allows them to contrast their own position with that of a rival or enemy. Equally fundamental is the assumption in Festinger's model that influence is likely to be unidirectional, namely, from the majority to the minority. Serge Moscovici proposed a theory of minority influence that explains why a deviant group member can change the majority opinion under some circumstances. Moscovici's *genetic* model proposes that any member of a group can potentially exert influence on others. Echoing Durkheim's theorizing, Moscovici has held that deviants play a key role in bringing about social change. To illustrate this, Moscovici and colleagues showed how judgments of whether physical stimuli (a blue slide) were blue or green could be influenced by a minority if the minority showed an incorrect (green) but consistent response. Moscovici identified that in these situations, even though the majority opinion is known (we generally agree what blue looks like), a consistent message from a minority can make us reconsider our judgments. Further research suggested that a minority group member's opinion has greater influence when the person combines his or her consistency on that particular opinion with flexibility (e.g., agreeing with the majority in opinions on other topics). Thus, in strong contrast to Festinger's ideas, Moscovici holds that groups progress and develop as a result of conflict. Whereas people succumb to normative influence from majorities (i.e., people simply conform without changing their private opinions), conflict from minorities makes groups reevaluate their ideas and perspectives and allows them to innovate.

### *Reactions to Deviant Group Members*

Given the potentially disruptive impact of a dissenting minority, it is not surprising that research also examines how people react toward deviant group members. One of the most widely reported studies was published in 1951 by Stanley Schachter.

He composed groups of 8 to 10 people, who had to reach agreement on the appropriate treatment or punishment for a delinquent. The groups included three confederates, one of whom conformed to the group's modal opinion, one of whom disagreed (the *deviate*), and one who gradually changed from the deviate to the modal opinion (the *slider*). Results showed that communication was directed more frequently toward the deviant than toward the other confederates and that the deviant was less likely than other confederates to be treated favorably. Subsequent evidence suggests that there may be a threshold effect with deviants. A deviant who exhibits the potential to change (to conform) is worthy of investment of time and effort because this change will reinforce the group. A deviant who is very extreme or whose opinion seems rooted in a more pervasive difference with the group is more likely to be ignored or rejected from the group altogether. This fits with research on minority influence showing that extreme minorities are less influential on the rest of the group than moderate minorities are.

An important question is how people make sense of deviant behavior within their group. John Levine and colleagues have shown that deviant members who shifted toward the majority opinion were viewed as seeking greater approval from the group whereas deviants who shifted away were viewed as being independent and assertive. The interpretation of behavior may also depend on other things in the context. For example, dissent in a group may be acceptable if it does not threaten the group's outcomes, but if it involves harm to the group (e.g., by reducing its rewards or by revealing important information to a rival group), it is likely to invite much harsher reactions. On the other hand, Edwin Hollander's research on idiosyncrasy credit shows that people who have shown loyalty to a group in the past may be permitted to dissent from the majority and to influence the majority. More recently, research has argued that some deviance might actually be normative, in the sense that group members will accept deviant views if those views are believed to be espoused in the interests or defense of the group.

### *Deviance in Intergroup Situations*

Deviant group members are also judged differently depending on the intergroup context. That is,

people may consider how differences between their own and other groups are affected by the presence of deviant individuals. José Marques and colleagues demonstrated a *black sheep effect* (see the entry titled Subjective Group Dynamics), whereby people derogate deviants in their own groups relatively more than deviants in other groups. This is thought to be motivated by people's desire to sustain a positive social identity. A deviant in the ingroup threatens the validity of social identity (based on the idea that *we* are right and we agree with one another). Dominic Abrams and colleagues also distinguished between two types of deviance in intergroup situations. *Antinorm deviance* describes a situation in which, when compared to the majority in a group, a group member expresses views that are relatively opposed to the member's own group and agrees with or supports an outgroup. *Pronorm deviance* is the situation in which a person shows more extreme endorsement of his or her own group and rejection of the outgroup (e.g., a fanatic). People tend to be more sensitive, and react more strongly, to antinorm deviants. An interesting consequence is that people are often positive toward outgroup members who are antinorm deviants. This is because such deviants lend credibility and support to the ingroup's social reality. The importance of social interaction in groups as a mechanism of social control is demonstrated by developmental psychology research. As young as 8 years of age, children seem to learn that groups expect their members to be loyal and conform, and these young children also recognize that ingroup deviants will be criticized. This understanding appears to be based on children's ability to take different social perspectives and also on actual experiences of belonging to a range of social groups.

### *Deviant Groups*

As noted earlier, whereas early research emphasized how groups expect and enforce loyalty and conformity, sometimes resulting in phenomena such as *groupthink*, they do not always derogate deviants. Some groups have norms that encourage originality and innovation, and others are themselves involved in challenging the status quo. These include deviant subcultures such as gangs, as well as groups that are in conflict over their rights or



resources. Early theories of crowd behavior (e.g., that of Gustave Le Bon) argued that people become more primitive when they are in a crowd, an idea echoed by Edward Diener's research on deindividuation in groups, showing that feeling anonymous and unidentifiable in a group can reduce self-regulation and constraint among the group members.

Although there is evidence that people may become more violent and extreme when they are in groups, it does not seem that this is always because they have lost self-control. Social identity theorists such as Stephen Reicher argue that groups may establish or develop a norm to confront authority or behave in extreme ways, and when people's group identity is salient, they follow these norms more closely (see the entries titled Referent Informational Influence Theory and Social Identity Theory). This position raises the question of who defines an act as deviant and highlights that deviance is frequently defined in relative (norm-violating) rather than absolute (lawbreaking) terms.

*Dominic Abrams*

*See also* Conformity; Deindividuation; Group Socialization; Idiosyncrasy Credit; Minority Influence; Norms; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Relative Deprivation; Social Identity Theory; Stigma; Subjective Group Dynamics; System Justification Theory

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## DISCRIMINATION

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*Discrimination* refers to the differential treatment of people because of the social groups to which they belong. In this definition, *differential treatment* refers to any observable differences in behavior toward people who belong to different groups. Discrimination may emerge in verbal or nonverbal behavior, involve positive or negative acts, and stem from an actor's benevolent or malevolent intent of which he or she is or is not aware. People can be discriminated against on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, age, nationality, immigrant and socioeconomic status, and many other bases. Discrimination, therefore, is said to occur when similarly qualified and/or behaving people are treated differently (e.g., receive different salaries, mentoring, eye contact), such that social group membership rather than individual attributes better explain differential treatment. Because social psychologists have studied discrimination against, as well as stereotypes about and prejudice toward, a variety of groups, we know that discrimination, representing differential treatment, is sometimes related to but is conceptually distinct from prejudice (one's feelings about a group) and stereotypes (one's beliefs about a group).

There is an important irony about discrimination, namely, that most of us value fairness but have the potential to discriminate (either individually or collectively). In fact, most of us would be

upset by the suggestion that we had discriminated against another person. To discriminate implies that we have judged a person unfairly on the basis of the groups to which he or she belongs rather than on the basis of his or her ability, skills, and/or character. Because, across cultures, people endorse egalitarian ideals, most people feel guilty and self-critical when confronted with evidence that their thoughts or behaviors violate ideals of fairness. As a result, images of the kind of person who discriminates against others are at odds with images of self as fair and principled. Discrimination is, however, a persistent social reality, being neither a thing of the past nor a problem exhibited by the rare few among us who reject egalitarian ideals.

The goal of this entry is to facilitate an understanding of the irony of discrimination. Toward that end it begins by distinguishing between blatant and subtle acts of discrimination. Then, before presenting examples of discrimination toward various groups, it also considers what most people think discrimination looks like versus what contemporary forms of discrimination typically look like.

### **Blatant Discrimination: What We Think Discrimination Looks Like**

When asked to imagine an instance of discrimination, most people call to mind images of blatant discrimination, or overt and unmistakable acts of discrimination such as the actions of hateful people who behave in negative ways that exclude others because of the groups to which those others belong. Discrimination is perceived to be a set of negative actions that follow from malevolent intent and effectively undermine or exclude others. These sorts of blatant acts of discrimination parallel acts of old-fashioned racism. Black citizens of the United States were not, for instance, allowed to commingle with Whites, being banned from entry into locations available to Whites or, when allowed to enter, required to stay in separate spaces (e.g., back of the bus, different schools).

Although social psychologists long have acknowledged that discrimination may be manifest in positive or negative acts, primary attention has been focused on negative acts of discrimination that have been assumed to be relatively more typical instances of discrimination and of greater consequence. In his seminal work, for instance,

Gordon Allport defined ethnic discrimination as the denial of equal treatment of ethnic outgroups via verbal rejection, exclusion, or physical attack. Likewise, in their recent social psychology textbook, Elliot Aronson, Timothy Wilson, and Robin Akert defined discrimination as unjustified negative or harmful actions that are expressed toward people simply because they belong to a particular group. The unjustified negative and harmful actions specified by such definitions refer to blatant acts of discrimination, such as open acts of hostility, verbal and physical aggression toward, and/or social and economic exclusion of members of particular groups.

Classic conceptualizations of discrimination such as those noted above, however, have overlooked several pervasive and problematic forms of discrimination. Not all acts of discrimination can be clearly classified as positive or negative. Some forms of discrimination are inherently neither positive nor negative. Other forms of discrimination may be positive in one context and negative in others (e.g., repeating comments to ensure understanding). What constitutes a positive or negative act may also vary from the perspective of an actor versus the perspective of the targets of discriminatory actions. A young man may sincerely seek to be helpful when opening a door for an aging person, whereas the aging person may perceive the same act an insulting instance of discrimination that follows from stereotypes of one's frailty. It is important to note that the classic conceptualization of discrimination cannot address the important question alluded to in the introductory paragraphs, namely, if most people fancy themselves to be fair and principled people who define discrimination as unfair, then how might those same people sometimes behave in discriminatory ways (as individuals or groups)?

### **Subtle Discrimination: What Contemporary Discrimination Typically Looks Like**

What people think discrimination looks like and what discrimination actually looks like are different things. As noted, acts thought of as discrimination tend to be blatant in that they are (1) negative, (2) linked to malevolence toward a group, and (3) harmful. In the absence of any of these three pieces, acts become more subtle forms of discrimination

from the perspective of the actor. As a result, one may treat people differently solely on the basis of the groups to which they belong (e.g., opening doors for aging people but not young people, and for women but not men) but have trouble seeing such acts as instances of discrimination. After all, how could my behavior be discriminatory if I did not treat someone negatively (e.g., I kindly opened the door), I feel benevolence toward the group to which someone belongs (e.g., I adore women), and/or I behaved in a way that does not harm and may even help another?

### *Discrimination Without Malevolence*

Discrimination often occurs because of the operation of basic cognitive and (via ingroup) self-enhancing processes, with no malevolent intent toward other groups. For instance, when people are classified as ingroup and outgroup members, there is an accentuation of similarities within groups (we are similar to one another, they are all similar) and differences between groups (they are very different from us). These processes of *categorization* motivate various forms of discrimination (e.g., allocating more rewards to ingroup than to outgroup members). It is interesting to note, however, that differences in how ingroup and outgroup members are treated often stem from ingroup-favoring biases rather than outgroup-rejecting tendencies. This is because, as long ago noted by Allport, we value that with which we are familiar and protect that which we value, such that the love of one's ingroup often leads to discrimination without feelings of malevolence toward outgroups.

### *Controlling and Explaining Away Acts That Could Result From Malevolence*

Even when actors with malevolent intent behave in negative and harmful ways (and commit acts typically seen as discriminatory), these realities coexist with the fact that people value fairness, see themselves as fair, and reject discrimination as unfair. There are several things people attempt to do to negotiate the ambivalent thoughts aroused in such situations. One may try to control behavior to avoid discrimination, but some behaviors are more subject to conscious control than others are. We may readily be able to control what we say,

but discrimination may still emerge in the behaviors over which we have less control, such as speech errors and eye contact. In addition, when malevolence exists outside of awareness and/or coexists with benevolent intent, acts of discrimination may be justified, perpetuated, and explained away in group-irrelevant terms (e.g., Christopher was better qualified than Jamal; race had nothing to do with it).

### *The Most Subtle Form of Discrimination: Institutional Discrimination*

Discrimination can occur individually or institutionally. Institutional discrimination exists when systematic policies and practices of an institution disadvantage or exclude certain social groups. In many situations, institutional discrimination results from judgments made on secondary rather than primary characteristics. Ethnicity and gender, for instance, may be consciously eliminated as criteria for hiring, but other criteria that are less directly related to performance may disadvantage participation of members of some groups. For example, racial profiling and the use of height and weight requirements to select firefighters (disadvantaging women) enforce discriminatory behaviors across actors, regardless of their personal beliefs about ethnicity or gender. Social institutions such as the criminal justice system, the labor market, the housing and retail markets, the education system, and the health care system use policies and procedures that systematically disadvantage or exclude members of certain groups. In such instances, all individuals within an institution are required to uphold and enforce discriminatory practices, such that acts of discrimination cannot be attributed to any individual or set of individuals. Instead, discrimination results as a mere function of doing "business as usual."

Considering the foregoing points, a full and complete answer can be provided to the question that motivated this entry; namely, if most people fancy themselves to be fair and principled people who define discrimination as unfair, then how might those same people sometimes behave in discriminatory ways (as individuals or groups)? What people think discrimination looks like and how discrimination is actually manifested are different things. We reject the unfair and negative treatment

of people because of the groups to which they belong, but because discrimination often takes more subtle forms that are hard to see, discrimination can still occur when it slips by undetected by those who discriminate.

Subtle acts of discrimination are, however, keenly felt by the targets of discrimination. Subtle acts of discrimination tend to have a contradictory duality whereby niceties of one sort (e.g., opening doors) are misaligned with other behaviors of import (e.g., who gets a raise). As a result, subtle discrimination is insulting and marginalizing, causing people to question their abilities, exhibit poor cognitive performance, and report lower self-esteem. To illustrate the range of adverse effects that acts of subtle discrimination have on the targets of discrimination, this entry turns to concrete examples of discrimination toward groups that have been the target of a great deal of social-psychological theory and research.

### Examples of the Content and Consequences of Contemporary Discrimination

As noted, many groups are discriminated against. To illustrate the content and consequences of discrimination, this section describes research examining discrimination against Blacks, women, aging people, and gay men because these groups have been most thoroughly studied by social psychologists.

#### *Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities*

Contemporary theories of racism note that Whites' attitudes toward racial and ethnic minorities are often ambivalent (i.e., positive and negative) and that contemporary forms of racial discrimination are often subtle. Each theory suggests that Whites who score low on prejudice (also called modern, aversive, symbolic, or ambivalent racists) can be distinguished from those who score high on prejudice (old-fashioned, dominative, or redneck racists), given the presence or absence of positive feelings toward racial and ethnic minorities. Presumably Whites typically harbor negative feelings about other racial or ethnic minorities that result from shared socialization experiences and an internalization of the negative cultural images of those groups (e.g., Blacks are lazy, aggressive). Whites who score high on prejudice endorse and

accept negative cultural images of racial and ethnic minorities. Although Whites who score low on prejudice also harbor negative feelings about other racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., as the result of shared socialization experiences), they also endorse egalitarian ideals and hold additional sincere positive feelings about minorities and have sympathy for racial and ethnic minorities as victims of past injustices.

The racial attitudes of White people influence their behavior, determining whether and in what form one discriminates. Whites who score high on prejudice are open about their antipathy and behave in consistently negative, rejecting, and blatantly discriminatory ways. By contrast, the ambivalent attitudes of Whites who score low on prejudice inspire more complex and subtle acts of discrimination, such that Whites who score low on prejudice discriminate when discrimination slips by undetected. This occurs when the negative treatment of another person can be justified in terms of race-irrelevant factors; for instance, refusing to hire someone, not because he is Black, but because there were just others who were exceptionally qualified. Subtle (vs. blatant) discrimination is also manifest in body language that may be difficult to detect by the actor (e.g., speech errors, less eye contact), but that may be keenly felt and distressing to the target.

The subtle and harmful nature of more subtle forms of racial discrimination was convincingly documented in a classic set of studies conducted by Carl Word, Mark Zanna, and Joel Cooper. The researchers asked White men to interview either a White or a Black job applicant with similar qualifications, who were trained to behave in similar ways. Findings revealed that the similarly behaving and qualified job applicants were treated differently based on their race. When interviewing a Black (vs. White) applicant, White men made less eye contact, sat less attentively (e.g., at an angle facing away), made more speech errors, and terminated the interviews sooner. Thus, racial discrimination emerged on behaviors that are harder to control and are outside the awareness of White actors.

To examine whether subtle acts of racial discrimination have meaningful consequences for those who are the targets of discrimination, Word and his colleagues asked White men to interview

for a position in a second study. Unbeknown to them, the White men were interviewed by men trained to behave similarly to the participants in the first study. Findings indicated that the men performed differently depending on whether they had been treated like the White interviewee or the Black interviewee in Study 1. When treated like the Black (vs. White) interviewees, the men performed more poorly (as evaluated by themselves and independent observers). The important and adverse consequences of subtle acts of racial discrimination are clear given that jobs are often awarded on the basis of interview performance.

### *Discrimination Against Women*

Stereotypically, women and men are perceived to be complementary opposites who come together to make a whole, given interdependencies in normative heterosexual relations (e.g., child rearing). Women are communal (e.g., nurturing, warm, caring) but not agentic. Men are agentic (e.g., influential, strong, independent) but not communal. Given heterosexual interdependencies, men come to feel a sense of responsibility for the welfare of traditional women that motivates positive sentiment (e.g., stereotypically warm and communal women are evaluated positively). Positive sentiment, however, reflects liking (but not respect) and may mask gender biases that emerge in behaviors that clearly reveal perceptions of women as being less competent than men. For example, feelings that women are warm and caring lead to genuine liking and interpersonal kindnesses (e.g., praise) that can make it difficult for a given man to see gender biases that emerge in his behaviors (e.g., denial of salary raises). These dynamics overlie interactions between men and women in particular contexts (e.g., bosses and employees) and motivate seemingly positive but actually condescending acts of discrimination.

Ambivalent attitudes toward traditional women lead to subtle but harmful acts of paternalistic discrimination in traditional achievement domains (e.g., science, technology), where perceptions of women's lesser competence imply their inability to succeed. In these contexts, women receive few valued resources (e.g., promotions, raises) as a result of their perceived incompetence, but many acts of interpersonal kindness (e.g., praise, flattery).

Although the subtle nature of such behaviors may make it difficult for men to see that such acts are a form of gender discrimination, women can keenly experience acts of paternalistic discrimination as insulting and unfair. When treated paternalistically rather than equitably, women feel angry and perform less well on cognitive tasks. In fact, the paternalistic discrimination of men in traditional achievement domains can actually cause women to perform more poorly than men (e.g., on standardized math tests), where such differences do not otherwise exist.

Nontraditional women (e.g., businesswomen, feminists) are also perceived ambivalently, but in opposite terms from traditional women—as competent but cold. In these situations, feelings of respect based on perceptions of competence may mask the degree to which nontraditional women are disliked. Respect, for instance, may lead one to assign many valued tasks to nontraditional woman, while one's dislike may make it difficult to attribute the successful completion of those tasks to the inherent skills of a nontraditional woman (e.g., attributing it instead to others' help). To the degree that nontraditional women succeed, however, they may present a threat (e.g., to men's position of power or cherished notions of masculinity) that exacerbates dislike. When feelings of dislike dominate, discrimination turns blatant. In such situations, nontraditional women and/or women who are successful in masculine domains are targeted with backlash (or social and economic punishments), sabotage, sexual and/or gender harassment, and other forms of aggression (e.g., ethnic harassment).

### *Discrimination Against Aging People*

Aging men and women are stereotypically perceived as warm but incompetent people who need to be cared for and paternalistically protected. Like traditional women, paternalistic discrimination against aging people is motivated by benevolence but represents a form of sugarcoated discrimination. Such acts of discrimination are contradictory in that they at once convey both liking and disrespect. Younger people adopt a "protector" status and heap trivial niceties (e.g., excessive offers of help, praise for displays of ordinary adult competence) on pitied older men and

women, which functionally masks stereotypic perceptions of incompetence that convey a lack of respect. From the perspective of the paternalistic protectors, it is difficult to detect one's disrespect for and infantilizing behavior toward older people given the fondness one feels as a result of one's cooperative interdependence with aging relatives. However, this behavior has adverse consequences for those who are the targets of discrimination.

Subtle discrimination against older people is often manifested in speech patterns. *Elderspeak* is a pattern of speech accommodations that are used in attempts to communicate more effectively to an older listener given stereotypic perceptions of impaired cognitive functioning and memory. Elderspeak is characterized by loud, slowed speech, limited vocabulary, simplified grammar, shorter sentences, exaggerated intonation, higher pitch, and repetition. It is important to note that elderspeak resembles the way adults talk to children (or baby talk) and when heard out of context is often mistaken for speech directed toward children. Although presumed to follow from a sincere positive regard and desire to accommodate the needs of another, the use of elderspeak typically does not vary with or depend on the comprehension or cognitive abilities of older listeners.

Although presumed to derive from sincere and benevolent attitudes, elderspeak has many adverse consequences. When addressed using elderspeak, older people feel angry, disrespected, and marginalized. Elderspeak also causes aging listeners to exhibit more dependence, question their cognitive abilities, and report lower self-esteem. Thus, subtle discrimination against aging populations has adverse consequences that parallel the effects of subtle discrimination against racial outgroups and women.

### *Discrimination Against Gay Men and Lesbians*

Unlike women, ethnic minorities, or aging people, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people are not protected from discrimination by national laws banning discrimination in the workplace or in housing or education. In fact, campaigns advocating efforts to bar gay men and lesbians from equal rights are openly broadcast and sometimes publicly sanctioned by authority

figures. Because discrimination toward gay men and lesbians is not only tolerated but often sanctioned, it is perhaps not surprising that open acts of hostility and blatant discrimination against gay men and lesbians are relatively common. In fact, as Gregory Herek and his colleagues have noted, as many as 20% of adult lesbians and 25% of adult gay men have reported experiences of victimization related to their sexual orientation. Furthermore, Anthony D'Augelli and his colleagues have shown that more than half of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth have experienced verbal abuse and 11% have experienced physical abuse because of their sexual orientation. In fact, 2002 Federal Bureau of Investigation statistics indicate that 16% of reported hate crimes are based on sexual orientation, which is likely an underestimate given that gay men and lesbians express reservations about reporting crimes, given concerns about police bias and needs to disclose their sexual orientation.

As noted at the outset, however, most people view themselves as fair and principled people who make decisions on the basis of other people's skills, talents, and qualifications rather than on the basis of the social groups to which people belong. In work situations, discriminatory behavior toward gay men and lesbians is often relatively subtle and more similar to the kinds of discrimination experienced by racial minorities and women. This point was demonstrated in a field experiment conducted by Michelle Hebl and her colleagues. In this experiment, men and women, who were trained to behave similarly, were sent into stores to apply for jobs. In some of the interviews, the men and women presented themselves as gay or lesbian, and in other interviews they presented themselves as straight/heterosexual.

The investigators found no evidence of formal discrimination (e.g., refusing to provide an application) against those who portrayed themselves as gay or lesbian, but there was clear evidence of discrimination in interpersonal behaviors. Compared with the way employers interacted with straight (or heterosexual) men and women, employers were less verbally positive, spent less time interviewing, used fewer words while chatting, and made less eye contact. In other words, although the employers could not be accused of treating gay men and lesbian women applicants unjustly in a formal sense (e.g., refusing to hire), employers

exhibited uncomfortable or more distant behaviors toward people they believed to be gay or lesbian. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that these subtle acts of discrimination (like subtle racism and sexism) could have harmful consequences for gay men and lesbian women.

### Conclusion

The considerations and examples in this entry illuminate several important points. First, discrimination refers to observable differences in behavior because of the social groups to which people belong. Acts of discrimination are likely to occur in two situations. People who endorse negative stereotypes and possess unbridled negative feelings toward other groups behave in consistently negative and blatantly discriminatory ways toward disliked groups. This type of discrimination parallels the blatantly negative and harmful acts of open hostility and exclusion associated with bigots, racists, xenophobes, and White supremacists. By contrast, people who reject discrimination, value the principle of fairness, and feel guilt when their thoughts and behaviors violate ideals of fairness, discriminate when acts of discrimination slip by undetected. These people, like many well-intentioned people among us, display subtle acts of discrimination that are either positively valenced, co-occur with benevolent intent, and/or are perceived as lacking harmful consequences. Regardless of the form of discrimination (subtle or blatant from the perspective of the actor), targets of discrimination often experience insult, feel marginalized, or exhibit a host of adverse behaviors. This entry has focused on the content and consequences of discrimination with an eye toward social justice and recognition that an initial step in attempts to create equal playing fields for all requires an ability to detect, understand, and reject subtle and blatant forms of discrimination.

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*See also* Affirmative Action; Ageism; Anti-Semitism; Ethnocentrism; Hate Crimes; Homophobia; Institutionalized Bias; Intergroup Violence; Islamophobia; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Prejudice; Racism; Sexism; Sexual Harassment; Stereotyping; Tokenism; Xenophobia

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## DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

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*Distributive justice*, or *distributive fairness*, refers to the extent to which an outcome or a distribution of outcomes conforms to norms of propriety or fairness. The recognition that people might want not simply to maximize their own payoffs and rewards but also to see goods distributed in a fair fashion has a long history. As a concept in philosophy, notions of fair distribution go back at least to Aristotle's *Ethics*, in which distributive justice is said to exist when each person's outcomes are proportional to his or her merits (or, as we now more often phrase it, outcomes are proportional to each person's contributions to the production of the outcomes). That is, for a favorable outcome from a joint project, the rewards should be divided among those who contributed to the project in proportion to their contributions, their skill, and their effort. When a joint undertaking has a negative outcome, the costs should similarly be borne in

proportion to each person's contribution to the failure of the enterprise. In either case, distributive justice exists when proportionality exists. However, when outcomes are not proportional to contributions, when one party to a distribution receives or gives either too much or too little, then *distributive injustice* exists.

In social psychology, one of the earliest explorations of distributive justice as a topic in its own right is seen in J. Stacey Adams's *equity theory* and in research associated with that theory. Adams suggested that people experience *inequity distress* when they receive or are associated with distributions of outcomes that violate norms of fairness, and in particular, outcomes that violate the Aristotelian rule that outcomes should be proportional to contributions. According to the theory, inequity distress motivates the individual in question either to change the reality of the situation or to alter his or her perception of the situation in such a way as to restore equity.

Consider, for example, a worker who is being paid more than others who are working equally hard and who bring similar skills to the job at hand. According to Adams, the worker in question, if he or she knows about the mismatch of skills and payment, should experience inequity distress and should be motivated to restore equity. The worker might, for example, increase his or her effort so that the now-higher contributions will be proportional to the relatively higher payment he or she is receiving. This is an action that changes the objective ratio of contributions and outcome, but there are also psychological solutions to the underpayment inequity. The worker in question can come to perceive the discrepancy in payment as fair, and thereby reduce equity distress, by altering his or her perceptions of the contributions and outcomes of those involved. Thus, the worker might decide that he or she in fact has special skills that justify the higher payment. Alternatively, the worker might decide that there are other positive outcomes that the other workers are experiencing as a result of being in this job (e.g., the worker might think, "This job is an especially good match for them because the working hours fit their lifestyles, so they have benefits that I do not.").

Equity theory is psychological, not philosophical, because it moves from normative views of what is fair in some objective sense to descriptions

of how people will react to unfair distributions. Because the equity theory describes changes in behaviors and beliefs that are used to restore a feeling of distributive fairness, it serves to relate feelings of unfairness to a variety of possible responses. This multiplicity of possible ways of restoring a sense of equity is both a strength and a weakness for the theory. It is a strength because it allows the theory to explain both cognitive and behavioral reactions to outcome distributions and a weakness because it is often difficult to predict which particular equity-restoring actions a given person might take.

Research on how people award outcomes to others has shown that there are other rules of distributive justice. In many situations, especially those that emphasize performance, outcomes are allocated in proportion to contributions, as Adams suggested. However, sometimes outcomes are divided according to the need of those receiving the outcomes, especially in situations that emphasize supportiveness and caretaking. And in situations where solidarity and a sense of community are a major consideration, or where it is difficult to calibrate contributions or need, outcomes are awarded equally. Indeed, psychologist Morton Deutsch has suggested that the association of each of these rules with the social situations just noted runs both ways, so, for example, not only are need-based distributions chosen most often in situations that emphasize caretaking, but using need-based distributions produces greater emphasis on caretaking and support.

As psychologists have continued to examine distributive justice-related phenomena, it has become clear that justice judgments and related attitudes and behaviors play an important role in how people interact with other individuals and with organizations and social institutions. Theory and research on distributive justice have helped explain situations as different as how people behave in experimental games to increases in employee theft that are observed when wages or other benefits are decreased. Work by Melvin Lerner and others showed that people hold deep-seated ideas about fairness—a "belief in a just world"—that can lead them sometimes to see innocent victims, those experiencing negative outcomes through no fault of their own, as somehow deserving their fate. Such *victim derogation* effects



are in line with the basic psychological processes outlined in equity theory because the impression of the deservingness of the victim is altered to make the situation equitable given the negative outcomes the victim has received.

As the study of the psychology of fairness has progressed, it has become evident that there are not only multiple distributive justice rules but there are also forms of justice that involve, not the outcomes being distributed, but rather the procedures used to decide the distributions in question. In the early 1970s, several studies showed that judgments of *procedural justice*, the belief that social processes and procedures are fair, can affect a variety of attitudes and behaviors in everyday social interactions, in organizational behavior, and in reactions to legal and societal institutions. We now know that procedural justice effects are often as strong as or stronger than distributive justice effects. Indeed, there is evidence that under conditions in which procedural justice is seen as high, differences in distributive justice have little effect.

Studies of the comparative impact of procedural versus distributive fairness have decreased, however, as new theories have emphasized similarities, rather than differences, in the way people react to fairness or unfairness in outcomes and in process. Testing predictions from *fairness heuristic theory*, an account of fairness effects that sees all fairness-relevant experiences—distributive or procedural—as information used to assess the likelihood of exploitation or exclusion, Kees van den Bos and his colleagues have shown what is termed the *substitutability effect*. The substitutability effect arises when whatever type of fairness is encountered first is generalized in the interpretation of subsequent fairness information. Thus, if procedural justice information is encountered first, subsequent distributive fairness information is interpreted to be in line with that early process information. On the other hand, if distributive fairness information is encountered first, then subsequent process information is colored by the positive or negative outcome of fairness impressions.

But why does fairness, distributive or procedural, matter so much to people? The answer seems to lie in the capacity of justice judgments to help people deal with the various personal uncertainties that life brings their way. Van den Bos and his colleagues have shown that the effects of both

distributive and procedural unfairness are stronger when people are uncertain and that fairness effects are strengthened by even peripheral or subtle alarm-producing stimuli (such as flashing warning lights). There is even evidence that the same areas of the brain are activated by fairness judgment processing as are activated by personal uncertainty or alarm processing. The reason that people show inequity distress and related justice phenomena appears to be that a sense of fairness helps them manage uncertainty in their lives, while feelings of unfairness may exacerbate personal uncertainty.

E. Allan Lind

See also Justice; Just World Hypothesis; Procedural Justice; Relational Model of Authority in Groups

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## DIVERSITY

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Diversity may be conceptualized as variance in human characteristics that leads people to perceive differences relative to the self. *Cultural diversity* refers to variation in social groups within human societies in a given context at a given time. For example, variation in the number of different nationalities, racial and ethnic groups, or religious affiliations that are reflected in a specific population (e.g., residents of the southern United States)

may wax or wane over time as a result of migration patterns. Changes in cultural diversity over time influence the frequency and nature of intergroup contact, with important implications for psychological phenomena. Hence, the study of diversity—particularly social group diversity—has emerged across a number of research traditions within psychology, including cultural psychology, social psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, educational psychology, and clinical/counseling psychology. With regard to groups and group relations, theories and research traditions examining a range of different types of diversity (e.g., social identities, attitudes, values, and experience) have focused primarily on the role diversity plays in shaping group performance and group dynamics. In addition, group researchers have examined policies (e.g., affirmative action) and procedures (e.g., diversity training) that impact organizational goals of maintaining and promoting diversity.

### Diversities Within Diversity

Because the concept of diversity refers to a broad array of human attributes, theorists have found it useful to distinguish different types of diversity. For example, one common practice is to differentiate *social category diversity* from *informational/functional diversity*. Social category diversity is defined by differences in easily identifiable social group attributes such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity. In contrast, informational/functional diversity is defined by variance in less-visible attributes such as attitudes, knowledge, education, and functional background or role within a group. In a similar vein, Douglas Harrison distinguished *surface-level diversity*, which again refers to variance in attributes that can be easily detected, from *deep-level diversity*, which refers to variance in less-visible attributes. In contrast to these approaches, Joseph McGrath proposed a more complex classification scheme comprising five different types of diversity: demographic attributes; task-related knowledge and skills; values, beliefs, and attitudes; personality, cognitive, and behavioral styles; and status within the group. McGrath proposed measuring these types of diversity as multiple dimensions and creating profiles to reflect the complexity of diversity within groups.

The operationalization of diversity (i.e., implementing manipulations and measures of diversity in research studies) has primarily followed two different approaches. In one approach, researchers have examined how diversity is dispersed across groups (e.g., the presence or absence of different racial or ethnic group members within the larger group, the degree of difference in educational background between group members). In the other approach, researchers, particularly those working from a relational demography perspective, have operationalized diversity in terms of numerical proportions of different groups (e.g., numerical minority/majority status). Proportional approaches are more appropriate for capturing some psychological effects. For example, measuring the proportion of individuals who belong to a minority group within a larger group is more sensitive to the relative differences between being a lone individual in a group (e.g., the only Black woman in a group of White women) and being a member of a small minority (e.g., one of three Black women in a group that also includes six White women). Being the “only one” is psychologically different from being a member of a small minority; operationalizing diversity in terms of the mere presence or absence of racial group variance could lead researchers to miss important psychological phenomena.

More recently, Dora Lau and J. Keith Murnighan have used the term *faultlines* to describe a situation within a group where subgroups differ on many correlated dimensions that maximize perceptions of differences between those subgroups. These ideas are drawn, in part, from research on *self-categorization* that has demonstrated that people are more likely to subcategorize others when dimensions of difference appear to covary. For example, if a group is composed of White men and Hispanic women, perceptions of difference between these two subgroups would be stronger than if gender and race or ethnicity were unassociated (e.g., if some of the men were Hispanic and some of the women were White). As faultlines become more salient, people attend more closely to subgroups, with the consequence that subgroup diversity can impact group processes quite profoundly. These theorists would argue, therefore, that we need to measure diversity in ways that capture the strength of faultlines by considering the degree of correlation between group memberships.

### Diversity Theories: Group Performance Versus Dynamics

The overarching question for much research on diversity in groups is whether diversity is beneficial or harmful. Recent reviews of relevant literature highlight two theoretical traditions that conflict when it comes to evaluating diversity's consequences for groups. On one hand, research on diversity and group performance (e.g., task performance, problem solving, creativity) suggests that diversity is beneficial to groups. On the other hand, research on diversity and group dynamics (e.g., group cohesion, satisfaction, commitment) points to potentially harmful consequences associated with increased diversity.

#### *Group Performance*

Early theorists such as L. Richard Hoffman and Harry Triandis argued that increased diversity was beneficial to group performance because diversity improves decision making. Individuals who come from different cultural, educational, and functional backgrounds are likely to also differ in the knowledge and skills they bring to decision-making tasks. As the variability of knowledge and skills increases within a group, so should the performance of the group, particularly when tasks are complex or demand multiple perspectives. These value-in-diversity theories further argue that interacting with diverse peers creates opportunities for people to expand not just *what* they know but also *how* they think. Hence, diversity is hypothesized to promote greater creativity in problem solving because people are forced to break out of mental ruts that undermine creative problem solving.

Hypotheses regarding the value of diversity for group performance have been tested and supported empirically for several types of diversity, including both surface-level (e.g., racial) and deep-level (e.g., knowledge) diversity, although less visible attributes related to knowledge distribution within task groups have received the primary emphasis. With regard to the effects of racial and ethnic diversity, for example, Poppy McLeod and colleagues asked participants in racially and ethnically homogeneous versus diverse groups to spend 15 minutes generating as many ideas as possible to increase tourism to the United States. Results pointed to the benefits of diversity. Ideas generated

by the racially and ethnically diverse groups were more effective and practical than those produced by homogeneous groups.

With regard to deep-level diversity, a large literature has examined whether diversity of knowledge benefits group performance. This research has compared, for example, whether distributed knowledge (i.e., different members of the group have different pieces of knowledge) is better than shared knowledge (i.e., all members of the group have the same knowledge) for task performance. Research by Verlin Hinz and Scott Tindale, for example, has demonstrated that low levels of knowledge diversity (shared information) are associated with less elaboration of information during group discussion. In contrast, when knowledge diversity is high (unshared information—members of the group each have unique information to contribute) elaboration of task-related information increases, leading to improved performance. Research further suggests that these effects are qualified by whether the task requires more complex thinking, by whether the group members are motivated to elaborate on information, and by members' task-relevant abilities.

#### *Group Dynamics*

Researchers who focus on group dynamics have drawn significantly from *social identity theory* and argued instead that diversity is detrimental for groups because it promotes conflict among subgroups within the larger group. This conflict weakens overall group bonding and cohesion.

More specifically, the mere presence of social category diversity (e.g. diverse ethnic groups) within a group prompts categorization and differentiation, in turn fostering ingroup favoritism and ethnocentrism—the tendency to have more positive attitudes and responses toward people who belong to one's own social groups. Thus, greater diversity can promote greater conflict within groups, resulting in less satisfaction, less cohesion (i.e., liking for members of the group), and lower commitment to the group. Researchers further suggest that these effects could be accentuated by intergroup anxiety and mistrust; dissimilar members may be less likely to trust one another and less willing to communicate and cooperate with one another.

Empirical tests of hypotheses about diversity and group dynamics have again examined a range of forms of diversity, but the primary emphasis has been on surface-level diversities related to race, gender, and tenure within an organization or group. Results of these studies are mixed. Research on tenure diversity, for example, shows a negative impact of diversity on turnover within organizations: The more diverse the group is with regard to tenure, the less socially integrated the group is likely to be and the more likely it is that group members will leave the group or organization. Research findings on racial and ethnic diversity largely parallel these effects. The more racially or ethnically diverse a group becomes, the less likely it is that members will communicate with one another informally, the more likely it is that conflict will arise, and the more likely it is that members will leave the group. However, gender diversity appears to have a positive, rather than a negative, impact on group dynamics.

### *Integrating Approaches*

In response to the apparent contradictions in research findings—that diversity benefits performance but undermines group dynamics—several theorists have argued that it is time to reexamine how scientists think about and study diversity. Across reviews, common themes emerge. First, a lack of consistency in how scientists define and operationalize diversity is problematic for interpreting results across studies. Second, scientists have been focusing primarily on testing the main effects of a given form of diversity on a single type of outcome. As a result, there is a lack of appreciation of the complexity of diversity's effects. There are few examinations of possible moderating and mediating factors. Thus, many of the assumptions about the mechanisms underlying diversity's effects remain untested. These reviews call on theorists and researchers to move beyond main-effects approaches, to propose more complex models and to directly assess mediating mechanisms.

In response to these concerns, Daan van Knippenberg and colleagues have recently proposed the *categorization elaboration model*, an integrative model of diversity and group phenomena. According to this theory, diversity can have both positive and negative effects for groups.

Understanding whether and when diversity will be beneficial requires an understanding of how group categorization processes qualify information sharing and elaboration within groups. These researchers have argued that the positive effects of diversity on group performance result from increased elaboration of task-relevant information. However, when social categorization processes threaten valued social identities, favoritism and bias are likely to occur and potentially disrupt elaboration. Hanneke Grotenberg and colleagues recently tested such an argument by manipulating levels of ethnic diversity and knowledge diversity within task groups. When knowledge diversity was high, instructions that emphasized taking advantage of multiple viewpoints improved the performance of ethnically diverse groups. These effects were mediated by information elaboration; the more that group members elaborated on information, the better the group performed.

In summary, research on group diversity points to both benefits and costs of increasing diversity. Recent theories argue that a more complex and nuanced understanding of diversity is required to reconcile these apparently contradictory results. Future research is likely to focus more carefully on moderating and mediating factors that qualify when diversity is beneficial versus harmful, as well as why these effects occur.

### **Diversity Policies**

Organizational policies on diversity are designed to promote equal opportunity and representation of diverse groups within institutions and to create climates that support the inclusion and acceptance of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The need for these policies becomes clear on examination of data that demonstrate the continuing problems of racism and sexism within the United States. Despite decades of improvement since the civil rights era of the 1970s (and the 2008 election of a Black president), members of racial and ethnic minorities continue to face economic, political, and interpersonal prejudice and discrimination in their daily lives, in both educational and employment settings.

For women, discrimination in education has diminished significantly, but women remain underrepresented in core areas of the sciences, including some of the most profitable careers in engineering

and computer sciences. In the workplace, women can still face hiring and salary discrimination and sometimes hostile climates that promote harassment or devalue their contributions. These effects can especially impact working mothers, who face a maternal wall when it comes to promotion and career advancement.

Advocates of affirmative action policies also point out that affirmative action is unique in that it addresses discrimination without requiring discrimination victims to voice their complaints. That is, unlike policies and laws that require individual victims to take personal responsibility for challenging discrimination (e.g., filing a complaint with a human resource office, filing a lawsuit), affirmative action policies require institutions to police themselves. A strong research tradition suggests that people who claim they have been the victims of discrimination may face (often extreme) backlash, which inhibits their willingness to voice concerns even in severe circumstances (e.g., sexual harassment). Hence, policies that do not require individual victims of discrimination to assume responsibility for challenging discrimination play an important role in reducing discrimination in organizational settings.

### *Defining Policies*

Affirmative action policies are the most recognized and perhaps the most misunderstood policies aimed at promoting educational and employment opportunities for members of minority groups. Affirmative action involves practices that protect individuals from discrimination based on status in legally protected social groups, including gender, race or ethnicity, age, and disability. In contrast to equal opportunity policies, which passively support diversity and punish violations of equal treatment, affirmative action policies are proactive in implementing practices that redress inequality. Examples of affirmative action include practices to promote diverse applicant pools (e.g., advertising employment opportunities in a diverse range of newspapers) and federal procurements for minority-owned and woman-owned businesses.

With regard to employment settings, Executive Order 11246, issued by president Dwight Eisenhower in 1965, mandates affirmative action policies for federal organizations and employers

who do business with the federal government. Agencies must evaluate whether they are guilty of discrimination by assessing their employment practices (e.g., representation of diverse groups as a function of the availability of qualified applicants) and must remedy such discrimination when it occurs. For example, an engineering firm that does business with the federal government may have too few female employees relative to the proportion of qualified women with degrees in engineering. In this situation, EO 11264 would require the organization to make an effort to increase the number of women hired in engineering positions.

In educational settings, race-sensitive admission practices are a common form of affirmative action, and these policies have been upheld in recent court rulings. For example, universities may take race into account when evaluating applicants if doing so fits with the university's mission to promote a diverse student body and if the implementation of these policies is sufficiently individualized. Federal court rulings argue that these policies are justified by a state's compelling interest in ensuring diversity within state-sponsored schools.

### *Effectiveness*

Scientists have examined a number of outcomes when assessing whether affirmative action policies achieve their intended effects. With regard to increasing the representation of minority groups in education and employment, the research largely indicates that such policies increase the representation of women and racially/ethnically marginalized groups in both academic and employment settings. In addition such policies appear to promote intergroup contact that results in more positive attitudes toward these groups, although the benefits of contact are qualified by many other factors. In educational settings, further evidence suggests there are indirect benefits for members of nonstigmatized groups (e.g., Whites, men). Students in more racially/ethnically diverse contexts engage in more complex critical thinking than their peers in more homogeneous settings. Critics of the policies point out, however, that the beneficiaries of these policies may experience self-doubt and lowered esteem. Such effects have been demonstrated empirically, but appear to be limited to laboratory settings; these negative effects do not appear to

generalize to real-world educational and employment settings.

### *Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action*

Attitudes toward affirmative action vary tremendously and depend largely on the nature of the policies and perceiver characteristics. People generally favor policies and practices that appear to be “soft” (e.g., outreach programs) over those that are portrayed as “hard” (e.g., choosing ethnic minorities in the case of equally strong candidates). When affirmative action programs are described as valuing merit, they are perceived to be more fair and therefore are received more positively. In addition, people feel most negatively toward affirmative action in educational settings rather than employment settings, although more people benefit from the latter.

When it comes to perceiver characteristics, attitudes toward affirmative action appear to be influenced, not surprisingly, by demographic attributes (e.g., gender, race), individual levels of prejudice, and political ideologies. Women and Blacks, for example, tend to support affirmative action policies more than do men and Whites. Both overt and subtle forms of prejudice are associated with less support for affirmative action policies. In addition, political conservatism reliably predicts support for these programs; people who are most conservative report the least support.

### **Diversity Education and Training**

Diversity education and training programs are designed to foster educational and employment settings that positively support diversity while discouraging intolerance and discrimination. Such programs vary tremendously. Some programs focus almost exclusively on providing employees with an understanding of antidiscrimination laws whereas others seek to foster positive intergroup attitudes through experiential exercises designed to promote empathy with targets of discrimination.

### *Academic Settings*

In academic settings, two perspectives have emerged: antibias education and cooperative learning. Antibias education explicitly focuses on teaching students about the existence of prejudice and

discrimination in society. The goal of these types of programs is to raise awareness about the different types of bias and to help students develop skills that will allow them to understand and counteract their own biases. Although only a limited number of studies have tested these issues empirically, initial evidence points to the efficacy of such approaches. For example, students' attitudes toward stigmatized groups are more positive following participation in psychology courses that focus on issues related to stereotyping and prejudice, particularly when such courses foster introspective awareness.

Cooperative learning programs focus on indirect attitude change through intergroup contact and collaboration rather than explicitly teaching students about cultural diversity, prejudice, and discrimination. Elliot Aronson and colleagues' *jigsaw classroom technique* is a now-classic and widely used approach to fostering cooperative learning. In a jigsaw classroom, teachers divide students into small ethnically and academically diverse groups, distributing materials to be learned across students. Students are then responsible for teaching one another the materials. This method of teaching has produced inspiring results. Students in jigsaw classrooms grow to like and respect each other more, are less prejudiced, and have higher self-esteem compared to students in traditional classrooms.

### *Employment Settings*

In employment settings, employers typically adopt educational strategies that parallel the goals of educational approaches in academic settings. Empirical examinations of the efficacy of such programs in employment settings are limited. However, research points indirectly to the efficacy of diversity training programs. For example, members of racial/ethnic minority groups report perceiving their work settings to be more positive and tolerant in institutions where such programs are implemented. Moreover, programs to promote a positive work climate appear to ameliorate some of the negative effects of racial diversity on group dynamics described above. Not surprisingly, if employees feel coerced or otherwise threatened by the information presented in these programs, it is unlikely such programs will

be successful at reducing intergroup bias and promoting tolerance in the workplace.

### Conclusion

Around the world, demographers agree that cultural diversity within groups and societies is likely to continue to increase over time as technological advances make it easier for people to travel and migrate between regions, and as virtual technologies (e.g., Internet telecommunication) increase contact among people of different nations and ethnic groups. Researchers studying diversity in group settings have been challenged by the difficulty of defining diversity. Although research to date suggesting there are both costs and benefits of diversity within groups may seem contradictory and confusing, one thing is clear: diversity in groups matters. Hence, future increases in cultural diversity and intergroup contact will necessitate a continued effort to understand the role diversity plays in group phenomena, including the factors that moderate and mediate its effects on human cognition, affect, and behavior.

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*See also* Affirmative Action; Civil Rights Legislation; Cooperative Learning; Discrimination; Faultlines; Group Composition; Group Performance; Intergroup Contact Theory; Jigsaw Classroom Technique; Prejudice; Self-Categorization Theory

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## DOGMATISM

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*Dogmatism* is a personality characteristic that describes an intolerant and inflexible conviction in one's own beliefs. People who are high in dogmatism will have a narrow political orientation and conform easily to authority. They will tend to be intolerant toward those who are different from themselves and reject points of view that challenge their own beliefs. Dogmatism is associated with a closed-minded way of thinking, and it is related to general extremist tendencies rather than any one specific belief system. This entry describes at the background of the concept, as well as related constructs and their implications.

### History and Background

The psychological concept of dogmatism was introduced by Milton Rokeach in 1960 as a critique of Theodor Adorno and colleagues' *authoritarian personality theory*. According to Rokeach, authoritarianism, which is measured by the *F-scale inventory*, reflects a right wing orientation and so

cannot account for ideological closed-mindedness on the left of the political spectrum. Rokeach believed that a general tendency toward closed-mindedness was unrelated to specific political attitudes; rather it was better conceived as a content-free tendency to rigidly follow the beliefs one holds.

Rokeach consequently developed a scale in an attempt to distinguish content-oriented from content-free *closed-mindedness*. The scale contained two subscales. The first subscale, *dogmatism*, assessed those aspects of closed-mindedness that are content-neutral. The second subscale, *opinionation*, focused on more content-specific tendencies, encompassing the earlier concept of authoritarianism. With this scale, Rokeach wanted to show that the underlying style of thinking was the same for those on both the right (e.g., fascists) and the left (e.g., communists) of the political spectrum.

Rokeach compared extreme right wing groups with left wing groups. The results were partially supportive of his argument that dogmatism was a more general construct than authoritarianism. In one of his studies that compared Adorno and colleagues' authoritarianism scale with his own dogmatism scale, communists had lower F-scale scores than all other groups, including conservatives, liberals, and Labor Party members. This, he argued, showed that the F-scale was actually measuring the authoritarianism of the right. On the other hand, for the dogmatism scale, communists scored the same as conservatives and in fact had the highest score of all the groups tested. Rokeach interpreted these results as evidence that dogmatism is a more general measure of (the content-specific) tendencies tapped by the F-scale.

### Origins of Dogmatism

Rokeach proposed that dogmatic thought arises out of a particular set of early childhood experiences, similar to Adorno and colleagues' explanation for authoritarian tendencies. Specifically, he suggested that repressed anxiety associated with an exaggerated glorification of one's parents would be linked to the development of dogmatic tendencies. By rejecting, out of hand, beliefs that contradict their own, individuals high in dogmatism could achieve the security and certainty they were unable to attain in childhood.

### Related Constructs

It is important to note that there has been dispute over the purported independence of authoritarianism and dogmatism and whether Rokeach's scale could appropriately distinguish the two constructs. In response to this, Bob Altemeyer introduced a new measure of dogmatism that focused, not on the way in which dogmatic individuals think, but on the *definiteness* of the beliefs they hold. He argued that dogmatism is the unjustified conviction in the value of one's beliefs, which is unassailable by evidence to the contrary. He devised a new, 20-item scale to measure dogmatism with the use of items such as "The things I believe in are so completely true, I could never doubt them." This new scale proved more reliable and valid than earlier attempts. For example, it correlated with the *right wing authoritarianism scale*, also developed by Altemeyer, which distinguishes between different kinds of authoritarian personalities, namely, those who are followers and leaders. Moreover, in a follow-up study, Republicans scored higher than Democrats. These results were taken as evidence that even though it is defined as a content-free construct, dogmatism is more useful in explaining the mind-set of right wing than left wing ideology.

Many psychological tendencies have been linked to dogmatism during the past 20 years. Some of these include need for cognitive closure, need for cognition, intolerance of ambiguity, integrative complexity, openness to experience, and uncertainty tolerance. Although these variables clearly have close links with the central tenet of dogmatism, the precise nature of these relationships has yet to be fully explored. Further research is needed to answer the question as to whether left wing and right wing ideologies are distinctive in their content while sharing a common set of characteristics that can be called dogmatism.

### Conclusion

Recent work has extended our understanding of the cognitive processes involved in dogmatic thinking. We know that dogmatic individuals adopt and hold more extreme attitudes and find it difficult to revise their existing beliefs. We know that they react to inconsistent information by ignoring or selectively forgetting it. We also know that they are more likely to show an inability to



ignore previously expressed beliefs when asked to adopt a contrary position. Finally, dogmatic individuals have a tendency to compartmentalize information in memory, which likely contributes to their tendency to persist in their beliefs in spite of information to the contrary.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Ideology; Need for Closure; Right Wing Authoritarianism

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## DOMINANCE HIERARCHIES

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*Dominance hierarchies* reliably form in face-to-face groupings of all primate species, including humans. Their defining feature is that higher ranked individuals have more influence, power, and valued prerogatives than those of lower rank.

To avoid an overly simple picture, several qualifications are needed: Rank may be persistently relevant among primates in permanent groups or only occasionally relevant for animals that forage alone; rankings are usually but not necessarily transitive; the relative status of two individuals may depend, in part, on the proximity of allies; sometimes, the highest ranking position is shared by a coalition of two or three individuals; and it is often easier to identify a male ranking than a female ranking.

Often social psychologists speak about small-group status hierarchies in specifically human terms, ignoring their essential similarity to the

status hierarchies of apes and monkeys. Human hierarchies do have unique characteristics, most obviously their dependence on language and complex cultural knowledge, but these are evolved variations on a basic primate theme.

Some social scientists make the dubious claim that *all* human status structures reflect an evolved (primitive) tendency toward hierarchy. To avoid this fallacy, one can distinguish three kinds of hierarchies: (1) face-to-face hierarchies; (2) formal organization hierarchies, such as those drawn on corporate organization charts; and (3) macrolevel socioeconomic systems (or social classes) of large societies. The last two kinds did not exist prior to the development of agrarian societies 10,000 years ago, and they do not occur among nonhuman primates. While such “modern” structures are permeated by face-to-face hierarchies, they are not themselves face-to-face hierarchies, and they are not based on the same biosocial mechanisms that affect status ranking within primary groups. This encyclopedia entry is concerned solely with face-to-face status hierarchies.

Among higher primates, dominance hierarchies have emergent features beyond simple rank ordering. Members of the group prefer to interact with near peers. The highest ranked members (the leaders) perform service and control functions for other members and for the group as a whole, directing relations with other groups and defense against threats to the membership. Social control within the group, including the allocation of status, is achieved partly by high-ranked members’ manipulating the stress of low-ranked members.

### Allocating Ranks

A common misunderstanding is that dominance rank is attained solely by force or aggression, the imposition of the strong on the weak. To the contrary, especially among apes and humans, status interactions are typically nonviolent, often subtle, and, in human terms, “polite” and conforming to accepted norms. High rank may be a prize for which to compete, but it can also result from unforced deference by other group members. Only rarely does competition for rank escalate beyond normal limits, more often among young adult males. Most of us live our adult lives in continual status interaction without overt threat or violence.

Dominance hierarchies, once set, are fairly stable. But when a group newly forms, there must be an initial allocation of ranks, and in established groups, some individuals occasionally alter their positions. How are these initial rankings, and later changes in rank, determined? The short answer is that ranks are allocated either cooperatively, by consensus of those involved, or competitively, when there is disagreement over who should be superior.

Every individual has certain observable signs (or signals) that suggest his or her social status is (or ought to be) high or low. Some status signs are limited to a particular species, such as the silver hair on the back of a dominant male gorilla. Others are similar across primate species. For example, large size, physical strength, vigor, good health, being adult (vs. being juvenile), being male, and (among the higher primate species) having a high-ranked mother are all signs associated with high status, while their opposites suggest low status. For humans, wearing expensive and fashionable clothing is a signal of high status. A beautiful wife, desirable to other men or having a rich dowry, gives prestige to her husband; a rich or powerful husband or protector elevates a woman's perceived rank. Status signs precipitate *expectation states* in the theoretical work of Joseph Berger and his colleagues.

Visualize two females, Ego and Alter, meeting for the first time. If their interaction is very brief or casual, the notion of ranking may never arise. In more extended or serious meetings, each will appraise the status signs of the other, forming some idea of their relative standings. If Ego perceives that Alter's status signs exceed her own, she may immediately defer to Alter. Ego, in explaining such concessions, may offer that Alter belongs in the higher rank, that Alter deserves it, that Alter could easily take it if Ego resisted, or that Alter will be more *competent* in the duties of high rank.

If Ego and Alter do not agree on their relative ranks, the outcome may be decided by one or more short dominance contests between them. A mechanism postulated to operate across primate species is that each individual attempts to "out-stress" or intimidate his or her opponent. The one that succeeds becomes dominant, the other subordinate. As an example, the eyes of two male strangers, Ego and Alter, meet by chance across a room. Ego decides to hold the glance. The chance eye contact

now becomes a dominance contest. Ego's stare makes Alter uncomfortable. Alter may avert his eyes, thus relieving his discomfort while in effect surrendering, or he may stare back, making Ego uncomfortable in return. In the latter case, the "stare-down" continues, with each individual trying to out-stress the other until finally one of the two succumbs to the discomfort (and to the challenger) by averting his eyes. The matter thus settled, the yielder usually avoids further eye contact although the winner may occasionally look at the loser as if to verify his victory. In this context, staring is an assertive sign of high status. Eye aversion is a deferent sign associated with low status.

### Conversation

Speech is the major and unique means of human face-to-face communication, and it provides a large number of status signs. These may be conveyed by specific words ("I came, I saw, I conquered" vs. "I am the dust beneath your feet"), by accompanying gestures (a pointed finger vs. averted eyes), or by intonations (loud and commanding vs. soft and hesitant).

Conversation between Ego and Alter is, by definition, a series of turns in which each person talks while the other listens. Two rules normally regulate turn taking:

1. If one individual is speaking, the other should remain quiet.
2. A listener who is offered the floor should speak.

Violating either of these rules is a dominant action. If both people violate them, there is a dominance contest, with each trying to speak over the other or interrupting the other. An alternative means of acting dominantly is to remain silent while the other person offers you the floor. Such violations are stressful. The contest is resolved, and the situation becomes more comfortable, when one person acquiesces and follows the appropriate rules.

There are other conversational rules of which most of us are consciously unaware but which we nearly all follow. For example, do not look into another person's eyes when no one is speaking (unless in a romantic context or at a distance well beyond normal conversational range), and look at

the speaker's face, particularly if the speaker is looking at you. Violating such rules sends a dominant signal, while following them strictly is a deferential signal. A conversational dominance contest may be so subtle that it is barely perceptible, even to the contenders.

### Testosterone

Testosterone is produced by both sexes but to a greater extent in males than in females. Testosterone is the hormone that is essential for the development of male characteristics in the fetus and the adolescent; however, this entry focuses on circulating testosterone in men. Testosterone is not the most important determinant of dominance, but it promotes dominant behavior. The relationship is reciprocal; that is, changes in dominance behavior or social status also cause changes in testosterone level. Among men athletes, for example, testosterone rises shortly before their matches, as if in anticipation of the competition. After matches, testosterone is higher in winners than in losers. Hypothetically, this provides a feedback loop in which success in competition heightens testosterone, which in turn facilitates future competitive success, and so on. On the other hand, a defeat depresses testosterone, which inhibits future competition. This produces a hormone-reinforced momentum, differentiating winners from losers.

Testosterone may be implicated in the aggressive street behavior of U.S. inner cities, where sociologist Elijah Anderson vividly portrayed the importance of dominance contests. He described how facial expressions, gait, and verbal expressions are used by young Black men to make or deter challenges. This environment of continual vigilance and challenge would be expected to elevate testosterone. Indeed, mean testosterone among young, poorly educated Black men is especially high. (High testosterone is not a general characteristic of Black men but is confined to those who are young and poorly educated.) Elevated hormone levels encourage further dominance competition, which occasionally turns violent. Homicides may occur when a dominance contest between friends or acquaintances, begun over a trivial disagreement, explodes in rage. This tragic outcome is facilitated by the presence of alcohol and a weapon.

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*See also* Evolutionary Psychology; Social Dominance Theory; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory

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## DYADS

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Strictly speaking, a dyad is any pair of individuals. However, among psychologists, the term *dyad* is usually restricted to pairs of individuals who are expected to exhibit interdependence or relatedness in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When social psychologists study dyads, they typically are studying interactions between two people who have or might anticipate having an ongoing relationship. That is, their research designs typically involve pairs of individuals who influence one another in some manner and often in many ways.

Technically, dyads are one type of group. At times, the study of dyads deals with the same issues as the study of groups of other sizes might deal with. For instance, an organizational psychologist interested in sharing of information between work colleagues might examine the same issue when studying collaboration in groups of two, three, or four individuals. However, much work on dyads involves the study of intimate relationships (e.g., romantic partners or spouses) that likely include phenomena that simply do not exist at all or in the same form in groups larger than two.

### Ways of Categorizing Dyads

Sometimes dyads are categorized by terms used in common language. For instance, dyads might be referred to as strangers, business partners, enemies, friends, romantic partners, or spouses.

Large bodies of psychological, sociological, and anthropological research are organized around these categories. Sometimes, however, psychologists identify dyads by the nature of the interaction the members of the dyad have with one another. For instance, a dyad might be described as an *exchange relationship* in which each person offers something to the other with the expectation of receiving something in return, or as an *authority-ranking relationship* in which one person follows another's directions by virtue of the status the first one possesses. Dyads also are identified sometimes by the functions that individuals serve for one another. For instance, an *attachment relationship* is one in which one individual (the *attachment figure*) serves as a consistent provider of support, encouragement, and sense of security in times of stress through his or her actions or mere presence, while the other person (an attached child, for instance) is the beneficiary of these provisions.

Large bodies of research are organized around the norms that govern dyadic interaction, the functions that dyads serve for their members, or a combination. Sometimes the distinctions between dyads are qualitative, referring to differences in the form, function, or nature of dyads, and creating categories that are truly nominal in nature. For example, mixed-sex dyads may be distinguished from same-sex dyads, or boss–employee or leader–follower dyads might be distinguished from dyads of coworkers. Often, however, there are substantial quantitative variations among dyads, and even within individual members of a given dyad, in terms of some construct relevant to the dyads' form or function. For instance, dyads can vary in terms of the ongoing degree of responsibility members assume for being noncontingently responsive to one another, how secure or trusting or warm the members feel, how similar they are to each other, or how often their interactions are conflictual. Individuals within a single dyad can vary in many of these ways as well. Researchers may use distinct nominal terms to differentiate dyads that vary along a quantitative dimension, referring (for instance) to secure versus insecure pairs of romantic partners. Yet it is wise for researchers to keep the underlying quantitative dimensions in mind while both theorizing and interpreting findings.

### Dyadic-Level and Individual-Level Variables

Whereas some variables may vary within and across dyads (e.g., whether people care for or trust others may be a result of both individual-difference and relationship-specific factors), other variables are strictly of a dyadic nature and cannot be assessed or conceptualized without thinking in dyadic terms because they describe features of dyads rather than individuals. Examples include the amount of self–partner agreement, similarity, or reciprocity, the length of the relationship, or the relationship type. In addition, some constructs vary only within dyads because they involve a comparison between one person and the other. Power and division of labor are examples.

### Ways in Which Interdependence Between Individuals May Arise

Dyadic *interdependence*—relatedness in thoughts, feelings, and behavior—may arise through a variety of processes, including (a) members of the dyad forming the dyad on the basis of similarity or differences, (b) members of the dyad influencing each other, and (c) members of the dyad experiencing the same events across time.

### Special Considerations When Studying Dyads

Precisely because of the interdependence of thoughts, emotion, and behavior found in dyads, special considerations must be made when analyzing data arising from dyadic studies. Interdependence is empirically indicated when the responses of people within the same dyad are more similar to (or different from) each other than the responses of people who are not in the same dyad. Data analysis techniques such as *intraclass correlation* can be used to assess the degree of interdependence. This interdependence often presents data analysis challenges, depending in part on whether members of the dyad are viewed as *distinguishable*. In distinguishable dyads, a meaningful factor can be used to separate the two members of every dyad. This is often decided theoretically (e.g., *should* gender matter in this analysis?) or empirically (e.g., *does* gender matter in this analysis?). In the distinguishable case, researchers sometimes use the individual as the unit of analysis and employ traditional

analytic techniques such as *analysis of variance*, *Pearson correlation*, and *ordinary least squares regression analysis*, but they do so separately for each level of the member-distinguishing variable (e.g., separate analyses for men and women in a sample of heterosexual couples). Special analytic techniques that use the *dyad* as the unit of analysis, such as *multilevel modeling* and *structural equation modeling*, are often used when dyad members are considered to be indistinguishable (i.e., when no variable meaningfully separates the two members of every dyad). Without conducting separate analyses for each level of a member-distinguishing variable, the interdependent nature of the data violates the independence of observations that more traditional analytic techniques assume and require. Often these special techniques also are employed in the distinguishable case. By modeling outcome variables as correlated across the members of each dyad, these techniques usually provide more accurate parameter estimates than do traditional analytic techniques. More complex designs involve individuals simultaneously belonging to multiple dyads, such as a woman who is both a wife and a mother. Several useful guides for analyzing dyadic data, as well as more in-depth treatments of dyadic analysis, have been published.

### The Importance of Considering Dyadic Context for Understanding Social Phenomena

Social psychology has a tendency to focus on individuals and their reactions to standardized social stimuli. The very nature of social phenomena, however, can vary dramatically by dyadic context. For example, people working on joint tasks for which there will be a reward keep track of individual inputs when working with strangers but actually bend over backwards not to do that when working with friends. Offering repayment for a favor can increase liking within a business dyad yet decrease liking within a friendship. Some researchers have even suggested that we are fundamentally different people when interacting with distinct relationship partners such as a parents, romantic partners, and friends. It behooves researchers studying social processes to routinely ask themselves whether their findings might change if the dyadic context were altered.

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*See also* Attachment Theory; Interdependence Theory; Levels of Analysis; Research Methods and Issues

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## DYNAMICAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

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The *dynamical systems approach* views groups as systems in which collective behavior arises from the flow of information and mutual influence among members. This approach to studying groups uses concepts and methods from systems, chaos, catastrophe, and complexity theories. A *dynamic system* (a general term) is any system that changes over time. A *dynamical system* (a more technical term) is any system whose current state provides a basis for predicting its state in the immediate future. The dynamical systems approach is particularly useful for understanding how groups change over time, whether that means short time spans of minutes and hours or longer

periods of weeks, months, and years. Change includes small fluctuations, rhythmic cycles, and both abrupt and gradual departures from prior patterns.

Scholars who take a dynamical systems approach share an interest in the interplay between stability and instability that underlies continuity and change in groups. This approach has been most commonly applied to collective behavior, from dyads to small groups to crowds and organizations. However, it has also generated theory and research on the patterning of attitudes in groups, on therapeutic outcomes in group members, and on the emotional dynamics of group members. Studies using this approach have demonstrated how the emergence of stable dissenting subgroups is consistent with conformity theories, shown that greater complexity heightens the effectiveness of group therapy, and explained why a modest intervention can have either a small or a dramatically large effect on the accident rates among workers in groups.

### History of Dynamical Systems Approaches to Groups

Most contemporary dynamical systems approaches to modeling groups were developed in the 1980s and 1990s, but precursors were evident decades earlier. Kurt Lewin, one of the founders of group dynamics, proposed an explicitly dynamic approach to studying groups in the 1940s. Application of his field theory approach, however, was hampered by the lack of appropriate methods. In the same era, Robert F. Bales (who was influenced by Lewin) developed one of the earliest methods to measure group interaction, using a fine-grained scale that classified every statement in a group discussion. A statement might be a request for information, for example, or an expression of approval or support. The resulting time series of codes can be examined to detect recurring patterns over time.

A new wave of dynamical systems approaches to groups emerged in the 1980s. A few years earlier, in 1976, mathematician E. C. Zeeman published a *catastrophe model* designed to predict the sudden outbreak of prison riots based on a combination of tension and alienation. Catastrophe models are a set of mathematical models of discontinuous change such as explosions or the sudden collapse of a bridge. However, the adoption of

such analytical techniques by psychologists was not evident until a decade later, after further groundwork adapting catastrophe models to data in the biological and social sciences occurred. The repertoire of dynamical systems applications to psychology was further developed during the rest of the 20th century by applying and adapting methods and concepts from chaos theory and complexity theory. *Chaos theory* revealed that seemingly small events can have a profound impact on how a dynamic system such as a group changes over time. The *complexity theory concept of self-organization*—the spontaneous emergence of new structure and order—provided insight into group formation and the emergence of roles, norms, and routines in member behavior.

### Dynamical Systems Methods for Studying Groups

To study dynamics, groups must be observed at multiple time points. Dynamical systems methods vary widely in the number of time points needed, from a minimum of two for each group to high-quality data streams that provide hundreds or thousands of observations. Data are collected and theory developed and tested via behavioral experiments, coding of group interaction, computer simulation, and mathematical modeling. The results are typically analyzed using graphical plotting techniques, nonlinear regression, and other statistical and mathematical techniques for identifying patterns in time series data. The data may be quantitative or, like Bales's coding of statements, categorical. The best way to illustrate the methods is to describe selected studies that used particular techniques.

### Continuous and Discontinuous Change in Accident Rates

Over several decades of research, evidence accumulated that accident rates in the workplace depend in part on how many people are working together in a subunit. How exactly group size and accidents were related, however, was unclear. Some studies found that accident rates were higher in larger groups, whereas others found that accident rates were highest in smaller or in medium-sized groups. No explanation accounted for these

mixed results until Stephen Guastello applied a *cusp catastrophe model* to the data. Cusp models are a good fit for data in which shifts between two equilibrium states (in this case lower or higher accident rates) are governed by two *control parameters* (features of the operating situation for the group).

The data consisted of accident rates measured at two to four points in time for each subunit. A nonlinear regression analysis of the difference scores (changes in accident rates across time) showed that accidents increased steadily in proportion to environmental hazards (the first control parameter) when units were large. When units were small, however, accident rates could shift abruptly from near zero to much higher rates, and vice versa. Group size was thus the second, *bifurcation* control parameter. The bifurcation is a shift from continuous (smooth, gradual) change to discontinuous (large and abrupt) change with smaller group size. When outcomes fit a nonlinear pattern, as in a catastrophe model, the results from any particular study will depend on what range of hazard conditions and group size was sampled. A catastrophe model made sense of what were apparently contradictory results.

### Chaos and Complexity in Therapeutic Groups

Chaos theory emerged after the unexpected discovery that apparently random dynamic behavior may actually have a complex order. Chaotic patterns were first documented in such phenomena as weather patterns, water turbulence, and dripping faucets. Chaotic dynamics generate behavior that is predictable for a short time but then quickly diverges. This is because very small fluctuations (the proverbial flap of a butterfly's wing) can send a system in a new direction. The empirical study of chaotic dynamics relied on the development of measures of chaos that were eventually applied to other phenomena, including group behavior.

Unlike catastrophe models, which can handle data measured at just a few time points, reliable detection of chaotic patterns requires much longer time series consisting of hundreds and preferably thousands of time points. Analysis of the time series assesses the degree of chaos or complexity that is present. In group research, studies typically investigate

whether the degree of chaos or complexity is associated with some outcome such as creativity, cooperation, or therapeutic effectiveness.

If time series lack adequate length and measurement precision, then reliable detection of chaotic patterning is difficult. Fortunately, less demanding methods are available to measure the complexity of group dynamics. In the past decade, group research has shifted away from attempts to identify chaotic patterns and toward measuring complexity as something that varies both across groups and within groups across time.

In the 1990s, Addie Fuhriman and Gary Burlingame and colleagues analyzed data from four therapy groups that each met for 15 sessions lasting 2 hours each. Every verbal utterance of every participant was coded for therapeutic quality on a 16-point scale, generating around 14,000 codes per group. After calculating the *fractal dimension* (a measure of complexity) for the time series of codes from each of the 15 group sessions, their analysis showed that the average level of therapeutic quality in a session was higher when group members' interaction was more complex—in other words, showed a greater variety of patterning. Other researchers have used fractal dimensions and related measures to study the process of self-organization in groups.

### Self-Organization in Group Formation

Self-organization is the process by which mutual influence among interacting components generates pattern and structure at a collective level. For small groups, David Pincus has characterized these emergent structures as the rules, roles, relationships, and realities (systems of shared beliefs) that develop through social interaction and shape the responses of group members to each other. As patterns emerge, behavior becomes more predictable. Pincus and colleagues have studied self-organization in groups by recording and analyzing the sequencing of contributions from different group members to measure the number and length of conversational patterns. Both conflict between and closeness among group members are positively associated with the emergence of orderly patterns of interaction.

Using a different methodology, Bibb Latané and colleagues studied the impact of interpersonal

influence on a large set of people with previously uncoordinated opinions. They used a simple computer model called a *cellular automata*, which is like a large checkerboard on which every chip (every *node*) can be one of two colors (red or blue, for example). The colors might represent a preference among two political candidates, a judgment of guilty or not guilty, or any set of two contrasting attitudes. At the starting point of the simulation, the “attitudes” of the nodes are set at random. However, at each subsequent time step, the color (the preference) is determined by the influence exerted by a node’s neighbors, who are also either red or blue. Closer neighbors exert stronger influence than more distant neighbors do. In the simulation that Latané and colleagues used, the “nodes” also varied randomly in how persuasive they were and how “supportive” they were of like-minded neighbors. The result of repeated interactions among nodes is that the initially random distribution quickly reorganizes into coherent areas of like-minded nodes. Even if the checkerboard as a whole turns mostly one color, however, pockets of the other color also form and persist because of the mutual support of close neighbors. These computer models provided an elegant illustration of how stable dissenting subgroups can quickly develop and stabilize even in the face of a much larger majority with a different view. The simulation results were later replicated with laboratory studies in which real people interacted on computers and shared their views with those who were closest to them in a social network.

All these studies fit within the dynamical systems framework, based on their use of methods and measures especially suited both to studying changes in group outcomes and to illuminating the dynamic processes that generate these changes.

Holly Arrow

*See also* Computer Simulation; Emergent Norm Theory; Group Development; Group Formation; Group Structure; Informational Influence; Social Entrainment; System Theory

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## EMERGENT NORM THEORY

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An old joke runs along the following lines. Herald: “The peasants are revolting, My Lord!” Lord: “I know, quite disgusting.” Representations of crowds since at least the Middle Ages have been characterized by this kind of “fear of the masses.” Crowds were seen as dangerous, unpredictable, chaotic, threatening, and inhuman, in that they lacked the capacity for reason and restraint. Familiar phrases such as “the baying crowd” and “the herd instinct” illustrate this infrahumanization. In the 19th century, industrialization and urbanization gave the masses more chances to congregate, and scholars such as Gustave Le Bon continued to emphasize the irrational and chaotic aspects of crowd behavior. In the 20th century, influenced by the prevailing intellectual climate of humanism and the writings of Karl Marx, scholars realized that there was a method to crowds’ apparent madness and that the behavior of violent and terrifying crowds is seldom entirely random. *Emergent norm theory*, the brainchild of the sociologists Ralph H. Turner and Lewis Killian, was one of the most important contributions in this vein.

Like many other sociologists and social psychologists—most notably their contemporary, Muzafer Sherif—Turner and Killian assumed that social behavior is driven by norms. Specifically, they suggested that in extraordinary circumstances, such as civic emergencies and certain types of crowd situations, the mundane norms that govern the course of our everyday lives no longer apply. New norms are required and are created by the crowd.

The type of crowd of most interest to Turner and Killian is the crowd that is not governed by established rules, has no predetermined leaders or leadership structure, and has no formal, prearranged mechanisms for making decisions or selecting leaders. The crowd ought to have been drawn together by a precipitating event that is the focus of the crowd members’ attention, such as a flood, an earthquake, a war, a protest, a strike, or even a power cut that disables the normal mechanisms of authority.

According to Turner and Killian, a key characteristic of such a crowd is that its members share a sense of both uncertainty and urgency. The precise nature of the event that has brought the group together may not always be clear. Crucially, the ultimate outcome of the event and the crowd situation is difficult to determine. There is no agreement in advance on what the crowd is trying to achieve and how. In addition, the crowd can exist only for a limited time and has only a limited time to act. Thus when the crowd first forms, people ask each other questions like, “What’s happened—was it an accident or a terrorist attack?”; “What’s going to happen next?”; “What should we do?”; “What should I do?”; and “Who will act?” Turner and Killian labeled this process of investigations, questions, and rumors *milling*. Through the process of milling, the initial uncertainty experienced by the crowd is reduced, and a shared understanding of the situation begins to emerge.

In the next stage of the formation of emergent norms, called *keynoting*, individuals make positive suggestions for action. A *keynote* can consist of a

verbal suggestion made to the crowd or some part of it (e.g., “Let’s storm the ramparts”), or it can simply consist of a distinctive action (e.g., an individual spontaneously mounting the ramparts, setting an example for others). Keynotes are more likely to be accepted if they converge with the predispositions of a large part of the crowd. For example, if many people in the crowd are angry, aggressive keynotes are likely to be influential. Eventually, through keynoting, a dominant understanding of what is right and wrong in the situation is determined, and the urgency of the crowd is focused on a specific course of action.

At this point, an emergent norm has formed, including a shared definition of the situation and a shared understanding of which behaviors are right or wrong in the circumstances. Initially rather formless and unsure, the crowd appears now to behave with some logic and purpose, and to be capable of enforcing its new norm. Thus, via processes of normative influence that are familiar to social psychologists, crowd members begin to experience pressure to conform to the implicit norm that they perceive to be taking shape. By conforming to this new norm, crowd members influence those around them, who infer from these members’ conformity that the norm is widely accepted.

Turner and Killian point out that the emergent norm does not produce unanimity in the crowd. There is no “group mind” in emergent norm theory. If unanimity appears to exist, it is an illusion reinforced by pluralistic ignorance, a process in which the silence of dissenters is taken for assent. The active and apparently enthusiastic participation of crowd members may be attributable to any number of motives apart from the desire to further the interests of the collective or to validate its norms. This point—that as the situation unfolds, individuals feel and act differently and participate for different reasons—is crucial to emergent norm theory and distinguishes it from other theoretical accounts of crowd behavior.

Turner and Killian flesh out this point by describing different types of participants that one might expect to find in a crowd situation and outlining their motives and how they might behave. The *committed* feel little uncertainty about the appropriate cause of action; they are highly identified with the collective and have a sense of common fate with it. These

crowd members act with little hesitation or vociferously suggest courses of action, and they are very likely to be prominent keynoters. In contrast, the *concerned*, while sharing the sense of common fate possessed by the committed, are sure that something should be done, but are uncertain about what. Although they are unlikely to keynote, they are likely to attend closely to, and eventually accept and act on, suggestions from others. Some participants are not highly invested in the crowd but merely want to see what happens; these people are termed *curious spectators* by Turner and Killian. Still other members of the crowd are *exploiters*, who have shown up merely to capitalize on all the fuss, perhaps for the sheer thrill of violence and destruction, perhaps for loot, to pick pockets, or even to sell souvenirs. Like curious spectators, the failure of exploiters to resist the emergent norm is liable to be taken as support for it. Even though curious spectators are passive and disengaged, and mercenary crowd members are exploiters, the active participants in the crowd are likely to see these individuals’ presence and failure to intervene as tacit signs of approval. In this way, they contribute to the growing illusion of unanimity among crowd members.

### Critiques of Emergent Norm Theory

The descriptive terminology of emergent norm theory is impressive in its intuitive appeal, its vividness, and its detail. Ironically, however, its descriptive felicity has attracted some of its most telling critiques. A problem that many critics have had with the theory is that it tends too often to describe rather than genuinely to explain crowd behavior. If we understand much of emergent norm theory as a causal analysis, it turns out to be circular. Thus Clark McPhail, the sociologist who has published perhaps the most sustained critique of emergent norm theory, notes that exploiters are so designated because they show up and try to capitalize on the situation, curious spectators earn their label by turning up to watch, and the committed are so called because they care about the issue that has brought the crowd together and have strong views on what to do about it. The theory does not specify what causes different people to adopt these roles. Neither does it lay out the conditions that determine

whether a crowd will organize itself along individualistic lines or more collectivistic lines based on solidarity. Further, it is not altogether clear why some keynotes achieve influence and others do not. Turner and Killian argue that “distinctive” individuals and behaviors are likely to shape the emergent norm, but they do not spell out what they mean, exactly, by distinctiveness. Steven Reicher points out that if emergent norm theory ultimately attributes the behavior of crowds to the lead of a handful of distinctive individuals, it weakens its own claim to be a theory of collective behavior proper.

More generally, critics have pointed out that it is not clear in what sense the “collective behavior” of crowds is different from the aggregated behavior of the individuals who comprise the crowd. For example, McPhail argues that while psychological states such as “uncertainty” and “urgency” can be ascribed to individual crowd members, it is not clear they can be ascribed to the collective, at least without resurrecting the group mind hypothesis.

Critics have also alleged that the theory is not specific about how crowds form and are organized. Where emergent norm theory does make clear predictions, empirical support is mixed. For example, according to the theory, rumor is central to the formation of crowds and occurs throughout the milling process. However, field studies of events involving crowds, such as the Detroit riots of 1967, showed that more participants heard about the riots through the mass media than by rumor.

Empirical studies of crowds have produced other problems for emergent norm theory. For example, the theory predicts that conformity to crowd behavior should be strongest when crowd members are identifiable, as participants perceive that the crowd will reward compliance and punish deviance. In contrast to this prediction, most relevant research findings suggest that people are more susceptible to crowd influence when they are anonymous rather than identifiable, and when they are low rather than high in self-awareness. These findings are consistent with deindividuation accounts of crowd behavior.

Other critiques have focused on the extent to which the long-standing norms of the group and the societies in which they are embedded are left behind when crowds form, requiring entirely new

norms to emerge. Critics from various perspectives have asked whether there is really a radical discontinuity between the norms that govern our everyday lives and those that govern crowd situations. One reason to reject the notion of such a discontinuity is that few, if any, crowds are composed of individuals who spontaneously gather with little or no prior history of association. Field studies show that there is some kind of prior organization in most events involving crowds. Also, people tend not to show up alone, but in family, friendship, or peer groups. Once there, people tend to influence and look out for each other, according to their shared and ongoing norms.

Research by Reicher and his colleagues shows that the ongoing social identities and associated normative codes of crowd members, whether as environmental protestors, anarchists, or police, have a profound effect on their behavior in crowd situations. According to their social identity model of deindividuation effects, the creative potential of crowds lies in the ability of their participants to discover group norms that may not have been apparent to them before, and to transform and adapt group norms in light of the new situation.

Despite the many criticisms that have been leveled at emergent norm theory, even its critics have acknowledged the many valuable insights that it contributed to the study of crowds. In particular, its point that crowds have an energizing and creative potential, but nonetheless behave in rational, systematic, and normative ways, has been highly influential. We still have cause to fear some crowds, but it is clear that we should no longer regard them as lacking in all human reason or constraint.

*Robbie M. Sutton*

*See also* Crowds; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Deindividuation; Depersonalization; Group Mind; Normative Influence; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Impact Theory

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## ENTITATIVITY

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Research on the perception of *entitativity* addresses the question, “How do we come to see a collection of people as a group?” Entitativity is the degree to which groups are perceived as having the nature of an entity. Thus the perception of entitativity lies at the core of a wide variety of processes that involve groups. It is connected to numerous important processes in intergroup perception and in intergroup relations. This entry distinguishes entitativity from another important group feature, similarity, and discusses the consequences of entitativity for information processing, stereotype formation, collective responsibility, and social identity.

### Perceived Entitativity and Its Antecedents

#### *Perceived Entitativity*

What is entitativity? Entitativity can refer either to the actual *properties* of the group (in which case it is comparable to group cohesion) or to the *perception* of the group as a viable entity rather than a mere collection of people. The research on entitativity in the last decade has mainly focused on how we perceive aggregates of people to be meaningful and unified groups. It answers questions such as these: How and when do we perceive that a given collectivity has the properties that constitute a group? What does it mean for an observer to see an aggregate of individuals as “a group”? Entitativity can be seen as the glue that holds (or is perceived as holding) a group together, the “groupness” or unity of a group. We can observe that

some aggregates of people qualify as groups more than do others. Thus groups vary along a continuum of entitativity on which groups are ordered according to the extent that they are perceived as being “real entities.”

#### *Cues for Perceived Entitativity*

What features influence the degree of entitativity that is perceived in a given group? The perception of entitativity can be based on several different cues. A comparison can be drawn between the perception of objects and the perception of groups. Physical stimuli that are *similar* to each other are more likely to be perceived as part of the same object. In the same vein, perceived similarity among persons enhances the likelihood that those persons will be perceived as a group. Also, physical elements that are seen as moving together in the same direction are perceived as members of the same physical entity. Similarly, persons whose activities are coordinated because they share a *common goal*, and who therefore share a *common fate*, will be more likely to be perceived as a group. Furthermore, the amount of *interaction* among group members, the *importance* of the group to its members, and the *group’s organization and efficiency* facilitate the perception of entitativity.

#### *Types of Groups*

As already noted, groups differ in the level of entitativity they possess. In addition, empirical research has shown that people spontaneously recognize systematic differences among certain types of groups in daily life interactions. The three main types of groups that have been distinguished are intimacy groups, task groups, and social categories. *Intimacy groups* (e.g., family, close friends, support groups) are small groups with high levels of interaction; membership is important to their members, the groups have long histories, and membership in the group tends to be longlasting. *Task groups* (e.g., a committee, a jury, a unit of engineers, members of a professional sports team) are also relatively small and highly interactive, and their members have shared goals and common outcomes. However, task groups are less important to their members than are intimacy groups,

and they are of shorter duration and easier to join and leave. *Social categories* (e.g., women, Blacks, Democrats, Europeans) are very large groups with long histories, relatively impermeable group boundaries, and lower levels of interactions among their members.

These three major types of groups seem to correspond to three important social needs that characterize human beings: belongingness, goal achievement, and a secure sense of self and social identity. Intimacy groups provide the means for members to satisfy the need for belongingness through emotional attachment, love, acceptance, and social support. Participation in task groups helps an individual in achieving goals through mastery, cohesion, success, and efficacy. People also have a strong need to establish and maintain a stable and secure sense of self and social identity. They frequently derive this social identity from the broad range of social categories to which they belong, and this identity can aid in creating positive self-esteem. Often people take pride in their group memberships in large social categories, such as religious, ethnic, or national groups. Thus, perceivers' recognition of these different group types and functions can help them in meeting and fulfilling important social needs.

In addition, these three group types differ in their perceived level of entitativity. People see intimacy groups as very tight-knit groups. Task groups are also seen as meaningful and unified entities, but to a lesser extent than intimacy groups. Finally, social categories are perceived as only moderately entitative groups.

### Consequences of Perceived Entitativity

#### *Information Processing*

The degree of perceived entitativity of a group has important consequences for how individuals process information about groups. Group information is processed differently for groups that are perceived as high in entitativity than for groups that are perceived as low in entitativity. When processing information about a highly entitative group, people spontaneously form an organized impression from the entire group, and this mental image remains consistent across time and situations. The perceivers' assumption is that highly entitative

groups have unified, organized "personalities," and so they try to fit the available information into a coherent impression. Thus, information inconsistent with the existent impression about a highly entitative group needs to be further processed and explained. An important consequence of this more extended, integrative processing of information about unified, meaningful groups is that people remember information better about these groups than about groups that are low in entitativity.

Furthermore, when people receive behavioral information about an *individual group member* of a highly entitative group, they abstract a group characteristic or trait from this behavior and generalize this trait to other group members. For example, if John is a member of a highly entitative group, and he acts in a very intelligent manner, perceivers will infer that other members of the group are also likely to be intelligent. They therefore will label their group as a whole as "an intelligent group." In this way, people treat highly entitative groups as categories, and they develop prototypic representations of these categories. Thus, a certain group becomes associated with a specific configuration of characteristics and traits (e.g., members of Group A are then seen as intelligent, organized, diplomatic but vain). All of these effects are more likely to occur when the group is perceived to be high, rather than low, in entitativity.

#### *Stereotyping*

People's perception of highly entitative groups as meaningful units and generalization of group traits and features across all members comes very close to the act of stereotyping. Stereotyping consists of assigning psychological attributes to group members on the basis of their membership alone. It is an overgeneralization of attributes across all group members. A stereotype itself is a mental representation of a group and its properties, an abstract conception expressed in very general terms. Perceiving a group as being highly entitative leads people to form an abstract representation of the group based on information about individual group members. In this way, members of highly entitative groups come to be perceived as sharing the qualities inferred about other group members, even if the observers don't possess any actual

information about the behavior of the other group members. The consequence of this process is that, in the mind of the perceiver, members of highly entitative groups become psychologically interchangeable with each other.

This perceived interchangeability constitutes an important aspect of stereotyping. If all group members are seen as sharing the same attributes, then generalizing about the group as a whole becomes easier and seems more reasonable. For example, because John acted in a very intelligent way, perceivers abstract the trait “the group is intelligent” and consequently assign this psychological attribute to all members of the group. Hence all group members come to be seen as intelligent.

### *Collective Responsibility*

Another consequence of perceiving a group as high in entitativity is known as *collective responsibility*. Members of highly entitative groups are seen as sharing responsibility for other members’ behavior. If one member of a highly entitative group commits a wrongdoing (criminal or not), then other group members are perceived as being partially responsible for the act, even if they were not directly involved in the misdeed. Other members of the group are seen as collectively responsible for the act simply because they are all part of a tight-knit group. Members of a highly entitative group may be assumed to share responsibility because they share the same views, the same ideology, and the same overall goals as the wrongdoer. The group members of a highly entitative group also might be seen as collectively responsible because they should have been able to prevent the wrongdoer from performing the inappropriate act. Judgments of collective responsibility rest on and are derived from the perception of a group’s entitativity, and do not occur in groups perceived to be low in entitativity.

### **Perceived Entitativity and Perceived Similarity**

One difficulty with the concept of entitativity is that it is sometimes difficult to disentangle its content from that of a number of other group features. Entitativity is often confused with similarity, one

of its important cues. *Similarity* is defined as the extent to which group members are alike on a number of dimensions, for example, goals, personality traits, lifestyle, behavior, and physical appearance. Although similarity is an important predictor of the perception of entitativity, similarity by itself does not provide a complete understanding of perceived entitativity. In fact, entitativity and similarity clearly dissociate under certain circumstances. Similarity is especially an important cue for the perception of entitativity in social categories. All members of a social category share some feature (gender, race, religion, nationality)—that is exactly what binds those groups together. In this way it can be an important cue to the entitativity of some groups. However, similarity is considered a less important indication for entitativity for some other types of groups, such as task and intimacy groups. Of all groups, the family is among the highest in entitativity. Yet a husband, a wife, and a baby are less similar to each other, in spite of their being a strong entity, than the baby is to other babies, or the husband to other men, or the wife to other women. For task and intimacy groups, perceptions of entitativity draw more on common goals, the close interaction among members, and the importance of the group to its members than on the extent of similarities among members.

Furthermore, people tend to see the groups they belong to as more unified and meaningful than other groups. Group members value their membership in their own groups, and generally perceive them as being higher in entitativity than groups to which they do not belong. Conversely, they perceive more variation among members of their own groups than among members of groups to which they do not belong. These differences in perceptions of entitativity and similarity in groups to which one does and does not belong illustrate that similarity and entitativity are perceived differently depending on membership status.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the perception of entitativity as reflecting the “groupness” of a group occupies a place at the very heart of social group processing. Perceptions of entitativity influence how people process group information in several ways. The concept of entitativity predicts stereotype formation

and provides insight into why people generate stereotypes. Individuals form a coherent, consistent mental representation of the highly entitative groups they encounter in daily life, and they generalize this representation across all its members. Entitativity also is highly functional and helps people to organize and structure their environment. People spontaneously categorize themselves and others into groups. Subsequently, they generalize typical group features across all the members, which is known as stereotyping. Because of the promising value of entitativity in fulfilling characteristic human needs, individuals feel more committed to highly entitative groups.

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*See also* Essentialism; Group Cohesiveness; Perceived Group Variability; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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resources. Faced with this dilemma, individuals often invest further in the failing course of action. *Escalation of commitment* is considered a decision-making bias and is often seen as an economically irrational act. This is because the initial invested resources are sunk costs (costs that have been incurred and cannot be recovered), which should be ignored in subsequent resource allocation decisions. Escalation of commitment has also been termed the sunk cost effect, entrapment behavior, and the “too much invested to quit” problem. This entry examines various expressions of this behavior and possible explanations.

#### Importance

Escalation of commitment has been implicated in many arenas, ranging from individual decisions to organizational investments to governmental policies. Individuals have been shown to escalate their commitments in financial investments, auction bidding, and romantic relationships, as well as in decisions about hiring, firing, and promoting employees. At the organizational level, escalation of commitment has resulted in many multimillion-dollar decision errors. For instance, innovations, construction of plants, acquisitions, and loan decisions have all been shown to involve escalation of commitment.

Escalation effects have even been found to influence professional basketball players' playing time: Players who were higher draft choices gained more subsequent playing time than was merited by their productivity on the court. There have also been demonstrations of escalation at the governmental level. The province of British Columbia's decision to host the world's fair (Expo 86) involved escalation of commitment, resulting in millions of dollars of losses. And, at the national and international level, wars and extended conflict (e.g., the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq) are perhaps the most costly examples of escalation.

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## ESCALATION OF COMMITMENT

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Escalation situations are contexts where individuals have invested resources (usually money, but also time or energy) in pursuit of a particular goal, but after making scant progress toward the goal, they must decide to withdraw or commit additional

#### Background and Causes

One of the primary causes of escalation of commitment is the individual's need to justify or rationalize his or her initial choice. By investing additional resources in a losing course of action, decision makers have the opportunity to demonstrate to themselves

and others that their initial decisions were, in fact, worthwhile and “rational” investments.

To illustrate the importance of justification, Barry Staw conducted one of the earliest and most well-known studies on escalation. In this study, business students were asked to play the role of a corporate financial officer in charge of making an important investment decision. Their task was to allocate research and development (R&D) funds to one of two operating divisions of a company that had recently experienced a decline in earnings. Half of the participants allocated the R&D funds to a particular division, were given feedback on their decision, and were then asked to make a second allocation of R&D funds. The other half of the participants did not make the initial investment decision themselves but were told that it was made by another of the company’s financial officers. Feedback was manipulated so that half of the participants received positive results on the initial decisions and half received negative feedback.

The results showed that participants allocated significantly more money to failing divisions than to successful divisions, and the effects were most pronounced when *they*, rather than another individual, were responsible for the initial investment decision. These findings have been replicated by other laboratory studies as well as field research on issues such as the write-off of nonperforming bank loans. Such findings suggest that decision makers often seek to justify an ineffective course of action by increasing their commitment to it. Thus, although economic actors should be prospectively rational and ignore sunk costs, individuals who escalate their commitment appear to be “retrospectively rational,” honoring sunk costs in their subsequent investment decisions.

Although justification is a key psychological cause of escalation of commitment, researchers have systematically tried to examine other factors that can contribute to and exacerbate escalation. These escalation causes can be psychological, project related, social, or organizational. In addition to justification processes, there are numerous psychological causes of escalation. For example, people are most likely to escalate their commitment if their initial decisions are unambiguous, freely chosen, and open declarations. The way people search for and process information can also affect their escalation tendencies, because individuals tend to

search for confirming evidence that helps them to justify past outcomes rather than predict future outcomes.

Similarly, because escalation decisions generally involve losses, people may have a tendency to be more risk seeking in allocating additional resources. This is because losses are generally more painful than objectively equivalent gains are pleasurable. Therefore, although people may be more risk averse in gain situations (to retain the gains), they tend to take more risks in loss situations (to prevent or recoup losses), resulting in escalation of commitment. Finally, long-term personality differences can also increase escalation, with individuals focused on striving for personal achievement more likely to be subject to escalation tendencies.

Project-related causes pertain to objective features of a project or decision. For instance, escalation of commitment is more likely to occur when decision makers believe that there is hope of turning around a losing course of action, which in turn may be more likely to occur when the negative feedback is ambiguous or temporary. Similarly, if the investment payoff is very large or if the costs associated with escalating are deemed to be small, individuals may be more willing to keep escalating.

Social causes often become involved when escalation decisions occur in interpersonal contexts. For instance, when individuals make their investment decisions in public, they can feel a greater need to persist in a losing course of action so that they can save face in front of others. The need for face saving may be particularly strong if individuals’ personal identities are tied to an investment decision. For example, leaders who are strongly identified with a losing course of action may persist simply because consistency and persistence (rather than inconsistency and withdrawal) are patterns of leadership behavior valued by the general public.

Thus, although much initial research on escalation involved simple situations where only one person made an investment decision, subsequent research has identified escalation as a broader social phenomenon. One example of this is auction bidding, where escalation of commitment can occur when multiple parties try to outbid each other. In these and other social settings, factors such as competitiveness and rivalry can further fuel escalation of commitment.



Finally, when we consider the wider context in which escalation decisions often occur, it becomes apparent that organizational factors can also contribute to escalation of commitment. Projects may gain political support over time and become increasingly central to an organization's mission and culture. Projects can also gather supporters as resources and careers become increasingly staked to a course of action. Therefore, decisions that start with the actions of a single manager (or small group of managers) can subsequently grow into major commitments by an entire organization. Once decisions have become embedded within the organizational context, they may also be especially difficult to undo, even when withdrawal is in the organization's best interests.

As outlined above, individual needs to justify decisions are often a starting point for escalation. However, numerous other factors can contribute to the decision-making bias, especially when escalation decisions are viewed as occurring in social and organizational contexts. Because so many factors may contribute to escalation of commitment, escalation can be very difficult to prevent.

Some research has considered how to reverse the causes of escalation to help individuals and organizations de-escalate. For instance, escalation of commitment can be minimized by having a neutral party (someone not involved in the initial investment and the need to justify it) determine the wisdom of allocating further resources to the initial course of action. Nonetheless, there is often a natural momentum toward escalation that can compound early losses into larger and potentially dire consequences for individuals and organizations alike.

*Gillian Ku and Barry Staw*

*See also* Cognitive Consistency; Self-Esteem

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## ESSENTIALISM

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*Essentialism* is a philosophical position on the nature of categories. An essentialist view holds that members of a category all share an inner essence that makes them what they are. Whether or not philosophers agree, people often *believe* that categories have essences, a belief known as psychological essentialism. Some of the categories that may be seen to have essences are social categories or groups. Social psychologists have recently taken an interest in essentialist thinking about groups because it seems to play an important role in stereotyping and prejudice. There is growing evidence that people who perceive groups in essentialist ways are more likely than others to hold negative attitudes toward group members and are more likely to make rapid stereotypical judgments about people on the basis of their group membership.

This entry will discuss the concept of essentialism and review evidence for the role that essentialist beliefs play in group processes and intergroup relations. It first discusses the meaning of essentialism and what it means to have an essentialist perception of a social group. It then reviews research on essentialist thinking in relation to race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, emphasizing how essentialism is implicated in perceptions, attitudes, and social behavior. It concludes with some remarks about why it is important to study people's beliefs about the fundamental nature of social divisions.

### What Is Essentialist Thinking?

Among philosophers, a category that is believed to have an essence is known as a natural kind. A *natural kind* is a naturally existing class of objects that share deep-seated similarities, with biological species and chemical elements usually offered as examples. All tigers share underlying similarities, as

do all things made of silver—genetic material in one case, and an atomic structure in the other—and these essential similarities make them what they are. Silver is essentially different from a superficially similar metal such as platinum, and a tiger remains a tiger even if it is dressed up to look like a lion.

Philosophers tend to deny that most categories do, in fact, have identity-defining essences, but laypeople often hold essentialist intuitions all the same. People tend to believe that all tigers are fundamentally alike and that what makes them so is some unchanging and unobservable quality of tigerness. They may not know precisely what that essence is, but they generally believe what someone with suitable expertise could tell them. Social psychologists and anthropologists have shown that these intuitions extend beyond the domain of folk biology into folk sociology: People often think that some social groups are like natural kinds.

Essentialist beliefs about social groups appear to have several distinct components. Essentialist thinking involves a belief that a social group is natural and that it has a biological basis. It involves a belief that membership in the group is all-or-nothing: Someone either is in the group or is not. It involves a belief that the group is unchanged through history and that a group member cannot easily cease to be a group member: Membership is immutable. Finally, essentialist thinking implies a belief that similarities between group members are deep-seated rather than merely superficial. To see a group in a nonessentialist fashion—as based on social conventions rather than biology, as fuzzy, as culturally shaped and changeable—is to view it as a social construct.

Social groups are not all equally essentialized. Research suggests that groups based on race, ethnicity, and gender are most essentialized, with people commonly inferring that their distinctive physical features spring from underlying biological differences. In some cases, people may even see differences between races or genders as akin to the differences between biological species. Thus groups differ in the degree to which they are essentialized, and people differ in the degree to which they essentialize groups. The implications of these differences between groups and between people are explored as follows.

### Implications of Essentialist Beliefs

There is ample evidence from several countries that racial and ethnic groups are often highly essentialized—even by young children. It has been argued that essentialist beliefs are inaccurate in this domain because racial and ethnic groups are products of history, have no essential commonalities, and do not represent discrete types. Nevertheless, the visible, embodied nature of ethnic differences seems to promote essentialist thinking, as does people's tendency to selectively reproduce within such groups so that ethnicity appears to be transmitted genetically. The attitudes of people who believe that differences between people, and especially racial differences, are genetically determined have been shown to be more negative toward ethnic outgroups (e.g., Germans' attitudes toward Turks, and White Americans' attitudes toward Black Americans).

Holding essentialist beliefs about race also has interesting behavioral implications. In a study of Asian Americans, those who essentialized race had more difficulty negotiating their bicultural identities and switching between their cultural frames than those who did not. Thus in addition to fostering negative views of ethnic outgroups, essentialist beliefs appear to lead people to see ethnic differences as deep and difficult to bridge.

Gender categories are also commonly essentialized, even by young children. For this reason, people tend to infer that the genders differ in fundamental, unchanging, and nonobvious ways and to exaggerate differences between them. People who endorse higher levels of essentialist thinking—belief in genetic determinism, in this case—tend to show more sexist attitudes toward women. These implications extend to people's relationship to their own gender, as women who believe that gender differences are biologically based tend to see themselves in stereotypically feminine ways.

Essentialist thinking about gender also influences behavior. One study showed that fathers who held more essentialist beliefs about gender differences provided less direct care for their young children and were less involved with them. There is some evidence that men are more likely to essentialize gender than women, and it has been argued that this is consistent with the view that essentialist beliefs make existing status

imbalances between men and women seem natural and inevitable.

Essentialist beliefs about sexual orientation are intriguingly different in their implications from beliefs about race, ethnicity, and gender. Homosexuality usually is not seen as essentialized to the same degree as race and gender. In addition, whereas essentialist beliefs about race and gender tend to be associated with negative attitudes, similar beliefs about homosexuality are often linked to positive attitudes. People with more favorable attitudes toward gay people tend to believe that homosexuality has a biological basis that is unchangeable and inborn, whereas more prejudiced people tend to believe that it represents an immoral or perverse choice. Even if people with antigay attitudes have anti-essentialist beliefs in this way, however, they also have essentialist beliefs that sexual orientations are deep-seated, discrete (i.e., either-or), and linked to many differences between people.

### Why Essentialist Beliefs Matter

The research sketched in this entry demonstrates that people's beliefs about the nature of social groups are important for their group perceptions, attitudes, and social behavior. Other research shows that it is not just beliefs about particular social groups that matter: People who believe that human attributes in general are fixed, biologically based, and deep-seated tend to endorse stereotypes of a wide variety of social groups. Essentialist thinking promotes stereotyping, antipathy to many social groups, acceptance of existing social inequalities, and a tendency to see group differences as chasms that are difficult to bridge. Social psychologists have made great progress in explaining general processes of ingroup–outgroup dynamics. Research on essentialism shows that it is also important to understand people's beliefs about the underlying nature of groups and group differences.

Nick Haslam

See also Categorization; Entitativity; Stereotyping

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## ETHNICITY

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*Ethnicity* is a multidimensional concept that involves both objective and subjective dimensions of people's sense of belonging to a community. At its most basic level, an *ethnic group* can be defined as a community of people who identify with each other and who are recognized by others on the basis of a presumed common genealogy, ancestry, or heritage. Ethnic groups are typically characterized by cultural, linguistic, and religious practices and behaviors that are shared among their members and that distinguish their members from those of other groups. Thus ethnic group membership often serves as a meaningful basis of self-definition, as well as an influence on one's experiences and relationships with members of other ethnic groups. This entry defines the term *ethnicity* and discusses how it relates to terms such as *race* and *culture*, then describes the significance of ethnicity for one's self-concept and social relationships.

### Definition and Comparison

In common language, the term *ethnicity* is often used interchangeably with related terms such as *race* and *culture*. Although there is a certain degree of overlap in the definitions of these terms, some important distinctions also remain. Both *race* and *ethnicity* involve a sense of shared genealogy, yet

*race* focuses more on inherited genetic and physical characteristics, whereas *ethnicity* encompasses both a shared genealogy and the cultural, linguistic, and religious practices that may be transmitted across generations within a community. Similarly, both *culture* and *ethnicity* can involve shared cultural, linguistic, and religious practices and behaviors. Typically, however, *culture* refers to a broad range of practices and behaviors that can be shared among all people who live within a particular context, whereas *ethnicity* refers more specifically to those that are shared among people who have a common ancestry or heritage.

Due to this shared ancestry or heritage, people often perceive ethnic groups as consisting of members who share underlying, immutable qualities that define the essence of the group; this is known as *essentialism*. Thus, members of different ethnic groups are sometimes believed to possess characteristics that are deeply rooted in nature and that clearly distinguish them from members of other groups. However, clear boundaries between ethnic groups can often be difficult to determine and may be decided due to a range of social and historical factors, some of which may be relatively arbitrary.

For example, Jewish tradition would describe one as being Jewish depending upon the ancestry of one's mother, whereas in the context of Nazi Germany, being Jewish was defined in terms of whether any Jews could be identified in one's family ancestry. Ethnic group boundaries may also become blurred through histories of cross-ethnic contact and intermarriage, which could result either from voluntary contact experiences (as in the case of immigration) or involuntary contact experiences (as in the case of conquest and/or slavery).

Moreover, what we define as an "ethnic group" is somewhat malleable, in that ethnic categories may be construed more narrowly or broadly depending on the social context in question. For example, in the national context of the United States, the term *Latinos* is often used to refer to a single ethnic group, even though this broad category includes people from a range of ethnic communities throughout North, Central, and South America. Similarly, after many waves of immigration and the passing of multiple generations, ethnic groups that were once considered to be quite distinct (Irish Americans,

Italian Americans, Polish Americans) are now more commonly referred to under the broad label of *European Americans*. Thus, the definitions of ethnic categories, and the meaning and significance associated with those categories, can vary greatly over time and across contexts.

### Significance for Identity

In addition, individual members of ethnic groups may also vary in the extent to which they regard the ethnic group as a meaningful basis of identity. One's subjective identification with an ethnic group, that is, *ethnic identity*, can play an important role in many domains of one's everyday life. Ethnic identities continually develop and grow through participation in cultural activities with other group members, such as ethnic celebrations and holidays, religious practices, and family gatherings. Having a strong identification with one's ethnic group can also contribute to a positive sense of self-esteem, to the extent that one has a positive evaluation of the ethnic group.

As a multidimensional concept, ethnic identity also includes many different components that can influence one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. For example, one's ethnic identity may involve feelings of belonging or emotional attachment to the group, knowledge about and engagement in the group's customs and practices, a sense of common fate and shared history among group members, and an internalization of the group's norms and values. People may also adopt different approaches in identifying with their ethnic group, and in cultivating a sense of belonging within the larger society (a process known as *acculturation*).

People may seek *integration*—identification with both the ethnic group and the broader society; *separation*—identification primarily with their ethnic group; *assimilation*—identification with the society at large; or *marginalization*—identification with neither of these communities.

There are also many social and contextual factors that can enhance or decrease identification with one's ethnic group in multi-ethnic societies. For example, if one's ethnic group represents a numerical minority in a given context, that experience can produce an enhanced awareness of ethnic group membership and, often, a stronger sense of identification with the ethnic group. Similarly,

when resources are not equally distributed across ethnic groups in the larger society, recognition of the group's disadvantaged position can lead people to identify more strongly with their ethnic group. Changes in the nature and strength of one's ethnic identification can also emerge from ideologies and social conditions that exist in the social context, such as pressures to reject one's ethnic group and conform to norms of the larger society (e.g., assimilation and color-blind ideologies), or alternatively, acceptance of ethnic group differences and open support for their expression (e.g., integration and multicultural ideologies).

Furthermore, some ideologies based on ethnicity can provoke ethnic conflict and violence, ranging from segregation and exclusion to mass killings and genocide. Although it is natural for people to feel a certain degree of positive bias toward members of their own group, or *ingroup favoritism*, some may view their own ethnic group as far superior to others, thereby using their group's norms, practices, and values as the standard against which all other ethnic groups are evaluated. This *ethnocentrism*, or view of one's ethnic group as superior, can then be used to rationalize and justify the domination and exploitation of other ethnic groups. Strategies are therefore needed to resolve and prevent ethnic conflicts, and to encourage more positive relations between ethnic groups. In large part, strategies to reduce ethnic conflict must focus on transforming institutional structures in order to dismantle ethnic hierarchies and establish social and economic equality among members of distinct ethnic groups. Corresponding to these changes, efforts should also be taken to diminish group members' support for ethnocentric beliefs and ideologies, and to instead promote norms of acceptance and appreciation of ethnic differences.

In sum, ethnic groups are communities of people who are presumed to share a common genealogy, ancestry, or heritage, and whose members participate in shared cultural, linguistic, and religious practices and behaviors. Although members of any given ethnic group are typically perceived as having many characteristics in common, there is often great variability in how strongly group members identify with their ethnic group, and how their group membership affects their life experiences and their relations with members of other ethnic groups. Further

research could usefully examine processes of identification and social relations when people belong to multiple ethnic groups, and how multiple group memberships might shift our perceptions of group boundaries and the strategies we use to improve interethnic relations.

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See also Ethnocentrism; Genocide; Intergroup Violence; Minority Groups in Society; Multiculturalism; Racism; Social Identity Theory; Status

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## ETHNOCENTRISM

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Membership in social groups is more than mere classification; it carries emotional significance as well. Attachment to the groups to which one belongs, or *ingroups*, and preference for these ingroups over outgroups may be a universal characteristic of human social life. *Ethnocentrism* refers to this strong predilection for loyalty and preferential treatment of one's ingroups over other groups, and the tendency to judge and evaluate others from the perspective of ingroup norms and practices.

The study of ethnocentrism has a long history in social science research on intergroup relations. Theories of ethnocentrism incorporate evolutionary perspectives, psychodynamic theory, and social psychological theories of group identity. Research on ethnocentrism documents the powerful effects

of ingroup attachment on both intragroup and intergroup behavior. This entry briefly reviews ethnocentrism, discussing its origins and the role played in it by ingroup bias and examining several theoretical perspectives on the concept.

### History

The concept of ethnocentrism was introduced to social science in a book entitled *Folkways* published by William Graham Sumner in 1906. The apparently universal tendency for human beings to differentiate themselves according to group membership was documented in the rich anthropological observations compiled by Sumner. Sumner adopted the terms “ingroup” and “outgroup” to refer to social groupings to which a particular individual belongs or does not belong. He then went on to speculate that ethnocentrism is a universal consequence of this distinction between ingroups and outgroups. Ethnocentrism was defined as a kind of group self-centeredness characterized by a sense of ingroup moral superiority and contempt for outsiders.

According to Sumner’s analysis, the essential characteristics of an individual’s relationship to ingroups are loyalty and preference. *Loyalty* is represented in adherence to ingroup norms and trustworthiness in dealings with fellow ingroup members. *Preference* is represented in ingroup pride and differential acceptance of ingroup members over outgroup members. Sumner contended further that all groups view outgroups with contempt and hostility and that ingroup peace and cohesion is maintained by intergroup competition and conflict. As a consequence, the term *ethnocentrism* has come to mean both ingroup favoritism and general negativity toward outgroups. The present review will focus exclusively on the ingroup preference aspect of ethnocentrism (also known as *ingroup bias*) in order to distinguish ethnocentrism from outgroup prejudice as a separate topic.

### Ingroup Bias

The fact that individuals value, favor, and conform to their own membership groups (ingroups) over groups to which they do not belong (outgroups) is among the most well-established phenomena in social psychology. Since Sumner’s 1906 book,

hundreds of studies in the laboratory and the field have documented ingroup favoritism in myriad forms. Preferential treatment and evaluation of ingroups relative to outgroups appears in evaluations of group products, application of rules of fairness in the allocation of resources to ingroup and outgroup members, attributions for positive and negative behavior, and willingness to trust and cooperate. Further, the tendency toward preferential treatment appears to arise automatically when any us–them distinction is made salient. Experimental social psychologists have demonstrated that even classifying individuals into arbitrary categories in the laboratory can elicit ingroup–outgroup feelings.

### Mere Categorization

Although the term *ethnocentrism* was originally coined to refer to allegiance to ethnic group identities, people’s tendency to favor members of their ingroups over those in outgroups has been found to extend across all forms of group membership. Groundbreaking experiments conducted by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in Bristol, England, in the early 1970s demonstrated that merely categorizing individuals into two arbitrary but distinct social groupings was sufficient to elicit ingroup favoritism. When given an opportunity to allocate money to other individuals known only by their category membership, participants chose to allocate higher rewards to members of their own category than to members of the outgroup category, even in the absence of any personal identification of group members, any past history, or any direct benefit to themselves.

### Rules of Fairness

The thing that is most surprising about the results of the Tajfel experiments is that participants were willing to allocate rewards in a way that favored one individual (an ingroup member) over another (an outgroup member) without any apparent justification for the inequality. The fact that allocations deviated from equal distribution suggests that ingroup versus outgroup distinctions alter concepts of what is “fair” or “just.” Equality as a rule of fairness assumes that individuals are the same in all relevant respects and hence deserve

the same outcomes. Other rules of fairness take individual differences into account in determining outcome distributions. The rule of equity, for instance, holds that individuals should receive outcomes proportional to their inputs; thus, those who contribute more in terms of abilities or efforts should also receive more.

One explanation for the presence of ingroup favoritism in the minimal intergroup situation is that participants assume that members of their own group have greater ability or aptitude than members of the outgroup. Such biased evaluation of ingroup members is a basic element of ingroup positivity. Ethnocentrism also influences perceptions of social justice and justice motives in general. Research provides evidence that group identification bounds the scope of people's concerns for social justice, so that motives for justice and fairness are more likely to be applied in dealings with fellow ingroup members than with outgroup members.

#### *Ethnocentric Attributions*

One psychological mechanism that sustains different perspectives on fairness is the attributions that are made about the causes of others' good or bad fortune. If an individual performs well or succeeds because of personal effort, ability, and integrity, then he or she is perceived to deserve positive outcomes. Conversely, if an individual's failure is attributed to personal dispositions such as laziness, incompetence, or dishonesty, then poor outcomes are seen as deserved. However, the relationship between behavior and outcomes is altered if the behavior is attributed to external factors, that is, it is caused by circumstances outside the individual's control. When good performance is attributed to luck or external aid, positive outcomes are not deserved. And poor performance that was caused by bad luck or handicapping circumstances does not deserve bad outcomes.

The attributions that are made for another person's behavior can be influenced by knowledge of the social group to which that individual belongs. In general, failure and negative behaviors exhibited by an outgroup member are more likely to be attributed to internal, dispositional causes than the same negative behavior by an ingroup member (whose behavior is more likely to be attributed to

external or situational causes). Conversely, positive acts and success are more likely to be attributed to internal causes for ingroup members than for outgroup members.

This ethnocentric pattern of attributions was labeled the "ultimate attribution error" by Thomas Pettigrew, and it has been demonstrated in studies of attributions made by members of different ethnic groups, sports teams, schools, religions, and with arbitrary social categories in the laboratory. Because of ethnocentric attributions, ingroup members are given the benefit of the doubt in ways that outgroup members are not. In effect, ingroups are credited more for successes and positive actions than are outgroups, and are less likely to be held accountable for failures or negative actions. This can explain why ingroup members are rewarded more when they outperform an outgroup member, but the same performance is not rewarded as highly when produced by an outgroup member.

#### *Cooperation and Trust*

Group membership also plays an important role in how individuals respond to others when they are in a situation of interdependence where each person's own outcomes are affected by how the others behave. There are different social orientations and motives that individuals might bring to such situations. Most important is whether the individual has a cooperative orientation (where the goal is to satisfy the needs and motives of everyone in the group) or a competitive orientation (where the individual is attempting to maximize his or her own outcomes relative to the others).

One factor that seems to influence choices in interdependent situations is the category membership of the participants. Even when participants are strangers to each other, if they know that they share a common ingroup membership, they are more likely to enter into cooperative responding than if they do not have a shared category membership. Apparently, just knowing that another individual is a member of the same ingroup is sufficient to increase the level of trust and cooperation. Within the ingroup category, individuals develop trust and cooperate in solving shared problems. In situations of interdependence with outgroup members, however, individuals behave less cooperatively.

Ethnocentrism leads individuals to adopt a cooperative orientation toward fellow ingroup members and to behave in ways that promote group welfare rather than individual self-interest. However, they are also more likely to adopt a competitive orientation toward individuals who are members of outgroups, even when facing a common problem. This difference in orientation toward interactions with ingroup and outgroup members gives rise to a pervasive ethnocentric stereotype, namely, that “we” (the ingroup) are honest, trustworthy, and moral, and “they” (outgroups) are treacherous and not to be trusted.

### Summary

The evidence from a number of different domains of social behavior demonstrates the importance of ethnocentric biases. When a particular group identification is engaged, individuals act in ways that favor ingroup members and promote ingroup welfare, even when that behavior is not consistent with individual egocentric motives. However, ethnocentrism also engages preferential biases, extreme attitudes, and competitive orientation toward members of outgroups. Thus, attachment and loyalty to one’s own group benefits the ingroup, but often at the expense of outgroups.

### Theories of Ethnocentrism

Given the pervasiveness of ethnocentric biases in social judgments and social behavior, understanding why people display ethnocentric attachment to their ingroups has been addressed from many theoretical perspectives. A few of the more prominent theories will be reviewed here.

#### Human Sociobiology

Theories of human evolution take into account the overwhelming evidence that the human species evolved in the context of group living. Evolutionary accounts of human psychology are based on analysis of the survival requirements associated with living in hunter–gatherer societies. Sociobiological models of the evolution of human social behavior rest heavily on the notion of inclusive fitness. These models assume that the gene is the basic unit

of selection and that selection favors genes that produce behavior benefiting anyone who carries those genes, including other individuals who possess the same genes by common descent or kin relationships.

One implication of this model of evolution is that there is a genetic disposition for people to behave differentially toward “insiders” (kin and extended family likely to share common genes, ingroups) and “outsiders” (nonkin, outgroups). This idea is the basis for a *sociobiology of ethnocentrism*, which holds that ethnocentric behavior derives from pursuit of inclusive genetic fitness. Cooperation between individuals will occur only to the extent that they have a high proportion of shared genes, since helping close relatives perpetuates an individual’s own genes. Conversely, the likelihood of conflict between individuals or groups of individuals increases as the proportion of shared genes decreases. According to the sociobiological view, the primal ethnic group is the small band of 100 to 200 related individuals, within which the human propensity for cooperative social arrangements is presumed to have evolved. Ethnocentric preference is extended to larger social groups through the development of *markers* (skin pigmentation, hair and facial features, mannerisms, etc.), which signal genetic relatedness among unfamiliar individuals.

#### Psychodynamic Theories

Freudian theory departs somewhat from evolution-based biological models in assigning a greater role to experience and development in the origin of ethnocentric identification. Freud’s own theory of group identification centered on the role of the group leader as the object of identification. Neo-Freudian theory extended this idea to incorporate all symbolic representations of the group as objects of identification. According to this view, group identification and ethnocentrism are the product of projection of the self onto external objects and introjection/incorporation of objects into the sense of self.

A recent extension of psychoanalytic approaches to understanding group identity is *terror management theory*, which is based on the idea that when human beings evolved the capacity for self-awareness, this included awareness of mortality



and the inevitability of their own death. Given the universal instinct for self-preservation, this awareness creates a high level of anxiety, which could lead to paralyzing fear if not sufficiently suppressed. According to the theory, human societies have evolved shared worldviews and cultural values as an adaptation to cope with this anxiety over death. By subscribing to this worldview and living up to cultural values, individuals achieve a sense of validation, self-worth, and a type of psychological immortality that serves to suppress mortality terror.

One implication of terror management theory is that if thoughts of mortality are made salient, an individual will respond by reaffirming his or her own cultural worldview, with intolerance toward different values or cultural views. A number of experiments have demonstrated just such a relationship between mortality salience and ingroup bias. When participants in these studies are induced to think about the prospect of their own death (as compared to other possible negative experiences, such as a painful dental procedure), ingroup preference, intolerance of others, and intergroup bias are significantly increased.

#### *Social Comparison and Uncertainty Reduction Theory*

A classic theory of group formation is provided by Leon Festinger's *social comparison theory of affiliation*, which was developed to explain why members of groups tend to be so similar in attitudes, values, and behavior. A basic premise of Festinger's explanation is the idea that people need a sense of subjective validity for their beliefs about themselves and the world around them. Much of our knowledge or understanding about the world we live in does not come from direct personal experience. We may come to learn that ice is cold and walls are solid by direct contact with these objects, but much of our knowledge about what is right or true—especially our knowledge about social groups and social behaviors—has no such objective referent. To achieve a sense of validation of such beliefs, people engage in *social reality testing*. Beliefs are seen as valid or appropriate when they are shared by similar others. The more uncertain an individual is about the correctness of a belief or attitude, the more important it becomes to find consensual support for that belief.

Agreeing with members of one's ingroup apparently increases certainty and the subjective validity of beliefs and attitudes. Finding out that others disagree reduces certainty—but only if those others are ingroup members. On many issues of values and preferences, we expect to agree with ingroup members but not necessarily with everyone, so learning that outgroup members do not share our opinions or values does not shake our confidence in the correctness of those beliefs. Thus, only ingroup members count as sources of validation, at least for subjective judgments. As a consequence of this relationship between ingroup membership and feelings of certainty, ingroup attachment and bias increases under conditions of uncertainty and doubt.

#### *Social Identity and Positive Distinctiveness*

Ethnocentric loyalty and preference are analogous to self-integrity and self-esteem. Ethnocentrism at the group level parallels egocentrism at the individual level. The comparison between egocentrism and ethnocentrism was reformulated by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in terms of a distinction between personal identity and social identity. *Personal identity* refers to self-conceptualizations that define the individual in relation to (or in comparison to) other individuals. *Social identity* refers to conceptualizations of the self that derive from membership in emotionally significant social categories or groups. Just as personal identity derives from social comparison to other individuals, social identity is defined by intergroup comparison. Accentuation of intergroup differences, combined with a need for positive distinctiveness in comparisons between ingroup and outgroup, results in ingroup favoritism.

The shift between personal identity and social identity entails a transformation of the definition of self from the individual to the group level. When group identification is engaged, motivations for self-integrity, preservation, and self-esteem are transferred to the ingroup as a whole. Consequently, ingroup status and collective welfare become important to the individual's sense of well-being. Consistent with this social identification perspective, there is considerable experimental evidence that once the self has become attached to a social group or category, positive affect and evaluations

associated with the self-concept are automatically transferred to the group as a whole. And, conversely, status and achievements of the group are internalized by individual group members regardless of whether or not they have directly contributed to the group outcome. An individual's sense of self-worth is enhanced by the positive distinctiveness of his or her ingroup. However, some experimental research indicates that social identification with a group may actually be increased when the group is threatened or devalued. Overall, research in this area supports the idea that positive ingroup evaluation and collective self-esteem are the products of group identification rather than its cause.

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*See also* Categorization; Collective Self; Identification and Commitment; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Loyalty; Minimal Group Effect; Nationalism and Patriotism; Optimal Distinctiveness; Prejudice; Social Identity Theory; Xenophobia

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## ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

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The objective vitality of an *ethnolinguistic group* (an ethnic group defined by its language) can be defined by factors such as economic status, geographic concentration, and political representation, according to Howard Giles, Richard Bourhis, and Donald Taylor. The greater the group's objective vitality, the more likely it is that group members will learn and maintain their ingroup language. According to *ethnolinguistic identity theory*, which explains language shifts, multilingualism, language attitudes, and media use, perceptions of group vitality are predictive of behavior. This entry looks at the implications of ethnolinguistic vitality for intergroup relations, language shifts, multilingualism, and social attitudes.

#### Language and Intergroup Relations

*Objective vitality* enables a group to survive as a distinctive and thriving collective entity. Groups with higher vitality survive and prosper; groups with lower vitality eventually cease to exist. Three factors combine to determine objective vitality: *status variables*, which include economic, social, and historic status as perceived from within and from outside the group; *demographic variables*, which include territory, population numbers, rates of birth, mixed marriages, immigration, and emigration; and *institutional support variables*, which include formal and informal representation in the mass media, education, government services, industry, religion, and culture. Objective vitality provides the sociostructural context for ethnolinguistic phenomena, but individual people's subjective beliefs about relative group vitality are predictive of behavior. *Subjective vitality* has been measured across cultures, usually as a single dimension, and has been found to vary between contexts and in the way it is structured—for example, depending upon what groups are being compared and the relative weighting of different facets of vitality.

Ethnolinguistic identity theory builds on and elaborates social identity theory and combines with communication accommodation theory to make predictions about language use in intergroup settings. Following social identity theory, it is

assumed that people are motivated to maintain a positive social identity and that groups with higher vitality confer more positive identity than groups with lower vitality. Following communication accommodation theory, it is assumed that people use language to psychologically accommodate to or differentiate themselves from others, and that doing so reflects beliefs about relative vitality.

There are three social strategies that people can use to create a positive social identity. The first is *social mobility*, in which people in subordinate groups can disown their group and converge upon the language of a group that possesses higher vitality. This happens when people have little commitment to their group and see the possibility of passing into a dominant group as feasible. Social mobility is endorsed by dominant groups that aim to assimilate minorities.

The second strategy is *social creativity*, in which people in subordinate groups may organize collectively, but they avoid direct competition with a dominant group. Examples include diglossic languages such as those spoken in Switzerland, where there are High German and (low) Swiss German forms. Speakers of the low form are viewed more favorably on solidarity (e.g., friendliness and kindness) than status (e.g., wealth and intelligence), whereas the reverse is true for those who speak the high form. This happens when people have a strong commitment to their group, when group boundaries are considered impermeable, and when status relations between groups are highly stable. Members of dominant groups will endorse social creativity when their status advantage is unstable.

The third strategy is *social competition*, in which people in subordinate groups aim to equalize or reverse their group's low-status position by promoting linguistic revival movements. This occurs when people are highly committed to their group, see group boundaries as impermeable, and see the status relations between groups as unstable and/or illegitimate. Members of dominant groups are likely to engage in social competition when aiming to prevail over competitive subordinate groups. Endorsement of majority-only language policies is likely in this circumstance.

### Language Shifts

Linguists estimate that there are 6,000 languages in the world, and that at the current rate of loss,

50% will become extinct in the next generation. This massive loss of languages is reflected in a comparable growth of languages such as Mandarin, English, Hindustani, Spanish, and Arabic. As a social indicator, the number of speakers predicts language survival. There is evidence, however, that people will fight against the loss of a language despite the low objective vitality of that language. Linguistic maintenance and revival movements are a case in point. Hawaiian, Gaelic, and Catalan have all declined dramatically in objective terms but have been saved from the brink of extinction by language preservation movements driven by concerns about subjective vitality.

Such psychological concerns may prevent "invented" languages from taking hold. The most successful of these languages, Esperanto, was devised by Ludvic Zamenhof in the late 1800s as a universal auxiliary language that would facilitate global communication. The idea was that people would maintain their heritage language but use Esperanto to communicate across otherwise insurmountable group boundaries. Despite being easier to learn than natural languages, it has never really caught on; relatively few people speak Esperanto. Ethnolinguistic identity theory suggests that the failure of artificial languages like Esperanto is in part driven by their failure to produce sufficient ethnolinguistic distinctiveness for speakers. Indeed, Esperanto is largely made up of European vowel sounds and is easily mistaken for other languages.

### Multilingualism

Code switching is the alternating of languages within an utterance or conversation. Well-known examples that have been elevated to the level of incipient languages include Spanglish and Hinglish—a respective mixing of Spanish and Hindi with English. On the one hand, these mixtures can be thought of as forms of social creativity that exist within speech communities. Those who mix language in this way differentiate themselves from other, "less sophisticated," monolingual ingroup members by using a second language such as English, and they can thus promote a positive identity for themselves. On the other hand, code switching may be perceived as leading to cleavages within a speech community. Those who maintain the heritage language without mixing in others'

codes may come to see themselves as the conservators of a language that is threatened by a dominant group, and hence engage in social competition to maintain their language. Finally, code switching between Spanish and English in the United States can be regarded as a linguistic precursor to cultural assimilation and a form of social mobility.

When relatively high-vitality language groups come into contact, the result is typically positive. For example, nowadays when Anglo-Canadian children take immersive French-language instruction, research shows that these children are equally proficient in English and French and show no evidence of language loss or deficits in general intelligence—a pattern of additive bilingualism. When groups that differ sharply in language vitality come into contact, however, the process of second-language learning is typically detrimental to the members of the low-vitality language group—a pattern of subtractive bilingualism. This has been proven to be the case with Inuit speakers who have been schooled in English or French. In this case, these children lack second-language proficiency and even perform less well in their heritage language than those given heritage language instruction.

### Language Attitudes

People typically view individual speakers through the lens of their group's language, which in turn reflects the relative linguistic vitality of groups. In the 1960s, Wallace Lambert devised the matched guise technique. Naïve subjects listened to tape recordings of different speakers and evaluated their personalities. In reality, the tape contained recordings of the same bilingual speakers using different languages, so any evidence for differences in evaluation were attributable to the language spoken. In the first study, Anglo-Canadian and French Canadian respondents downgraded speakers who used the French guise relative to the English guise. This pattern is understood in ethnolinguistic identity theory as a pattern that occurs when groups are defined by marked differences in language vitality. The lower vitality language group at the time, the French Canadians, were subjectively assimilating to the Anglo-Canadians. Since the rise of the Quebecois movement, however, this pattern is likely to have equalized, if not reversed as the Quebecois shifted from a social mobility to a social competition strategy.

Patterns of social creativity are also evident, as a typical finding is that speakers from high-vitality language groups are considered high on status variables (e.g., wealth, intelligence) but low on solidarity variables (e.g., friendliness, kindness), whereas the reverse is true for speakers from relatively low-vitality language groups. This pattern is extant in the North and South of England as well as in Italy, and it seems to reflect the division into historically competitive groups that no longer engage in outright hostility. Finally, patterns of mutual downgrading can be found in groups that are socially competitive. Further research by Lambert and his colleagues in the 1960s, for example, showed that Palestinian and Israeli linguistic guises were seen in ways that reflected the group membership of the social perceiver.

### Current and Future Work

The concept of vitality, which as described above was originally tied to ethnolinguistic groups, has been broadened and is now applicable to nonlinguistically defined groups. Research on aging has shown that the elderly are typically perceived as possessing higher vitality in Western cultures (e.g., United States, Canada, Australia) than in Eastern cultures (e.g., Japan, South Korea, China), and that the middle-aged are viewed as possessing the highest vitality across cultures. Most recently, research has shown that Blacks who are more ethnically committed avoid television and have decreased perceptions of group vitality. It is likely that future research will continue to expand the concept of vitality to explain intergroup behavior in nonlinguistic contexts.

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*See also* Identification and Commitment; Language and Intergroup Relations; Multiculturalism; Power; Social Identity Theory

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## EUGENICS

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*Eugenics* was a political and scientific movement that sought to improve humanity by using the study of heredity to design programs aimed at guiding human reproduction. It was based on an assertion that socially important traits are genetically determined and that steps should therefore be taken to ensure that future generations are descended from individuals with the best traits. Many eugenicists claimed that social categories such as race show inherent differences in intellectual and moral worth. The eugenics movement originated in England and was most influential in the United States in the first half of the 20th century. Eugenics also played a role in other countries. For example, in 1940s Germany, eugenics was used to legitimize the Holocaust. Eugenics has had a lasting influence on several issues relevant to group and intergroup processes today, including racism, anti-immigration politics, and group differences in intelligence. The history of eugenics and its current importance are reviewed in this entry.

### History

Although some ideas and practices related to eugenics can be traced back to ancient Greece, the founder of the eugenics movement is generally considered to be Francis Galton, who first published his ideas in 1865. Galton was impressed by the writings of his cousin Charles Darwin on evolution by natural selection. This led him to suggest that it would be possible to take control of human evolution by influencing who would reproduce and who would not. In this way, he argued, one

could ensure that future generations would be the descendants of the best members of society. These ideas resonated with Victorian fears about moral decline and the associated perception that the most criminal and degenerate people were also the most prolific breeders.

Galton felt that, for humanity to take control of its evolutionary future, a more developed science of heredity was needed. To this end, he attempted to quantify the extent to which various traits, such as criminality, drunkenness, and sexual promiscuity, were inherited. The British eugenics movement acquired the support of scholars and activists from across the political spectrum.

The establishment of eugenics as a political force in the United States owes much to the work of Charles Davenport, who published *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* in 1911. Davenport claimed that there were genetically determined tendencies toward violent and criminal behavior among certain races. He saw the U.S. population as threatened by the “inferior” blood and “excessive” breeding of southern and eastern European immigrants and others with “undesirable” traits, including Black people. These threats were to be countered by restricting immigration and denying “defectives” such as criminals and insane people the chance to reproduce, perhaps by forced sterilization. Davenport’s ideas, spurred by the panic over the social problems that came with increasing urbanization, became central to the political agenda of the eugenics movement in the United States.

Intelligence testing allowed eugenicists to quantify their vision of human worth in an apparently pure measure of innate intellectual ability. This interpretation of the tests was contrary to that of their originator, Alfred Binet, but it suited the eugenics agenda perfectly. Within the military, White people were found to score higher on the tests than Black people. This was taken as evidence of the biological inferiority of Black people. It led to the conclusion that trying to equalize opportunities in education was worthless because some groups simply lacked the potential for educational achievement.

Eugenics involved both “positive” interventions, which aimed to optimize reproduction among the genetically fit, and “negative” interventions to restrict it among the unfit. Positive interventions involved public awareness campaigns and

programs such as the “Fitter Families” competitions, whereby supposedly genetically fit people were identified and encouraged to produce offspring with one another rather than with the unfit. “Fitness” was evaluated in terms of various criteria, including educational success and physical health, which were assumed to be genetically determined.

The negative eugenics interventions are understandably more infamous. Forcing or persuading those with what were seen as undesirable traits to be sterilized was a common eugenicist strategy. Throughout the world, there have been official and unofficial programs to sterilize criminals, the mentally ill, the mentally or physically disabled, and the poor. Wendy Kline has recently linked U.S. sterilization programs in the early 20th century with an attempt to control female sexuality. Many women were sterilized simply because they transgressed conservative norms of sexual morality, which was assumed to be evidence of feeble-mindedness. The Norwegian government recently admitted to sterilizing hundreds of “gypsies” without their full knowledge or consent from 1932 to 1977. In Nazi Germany, sterilization of “defective” individuals later became racialized, so that Jews and “gypsies” were seen as inherently defective. These efforts intensified and ultimately led to the murder of millions in the Holocaust.

Negative eugenics also took the form of agitation against immigration, which had a major impact on policy. In Britain, the Aliens Act of 1905 was directed against diseased and “idiot” immigrants, while the U.S. Immigration Restriction Act of 1924 was designed to severely restrict the number of immigrants from Asia, eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean, whose presumed low intelligence and high fertility were feared to threaten the “racial purity” of the U.S. population.

Despite considerable political influence at its peak, eugenics did not go unopposed. Some of the strongest criticism came from geneticists who objected to the distorted version of their science. Social scientists also sought to undermine the basic logic of eugenics by arguing that religious, ethnic, and other groups share social and cultural similarities rather than genetic ones. As such, they argued, efforts at improving society should be made by social and cultural means rather than through managing reproduction. It is important to

note, however, that the greatest damage to the eugenics movement is likely to have come from its association with the Nazis. When the full extent of the Holocaust came to light, few wished to be associated with the eugenicist ideology that the Nazis had pursued so brutally.

## Contemporary Importance

### *Scientific Racism*

The 1994 book *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray was a clear sign that the central claims of the eugenics movement remain influential in the United States, although it provoked intense debate both within and beyond academia. *The Bell Curve* combines a resolute genetic determinism, claiming that races differ substantially in inherited potential, with an associated political agenda. It therefore echoes the leading voices in the U.S. eugenics movement from 80 years earlier. This is not the only example of the continued assertion of genetically determined racial differences in intelligence. The Pioneer Fund, which was founded by eugenicists in 1937, still exists and continues to fund research to support the basic claims that were central to the eugenics movement.

This interpretation of the relationship between intelligence test scores and social status is important to understanding the legacy of eugenics as a political movement. If intelligence tests are seen as direct tests of inherited ability, then observed differences between class and racial groups can be taken to imply that social hierarchy is based on a natural hierarchy of merit, rather than on injustice. This leads to the conclusion that attempts to improve living conditions and educational opportunities for low-status groups are futile; these groups occupy a low status because they are genetically predisposed to be unintelligent. Indeed, some argue that intelligence tests remain so popular, despite continuing uncertainty about their meaning, because they help to reconcile existing social stratification with the egalitarian values and meritocratic ideology that now prevail in some societies. Thus, a genetic deterministic interpretation of intelligence test scores is closely connected with ideological ways of viewing race and class that serve particular

political agendas. It can be seen as a form of rationalization and legitimization.

There are many reasons to reject the genetic determinist account of group differences in intelligence test scores. Even at the height of the eugenics movement, it was noted that racial differences in the test scores were smallest in northern U.S. cities, where the economic disparity between White and Black people was smaller than in the South, and intelligence scores of immigrant groups increased as these groups became more established in America. Both observations suggest that intelligence test scores reflect the social and economic conditions of the groups being tested. This would be unlikely if intelligence tests were a direct measure of some genetically determined quantity.

Recent social psychological work on intelligence also contradicts the genetic determinist account. For example, research on the threat of stereotyping in relation to intelligence testing suggests that group-based differences are contingent on the testing situation, such that the standard testing procedures systematically inflate the scores of high-status groups and depress those of low-status groups. The differences do not appear if participants are told that their test results have no diagnostic importance.

### *Anti-Immigration Rhetoric*

Since the eugenics movement first became fixated on immigration at the turn of the 20th century, immigration has not ceased to be a salient political issue. On the contrary, it has become the foremost issue in political debates around the world, and recent years have seen an increase in public opposition to immigration in many countries. Anti-immigration rhetoric has, in a sense, diversified. Immigrants are now seen in all sorts of ways, including as terrorists, welfare scroungers, threats to public services, threats to cultural and religious values, and competitors for presumably scarce jobs and housing. Nonetheless, the tone and content of the debate are often remarkably similar to the arguments advanced by Davenport and other eugenicists.

Opposition to immigration is often associated with a fear that the society will be harmed by the admission of people of lesser quality who will propagate undesirable traits. In a recent election in Switzerland, the Swiss People's Party urged voters

to back their initiative to deport immigrants who had been convicted of crimes. Posters showed a group of white sheep grazing on the Swiss flag as one kicked a black sheep off the flag. The headline for the poster read "Bringing Safety." Although the threat posed by immigration tends to be expressed in terms of vaguely defined national "values" or "character" rather than genetics, allusions to race, color, blood, fertility, and other pseudogenetic concepts are not uncommon. Indeed, opponents of immigration still claim that relatively high fertility rates and poor health among immigrants make them a particular threat to the host country.

A return to the kind of organized academic movement of early 20th-century eugenics seems unlikely today; eugenic ideas are too widely opposed in the biological and social sciences. A return to a concerted political movement that relies directly on eugenics to advocate restricted immigration or the sterilization of the deprived, depraved, or disabled also seems unlikely. However, remnants of eugenics seem to survive in some circles of contemporary academic and political debate. There is certainly no shortage of political rhetoric and proposed policy that endorses the view that those with the best genetic profile should be encouraged to reproduce, whereas those with the worst profile should be discouraged. This rhetoric has heightened implications in the light of advances in genetics and the widespread interest in the human genome project. As long as people continue to view important social traits and behavior as genetically determined, eugenic arguments will appeal to those who believe that the regulation of who reproduces with whom is a route to a better society.

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*See also* Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Evolutionary Psychology; Immigration; Prejudice; Racism; Stereotype Threat

### **Further Readings**

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## EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

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*Evolutionary psychology* (EP) is a specific theoretical framework within the evolutionary sciences. The EP perspective toward understanding human functioning and behavior has several unique features and cardinal assumptions that make it different from other major perspectives in the evolutionary sciences such as behavioral ecology and co-evolution. Scholars who adopt an EP perspective, for example, assume that the human mind has been shaped by tens of thousands of years of rather focused selection pressures. Over time, these selection pressures have generated domain-specific cognitive algorithms (i.e., cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses that reliably occur in response to a specific environmental stimulus or set of stimuli). These mechanisms, on average, helped our ancestors make adaptive choices, judgments, and decisions that in turn promoted their survival and reproduction (i.e., their reproductive fitness).

According to the EP perspective, therefore, our minds are a reflection of the most important selection pressures that our ancestors encountered during evolutionary history and, consequently, our “stone age” minds are sometimes ill equipped to deal with novel features and contingencies of the modern world effectively. This explains why most people are morbidly afraid of snakes and heights (which were recurrent, major threats to the reproductive fitness of people throughout evolutionary history), but they are not afraid of cars or electrical outlets, which kill many more people each year than do snake bites or falls. It also explains why people have such difficulty limiting their intake of salty, fatty, and sugary foods, which are overly abundant in many parts of the world today but

were scarce and valuable sources of needed calories during our evolutionary past.

This entry provides an overview of evolutionary psychology, examining its basic assumptions and its view of intragroup and intergroup processes.

### Basic Assumptions

One of the most controversial assumptions of the EP perspective is that, because there were so many strong and recurrent selection pressures throughout evolutionary history, the human mind contains a host of highly domain-specific cognitive algorithms. Once they had been selected and could be passed on genetically to offspring, these algorithms permitted our ancestors to make rapid, efficient, reliable, and usually fitness-enhancing decisions when confronted with issues and situations that were most relevant to survival and reproduction across evolutionary history. According to the EP approach, the evolution of these genetically based algorithms accounts for much of the cross-cultural consistency that is witnessed in many psychological features, ranging from which features of mates tend to be most attractive cross-culturally to which types of objects or social situations most people in vastly different cultures universally like, dislike, fear, become addicted to, or dread. This cardinal assumption—that the human mind is comprised of many domain-specific cognitive algorithms, shaped by past selection pressures, which helped our ancestors “solve” recurrent problems related to their reproductive fitness with economy, efficiency, and reliability—remains one of the most contentious aspects of the EP framework.

In addition to knowing what the cardinal assumptions of EP are, it is equally important to understand what the EP perspective does *not* suggest. It does not suggest that the environment and what people learn within their cultures or groups is unimportant. In fact, virtually all EP-based models assume that one cannot understand the operation of evolved mental algorithms without also knowing to which kinds of environmental stimuli, events, or learning histories an individual has been exposed. EP also does not presume that natural selection reflects what is “right” or “proper” (that is, it does not fall prey to the naturalistic fallacy), nor does it imply that naturally selected genes that underlie specific mental algorithms invariably



“determine” how people think, feel, and behave in different social situations. Genes cannot express themselves in phenotypes unless they are triggered by and unfold within the context of specific environments.

Across evolutionary history, one of the strongest and most persistent selective pressures on the human mind was other humans with whom individuals had to sometimes cooperate and sometimes compete. Indeed, one of the primary reasons for the rapid and massive development of the neocortex in humans is likely to have been the tremendous selection pressures imposed by the need for early humans to live in groups and work cooperatively when possible. For this reason, it is important to consider how the EP approach can extend and enrich our understanding of intragroup and intergroup processes, topics that are discussed next.

### Intragroup Processes

*Intragroup*, or *ingroup*, processes are interactions within social groups. These interactions often take the form of mutual cooperation to achieve some common goal. In the hunter–gatherer groups from which we evolved, for example, men probably formed coalitional hunting parties to bring down large game, and a successful hunter most likely shared excess meat with others. This sharing carried relatively low costs because a single kill was often more than a single family could consume before spoilage. Furthermore, the benefits of sharing would have been high if others reciprocated when the same hunter was later unsuccessful.

This example illustrates a fundamental tenet of the EP perspective: In order for a behavior to have evolved, the benefits of engaging in the behavior must have, on average, outweighed the costs. If the costs outweighed the benefits, the behavior would have been selected against. Because social exchange within groups is potentially risky, natural selection may have favored cognitive algorithms designed to make accurate impressions of potential exchange partners, maximizing the benefits and minimizing the costs associated with an exchange.

### *Reciprocal Altruism*

Reconsidering the example of the successful hunter, a hunter who indiscriminately shared food

with others in a totally altruistic manner might have gone hungry if the favor was never returned in times of need. It would have been more beneficial for the hunter to share only with those he could expect to reciprocate some time in the future. This pattern of social interaction is known as *reciprocal altruism*, which is the foundation for many forms of social exchange within both human and nonhuman groups. Indeed, this form of exchange has even been found to characterize patterns of blood sharing among vampire bats.

### *Punishing Cheaters*

Traditionally, social exchange research relied heavily on an economic model of motivation in which people were expected to maximize their own outcomes (that is, rewards minus costs). An economic perspective, however, fails to account for why people exhibit a strong desire to punish cheaters—those who reap the benefits of cooperation without paying associated costs. Research suggests that (a) this desire is motivated by anger—the less a cheater contributes to the group relative to others, the greater the anger that is felt by the other group members; and (b) the desire to punish can at times be so strong that people will punish cheaters even at substantial cost to themselves. These findings, which cannot be explained post hoc by purely economic models, can be understood from the EP perspective. Punishing cheaters in social exchanges is adaptive if doing so inhibits them from cheating in the future. When cheaters are rare, punishers have to punish infrequently and, thus, bear sporadic and minimal costs.

Too many cheaters in a group, however, may result in very high costs for the punishing individual. Accordingly, individuals should also have evolved to prefer those who are cooperative and trustworthy group members. Various studies have demonstrated that, across a range of interdependent group types, people consistently value trustworthiness and cooperativeness in other people above and beyond nearly all other characteristics, including intelligence and physical attractiveness. People also prefer group members who are familiar and highly committed to the group, both of which are cues of more or better social exchange opportunities in the future and, therefore, a higher chance of reciprocation.

### Threats to Security

One final important component in the selection of group members is the ability of others to reciprocate. Simply possessing or demonstrating a willingness to reciprocate is not sufficient. Sometimes individuals involuntarily extract benefits without contributing to or reinvesting in the group (e.g., due to age or disability). Punishing such people would invoke costs to the punisher without benefits. Thus, the perceived reason for others' cheating should theoretically influence whether or not they are punished. Recent research shows that people are less likely to punish someone whose cheating is outside his or her control, especially if this lack of control is attributable to a temporary infirmity. Instead of feeling angry toward such "cheaters," most people experience feelings of empathy and/or pity.

Infirmities, however, can pose a threat not only to the ability of fair exchange ability within a group but also to the safety of group members. The intense sociality of most human groups increases the likelihood of pathogen exchange between group members. Being social, in other words, typically leads to increased physical proximity, which can facilitate the transmission of infectious agents. As a result, adaptations may have evolved to minimize exposure to and maximize distance from individuals who appear to be contagious. In this regard, physical disgust tends to be elicited by those who exhibit signs of disease, such as open sores and discharged bodily secretions. This suggests that a disgust response may have evolved to protect people from contagion.

In sum, empirical evidence supports EP-based predictions that (a) people are drawn to partners with whom interactions tend to result in relatively greater benefits than costs, (b) people punish those who threaten the equity of exchange within social groups, and (c) people avoid contact with those who are perceived to pose a physical threat to group security. EP-based theories of ostracism and stigmatization of group members who are perceived to pose a threat to ingroup cooperativeness (e.g., cheaters) and safety (e.g., persons with disease) have increased our understanding of intergroup processes, especially prejudices, which are discussed next.

### Intergroup Processes

*Intergroup processes* are interactions between social groups. Traditional social psychological perspectives toward prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict have examined how and why intergroup clashes occur. Several psychological processes that might be responsible for intergroup conflict have been studied, ranging from ingroup versus outgroup categorization processes, to social learning processes, to perceived competition for limited resources, to the motivation to enhance one's views of the self or one's group. These approaches, however, have relied exclusively on domain-general cognitive processes and mechanisms that fail to make important distinctions between specific stereotypes associated with specific groups, different patterns of emotions and behaviors that are typically elicited by members of different groups, or contextual and personality factors that are likely to evoke or inhibit these stereotypes, emotions, and actions.

Why, for instance, in the United States, do Native Americans often elicit pity from people and motivate them to establish community-outreach programs? Why, on the other hand, do Blacks often elicit fear and the desire to protect oneself? And why, more globally, are individuals concerned about contracting infectious diseases especially prejudice against people who are physically deformed or disfigured, whereas individuals who see the world as a dangerous place are most prejudiced against members of ethnic outgroups?

Steven Neuberg and Catherine Cottrell have developed a new evolutionary conceptualization of the origins of intergroup prejudices and conflict based on the assumption that many modern-day prejudices may be by-products of adaptations that were originally designed by natural selection to manage threats to intragroup processes. This new approach can answer questions, including those posed above, that traditional approaches struggle to explain.

Because interracial contact is too recent a development to have evolved genetically, the EP perspective does *not* argue that there should be an evolved prejudice against a given race or group of people. Although ancestral tribal groups might have come into contact with other tribal outgroups, geographic limitations during evolutionary history probably limited most contact to racially similar others. Instead, EP theorists argue that humans evolved the capacity to perceive threats

that could be posed by outgroups and, thus, to attend to cues linked with outgroup membership. In contemporary society, physical differences between races serve as one such cue, so individuals in multiracial societies such as the United States learn to classify others based on race. Traditional explanations of racial prejudice, such as the need to enhance self-esteem or group esteem, fail to explain why *different groups* elicit *different types* of prejudices, why these prejudices are often contingent on the personality of the perceiver, and why they are evoked by different kinds of situational cues.

### *Cultural Influences*

According to the EP approach, evolved responses are not genetically determined. Instead, they are environmentally contingent and activated by specific contextual information. In the case of racial prejudice, an individual's cultural environment is likely to shape the specific threats that are attributed to members of a specific racial group. Such threats, however, are of evolutionary significance and, therefore, they should trigger evolved adaptive responses designed by natural selection to avoid or eliminate the perceived threat.

For instance, in the United States, people are exposed to the stereotype that Black men (but not women) are dangerous and more likely to commit violent crimes. Regardless of its accuracy, this stereotype leads to the perception of threatened physical safety. This threat perception, in turn, is associated with greater reported fear and a strong desire for self-protection. Gay men, in contrast, are stereotyped as spreading disease (e.g., AIDS) and are thus perceived to threaten health. Instead of fear, this threat perception evokes physical disgust and motivates health-protecting behaviors such as avoiding direct or indirect physical contact.

According to the EP perspective, there is not an evolved prejudice against Black men or gay men; rather, there is an evolved prejudice against those who are believed to threaten safety or carry disease. To the extent that cultural stereotypes portray Black men as being dangerous or gay men as carrying disease, prejudicial responses associated with protecting oneself from physical harm or disease should follow. In both examples, cultural stereotypes generate perceptions of threat and elicit specific emotional and behavioral responses that serve to reduce the threat. Unlike traditional social

psychological approaches, which fail to fully explain these differences in prejudice, the EP perspective anticipates that prejudicial responses ought to differ in response to the specific *type* of threat linked to the stereotype associated with an outgroup.

### *Situational and Dispositional Influences*

In addition to explaining how broad environmental contexts, such as culture, influence perceived threats and group-based prejudice, the EP approach also predicts that more immediate situational and dispositional contexts should influence perceptions of threat. For example, if prejudice against Black men is based on a perceived threat to physical safety, situations that pose a greater risk to safety ought to elicit stronger prejudicial responses against this group, but not against groups that are not stereotypically associated with this form of threat. Likewise, the EP perspective would anticipate that people who are chronically concerned about physical safety should be more biased against a group perceived to threaten physical safety than people who are less concerned about this threat. These predictions have been supported by recent empirical evidence. Once again, such evidence cannot be explained by traditional social psychological theories, yet it was predicted *a priori* by evolutionary theorists.

Findings such as these have significant implications for interventions intended to reduce or eliminate between-group prejudice. Neuberg and Cottrell argue that, because situational, dispositional, and cultural contexts all interact to form different stereotypes of different groups held by different people, different interventions may be needed to combat and reduce these prejudices. One cannot presume, for instance, that an intervention designed to reduce the fear directed toward Black men will also reduce disgust often elicited by gay men. Current interventions could be appreciably improved by incorporating evolutionary principles and findings.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Discrimination; Ethnocentrism; Homophobia; Intergroup Emotions Theory; Intergroup Violence; Ostracism; Prejudice; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Stereotyping; Stigma; Xenophobia

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## EXPERIMENTATION

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Social scientists have a plethora of ways to gather information about group processes. To describe how groups operate, researchers can observe groups in action, examine archival data sources, and use interviews or questionnaires to ask individuals about their beliefs and motivations. All of these techniques are useful, but none allows firm statements about causality. For this reason, researchers often utilize experiments, which, if properly conducted, allow strong inferences about the factors that produce various group behaviors. Because of this ability, experimentation is the most widely used methodology in group research.

Experimentation involves the manipulation of one or more independent variables to investigate the effects on one or more dependent variables. Experimentation is a powerful method because it allows the researcher to draw causal explanations about the “hows” and “whys” of group processes.

This entry provides an overview of the experimental method, describing how experiments are conducted and the basic issues and dilemmas researchers face when designing an experiment.

### Overview

An experimental investigation of group processes begins with the formulation of a *hypothesis*, a formally stated expectation about how certain independent variables will affect certain dependent variables. Hypotheses may be formed on the basis of prior research or assumptions about how the world operates. Once a hypothesis has been formed, it is then tested in a controlled study.

In 1968, an experiment conducted by Bibb Latané and John Darley on bystander intervention hypothesized that the more individuals who ostensibly witnessed an emergency, the longer it would take for any one individual to intervene in the emergency. In an experiment designed to test this hypothesis, Latané and Darley placed an individual participant in a room containing an intercom and told the participant that one or more other participants were seated in different rooms. Participants were led to believe that they would engage in a group discussion with one other person, two other people, or five other people. During the subsequent discussion, the participant heard a fellow group member ostensibly having a seizure (in actuality, participants heard a taped recording of an actor faking a seizure). The researchers then measured how long it took the participant to seek help for the person who was in distress.

Besides manipulating independent variables and measuring dependent variables, experiments such as the one conducted by Latané and Darley involve random assignment of participants to experimental conditions and control of extraneous variables that might affect the dependent variables. In the Latané and Darley study, the number of persons ostensibly present while the participant heard the seizure was the *independent variable*. It is the independent variable that is believed to cause a change in the *dependent variable*, in this case the length of time it took the participant to seek help.

As hypothesized, the researchers found that the larger the group, the longer it took for participants to seek help. The researchers were confident that the changes they observed in the dependent

variable were not a result of preexisting differences in the participants because these people had been *randomly assigned* to different levels of the independent variable. In social science research, participants inevitably bring unique individual differences, such as personality traits and life experiences, into a study, and these in turn may affect their response to the dependent variable regardless of their experimental condition. Randomly assigning participants to different levels of the independent variable minimizes the impact of such factors on the dependent variable. By ensuring that each participant has an equal chance of being assigned to each of the experimental conditions, any systematic differences between participants is randomly distributed across conditions.

In addition to participants' individual differences, other factors may also affect how they respond to the dependent variable. For example, if one condition were run in a setting characterized by frequent interruptions while another condition were run in a setting without such interruptions, the level of interruptions might influence how the participants responded to the independent variables. For this reason, experimenters strive to create conditions that are as similar as possible, except for the independent variable of interest. By holding constant such extraneous variables, the researcher gains confidence that the independent variable of interest in fact caused any change in the dependent variable.

## Types of Experiments

### *Laboratory Experiments*

The classic group experiment is conducted in a laboratory setting. This setting has several advantages. First, random assignment of participants to conditions is fairly easy to accomplish. Second, the laboratory setting allows precise manipulation of independent variables, as well as a high degree of control over extraneous variables. Finally, laboratory researchers can use precise dependent variables. Taken together, these characteristics yield studies that are high in *internal validity*—the extent to which cause-and-effect statements can be made on the basis of the results of the study.

But there are also some downsides to laboratory experiments. Because participants in such experiments are aware that they are being observed,

a number of subject effects can threaten internal validity. *Subject effects* are aspects of the experiment that produce “artificial” behavior on the part of participants. These may take the form of demand characteristics, which are features of the experiment that appear to require specific responses from participants and hence bias how they respond. For example, when an experimenter is aware of the hypotheses, he or she inadvertently may express subtle cues that cause the participant to respond in a way that confirms the hypotheses. Experimenters can minimize this issue by using a procedure in which they remain ignorant of which participants are assigned to which conditions (e.g., by having others assign participants to conditions and employing techniques, such as recorded instructions, which mask condition assignments during the experiment). In addition, participants may want to portray the best possible image of themselves, which can cause them to act in socially desirable ways that interfere with a spontaneous and natural response to the experimental manipulations. In all of these situations, the experimental manipulation may not be the only variable affecting participants' response on the dependent variable. Therefore, experimenters must be sensitive to threats to internal validity and make serious efforts to avoid them.

### *Field Experiments*

As noted, the major advantage of laboratory experiments is the substantial control they provide to the researcher. However, the results of laboratory experiments may not generalize to situations that exist outside the laboratory. To circumvent this drawback, field experiments can be conducted in more naturalistic settings. In contrast to laboratory experiments, field experiments are often high in *external validity*—the extent to which the results of the experiment can be generalized to different settings, participants, and times.

Inspired by the Darley and Latané's bystander intervention study, Irving Piliavin, Judith Rodin, and Jane Piliavin examined helping behavior in the tumultuous context of a New York subway train. In their study, a team of researchers staged an emergency situation, in which an apparent victim collapsed in full view of the train passengers, then members of the research team, acting as passengers,

measured the time it took for bystanders to intervene. The independent variables in their study were the type of victim (drunk or ill), the race of the victim (Black or White), and the presence or absence of a helping model. A major strength of field experiments is that researchers can take advantage of preexisting settings to introduce systematic variations and determine their effects. Thus, because participants in field experiments are generally not aware that they are participating in a study, field experiments are low in subject effects. However, field experiments are vulnerable to threats to internal validity. One drawback of such experiments is the difficulty of randomly assigning participants to different conditions. In addition, in contrast to laboratory settings, where situations can be created that are identical except for the independent variables of interest, such control is more difficult to attain in real-world settings. For instance, Piliavin, Rodin, and Piliavin could not control the number or demographic characteristics of the train passengers in each condition of their study.

It is extremely difficult to design an experiment that is high in both internal and external validity; therefore, researchers typically must choose one over the other. In so doing, they have to weigh the pros and cons of the two kinds of validity and seek an optimal trade-off between control and realism. Deciding on the appropriate methodology depends largely on the research question—whether it is process oriented or problem oriented. Process-oriented questions focus on understanding the underlying causes of a phenomenon, while problem-oriented questions focus on solving a specific problem. Of course, these two kinds of questions are often interdependent, because in order to solve a specific problem one needs to understand the mechanisms that underlie it. Nevertheless, process-oriented questions, which deal with basic mechanisms such as perception, motivation, and emotion, are best addressed using laboratory experiments, whereas problem-oriented questions, in which the social context is key to developing a solution, are best addressed using field experiments.

### Ethical Concerns

By working with human participants, social scientists face a unique ethical dilemma between gathering scientifically valid evidence and maintaining

participants' dignity. As an aid to researchers, the American Psychological Association has established a set of guidelines for ethical conduct of research involving human participants. These guidelines are based on five principals: (1) protecting participants from harm, (2) maintaining participants' right to privacy, (3) minimizing deception, (4) obtaining informed consent from the participants prior to a study, and (5) fully debriefing participants at the conclusion of the study.

Experimenters must take great care to ensure the welfare of participants and protect them from physical and psychological harm. While physical harm to participants is not difficult to assess, psychological harm is often harder to measure. For this reason, experimenters must make substantial efforts to ensure that participants do not experience undue stress either during the experiment or afterwards. This is particularly important when experimenters gather information of a sensitive nature, such as strongly held attitudes and beliefs about sexual orientation, race, and so forth. In such cases, researchers must ensure participant confidentiality by removing personally identifying information from data.

A controversial topic in group research is the use of deception. In some cases, deception is necessary to study a particular phenomenon. For example, both the Darley and Latané and the Piliavin, Rodin, and Piliavin studies led participants to believe that they were witnesses to an emergency situation when in fact they were not. Because deception raises ethical concerns, group researchers go out of their way to avoid it unless it is absolutely essential.

Two final ways to safeguard the rights of participants are to obtain informed consent prior to participation and to fully debrief participants after the experiment. As thoroughly as possible, researchers should describe the procedures used in the experiment before the study and obtain participants' consent to take part. Participants should be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without repercussion. At the conclusion of the experiment, researchers should debrief participants. By offering a detailed explanation of the experiment and its broader implications, any use of deception can be explained and justified. In addition, participants can leave the study with an increased understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

### Conclusion

In an experiment, through random assignment of participants to conditions and the control of extraneous variables, the researcher creates an environment in which only the independent variables could plausibly influence responses on the dependent variables. For this reason, the experiment, whether conducted in the laboratory or the field, is a powerful tool for investigating group processes.

*Danielle L. Blaylock*

*See also* Action Research; Levels of Analysis; Research Methods and Issues; Survey Methods

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## EXTENDED CONTACT EFFECT

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According to the *extended contact effect*, merely knowing that a member of our group has a close friend from another group can improve our attitudes toward that group. This means that even a relatively small number of cross-group friendships can have a wide impact on prejudice and thus can influence relations between groups on a large scale. The extended contact effect is an expansion of the contact hypothesis, which has a longer history.

Sixty years of research has convincingly demonstrated that positive interactions with people from another group, under the right circumstances, can reduce prejudice and create feelings of warmth and respect toward that group. In 1947, R. M. Williams

authored one of the earliest statements of this hypothesis. However, it was Gordon Allport who in 1954 provided the most influential account of the circumstances under which contact across groups can effectively reduce prejudice.

His hypotheses inspired an enormous volume of scientific research. However, there are many good reasons why most people cannot, or do not, enjoy friendly contact with members of other groups. Thus, the power of cross-group contact to create tolerance and respect might appear quite limited. However, social psychologists have shown that cross-group friendships can have positive effects not only on those actually involved, but also on others who are aware of them—thus the extended contact effect. This entry reviews supporting evidence of this effect and possible explanations for its occurrence.

### Supporting Evidence

The extended contact effect was formally introduced in 1997 with evidence from a series of studies. Two studies were surveys of Whites, Latinos, and Blacks. Respondents indicated how many people they knew from their own ethnic group who had a friend in one of the other ethnic groups. They also answered questions measuring their attitudes toward the two other ethnic groups. Both surveys showed that compared to people who knew of fewer cross-ethnic friendships, people who knew about more friendships between members of their own group and another ethnic group had more positive attitudes toward that other ethnic group.

Subsequently, surveys have shown the same positive effect of extended contact for numerous other groups, including both Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; German adults toward “foreigners” and Muslims; German school children toward Turkish children; heterosexuals toward gay men in both Vancouver, Canada, and in New York; White and South Asian high school students in Britain; and White, Chinese, and South Asian groups in Vancouver, Canada. In every case, the more friendships that a person knew about their own group and another group, the more positively they felt toward the other group.

However, in these survey studies, extended contact and attitudes toward the other group are measured at the same time. Therefore, it could be that knowing

about more cross-group friendships leads a person to hold more positive attitudes—the extended contact effect. However, the causal influence behind these results could just as well be in the opposite direction: Perhaps people with more positive attitudes seek out situations where there will be more interactions between the two groups, so they find out about more cross-group friendships. To be certain that extended contact *causes* improvements in attitudes, controlled experimental studies were required.

Two different types of experiments have been done. One type has been carried out in the field and involves direct interventions with schoolchildren. In one study, for example, British elementary school children were randomly divided into groups. The researchers then read stories about friendships between British and refugee children to one of the groups. The other group heard the same stories, but the friends were both British. Sometime later, the children's attitudes toward refugees were measured. The results were that the group of children who listened to the cross-group friendship stories had more positive evaluations of refugees than the children who heard stories about friendships between the two British children.

Other experiments have shown that these procedures can improve children's attitudes toward immigrant groups and toward children with disabilities. Similar effects were found for a group of adolescents in Finland, where reading stories about cross-group friendships led to improved attitudes toward "foreigners."

A second type of experiment has been carried out in laboratory settings, where new "artificial" groups are created. In one such study, university students were told that overestimators and underestimators differed in a number of important personality characteristics and then asked to perform a task where they made a series of estimations. All of the participants were told they were overestimators and were given a blue shirt to signal their group membership. They then watched as two other students, one in the blue shirt of the overestimators and one in the red shirt of the underestimates, worked on a puzzle.

What the observers did not know was that these other students were actors in the experiment. They enacted one of the following three scripts: (1) they were close friends, (2) they were strangers, or (3) they disliked each other. Consistent with the

extended contact effect, those who watched a cross-group friendship later gave more positive evaluations of the other group (the underestimators) than did those who watched a cross-group interaction between strangers or hostile enemies.

### Underlying Processes

Why does observing the cross-group friendship of others reduce our prejudice? Several explanations seem to have merit. First, there is considerable evidence that cross-group interactions can be a source of anxiety and concern, and these feelings can strengthen negative attitudes toward the other group and lead us to avoid these interactions. Observing cross-group friendships can reduce this anxiety. The friendly interaction experienced by a member of our group may make us more confident that we can also have positive, friendly relations with members of the other group, and this facilitates positive feelings and evaluations.

In addition, extended contact can change our beliefs about what is normal and appropriate for our own group. When other members of our group have friends from another group, we may come to believe that members of our group generally think positively of that group. We come to think that positive thoughts and feelings are the normal and expected response of people in our group to the other group. If we want to be good members of our group, we should adopt these same positive attitudes.

A recent study investigating the attitudes of White and Chinese Canadians toward South Asian Canadians found that those with more extended contact believed that other members of their ethnic group had more positive attitudes toward South Asian Canadians, and this belief about the feelings of others in their group was an important predictor of their own positive feelings toward South Asian Canadians. Thus, extended contact can influence attitudes by shifting the observers' beliefs about what is normal and expected for members of their group.

Finally, there is evidence that extended contact works because it creates meaningful connection between oneself and someone in another group—a connection described as *the inclusion of the group in the self*. The idea is that other people's cross-group friendships provide a conduit that connects one's self-concept (one's knowledge and feelings about oneself) to the other group. When



we feel connected to a member of our own group who has an outgroup friend, his or her connection to the other group can also connect us to that group. Most people have a strong tendency to see things that are connected to themselves in a positive light. Thus, if the other group and its members are now to some degree connected to us, we extend the positive feelings that are reserved for things that are connected to us to that group.

### Conclusion

It appears that simply knowing about friendships between members of one's own group and members of another group can improve one's attitudes toward that group. This extended contact effect can occur as a result of at least three processes: It can reduce anxiety associated with the other group; it can change beliefs about what is normal and appropriate for members of one's own group; and it can connect one to the other group and its members in ways that lead to extending a positive attitude toward the self to the other group.

The extended contact effect provides a basis for real optimism about the possibilities for improving relations between groups. It means

that even a few cross-group friendships may have the power to improve the attitudes of many, and it can thus explain how intergroup attitudes are improved even when direct contact between groups is uncommon.

*Stephen C. Wright and Arthur Aron*

*See also* Intergroup Contact Theory; Prejudice

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## FADS AND FASHIONS

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*Fads* are objects or activities that are popular with a group of people over a short period of time. Fads are also known as *crazes*. *Fashions* are a related phenomenon and are defined as objects or activities that become popular within larger groups over longer periods of time. Fashions are also known as *trends*. Researchers argue that people follow fads and fashions as a result of both *informational social influence* (where they incorporate useful information from others about what is acceptable and desirable) and *normative social influence* (where they adopt the acceptable behavior or desired object so that they themselves are accepted and liked by others). By following fads and fashions people can also assert their identity.

### History and Background

During the 17th century in the Netherlands, the demand for tulip bulbs reached such a peak that astronomical prices were charged for a single bulb, and people were prepared to pay an enormous proportion of their earnings to own this most desired object. The most famous example of this tulipomania was a bulb reportedly sold for fl. 6,000 in the 1620s, when the average annual income of the time was fl. 150. While this is an extreme example, it is illustrative of the phenomenon we popularly know today as a fad. Tulipomania lasted for a short period of time, but during this period it caused a craze that swept

through a society and left many people financially ruined.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, many more familiar and less dramatic examples of fads have existed. For example, most children in the 1950s owned a hula hoop, but these are rarely seen in the playgrounds of the 2000s. In the early 1980s, many children owned a Rubik's cube. Fads can also be seen outside the realm of consumerism. For example, the social networking site Facebook is rapidly growing in popularity, with over 70 million visits recorded in a single month in 2008 and hundreds of thousands of new users joining each day. Also, the discipline of psychology is not immune from research fads that last for a short period and then fade in popularity as new research topics take their place.

The two concepts of fad and fashion are often difficult to tease apart, and there appears to be little consensus amongst psychologists concerning where a fad ends and a fashion begins. Indeed, one dictionary definition of a *fad* is a temporary *fashion*, idea, and/or behavior assumed by a group. Generally, though, it is accepted that fads are short-lived, and that the process of adopting the object or activity of a particular fad over alternatives is rather arbitrary. For example, why were hula hoops, and not some equally fun alternative, the most popular toys of their time?

In contrast to fads, fashions are seen as having a sustained influence on society and a broader reach, often across multiple societies. For example, the hippie fashions lasted for a significant period of time during the 1960s and '70s and were followed by

people throughout the world. In addition, fashions, unlike fads, are characterized by people in a group sharing a look or style. In other words, a clear trend is noticeable among group members, who alter their appearance to reflect what is collectively perceived as appropriate and stylish at any given time. Although fashions can last for extended periods of time, they are inevitably replaced by new fashions that render the old ones outdated—at least until they return when the fashion industry again proclaims them fashionable. This is not uncommon, and it is another important feature of fashion. Although some fashions run their course and disappear forever, some return from obscurity after several years and become part of the “cycle of fashion.”

### Fads, Fashions, and Social Influence

People are influenced by fads and fashions through two processes of social influence: informational social influence and normative social influence. *Informational social influence* occurs when people’s choice to follow a norm is informed by the choices and decisions of others. *Normative social influence* occurs when people’s choice to follow a norm is driven by the desire to be part of a group (and avoid rejection and exclusion) or to achieve a positive social outcome such as being liked or accepted by a desirable group.

#### *Informational Social Influence*

Informational social influence is the mechanism by which people gain important information from others that subsequently guides their behavior. If as a result of informational influence people follow fads or fashions, it is because the behaviors of others have convinced them that doing so is a good choice.

A study by Matthew Salganik, Peter Dodds, and Duncan Watts in 2006 illustrates informational influence in making fashionable music choices. Salganik and his colleagues simulated an online center for downloading music. After agreeing to take part in a study of musical preferences, participants were assigned to either a control condition, where they chose which out of a list of 48 songs they wanted to listen to, or an experimental condition, where they chose the songs they wanted to listen to after seeing the number of downloads

each song had received from other people who had visited the site. It was found that in the experimental condition, visitors to the site paid attention to the download activities of others, and their choices were influenced by the choices of others. Popular songs were more popular in the experimental condition than in the control condition, and less popular songs were less popular. Participants in the experimental condition therefore used informational social influence to navigate the site and increase their chances of finding the good songs.

#### *Normative Social Influence*

People can also follow fads and fashions when they want to “go with the crowd” or feel part of a group. Following trends is one way in which people can gain the approval of others who are important to them. For example, decorating one’s house in a particular fashion might make it easier to be accepted into a desirable social circle. Similarly, wearing particular clothes at school might increase a student’s chances of being accepted by a desirable peer group.

Also, conforming to normative social influence means that people can avoid some of the negative consequences that might result from standing out from the crowd. Resisting group pressure can lead to disapproval from others, negative interactions with other group members, and ultimately rejection or even ostracism by the group. If membership in the group is important, then conforming to the fashion norms of the group is one way for individuals to retain the group’s good opinion.

#### *Fashion and Identity*

Related to the notion of conforming to group norms, adhering to particular fashions can also be a way for people to signal their group membership to others. This is particularly the case for widespread fashions that are adopted by specific groups, or *subgroups* of individuals. Such conformity can evoke positive feelings in people, in that identifying with a personally valued group is good for self-esteem. In displaying their identity through fashion, people also become associated with a particular group membership, and other people then make judgments about them based on their membership in that group.

For example, wearing Goth clothing and makeup signifies to outsiders that a person is most probably a Goth. Identifying him- or herself as a Goth might improve a person's self-esteem. At the same time, others will make judgments about this person based on his or her Goth attire—for example, that he or she is morbid and likes “dark music,” because this fashion is an identity marker associated with a specific set of norms and values. In cases like these, where a fashion is shared by a small group of people, the people adopting the fashion can even be seen as nonconformists. However, some psychologists would argue that this is still a case of normative group influence—in this case, however, people are conforming to a subgroup norm instead of a mainstream norm.

### Organizational Fashions

A good example of how trends fluctuate and how fashions spread or diffuse can be seen in fashions in the promotion and use of particular management techniques within and across organizations. In 1999, Eric Abrahamson and his colleagues studied how the popularity of trends in management practices (collective beliefs about the effectiveness and appropriate use of cutting-edge management techniques) is determined by the discourse surrounding such techniques. They argue that the success and life of an organizational fashion is also determined by the discourse surrounding it. This idea explains why some fashions might be successful and long-lasting, and some may not. It also explains how some fashions may be institutionalized or adopted in the first place, and why some may be dismissed as mere fads.

In particular, Abrahamson and his colleagues argue that variability in when advocates begin, continue, and stop promoting organizational fashions can explain variability in the fashions' lifecycles. Also, combinations of forces both within and outside the management-fashion market can trigger, promote, and diffuse management fashions. Finally, the success and longevity of management fashions can be determined by the emotionality of the discourse surrounding them. Emotionally charged, unreasoned, and enthusiastic discourse characterizes the upswings or successes of fashions. On the other hand, unemotional, reasoned, and qualified discourse characterizes

the downswings or lack of success of organizational practices.

### Fads, Fashions, and Body Image

Another good example of fluctuating trends can be seen in women's and men's responses to social norms concerning body image. In a study conducted in the 1980s, Brett Silverstein and her colleagues examined the standard female body size/shape in American magazines from 1901 to 1981. Their results show significant changes in the female body shape over the years. For example, in the 1940s and 1950s the images were characterized by curvaceous women like Marilyn Monroe, whereas in the 1960s the images of women changed to the reed-thin ideal exemplified by British fashion model Twiggy.

It is important to note, however, that like all fashions, ideal body weight is culture-specific. A study of 54 cultures, conducted by Judith Anderson and her colleagues in the 1990s, illustrates this point clearly. Across these cultures, Anderson and her colleagues measured people's ideal female body (heavy, moderate, or slender). They also analyzed how reliable the food source was in each culture. Interestingly, body size varied according to the reliability of the food source. Specifically, in cultures where food resources were stable, a slender female body shape was preferred. However, in cultures where the food supply was unreliable, a heavier shape was preferred—perhaps because it indicated that the woman was likely to be healthy and fertile.

Men are not exempt from the change in the physical ideal over time. Harrison Pope and his colleagues found some evidence for a changing ideal male body in their analysis of GI Joe dolls' bicep, chest, and waist measurements from the 1960s to 1990s—these showed a significant increase in muscularity over the four decades. In another study, Pope and his colleagues asked men in the United States, France, and Austria to alter computer images of male bodies to match their actual body shape, their ideal shape, and the shape that women would find most attractive. While they were accurate about their own shape, participants' ideal and most attractive shapes differed significantly from their own body shape—overall they chose more muscular body shapes.

There is a great deal of concern about the fashion for certain ideal body shapes. Some studies show that young women perceive themselves as overweight when they are not, and that these women are dissatisfied with their normal (or even slim) body shapes because they do not conform to the thin ideal portrayed in the media. Likewise, the muscular ideal for male figures has been linked to feelings of pressure in adolescent and young adult males. Some study results suggest that young men are changing their eating habits in order to “bulk up” to meet the muscular ideal, which sometimes also entails the use of substances such as steroids. Following fashion therefore does not necessarily have positive consequences.

*Karen M. Douglas*

*See also* Conformity; Inclusion/Exclusion; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Norms; Self-Esteem; Social Identity Theory

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## FALSE CONSENSUS EFFECT

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People tend to overestimate the extent to which other people share their opinions, behavioral inclinations, and preferences, a bias known as *false consensus*. In a typical study, participants might be asked whether or not they agree with a statement (e.g., “use of the death penalty is appropriate

in some cases”), after which they are asked to estimate the percentage of their peers who would also endorse the statement. Investigators then compute a score that represents the difference between the estimate given by those who endorse the statement and those who do not. For example, suppose 70% of individuals in a sample endorse the death penalty (and thus 30% do not). If the 70% who endorse it estimate that 60% of their peers agree with them, whereas the 30% of those who disagree provide an estimate of 50% regarding their peers’ agreement, there will be a false consensus effect of  $60\% - 50\% = 10\%$ . Note in this example that participants can exhibit the false consensus effect even if they underestimate the percentage of their peers who agree with them. The key requirement for false consensus is that estimates about others are pulled toward one’s own opinion, irrespective of where they are on an absolute scale. This entry provides a historical background for research on false consensus, lists explanations for this phenomenon, identifies similar psychological constructs, and finally, considers the implications of the effect.

### History and Background

In one of the earliest demonstrations of false consensus, Lee Ross and his colleagues asked Stanford undergraduates to wear an unattractive sign promoting a local restaurant and found that those who agreed to do so gave higher estimates of the number of students who would agree than did students who initially declined the request. The false consensus effect has now been observed in a wide variety of attitudes and behaviors, such as political opinions, health-related behaviors, and social perceptions, and it appears even when incentives to make accurate judgments are present.

Research shows that people are particularly likely to demonstrate false consensus effects for strongly held attitudes and when judging consensus among members of their ingroups rather than among members of outgroups. Other work shows that false consensus is more likely to appear where there are differences of opinion (e.g., whether capital punishment is appropriate) than where there is wide agreement (e.g., whether stealing is acceptable). Of note, George Goethals and his colleagues have shown that people are less likely to

demonstrate false consensus for abilities and predispositions that are a source of personal pride; for example, people see their morality and abilities as being particularly unique, thereby leading instead to a *false uniqueness* bias.

### Explanations

There are many possible reasons why false consensus effects occur. First, it is likely that people surround themselves with others who share their values, attitudes, and preferences. Research on the availability heuristic shows that people make judgments based on information that is most memorable and accessible; given that their peers are more accessible than those who are not their peers, it makes sense that people's estimates of universal opinion will be biased in the direction of their own opinion. Because ingroups typically contain relatively more similar others, false consensus is exacerbated among members of ingroups.

A second explanation is the fundamental attribution error, or correspondence bias; a tendency for people to overestimate the consistency between other people's behaviors and their underlying attitudes. Other people might convey particular attitudes in order to appear socially appropriate, whereas their true attitudes might be quite different. Nevertheless, if their outwardly expressed attitudes are consistent with our own, we may overestimate the consensus of our opinion.

A third reason is that people tend to seek out confirmatory information for their opinions. Research shows that people notice confirmatory information more than disconfirmatory information, which suggests that people will be more likely to remember cases in which their opinions were validated than cases in which others expressed an opposing point of view. A related explanation is that when people are asked to estimate how consensual their opinions are, they might focus more attention on their own opinion than on possible alternative opinions—a focalism bias. Many studies show that people are less likely to consider alternative perspectives if those perspectives are not cognitively accessible. For example, if people are asked how much they like one food, they may report higher ratings than if they make ratings in the context of several other possible foods they might consume.

All of these explanations suggest a cognitive bias in how people encode and recall information about others, but people might also be motivated to perceive consensus in order to avoid ostracism and a lack of social acceptance, as well as to maintain self-esteem. They may be particularly concerned about matching the values of their ingroups. Perceiving consensus can facilitate smooth social interactions; indeed, people expect consensus more when they expect to interact with the other individuals with whom they are estimating consensus. These and other motives could partially explain why people overestimate agreement.

A review of the false consensus literature by Gary Marks and Norman Miller suggests that no one explanation fully accounts for false consensus effects, but rather, that two or more of these processes could be operating at the same time (depending on the topic). Also, some investigators question whether the false consensus effect should necessarily be called a bias. According to these investigators, one's own standing is an important piece of information—often a well-known piece of information—that should be used when projecting beliefs in the aggregate. We know less about others' opinions than we do about our own, and we therefore are less confident in our knowledge of their opinions. Thus, our own opinions might be considered a reasonable anchor.

### Related Constructs

It is useful to distinguish the false consensus effect from other, related phenomena that also address the nature of people's social comparisons. People display the *uniqueness bias* when they *underestimate* the percentage of their peers who could or would engage in positive behaviors, and *overestimate* the percentage of their peers who would or could engage in negative behaviors. For example, individuals who engage in community service may believe that most of their peers would not engage in such moral and self-sacrificial behavior. However, citizens who act in some negative way (e.g., pollute) may believe that most others do likewise. Research by Goethals and his colleagues shows that the uniqueness bias is more likely to emerge for beliefs about one's creative abilities and moral proclivities than for academic skills, a tendency called the "Muhammad Ali" effect because

the famous boxer once quipped, “I only said I was the greatest, not the smartest.” The uniqueness bias is also more likely to appear for general abilities (e.g., intelligence) than for specific ones (e.g., ability to complete a *New York Times* crossword puzzle).

Importantly, the uniqueness bias is not synonymous with false uniqueness nor is it the opposite of false consensus, both of which are measured differently. The uniqueness bias is demonstrated simply by comparing the estimated percentage of individuals who would or could engage in a behavior to the actual percentage. If 70% of participants in a given sample indicate that they would engage in a moral behavior, but members of the sample estimate that only 20% would, the sample as a whole has demonstrated a uniqueness bias of  $70\% - 20\% = 50\%$ . As a result, it is possible to display both the uniqueness bias and the false consensus effect in the same sample. For example, suppose 60% of the members of a group report that they would donate blood and that these individuals estimate the donation rate to be 20%, whereas the 40% who would not donate blood estimate the donation rate to be 10%. This would result in a false consensus effect of  $20\% - 10\% = 10\%$ . However, both groups are greatly underestimating the percentage of their group who would donate, which is quite high (60%), representing a uniqueness bias.

A second, related phenomenon is *pluralistic ignorance*. This occurs when a group of people are engaging in similar behavior, yet the members of the group attribute their own behavior and the behavior of other members of the group to different causes (see the entry on pluralistic ignorance for other definitions of this phenomenon in social psychology). For example, college students at a party may drink excessively because they want to fit in, yet believe that other students at the party are drinking excessively because of a desire to do so. In another example, research on bystander intervention in emergencies shows that people misperceive others’ interpretations of the event from their behavior (i.e., they believe that others do not consider the event an emergency because those others are failing to act). It would seem that such misperceptions run counter to false consensus effects, because in the case of pluralistic ignorance, people are *underestimating* the similarity between their own and others’ opinions. Perhaps in these contexts

the motive to “do the right thing” (and associated concerns about being accurate when judging others’ opinions) overwhelms the motive to seek out validation of one’s own opinions. People can also misperceive consensus and consider their own motives to differ from those of others; as an example, supporters of a political issue may overestimate consensus yet believe that their support originates from “purer” social concerns than does the support of their political comrades.

An interesting field study demonstrates how each of the phenomena described above can co-occur. The authors, Benoit Monin and Michael Norton, capitalized on a water shortage at the Princeton University campus. A showering ban was instituted over a 3-day period to conserve water, and students were surveyed throughout the ban regarding their actual shower use and their perceptions of others’ use. On the day after the ban was instituted, the investigators found that bathers offered a higher estimate of the number of students who were showering (63%) than did those who were not showering (39%)—a false consensus effect of  $63\% - 39\% = 24\%$ . As it turned out, only 33% of the students were actually showering. Across both groups, the average estimate of the percentage of students bathing was 47%, leading to a uniqueness bias of  $47\% - 33\% = 14\%$ . These biases were sustained throughout the ban until it was lifted, at which point the false consensus effect remained, but a uniqueness bias then appeared in the reverse direction (i.e., students *underestimated* how many of their peers were showering). Finally, the investigators found that bathers believed they cared about the community more than the other bathers did—in other words, they believed that their own bathing was justifiable (e.g., because they engaged in intense workouts), whereas others’ bathing was due to immorality. At the same time, nonbathers believed that they cared more about the community than other nonbathers did. Thus, both bathers and nonbathers believed their actions were caused by different factors than those influencing their peers’ behavior—a clear example of pluralistic ignorance.

### Conclusion

False consensus is likely to have important consequences. To the extent that people overestimate the magnitude of social support for their opinions, they



may become less open-minded, less persuaded by alternative perspectives (in part because such perspectives will be perceived to be in a relatively small minority), and more convinced of the moral and social grounding for their own perspective. In turn, this resistance to alternative perspectives can promote intergroup hostility, much like the illusion of unanimity in groupthink. False consensus also has the potential to underlie faulty decision making in a host of consequential domains; examples include career and spousal choices, medical decisions, and political behavior. Although some research shows that asking people to take the perspective of others makes them less egocentric—and perhaps less susceptible to false consensus and other biases—research has not yet identified systematic ways of reducing the bias across multiple domains.

*William Klein*

*See also* Attribution Biases; Bystander Effect; Deviance; Groupthink; Inclusion/Exclusion; Need for Belonging; Pluralistic Ignorance; Shared Mental Models; Socially Shared Cognition

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## FAMILIES

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The family is the child’s first group. However, defining the family is not an easy matter given today’s diversity of family types, some of which have only recently become possible as a result of advances in reproductive technology. At a minimum, scholars agree that the family is a social unit in which members identify with one another and share economic responsibilities, social and emotional commitments, memories of common experiences, and expectations for continuity over time and a common future. These elements characterize many nonfamily groups as well.

Families are a unique kind of group because the members of typical families—parents and children—do not choose their group members and do not typically leave the group. In most families, unlike other groups, members are also biologically related. Like some other groups, family members differ in both age and power, and they occupy prescribed roles when the group is formed (i.e., when the first child is born or adopted). Well-functioning families are hierarchical, with children relatively powerless compared to parents until the balance of power begins to change as children enter adolescence. Families also serve unique functions, the most basic of which is to provide protection and support until children are capable of providing for themselves.

Because families serve as the first and primary source of children’s socialization, much of the research on families focuses on how they socialize their children. Historically, theories held that parents were the primary shapers of children’s personalities, values, and social and emotional competence. In recent years, however, it has become clear that family socialization is far more complex than simple unilateral, parent-to-child influence and that all

family members contribute to family social processes, including children themselves. Theoretical perspectives now reflect this complexity.

### Family Socialization Processes

By studying family members with different degrees of genetic relatedness (e.g., identical vs. fraternal twins), researchers have been able to show that some of the similarities among children raised in the same family are a product of their common family socialization, as traditionally assumed, but some are because children and parents share half of their genes. Because individuals' genes influence their reactions, judgments, and interpretation of experiences, children uniquely affect their parents' and siblings' behavior, and thus their parents' and siblings' influence on them in return. This research has also shown that the children in each family differ from one another partly because parents treat each child in the family as a unique individual, partly because each child interprets and responds to the same family experiences differently (e.g., younger and older children respond to divorce differently), and partly because each child has singular experiences outside the family. Thus, family environments and children's genes interact in complex ways to mold development. For example, children with a genetic history of anxiety disorders who grow up in stressful, conflict-ridden family environments are more likely to develop anxiety-related problems than children without such a family history, or than children with the same genetic propensity who grow up in more typical families.

### Attachment

Socialization in the family begins with the special relationship that forms between parent and child during the first year of life, known as parent-infant *attachment*. In landmark studies by Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Alan Sroufe, and their students from the 1950s through the 1970s, it became clear that children become attached to their parents not because parents feed them, as had long been thought, but because of a biologically based need for contact, comfort, and safety that is characteristic of all mammals. By the end of infants' first year of life—in every culture

studied, from hunter-gatherer to urban industrial—they have established an intense and long-lasting emotional bond with their parents and other regular caregivers that is unlike any other interpersonal bond or relationship.

Importantly, research has also shown that it is this unique emotional bond that opens children up to parental socialization influence. One- and two-year-old children listen to and comply with parents' requests not because they fear punishment, but because they want to maintain their parents' love, approval, and protection. One might expect, therefore, that children with more secure, high-functioning attachment relationships would be more compliant, cooperative, and eager to please their parents, and research has confirmed this.

Attachment research remains a thriving area of inquiry. Ongoing questions include how attachments vary by culture, how parenting quality and child characteristics such as emotional reactivity shape the developing attachment relationship, and how early childhood attachment relationships influence later developing social and emotional competencies. It is especially difficult to address the last question because it is not possible to manipulate children's attachment relationships experimentally. For example, children with more secure attachment relationships in infancy have been found to be more successful in the peer group in middle childhood, more likely to be group leaders, and more well-liked by their peers. One prominent theoretical perspective credits these associations to a relationship prototype, called an *internal working model*, which is held to derive from the child's attachment relationship and to influence all subsequent relationships in which the child participates. Scholars with another perspective have argued that continuity in children's general socialization experience in the family is a more likely explanation. Large-scale longitudinal studies in which a significant number of children experience changing family environments, and who can then be studied for several years to examine their subsequent development, hold promise for elucidating these fundamental questions.

### Parenting Styles

Much of the research on family socialization concerns how parents convey and enforce rules

and expectations for children's behavior. Based on influential studies by Diana Baumrind beginning in the 1960s, scholars have identified four common parenting styles. These are based on two distinct dimensions of behavior that have sometimes also been found in research on nonfamily groups: warmth/responsiveness and control/demandingness. *Authoritative* parents score high on both dimensions. They are attentive, affectionate, and accepting. At the same time, they establish clear routines, rules, and limits; expect age-appropriate behavior; and communicate and enforce expectations consistently. *Permissive* parents score high on the warmth dimension, but low on the control dimension. They are affectionate and responsive, but also indulgent, with few rules or limits on behavior or expression and few demands for age-appropriate behavior. *Authoritarian* parents score high on the control dimension, but low on warmth. These parents have many, often rigidly enforced rules, seldom consider the child's point of view, and typically expect their children to behave with greater maturity than the children are capable of. They tend to be intrusive and coercive, as well as harsh, critical, and rejecting. *Disengaged* parents score low on both warmth and control. They are generally detached and uninvolved with their children. They are either indifferent to their children's feelings or thoughts, or rejecting and critical. They have few or no routines or rules, and their expectations for maturity and age-appropriate behavior are inconsistent or inappropriate.

As one might expect, research has shown that the developmental outcomes are quite different for children growing up in families with these different parenting styles. Children of authoritative parents were found to be the most socially and emotionally competent from early childhood through adolescence, with correspondingly low levels of maladjustment. Permissive parenting was shown to be associated with impulsivity, aggression, and less initiative and self-reliance in children. Children of authoritarian parents tended to have little general social competence, and were moody and unfriendly, with low self-esteem. Finally, children of disengaged parents were found to have the least social and emotional competence and exhibited a variety of behavioral and adjustment problems. This research, however, was conducted with a relatively homogeneous population. More recently, researchers have

been working to specify the particular components of each style that produce these differences, as well as whether these styles and their associated outcomes hold up across different family types and cultures. For example, research suggests that both Chinese American and Black American families are more likely to use the authoritarian parenting style, but the outcomes for their children are more like the outcomes for White American children reared in authoritative families. This suggests that parenting styles possess different meanings in different cultural contexts, and that culture serves as an important moderator of family socialization effects.

### *Other Family Socialization Processes*

Although research on parenting styles has been influential and informative, it has largely neglected the role of children in family socialization. Therefore, scholars have begun to extend the study of family socialization beyond disciplinary contexts, and to other mechanisms of influence besides control. Research has focused on *gatekeeping and monitoring*, in which parents manage children's exposure to adults and peers who model (or fail to model) culturally valued behavior; *scaffolding and coaching*, in which parents create structures and routines, and provide help and feedback so that children learn age-appropriate values and behavior through supported participation in a variety of social contexts; and *mutual reciprocity and affect sharing*, in which parents and children establish and share common goals in pleasurable, affectively positive social settings. Notably, none of these involves disciplinary encounters, direct imposition of control over children's behavior, or conflict and disagreement between children and parents.

The trend in family socialization research has been especially influenced by the recent conceptualization of families as groups. This theoretical perspective places more emphasis on family practices and norms, the child's interpretation and acceptance of parents' communication of norms and expectations, and the child's own efforts to behave in accordance with perceived family norms. For example, parental monitoring of children's activities and companions in early adolescence is associated with more positive emotional adjustment and greater social competence, but only when children are honest with their parents about

their whereabouts and accept their parents' authority in monitoring them. One interesting but unstudied question is whether children's socialization in the family establishes some of the basic phenomena that characterize nonfamily groups in adulthood, such as ingroup attachment and positivity.

### The Family as a System

The most complex conceptualization of families considers them as holistic systems of interconnected alliances and relationships that are constantly shifting, and that both affect and are affected by external relationships, including those in the workplace, the community, and the culture. For example, the marital relationship is affected by and affects each child's relationships with each parent, and each child's relationship with his or her siblings. Likewise, the marital relationship is influenced by each parent's workplace relationships. Family relationships are also affected by cultural norms and practices. For example, some cultures value strong extended family ties; children in these cultures are likely to grow up in households that include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins as well as parents and siblings. The family system also develops, with the nature of its relationships changing as each member ages and as the world itself changes. Maternal employment, for instance, has increased dramatically over the last few decades in Western industrialized nations, with concomitant changes in family dynamics and children's experiences. Viewed as a dynamic system, the family provides critical physical and psychological resources for all of its members, and can be characterized by its degree of interconnectedness, stability, and support.

### Dysfunction Within the Family System

The family can also be the source of interpersonal stress and conflict. Traumatic life events, social disadvantage, mental illness, and substance addiction can contribute to a breakdown in the smooth functioning of the family system. In some extreme cases, parents not only fail to provide for their children but actively harm them through physical or emotional neglect or abuse. Moreover, adult children of abusive families are more likely to replicate such abuse with their own children.

Thus, a dysfunctional family system can perpetuate itself across generations.

Contemporary theory acknowledges the importance of the family as a system in adapting to each member's behavior, including mental health difficulties. The tendency for psychological disorders to run in families can lead to significant stress on the family system, particularly if there is a lack of fit between family members' problems. For example, a father who struggles with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder may find it difficult to inhibit a harsh reaction to the misbehavior of his impulsive child, whose inherited tendency to impulsivity is further exacerbated by his father's responses. Family therapy, built on the conceptualization of the family as an interdependent system of relationships, has been found to assist in preventing relapse of significant mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, and it is a promising method by which to treat adolescent problems such as eating disorders. In sum, whether socializing children or providing important resources for the healthy functioning of all members, family members influence one another's development and adjustment in multiple, complex, intersecting ways.

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See also Attachment Theory; Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Socialization

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## FAULTLINES

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Groups have *faultlines* when group members' personal characteristics align with one another, so

that distinct, unique subgroups are recognizable within the larger group. These alignments provide the basis for conflict, especially between the subgroups, and especially when issues arise that are related to the subgroups' differences. This entry provides a specific definition of group faultlines, a variety of examples and implications of these faultlines, and some recent research findings.

### Defining the Concept

The concept of group faultlines uses a geological metaphor: The surface of the earth is covered by layers of rocks, huge rocks. Among, between, and beneath the layers are *faults*, that is, fractures within the earth's crust. As long as things are calm and external forces don't appear, faults can be dormant for many years without being noticed.

In like fashion, we can think of the surface of a group of people as being covered by their demographic characteristics, which hide the more important, underlying personal characteristics that we normally associate with those demographics. Thus, if we could look down at the earth and see below its vegetation, we might see its layers and its faults. Similarly, if we look at a group of people and see their surface characteristics, like race, age, and gender, we also understand that they have deeper characteristics, like preferences, inclinations, and values. At the same time, we have lay theories about how individuals' surface characteristics relate to these deeper qualities. We go even further when we form conclusions about the deeper interrelationships of group members based on their array of demographic characteristics.

As noted, groups can have faultlines, much like the earth has faults. Faultlines occur when a group's members differ on the basis of one or more attributes and their differences align. When more attributes are intercorrelated, they can create the potential for a schism in the group's interpersonal structure (e.g., gender faultlines can divide groups into male and female subgroups). Faultlines increase in strength when the entire group can be divided into a small number of subgroups, each of whose members are similar to each other but are markedly different from the members of the other subgroup.

For instance, a group with two teenagers and two elderly people will experience stronger faultline

effects than a group with two members in their 20s and two members in their 30s. Faultlines also get stronger as multiple attributes align. Thus, a group that includes two older Hispanic men and two young Caucasian women would have a very strong faultline, as gender, age, and ethnicity all align. Faultline strength is strongest when a large number of individual attributes align with each other and create a small rather than a large number of subgroups. The strongest faultlines occur when a large number of attributes that differ widely align themselves consistently and result in two distinct subgroups. In contrast, if a group's members are extremely diverse (i.e., they all differ from each other in many ways), diversity may be high but the possibility of a faultline becomes unlikely. Thus, faultlines, and particularly strong faultlines, tend to surface in groups that have a moderate range of diversity.

Faultlines and diversity are related but different concepts. Diversity refers to the dispersion of group members' personal characteristics. For instance, a group may be homogeneous with respect to gender but diverse with respect to personality or cultural values. Groups are diverse when members are different on any single attribute. Thus, a group that includes members who all have different occupations is obviously diverse in occupations, and more diverse than a group that includes two engineers and two clerks. Diversity is a characteristic of groups that can depend on individual attributes, considered one at a time.

Group faultlines, in contrast, depend on multiple attributes, considered simultaneously. Faultline models suggest that the members of a group that is tremendously diverse on many dimensions may get along very well with one another because the group has no faultlines. The models also suggest that another group that is less diverse may have internal turmoil and conflict if many of its group members' personal characteristics align to form a strong faultline. Faultline models emphasize the formation and action of subgroups: Faultlines can form the basis for difficult interactions within a group, especially when the topic being discussed is related to the characteristics that have caused the faultline. Thus, faultlines use the concept of diversity and build on it by focusing on the microcomposition of a group's members.

### Examples and Implications

An example may help to clarify the different dynamics that can emerge from diversity and faultlines. Consider two groups that encompass similar levels of diversity but different faultline strengths. A group with two female accountants and two male engineers has a stronger faultline than a group with a female accountant, a male accountant, a female engineer, and a male engineer. While the groups have similar diversity in gender and occupation, the former group has a much stronger faultline and, theoretically, may have more difficult interactions—especially if the company budget can send only two people to a professional conference this year, and the group must decide between an accounting conference and an engineering conference.

Among the many attributes that can form potential faultlines, social context plays an important role in deciding whether a particular faultline will be activated. For instance, differences in political ideology in parliament, the home country of parent companies in international joint ventures, and geographical locations in global virtual teams may be more salient than demographic faultlines, such as gender and race.

When faultlines split a group into subgroups, increased internal conflict is a logical result. Recent research indicates that this may be the case even when the issues that a group is addressing are not related to the nature of their faultline. When issues are related to the group's faultline, however, the potential for considerable conflict may increase even more. Thus, if our example group of older Hispanic men and young Caucasian women was discussing the establishment of a day care center at their organization, they might have significant conflict—and it would be easy to predict who would line up on which side of the conflict.

Over time, group members learn about each others' personal characteristics, and their similarities and differences in values and philosophies may become more important than their demographic similarities and differences. In other words, as group members get to know how the other members stand on a variety of attitudinal issues, what they learn can become the basis for either harmony or conflict. Different political preferences, for instance, which are not easily

seen by just observing a person, may lead to political faultlines within a group—and the potential for accentuated political conflict. When conflict is intense, groups with strong faultlines may actually break into two or more groups along their faultlines.

Another effect of faultlines, if they are activated, is that group members may identify more with their fellow subgroup members rather than with the group as a whole. When subgroup identification is strong, members within the same subgroup enjoy highly trusting relationships, but they may be suspicious of the members of the other subgroup. Similarity among subgroup members also creates a psychologically safe environment for team learning. However, the benefits created within subgroups are sometimes created at the expense of the whole group.

### Recent Research

Recent research has indicated that strong faultlines influence the effectiveness of communication with a group: When faultlines are weak, communication across subgroups tends to be effective; when faultlines are strong, increased communication actually seems to decrease performance. Research also has found that members' identification with the group was lower in groups with strong faultlines than in those with weak faultlines. Decision accuracy also suffered in groups with strong faultlines, because these groups failed to process information efficiently and effectively.

A study that is an excellent application of the idea of faultlines investigated the characteristics of firms that were forming a total of 71 international joint ventures in China. Each firm had at least two expatriate managers and at least two local managers. The managers' nationalities were an important characteristic that could have created "factions" (or subgroups) in the management teams: It was to be expected that local managers might find it easier to work with other local managers, and that expatriates might find it easier to work with other expatriates. The research clearly indicated that the presence of such strong faultlines led to task and emotional conflict, less "behavioral integration" (i.e., information exchange, collaboration, and joint decision making), and, ultimately, reduced performance.

The bottom line: Faultlines can be a particularly important structural force in the dynamic interactions within groups.

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*See also* Categorization; Cliques; Cooperation and Competition; Diversity; Schisms; Social Identity Theory

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## FEMINISM

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The concept of *feminism* is not universal and has many forms (e.g., liberal, radical, womanism) and definitions. However, there are three characteristics that are shared by most, if not all, forms of feminism. First is the recognition that women are treated differently than men, and are in the subordinate role in society. Second, feminists view gender and gender roles as socially constructed (and thus capable of change) and as differentially valued within society. Third, feminism holds that women can be autonomous and self-reliant. The main goal of feminism is gender equality.

### Brief History

Discussions of women's position relative to men's go back at least as far as the 12th century, although "feminism" did not emerge until the mid-18th century. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in 1792, is considered the first feminist text. Early North American feminists struggled with competing loyalties: family vs. self, abolition vs. suffrage, and change vs. comfort, among others. In 1869, John Stuart Mill published *The Subjection of Women*, which distinguished between women's biological abilities and social construction; for example, it differentiated

between the ability to bear children and the need to stay at home. It is a critical text because it was written by a man and therefore considered more credible by a male-dominated society.

Modern feminist movements are referred to as "waves." The waves of feminism in the United Kingdom and the United States have similar timelines, although other countries have their own progressions. The first wave in the United States lasted approximately 60 years, from 1860 to 1920, and focused on gaining the vote for women. The second wave, in the 1960s and 1970s, is often prominent in definitions and descriptions of feminism. While many actions of the second wave were attempts to make family life more equitable for women, there were also extreme changes in society, both within and outside the feminist movement. The movement of the 1960s left out many women of color, often focusing on White, middle-class issues such as the right to employment and the distribution of household labor. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 made abortion legal, granting women control over their own bodies, and sparking a debate that has continued for over 30 years. Extreme actions covered by the media (e.g., marches, bra-burning, single-issue protests) managed to alienate more moderate feminists, distancing more women from what became a very political label. The political climate during the 1980s and 1990s was difficult for feminism, and women continued to avoid the label "feminist" into the next decade. This is the era during which the third wave of feminism began.

### Relevance to Intergroup Relations

Women constitute half of the world's population, and the majority hold a socially subordinate role to men. Compared to men, women experience inequalities in social, political, economic, and domestic realms. Feminism has brought to the forefront several issues relevant to intergroup relations, including (a) feminist identities; (b) stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against women; (c) rejection of dominant ideologies; and (d) collective action and social change.

### Feminism as Identity

Females today may believe in feminist ideals but disavow the label "feminist." This is part of the

third wave battle, in which women are fighting to maintain the rights achieved during the second wave, but still struggle against many of the obstacles of 50 years ago. While women may have achieved much success in the workplace, their roles at home may resemble those of their grandmothers. During the 1980s and 1990s, conservative groups tried to undermine the achievements of the second wave, portraying feminists as angry, antimale, bra-burning, home-wrecking, lesbian, and so on. Consideration of this negative portrayal is key to understanding why many feminist women choose not to label themselves as such.

### *Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination*

Societal attitudes toward women are mixed, encompassing both positivity and negativity. Researchers have identified two key characteristics on which women, and social groups in general, are judged: warmth (or likability) and competence. Women who fulfill traditional gender roles, such as housewives and mothers, are consistently viewed as very warm but not very competent. People view them as having low social status, and the common emotions felt toward these women are pity and sympathy. However, people feel more positively toward traditional women and tend to help and protect them. In contrast, women who fulfill non-traditional gender roles, such as career women and feminists, are viewed as not very warm but very competent. Society views these women as having high social status and in competition with men. Thus, emotions commonly felt toward these women are envy and jealousy, but people tend to cooperate and associate with these groups due to their high status.

Women who are highly identified with their gender are more likely to be aware of discrimination against women. However, many women recognize sexism toward women as a group but deny that sexism affects them personally. Part of this denial may be due to the fact that sexism, like racism, has become more subtle and difficult to detect.

Social psychologists have identified two distinct forms of sexism, hostile and benevolent. Hostile sexism is the traditional form in which people hold openly negative attitudes toward women. Hostile sexists view women, particularly feminists, as competitors with men for jobs and power. In

contrast, benevolent sexism reflects a consistent research finding termed the “women are wonderful” effect. Benevolent sexists view women as pure and deserving of men’s protection. Women are viewed as complements to men, as men’s partners in heterosexual relationships in which women fulfill their traditional gender roles of wife, mother, and nurturer.

Women are less likely to endorse hostile sexism than men, but women are equally likely to endorse benevolent sexism, especially in highly sexist cultures. On the surface, benevolent sexism appears to be positive and provides women with protection and domestic power. However, benevolent sexism actually enforces inequality between women and men. Benevolent sexism in a sense keeps women “in their place” and prevents their mobility in employment and attainment of economic and social power.

Benevolent sexism rewards women who maintain traditional gender roles by providing them with affection and protection. Women who violate traditional gender roles often are subject to the effects of backlash. The backlash effect occurs when stereotype violators are penalized for their violating actions. Women who appear masculine in any way can be seen as violators of gender norms, and they may be sanctioned for it—for example, by being excluded from a social group. Feminists often face the backlash effect as they work toward autonomy and independence.

Women who experience backlash are faced with the dilemma of whether to claim discrimination and seek justice. Research has shown that women pondering whether to report discrimination worry about retaliation and being seen as troublemakers. These fears are reasonable, as research suggests that women who claim discrimination are viewed as complainers, are derogated, and are blamed for their situation. Further, women have reported anger toward other women whose claim of sexism makes their gender group look bad. The negative social consequences for reporting discrimination may prevent women from doing so, which further perpetuates inequality.

### *Feminism and Dominant Ideologies*

Identification with feminism involves rejecting some dominant ideologies or belief systems. Thus,



feminism commonly involves disidentification with some of the core values and standard practices in U.S. society. A fundamental ideology in the United States and many other cultures is that of meritocracy. A meritocratic system is defined by the assumptions that people who work hard will get ahead in life, that people get what they deserve, and that anyone can succeed in life regardless of their circumstances. A meritocratic worldview conflicts with feminism because it does not recognize societal barriers, such as discrimination, as an influence on life outcomes. Further, people who endorse a meritocratic worldview regard victims of discrimination and inequality as deserving these outcomes. Feminism as a belief system recognizes that inequality exists and not all people are treated equally or have the same opportunities; thus, being successful is not due just to hard work. Feminists understand that women have less economic and social power and fewer resources because of unequal opportunities, sexism, and discrimination.

Endorsing a meritocratic worldview has consequences for women's well-being. First, women who endorse a meritocratic worldview are less likely to perceive discrimination. Thus, women who may have less life success due in part to discrimination may blame themselves for their inability to get ahead in life. In contrast, women who reject a meritocratic worldview are more likely to perceive discrimination and recognize it as one cause of their inability to get ahead.

Cultural belief systems, such as meritocracy, serve to justify the status quo. That is, people endorse the system and see the world in its current form as fair and just. A meritocracy places the cause of events internally, as due to a person's own actions. If society believes people are responsible for their own life outcomes, then social change is not needed and inequalities continue. An example of a self-harming consequence of women's endorsement of a meritocratic system is women's perception of entitlement to pay. Women can feel less entitled than men to a high salary for comparable work.

Another dominant ideology in the United States that is relevant to feminism is romantic idealism. U.S. society continues to endorse traditional gender roles in romantic relationships, where men pursue women in courtship and women play a passive role in sexual intimacy. Many women implicitly believe that their ambitions can be fulfilled

through their romantic partner, and women's endorsement of the male "hero" is linked to their attainment of less leadership and lower achievement in education and work. Thus aspects of romantic relationships between heterosexual men and women may be challenged by feminist beliefs, and research has shown that heterosexuals do not equate beauty and romance with feminism.

### *Collective Action and Social Change*

Attitudes toward women have steadily become more positive since 1970, showing more support for women's employment and education, as well as for the sharing of household duties by husband and wife. In the United States this is consistent for conservatives and liberals, and does not vary by region—except in the southern United States, where people show less agreement with these attitudes than is shown by those in other regions. It should be noted that in some parts of the world improvements are less evident.

Feminism is not exclusive to women, although the media would portray it as such. Men have the same ability as women to recognize the societal disparities between genders, realize that such inequality can be changed, and know that women can survive without men. Studies have shown that women's relationships with feminist men have resulted in healthier romantic relationships for both men and women. Both men and women report greater stability and sexual satisfaction with feminist partners. Thus men can serve as allies and partner with women to work for gender equality.

After the second wave of feminism there was a "postfeminist" movement that rejected some feminist ideas as having no merit. Postfeminism encouraged personal choice, and implied that women could have a career, beauty, motherhood, and a good sex life without any sacrifice. Besides ignoring political issues, it romanticized domestic life while not addressing the issues of women across the nation. However, continuing the work of the women before them, women have been waging small battles to change their corner of the world, and this could be considered the heart of the third wave of feminism. While they may not accept the label "feminist," women around the world are working to better their lives and the lives of others in a way that acknowledges and tries to lessen the disparity

between the positions of men and women in society. This humanistic movement may be the new feminism, bound by the fight against oppression.

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*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Discrimination; Gender and Behavior; Gender Roles; Ideology; Modern Sexism; Sexism

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## FESTINGER, LEON (1919–1989)

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Leon Festinger is known for his contributions to the study of group behavior, self-evaluation, and attitude change. Many scholars consider Festinger to be the person most responsible for moving the experimental study of social processes to the center stage of social psychology.

### Background

Festinger graduated as a psychology major from the City College of New York in 1939 with a senior honors thesis on factors affecting how people set goals. Despite a passion for all kinds of games (initially chess, later Go, pinball, and cribbage), he was persuaded to study at the University of Iowa with Kurt Lewin, who was known for his studies of motivation. However, Lewin was increasingly interested in group behavior. Conducting

research on complex social processes in the laboratory to test theories and solve applied problems was Lewin's mission. Festinger remained interested in people's level of aspiration and decision making, but he was drawn to Lewin's striving for conceptual understanding and intellectual enthusiasm. Lewin conducted research meetings very informally so that everyone had a voice, and debate was encouraged. In these meetings, Festinger was known for his aversion to sloppy thinking and a fondness for counterintuitive findings, attitudes he held throughout his career.

Festinger's early research concerned the effects of motivation and group standards on goal setting, decision making, taste preferences in the rat, and statistics. He obtained his PhD from the University of Iowa in 1942, remained at Iowa as a research associate for 2 years, and then moved to the University of Rochester to work for the Committee on the Selection and Training of Aircraft Pilots.

### Social Pressures in Informal Groups

In 1945, Lewin moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to found the Research Center for Group Dynamics, and Festinger joined him as an assistant professor of social psychology (although neither he nor Lewin had ever taken a course in social psychology). The center was committed to the application of psychological concepts and methods to solve social problems, and it attracted many talented students. At the time, Festinger's credentials as a social psychologist might have seemed questionable; he later said that he became a social psychologist by fiat.

His first project was based on attitude surveys of residents in married student housing. This study yielded a textbook phenomenon—friendships were more likely the closer the people were physically in proximity (even by just a few yards). Similarity in attitudes was also critical—attitudes of residents tended to converge, but residents who held deviant attitudes were social isolates.

Festinger thought group members acquired similar beliefs and opinions because of social pressures toward uniformity, but this idea remained to be tested experimentally. In his informal communication theory, he proposed that people are susceptible to social pressure when they are attracted to a group. This attraction occurs because some goals

can be pursued successfully only with the cooperation of others or because groups provide validation about social reality, which is necessary since some opinions and beliefs cannot be tested directly or objectively (e.g., “Should abortion be legal?”; “Who is the greatest baseball player of all time?”).

Assuming people are attracted to a group, they could strive for group uniformity or agreement by trying to change other people’s opinions (communication), modifying their views to match those of the other group members (opinion change), or rejecting divergent others as appropriate references (rejection). Such pressures should increase in attractive groups, or as an issue becomes more relevant to a group’s goals.

To test the theory, Festinger and his students conducted a series of laboratory experiments. Groups (or clubs) were formed of previously unacquainted individuals who were asked to discuss various issues. Factors such as types of goals, need for social reality, attractiveness, issue relevance, and so on were manipulated. In some experiments, accomplices posed as subjects and played scripted roles as group members with deviating or consensual opinions. The precedents for this ambitious research program were Muzafer Sherif’s and Lewin’s earlier work, but Festinger magnified the experimenter’s role as playwright and stage director.

For brevity’s sake, only one study will be described here. For his dissertation, Stanley Schachter, under Festinger’s direction, placed accomplices in groups. One group adopted the majority view (i.e., the “mode”) from the beginning, another initially voiced a deviant view but over the course of the discussion adopted the consensual position (i.e., the “slider”), and a third (the “deviate”) maintained the opposing view. Observers coded group discussion behaviors. The actual subjects tried to persuade the other discussion partners. The mode was readily accepted, as was the slider after adopting the majority view. Initially much communication was directed at the deviate, but when the deviate proved impossible to convince, communication declined, and the deviate was nominated for the most undesirable club assignments. Consistent with the theory, group goals or social reality were achieved by striving for group consensus, the pressures to obtain uniformity were manifest via different behavioral routes, and deviates were rejected.

This experiment reflects several features of the “Festinger research style.” Festinger realized that progress in any science required methods appropriate to that field. Social psychology needed its own experimental approach, following Lewin’s lead—a kind of experimental theater, with covers stories, accomplices, and deception to control for confounding factors and to create a situation that was perceived as psychologically meaningful to the subject.

### Social Comparison

After Lewin’s death in 1947, the Research Center for Group Dynamics, with most of its remaining faculty, moved to the University of Michigan where it remains today. Faculty salaries at the center relied on grant support, however, so in 1951 Festinger moved to a tenure-track position at the University of Minnesota where Schachter was already on the faculty.

At the University of Minnesota, Festinger developed his second major theory, social comparison theory. Informal social communication theory was about the power of the group over the person, but in “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes” Festinger emphasized how individuals use groups to fulfill the informational need to evaluate opinions and abilities. The new theory focused only on the need for social reality, and abilities were considered as well as opinions. As with beliefs and opinions, there often is no objective standard available to assess abilities. People must rely on social consensus.

Social comparison theory posited that people evaluate their abilities and opinions by comparing them with those of others when it is not feasible to test them directly in the environment. Comparison leads to pressures toward uniformity (i.e., similarity), but the tendency to compare will cease if others are too different in dimensions that are related to the ability or opinion at issue. For opinions, agreement with others who presumably also are motivated to hold correct views should make us feel more confident. For abilities, observing those with similar abilities should allow us to learn our possibilities for action in the environment, which should be identical or very similar to theirs.

Social comparison theory also recognizes a distinctive feature of abilities. People want to be slightly

better than everyone else because the desire to be better or to improve is emphasized in Western cultures. This means that complete opinion agreement may be satisfactory to everyone, but completely equal abilities will not—implying that “a state of social quiescence is never reached,” as Festinger put it.

### Cognitive Dissonance

While at the University of Minnesota, Festinger read about a UFO cult that believed the end of the world was at hand. A housewife, “Mrs. Keech,” reported receiving messages from extraterrestrial aliens that the world would end in a great flood on a specific date. She attracted a group of followers who left jobs, college, and spouses, and gave away money and possessions to prepare to depart on a flying saucer that, according to Mrs. Keech, would rescue the true believers. Given the believers’ serious commitment, Festinger wondered how they would react when the prophecy failed. He and his colleagues, posing as believers, infiltrated Mrs. Keech’s group and kept notes on the proceedings surreptitiously.

The believers shunned publicity while they awaited the flying saucer and the flood. But when the prophecy was disconfirmed, almost immediately the previously most-committed group members made calls to newspapers, sought out interviews, and started actively proselytizing.

Festinger was unsurprised by the sudden proselytizing after the prophecy’s disconfirmation; he saw the cult members as enlisting social support for their belief to lessen the pain of disconfirmation. Their behavior confirmed predictions from a theory of his whose premise was that people need to maintain consistency between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The theory proposed that inconsistency among beliefs or behaviors causes an uncomfortable psychological tension (i.e., cognitive dissonance), leading people to change one of the inconsistent elements to reduce the dissonance, or to add consonant elements to restore consonance. Mrs. Keech’s followers actively enlisted new believers to obtain social support (and thereby add consonant elements) to reduce the dissonance created by the disconfirmation.

In 1955, Festinger left the University of Minnesota for Stanford, where he and his students launched a series of laboratory experiments testing

cognitive dissonance theory and extending it to a wide range of phenomena. Like the experiments in group dynamics, the studies were carefully crafted and involved cover stories, complex manipulations, and deception. One of the best known was the forced compliance paradigm, in which the subject performed a series of repetitive and boring menial tasks and then was asked to lie to the “next subject” (actually an experimental accomplice) and say that the tasks were interesting and enjoyable. Some subjects were paid \$1 for lying, while others were paid \$20. Based on dissonance theory, Festinger predicted and found that the subjects who were paid \$1 for lying later evaluated the tasks as more enjoyable than those who were paid \$20. The subjects that paid a large amount should not have experienced dissonance because, after all, they were well rewarded and had ample justification. The subjects that paid \$1 had little justification for lying to a stranger and should have experienced cognitive dissonance. To reduce the dissonance, they reevaluated the boring task as interesting and enjoyable. The forced compliance paradigm generated much interest because more attitude change was associated with a small rather than a large incentive—contrary to reinforcement theory. This experiment also illustrates the appeal of cognitive dissonance theory—it combined cognition and motivation and showed how that combination led to nonobvious predictions.

Festinger conducted much research on cognitive dissonance processes and even extended the theory to animal learning, showing that a limited version of dissonance could explain why a rat who worked harder during acquisition resisted extinction longer than a consistently rewarded rat. The former animal reduced its dissonance by finding extra attractions in the situation. Festinger is best known in psychology for his research in cognitive dissonance, and the term *cognitive dissonance* has become a part of popular speech.

He received the Distinguished Scientific Award of the American Psychological Association in 1959 and the Distinguished Senior Scientist Award of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology in 1980. He was inducted into the National Academy of Sciences in 1972 and the Society of Experimental Psychology in 1973.

In 1964, Festinger moved from social psychology to research on visual perception. Although

this seemed like a radical departure, it was a continuation of a theme. Festinger's work on visual perception concerned how people reconcile inconsistencies between visual perception and eye movements to see coherent images. His social psychological research concerned how people resolve conflict (group dynamics), ambiguity (social comparison), and inconsistency (cognitive dissonance) all manifestations of pressures for uniformity.

### Psycho-Social-Archeology

In the late 1970s, Festinger turned to questions about human nature based on archeological data. He read the relevant literature, talked to specialists, and visited archeological digs, work that resulted in a monograph, *The Human Legacy*. His ex-student Schachter referred to it as "psycho-social-archeology."

A general theme of this work was that humans often bring about problems unwittingly as a function of their intellectual and creative talents to create new technologies without being fully able to foresee their long-term consequences. Initially, Festinger's "archeology" was perceived to be at the margins of social psychology, but now it can be seen as prescient of current developments in evolutionary and cultural psychology.

### Mentoring

Festinger was described by an ex-student as "a tough character who did not suffer fools gladly." Others testified to his voracious curiosity, extraordinary memory, incisive intellect, and powers of concentration—more than a little intimidating. However, he mentored dozens of students, his office door was always open, and he was on a first-name basis with his students, something quite rare in the 1950s. Meetings at his home where ideas were discussed over beer and pretzels and dinners with students and other faculty members were common, and everyone played games in his lab. Something of Kurt Lewin's benign nature and charisma rubbed off on Festinger. Both charisma and intellect contributed to the "Festinger legacy" in experimental social psychology.

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*See also* Cognitive Consistency; Conformity; Lewin, Kurt; Minority Influence; Opinion Deviance; Social Comparison Theory

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## FREE RIDING

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*Free riding* refers to enjoying the benefits and rewards associated with membership in a group without making full contributions to that group. Free riding can occur in a range of group and team contexts varying in size, membership type, and purpose. For example, individuals can free ride in a larger group or societal context by failing to make contributions to shared resources and public goods, such as libraries, blood donation centers, recycling units, and public broadcasting networks. However, they can also free ride by withholding their efforts from a small project team and relying on the work of others. Free riding (also sometimes referred to as the *free-rider effect* or the *free-rider problem*) may undercut a range of group, collective, and societal initiatives intended to benefit multiple parties. This entry describes the background of thinking in this area, looks at a sampling of research, and briefly discusses related social concepts.

### Historical Background

Although analysis of the relationship between individual action and societal outcomes has a long

philosophical tradition, economists and sociologists such as Vilfredo Pareto, Paul Samuelson, and Max Weber were among the first modern scholars to formally articulate the potential for free riding, as well as other similar forms of social inaction, to undercut various societal and market processes. In an influential 1965 book, Mancur Olson provided an economic analysis of how large collectives can lead individuals to view their contributions to the collective as mostly or entirely unnecessary, leading to disinterest and apathy.

Specifically, individuals are likely to view their own contributions to an outcome or public good that is provided by many such individuals as at best minuscule, and perhaps as entirely unnecessary. Stated differently, individuals may reason that if they do not provide the requisite effort or resources, others are likely to sustain the resource anyhow; thus, they may therefore simply choose to “let George do it.” The likelihood of being able to continue to benefit from a pooled resource with many contributors may be nearly as high when one makes little or no contribution as when one makes a full or even exceptional contribution.

Olson noted that such free riding becomes increasingly likely as the size of the group increases, both because individual actions are less immediately noticeable in larger groups and because individuals are likely to view their collective actions as being efficacious in larger groups. As group size increases, the costs of organizing individual contributions or efforts are also likely to increase, providing another possible mechanism for individual inaction. Other factors influencing individual action include the level of public interest about specific causes, the presence of coercion or special incentives to participate, the nature of the task, and individual differences in factors such as value orientation (a habitual tendency to value the self or others) and fairness perceptions.

Consider a political election as an example. As the potential voting base increases in size, it becomes increasingly likely that each individual voter will have less impact on the outcome, that each individual will see less efficacy to his or her vote, and that it will be increasingly difficult logistically to organize voter participation in an effective manner. Yet, if public interest in the election and in issues central to the election is high, if the anticipated outcome is expected to be very close (thereby increasing the

potential value of each vote), or if voters are influenced by potential rewards from friends, political organizations, or community groups (or otherwise fearful of negative reactions from these sources that could result from not voting), individual inaction will be less likely. Similarly, individuals with a vested interest in specific election-related issues or who view themselves as socially responsible might also be more likely to participate.

Free riding is not restricted solely to very large groups or societal collectives, but can also occur among smaller units, including organizations, small groups, and project teams. Indeed, recent research by economists, political scientists, sociologists, social psychologists, organizational psychologists, and industrial relations scholars has implicated free riding as an important phenomenon in a wide range of behaviors and contexts, including cooperative learning in the classroom, the provision of public resources, voting behavior, restaurant tipping, community vaccination, charitable and blood donation, energy conservation, and raw material preservation.

### Research Findings

Robert Albanese and David Van Fleet did an analysis in 1985 of the implications of free-riding theory for business organizations and teams within such organizations. They concluded that the most effective means for countering free riding in organizations is to create organizational task and team structures conducive to individual accountability and responsibility. They highlighted several strategies, include building communication systems and cultures that broaden individuals' views of self-interest to also incorporate organizational goals, more closely monitoring individual contributions, making individuals more accountable, allowing individuals to make more unique contributions, and building organizational commitment.

At the small group level, Norbert Kerr and his colleagues have conducted a programmatic series of studies on free-riding effects and related phenomena. In these studies, participants were asked to pump as much air as possible through a hand-controlled device both individually and with others, and the task type and ability level of participants relative to their partners or teammates were manipulated. Several of these studies showed that

when working with a highly capable teammate on a disjunctive task (in which the group performance is determined by the strongest performer within the group), individuals reduced their efforts, free riding on the work of their teammates. Kerr and his colleagues noted that in these conditions, participants' efforts are more dispensable, or unnecessary for satisfactory group performance. Thus, free riding doesn't just occur in large groups or societal collectives, it also occurs in small work groups when individuals believe their efforts are not obviously needed.

Some of these studies also documented that when working with a highly capable member who consistently performed poorly, individuals often choose to also withhold their own effort from the task to avoid being played for a fool, a phenomenon that was called the *sucker effect*. However, the news was not all negative with regard to individual effort. Some studies also documented conditions under which team members with little ability showed very high motivation levels when working on conjunctive tasks (in which the group performance is determined by the weakest performer within the group). In this latter case, called the *Köhler effect*, participants' efforts were highly indispensable and crucial to team performance, creating the potential for enhanced motivation.

### Related Processes

Free riding has a close relationship with some other social processes. Specifically, in the case of withholding effort from a group, free riding constitutes a form of social loafing. *Social loafing* is the tendency for people to reduce their efforts when working in groups. Thus, free riding represents a type of social loafing in which people take advantage of the efforts of teammates in order to minimize their own efforts—when they perceive that their own efforts are likely to have little or no impact on the group outcome. Because free riding in small groups often emerges in situations where the nature of the task or of the expected contributions of teammates makes a person's own efforts seem dispensable, it may represent a more consciously aware or strategic type of social loafing.

Free riding is also an inherent problem in all types of social dilemmas. *Social dilemmas* are situations in which actions that are beneficial to an

individual, if taken by most or all such individuals, would be detrimental to the group as a whole. In the case of free riding, it may benefit individuals to refrain from contributing their time or money to a public resource (such as a community service organization, symphony orchestra, library, or public television station), but if most or all such individuals were to similarly free ride, the public good in question would be seriously diminished in quality and might even become unable to sustain its existence. Hence, as many scholars have acknowledged, the literatures on free riding and on social dilemmas are largely compatible with one another, especially with regard to the subclass of social dilemmas known as public-good dilemmas, in which individuals are likely to make less than their fair share of contributions to collective resources that are reliant on many individuals.

Steven J. Karau

*See also* Group Motivation; Köhler Effect; Social Dilemmas; Social Loafing; Sucker Effect

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## FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION HYPOTHESIS

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The frustration-aggression hypothesis is an attempt to explain aggressive behavior by linking

it to frustration, in particular frustration of goals. One important application involves scapegoating, where it is suggested that as sources of frustration accumulate—during an economic crisis, for example—the frustrated groups might unleash their aggression against a convenient social target, often a minority group. This entry discusses development of the theory and its major assumptions, applications to intergroup relations, and critiques.

### Background and Assumptions

The frustration-aggression hypothesis was introduced by a group of Yale University psychologists, John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears. These authors published an important monograph in 1939 entitled *Frustration and Aggression*, in which they sought to integrate ideas and findings from several disciplines, especially sociology, anthropology, and psychology. In terms of intellectual history, the work is notable for its eclectic use of psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and Marxism. It became one of the most influential explanations in the history of social science for the origins and expressions of aggressive behaviors.

The point of the frustration-aggression hypothesis was to identify a universal, parsimonious set of testable assumptions that would apply to virtually all situations of violence in humans and other animals. According to the original, strong version of the hypothesis that appeared in *Frustration and Aggression*, “the occurrence of aggression always presupposes the existence of frustration, and, contrariwise, frustration always leads to some form of aggression.” Thus, frustration, which was conceptually and operationally defined in terms of goal interference, was seen as both a necessary and sufficient condition for aggressive behavior.

The hypothesis was soon modified by the Yale group, however, and in 1941 it was proposed that frustration might lead to many different responses, one of which is aggression. Whereas the original formulation explained the lack of overt aggressive behavior in certain situations in terms of inhibition due to the fear of punishment (which would not diminish the aggressive drive), the subsequent version made clear that some responses to frustration could reduce the instigation response to such an extent that the aggressive response did not occur.

It is important to point out that Dollard and his colleagues believed that their account of frustration and aggression was valid for human as well as nonhuman (i.e., animal) actors, and for groups as well as individuals. That is, we should expect aggressive inclinations to result whenever a person or animal experiences frustration. The logic of the frustration-aggression hypothesis was applied to the context of intergroup as well as interpersonal relations.

### Applications to Intergroup Relations

In the realm of intergroup relations, the frustration-aggression hypothesis was used to shed light on the dynamics of stereotyping, prejudice, and outgroup hostility. The theory of scapegoating is probably the most well-known application of the frustration-aggression hypothesis to the study of prejudice. The general idea is that as economic or other sources of frustration accumulate, people tend to seek out convenient social targets, or scapegoats, on whom to unleash their aggression.

Drawing in part on Freudian concepts of displacement, projection, and catharsis, the theory held that once frustration and the impetus for aggressive behavior have occurred, it makes relatively little difference who receives the brunt of the violence. In some cases, aggression naturally takes the form of retaliation against the initial source of frustration. In other cases, situational constraints can prevent a person from being able to react against the actual source of frustration (such as when the frustration was caused by a very powerful person or group). In still other cases, such as natural disasters, there may be no one to blame, but the frustration can still produce aggressive inclinations.

Under these latter two sets of circumstances, it was predicted that people will engage in scapegoating, that is, selecting relatively weak, vulnerable targets for aggression (such as members of low-status minority groups, who cannot fight back effectively). For example, it was suggested that during the Great Depression, many Germans blamed Jews and many Southerners in the United States blamed Blacks for their economic frustrations. However, recent research suggests that the connection between economic conditions and hate



crimes is more elusive than frustration-aggression researchers once assumed.

According to the theory, the displacement of aggression onto a socially sanctioned (i.e., convenient) victim group serves several purposes. First, and most important, it channels the expression of aggressive impulses and creates cathartic relief once the aggression has been released. Second, it is socially undesirable to behave violently toward others in the absence of justification, but prejudicial attitudes can be used to justify (or rationalize) the expression of hostility. In this way, members of disadvantaged groups can be blamed for their own plight as targets of hostility and prejudice. Finally, in accordance with psychoanalytic thought, the theory of scapegoating suggests that victim blaming is exacerbated by the projection of (typically unconscious) guilt that frustrated parties feel as a result of their own prejudice and violent activity.

The occurrence of stereotyping, as discussed by Gordon Allport and Bernard Kramer, is explained by the theory of scapegoating as another manifestation of rationalization tendencies. Rather than simply rationalizing an aggressive posture directed against one person, stereotypes are effective rationalization devices that would seem to legitimize hostility against a social group in its entirety. Consequences of the scapegoating dynamic include overgeneralization of stereotypical traits to an entire social group and the exaggeration of similarities among group members, especially with respect to stereotypical qualities. Finally, because stereotypes are ingrained in the culture, they tend to signal which social groups are appropriate targets for relieving one's frustration.

### Criticism and Modifications

The frustration-aggression hypothesis was extremely influential with respect to subsequent decades of empirical research on aggression and violence. Nevertheless, the hypothesis was severely criticized on the grounds of theoretical rigidity and overgeneralization; clearly, it was necessary to limit the scope of the hypothesis to establish its validity. For instance, the initial hypothesis failed to differentiate between hostile forms of aggression, in which the actor's goal is to inflict harm, and instrumental forms of aggression, in which aggression is simply a means to attain other goals

(such as control or domination). This criticism can be dealt with rather easily by confining the frustration-aggression hypothesis to cases of hostile aggression alone.

Critics also challenged the premise that any interference with ongoing goal-directed behavior would evoke frustration. According to Abraham Maslow and others, legitimate (or justified) interferences do not necessarily produce frustration. Only forms of interference that seem illegitimate (or arbitrary or otherwise unjustified), they argued, should lead to frustration. Research on attribution processes indicated that aggressive behavior is indeed a prevalent response to deliberate and unfair efforts to interfere with an individual's goal-attainment opportunities.

Finally, the nature of the connection between perceived frustration and the display of violence also turned out to be more complicated than Dollard and his collaborators realized. In the most empirically successful modification of the original frustration-aggression hypothesis, Leonard Berkowitz suggested that frustration is a psychologically aversive state that can create a predisposition to behave aggressively. His model was a reformulation of the frustration-aggression hypothesis that integrated subsequent theorizing on the antecedents of aggression and addressed many of the criticisms directed at earlier versions of the hypothesis. According to Berkowitz, frustration will lead to aggression to the extent that it elicits negative emotions. Moreover, frustration is only one form of unpleasant negative affect that can provoke violent responses.

The general idea was that aversive experiences produce negative emotions and feelings, as well as related thoughts and memories of past reactions to negative events. Berkowitz noted that these negative emotions and thoughts lead automatically to the fight-or-flight response. The choice between "fight" and "flight" responses was theorized to depend on the intensity of the negative emotion as well as the subjective appraisal and interpretation of the situation. A key factor was whether or not goal interference was expected, and Berkowitz regarded this as a more important factor than its legitimacy (although illegitimate interferences are also frequently unexpected). To the extent that unexpected interferences are more psychologically aversive than expected interferences, they were theorized to lead more

easily to aggressive behavior. Although Berkowitz's model has also been criticized for being overly simplistic, it has received substantial empirical support and is generally considered to be the most useful and valid reformulation of the classic frustration-aggression hypothesis.

Other researchers have focused more on the concept of frustration, asking questions about the nature and causes of frustration and whether different forms of frustration can produce different behavioral outcomes. Their focus has been on feelings of relative deprivation, especially the notion that these feelings are experienced very acutely when expectations are suddenly thwarted, particularly when expectations have been rising. It has been suggested that feelings of deprivation under these circumstances can often lead to violence, as in "revolutions of rising expectations."

Still other researchers have distinguished between interpersonal (or fraternal) deprivation and intergroup deprivation. Such research suggests that interpersonal deprivation (i.e., an individual feeling that he or she is deprived relative to another individual) can lead to low self-esteem, a lack of motivation, and even depression, whereas intergroup deprivation (i.e., members of a group feeling that they are deprived relative to the members of another group) can lead to social protest and collective mobilization. However, it has often been pointed out that such acts of shared rebellion are

far less common than a straightforward application of the theories of frustration aggression and relative deprivation would suggest.

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*See also* Prejudice; Relative Deprivation; Scapegoating; System Justification Theory

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## GANGS

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Used originally to refer to a group of workmen, the term *gang* is now most often applied to groups distinguished by their involvement in criminal activities. This entry provides a brief history of research on gangs, describes methods of inquiry in this field, and outlines types of gangs and their forms of organization. It then examines the relationship between gangs, crime, and victimization.

### History

Scholarly interest in gangs can be traced at least as far back as 19th-century journalistic accounts of adolescent males growing up in areas of high population density and economic disadvantage. Charles Dickens's fictionalized gang in *Oliver Twist*, for example, was based on accounts of London street urchins.

More systematic and scientific study of gangs began in the 1920s in the United States with Frederic Thrasher's massive investigation of more than 1,300 gangs in Chicago. He concluded that young people seek out gang membership from a desire for excitement, and he painted a picture of gangs as stable, coherent, and highly structured, with well-defined roles such as war counselor, armorer, and treasurer.

Thrasher's account of gangs did much to define the questions dominating subsequent research: How stable are gangs, and how large are they? How coherently are gangs structured? What are their core or defining activities? In answer to each

of these questions, research in the following decades, mostly in the United States, provided a mixed picture. Regarding stability, an early study in Los Angeles suggested that many of the city's gangs had histories extending back as much as 50 years. This and other work noted that enduring gang identities are often based on locality, underlining another recurring theme in gang research—the significance of territoriality. Many other studies, however, failed to find such long-term stability or even to find gangs at all.

The issue of stability is difficult to separate from that of size. Gang members often provide unreliable, uncertain, and highly inflated estimates. Sometimes, as Yablonsky found in a study of New York gangs, they estimate membership in their gangs in the several hundreds. More systematic observation points to much lower numbers, though this work has also revealed the importance of distinguishing core from peripheral members. In the 1960s, studies of patterns of association in gangs over spans of 6 months to a year pointed to core memberships of less than 10 as typical, but there were exceptions.

### Methods of Studying Gangs

What are the consequences of being a group in which criminal behavior is normative, perhaps even its “core business”? A challenge to answering any questions about gangs is posed by the difficulty of collecting valid evidence.

Research on gangs involves the study of naturally occurring rather than ad hoc groups. There

are significant challenges in securing information from and about gangs, because they are involved in illegal activities. Questionnaire methods are attractive, given the low cost of collecting data from large samples. The particular difficulty in using questionnaires with gang members relates to credible guarantees of confidentiality, which limit the researcher's options for checking the validity of responses. Interviews potentially generate richer data but at much higher cost. Many interview studies in this field have relied on sampling young offenders while they are detained or incarcerated. Participant observation would appear to offer the most accurate picture of gang life but contains its own challenges, the most obvious but not necessarily the most serious of which is the ethical position of the observer. One notable example of such an approach, described by James Patrick in his 1973 book *A Glasgow Gang Observed*, was achieved through the researcher's temporary membership in the gang. A more recent example is the 10-year relationship between sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh and a Chicago gang trading in illegal drugs. The rich detail and high ecological validity of such research is offset by the problem of generalization, in that each study is effectively a single case study. Researchers have also drawn on out-group perspectives—those of community workers or criminal justice agencies, for example—to develop a picture of gang characteristics. But the goals and perspectives of the various outgroups inevitably color their accounts and perceptions.

For these various reasons, solid evidence on gangs—their prevalence, formation, size, composition, organization, activities, and consequences for members—remains limited.

### Gang Composition: Organization and Types

While Thrasher's work described what appeared to be highly organized and stable gangs with clearly defined roles and positions, more recent work has portrayed gangs as loosely organized, flexible, and short-lived. It is now generally accepted that the organization of gangs falls along a continuum defined by the respective extremes of organized–stable and flexible–transient, and though the continuum has also been partitioned into types of gangs—such as the typology distinguishing organized, street, and wanna-be gangs

described below—in reality there are no sharp discontinuities between types. However, it is convenient for researchers to focus on the extremes and the middle of the continuum as “ideal types.”

*Organized gangs* are criminal business organizations, primarily composed of adults engaged in criminal activity for economic reasons. The members of such gangs are commonly from the same ethnic background, have poor job skills and opportunities, and group together for social support and financial survival. They are secretive in their membership and engage in profitable forms of organized crime (e.g., selling drugs, prostitution, human trafficking, protection rackets). They are also highly organized and hierarchical, with a quasi-formal career structure. Such gangs tend to be very stable, and their memberships tend to be long-lasting, often spanning generations.

*Street gangs* are primarily composed of youth and young adults who see the gang as a surrogate family and a source or support, friendship, and protection. The members of such gangs proudly advertise their gang affiliation and may engage in crime for economic reasons as well as in organized violence against similar gangs seen as rivals. Street gangs are semistructured, and individual roles in these gangs are loosely defined. The groups are somewhat stable but exhibit a pattern in which they appear and disappear in waves, over time.

*Wanna-be groups* are formed by adolescents who band together from time to time to engage in social activity as well as criminal and antisocial activities in order to find excitement and diversion rather than obtain economic gain. The small number of female gangs that have been reported fit into this category. Organization is minimal, and the groupings involved are quite transitory, based more on convenience and availability than effort or commitment. It is not clear that such groups invariably aspire to be gangs in a more identifiable sense. At least some research suggests members of such gangs are adolescents hanging around with their friends. By virtue of their visibility in public places, however, they are at risk of being perceived, identified, and labeled as gang members by others.

### The Relationship Between Gangs and Crime

Gang membership is associated with criminal activity, but an important question concerns the

source of this association. This question is frequently answered in one of two ways: (1) joining a gang can turn a young person into a criminal or (2) gangs are groups of young people who individually are criminally active. Neither of these answers captures the whole truth.

Consider the potential routes into gang membership. At least three have been distinguished, though in practice it is likely they overlap and combine in varying degrees of relative importance. First, joining a criminal gang may be a pragmatic career decision. In some localities and for some social groups, criminal gangs are the primary and perhaps the only providers of employment. Second, young people who become homeless often band together to form surrogate families and provide solutions to shared problems. At least one authority on homeless youth, John Hagan, has argued, however, that there are important differences between these groupings of street youth and delinquent gangs, differences the group members emphasize.

The third route begins with individual inclination and the common tendency for young people to join groups in pursuit of companionship and fun. Such groupings reflect already established inclinations. This is important, as inclinations toward antisocial behavior and crime predate group membership. Young people are more likely to form or join delinquent gangs, and not other groups, to the extent that they are already disposed to such activity. There is little evidence that young people not so disposed succumb to pressure to join gangs. However, gang formation is also favored by certain social and environmental conditions, including economic deprivation and residential instability. This route into gang membership, in other words, is a combination of inclination and opportunity.

Associating with like-minded peers increases the likelihood that individuals' shared inclinations will translate into more consistent habits of behavior. The group nature of juvenile offending is well established. For routine involvement in more serious crime during adolescence, the group context seems almost to be a necessary condition. Thus opportunities to affiliate with other youth inclined to be delinquent increase the likelihood of a young person's committing crimes.

The more organized the gang, the greater the likelihood of its members committing more serious

and more violent crime. More organized gangs are also more likely to deal in drugs. Supplying and selling illegal drugs requires coordinated activity, and if a group moves into drug trafficking this may set up a feedback loop—a higher degree of organization will support more extensive and profitable drug-based trafficking.

The more organized the gang, the more visible it will be, and the more likely it will be defined and treated by those outside it as a group. In addition, more visible gangs attract more police attention, increasing the possibility of arrest and conviction. Labeling, whether as gang member or through more formal criminal proceedings, in turn increases the likelihood of further and more serious offending.

Basic group dynamics reinforce these feedback loops. Gangs that are more organized are more likely to form and adhere to shared norms and shared views. And their decisions about which actions to take are more likely to polarize in the direction of already shared inclinations. Intergroup dynamics further reinforce the distinctive identity of the group, the deference of its members to ingroup norms, and the emergence of leadership.

### **The Relationship Between Gang Membership and Victimization**

Research on delinquency shows a clear link between victimization and offending, but there is uncertainty surrounding the causality underlying the relationship. Some recent work supports the view that victimization comes first, often in the family or in an institution that has substituted for an absent or nonexistent family.

Insofar as victimization disposes individuals to offending, it may increase the possibility that they will become gang members. One plausible line of argument is that those who suffer victimization, and so lose confidence in conventional forms of protection, join gangs as alternative means to secure protection and redress for grievances. Ironically, however, gang membership increases the likelihood of further victimization. And the more organized the gang, the higher the risk of violent victimization of its members. Much of this victimization is a product of the intergroup conflict characteristic of relations between gangs, but some reflects social control within gangs.

### Institutionalization of Gangs

The link between gang membership and violence relates to what is perhaps most distinctive about gangs as social groups. Almost all other social groups, whatever the strength of the group dynamics that sustain their particular norms, operate within a more general normative framework enforced by the state. Gangs, to varying degrees, operate outside this framework—and violence, whether potential or actual, becomes a substitute instrument of social control.

If a sense of exclusion from the protection of the state system is a feature of involvement in delinquency, and thus in delinquent gangs, under certain circumstances this sense of exclusion is shared by entire subpopulations. Defining features of these populations are urbanization, poverty, and some combination of minority ethnic, religious, and racial status. As John Hagedorn has observed, these circumstances favor the institutionalization of gangs—a process in which their gang identity survives leadership changes and membership turnover, they become larger and develop more complex role structures, they have the capacity to adapt to changing conditions, and they become more embedded in a host community. This last circumstance reflects gangs' involvement in provision of economic, security, and other needs not met by the mainstream. They may also be the focus for identities in opposition and resistance to the dominant culture. But violence, or the capacity for it, is integral to their functioning, and such gangs are characteristically male dominated and armed.

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*See also* Deviance; Group Composition; Group Formation; Group Polarization; Group Structure; Identification and Commitment; Minority Groups in Society; Norms; Roles; Social Deviance

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## GENDER AND BEHAVIOR

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Gender is a subject of much interest to social scientists who study groups, and there are a number of reasons for this. First, much of our daily life is spent in mixed-gender groups. For example, a family—a group in which much of our social behavior occurs—usually contains members of both genders. Thus, most of us are required to interact with members of the other sex on a regular basis. Second, gender seems to hold an important place in our conception of ourselves and other people. One of the first questions we ask about a new baby is, “Is it a boy or a girl?” We are uncomfortable when someone’s gender is ambiguous. And third, gender affects behavior both within and between groups in a variety of social locations.

A number of social scientific perspectives exist on the mechanism by which gender affects social behavior. This entry reviews a few of the primary perspectives and discusses some of the social locations in which gender most affects behavior.

### Perspectives on Gender and Behavior

Gender scholars have espoused a variety of conceptualizations of gender and gender differences in behavior. These vary from very individual and person-oriented (gender is an integral part of an individual’s self-concept) to interactional (gender is a learned behavior) to structural (gender is a system of social practices and cultural beliefs) conceptualizations. Gender as identity, gender as role, and gender as a structural system of practices are discussed in this entry.

#### *Gender as Identity*

Gender holds an important place in how we categorize individuals. In fact, cognitive psychologists have shown that gender is the usually first

category by which we classify others upon meeting them. Further, this process is automatic and unconscious.

At least as important for the study of behavior, gender is a large component of our definitions of our own identities. Most children define themselves in terms of their gender—"I'm a boy" or "I'm a girl"—during their preschool years. When researchers think of gender as an identity, they can examine how this sense of meaning plays out in social behavior and what it means to an individual to be male or female.

When people interact, they bring these identities to the group. An identity is a component of the self and, as such, is a standard to which individuals hold themselves. With regard to gender, this means that people bring with them an idea about their own gender identity, or how masculine or feminine they believe themselves to be. Researchers who examine the effect of gender identity on behavior thus see interaction as the place in which these meanings are made and maintained for individuals. Generally, they see interaction as reproducing general patterns of social meaning regarding gender, femininity, and masculinity. However, viewing gender strictly as an identity makes gender an individual trait rather than a part of the larger social structure. To fully understand the place of gender in group processes and group relations, an understanding of the broader processes that differentiate men and women is required.

### *Gender as Role*

Another important way in which gender is conceptualized by scholars is as a social role. A gender role is a set of structured social expectations attached to the position of "male" or "female." People's gender role represents both the sum of the ways in which they express their gender identity and also the kinds of activities that are seen as appropriate for their gender. Through socialization, children are taught—by their elders and by each other—what kinds of behavior are appropriate for a person of their gender.

Alice Eagly has proposed a social role theory which suggests that social roles develop from the sexual division of labor. The theory distinguishes between communal and agentic types of behaviors, defining *communal behaviors* as those that require

nurturance and emotional expressiveness and *agentic behaviors* as those that require assertiveness and independence. In our culture, communal behaviors are associated with women, and agentic behaviors with men.

At the elementary school level, gender socialization usually takes the form of what Barrie Thorne calls *borderwork*, which is interaction that serves to heighten the differences between the genders. This interaction separates the genders and perpetuates gender stratification (e.g., as expressed in "boys have cooties" and "no girls allowed"). For older children, the socialization process centers on learning (primarily from peers) about how to conduct romantic relationships with members of the other gender. This socialization also serves to reinforce stereotypes about appropriate masculine and feminine behavior. In adulthood, this socialization often continues. However, at times interaction is created to teach less stereotypical gender behavior, such as in women's consciousness-raising groups.

Once socialized, people take the received ideas of what constitutes "right" or "proper" behavior for each gender into their social interactions, and these ideas guide their behavior. Thus, in groups, people tend to enact their gender, no matter what else they are doing. Candace West and her colleagues have labeled this interactional process "doing gender." Gender is thus a set of behaviors people perform, rather than just a way that people think about themselves.

### *Gender as a System of Practices*

Recently within the social sciences, there has been more thinking about gender as a set of social practices rather than as an individual trait or a socialized role. These practices exist at the level of the social institution. They serve to organize social behavior on the basis of gender and bring with them a set of social relations of inequality that distinguish men (as privileged) from women (as not privileged). There are two mechanisms by which this occurs: (1) through the exaltation of things generally associated with men, to which women are denied access and (2) through the deprecation of things associated with women. The system of practices affects the patterns of behavior of men and women, and the system of inequality influences cultural beliefs and status effects.

### Cultural Beliefs

Numerous survey and experimental studies show that cultural beliefs about gender, also called gender beliefs or gender status beliefs, exist everywhere. Despite changes in discrimination laws, women's workforce participation, and notions of political correctness, these gender beliefs persist. The content of these gender beliefs can be described using stereotypes: Women are more nurturing and communal while men are more self-interested and instrumental. In addition, men are seen as more competent, worthy, intelligent, and capable than are women. Women are seen as nicer.

These abstracted meanings are held broadly and are roughly consensual. Most people in the culture can articulate them and believe that most other people hold them. The expectation is that most people will behave in a manner consistent with these beliefs and expect others to behave that way as well. Given the distinction that privileges men, people generally enter social interaction believing that men will act in more competent ways than will women and that men are more deserving of opportunities to exert influence in the group.

These cultural beliefs affect social interaction markedly. They provide the underlying structure and set of practices that shape group and intergroup interactions. One way in which this happens is through the activation of status effects.

### Status Effects

Status effects occur when a characteristic, such as gender, carries differential levels of privilege and this difference affects social interaction. Status effects result in things like estimations of competence, opportunities to contribute to a group task, influence, and leadership.

Many (but not all) cases of gender inequality are better understood as status effects than, for instance, effects of gender socialization patterns. This interpretation has been confirmed and elaborated in theoretical and empirical studies in varied settings. For example, men control about twice as much of a group's participation time as women, men counterargue more and women agree more than vice versa, and men are five times more likely than women to assume leadership roles in initially leaderless groups. Research also shows that nonverbal

power cues are displayed in accordance with a gender status conception.

These studies, while demonstrating the privileged position of men, also attribute that position to status effects rather than to socialization or identity. When women are put in high status positions through experimenter manipulation, they display the same types of high status behavior as do men. In other words, it is the status position that produces the behavior, not a person's gender per se. Given our culture's gender beliefs, however, it is men who receive the benefits of status effects in the current system of practices.

### Locations of Gender Differences in Behavior

Gender differences in behavior exist, regardless of the perspective taken on them. Examples can be found across many arenas of social life. This entry focuses on intimate relationships, household labor, work, and other organizations.

#### *Intimate Relationships*

A number of scholars have studied differences in how men and women approach intimate or romantic relationships. Differences have been identified in the ways men and women talk to each other, the ways they interpret what others say, and the amount of talking they do. One oft-cited notion is that women talk at home, whereas men talk in public. While the veracity of that notion can be questioned, there certainly is evidence that men and women have somewhat different experiences in intimate relationships.

The popular notion is that women want intimacy, while men try to avoid it—at least as long as it is socially acceptable to do so. However, as the work of Lillian Rubin shows, the case may be that men simply do not need to express the desire for intimacy, which may be due to socialization (i.e., males learn it is not manly to express a need for a partner) and/or social position (i.e., men's authority does not require them to express their feelings of intimacy verbally). In addition, women often create barriers to intimacy through their behavior, even as they claim to want more intimacy. The ways men and women behave in intimate relationships is not as black and white as the stereotypes portray.



### *Household Labor*

One issue that can impinge on intimate male–female relationships is housework. With women’s increased participation in the paid workforce, it is often argued that unpaid work at home in the form of cleaning, shopping, cooking, caring for children and the elderly, and outdoor chores should be distributed equally between men and women. Nevertheless, the results of studies on the time men and women spend on housework are mixed. Some studies show that women still do more of this kind of work than do their male counterparts, even when other variables like time availability and resources (i.e., who works more/less and who makes more/less) are statistically eliminated. However, other studies indicate that as women have increased their paid work hours, they have decreased the time spent on housework, such that men’s and women’s total work hours (combining paid and unpaid work) are about equal.

Arlie Hochschild was the first researcher to study dual-career families in depth to see what really happens to the housework when both partners work outside the home. He used the term “the second shift” to refer to the burden of household work carried by women, who put in a full day at work and then many more hours of unrewarded, often unfulfilling work at home. This is also sometimes called women’s double burden.

### *Workplace*

As noted above, one way in which the system of practices privileges men is by exalting things they do while denigrating activities associated with women. Nowhere is this more clear than in the workplace. On the whole, men’s jobs involve higher prestige, better pay, and more autonomy than women’s jobs.

Studies of comparable worth, the idea that work of equal value and difficulty should be rewarded with equal pay, indicate that the pay difference is due, at least in part, to discrimination. Even when studies statistically control for issues such as job interruption, education, time on the job, and job performance, they still find that men are paid more than women in similar jobs. The system of practices is influenced by status processes as well, as illustrated by the following examples.

Cecilia Ridgeway showed how status differences often perpetuate gender inequality in business organizations through gender labeling of jobs, misattribution of results, constructing people as gender-interested actors, and other processes. Those status effects usually carry across interactants and situations, so they diffuse and perpetuate gender stereotyping and gender-based hierarchies in organizations.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter conducted an analysis of the social organization of corporations. She examined how particular social structures constrain or create opportunities for people, particularly minorities, who are in a similar situation to women when they first entered the workforce in large numbers during the 1970s. Kanter focused on social structural characteristics of businesses, such as hierarchy, distribution of power across positions, and social networks. Then she examined how an individual’s position within the social structure in combination with his or her role and its power constrains that individual’s choices. Women in particular were found to be isolated in low-level, low-power positions, disconnected from others, and therefore unable to engage in behavior that would lead to promotion.

### *Other Organizations*

It has been posited that “gender is everywhere.” In fact, gender differences in behavior have been identified in such diverse places as schools, religious organizations, and voluntary organizations. While more women than men graduate from college, fewer women are represented in graduate programs and among faculty. Many religious organizations prohibit women from participating in various roles within religious institutions and support organizations. Women tend to belong to voluntary organizations that are smaller, focused on community or youth, and more peripheral. Men belong to voluntary organizations that are larger, more connected to other organizations, and more focused on economics and business. Clearly, gender has wide-ranging effects on behavior in a multitude of contexts.

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*See also* Gender Roles; Identity Control Theory; Roles; Sexism; Status; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory

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## GENDER ROLES

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*Gender roles* consist of shared expectations that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified sex. The sharing of gender roles refers to the tendency of expectations associated with men and women to be consensual in society. At an implicit or explicit level, most people endorse expected behaviors as appropriate for men or for women. Therefore, as Eagly's social role theory argues, membership in the female or male social category subjects people to social expectations that affect social interaction in group situations and influence the intergroup behavior that transpires between women and men. This entry defines gender roles and discusses the consequences of deviation from them, their effect on self-concepts, theories about their origin, and their impact on individuals and society.

### Concept of Gender Roles

The definition of gender roles derives from the concept of social role, which refers to the shared expectations that apply to people who occupy a certain social position or are members of a particular social category. At an individual level, roles are schemas, or abstract knowledge structures, pertaining to a group of people. To the extent that role schemas are shared among members of a society, they are important structures at the societal level as well as the individual level. Roles are thus aspects of social structure, which consists of persisting and bounded patterns of behavior and social interaction.

Social roles foster characteristic ways of behaving among people who have the same social position within a social structure or who are classified in the same general societal category (e.g., as men, as elderly). Encouragement to act in particular ways arises from the shared role schemas that people in a society hold. For example, people who have a particular occupational role (e.g., as an accountant or a plumber) are subjected to a set of expectations concerning the work they should do and the manner in which they should do it.

Gender roles apply to people in the extremely general social categories of male and female. These roles, like roles based on qualities such as age, social class, and race/ethnicity, have great scope because they apply to all aspects of people's daily lives. In contrast, more specific roles based on factors such as family relationships (e.g., father, daughter) and occupation (e.g., nurse, police officer) are mainly relevant to behavior in a particular social context—at work, for example, in the case of occupational roles. This general applicability of gender roles means that they influence behavior, even though specific roles simultaneously constrain behavior. For example, because gender roles are present in the workplace, people have somewhat different expectations for female and male occupants of the same workplace role.

### On Stereotypes

The importance of gender roles is revealed in research on gender stereotypes, which documents the differing beliefs that people hold about the typical behaviors of women and men. The content of many of these beliefs can be summarized by

differences on two dimensions, which are frequently labeled *communal* and *agentic*. Women, more than men, are thought to be communal—that is, friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive. Men, more than women, are thought to be agentic—that is, masterful, assertive, competitive, and instrumentally competent.

Gender stereotypes also encompass beliefs about other personal attributes, including physical characteristics, typical roles, specific skills, and emotional dispositions. Research on gender stereotypes has shown that merely classifying a person as male or female automatically evokes these expectations, or mental associations, about the characteristics that are typical of men or women. These associations are pervasive and influential even when people are unaware of them.

Beliefs about the typical characteristics of women and men are not sufficient to demonstrate gender roles because roles are composed not merely of expectations about how people *do* behave, but also of expectations about how they *should* behave. Social roles are thus prescriptive (or injunctive) as well as descriptive. Research has demonstrated the prescriptive quality of gender roles by showing that stereotypical ways of behaving are perceived as generally desirable for people of each sex—at least insofar as researchers have examined the evaluatively positive aspects of gender stereotypes.

To identify desirable behaviors for women and men, some studies have investigated beliefs about ideal women and men. These beliefs about ideal behavior tend to parallel beliefs about typical behaviors of women and men. Such findings show that people tend to think that women and men ought to differ in many of the ways that they are perceived to differ. This oughtness transforms gender stereotypes into gender roles. And these descriptive and prescriptive beliefs define what is considered masculine and feminine in a given society.

The descriptive aspect of gender roles specifies what is considered normal or typical for each sex and thus provides guidance concerning what behaviors are likely to be effective in a situation. People refer to others of their own sex to find out what sorts of behaviors are usual for individuals of their sex in a particular situation. They tend to imitate these sex-typical behaviors, especially if a situation is ambiguous or confusing. The prescriptive

aspect of gender roles describes what is desirable and admirable for each sex, providing guidance concerning what behaviors are likely to elicit approval from others. People thus refer to what is desirable for persons of their sex when they endeavor to build and maintain social relationships. In summary, the power of gender roles to induce role-consistent behavior derives from these roles' descriptions of what is typical of men and women and what is desirable for them.

The idea that expectations about male and female behavior are shared implies a social consensus about typical and appropriate behaviors as well as people's awareness of this consensus. This consensus is evident in stereotype research, which has shown generally similar gender beliefs among people who differ in attributes such as sex, age, ethnicity, social class, and others. Moreover, social cognitive researchers have maintained that virtually everyone acquires the stereotypical beliefs that are associated with important social categories such as sex, race, and age. In addition, awareness of the society's apparent consensus about the characteristics of men and women is demonstrated by respondents' ability to report on the stereotypes held in their own cultures.

In summary, the power of gender roles to affect behavior derives not only from their description of typical and desirable behavior of women and men but also from their tendency to be relatively consensual and for people to be aware of this consensus. People thus believe that the typical other person holds these beliefs and consequently would react favorably to role-consistent behavior and unfavorably to inconsistent behavior. Therefore, social approval and a smoothly functioning social interaction in group settings generally follow from behavior consistent with gender roles. Consequently, it is not surprising that, following from social psychological concepts such as normative influence and self-fulfilling prophecy, research on the behavioral confirmation of gender stereotypes has shown that, under many circumstances, men and women act to confirm the stereotypical expectations that others hold about their behavior.

### Deviation From Gender Roles

A key assumption of a gender role analysis is that behavior inconsistent with gender roles is often

negatively sanctioned and tends to disrupt social interaction. The sanctions for role-inconsistent behavior may be overt (e.g., losing a job) or subtle (e.g., being ignored).

Social psychologists have produced many demonstrations of negative reactions to deviations from gender roles. For example, in one study, men who behaved passively and women who behaved assertively were rated less favorably than men who behaved assertively and women who behaved passively. Also, in small group interaction, women's competent, task-oriented contributions are more likely to be ignored and to elicit negative reactions than identical contributions from men. Moreover, women tend to lose likability and influence over others when they behave in a dominant style by expressing clear-cut disagreement with another person, using direct speech, or displaying assertive or extremely competent actions. Group members thus elicit conformity to gender-role norms by dispensing rewards such as liking and cooperation in return for conformity to these norms and by dispensing social punishments such as rejection and neglect in return for nonconformity.

In general, gender roles regulate social interaction because people judge the value and appropriateness of others' behavior according to its conformity with gender roles. Because people often sanction behavior that is inconsistent with gender roles, these roles have a generally conservative impact by exacting costs from people who deviate from norms concerning male and female behavior. Weighing these negative outcomes in a cost-benefit analysis, people do not deviate from their gender role unless nonconformity produces benefits that outweigh the costs. Part of these perceived benefits for women, as members of a subordinate group in society, may be having some chance to gain access to rewards and opportunities formerly reserved for men.

### Gender Roles and Self-Concept

Gender roles can produce differences in males' and females' behavior not only by affecting the rewards and punishments received from others but also by affecting the self-concepts of women and men. Psychologists have often focused on the extent to which individuals define themselves by the attributes that are associated with being male or

female. These self-definitions constitute an internalization of societal gender roles. The term *gender identity* refers to these self-definitions in terms of masculinity and femininity. Individuals of each sex differ in their gender identity, and men and women differ on the average. Gender identity is only one of many possible social identities, with each identity representing the individual's psychological relationship to a particular social category (e.g., race, social class, religion).

Studies of gender identity have shown that women, more than men, ascribe communal qualities to themselves, and men, more than women, ascribe agentic qualities to themselves. In addition, women's construals of themselves are oriented toward interdependence, in that their representations of others, especially those to whom they are linked in close relationships, are treated as part of themselves. In contrast, men's construals of themselves are oriented toward separation and dominance, albeit incorporating a collective focus on membership in larger groups such as teams and organizations.

The internalization of gender-stereotypical qualities results in people adopting these qualities as personal standards for judging their own behavior. They tend to evaluate themselves favorably to the extent that they conform to these personal standards and to evaluate themselves unfavorably to the extent that they deviate from these standards. One study found that to the extent that gender role norms were personally relevant to participants, experiences that were congruent with gender norms (i.e., involving dominance for men and communion for women) yielded positive feelings about the self and brought participants' actual self-concepts closer to their desired self-concepts. However, despite evidence of gender roles acting as self-standards, people raised in culturally atypical environments may not internalize conventional versions of gender roles and thus may have atypical gender identities. Research has thus shown that people who have self-concepts that differ from those that are typical of people of their sex are less likely to show traditionally sex-typed behavior.

### Origins of Gender Roles

Gender roles form an important part of the culture and social structure of every society. Although the

ascription of agentic qualities to men and communal qualities to women is widely shared across world cultures, beliefs about the proper relationships between women and men vary widely. Traditional ideologies endorse the dominance of men over women, whereas modern ideologies endorse more egalitarian relationships. Gender ideology is generally more modern in more developed, urbanized nations.

According to Wood and Eagly's biosocial model, even though gender roles are products of the culture, they are not arbitrary cultural constructions but are rooted in a society's division of labor between the sexes. The differing distributions of men and women into social roles form the basis for gender roles. Thus, the typical division of labor in industrialized nations assigns a disproportionate share of domestic activities to women and of other activities to men. Mainly women occupy the domestic role, somewhat more men than women occupy the employee role, and women are more likely than men to be part-time employees. Although most women are employed in the paid labor force in the United States and many other industrialized nations, women and men tend to be employed in different occupations in a somewhat sex-segregated labor force.

The link between gender roles and the male-female division of labor follows from the principle that men and women are expected to have attributes that equip them for their sex-typical roles. People are expected to accommodate to their family and employment roles by acquiring role-related skills, such as women learning domestic skills and men learning skills that are useful in paid occupations, particularly in male-dominated occupations. Also, women's association with the domestic role and female-dominated occupations favors interpersonally facilitative and friendly (i.e., communal) behaviors. In particular, the assignment of the majority of child-rearing to women leads people to expect and prefer nurturing behaviors from women.

In contrast, men's association with the employment role, especially male-dominated occupations, leads people to expect more assertive and confident (i.e., agentic) behaviors from them. In addition, expectations about the personal qualities of each sex appear to be shaped by their typical paid occupations. In support of this idea, research has shown that to the extent that occupations are male

dominated, success in them is perceived to follow from agentic personal qualities, whereas to the extent that occupations are female dominated, success in them is perceived to follow from communal personal qualities.

Roles that entail the greatest amount of power and status remain male dominated. Thus status differences between the sexes foster expectations that men are assertive and directive and that women are supportive and cooperative. These expectations arise from people's observations of inequalities between the sexes. Traditionally, men have interacted with women who have lower status than they do—for example, male executives interacting with female secretaries. Until relatively recently, it was unusual for men to interact with women who are equal or superior to them in income and prestige—for example, male executives interacting with female executives.

The inequalities that individual men and women experience are transformed into widely shared beliefs not merely in men's greater status and power, but also in their greater ability and worthiness. It follows that men more readily exercise influence over women in new encounters, even outside of workplaces, and women more readily accept this influence. The expectations that flow from men's higher status shape interactions even when a man and a woman are objectively equal in status. Nevertheless, relatively recent changes in the status of women have moderated this aspect of gender roles in many contemporary societies.

### Impact on Individuals and Society

Gender roles can have powerful effects on individuals who take these roles into account as they strive to reach important goals, enhance their self-esteem, and gain approval from others. Even without conscious awareness of gender roles, people have mental associations about men and women that guide their thoughts and behaviors and help maintain traditional arrangements. Because masculine and feminine associations are elicited automatically by cues related to gender, these associations influence virtually all social interaction.

In all social settings, people must negotiate social interactions as men or women and therefore must contend with their own and others' expectations concerning the behaviors that are typical and

appropriate for individuals of their sex. Violating others' expectations about male or female behavior can bring negative reactions, whereas meeting their expectations can bring rewards of social approval and cooperation. In addition, living up to one's own personal gender identity can yield rewards of self-esteem and satisfaction. Yet, this view that conformity to gender roles yields social and personal rewards is overly simple in societies in which women's position in the social structure is changing and therefore gender roles are in flux. Although these changes can loosen the constraints of traditional norms about how men and women should behave and thus allow more behavioral flexibility, other consequences include ambiguity, confusion, and debates concerning the proper place of women and men in society.

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*See also* Gender and Behavior; Norms; Roles; Sexism; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory; Stereotyping

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## GENOCIDE

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As defined by the United Nations, *genocide* involves “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.” Although human beings have been victims of genocidal assaults throughout history—and prehistory—the word *genocide* itself is of relatively recent origin. A word from the Greek *geno* (meaning “race” or “tribe”) and Latin *cide* (meaning “killing”), it first appeared in print in 1944 in the book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, written by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer. Lemkin had already been studying the causes and consequences of mass slaughter when he witnessed the annihilation of his own community, Eastern European Jewry, during World War II. After the war, he dedicated himself to raising awareness of genocide. His efforts were directed toward lobbying for the establishment of international treaties to prevent genocides and punish those who carried them out. His efforts culminated in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This entry provides a general definition of genocide, and then looks at the phenomenon from the viewpoint of perpetrators, victims, bystanders or witnesses, and heroes and resisters.

### Definition

In Lemkin's view, genocides did not necessarily entail intentions to murder every member of a group. Nor was killing of any kind absolutely essential. Trying to wipe out a group's cultural existence, making it essentially disappear, was enough. The UN genocide convention focuses on physical destruction of a group's members—that is, mass murder—but it still leaves room for interpretation. Indeed, the issue of how best to define genocide has been very contentious.

At one extreme, some reserve the term for efforts to exterminate every last living member of a group. By that definition, few events would qualify—perhaps only the Holocaust, the Nazis' attempt to exterminate all Jews who fell into their hands. At the other extreme, some argue that any armed assault on civilian noncombatants is genocidal. Attempts to develop a finer grained language of mass brutality have been no more successful. For example, the term *ethnic cleansing* is sometimes used to label actions against civilian populations that are allegedly less extreme than genocide—specifically, attempts to forcibly displace or transfer a group rather than directly destroy it. Arguably, however, *ethnic cleansing* is simply a term perpetrators use to downplay the severity of their crimes. Few if any “ethnic cleansings” do not also involve mass murder.

Despite these ambiguities, *genocide* can be defined as an organized effort to brutalize, kill, or otherwise eliminate people who are targeted simply because of their social identities, and not because they pose any objective threat. Although genocide can involve spontaneous explosions of mob violence, it requires planned and organized group activity. Murder is central to genocide, but other acts of violence and cruelty that characterize it are also important to acknowledge and understand.

In addition, there are other ways to try to eliminate groups—by preventing births, for example. Also important to note is that although any civilian casualties during armed struggles are tragic, not all such civilians are genocide victims. During an episode of genocide, all members of a group—men, women, children, senior citizens—are explicitly targeted for violence. Finally, perpetrators of genocide almost always believe they are doing the right thing and do not believe that their victims are

blameless. By any reasonable standard, however, genocidal killings cannot be construed as acts of self-defense.

Besides the Holocaust, recent history's most notorious genocides include the slaughter of the Tutsis in the African nation of Rwanda in 1994, the expulsion and murder of Turkey's Armenian population shortly after the outbreak of World War I, the killings of large segments of the Cambodian population by the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s, and the rape, pillage, and slaughter of inhabitants of the Darfur region in Sudan that began in 2003.

In addition to the systematic annihilation of large numbers of people, two other aspects of genocide inspire particular horror. One is how genocide becomes a project in which members of the perpetrator group from every level of society become involved—including politicians, the military, police, business owners, educators, clergy, and members of youth movements. The second is the barbarous and diabolical nature of the killing. In Rwanda, in the space of a few weeks, hundreds of thousands of people were cut down with machetes, often by their own neighbors. The Armenians were subject to months of rape, assault, and robbery as they marched to their deaths. And the Holocaust culminated in the establishment of assembly line-style death factories in which Jews (and others) were exterminated in poison gas chambers (which the victims were led to believe were shower rooms).

### Conditions Leading to Genocide

Organized genocidal killings do not develop spontaneously. They are inspired, directed, and sanctioned by powerful and influential instigators—typically, political leaders. But some circumstances facilitate instigators' efforts to mobilize people for genocide.

Genocides are most likely to occur when people in a society perceive themselves to be experiencing difficult life conditions or some sort of social crisis. While some societal problems lend themselves to relatively straightforward solutions, others do not. Thus, when a bad situation seems out of control and is causing widespread fear and frustration, as in wartime, people become increasingly desperate for answers. At such times, they are receptive to

simple analyses of their problems—including the idea that those problems have been caused by the evil machinations of another group of people and that the solution is elimination of that group.

Groups experiencing a collective sense of humiliation are especially prone to lash out at scapegoats to avenge perceived slights. In early 20th-century Turkey, people were acutely aware of the Ottoman Empire's eclipse, and early military reversals during World War I further eroded Turkey's status as a major world power. Later in the century, the German people believed that they had been unfairly blamed for World War I, and they felt burdened by what they perceived to be the vindictive provisions of the Versailles treaty. Just as individuals lash out at others when experiencing a threat to their egos, so do groups, as the Turkish government did with the Armenians and Nazis did with the Jews.

### How People Become Perpetrators

Although genocides are group-level phenomena, individual human beings carry out the killings—that is, they are the ones who chop off people's heads with machetes, drive them over cliffs, shoot them at close range, and herd them into gas chambers. How people bring themselves to do such things, which under normal circumstances would violate their moral standards, is a complex issue.

Research by social psychologists has vividly demonstrated the surprising ease with which people can be led to engage in harmful, destructive behavior, especially when people perceive the authority figures directing their behavior to be powerful and legitimate. In Stanley Milgram's obedience studies, for example, participants administered what they believed to be deadly electric shocks to a protesting person simply because an experimenter told them it was expected and required of them.

Brutality also comes easier to people when they are in large groups. Being part of a crowd, and less identifiable as an individual, can lower a person's normal inhibitions. People who are just blurry faces in a mob become less attentive to their normal standards of behavior. This phenomenon, known as *deindividuation*, undoubtedly played a role in scenes such as those witnessed in Rwanda, where large groups of people assembled to urge

machete-wielding Hutus to decapitate their Tutsi neighbors.

First-person accounts of genocide reveal that over time, the lethal and often shockingly brutal behaviors of perpetrators are not typically direct responses to orders from above, nor are they triggered by any other sort of immediate social pressure. Instead, perpetrators' activities are usually self-initiated, self-directed, and carried out with enthusiasm and even creativity. Ervin Staub has characterized the increasing brutality of perpetrators as a progression along the *continuum of destructiveness*. Perpetrators, like bystanders, need to rationalize and justify their behaviors. Often, this involves convincing themselves that their victims deserve the treatment they are receiving. That can be accomplished by *dehumanizing* members of the victim group. It is easier to terrorize and kill others when one believes that they are so evil, debased, and generally inferior as to no longer even qualify as human beings. The end result of this process is that perpetrators become convinced of the moral justification of extermination, and need no prodding to participate.

In addition, a perspective on intergroup relations known as *social identity theory* describes how simply identifying strongly with a perpetrator group can transform individuals by leading them to embrace attitudes (such as prejudices), beliefs (such as stereotypes), and behaviors (such as discriminatory practices) they see as being prototypical of their group.

A disturbing implication of this discussion of how people become perpetrators is that it involves normal psychological processes. In other words, normal people become participants in genocide. Not all people are equally promising candidates for the role of mass killer, but perpetrators are not necessarily characterized by extreme personality characteristics. Indeed, research by behavioral scientists has not revealed any traits that are necessary or sufficient for explaining why people become perpetrators.

### Which Groups Become Victims

Victims of genocide are generally members of minority groups that have long been the targets of prejudice. But not all minority groups—not even all those perceived unfavorably by the majority—are



equally at risk. Particularly vulnerable are ethnic (and other) groups that are seen as competitors for resources (and thus viewed with hostility), and at the same time, as being clever, competent, and successful. Such groups are the targets of *envious prejudice*. They are believed to be motivated to make life difficult for the perpetrator group and capable of carrying out sinister plans to get their way. In other words, people can convince themselves that these groups are plausible causes of the difficult life conditions in a society. As a result, members of these groups become scapegoats. Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Jews in Germany, and Tutsis in Rwanda were all targets of envious prejudice.

Also at risk are groups that are seen as being not only hostile, but also so intellectually and culturally inferior as to be less than human. Such groups are the targets of *contemptuous prejudice*. Members of these groups are slaughtered not because they are believed to be plotting against the perpetrator group but because, at crucial junctures in a society's development, they are seen to be dangerous—and expendable—impediments to progress. Native Americans, the Roma people in Europe (often called “Gypsies”), and the original inhabitants of Tasmania were targets of contemptuous prejudice.

#### Acquiescence to Evil: Bystanders and Supporters

Most members of perpetrator groups are not actively involved in the killings. Few, however, speak out against the evil being perpetrated in their names. Many bystanders undoubtedly support the violence, as victims of genocide are typically targets of preexisting prejudice. Even were this not the case, and even if large segments of the perpetrator group opposed the killing, a number of psychological factors would work to mute their objections.

The first is *diffusion of responsibility*. Even when people believe an injustice is taking place and they are capable of intervening in some way, they feel less obligated to do so if they perceive that many others are also witnesses and could act instead of them. In such circumstances, people might not be willing to bear the costs of coming to the aid of other people, even if those costs are not great.

People will be even more inhibited from intervening if they believe that most other people, unlike themselves, support the assault on the victim group, even if that belief is false. Groups are often characterized by *pluralistic ignorance*, a state of affairs in which individuals assume that other group members have different attitudes or beliefs than they do despite that fact that those attitudes and beliefs are more similar to their own than they realize. Pluralistic ignorance prevents people from expressing their objections to unjust or even genocidal policies. This is especially true when people fear that their opinions might suggest a lack of courage, strength, or patriotism. Thus, people often conform to group norms that are privately endorsed by only a small minority of group members.

Few people are comfortable with passively observing the unjust victimization of others. To resolve this tension, bystanders rationalize or justify their inaction. A common method involves *just world thinking*, the tendency to believe that those who experience misfortune deserve their fate. The more people justify genocidal policies, the more they become supporters of those policies. And supporters, of course, can eventually become active participants in mass killing.

#### Nations as Bystanders

It is easy to understand how individuals might not believe they have the power to intervene effectively to stop genocides. The same cannot always be said, though, of other nations. Nonetheless, those nations also usually are passive bystanders. Governments are rarely willing to incur the costs (financial, political, and human) of a military intervention or rescue operation. They typically rationalize their inaction, often by downplaying the magnitude of the violence. Otherwise, they argue that there are no effective means of intervention available to them or that any attempt to intervene will only make matters worse for the victims.

#### Heroes and Resisters

Just as it is impossible to define a specific perpetrator type, those who actively oppose genocide do so for a wide variety of motives. Some act not so much out of sympathy for the victims, but as a

way of expressing animosity toward the perpetrator group. Others assist potential victims or otherwise subvert the perpetrators' plans as a result of the social influence or even active encouragement of esteemed authority figures (for example, local religious leaders). Certainly, though, many people have engaged in resistance and even made heroic efforts to save those targeted for death because of deeply held values and beliefs that are incompatible with genocide. One of the most commonly cited characteristics of helpers is an extensive (i.e., inclusive) view of people—that is, a belief that people should be first and foremost categorized as human beings, and not in terms of race, ethnicity, or nationality. “Extensivity” is associated with feelings of responsibility for others' welfare.

Case studies of heroic helpers reveal a common pattern. Such people typically start with limited acts of resistance but over time become more committed in their opposition and bolder in their actions. In other words, they progress on a *continuum of benevolence*. Major acts of heroism usually represent the final stage of a process that starts with small acts of kindness or bravery.

Nations can behave heroically too. During World War II, Danes organized a rescue operation that allowed most Jews in their country to escape to Sweden. Bulgaria was also notable for having shielded most of its Jews (especially native-born ones) from the Nazis. The country's leaders, in their deliberations and in communications with the public, emphasized the primacy of the Jews' identity as Bulgarians. Consistent with social identity theory, this led other Bulgarians to perceive themselves and the Jews as sharing a common fate.

### The Aftermath: Collective Guilt and Forgiveness

Perpetrator groups are often loath to admit that they carried out genocidal killings. Simple denial is usually untenable, however. Instead, perpetrators might argue that the number of deaths has been grossly exaggerated; that most victims died from disease and starvation, despite efforts to sustain them during a chaotic period of upheaval and violence; that those who were killed died as a side effect of normal military operations; that the

killings occurred during a civil war in which members of the perpetrator group also perished in large numbers; or some combination of these excuses.

Other groups have openly admitted to their former genocidal policies and have attempted to come to terms with the past. Contemporary Germany is a prominent example. Holocaust education is a part of the regular school curriculum, and many prominent public memorials to the Nazis' victims have been constructed.

Individual members of former perpetrator groups can experience collective guilt—that is, guilt due to actions taken by members of their groups, even if they themselves did not take part in those actions (perhaps because they were not born yet). Collective guilt can be constructive, for example by inspiring reconciliation with survivors of the killings and support for the payment of reparations. Collective guilt is far from universal, however. To experience it, people have to subjectively identify with the group that committed genocide, but not too strongly. People for whom group membership is the most salient and important aspect of their self-concept will find it difficult to admit that there is cause to feel guilt. In other words, they will be motivated to deny that a genocide took place or to explain it away.

Survivors of genocide often demonstrate remarkable psychological resilience. Some, however, experience psychological difficulties, including guilt at having lived when so many others were killed. These internal struggles can complicate their interpersonal and family relationships. Although no one can reasonably demand that genocide survivors forgive their former assailants, reconciliation is more likely under certain conditions. The first is some expression of collective guilt by the perpetrators. The second is that survivors frame what happened as an example the terrible things that *people*—as opposed to Germans, Turks, and others—do to other people. Coexistence after a genocide is difficult but not impossible.

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*See also* Anti-Semitism; Bystander Effect; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Deindividuation; Discrimination; Holocaust; Just World Hypothesis; Obedience to Authority; Pluralistic Ignorance; Scapegoating; Social Identity Theory

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## GRADUATED RECIPROCATION IN TENSION REDUCTION (GRIT)

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*Graduated reciprocation in tension reduction* (GRIT) is a behavioral strategy designed to reduce hostilities among conflicting parties. It is a unilateral strategy under which the adopter initiates a system of conciliation and reciprocation and at the same time signals a willingness to cease the process if the other party attempts to exploit the goodwill. GRIT is applicable to both intergroup and intragroup conflict.

GRIT was proposed in 1959 by Charles Osgood in response to the escalation of the Cold War and the wave of strategic models being advocated, all of which took, in Osgood's view, untenable perspectives on U.S.–USSR relations. Military strategists advocated a preventive or preemptive first strike (“getting it all over with in an angry burst of hell-fire,” in Osgood's words). Pacifists argued for unilateral disarmament by the United States, on the assumption that the USSR would not attack a defenseless country and would eventually follow suit (“passively hoping for the best from an aggressive opponent as we lay down our arms”). Think-tank

experts advocated a buildup of far more nuclear weapons than would ever be needed and simultaneous recognition of the impossibility of completely shielding the country from nuclear attack. Their logic was that such a strategy would both convince the USSR of the United States's ability to annihilate them and produce extreme reluctance within the United States to actually launch such an attack, because a counterattack could not be completely defended (“erect[ing] stabilized deterrence on the shifting sands of human fallibility”). Negotiated disarmament was also advocated in some quarters, though Osgood believed any such negotiations were doomed by biased perceptions, distrust, self-fulfilling prophecy, and inflexibility.

The catalyzing event for Osgood, however, was a debate between the philosophers Bertrand Russell and Sidney Hook over whether it was preferable to live under communism or be killed in a nuclear war (Russell preferred the former, Hook the latter). This convinced Osgood that people were viewing the conflict as a conquer-or-be-conquered situation, and he refused to believe that only two outcomes were possible. GRIT was his response.

### Basic Principles of GRIT

The essence of GRIT is quite simple. One combatant unilaterally announces and performs a concession and indicates expectation that the opponent will reciprocate. If reciprocation occurs, the initiator announces and makes a second, larger concession, hoping it will be reciprocated. This process continues until the combatants arrive at common ground. An occasional failure to reciprocate is tolerable, but if a series of concessions are not reciprocated, the initiator revokes the last action to bring the relationship back into balance, and makes no further changes. Even if such an unsatisfactory outcome occurs, the environment will be improved relative to the pre-GRIT atmosphere, unless it is the initial concession that is rebuffed.

Osgood's analogy for GRIT was of two people standing at opposite ends of a seesaw. The seesaw is balanced, but very wobbly, and it would not take much for one person to tumble off, which would cause the other to come crashing to the ground and both to be injured. Under GRIT, one person would take a small step toward the center of the seesaw and indicate that the other should do

the same. If the other person did so, the seesaw would come back into balance and be a little more stable than it was previously. Repetition of this process would eventually lead to the two people standing in the middle of the seesaw, with the seesaw balanced and very stable. If at any point one person failed to mimic the steps forward of the other, the initiator would need to back up to the last position in order to bring the seesaw back into balance, and here the process would end.

Within each step, there are a number of caveats and details that must be addressed. The concession should not be so major that it cripples the initiator's ability to retaliate if abused. The magnitude of the concession should match that of any concessions made by the opponent. Thus a large concession should be followed with a large concession and a token one with a token one. Concessions should ultimately be made across a variety of issues. It is not helpful to give in on one issue and hold firm on everything else. The initiative should be unforeseen, so that the opponent has no time to distort or propagandize the offer. The concession must be publicly announced, and the initiator must actually follow through on the announcement. Finally, the actual behavior must be clear and unambiguous so that even a biased observer will agree it is truly a concession, and the quality of the concession should be independently verifiable.

Osgood saw GRIT as accomplishing four goals: (1) reduction and control of tension, (2) creation of a trusting atmosphere, (3) empowerment to take initiative, and (4) alteration of future relational processes. When Osgood proposed his model to reduce international tension, his discussion of these goals focused strictly on that arena. That is, as examples of unambiguous concession, he presented actions such as reduction of trade barriers, reduction of troops in disputed territory, and provision of food to impoverished regions supported by the opponent. And the last chapter of his book was devoted to rebutting imagined arguments against GRIT by policymakers.

### Applications of GRIT

To date, there has not been a complete application of GRIT at the international level. The closest approximation is President John F. Kennedy's June 1962 Strategy for Peace initiative, under which the

United States and USSR announced and traded concessions over the course of 15 months. However, this initiative is often criticized as disingenuous because the concessions were largely valueless (e.g., the U.S. offered to halt atmospheric nuclear weapon tests, but held a 2-year backlog of unanalyzed data when the offer was made), and Kennedy stopped the process when public criticism of his actions grew large enough to concern Democratic strategists. Some have pointed to this latter event as evidence that GRIT will never work because the public will not tolerate seemingly endless giving to an enemy. This is speculative, however.

Although developed to deal with international conflict, GRIT was rather quickly recognized as being applicable to interpersonal conflict as well. In fact, most of the subsequent research on GRIT has focused on reducing interpersonal tension. It is important to understand that, because of its complexity, a comprehensive test of all aspects of GRIT at once is not possible. Even if such an experiment could be designed, the number of study subjects required would be so large as to be prohibitive. Instead, researchers have examined particular pieces of GRIT and then assembled those pieces into a larger picture. In general, this work has supported Osgood's arguments for clear communication of intent, adherence to an announced concession, verifiability of the concession, willingness to overlook occasional lapses in reciprocation, and the need for balanced power.

Some other arguments are less well supported, however. For example, so long as one matches the frequency of concession performed by the opponent, matching of the magnitude seems unimportant. One could thus always respond to a concession with a smaller concession, so long as one always does respond. More critically, direct invitations to reciprocate are often perceived as devious rather than attractive. People tend to see the inviter as having an ulterior motive and the invitation as an attempt to set a trap. As the invitation is a crucial part of GRIT, this raises serious questions about how to convey one's expectation of reciprocation without inducing suspicion. Finally, some aspects of GRIT, most notably the recommendation to diversify concessions, have received no systematic research attention.

Some research has tried to identify who is most likely to employ GRIT. The clearest indication is

that users are highly confident individuals with an internal locus of control. Reflecting back on the Kennedy example, it is also clear that the strategy needs to have majority support within the group to be effectively applied. For reasons that remain vague, it appears difficult to persuade even neutral individuals to adopt a conciliatory position. Thus, the GRIT supporter who hopes to win converts is unlikely to succeed.

It is important to note that the body of literature summarized here is not large. In some cases, the conclusions drawn are based on one or two studies. Therefore, GRIT needs more, and more systematic, investigation. Unfortunately, research on GRIT has tailed off considerably since the mid-1980s, as conflict theorists have shifted their attention to mutual-gain models of conflict resolution (e.g., integrative bargaining) and to third-party mediation of conflicts. Undoubtedly, many researchers were disillusioned by the difficulty of testing more than one or two elements of GRIT at a time. GRIT is still cited by theorists with some frequency, but it is usually represented as a well-understood approach that is appropriate for some situations but not for others. This is unfortunate because, as we have seen, much remains unclear about the dynamics and limitations of the strategy.

*Craig D. Parks*

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Group Performance; Negotiation and Bargaining; Power; Social Dilemmas; Team Negotiation; Trust

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## GREAT PERSON THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

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Dating back at least 2,000 years, the *great person theory of leadership* (GPTL) is one of the cornerstones

of traditional academic and lay understandings of leadership. This is because it provides a straightforward answer to the question, “Are leaders born or made?” Answering that great leaders are “born,” the GPTL suggests that these leaders are superior to other people by virtue of their possession of innate intellectual and social characteristics. In short, leaders are simply people who have “the right stuff.”

This stuff is commonly conceptualized in terms of distinctive personality traits that are believed to make those who possess them inherently more adept at directing, managing, and inspiring others than lesser mortals. Either implicitly or explicitly, these leaders are typically assumed to be men, which is why the theory is also often referred to as the “great man theory of leadership.” Different analyses place emphasis on the importance of different traits, but these typically relate to qualities such as intelligence, decisiveness, insight, imagination, and charisma.

This entry examines the origins of the GPTL and some of its empirical and practical limitations. It also looks at how the theory has been refined over time and at some of the ways in which it has been challenged. A key point is that while the empirical validity of the theory is highly suspect, this has not stopped it from being enormously influential.

### Historical Context

The origins of the GPTL are often traced to Plato’s *Republic*. Written in 380 BCE, the *Republic* presented ideas on leadership in the form of a tutorial in which the student (Adeimantus) learns from the master (Socrates) that only a rare class of philosopher-ruler is innately fit to lead the uneducated and brutish majority and that, without such leaders, democracy is in peril. For Socrates, the key characteristics of such a ruler quickness in learning, a good memory, courage, and breadth of vision. Important, too, is that the person needs to be gifted physically as well as mentally.

Although embryonic, Plato’s analysis set the stage for the large body of subsequent leadership research that focused attention on the psychology of the individual and argued that leaders’ distinctive and exceptional qualities mark them out as qualified not only for responsibility and high office

but also for universal admiration and respect. Particularly important in this respect were Thomas Carlyle's 1840 lectures titled "Heroes and Hero Worship," which argued that the history of civilization is effectively the history of the great men whose leadership made civilization possible.

Examining the historical trajectory of such ideas, there is a clear lineage that progresses from John Stuart Mill's notion of the genius whose pleasures are of a higher order than the animalistic gratifications of the majority, through Friedrich Nietzsche's "superman" who would let nothing stop him from satisfying his appetites, to Gustave Le Bon's notion of the hypnotic crowd leader.

These ideas were carried into the 20th century by Max Weber—in particular through his writings on the historical significance of charismatic leaders who possess superhuman powers not accessible to the ordinary person. Weber argued that such people—and only such people—have the capacity to deliver enlightenment and salvation to the masses. This analysis became less popular in the wake of World War II, after people had become terrifyingly familiar with the capacity for charismatic dictators to deliver the very opposite. Nevertheless, the idea of charismatic leadership has recently been rehabilitated and revitalized by James McGregor Burns, whose work focuses on the special properties of an individual that allow him or her to articulate a vision that inspires large-scale group action and transformation.

Along similar lines, numerous popular organizational texts advance slightly different versions of the view that the key to effective organizational and political leadership lies in a peculiar constellation of traits and abilities that set the chosen few apart from the undifferentiated mass. In this vein, hagiographic profiles of business leaders typically encourage attempts to discover the secrets of business success within the psychology of the exceptional individual—their unusual habits, their unique tastes, their extraordinary drives.

### Critiques

Despite the enduring popularity of such work, many researchers and commentators, dating back to Herbert Spencer at the end of the 19th century, have questioned the wisdom and utility of preoccupation with the individual leader that the GPTL

embodies. At a practical level, a series of influential reviews (e.g., by Gibb) failed to find a strong or reliable link between a person's possession of particular psychological or physical traits and his or her subsequent success as a leader. Observers often claim to be able to identify leader traits retrospectively, but prospectively, it is very difficult to specify traits that will cause some people to be more effective leaders than others.

At a political level, observers have argued that the GPTL is pernicious because it disempowers the general populace by leading its members to believe (a) that they are ruled out of contention for high office due to their lack of a suitable leadership profile and (b) that it is people who possess this profile who bring about all forms of worthwhile progress and social change. In this vein, one of the key functions of the GPTL is to encourage the acquiescence and passivity of followers who, if they accept the view that social change is brought about by the actions of distinguished individuals, become resigned to their lowly role and are deterred from seeking to stimulate collective change.

These arguments are supported by historical observations that the cult of the individual leader was promoted particularly vigorously in 19th-century Europe (e.g., through portraits, statues, and biographies) to nullify the threat to the ruling elites that was posed by the prospect of popular revolution. It is possible to see profiles of powerful and wealthy CEOs as a modern manifestation of the same status-preserving motivations.

In the last decade, critiques of the GPTL have had a significant impact on mainstream theory in social and organizational psychology, which has developed a range of approaches to leadership that either adapt or challenge the GPTL in various ways. The most popular adaptations take the form of contingency models, which see leadership as the product of an interaction between the person and the situation. According to such formulations, leadership is not just about having "the right stuff" but also about being in "the right place at the right time." Again, though, researchers have questioned the predictive power of these models and their individualistic conceptualization of the person—in particular, the view that the psychology of the individual leader is stable, static, and immutable.

Important strands of work have argued that the focus on the leader that is encouraged by the GPTL

needs to be balanced by consideration of the importance of followers to the leadership process. In different ways, this alternative emphasis is found in work by Robert Lord and Edwin Hollander, which emphasizes the importance of followers' perceptions and actions (followership) to the success of leaders, and in work by James Meindl, which argues that leadership is a reflection of followers' (often faulty) attributions for the causes of group success.

Taking such critiques even further, social identity researchers argue that successful leadership is achieved not by individuals who are different from others in the way that the GPTL suggests, but rather by leaders who exemplify what the group stands for in any given context. Rather than directing attention toward the leader in isolation, this perspective focuses on the status of leaders as representatives and mobilizers of shared group values, goals, and identities. It argues that successful leadership is not a product of great individuals set apart from ordinary mortals, but rather ordinary mortals who embody and promote their groups.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## GROUP BOUNDARIES

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*Group boundaries* are used to determine who is included in a specific group and who is not. Such boundaries play a central role in human perceptions and behaviors. Sometimes group boundaries refer to concrete and objective criteria that determine group membership (as in the case of gender). Sometimes the crossing of group boundaries is a special event that is readily apparent and even ritually celebrated (as when new fraternity members are initiated, or a new national citizenship is awarded). More often, however, group boundaries are defined in a *metaphoric* or *symbolic* way. They indicate which individuals are most likely to experience a psychological sense of inclusion or exclusion in relation to a particular group.

### Origins and Functions of Group Boundaries

Group boundaries are used to help define the social roles of the self and others. Group boundaries indicate who you are, how you are expected to behave, and how you are seen by others. Group boundaries may evolve naturally and organically (as when new members are added to the family through marriage or birth, or existing family members drift apart and disconnect) or they may be defined with reference to strict criteria that sometimes have legal implications (e.g., through legally certified admission to certain professions). Group boundaries may connect individuals who are similar to each other in terms of a central characteristic that they share (such as their ethnic origin) or they may bring together people who can complement and help each other because they are different (as in work organizations).

The term *group boundary permeability* is used to indicate the extent to which boundaries are fixed (impermeable boundaries) or flexible and easily crossed (permeable boundaries). Because of the symbolic and metaphoric way in which group

boundaries tend to be defined, permeability does not simply reflect whether it is possible to acquire or discard defining group characteristics (such as gender or ethnic origin). Instead, the permeability of group boundaries indicates whether merely belonging to a certain (e.g., ethnic or gender) group prevents people from moving freely within a social system, for instance to achieve positions of higher social status.

Group boundaries have two main functions. The *meaning-seeking* function of group boundaries means that they can be used as a tool to acquire information about specific individuals (including the self), the way those individuals relate to each other, and the way they are likely to behave. The *strategic identity expression* function of group boundaries means that people can define them (and who is included in or excluded by them) in ways that best fit their own self-image. This is the case, for instance, when someone who studied at a prestigious university but did not earn a degree there claims to be an alumnus of that university.

### Group Boundaries and Meaning Seeking

Group boundaries help us define who different individuals are and how they relate to each other. Even when personal relationships seem to be the primary basis for social interaction, events that make group boundaries more salient can have dramatic consequences. This happened, for instance, in the former Yugoslavia. Friends, neighbors, and even spouses felt alienated from each other and sometimes harmed each other because ethnic and racial group boundaries became the central defining feature of their social and political reality.

The psychological mechanism by which people structure and define their social world through group boundaries was illustrated in a classic experiment by Tajfel and Wilkes. They demonstrated that objectively defined stimuli (lines of different length) were perceived differently, depending on whether they were presented as a set of individual stimuli with gradually increasing length or as two separate groups, one with “short” lines and the other with “long” lines. In the latter case, the differences between the lines that were categorized into the same group were minimized. At the same time, the differences between adjacent lines that were separated by a group boundary were exaggerated.

Even when group memberships are flexible and subject to change, group boundaries can be used as a point of demarcation in a more gradual and ambiguous area of transition between different groups. Especially for people who find themselves at or near this demarcation area, group boundaries may help determine how they should see themselves in relation to others around them. In this case, the knowledge that one is included in or excluded from a particular group can result in the adoption of group membership markers, such as language use (e.g., regional dialect, professional jargon), preferences for certain foods or dress styles (e.g., when male students cut their hair and buy a business suit after graduation), and adaptation to specific behavioral norms (e.g., when immigrants attempt to show politeness in locally approved ways).

As a result of such group boundary transitions, many groups are characterized by a continuous flow of new members entering and current members leaving. In this process of changing commitment to the group, individuals can also experience role transitions within the group—for example, from new member to full member to marginal member. This process is described in group socialization theory, developed by Richard Moreland and John Levine. Sometimes the crossing of group boundaries is marked as a meaningful event at which an aspiring group member qualifies to enter the group or a long-standing member formally takes leave of the group (e.g., by going into retirement). In other cases, however, people repeatedly move back and forth across group boundaries. These *boundary spanners* can facilitate networking and integration between different groups. In work contexts, boundary spanners are seen as an important source of information exchange and innovation that can improve work team performance.

### Strategic Identity Expression

Group boundaries are not always defined by concrete membership criteria (such as gender). When group boundaries are more ambiguous, they can be adapted or redefined to strategically include or exclude specific individuals. Such strategic identity expression is likely to occur when people come to the conclusion that their group is devalued by others. This may prompt them to self-present and



behave as if they belonged to another, more highly valued group.

In social psychology, a basic assumption is that people generally want to achieve and maintain a positive sense of self, and a theory that explains how this basic motivation affects the way people perceive groups is social identity theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. This theory argues that people tend to self-present and behave in line with norms of groups that can yield them a positive identity. As a consequence, people who belong to groups that have a positive image are motivated to guard their group against the inclusion of individuals who can spoil the group's favorable image. Indeed, research has shown that people respond quite negatively to those who aspire to be included in a group but do not meet the criteria for membership (i.e., impostors). Likewise, people tend to be highly critical of current group members whose characteristics or behaviors reflect negatively on the rest of the group (i.e., black sheep).

When people belong to a group that does not contribute to a positive identity, they can use a range of strategies to cope with this situation. One possibility is to blur the boundaries between different groups. Members of groups with low status, for instance, tend to emphasize differences among individual group members to convey that not all individuals in the group necessarily have the same characteristics. This is intended to lessen the meaningfulness of their (devalued) group membership as a way for others to acquire information about individual group members, including themselves. Alternatively, when the significance of group boundaries cannot be denied, or when these boundaries cannot be crossed, members of stigmatized groups (such as the mentally ill, handicapped, or homosexuals) may simply hide this stigmatizing condition in an attempt to avoid social exclusion.

### Threats of Inclusion and Exclusion

Because of the subjective and symbolic nature of many group boundaries, the way they are drawn can imply a source of (identity) threat, to which people can respond with strategic identity expression. When people are seen as members of a negatively stereotyped group, the resulting stereotype threat can limit their ability to present themselves positively to others or to perform well on certain

tasks. But there also are other more subtle forms of threat that directly relate to group boundaries. These forms of threat occur independently of the group's social standing. The threat in this case is implied in the fact that the way people are seen by others does not necessarily converge with the way those people prefer to see themselves.

*Categorization threat* refers to the threat that is evoked when someone is regarded as a member of a particular group but does not see this as desirable, or thinks it is inappropriate to refer to this group membership in a given situation. Thus, even when inclusion in the group is not disputed (e.g., a woman cannot deny her gender), or when the group reflects positively on the self (e.g., women are socially sensitive), people may still object to being defined in terms of specific group boundaries *in a particular context*. In fact, research has shown that when women think their gender is not relevant to a particular work context, they object to being categorized on the basis of their gender, even if that categorization leads to positive outcomes (e.g., attractive work assignments).

Conversely, *exclusion threat* is the fear that others will define group boundaries in such a way that one is not included in the groups that are seen as appropriate for the self. This is the case when immigrants, seeking to adopt a new national citizenship, are not seen as full citizens by those who were born in the host country. Once again, the threat is not primarily about the attractiveness of one group or the other or about whether people meet formal membership criteria. Instead, people feel threatened when their preferred self-definitions are not respected or accepted by others.

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*See also* Black Sheep Effect; Deviance; Group Socialization; Optimal Distinctiveness; Ostracism; Perceived Group Variability; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Social Mobility; Tajfel, Henri

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## GROUP COHESIVENESS

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The term *cohesiveness* derives from the Latin word *cohaesus*, which means “to cleave or stick together.” This may be the one aspect of cohesiveness on which all scholars agree. However, as is the case with many theoretical constructs, it is difficult to reach consensus about the nature of cohesiveness (or cohesion) and its proper measurement.

First scientifically and operationally defined by Leon Festinger and his colleagues in 1950, the scientific concept of cohesiveness has been marked by debate. Indeed, in a 1985 publication, Stuart Drescher and his colleagues suggested that the definition and empirical understanding of cohesion lack both clarity and consistency. And after examining the history of research on cohesion, Peter Mudrack concluded in a 1989 publication that it has been “dominated by confusion, inconsistency, and an almost inexcusable sloppiness in defining the construct.” One promising approach to cohesion is Michael Hogg’s 1992 application of John Turner and colleagues’ self-categorization theory. Hogg distinguished between two types of attraction/liking that occur in groups (and help bind group members together)—an interpersonal form called *personal attraction*, and a group-level form called *social attraction*. The individual group member can experience each of these types of attraction. Further, both may or may not be present at a given time.

Personal attraction varies in strength in different dyadic relationships within a group (e.g., “I like Mary a lot, am ambivalent about George, and

actively dislike Bill”). Conversely, social attraction is a “depersonalized” form of liking based on the extent to which you believe that a person is a prototypical member of a group to which you both belong. Prototypical members are those who possess essential defining characteristics of the group (e.g., “We are a hardworking group”).

Another promising theoretical approach to cohesion was published in 1998 by Albert Carron, Lawrence Brawley, and Neil Widmeyer. They defined cohesion as “a dynamic process reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of instrumental objectives and/or the satisfaction of member affective needs.”

Carron and his colleagues identified four major characteristics of cohesiveness. First, cohesion is *multidimensional*. Although task and social factors are the primary binding properties of most groups, there are numerous reasons for group members to stay united (e.g., the stigma associated with leaving the group, contractual constraints).

Second, cohesion in any group (e.g., sports team, family, work group, army platoon) is *dynamic*. Cohesion—and the factors that contribute to it—in a group can change over time. In a marriage, for example, the perceptions of unity and closeness that any couple experiences typically do not remain static over a lifetime. Instead, feelings of closeness, unity, and togetherness fluctuate over time.

Third, cohesion is *instrumental*. Most groups have a *raison d’être* that includes sticking together, and this represents the instrumental basis of the group. For a book club, for example, the *raison d’être* may be mostly social or some combination of task (reading the book) and social (being with friends). For a committee, the *raison d’être* may be exclusively instrumental (achieving committee objectives).

Finally, cohesion is *affective*. In 1995, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary proposed that humans have a fundamental need to affiliate—that people need frequent interpersonal contact with others in situations characterized by stability and affective concern. Membership in any group satisfies the affiliation need. Cohesion certainly provides a “feel good” property to groups. Lack of cohesion, in contrast, contributes to feelings of anxiety, depression, and alienation.

Carron and his colleagues also proposed a conceptual model of cohesion. A foundation for that model is that each group member develops beliefs about the group as a *whole* (i.e., the similarity, closeness, and bonding among members), as well as about the group's ability to satisfy *personal* needs. The former beliefs are labeled *group integration*; the latter are labeled *individual attractions to the group*.

Carron and his colleagues suggested that there are two fundamental orientations associated with group members' perceptions of cohesion: (1) a *task* orientation, which represents a general motivation to achieve the group's instrumental objectives and (2) a *social* orientation, which represents a general motivation to develop and maintain social relationships and activities within the group. Consequently, four manifestations of cohesiveness were suggested: group integration–task, group integration–social, individual attractions to the group–task, and individual attractions to the group–social.

### The Development of Cohesiveness

How and when does cohesiveness form in groups? This question can be examined using the *minimal group paradigm*. In this paradigm, strangers are assigned to groups randomly and then informed that they share some trivial characteristic (e.g., a preference for one artist over another). Immediately, this shared characteristic leads to bonding (a sense of unity) and “group members” begin to exhibit ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias. According to Henri Tajfel and John Turner's social identity theory, the underlying mechanism is social identification with the group (or self-categorization as a group member), which accentuates perceived or assumed similarities among members of the ingroup and perceived differences between the ingroup and an outgroup.

If categorization into “us” (the ingroup) versus “them” (the outgroup) occurs as readily as it does in the minimal group paradigm, then it is hardly a surprise that distinctions between “us” and “them” are especially strong in groups to which individuals choose to belong and to which they develop strong feelings of cohesion. We now consider some of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral antecedents, consequences, and correlates of group cohesion.

## Group Cohesion and Ingroup Relationships

### Ingroup Favoritism

A common correlate of ingroup favoritism is *sacrifice*—the willingness to place the needs and goals of the group above one's own needs. In research conducted with sports teams, for example, Harry Prapavessis and Albert Carron found that athletes holding the strongest perceptions of team cohesiveness showed the greatest propensity to make sacrifices for their teams—to accept less playing time, adapt to a personally unfavorable style of play, and accept and carry out unpleasant duties.

### Group Success and Group Cohesion

A question of long-standing interest has been whether cohesion is associated with group success. Popular wisdom has been that it is. For example, as early as 550 BCE, Aesop concluded that “union gives strength.” Research in the 20th century, however, produced results that seemed to contradict Aesop's conclusion. For example, in a narrative review of research on group productivity published in 1972, Ivan Steiner concluded that evidence does not support a positive relationship between group productivity and cohesion.

In 1991, Charles Evans and Kenneth Dion conducted a meta-analysis (a statistical integration of results from many different studies) to reconcile the apparently mixed results of prior studies on cohesion and performance. Based on their analyses, these authors concluded that a positive relationship between group cohesion and performance does exist, though they cautioned that these results should not be generalized to work settings where performance criteria are complex.

In 1994, Brian Mullen and Carolyn Copper conducted another meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between cohesion and performance. Their sample of studies represented a broad spectrum of research from sociology and psychology—dealing with military units, sports teams, work groups, and social groups. Mullen and Copper found that, overall, there was a positive relationship between task cohesion (but not social cohesion) and group performance. Interestingly, they also found that the cohesion–performance relationship was stronger for “real groups” than for artificial groups. With regard to sports teams,

Mullen and Copper found that higher cohesion was associated with enhanced team performance across all types of sports, regardless of the amount of group interaction required.

In 2002, Carron and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis focusing solely on sports teams. They found that social and task cohesion lead to team success, and task cohesion and social cohesion early in the season contribute to team success later on. And, as in the meta-analysis by Mullen and Copper, Carron and his colleagues found that group success produces increased cohesiveness. Thus, groups that have strong social and/or task bonds perform well, and groups that perform well develop stronger social and/or task bonds.

### *Individual Satisfaction*

Group member satisfaction is also entwined in the cohesion–performance relationship. Research has revealed that perceptions of cohesion contribute to group performance, which in turn produces greater member satisfaction. Member satisfaction then leads to the development of greater group cohesiveness.

### *Jealousy*

Platoon commanders, office managers, coaches, and other leaders spend a great deal of time and effort trying to develop sacrifice behavior, successful performance, group cohesion, and member satisfaction in their groups. Within many groups, there are various issues that can be toxic, if not properly addressed. These can create an unfavorable atmosphere within the group and weaken its cohesion. One such issue is jealousy. Jealousy is a common phenomenon in many groups. For example, one group member might be jealous about the amount of attention that another receives from the group's leader. Or within a family, one sibling may harbor jealousy toward another with regard to his or her appearance, personality, popularity, or some other attribute. In a 2005 study of Division I athletes, Cindra Kamphoff and Diane Gill found negative relationships between both task and social cohesion and the presence of jealousy within a team. Moreover, jealousy was more strongly related to task cohesion than to social cohesion.

### *Shared Beliefs*

Until recently, theorists assumed that group members have similar beliefs about the level of cohesion in their group. Researchers typically measure group cohesion by asking members to (independently) complete a questionnaire pertaining to the group's level of task and/or social cohesion. Members' responses are then combined to create an aggregated score that represents a group-level characteristic.

However, researchers have begun to ask whether it is always appropriate to combine individual perceptions of cohesion. If one group member sees the group as highly cohesive, another as completely lacking in cohesion, and a third holds an intermediate view, then an aggregate score is misleading—members of the group do not possess similar beliefs. Some researchers therefore assess the degree to which shared beliefs are present in a group using an *index of agreement*. With regard to cohesion, the index of agreement provides a statistical measure of the extent to which group members show consensus in their perceptions of the group's level of unity. Assuming there is sufficiently high agreement among members, the index of agreement can be used to justify the aggregation of individual scores.

Recent research with sports teams has shown that group members are more likely to share beliefs about their team's level of cohesion when they perceive that cohesion is strong. That is, individuals tend to agree about cohesion when they are part of a close-knit group, but often disagree about cohesion when their group is more divided. In addition, team members are most likely to possess shared beliefs when judging the team's level of unity around group tasks and least likely to possess shared beliefs when they evaluate the team in terms of how well it satisfies their social needs. This is not surprising because sports teams are task oriented, in that the majority of members' interactions relate to the group's common task, and group success is a high priority.

### *Group Norms*

John Turner, in his referent informational influence theory, has suggested that social identification develops through a three stage process: (1) Social categorization occurs such that individuals perceive themselves as part of a distinct category or

group; (2) Individuals' behavior is strongly influenced by the expectations, attitudes, and behaviors of others in that category or group; and (3) Individuals conform to the expectations (i.e., group norms) and stereotypes associated with the group. Typically, the third stage—conformity to group expectations—is strongly related to the presence of group cohesion. Groups that are strongly united have the potential to exert more influence on their members. A classic study by Stanley Seashore in 1954 illustrates the relationship between group cohesion and productivity standards in work settings. Seashore gave a questionnaire to more than 5,800 employees (in 228 work groups) in a machinery factory. He found that highly cohesive work groups showed less variation in productivity than did less cohesive groups. Highly cohesive groups also had higher or lower group productivity (in comparison to the factory norm for productivity), depending on the extent to which group members perceived the company to be “supportive.”

### *Group Diversity*

Laboratory studies using the minimal group paradigm have shown that stronger ingroup cohesion can produce greater bias toward an outgroup. Of course, it is possible that ingroup and outgroup categorizations also can be applied to members of the same group. Birds of a feather may flock together and produce more cohesion when they do, but many groups require that birds of *different* feathers flock together. Sports teams, military units, and work groups, for example, are often composed of individuals of varying ages, ethnicities, and races—demographic factors that have been shown to be sources of conflict among group members.

As Elizabeth Mannix and Margaret Neale suggested in their 2005 report on workplace diversity, “the optimistic view holds that diversity will lead to an increase in the variety of perspectives and approaches brought to a problem. . . . However, the preponderance of the evidence favors a more pessimistic view: that diversity creates social divisions, which in turn create negative performance outcomes for the group.”

A popular conception is that sports is one place where racial and ethnic conflicts do not exist. The rationale for this conception is that an athletic

self-identity (e.g., “I am an athlete”), coupled with cultural beliefs about the sports context (e.g., “The team’s welfare comes first”), diminish the salience of race and ethnicity. Research with college athletes has provided some support for this conception. Both Black and White college athletes with a strong athletic identity strongly endorse the proposition that racial discrimination is not a problem in sports. Popular media have also supported this notion. In 1971, an award-winning television drama called *Brian’s Song* documented the real-life friendship of professional football players Brian Piccolo, a White running back eventually stricken with cancer, and Gale Sayers, a Black teammate who supported Piccolo during his courageous battle against the disease.

### **Negative Consequences of High Levels of Group Cohesion**

Despite the benefits associated with high levels of cohesion, it has some disadvantages as well. For example, in his classic 1972 work on “groupthink,” Irving Janis described situations in which members’ needs to maintain “groupness” and consensus negatively influence their abilities to consider and critically evaluate alternative ideas or viewpoints. In other words, maintaining a high level of group cohesion and conforming to group norms become more important than paying attention to all the facts. Poor-quality decisions are often the result. Janis noted that involvement in highly cohesive groups is the primary cause for groupthink, although the presence of other variables (e.g., group isolation, directive leadership) contributes as well.

More recently, the potential disadvantages of strong group cohesion were explored within the context of sports. In a 2005 study, James Hardy and his colleagues asked more than 100 athletes (from a number of sports and various competitive levels) about the potential disadvantages of high task and social cohesion in sports teams. More than half of the athletes reported possible disadvantages of high social cohesion, whereas a third reported potential disadvantages of high task cohesion. Some of the reported negative consequences of high social cohesion were at the group level, such as time wasted socializing and failure to communicate information that was less than positive. Others

were at the personal level, such as social isolation of individuals who were not in the core group. Potential disadvantages associated with high task cohesion at the group level included damage to social relations because of an extreme focus on the task at hand. A personal-level disadvantage was that high task cohesion leads to increased pressures to perform well so as not to disappoint teammates.

### Conclusion

Human beings have a fundamental need to affiliate. This need is manifested in nearly every group, no matter how minimal. Even on the basis of arbitrary criteria, individuals quickly develop perceptions of “us” and “them” and then favor the ingroup over the outgroup. So, it is hardly surprising that members of real groups form cohesive bonds around their task and their relationships with one another. In turn, the relative degree to which cohesiveness is present in a group is related to group maintenance (activities associated with the development of the group) and group locomotion (activities associated with the achievement of group goals)—the two fundamental tenets of group dynamics identified by Kurt Lewin. Thus, it is not surprising that some group theoreticians believe that cohesion is the single most important group variable.

*Albert Carron and Shauna Burke*

*See also* Diversity; Festinger, Leon; Group Performance; Groupthink; Organizations; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Socially Shared Cognition; Sports Teams; Teams; Work Teams

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## GROUP COMPOSITION

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A key feature of every group is its composition—the number and types of people who belong. *Group composition* has been studied extensively, though in much of that work, it was studied mostly because of its role in other group phenomena, not as a phenomenon in itself. In any event, much research has been done, and several efforts have been made to review and analyze this work.

One way to organize research on group composition is to focus on the characteristics of group members who were studied. Thus, some researchers study *group size*, which involves the simple presence or absence of group members. Other researchers study the *demographic characteristics* (e.g., race, sex, or age), *abilities* (e.g., knowledge or intelligence), *opinions* (e.g., conservatism or religiosity), or *personalities* (e.g., traits or needs) of group members. Unfortunately, researchers seldom view group composition broadly enough to encompass more than one member characteristic. Researchers who study the sex or racial composition of groups, for example, rarely consider one another’s theories or research findings, even though work on one of those topics might well inform the other.

Another way to organize research on group composition is to focus on measurement issues. How can one compute a single number to capture the composition of a group? Some researchers measure the central tendency among group members, examining their mean score on some characteristic that can vary continuously (e.g., intelligence, conservatism, or emotionality), or the proportion of group members who have some characteristic that is categorical (e.g., Blacks, females, or Republicans). Other researchers are more interested in the variability among group members—the group’s level of diversity. They might examine the range or variance in continuous characteristics (e.g., weight, batting average, sociability) or the distribution of members across the levels of categorical characteristics (e.g., college major, religion). Finally, a few researchers have measured special configurations of characteristics among group members. There has been considerable interest, for example, in the unique problems that can arise in groups containing a “token” member (e.g., a work group of men containing just one woman).

Finally, research on group composition can be organized by focusing on the general conceptual orientation that is taken. Three such orientations can be identified. Most researchers conceptualize group composition as the *cause* for other group phenomena. One might study, for example, the effects of group size on levels of conflict among group members. Other researchers conceptualize group composition as a *consequence* of other factors. One might study, for example, whether groups tend to be especially homogeneous for a particular member characteristic, and if evidence of homogeneity is found, then one could ask how that homogeneity was achieved and is maintained. Are the work groups in an organization mostly made up of White men? If so, then why are there not more women and people of color in those groups? Finally, a few researchers conceptualize group composition as a *context* within which other phenomena can occur—a context that can shape those phenomena. One might study, for example, how the number and ages of a family’s children influence the intellectual development of each child. Do children from larger families, or from families in which many children were born at about the same time, grow up to be less intelligent? If so, then why? This last method of organizing the

literature, by conceptual orientation, is probably the most informative, and so the next sections pursue it further.

### Group Composition as a Consequence

Most groups are rather small. Several researchers have done observational studies of natural groups that people form for various activities (e.g., shopping at a mall, working on a task), and the results are clear and consistent—people prefer smaller groups, often containing just a few members. Why? Several possible answers have been proposed.

First, if we assume that people want to keep track of the ongoing personal relationships (who likes whom) within a group, so that they can use that knowledge to guide their own interpersonal behavior, then larger groups may be more confusing and thus aversive. As the number of people in a group increases, the number of possible relationships (not only between individuals, but also between individuals and subgroups, and between subgroups) obviously increases too, but at a startling, exponential rate. In fact, a group that contains more than just a few members may already exceed the limits of short-term memory (seven plus-or-minus two pieces of information) when it comes to the number of possible relationships. Thus, people may prefer small groups because they are easier to understand.

Another possible explanation why people prefer smaller groups is that bad things happen less often in such groups. Research has shown that larger groups are more likely than smaller ones to experience a variety of negative outcomes, such as deviance, social loafing, and internal conflict. Of course, some of these outcomes can be avoided by strengthening a group’s structure (e.g., status systems, norms, roles), or by devoting more resources to monitoring and controlling members’ behaviors. But such changes can make membership in the group less satisfying and may alienate some members, which strengthens their preference for smaller groups.

Finally, evolutionary psychologists have noted that in the animal kingdom, creatures that are inherently social often seem to organize themselves into groups of a particular size. For example, a given species of birds will form flocks that are all about the same size. This “species-specific group

size” may reflect the optimal balance point between membership in smaller versus larger groups when it comes to such issues as feeding, reproduction, nurturance, and defense. A larger group, for example, might offer more opportunities for possible mates, but it would also entail greater competition for such mates. Maybe humanity, as an inherently social species, has “discovered” across long periods of evolutionary history that smaller groups have greater survival value. As a result, such groups are preferred in general and without much thought.

The fact that people prefer smaller groups means that efforts to create or maintain a large group are unlikely to succeed. What often happens is that a large group will break apart into smaller cliques, which may or may not like one another, work together well, and so on. Special tactics may be needed to avoid these problems.

What about diversity in groups? Several studies have shown that groups are usually homogeneous, rather than heterogeneous. Why? Maybe it is because homogeneous groups are less likely than heterogeneous ones to experience various problems, such as miscommunication, mistrust, and lack of cohesion. This might be why people are less committed to more heterogeneous groups, put less effort into such groups, and are more likely to quit them. Another possible explanation is that homogeneity is a natural by-product of group socialization practices. Because similarity is an important source of interpersonal attraction, people are more likely to join (and remain in) groups whose members are more similar to themselves. And groups are more likely to admit (and try to retain) people who are more similar to their members. Diversity is thus rare, unless outside pressures (e.g., affirmative action programs) are brought to bear. Even when diversity does arise in a group, it often “corrects” itself over time through attrition. The people most likely to leave a diverse group are those who are most different from the other members.

The fact that people prefer more homogeneous groups means that efforts to create or maintain more heterogeneous groups are also unlikely to succeed, unless special tactics are used. The members of heterogeneous groups must be led to accept, appreciate, and make productive use of their differences from one another. This is necessary not only for reasons of social justice (people should not be excluded from work groups, for

example, just because of their sex or race), but also because a few studies have shown that diversity can improve group performance, especially on tasks that require creativity.

### Group Composition as a Context

Few researchers have studied group composition as a context, which seems a shame, given that almost every psychological phenomenon can occur in groups of many types, whether they be families, neighbors, coworkers, or others. So, if the composition of a group can indeed shape the way a phenomenon unfolds, then we should explore how and why such shaping occurs. Consider, for example, a study done several years ago on the relationship between scholastic aptitude (as measured by the scores of high school students on the SAT) and academic performance (as measured by those students’ grades later on, during their first semester in college). This phenomenon is well understood, of course—students with greater scholastic aptitude tend to perform better academically. And that is exactly what was found in this study, but what made it special was that the researchers examined students who were living in different settings at college—at home, in a dormitory, or in fraternity or sorority houses. Although the impact of SAT scores on college grades was always positive, it proved to be strongest among students living at home, somewhat weaker among students living in college dormitories, and weakest among students living in fraternities and sororities. Why? Maybe because the values of those people students lived with in those different settings were dissimilar, suggesting that group composition effects were occurring. Students’ families probably valued their academic achievement more than did students’ dormitory roommates, who probably valued achievement more than did the student’s Greek “brothers” and “sisters.” Put another way, the scholastic aptitude of a student was converted into actual academic achievement more thoroughly when the student lived in a setting where others thought that achievement mattered.

### Group Composition as a Cause

Most researchers who study group composition think of it as a cause for other group phenomena



of interest. The underlying premise of their work is that if we understood more about group composition, then it might be possible to create groups that were just the right size, or that contained just the right kinds of members, to ensure that various positive outcomes occurred (or that various negative outcomes did not occur). Consider, for example, all the effort that the coaches, managers, and owners of sports teams put into drafting the right players. What about all the trouble that lawyers go to when selecting the right jurors for a murder trial, or all the concern that has been voiced by both politicians and voters about how many conservative and liberal justices (whose other qualities, such as gender, age, and ethnicity, are debated as well) ought to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court? Finally, consider attempts by therapists to create groups that contain the right kinds of patients—people whose interactions will have the greatest possible therapeutic value for everyone involved.

There are many theories (each with associated research findings) that reflect the conceptualization of group composition as a cause, but this work tends to be narrow—researchers seldom consider more than one member characteristic, even though there could be parallels in how composition effects involving different characteristics occur. In an attempt to take a broader approach, Richard Moreland and John Levine developed a “generic” theory of group composition efforts, one that spans different member characteristics. They began by asking three broad questions that such a theory ought to be capable of answering. First, of all the characteristics that the members of a group possess, which characteristics will matter most in a given situation? Will race be important? What about intelligence? Second, once some characteristic has been identified as important, which group members (each of whom possesses some level of that characteristic) will be most important? Does one person’s intelligence, for example, matter as much for the group as another person’s intelligence, and if so, why? Finally, how do members’ characteristics combine to affect the group? That is, what kinds of transformations (from the individual to the group level) are possible, and when will transformations of each kind occur?

Moreland and Levine’s answer to the first question involved the notion of *salience*. A particular member characteristic, they argued, becomes

important to the extent that group members notice it in one another and believe that it matters. Demographic characteristics, such as age or race or sex, should thus produce stronger composition effects than other member characteristics, because they are inherently more salient and because people generally see them as more important for their social interaction. Moreover, composition effects that involve these “surface” characteristics should occur earlier in the life of a group than composition effects that involve “deep” characteristics, such as abilities, opinions, or personality traits, because the latter require more time for members to assess. A characteristic can also gain or lose salience depending on various situational factors, such as the distribution of that characteristic among group members, the task on which a group is working, or the outsiders with whom a group must deal. For example, sex is a more salient in groups that contain a token female member, camping skills are more salient to groups about to go on outdoor retreats, and political beliefs are more salient to groups whose members have political axes to grind. In all these cases, increases in the salience of the characteristic would make relevant composition effects more likely to occur.

Moreland and Levine’s answer to the second question involved the notion of visibility. A particular group member, they argued, is visible to the extent that others can tell what his or her characteristics are, and the more visible someone becomes, the more impact that person’s characteristics will have on the group. What makes some group members more visible than others? Visibility can arise from higher status in the group, from more frequent (or intense) participation in group activities, or from longer membership in the group (seniority). Someone who has played an especially important role in the life of the group may also have a lot of visibility. For example, a group’s “founder” can sometimes imprint his or her personality on the group (consider Steve Jobs and Apple). It is also possible for someone to gain or lose visibility because of situational factors like the kind of task the group must perform. If an engineering group is asked to solve some complex design problem, for example, and only one of its members has been trained to solve such problems, then that person will suddenly become more visible to the rest of the group.

To answer the third and final question, Moreland and Levine evoked the notions of transformation rules and social integration. Transformations of member characteristics into group characteristics can follow two rules, one simple and the other complex. The *additive rule* is relatively simple—the more of some characteristic that exists among the members of a group, the more that group will be shaped by it. A basketball team whose players are better at making 3-point shots, for example, will probably win more of its games. A work group containing more men will probably take more aggressive action toward competitors. And the Supreme Court is probably more likely to make abortion illegal if some future president appoints additional conservative justices. Under the additive rule, each member affects the group independently of every other, so it hardly matters what the other members are like. This implies a corollary, namely, that any particular person will affect every group to which he or she belongs in about the same way.

The *interactive rule* is more complex, corresponding to what many people call “chemistry” in groups. Sometimes individual characteristics combine in strange, often unexpected ways. A team of mediocre football players, for example, surprises fans by winning most of its games, or a team of star players fails to win many games, enraging fans. Under the interactive rule, the effects of different members on the group are interdependent—one member’s impact depends a lot on what the other members are like. And again, there is a corollary, namely, that any particular person can affect every group to which he or she belongs in a quite different way.

When do these different transformation rules operate? Based on a review of the literature on group composition effects, Moreland and Levine argued that the additive rule always operates, even in laboratory groups, where strangers meet briefly to carry out a trivial task. It is not difficult, in fact, to find published accounts of additive composition effects. But the interactive rule seems to operate only in groups that have higher levels of social integration—groups that are more “real,” because they operate out in the world, exist for longer periods, carry out more important tasks, and so on. Published accounts of interactive composition effects are difficult to find—chemistry in groups, for better or worse, appears to be a rare thing,

something that newly formed or temporary groups are unlikely to experience.

We are still a long way from understanding group composition effects well enough to create ideal groups—groups that are the perfect size and contain exactly the right kinds of members. But interest in this topic has been growing, leading to some valuable new theories and research findings. Optimism is thus justified.

*Richard L. Moreland*

*See also* Diversity; Group Socialization; Homophily; Tokenism

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## GROUP DEVELOPMENT

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Whether there are predictable patterns of development in small groups has been of interest to group scholars and practitioners for some time. Theories of *group development* differ in what and how many levels of analysis they focus on. Some mostly stick to the group level, treating the group as a whole unit and its members and their experiences as relatively homogeneous. Others focus on the development of individual members into, through, and out of groups. Still other theories focus on how groups develop in the context of their embedding environments. Recent theories attempt to incorporate all three levels of analysis by considering the interplay among the group, its members, and its context over time.

### Group-Level Theories

Theories that focus on the group as a unit consider the different stages of interaction the group moves through over time. Some of these theories propose sequential stages, envisioning groups as moving from one stage to the next in a given order. Other theories propose flexible stages, envisioning groups as skipping or repeating stages as needed.

Group-level theories of development have been largely based on studies of groups that have been assembled to accomplish a particular task and have little or no member attrition or replacement. For example, Bruce Tuckman's famous review was based largely on studies of therapy and training groups with stable memberships, and the pioneering work of Warren Bennis and Herbert Shepard was based on groups with fixed memberships that attempted to improve their internal communication.

Theories of group development typically identify up to three aspects of development: (1) task activity, (2) member experiences, and/or (3) group norms. Theories also identify three or more stages of group development: (1) a beginning, involving formation and orientation; (2) a middle, involving coordination and performance; and (3) an end, involving task completion and/or the dissolution of the group.

One of the first theories of group development was proposed by Robert Bales and Fred Strodbeck

in 1951 to address phases of group problem solving. These researchers divided into thirds the interaction time of eight groups of men engaged in a variety of decision-making tasks (e.g., planning a thesis, making arrangements for a Christmas party, devising strategy for a chess game) and then tallied the number of acts of orientation (providing or requesting information, repetition, clarification, or confirmation), evaluation (providing or requesting evaluation, analysis, emotional expression, and wishes), and control (providing or requesting direction and autonomy) in each third. Orientation, evaluation, and control occurred in all three phases of problem solving, but orientation peaked in phase one, evaluation in phase two, and control in phase three. Bales and Strodbeck concluded that problem-solving groups move from an emphasis on problems of orientation to problems of evaluation to problems of control.

In 1956 Bennis and Shepard, who studied groups that were trying to improve their internal communication systems, proposed that groups face two major and competing obstacles: (1) members' orientations toward how power should be handled and distributed in the group and (2) members' orientations toward each other. Based on these obstacles, Bennis and Shepard proposed that groups undergo two major phases of development: (1) preoccupation with authority relations and (2) preoccupation with personal relations.

Echoing similar themes of authority and intimacy in groups, in 1958 William Schutz proposed the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) model of human relations based on studies of U.S. Navy groups. Schutz proposed that all human interactions move from resolving issues of inclusion (being with, belonging to, and receiving attention) to resolving issues of control (having power, influence, and authority) to resolving issues of affection (sharing feelings and inner thoughts). Schutz proposed that human interaction defaults to an earlier stage if issues in the next stage are not successfully resolved.

In 1965, Tuckman proposed what has become the best known theory of group development. Based on a review of studies and theories of groups over time, Tuckman proposed a four-stage model of group development with the rhyming labels of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Tuckman and Mary Ann Jensen later added a fifth

and final stage, which they called adjourning. Tuckman discussed both the interpersonal and the task processes of the group during each stage. When the group is forming, members look to others to provide guidance, information, and feedback about what interpersonal and task behaviors are acceptable in the group. While storming (which Tuckman suggested might be skipped by task-focused groups), members attempt to express their individuality and resist the formation of group structures. During norming, members accept the group and the idiosyncrasies of other members and begin to interact harmoniously and openly to avoid conflict. In the performing stage, members constructively try to complete the group task. Finally, when the group is adjourning, members struggle to accept the end of the group.

Subsequent group-level models echoed earlier ones. In 1974 Rosemary Sarri and Maeda Galinsky proposed three dimensions of group development: (1) social organization (the structure and pattern of member roles in the group), (2) task activities, and (3) group culture (the norms and expectations that characterize the group). They also specified seven stages of group development: (1) origin (composing the group), (2) formative (seeking mutual interests), (3) intermediate (moderate group cohesion), (4) revision (challenges to existing group), (5) intermediate phase 2 (cohesion after revision), (6) maturation (stabilization of processes), and (7) termination (dissolution and/or goal attainment). In 1980 Roy Lacoursier proposed a five-stage model of group development that resembled Tuckman's model—his stages were labeled orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution, production, and termination.

In the 1990s extensions of prior models were proposed that combined stages or made them more flexible. Susan Wheelan proposed five stages of group development: (1) dependency and inclusion, when members worry about being accepted and included in the group; (2) counterdependency, when members experience conflict over group goals and procedures; (3) trust and structure, when norms and roles are more established and secure; (4) work and productivity, when members focus on task accomplishment; and (5) the final or termination stage, which groups with distinct end points experience. Stephen Worchel proposed a cyclical model with six stages: (1) discontent, before members strongly identify with the group; (2) group

identification, when a precipitating event motivates group identification and coordination; (3) group productivity, characterized by collaborative work; (4) individuation, when members want individual recognition for their contributions; and (5) decay, when the group begins to return to discontent.

Though stage models of group development appear to suggest that groups move linearly from one stage to the next over time, most theorists have allowed exceptions to this rule (e.g., Tuckman suggested that groups may skip storming or revisit it) or back-and-forth cycles between stages (e.g., Stephen Worchel's cyclic model). Many scholars have criticized stage models of group development for treating groups as closed systems that are largely impervious to their embedding environments and for being descriptive without outlining the processes underlying group transitions between stages.

## Multilevel Theories

### *Member–Group Relations*

Taking a different perspective on group development and focusing on the member–group relationship over time, Richard Moreland and John Levine proposed a model of group socialization in 1982 that provides a flexible template for studying member movement into, through, and out of groups. Unlike other theories of group development, the model of group socialization can be easily applied to study ongoing groups experiencing membership change.

Based on a social exchange approach to the member–group relationship, Moreland and Levine's model of socialization assumes that groups and individuals exercise influence over each other and that the relationship between them changes in a systematic way over time. Three psychological processes are at work in the model: evaluation, commitment, and role transitions. The individual evaluates the extent to which a group will meet his or her needs, and the group evaluates the extent to which an individual will contribute to attaining group goals. These evaluations result in individual and group levels of commitment to one another, which are related to a number of important outcomes. A group that is committed to an individual is likely to work to satisfy that individual's needs and retain that individual as a member, whereas individuals who are committed to a group are

likely to work hard at achieving group goals and maintain their membership. Changes in commitment are also important because they lead to role transitions in the group. Through this process, individuals pass through five phases of membership in groups (investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, and remembrance), which are divided by four role transitions (entry, acceptance, divergence, exit).

### *The Group in Context*

Rather than looking inward at members' experiences within and movement through groups, models that focus on how the group develops in relation to its context look outward to the group's embedding context to predict group development. Connie Gersick's "punctuated equilibrium" model of group development suggests that deadlines shape group development. Through an in-depth observational study of eight naturally occurring work groups, whose life spans ranged from 7 days to 6 months, Gersick discovered that the first half of a group's interaction was characterized by an approach to accomplishing the group task that was adopted without explicit discussion. At the halfway point between the first group meeting and the task deadline, however, a group often reevaluated its original approach, developed a new one, and then executed that approach to meet the deadline. The punctuated equilibrium model thus proposes two major stages of group development: one before the middle of a group's life span and a second after its midpoint, both driven by the group's task deadline. Gersick's model is unique compared to previous ones, which largely propose that groups pass through stages of development in a predictable and sequential fashion. The punctuated equilibrium model instead proposes that groups undergo long periods without change, followed by sudden change caused by "revolutionary events," such as reaching the temporal midpoint of a project.

Artemis Chang and her colleagues later suggested that the punctuated equilibrium model and other stage models of group development (such as Wheelan's integrative model) could be viewed as complementary, in part because the integrative model outlines the lower level processes at work within Gersick's two phases. When studying

simulated work groups in a laboratory setting, Chang and her colleagues observed patterns of both punctuated equilibrium and linear progression in groups.

### *Member-Group-Context Dynamics*

Recent models of group development incorporate all three levels of analysis to explain group adaptation to context, members' needs, and interpersonal dynamics in the group over time. For example, Deborah Ancona and her colleagues have studied the roles that different work group members play while managing the group's relationship with the embedding context (usually a work organization). Mary Waller and her colleagues have examined the mutual adaptation of members' work rhythms in groups, based on their preferences for pacing and planning and the task demands placed on groups by their environments.

Others have theorized about what stimulates change in groups over time. Scott Poole and his colleagues proposed four sources of change in groups over time: (1) life cycle change, or group development as it is traditionally conceived of as a prescribed sequence of stages imminent within, or imposed on, groups; (2) teleological change, or purposeful movement toward group goals that adapts to feedback from the group's environment; (3) dialectical change, which emerges from conflict between opposing viewpoints and forces; and (4) evolutionary change, which emerges from repeated cycles of variation, selection, and retention of group members, goals, and strategies.

Holly Arrow, Joseph McGrath, and their colleagues proposed typologies of groups and development trajectories over time based on the complex interaction among local, global, and contextual group dynamics. At the local level are members, tasks, and tools (i.e., group resources and procedures) and their characteristics; at the global level are emergent structures and norms in the group that emerge from and subsequently constrain local dynamics; at the contextual level are aspects of the group's environment, such as deadlines, the organizational environment, and threats and opportunities. Arrow, McGrath, and their colleagues propose possible trajectories of development for various aspects of groups. These trajectories include (1) robust equilibrium, in which an aspect

of a group converges on a stable state and remains there; (2) multistability, in which an aspect of a group alternates between two or more equilibria over time; and (3) instability, in which an aspect of a group demonstrates instability or a chaotic pattern over time. Aspects of groups that may follow one or more of these trajectories include (1) commitment levels between members and their groups (from Moreland and Levine's model of group socialization), (2) project output and performance, (3) division of labor and roles within the group, (4) information sharing, (5) conflict, and (6) group norms and procedures.

As this entry indicates, there is a good deal of scholarly interest in group development. A variety of theoretical perspectives have been offered to describe and explain how groups develop over time, and each of these perspectives has both strengths and weaknesses. Recent theories that consider the interplay among the group, its members, and its context over time appear to be particularly promising.

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*See also* Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Composition; Group Dissolution; Group Formation; Group Socialization; Role Transitions; Social Entrainment; Therapy Groups; Work Teams

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## GROUP DISSOLUTION

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*Group dissolution* is a topic that has attracted much attention recently. Scientists are interested in theoretical issues, such as how and why groups dissolve, whereas practitioners are interested in more pragmatic issues, such as how to delay the dissolution of groups that are helpful (e.g., self-help groups) and how to hasten the dissolution of groups that are harmful (e.g., youth gangs, terrorist cells).

One way to organize work on group dissolution is to distinguish between two general scenarios. The first involves the dissolution of groups that were not expected to last for a long time (e.g., juries, therapy groups, task forces, health care teams, and negotiating teams). Members of such groups know right from the start that their groups will someday dissolve. They may even know (if only roughly) when that will occur. A second scenario involves groups that could, at least in principle, last indefinitely (assuming things go well). Many groups are of this sort, though turnover among members (and other changes over time) can be viewed as part of a continual “dissolution” process, in which the current incarnation of the group keeps disappearing and is replaced by newer incarnations. Dissolution is a somewhat different phenomenon in these two scenarios, so they are considered separately in this entry.

### Expected Dissolution

How are groups affected by the knowledge that they will surely dissolve? Research on how anticipated future interaction affects relationships shows that people who expect to continue interacting with one another often behave in ways that produce interpersonal attraction. For example, they (a) disclose more information about themselves, (b) gather more information about others and

remember such information better, and (c) act more cooperatively. Interpersonal attraction within a group should strengthen its cohesion. All of this suggests that there might be less cohesion, and perhaps more conflict, in a group that members expect will dissolve. Ironically, these effects might hasten the group's demise.

Another possible effect of expected dissolution involves group development. In 1988, Connie Gersick published a study of groups that were working on projects with definite deadlines (after which the groups were expected to dissolve). She found that knowledge about the dissolution of a group structured its members' activities. In the groups that Gersick studied, members began their projects quickly, without much planning, and worked hard until about half their time was gone. Then, suddenly, they paused to reconsider what they were doing. As part of that reflection process, the group members often sought more information. Then they began to work hard again, but often in different ways, reflecting changes in their strategies. Gersick did not study any groups that did not expect to dissolve, but her findings imply that such groups might not have stopped to reflect and change strategies, or at least that they might have done that only as needed rather than at any particular point in time.

There has been considerable research on how members react just before a group dissolves that was always expected to dissolve. Some of this work was summarized in a 1977 article by Bruce Tuckman and Mary Ann Jensen. They proposed that a new stage of group development ("adjourning") be added to the four stages already proposed by Tuckman (forming, storming, norming, and performing). Much of the work that Tuckman and Jensen reviewed involved counseling or therapy groups, but other researchers, such as Joann Keyton and James Krantz, have studied reactions to the impending dissolution of work groups, like those embedded in organizations that are going out of business. Some common themes can be found in all of this work. People in groups that are about to dissolve struggle to complete whatever group tasks remain, but that is often difficult, in part because they feel sad, discouraged, and anxious about the future. Special events (e.g., parties) may be held, at which group members reminisce about the past, exchange contact information so

that they can keep in touch, and plan possible future "meetings" of the old group. But people who once were in a group together often find it difficult to maintain any meaningful relationships with one another.

### Unexpected Dissolution

Many groups don't expect to dissolve, so their members do not think about it unless serious problems arise that make the group's possible dissolution more salient. Those problems can be internal or external in origin. A major internal problem for many groups is conflict among members. Although conflict has some benefits, it can also damage a group in serious ways. To the extent that group members are fighting with one another, for example, they have less time and energy to accomplish the group's tasks. As a result, the group begins to fail, which weakens both the commitment of its members and support for the group among outsiders. As conflict intensifies, some members may leave the group, and prospective members may be reluctant to join because the group seems so unpleasant. As a result, the group shrinks and may eventually disappear. Several kinds of external problems are possible. For example, a group may lose support from stakeholders, who withdraw resources that the group needs to survive. Or a group may antagonize authorities or competitors, who decide that it ought to be weakened or even destroyed. Paradoxically, attacks from outsiders often backfire—according to K. L. Dion, group members naturally resent such attacks and react by becoming more cohesive and working harder to keep the group alive.

Whether a group's problems are internal or external, they may not always be clear to group members. A process of problem identification, described by Richard Moreland and John Levine, is often required. A problem must first be detected and diagnosed, then the group must develop possible solutions for it, and finally the "best" solution must be chosen and implemented. Research suggests that groups do not do any of these very well—they are often slow to detect problems and may diagnose problems incorrectly. As for developing solutions, many groups decide that the only solution needed is to simply keep on doing what they have been doing, but with more intensity.

And even when groups admit the need for change, they often prefer to “borrow” solutions for their problems (solutions that have been used before, by themselves or other groups) rather than trying to develop new solutions. Borrowed solutions, of course, do not always “fit” the problems they are meant to solve. Finally, when groups try to choose the best solution for a problem, they often limit their options to just a few alternatives, even when more solutions are available.

These and other mistakes force many groups to cycle back through the process of problem identification repeatedly, wasting time and energy. This contributes (along with several other factors) to a general trend toward failure. Large problems often cannot be solved, and small problems frequently grow larger and larger, until they cannot be solved either. Many groups that never expected to dissolve thus reach at some point the realization that they will soon dissolve.

When that point has been reached, some of the activities and emotions described earlier (for people who expect their groups to dissolve) are likely to occur again, but with two differences. First, members of these groups want to understand *why* their groups are dissolving. What went wrong? Who is to blame? Could anything have been done to preserve the group, and if so, then why was it not done? Considerable sense-making activity thus occurs among members, much of it involving attributions for the failure of the group. Outsiders are likely to be blamed, if that makes any sense at all, but if not, then leaders and other high-status members of the group are targeted. A second difference is emotional in nature. Besides feeling sad, discouraged, and anxious about the future (like people who expect their groups to dissolve), members of these groups often feel angry as well—not only with others but often with themselves. That anger can sometimes lead to aggression.

### Conclusion

Maybe the issue of group dissolution is less important than it seems. Social identity theorists have long argued that a group exists and can influence people’s behavior whenever those people simply think about themselves as group members. If that is correct, then a group could survive almost indefinitely, so long as people remember the group and

categorize themselves as members. That is either a comforting or a disturbing prospect, depending on the group.

*Richard L. Moreland*

*See also* Categorization; Group Boundaries; Group Cohesiveness; Group Development; Group Formation; Schisms; Social Identity Theory

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## GROUP ECOLOGY

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Ecology is a branch of biology that analyzes the relationship between an organism and the setting where it lives. Groups can be analyzed in this way too. Every group occupies some setting, and no group can be fully understood without analyzing that setting. Analyses of the settings that groups occupy reveal a variety of environmental factors, ranging from the physical to the social to



the temporal. Although researchers usually study the effects of environmental factors on groups, attempts by groups to control those factors are sometimes studied as well. That is, a setting can be both a cause and an effect of group activities.

### Physical Environments

The physical environments of groups have been especially interesting to researchers. One popular research area is crowding. The effects of crowding on groups are studied in residential areas, college dormitories, and prisons, as well as laboratories. As people feel more crowded, they exhibit greater stress, worse performance (especially on more complex tasks), and more negative social relations. These effects are believed to be mediated by several factors, including loss of control, cognitive overload, and behavioral constraints. Some researchers have found that groups, rather than being the reason why people feel crowded, can sometimes provide solutions to crowding problems. In a crowded dormitory, for example, a friendship group might form and "take over" several rooms or a lounge area. This could restore group members' sense of control, reduce their cognitive overload, and weaken some of the constraints on their behavior.

A related area of research involves groups that work in "exotic" environments, such as outer space, underground, underwater, or at the poles. These environments are generally dangerous, confining, and impoverished in terms of stimulation. Common responses by groups to such environments include increased cohesion, greater pressure on members to conform, and the development of strong leadership. Groups apparently adapt in these ways to eliminate or control any problems that are internal to the group, so that the group's external problems can be handled more effectively.

Another area of research on physical environments involves groups that work in factories or offices. Underlying this research is the assumption that working conditions affect job satisfaction, which in turn affects how productive workers are. Temperature, lighting, floor space, noise, and provisions for privacy have all been shown to affect workers, but individual reactions to such factors may well be shaped by groups. Judgments about working conditions are often made collectively, rather than individually. Several theorists, including

Gerald Salancik and Jeffrey Pfeffer in a 1978 publication, have argued that various social processes can influence workers' opinions about whether their jobs are interesting, their salaries are adequate, and so forth. For example, members of work groups may call attention to some factors more than others, evaluate some factors more positively than others, "explain" why things are the way that they are now, or predict whether and when things might get better or worse. It would not be surprising, then, if judgments about the work environment were affected in these ways as well.

The computerization of offices has led researchers to study the impact of technology on workgroups. A wide variety of computer systems have been studied, including (a) simple word-processing or accounting programs; (b) complex collaborative writing/editing programs; (c) electronic mail, bulletin boards, and chat rooms; and (d) support systems for group decision making. E-mail has been studied most often. The evidence suggests e-mail can affect workgroups in several ways, such as reducing overall communication, equalizing participation levels, weakening status systems, emphasizing informational rather than normative influence, and encouraging deviance. There is little evidence that e-mail improves group productivity.

The research described so far has focused on how the physical environment can affect a group. But there are also several ways in which a group might try to control its physical environment. Some groups, for example, have the resources and mobility to seek out pleasant environments or avoid unpleasant ones. And some groups can alter their environments in ways that make them more pleasant. Finally, it is often possible for a group to interpret its environment in ways that make it seem more pleasant.

Few researchers have studied how groups move from one environment to another. A more popular focus of research is on how groups try to alter their environments. Much of this research involves territoriality. Many groups, such as youth gangs, mark territories and then defend them against outsiders. Primary territories, which are owned by groups and used by them often (e.g., family homes), are the ones most likely to be marked and defended, but secondary and public territories are sometimes treated that way as well. Secondary territories (e.g., a corner bar or certain tables in a dormitory cafeteria) are not

owned by groups, but are used often by them. Public territories (e.g., a picnic table, camping space, or spot on the beach) are neither owned nor used often, but still may be viewed by groups as their “possessions” for periods of time. Some groups also apportion their primary territory among members, usually on the basis of status. This occurs in families (e.g., mothers and fathers “own” different parts of the house), work groups (e.g., the boss has an office with lots of space, windows, and special furnishings), and even college classrooms (e.g., good students often sit toward the front and center and poor students often sit toward the back and sides).

Territoriality is alleged to serve several purposes for groups. A territory could help a group to (a) protect valuable resources, (b) improve living/working conditions, (c) gain a sense of privacy, (d) control social interactions, (e) become more cohesive, and (f) express a social identity. And when certain members take or are given special areas of a group’s territory for their own, they could enjoy some of these same benefits at a more personal level. However, there is little evidence that territoriality actually produces benefits like these for groups or their members.

Although group territories are usually fixed in space, it may be possible for groups to create portable territories that can be transported from one location to another. There is considerable research on the “personal spaces” of individuals—invisible “force fields” that people carry around with them in order to buffer themselves from the world. When someone “invades” another person’s space, that person is likely to back away until the space is restored, and if the invader does the same thing again, then the person may well react angrily. Do “group spaces” exist too, and if so, then are they like the personal spaces of individuals? Two types of research suggest that the answer to both questions is “yes.”

First, *invasion studies* examine how groups react when outsiders try to pass through them (e.g., someone walks through the middle of a group of several people talking together in the hallway). Research has shown that outsiders try to avoid doing this, and when it must be done, they seem embarrassed and may even apologize to the group, as if realizing they have misbehaved. The group, in turn, is likely to be annoyed and may glare at the intruder or say something hostile to him or her.

These reactions vary with characteristics of both the group and the invader. For example, a larger group, or one whose members have higher external status or are interacting more intensely (e.g., arguing), is less likely to be invaded and will react more negatively if its space is invaded. And if situational constraints (e.g., a narrow hallway) “force” someone to invade a group, or the invader has a higher external status, or apologizes for his or her misbehavior, then a group is likely to react less negatively to a violation of its space.

A second type of research on group spaces involves *deflection studies*. Imagine an area in which sight lines prevent people from seeing a group until they are almost upon it. For example, a group may be doing something in an alcove located just off a hallway. This hides the group for a while from people walking down the hall, until they come close enough to discover that the group is there. If “group spaces” indeed exist, then a deflection ought to occur in these situations—the people walking by should change their course suddenly, as though they were “bouncing” off a kind of force field. This is exactly what happens, and some of the same individual and group variables that affect behavior in invasion studies operate in deflection studies and with similar effects.

A few theorists have tried to analyze how groups interpret their physical environment. For example Daniel Stokols argued in a 1981 paper that when a group has occupied a place for a long time and conducted many activities there, that place will acquire special meanings that become shared among members. Those meanings may be functional, motivational, or evaluative and can produce *place dependence* and other important consequences. Place dependence means that moving the group to another place, even one that seems to offer similar or better resources, can be very unsettling to the group and might cause unforeseen and unwelcome changes in its structure, dynamics, or performance. For example, moving a family from one house to another might alter the relationship between a husband and wife or the relationships between parents and their children.

### Social Environments

The social environments of groups have been studied less often. The most popular research area is

clearly intergroup relations. Several other entries in this Encyclopedia are about intergroup relations and related issues, so there is little need to explore that topic here. A few points are worth noting, however. First, many researchers seem to assume that groups relate to one another in a social vacuum. Usually, only two groups are studied, and they have no connections to one another. Yet nearly all groups are bound together in some way, because they share members, have developed friendship ties that cross group boundaries, or are embedded in the same social network. Also, other groups or individuals often intervene in intergroup relations if they believe that their own outcomes could be affected. As a result, intergroup relations are usually complex, involving many actors related to one another in a variety of ways.

Researchers also seem to assume that intergroup relations are nearly always competitive, yet there is clear evidence of cooperation among groups. Sometimes that cooperation is indirect, as when one group imitates others by importing their procedures or uses other groups for social comparison purposes. More direct forms of cooperation are possible too, as when groups exchange valuable resources, form alliances to attain common goals, or merge to form new groups. These and other cooperative relations among groups often emerge in the context of groups having shared superordinate goals that cannot be achieved by working in isolation or in competition.

There are, of course, other areas of research on the social environments of groups. One of them involves groups embedded in organizations. Most of this research focuses on formal work groups within business organizations. Work groups are often shaped by the organizations in which they operate. For example, work groups in organizations that are failing can adapt to their unfortunate circumstances. Organizations of all kinds offer opportunities for informal groups to form and operate as well. In fact, organizations can be viewed as large social networks that link individuals and groups with one another in many different ways.

Another area of research on social environments involves groups that share one or more members. A single person can belong to several different groups. This produces interdependence among those groups, because experiences in one group can affect the person's behavior in all the others to

which he or she belongs. This phenomenon occurs often in families. For example Urie Bronfenbrenner in a 1986 publication noted that child development, which seems to occur primarily within a family, can also be influenced by other groups to which children and their parents belong. Problems at work that parents experience, for example, may be brought home by them, causing them to neglect or even mistreat their children. And peer groups to which children belong may lead them to misbehave, causing their parents to become angry and mistrusting. Sometimes two groups overlap so much that they are nearly the same group. Family businesses can be both strengthened and weakened, for example, by the merging of family and business affairs. What can a parent who runs a business do about a bumbling worker who happens to be a son or daughter? Family businesses must often develop special procedures for regulating the family-business boundary.

Groups are often influenced by people who are not actually members. These people include prospective and ex-members, friends and relatives, customers and clients, and enemies. An "outsider" can, for example, sometimes change a group's performance, as when a sports fan cheers for the home team and/or mocks the visiting team during a big game, thereby helping the home team to win that game. Outsiders can also change the atmosphere within a group, as when a lone woman enters a bar containing only male patrons. More direct forms of influence are also possible, as when people are recruited into new groups by their friends, or someone persuades a person to leave his or her current group and join that person's group instead.

Finally, all groups are embedded within a culture, whether it be national or regional. At least some of the variability among groups may thus reflect cultural differences, and some of the changes groups undergo may reflect cultural trends. Unfortunately, little research on these matters has been conducted.

The research described so far has (again) focused on how the social environment can affect a group. But groups can and do try to control the social environments that they occupy. Deborah Ancona has studied this phenomenon extensively among work groups within business organizations. She believes that the best groups adapt to their organizational settings through various boundary-spanning

activities, such as negotiation (bargaining for necessary resources), scanning (acquiring valuable information), profile management (impressing powerful others), and buffering (defending against current or anticipated attacks). Ancona has found that special roles (e.g., ambassador, scout, guard) associated with these activities develop within many work groups. More importantly, Ancona has found that work groups perform better if they carry out more boundary-spanning activities, through these roles or in other ways. In fact, she argues that a work group's success often depends less on what is happening inside the group than on what is happening around it.

### Temporal Environments

Several other entries in this encyclopedia examine ways in which time could influence groups (e.g., the formation, development, and dissolution of groups, and group socialization). So, little more needs to be said here about those phenomena. There are other ways, however, in which temporal environments can affect groups. For example, consider how work groups react to time pressures. One interesting example of those effects is *temporal entrainment*. If a work group is given a specific amount of time to perform a task, then its members adjust their behavior to suit whatever time they have. If the situation changes, so that more or less time becomes available, then group members ought to change their behavior accordingly. But, in fact, they do not—they keep on working as if the original time limit were still in place. Why? Maybe this is a specific example of a more general phenomenon, namely, the difficulty that groups often have with changing their routines.

Other interesting work on how time pressure affects groups has been reported by Steven Karau and Janice Kelly in a 2004 publication. They proposed and tested an “attentional focus” model of such effects. According to their model, time pressure leads group members to focus on a restricted range of task cues and to adopt task completion as their major goal. All this changes how group members act toward one another (e.g., less socializing, more impatience) and how well they perform their task (e.g., better at tasks for which quantity of output is more important, worse at tasks for which quality matters more). A narrow focus of attention

seems to affect the recall of information about the task, not the initial encoding of that information. Group members under time pressure absorb just as much information about a task as they would otherwise, but then later on they become more selective than they otherwise would be in their memories of that information. Information that seems less relevant to their goal is likely to be forgotten.

Although time can affect groups in several ways, groups are not helpless time travelers. Research suggests that they often try to control their temporal environment. For example, Gregory Janicik and Caroline Bartel argued in a 2003 publication that work groups control time through allocation (how much time should be devoted to achieving various goals?), scheduling (when must projects relevant to those goals be done?), and synchronization (what should each group member be working on at a given moment?). In a study that tested these claims, they found that when groups spent more time at temporal planning, which included allocation, scheduling, and synchronization activities, their performance improved. Other research on the control of time includes work on “temporal orientations” in groups (members may focus on the past, present, or future) and work on how groups might be strengthened by traditions and periodic rituals.

### Conclusion

The physical, social, and temporal environments in which groups operate are clearly important. They not only influence the groups that occupy them, but they are also the targets of group activities designed to change them. Yet group environments are rarely salient to groups themselves and sometimes not even to observers. They provide a background to group life, unnoticed because they surround a group and are always there. They deserve to be analyzed and studied more often, however—they may be unobtrusive, but they are important.

*Richard L. Moreland*

*See also* Boundary Spanning; Extended Contact Effect; Families; Group Culture; Group Development; Group Dissolution; Group Boundaries; Group Formation; Group Socialization; Intergroup Contact Theory; Organizations; Social Entrainment; Territoriality; Virtual/Internet Groups

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streets to celebrate when their national team advances in World Cup competition. Company employees exchange congratulatory hugs when their firm wins an important new contract. On the negative side, people experience irritation or anger when they encounter those they perceive as illegal immigrants to their country. And, in all too many cases, extreme rage, fear, and hatred directed at an outgroup (a group to which the perceiver does not belong) are driving forces behind pogroms, policies of “ethnic cleansing,” and even genocide.

Following a brief historical overview of the study of emotions and their relationship to group memberships, this entry will discuss research findings in two distinct areas: (1) emotions that people experience in individual encounters with members of other groups and (2) emotions that people experience when they categorize or think of themselves as a group member.

### Historical Perspective

The exposure of Nazi atrocities in the immediate aftermath of World War II sparked a research focus on the psychological origins of prejudice, which one influential perspective traced to intense inner psychodynamic conflicts resulting in an “authoritarian personality.” This perspective focused on affective processes resulting in extreme hatred for outgroups—in other words, the psychology of the extreme bigot. These emotions were seen as irrational, targeted at convenient outgroups (as the Nazis targeted the Jews) without any basis or justification in actual intergroup experience.

However, this line of research was criticized on both conceptual and methodological grounds, and by the 1960s psychology as a whole began to undergo a “cognitive revolution,” with theories stressing information processing rather than emotion and motivation. At the same time, research attention shifted from the rare and abnormal characteristics of the extreme bigot to the more “normal” prejudices that (all too obviously) are common in large numbers of ordinary people. Influential perspectives in this period stressed that prejudice often resulted from conformity to the norms of one’s own ingroup or from stereotypes (socially shared beliefs) about negative characteristics of the outgroup. Emotions played little obvious role in these models.

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## GROUP EMOTIONS

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Many of the strongest emotions that people experience are related to events that affect social groups. Soccer fans throughout a country pour into the

Beginning in the 1980s, research interest turned once again toward emotions, with a focus on people's immediate experience in intergroup encounters. Negative feelings such as anxiety and irritation were found to be provoked by encounters with others who are culturally different or belong to unfamiliar or disliked groups, as described below. Finally, in the 1990s researchers began to link emotions and group memberships in a more direct way, assuming that particular emotions can be experienced when people simply think of themselves as members of particular groups and not only in face-to-face intergroup encounters. In these more recent views, emotions related to group memberships are no longer seen only as irrationally driven by deep underlying personality conflicts. Instead they are seen as more or less adaptive and understandable, arising from such factors as conflicts or competition between groups, cultural differences, or lack of familiarity and experience with cross-group interaction. In other words, emotions are normal, and any of us is likely to experience them when reacting to members of an outgroup. Thus, emotional responses to groups are not the sole property of a few extreme, irrationally motivated bigots.

#### **Emotions in Individual Encounters With Outgroup Members**

When people interact with members of outgroups, they may experience the negative emotion of *intergroup anxiety* stemming from unfamiliarity with the group, lack of knowledge about how to behave, or fear of unintentionally giving offense. This anxiety can disrupt the smooth flow of interaction, producing a self-fulfilling prophecy. Notably, people who experience intergroup anxiety may attempt to avoid interacting with outgroup members. In fact, it is generally true that negative emotions about the outgroup motivate people to avoid intergroup encounters. Intergroup anxiety is special in that the tendency to avoid is not motivated by prejudice in the usual sense (dislike or antipathy for the outgroup) but by relatively benign social motives, such as desires for the interaction to go smoothly and to avoid appearing prejudiced.

A second source of negative feelings about outgroup members is simple cultural difference. Members of one group (especially a majority group

that is culturally dominant) can become irritated or annoyed when outgroup members speak a different language, follow different cultural customs, or otherwise violate the ingroup's cherished and symbolically important norms and expectations. In extreme cases, these feelings of discomfort can fuel demands that outgroup members put aside all elements of their own cultures and assimilate to the majority, even in relatively innocuous areas of difference such as clothing styles.

Negative feelings in intergroup interactions can also arise from the negative images and stereotypes of an outgroup that people absorb over a lifetime through socialization as well as from the media and the popular culture. Many individuals do not consciously acknowledge these negative thoughts because they conflict with more explicit egalitarian attitudes, but this nonconscious conflict still has effects: Like intergroup anxiety, suppressed conflict can disrupt thoughts and feelings and interfere with positive social interaction.

Finally, some people may explicitly recognize that they have negative feelings or stereotypic thoughts about outgroup members they encounter and feel guilty or upset about having such thoughts or feelings. Again, the result of these self-directed negative emotions may be disruption of social interaction.

This discussion has focused on negative emotions, which are frequently part of intergroup interaction, but positive emotions can also occur and in fact can lead to reductions in prejudice, as will be discussed later.

#### **Emotions Based on Identification With a Group**

In a number of ways, emotions can be experienced when people simply think of themselves as members of a particular group, even without specific intergroup contact or interaction. As in the example mentioned earlier, people often feel positive emotions of joy or pride when their nation, sports team, or other group achieves a success or positive outcome. In such circumstances people tend to stress their connection with the group, for example by referring to it as "we" or by wearing clothing with team logos or colors.

Identifying with a group can make events that affect another individual group member (not only

the group as a whole) emotionally relevant to a perceiver. Consider how you would feel on hearing that another member of your religion, nation, or other significant group had been negatively and unfairly treated by the authorities in some far-off place. Although the event does not affect you personally in any way, if your common group membership with the victim is salient, you may react with unhappiness and anger.

The underlying reason that people feel emotions, whether positive or negative, on the basis of group membership is that an important group becomes part of the psychological self, an aspect of *social identity*. As a result, any event or situation that impinges on the group—a success or failure, threat, or hopeful outlook—can generate emotional responses just as if the situation were directly relevant to the personal self. So someone can feel great when his or her team wins because the team identification is part of the self, even though the perceiver personally did not score a single goal. Or, a person can feel threatened by discrimination against a fellow group member because the group is threatened, even though the individual is personally unaffected by the remote event. People can even feel guilty about actions of their group in which they have had no personal participation, for example, events in a nation's colonial past that took place hundreds of years before the individual was even born.

An evolutionary perspective sheds light on this phenomenon by assuming that (a) emotions are generally functional and adaptive in directing responses to threats and (b) because humans evolved in group living situations, emotions are likely to be sensitive to group-level as well as individual-level threats and dangers. This perspective predicts that people have a built-in readiness to respond with distinct emotions not only to threats to themselves (e.g., threats of physical harm or theft of personal resources) but also threats to their group (e.g., threats to the stability of the group's status hierarchy, to group-defining beliefs or symbols, or to the clarity of group boundaries). Outgroups may thus elicit negative reactions because they are perceived as posing group-level threats, even if the individual perceiver is in no way personally threatened.

Another viewpoint holds that the specific emotions that people feel in response to societal groups

are related to those groups' structural positions in society. For a perceiver who occupies the societal "mainstream," some groups are regarded as friendly allies and as high in status or competence, resulting in feelings of respect and admiration. Other groups are friendly but low in status and competence (such as the elderly or disabled), and elicit feelings of sympathy and pity. Conversely, groups that are regarded as dangerous competitors rather than allies, and as high in status and competence, are responded to with envy—this has traditionally been the case for Jews. And competitive or threatening groups that are low in status, such as drug addicts or people on welfare, are viewed with disgust. These emotional responses to groups of each type (allies/competitors, high/low status) in turn have implications for the ways people prefer to act toward those groups.

One theoretical perspective has been developed specifically around the idea that emotions can be rooted in group memberships. Intergroup emotions theory holds that when people identify with a group they tend to appraise objects or events in terms of their implications for the ingroup (rather than for the individual self). As a result, emotions can be experienced with regard to the group membership or social identity, and like any emotions, they will contribute to desires or tendencies to act in specific ways. The resulting feelings and behaviors will be differentiated rather than simply negative in character. Thus, people might view one threatening outgroup with anger and feel desires to confront or attack them, while another rival group is viewed with fear, which generates desires to escape or avoid them. Research has confirmed these and other predictions of the theory.

Most of this discussion of emotions based on group identification has involved emotional responses to specific events or objects (an ingroup victory or a threatening outgroup, for instance). Research inspired by intergroup emotions theory has found that people associate more general or chronic emotional feelings with particular group memberships. These are feelings such as anxiety, irritation, pride, discouragement, and so on that are not direct responses to any particular objects or events, but rather more general emotional feelings tied to particular group identities. So people might feel high levels of pride when they think of themselves as citizens of their nation, or anger

when thinking of their political party membership, even if neither of these emotions is especially characteristic of them when thinking of themselves as individuals. For positive emotions such as pride, satisfaction, and happiness, higher levels of these more general or chronic group emotions are experienced by those who identify more strongly with a valued ingroup. General group emotions also relate to people's general behavioral tendencies toward the ingroup and outgroups, such as desires to affiliate with and support the ingroup or to avoid or confront outgroups. In sum, just as individual-level emotions can be either acute responses to specific objects or events (such as fear at the sight of a wasp) or more general, chronic emotional or mood states (such as happiness, depression, or anxiety), so also can group emotions can be acute or chronic. Both types of group emotions are meaningfully related to people's attitudes and behaviors toward ingroups and outgroups.

### Related Topics and New Directions

Although negative emotions most often arise in situations of intergroup conflict or competition, positive emotions can also occur in intergroup situations, and they can be important in reducing prejudice. Specifically, for over half a century the idea that personal, friendly contact across group lines can reduce prejudice has been tested and confirmed. It is often assumed that the reason is that contact helps debunk inaccurate negative stereotypes about the outgroup, which in turn clears the way for prejudice to diminish. In contrast, the real story appears to be that friendly contact produces changes in emotions—more positive and less negative feelings about the individual outgroup member and hence the group as a whole—rather than changes in stereotypic beliefs. Evidence for this idea includes the fact that contact produces larger changes in affective measures of prejudice than in cognitive beliefs such as stereotypes. Some theorists have been concerned that friendly contact with an individual outgroup member might be relatively unlikely to reduce prejudice toward the group as a whole because the outgroup friend would be seen as exceptional or unrepresentative of the negatively viewed group. However, friendship with an outgroup member does reliably decrease prejudice toward the group as a whole, suggesting that

people see the other simultaneously as an individual and as a member of the group. These findings regarding the effects of intergroup contact reinforce the importance of emotional processes as contributors to intergroup relations in general.

Several important future directions for investigation in the area of group emotions can be identified. Research in this area has relied almost completely on self-reports of emotions, leaving unanswered questions about how “real” or deep group-based emotional experiences may be. However, limited evidence to date suggests that group-based emotions have many of the same consequences as conventional individual-level emotions, including biasing effects on cognitive processes, physiological responses, and activation patterns in emotion-related brain regions. Multiple-method investigations will be able to clarify the relative roles of conscious thoughts, affective processes, facial expressions, and the like in contributing to the totality of an emotional episode.

Although emotions are conventionally thought of as automatic and uncontrollable, phenomena that just “happen” to people, recent research has begun to investigate the ways people intentionally manage and regulate their emotions. Do people regulate group emotions in the same ways as individual emotions? Does the fact that group emotions are socially shared—experienced in consensus with other members of the ingroup—make them more difficult to regulate? Since group emotions are based on psychological identification with the group in the first place, are shifts in group identification viable strategies for emotion regulation in some instances? That is, might people choose not to identify with a group if membership regularly produced negative feelings of guilt, irritation, or discouragement? These questions have scarcely begun to be addressed, although knowledge about emotion regulation might suggest new strategies for changing emotionally based prejudiced reactions to outgroups.

Finally, conventional perspectives on prejudice and stereotypes include the idea that these phenomena are highly stable and difficult to change or reverse. In contrast, emotions are labile, shifting rapidly over time periods of minutes if not seconds. This observation suggests that further examination of the role of emotions in prejudice and intergroup behavior might reveal ways that these



phenomena vary on short time scales, rather than remaining stable over months or years.

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*See also* Intergroup Anxiety; Intergroup Contact Theory; Intergroup Emotions Theory; Prejudice; Self-Categorization Theory; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Social Identity Theory; Symbolic Racism

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of people into more enduring new collectives, and the deliberate assembly of new groups by powerful outsiders. Behavioral coordination among two or more individuals creates an ephemeral acting group. In more persistent groups that come together over multiple interactions, the forming process establishes the roles, norms, and boundaries that constitute group structure. Structure is a feature of standing groups, to which members continue to belong even when the group is not assembled for action. Structures established during group formation guide behavior when members assemble and reassemble over time.

In standing groups, successful group formation creates psychological bonds between members and the group. When groups are deliberately assembled, as when a teacher assigns students to project groups or a manager recruits employees for a committee, choices about group size, membership, and task structure help determine how effectively group members will work together. The formation process is more challenging when we are put together in configurations that differ from those that emerge spontaneously and to which our psychology is adapted.

### Acting Group Formation

Since the 1950s, research by biologists and social scientists has revealed how bands of social primates typically feed, travel, or sleep together in small, temporary, shifting collectives that may form in seconds or minutes and dissolve shortly thereafter. Similar types of ephemeral groups are evident throughout human societies. We readily perceive people as belonging to a group when they act together, especially if they also look alike and are physically close together. Despite their transient nature, short-lived groups that meet only once can still be psychologically meaningful. Ostracism research, for example, has documented the distress people feel when they are excluded from an ephemeral group, even when the benefit of inclusion (e.g., sharing in a game of ball passing to pass the time in a waiting room) seems trivial.

Perception of common threat is one of the strongest triggers for spontaneous group formation, as seen in World War II London, for example, when people preferred to congregate in subway tunnels rather than use small private

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## GROUP FORMATION

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*Group formation* includes the short-lived emergence of ephemeral groups, the self-organization

shelters. Social psychology experiments in the 1950s and 1960s also demonstrated that people anticipating unpleasant events seek out the company of others facing the same threat. In addition to defensive solidarity, ephemeral groups may emerge to exploit resources unavailable to individuals, to share and discuss information, to enjoy social activities, and to tackle challenges beyond the scope of a single person. A barn raising, a pickup basketball game, a clump of people gossiping, and a search party are examples. The people involved are drawn together based on shared or complementary needs and cooperate to gain mutual benefits. When the needs are met or the benefits cease, the group dissolves.

Coalition formation, which occurs when two or more individuals temporarily join forces to gain an advantage, is a particularly well-studied form of ephemeral group that is ubiquitous among humans and chimpanzees. Coalitions generate considerable social complexity by making power and status dependent not just on individual size and strength but also on the ability to recruit support from others, a vital defensive resource. In social primate populations, support can be solicited through vocalizations, facial expressions, and gestures such as reaching out a hand to solicit assistance. By observing coalitions that form in public, individuals can track dynamic changes in social hierarchies and relative power. According to the “social brain” hypothesis, which proposes that the cognitive demands of complex human social interaction have been an important factor in brain evolution, attention to coalition tracking has helped spur the development of higher mental capacities in primates.

Because people are attracted to similar others, groups that form spontaneously are more homogeneous than would be expected by chance. Observations of people in public settings indicate that such groups are also typically small, between two and five people. Small group size makes it easier for people to hear each other clearly when conversing, and allows for everyone to have their say. Small size also enables groups to coordinate their behavior in real time (act alike) without negotiating more formal guidelines for behavior (norms), division of labor and responsibilities (roles), and task specifications (standard operating procedures, agendas) that larger groups need.

### Self-Organization of New Standing Groups

When the same people repeatedly come to one another’s aid, this indicates not just a momentary coalition but a more enduring alliance—a standing group with members, rather than simply a set of people interacting. Support cliques—small, tight-knit groups whose members interact intensively and rely upon one another for costly assistance—tend to average around five people. Sympathy groups, which can also be counted on for support but involve relationships that are not as close or demanding, are typically larger, in the range of 12 to 15 people. Standing support and sympathy groups balance out costs, benefits, and risks not only across people but also across time, and rely on the strength of the bonds among members to ensure that members’ needs are met. People also organize into standing work groups to tackle ongoing projects. Musicians form bands, entrepreneurs launch new businesses, and neighbors form community watch groups. When forming project groups, people tend to seek out others whom they already know, who are similar demographically, and whose competence they trust.

The formation of durable new groups occurs via social integration—the strengthening of bonds among people—and group identification, which creates a bond between a person and a group. The incidence of new group formation is affected by the opportunities and constraints offered by the social setting and the needs of potential members. People entering a new social setting, such as a new job or school, will typically have unmet needs for belonging, social support, and other resources, and will be more open to forming or joining new groups. Opportunities for frequent informal interaction allow people to discover needs in common and hence facilitate self-organized group formation. Secondary sources of information from mutual acquaintances or from social networking sites, for example, also help people organize into groups based on shared interests. As successful groups grow, coordination becomes more difficult, so growth tends to spawn new smaller groups. This can happen either because the group splinters permanently or because smaller subgroups form their own identity and agenda under the umbrella of a larger organization.

The emergence of new opportunities in the environment encourages self-organized group formation to exploit resources, whether through the formation of new businesses, activity clubs, or research groups pursuing grant money. The propensity of people to organize themselves into new political, social, and economic groups both ties communities together and allows them to adjust to changing circumstances. This can pose a threat to oppressive regimes and organizations, which may actively counter the tendency of people to join forces by limiting opportunities for unsupervised assembly.

### Formation as a Stage of Group Development

Group formation creates a new collective entity with a boundary that distinguishes outsiders from members. Because standing groups interact repeatedly, they change over time, developing structures not available to newly formed or ephemeral groups that enable them to handle a broader range of projects, to coordinate more effectively in larger groups, and to tackle more complex and difficult tasks.

The duration and difficulty of the formation process depends on the nature, purpose, composition, and expected lifetime of the group. Some new groups hit the ground running. Others require more time to sort out structure and process issues before members are capable of working together effectively. Groups that are small, with a clear goal and a mix of appropriate skills but limited demographic diversity, can form more quickly than groups that are larger, more demographically diverse, and have a poorly defined task. Diversity in background, culture, and associated expectations for behavior can be good for group performance in the long run, but culturally diverse groups take longer to form.

The first systematic observations of group formation as a stage in group development—systematic change over time in groups—began appearing in the late 1940s and 1950s. In 1965 Bruce Tuckman integrated the findings of 50 studies into what is still the most well-known model of group development, with “forming” as the initial stage. Forming involves testing and dependence. Group members seek information on what is socially appropriate

and what their own position in the group will be. If the group has a leader, others depend on him or her to provide guidance; if not, a member who shows early initiative may emerge as a leader. Members try out different actions to see how the group responds, allowing them to either discover or create the boundaries of acceptable action and reduce uncertainty. Members also explore what the task or project calls for, seeking to discover, confirm, or create ground rules for how they will proceed.

Studies of group development since Tuckman’s model was published have supported its validity for a wide variety of groups, expanded insights into the forming stage that he described, and also documented clear exceptions. For example, Susan Wheelan has stressed the anxiety about inclusion and acceptance that members feel in the forming stage, while they are establishing trust and seeking approval. Members’ tendency to be polite and avoid conflict makes decisive group action unlikely at this stage.

Two important exceptions show that groups need not follow this standard forming process. Some task groups come together for a single project and disperse when the job is done. They resemble ephemeral groups in their speed of formation, but complete a task that requires repeated interaction over a longer period. Research has shown that these groups usually get to work immediately, deferring questioning, exploration, and thorough orientation to task demands until later. Members focus on the task, attend to division of labor and task leadership as the key structural features, and often do not identify strongly with the group. Despite their immediate task focus, these quick-start groups perform less effectively and efficiently in the first half of their time together than during the second half of the project.

Also contrary to the standard model, specialized groups such as flight crews are able to perform complex and challenging tasks effectively within minutes of forming. Crews can form quickly because prior training and extensive knowledge of what their own and other members’ roles require removes the uncertainty that generates testing and dependency. Structure does not need to be developed because it is imported, and crew members fit together like pre-engineered modules. Even in such crews, however, a short period spent reaffirming

the structure and orienting members to one another helps the group operate smoothly.

When formation fails to bind members together around a common purpose, most self-organized groups will quickly dissolve. Assembled groups whose members are not so free to leave the group may, however, continue to meet even without a sense of shared purpose or commitment. Poor group design increases the risk of failed formation, low commitment, and poor performance. Groups that are too large to coordinate easily, with members who have conflicting expectations or agendas and very different backgrounds, and whose mission is either unclear or not aligned with member needs, will have special difficulty completing group formation and working together for a common purpose.

*Holly Arrow*

*See also* Coalitions; Group Boundaries; Group Composition; Group Development; Norms; Ostracism; Roles; Team Building

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## GROUP LEARNING

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Groups and teams have increasingly become a critical component in organizations. Indeed, many organizations rely on groups to carry out both operational and strategic tasks, such as designing and producing new products, delivering services to customers, and developing strategies to respond to changes in the environment. While working on these tasks, learning at the group level occurs when teams change what they know or what they do based on the experience they have acquired working together on the group task.

The topic of group learning has received increasing attention from both researchers and practitioners over the last two decades. Studies across a variety of disciplines have addressed questions such as these: Under what conditions do groups learn? Which factors inhibit or enhance group learning? Which factors explain differences in rates of learning across groups and organizations? The main findings of research investigating learning at the group level is the subject of this entry. The entry discusses the learning process and its main subcomponents, identifies both antecedents and consequences of group learning, and describes why learning in groups is important to organizational effectiveness. Although many researchers use the terms *groups* and *teams* interchangeably, others differentiate between the two terms. In this entry, the terms *team learning* and *group learning* are used interchangeably because this terminology does not affect the findings discussed.

### Research on Group Learning

Group learning emerged as a distinct research topic in the 1990s. Since then it has greatly expanded in both volume and variety. Research on group learning builds on and complements a wealth of studies on organizational learning. Organizational learning has been investigated in many research fields, including organizational behavior, industrial engineering, operations management, and strategic management. Research on both group and organizational learning makes the important distinction that learning at the group or organizational level is different from individual

learning. Not only does group learning involve learning by individuals, it also involves sharing, distributing, and coordinating knowledge across individuals. If an individual group member has learned something, this does not imply that group learning has occurred. For group learning to occur, group members must have access to others' knowledge—either because it has been shared with them by the relevant individuals or because they know that they can access the knowledge by consulting the individuals or a repository such as a database containing that knowledge.

While group learning is critical to an organization's success and survival in a constantly changing environment, assessing it is a challenging task. Two main measures are commonly used to assess group learning: (1) changes in group knowledge that occur with experience and (2) changes in group performance that are associated with experience. Both measurement approaches pose challenges. The difficulty with the first measure is that much of the knowledge group members acquire, share, and use is not coded in formal documentation; is "tacit"; is distributed across members; or resides in repositories other than individuals (such as routines or technologies the group uses to accomplish tasks). As for the second measure, researchers have used changes in the routines the group uses to perform its task or changes in characteristics of task performance (such as quality and speed) that occur as the group gains experience to measure group learning. Yet, there are many factors other than experience that influence group performance. Researchers need to account for such factors or control for them in their empirical research in order to infer that group learning occurred.

Group learning has been investigated in four main streams of research over the last two decades: (1) learning curves in manufacturing or service operations settings, (2) work on group context and group learning, (3) research on how groups learn from different types of experience, and (4) small group research on learning, memory, and knowledge transfer. While a few attempts at synthesis exist across the areas, these research streams have generally flowed in parallel, with little confluence. There are enormous opportunities for these research streams to come together and thereby increase our understanding of group learning.

### *Learning Curves*

Research on learning curves examines the rate of improvement associated with experience in both manufacturing and service operations settings. This research has robustly demonstrated a link between cumulative production experience and operational performance improvement, which is measured by cost reduction, quality improvement, productivity improvement, or completion time. Although research has shown that performance typically improves with experience, it has also documented enormous variation in the rate at which performance improves. Some groups evidence dramatic improvements with experience, whereas others evidence little or no learning. Researchers are beginning to understand factors that explain differences in learning rates observed across groups. For example, research has found that efficiency improvements are enhanced by team stability, knowledge sharing, common ownership, and codified knowledge. These findings point to the influence of the group context on the rate of improvement associated with experience.

### *Group Context and Group Learning*

A second area of research on group learning focuses on the importance of group context in affecting the processes and outcomes of group learning. Studies in this research stream are mainly field based (i.e., done in actual work teams) and investigate how learning processes in groups differ based on contextual factors such as the group's learning climate, leader behavior, and the group orientation or goals. Several antecedents of learning behavior within groups have been identified. Among them there are identification with the group, leader behavior, group climate, shared learning goals and orientation, group structure, and task characteristics. This work has identified important direct effects, such as the influence of context on group learning, as well as variables that enhance or inhibit the impact of context on learning. For instance, a learning orientation (as contrasted with a performance orientation) has been shown to improve performance, but only to a certain extent: If taken too far, a learning orientation can actually hurt group performance. Another important predictor of group learning is psychological safety, defined as a shared belief that a

group is safe for interpersonal risk taking. Research has demonstrated that the effects of team-leader coaching and context support on group learning behavior are due to the effects of the former variables on psychological safety.

### *Types of Experience and Group Learning*

A recent trend in research on group learning is to characterize experience at a fine-grained level and to investigate the effects of various types of experience on learning processes and outcomes. Work in this area has identified different dimensions of experience, such as homogeneous versus heterogeneous experience and direct versus indirect experience. As an example, research has distinguished between learning from direct experience, defined as learning from interactions within a group, and learning from indirect experience, defined as learning by seeking ideas, help, or feedback from outside the group. These distinctions between types of learning are important because different types of learning have different effects on organizational performance variables. For example, local learning or learning from direct experience has been found to positively influence the efficiency of group operations and to be responsible for the effects of group cohesion on efficiency. In contrast, distal learning or learning from indirect experience has been found to positively influence group innovativeness. This stream of research can be productively combined with the second stream to arrive at a deeper understanding of group learning. Examining how dimensions of experience interact with dimensions of the context to affect group learning processes and outcomes is a very promising approach.

### *Group Learning, Memory, and Knowledge Transfer*

A fourth stream of research on group learning examines how members of a group learn either from their own experience or from the experience of other groups, and how they store knowledge in the group memory system. Research in this area is mainly experimental and is thus able to draw causal conclusions on the relationships investigated in a controlled laboratory setting. Through experience working together, group members build a shared understanding and knowledge of the task

they are working on, of the expertise and skills of each group member, and of the resources available to accomplish the task. Groups reach this shared understanding by developing transactive memory systems (TMS), which allow team members to encode, store, retrieve, and share the different pieces of information and knowledge group members possess. When members know what each other knows, both individually and collectively, group performance on interdependent tasks is enhanced. Because of the positive relationship found between transactive group memory systems and group performance, studies have investigated what enhances or inhibits the development of TMS within groups. This body of research has identified features of the group that positively or negatively affect TMS development. For instance, high turnover has been found to inhibit TMS development, while high diversity in group members' expertise and communication has been shown to foster TMS development. Research in this area suggests that storing information and knowledge within groups in a coordinated manner is fundamental to learning processes and leads to better group performance on tasks that involve interdependencies among members.

Not only do groups learn directly from their own experience, they also learn indirectly from the experience of other groups. This later form of learning has been referred to as knowledge transfer or vicarious learning. Personnel movement (the transfer of members across groups) is the primary mechanism through which knowledge transfer has been effected in the laboratory, and it has been shown to be an effective mechanism for transferring knowledge across groups as well as for stimulating the creation of new knowledge among group members.

### **The Learning Process and Its Subcomponents**

Group learning occurs through three main subprocesses: creating knowledge, retaining knowledge, and transferring knowledge. Creating knowledge refers to the development of new knowledge or better understandings of existing information with the group. For instance, as group members work together, they might acquire more information about each other's expertise and skills and, as a

result, develop new understandings or combine their knowledge in new ways. Research on this first subprocess of group learning has investigated when characteristics of members influence the generation of new knowledge. Diversity in the views and perspectives represented in the group has been found to stimulate knowledge creation, and member rotation among groups has been found to have similar effects. The creation of knowledge is also affected by social networks. Specifically, groups with communication ties or links to other groups with different knowledge are more likely to be creative than are groups with dense internal social networks but few ties to external groups.

The second subprocess of group learning is retaining knowledge, which refers to embedding knowledge in various repositories so that it can persist over time and be reused in the future. For example, knowledge might be embedded in individual members, in routines or task sequences, or in member–task networks such as the transactive memory systems group members develop while working together. Depending on where knowledge is embedded, different factors might impair the retention of knowledge. Research has found that turnover is detrimental to a group’s knowledge retention when knowledge is embedded in individuals, especially when the members leaving the group are high-performing individuals. However, it has been shown that group structures can buffer groups from the detrimental effects of turnover. When group members have specialized roles and procedures exist for accomplishing the task, the impact of turnover is reduced. Embedding knowledge in routines or in repositories such as tools or artifacts promotes its retention because interruptions in a group’s work are less likely to have detrimental effects.

The third subprocess of group learning is transferring knowledge. Through knowledge transfer, one group is influenced by the experience of another. Moving members from one group to another has been shown to promote the transfer of both tacit and explicit knowledge. Other factors influencing knowledge transfer are social networks, communication, relationships between work groups, characteristics of the tasks groups perform, and features of the knowledge being transferred. For instance, research has shown that it is easier to transfer knowledge

codified in routines than noncodified knowledge. A shared superordinate social identity has also been found to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between groups.

### Group Learning Consequences

Group learning has important consequences for both the group and the organization in which the group operates. As mentioned earlier, group learning can enhance group creativity and promote group performance. Learning within groups is a key mechanism through which an organization can learn, adapt, and respond to changes in its environment. Thus, group learning can enable the organization to respond strategically to changes and turbulence in the environment. The relationship between group and organizational learning is poorly understood, and more research is necessary to understand how learning at the group level translates into learning at the organizational level. Also, little is known about how patterns of group learning can be created and maintained within an organization so that different groups can learn in their most effective ways but ultimately toward the same organizational goals. Future research shedding light on these questions is warranted and could yield important insights for theory and for practice.

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*See also* Group Performance; Innovation; Organizations; Personnel Turnover; Social Networks; Team Performance Assessment; Transactive Memory Systems; Work Teams

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## GROUP MEMORY

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In psychology, memory often has been defined purely at the individual level. According to this analysis, memories are stored in various parts of the brain and are based on experiences and structured learning of information. However, more recent conceptualizations of groups as information-processing systems have begun to redefine memory to include both the group and organizational levels. To the degree that memory involves the storage and retrieval of information, groups and larger social aggregates perform and rely on such processes on a regular basis. Anthropologists have long viewed memory and recall as sociocultural phenomena. The retelling of stories and myths by parents and group leaders allows all members to share the cultural heritage of the group and helps to reinforce the cultural norms and ideals represented therein. However, only recently has psychology focused on the social or collective nature of memory.

Early empirical work on group memory focused on comparing individuals and groups on memory performance. Similar to findings in other cognitive domains (e.g., problem solving), multiple studies have found that groups recall more information than individuals. Many of the early studies tested a model called *truth wins*—if one member of the group can recall a piece of information correctly, the group will recall the information. Actual group performance tends to be less than this optimal model would predict. For relatively simple types of information (e.g., nonsense syllables, words, etc.), groups perform near the truth wins model, but typically they do better if at least two members recall the information. For more complex types of information (e.g., pieces of evidence for a jury trial, key pieces of information for a strategic planning team), having more than two group members who can recall the information seems important. Thus, although groups remember more than would an average individual, and more than can be remembered by any individual member, their memory rarely achieves what could be considered an optimal level of performance. This entry examines explanations for the superiority of group memory performance, describes the stages in this performance, and reviews current research in the field, including work on transactive memory and shared memory models.

### Explanations for Superior Group Performance

Recent research on group versus individual memory performance has focused on three explanations for the superior performance of groups: information pooling, error correction, and effective group decision making. *Effective group decision making* is defined as integrating all useful information and avoiding decision errors, so both information pooling and error correction are involved. *Information pooling* suggests that groups recall more information because individual group members recall different pieces of information to some degree. The nonoverlapping recall across group members allows groups to recall a greater total number of items relative to any single individual. Research has generally supported pooling as one of the factors underlying the individual–group difference. *Error correction* implies that



group discussion leads groups to reject incorrect items that may have been erroneously recalled by a specific group member. Recent research has confirmed that groups do reduce errors, but only if they are allowed to discuss each item. Nominal groups (groups in which each member contributes to the group product but the members are not allowed to interact) produce considerably better total recall scores than do individuals, but also increase intrusion errors (items recalled that were not part of the initial information to be recalled). Thus, group discussion seems to be an important aspect of both error correction and effective decision making by groups.

### Stages of Group Memory Performance

Group memory performance, much like individual memory performance, involves a number of information processing stages.

#### *Attending to and Encoding Information*

Groups must first attend to relevant information and then encode it (i.e., give it meaning and relevance to the situation at hand). Because groups contain multiple members, each with the ability to encode information, they can encode information in different ways. Each group member may encode a piece of information idiosyncratically based on his or her previous information exposure and currently activated categories. Such idiosyncratic encoding may increase the likelihood that a piece of information will be recalled due to many more contextual cues that may allow at least one member to access the encoded information. Groups can also encode information strategically by assigning certain types of information to specific group members, based on their role in the group or their specific expertise. Thus, information may not be encoded by every member, and the degree of encoding may vary across group members.

#### *Information Storage*

Once encoded, the information must be stored in some manner in the group. Much like encoding, storage can also vary across group members. Different members may have different information demands in terms of the amount of information presented to them. Therefore, the likelihood of a

piece of information being recalled likely will vary across members due to differential rates of storage degradation (forgetting). Research has shown that the greater the number of members who recall a piece of information, the greater the likelihood that the group will recall the information when necessary. Thus, information that is shared across group members is more likely to be recalled. Unfortunately, in information rich environments, greater information sharing also involves a greater cognitive load for each member (i.e., more information for each member to recall). Research on individual memory consistently has shown that recall probabilities for any given item decrease as the number of items increases. Although the issue is not settled, some research supports the notion of some partial information sharing across members as a good strategy for improving group memory. Having information shared by only some group members eases the cognitive load relative to complete sharing but increases the probability of group recall relative to no information sharing. More research is needed on this topic to elucidate the relative trade-offs between reduced cognitive load and information sharing across different task domains.

#### *Information Retrieval*

Retrieval is the final stage of memory. Research findings on encoding and storage reflect information retrieval as the final outcome. However, some research has specifically looked at retrieval at the group level. One aspect of retrieval by a group is whether the group reaches consensus as to whether a specific piece of information should be considered valid, or an accurate representation of the initial information. For the group to have retrieved a piece of information, there must be some agreement as to whether the information was originally present or valid. One of the reasons for superior performance by groups compared to individuals is that invalid information will rarely receive enough support from the group to be included. Similar to other areas of group performance, majority or plurality processes seem to provide a viable description of the group decision process. Incorrect items rarely receive support from a majority of the members and, therefore, are not included in the information recalled by the group. For correct items, plurality or majority support will almost always

lead to inclusion. In addition, occasionally correct minorities will be able to convince incorrect majorities to include a correct item. Thus, item correctness and degree of consensus both play a role in group retrieval.

A second aspect of group retrieval involves cued recall in groups. It seems intuitive that recalling information in groups could help each member recall more information, because items produced by other members will cue a particular item that might not have been recalled without such a cue. Although there is some evidence the group-level cuing process occurs, it comes with a cost that often overrides the benefit—interference. Although hearing information from other group members may cue new items in memory, it can also interfere with ongoing memory processes and prevent items from coming to mind that would have done so without the interference. Unfortunately, in most face-to-face interacting group situations, results tend to show that group discussion interferes with individual memory processes more than it aids them through cuing. However, group members sometimes remember more after being in an interacting, as opposed to a nominal, group. In addition, some recent research shows that technology (split-screen computer-mediated interaction) can reduce interference and still provide opportunities for cuing.

### Transactive Memory

The concept that has garnered the greatest amount of research attention in the past two decades is transactive memory. Initially hypothesized as a mechanism for increasing group memory performance, it quickly became a description of how groups and organizations could, should, and often do structure information storage. A transactive memory system involves both cognitive and metacognitive knowledge at both the individual and group or organizational level. Metacognition involves what people think they know about what they know. Thus, psychology professors may know that they have expertise in psychology but no expertise in chemistry. The actual knowledge they have about psychology and chemistry is located at the cognitive level, but the fact that they know that they know more in one area than another (or at least believe they do) is knowledge

of what they know, or metaknowledge. A transactive memory system is defined by distributed knowledge at the cognitive level in conjunction with shared knowledge at the metacognitive level. Each group member is assumed to have some unique knowledge that the other members do not have. This allows the group as a whole to store (and retrieve) a greater amount of information than would be expected with a random distribution of information across individual members. However, the unique information held by each member is only accessible to the group if each member knows which group member has that unique knowledge. Thus, the metaknowledge is shared by the group members, while the actual knowledge is distributed uniquely across the individual members.

There is now a vast amount of evidence that transactive memory systems aid in group and organizational memory. For example, married couples tend to do better at trivia games than paired strangers, because each member of the couple knows which member is better at certain categories of knowledge. Other research has shown that teams trained together tend to perform better than teams composed of members trained individually, because the team-level training allows members to learn who is good at what. Although groups can be engineered to have a transactive memory system, most groups form such memory systems naturally and within a relatively short period of time. Other research has shown that one of the key issues concerning turnover in organizations is that when a team loses a member, some of the unique knowledge available to the group is no longer present, and the group has to reestablish both the knowledge and the metaknowledge it needs, and then ensure that new members learn the metacomponents of the transactive memory system.

### Shared Mental Models

Another related area of research relevant to group memory involves shared mental models. Groups working on a particular task often need to share a basic understanding of both the task on which they work and the group within which they work. Having all members know what needs to be done, and who should be doing it, allows them to coordinate their actions to reach their performance

goal. The shared task mental model tends to be quite specific to the technology and resource requirements of the particular task. However, the shared group mental model almost always involves, in part, a transactive memory system. Group members must know where information is located within the group in order to efficiently access it. There may be other aspects of the shared mental model of the group (e.g., power relations, the importance of each position, the idiosyncrasies in personality of the other members), but transactive memory is almost always a key component.

Theory and research on group memory in psychology are relatively recent developments, and there is much left to learn. However, the early research has demonstrated the importance of group memory and has changed the way memory is conceived in group and organizational settings.

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See also Collaboration Technology; Group Learning; Group Mind; Group Performance; Socially Shared Cognition; Transactive Memory Systems; Work Teams

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## GROUP MIND

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The “group mind” is one of the most ambiguous, most controversial, and most contested ideas in the whole of social thought. It can be traced back to the notion of Atman, or universal soul, in ancient Indian thought. In its modern guise, the concept derives most directly from German idealist philosophy, where it denotes a collective consciousness that is separate from and independent of the consciousness of individuals

### Historical and Philosophical Roots

In broad terms, there are two variants of the concept of group mind. The universalist position, represented in the work of Hegel, suggests that history is the reflection of a universal and unitary spirit (*geist*) that unfolds according to its own internal dialectic. Human beings are merely agents of this *geist*, and the nature of human society reflects its state of development. By contrast, the particularist position proposes that each group (usually conceptualized as a people or nation) has its own *volksgeist*, which unfolds in its own way leading to distinctive histories for different peoples. This approach is represented in the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder, especially as they responded to the invasion of German lands by Napoleon’s armies. The importance of this context reveals the political nature of the group mind concept, which in turn is the source of much of the controversy that surrounds it.

Fichte in particular came to view the “true self” as the political state rather than the individual. Individuals are but elements of the state, he thought, their interests are wholly subordinate to those of the state—indeed, they have no meaning or value outside of their relation to the state. The relationship of individual people to the body politic is conceptualized as much like the relationship of individual cells to the whole human body, which alone is fully conscious. And just as one would cut out any collection of cells to save the body, so individuals must always be sacrificed for

the political whole. Not surprisingly, then, the group mind concept has long been denounced as an apology for (Prussian) absolutism. Such critiques were only intensified by the Nazi usage of *volksgeist* principles.

### Critics in Social Psychology

Group mind concepts entered the mainstream of social psychology in a two-stage process. First, over the course of the 19th century, they spread beyond philosophy to the social and life sciences. In particular, the work of Alfred Espinas on bee communities gave credibility and prestige to such ideas. Espinas argued that, while bees display individual consciousness, they can also form a specialized part of the highly integrated whole, which has its own collective consciousness. In this way individual consciousness can be seen as a constituent part of the consciousness of a higher order unit. What is more, the group mind ensures that the cognitive or emotional state of any one element will automatically spread to all others. Espinas held this to be true even where individuals do not have common parentage. The collective consciousness exists in all parts of the animal kingdom, from protozoa to humans, in this view.

In a second stage, crowd psychologists drew directly on the work of Espinas and others in formulating their own theories. Gustave Le Bon, the most famous of these psychologists, was particularly influenced by the group mind approach. In his book *The Psychology of Peoples*, he suggested that different “races” have irreducibly different “souls,” which means that they feel and think differently and cannot comprehend one another. This idea was then imported into his crowd psychology. Le Bon argued that, in everyday life, people may have developed more sophisticated and individual ways of being. However, when submerged in the mass, all this is stripped away, and people revert to the more primitive “racial unconscious.” This unconscious provides the ideas and emotions that spread uncontrollably among all crowd members, and it explains why even the most refined of individuals can behave like a beast in the crowd.

Le Bon’s ideas were highly influential, and his use of group mind as a supraindividual level of consciousness was employed as the central explanatory concept in a whole series of crowd psychologies in

the early 20th century; among others, those of Wilhelm Wundt, Carl Jung, Theodor Geiger, and Alfred Adler. Jung’s system, which (like that of Le Bon) racializes the group mind concept, is especially well known. He believed that identical ideas occur in members of the same race, independently of any contact, and that these ideas indicate the existence of a psychic commonality. In the crowd, individuals experience a sense of “mystical participation” that reflects their unconscious racial identification. Where the masses behave, said Jung, archetypes take over.

Group mind ideas were also highly influential among the founders of British and American social psychology, including William James, William Sumner, Edward Ross, and William McDougall. Indeed, it is the last of these who is most explicitly associated with the approach through his book, *The Group Mind*, first published in 1920. He almost immediately regretted this title and referred to it as a “tactical error.” McDougall rejects the notion of “some mental entity that exists over and above all individuals comprised in the group.” For him, the notion of a group mind is akin to the gestalt principle that an understanding of the life of the whole must incorporate principles (notably, of organization) that cannot be arrived at by the study of the parts alone.

Yet, equally, these systemic principles affect action through the way that they affect the consciousness of individual actors. Whatever McDougall’s actual position, his title wrought its baleful effects. Despite his explicit repudiation of Le Bon’s claim that crowds revert to a racial unconscious, he and Le Bon were and still are generally lumped together. As such, they generated a powerful reaction, and in this respect, even more than in their own work, they had the most influence on psychology. This is reflected in Floyd Allport’s foundational text, *Social Psychology*, published in 1924, in large part as a riposte to group mind theorists.

Allport makes three claims. First, he dismisses the notion of a group mind and the notion of a collective consciousness as the most flagrant form of this “group fallacy.” For Allport, “there is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals.” Second, the behavior of people in group settings is to be explained entirely in terms of individual tendencies. This, claims Allport, reflects a scientific

imperative to explain the complex in terms of the simple, the whole in terms of its parts. Third, he argues that any commonalities of social behavior reflect the convergence of individuals who, due to similarities of “constitution, training and common stimulations, are possessed of a similar character.” Such an approach proved so influential that, 50 years later, Ivan Steiner was forced to ask “what-ever happened to the group in social psychology?”

### The Socially Structured Field in the Individual

Both group mind theorists and their individualist critics conflate *explanandum* and *explanans* (respectively, the phenomenon that requires explanation and that which explains it). Thus, the idea of a group mind goes from assuming that consciousness must be explained at a group level to positing that consciousness exists at a group level. In retort, individualism goes from denying group-level consciousness to denying that consciousness can be explained at a group level. There has long been another position in social psychology, which suggests that consciousness is individual but, in part at least, requires explanation at a group and societal level. This was what McDougall was arguing in his defense of his position. It is reflected early on in the work of Leon Festinger on social norms and in the works of Muzafer Sherif, Solomon Asch, and particularly Kurt Lewin. The task for Lewin is to address the nature of the socially structured field *within the individual*.

Over recent years, such a stance has come increasingly to influence the social psychology of groups through social identity and self-categorization theories. They suggest that we act collectively to the extent that we define ourselves in terms of a collective identity. Hence, the behavior of group members cannot be explained without considering the cultural and historical nature of these identities. Equally, these cultural and historical factors become potent only to the extent that they structure the self-understanding of individuals. In short, rather than positing a group mind beyond the individual, or denying any reality to the group, the task of social psychologists is to investigate the group in the mind of the individual.

*Stephen Reicher*

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Crowds; Lewin, Kurt; Nationalism and Patriotism; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Socially Shared Cognition

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## GROUP MOTIVATION

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When people work together on a task (e.g., group project for class), they influence each other, making the group experience different from working alone in a number of ways. One important type of influence involves task motivation, or the amount of effort exerted to reach a goal. Because groups are frequently assembled to complete tasks, much research has been conducted to explore when and why groups affect their members' motivation.

After a brief review of research on group motivation, this entry summarizes some of the important lessons that have been learned and illustrates how these lessons can help us predict when working in a group will decrease effort (i.e., motivation losses) versus increase effort (i.e., motivation gains). Moreover, knowledge about group motivation can help us make better informed decisions about whether individuals or groups should undertake a task and about how to design and structure group tasks.

### History

Do people work harder in groups or when alone? More than a century ago, Max Ringelmann showed that, for certain tasks, people working in a group were less productive than the same number of individuals working alone. Although it was soon well documented that group performance often differed from individual performance, it was not until much later that researchers demonstrated that these performance differences could be due to changes in task motivation. Given the applied implications of group motivation, research on this topic is conducted within several disciplines, including social psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, and organizational behavior. A number of scholars contributed ideas that were instrumental to advancing knowledge about group motivation, and their influence is still evident in contemporary theory and research.

### Studying Group Motivation

In 1972, Ivan Steiner proposed a valuable set of ideas for understanding and assessing group motivation. Steiner suggested that groups fail to achieve their potential productivity because of losses in coordination and/or motivation. Whereas coordination losses occur when group members do not pool their resources and efforts optimally, motivation losses emerge from reductions in effort. But just how does one determine whether a loss in motivation has occurred?

One approach that has been frequently adopted is to compare the motivation level of a person working on a task alone to the motivation level of a group member working on the same task. For instance, in a classic study by Richard Ingham and his colleagues, participants were asked to pull on a rope either alone or in a group. In the group setting, the other group members were positioned behind the participant so they could not be seen, and, unbeknownst to the participant, were instructed not to pull on the rope. The researchers found that people working alone exerted greater force during the task than did those who *thought* they were working as members of a group.

To date, more than 100 studies have been conducted in a variety of settings (e.g., laboratories, organizations) showing that motivation levels are influenced by working in a group. Many of the

results of these studies can be understood using the Collective Effort Model, which identifies two subjective judgments that determine group members' level of motivation. One is how instrumental their efforts are for reaching a goal, and the other is the value of that goal. Motivation is highest when group members believe their efforts will increase the chances of obtaining a goal and when they also value that goal. Motivation decreases if effort is not seen as instrumental and/or if group members do not place much value on the goal.

### Motivation Losses

Group members frequently reduce the amount of effort they expend on a task when they are working together compared to when they are working alone. Imagine three brothers doing yard work as a group. Suppose they rake and collect twelve bags of leaves in an hour. On average, then, each brother fills four bags. *Motivation loss* in the group would be demonstrated if each brother were given an hour to individually rake and bag leaves and each filled five bags.

Motivation losses (also known as *social loafing*) are one reason each brother may accomplish less when working with others than when working alone. Sometimes these reductions in effort occur in groups because members feel their personal contributions to the overall group product are not discriminable from the contributions of others. For example, if the brothers used a division of labor that assigned each a unique role (e.g., raking, holding the bag, filling the bag with leaves), effort might decline because it would be difficult to make comparisons of their relative effort levels, given the distinct nature of their responsibilities. But even if the brothers decided not to assign unique roles, task motivation would still be likely to decline if all the bags of leaves were piled together so that no one could discern who did what.

Consistent with the Collective Effort Model, research shows that motivation in groups also drops when members believe that their efforts will have little impact on the group's success. For example, if the group is large and its task is disjunctive (that is, requires that only one member solve a problem in order for the group to solve it), then individual members are likely to feel that their efforts are not necessary, and hence they will be

unlikely to exert much effort. This tendency to free ride on the efforts of others is especially likely when the task is not enjoyable or rewarding.

Social loafing can be contagious, spreading even to group members who are diligent and relatively self-motivated. If hardworking group members perceive that others in the group are not trying as hard as they are, they may decrease their own efforts to avoid feeling exploited and being seen (or seeing themselves) as a “sucker.”

### Motivation Gains

Many factors can lead to motivation losses in groups, but are there conditions that encourage people to work harder in groups than when alone? Although motivation gains in groups are not common, they do exist, and over the past few decades there has been an increased focus on understanding when and why working in groups can lead to enhanced effort.

When they are part of the group, members often share a common fate, in the sense that the outcomes obtained by individual members are the same regardless of their personal contributions. When the fate of group members is shared in this way, motivation gains can emerge when some members feel they must compensate for the less capable members with whom they are working. Particularly on tasks that are very important, better performing members may increase their efforts and do more—even more than their fair share—so that the group as a whole can succeed. Such social compensation is especially likely if these group members believe that their performance is necessary to achieve their common goal.

For instance, imagine that three students have been assigned to work together on a group project for their psychology course. The instructor has informed the class that members of a group will all receive identical grades. If one of the group members is struggling in the course, or for some other reason cannot adequately fulfill his or her responsibilities, the other members of the group may increase the amount of effort they dedicate to the project to compensate for this less capable student. While they will probably not welcome the additional work, their task motivation will, of necessity, increase.

It is also the case that, on tasks for which the contributions of the weaker members of the group

determine the fate of the collective, these members will increase the amount of effort they expend. This is due to their realization that their performance will have a strong impact on how well the group performs and how other members evaluate them.

This phenomenon was first demonstrated by the German industrial psychologist Otto Köhler and is referred to as the *Köhler effect*. Research shows that people will work hard when their group is counting on them, in part because they feel that their efforts are necessary for group success and in part because they don't want to face disapproval from others. Another factor is social identity. A central tenet of social identity theory is that when individuals embrace a group and their membership becomes central to their identity, the success and status of the group affect their self-appraisals. If the group is successful, has status, and is perceived positively, the member who identifies with the group derives self-esteem through this association. Conversely, if the group has a negative image, the member who identifies with the group experiences reduced self-esteem.

Thus, group membership and identity can affect motivation in interesting ways, particularly in the context of intergroup competition. When groups are competing against other groups, competitiveness and motivation increase, compared to when individuals are competing against other individuals. When people working on a task feel that they are representing a group and their success or failure will be viewed as an indicator of their group's ability, motivation is likely to increase. Importantly though, whether effort increases or decreases is dependent on whether excelling at the task is something the group endorses or rejects.

In work groups, others' acceptance is often earned by trying hard and doing well. So, when the individual efforts and contributions of group members are identifiable, gains in motivation may occur because members are concerned with how others will evaluate them. It should be noted, however, that the desire to be evaluated positively does not invariably result in enhanced motivation. It will not enhance motivation when the group's norms discourage high levels of effort. Moreover, it is important to recognize that whether heightened motivation facilitates or hinders group performance depends on several aspects of the task, such as familiarity and difficulty.

### Conclusion

Research shows that working in a group can lead to increases or decreases in effort. Although people often conceptualize motivation gains and losses as distinct phenomena, some researchers argue that they share similar underlying causes. For instance, when people perceive their contribution toward the group's product to be unimportant for group success, they will reduce their effort. However, when they perceive their contribution to the group to be important for group success, they will increase their effort. Thus, it is important to understand the basic social psychological processes that underlie why people exert more or less effort in group settings. Such understanding should be very helpful for creating productive task groups.

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*See also* Free Riding; Group Performance; Köhler Effect; Ringelmann Effect; Social Compensation; Social Facilitation; Social Identity Theory; Social Loafing; Sucker Effect

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## GROUP PERFORMANCE

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*Group performance* is the process and outcome of members' joint efforts to achieve a collective goal. That goal could be nearly anything—to reach a decision, to solve a problem, to generate an idea, to negotiate a contract, to build a house. The scientific study of group performance has been central to several disciplines, particularly social psychology and industrial/organizational psychology (where it is more likely to be referred to as the study of *team effectiveness*). Thus, it is not surprising that a vast amount of research on group performance has been done—literally thousands of studies. There are many reasonable ways to describe and summarize this research literature. This entry considers three questions that have dominated and guided much of this research: (1) Are groups more productive than individuals? (2) What factors affect a group's performance? (3) Why don't groups perform as well as they can?

### Comparing Individual and Group Performance

There are some tasks that only groups can undertake (e.g., certain sports; certain tasks requiring more skills or inputs than any single individual could possess). Most tasks, however, can be performed either by individuals or by groups. Hence, an early and eminently practical question was, “Are groups more productive than individuals?”

Actually, the first topic receiving sustained research attention was a variant on this question, namely, “Are individuals more productive when others are present than when they are not?” Because a common feature of working in groups (although not a necessary one, particularly in this era of virtual work groups) is the presence of others, this is a rather fundamental question. And several aspects of the research on this topic are instructive for the broader study of group performance.

First, it soon became clear that there was no simple and general answer to the question—sometimes individuals performed better in the presence of others (*social facilitation*), and sometimes they performed worse (*social inhibition*). It is also rare for a simple or completely general answer to be found for nearly any question about group performance.



Second, it eventually became clear that the answer to the social facilitation question hinged largely on what the task was. For simple, well-learned tasks, the presence of others was facilitating, whereas for complex, poorly learned tasks, isolated individuals' performance tended to be superior. In much the same way, few if any generalizations about group performance can be made without careful consideration of just what task a group is undertaking. Third, progress in answering this question resulted less from the pattern emerging from a welter of studies than from a theoretical insight (in this case, by Robert Zajonc, who recognized that the presence of others was usually arousing and that such arousal tended to facilitate behaviors that were already likely to occur). Although interest in group performance has always had a very practical bent, Kurt Lewin's dictum that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" has repeatedly been confirmed in the study of group performance.

One of the first studies directly comparing individuals with cooperative groups was published in 1932 by Marjorie Shaw. She had students in a class try to solve word puzzles either as individuals or in four-person groups. Across three such problems, including one that no individual could solve alone, she found that groups were more likely to solve the problem than were individuals, a result that she attributed to group members catching and correcting one another's mistakes. This and other advantages of groups—members complementing one another's knowledge, pooling their efforts, strategically dividing labor, encouraging one another—might lead one to suspect that groups are generally better problem solvers and decision makers. But even a moment's consideration will suggest that there are many tasks for which a group's disadvantages probably outweigh its advantages. Consider the familiar task of driving a car. With a bit of training and practice, an individual can master the different subtasks involved—steering, braking, using the accelerator, and so on. However, it would be considerably more difficult for a group—one person steering, another braking, and so on—to perform the same task. Clearly, certain forms of coordinated behavior are more effectively accomplished by one person working alone than by several people working together.

Nonetheless, there might still be simple answers to more focused questions, such as, "Does group

performance exceed individual performance in general for certain kinds of tasks?" Reviews of the group performance literature have offered some useful answers to such questions, such as the following:

- Gayle Hill's thorough review in 1981 concluded that group performance is usually superior to individual performance on learning or concept-attainment tasks, vocabulary/word knowledge tasks, idea generation tasks (like brainstorming), and nearly all abstract problem-solving tasks. She attributed this superiority to group members' ability to correct each other's errors and to effectively pool their resources (e.g., knowledge, skills, problem-solving or learning strategies).

- Most studies examining the accuracy of judgments (e.g., judging weights or numerosity, geography judgments) have shown that the average judgment of a group of judges is usually superior to the average judgment of randomly selected individuals. Such research has led some to tout "the wisdom of crowds." However, once again, this conclusion has been shown to depend upon the nature of the judgment being made. Aggregating individual judgments does lead to more accurate judgments as long as individual judgment is unbiased (i.e., the errors of judgment are random). However, if individual judgments are systematically biased (e.g., individuals' weight judgments are mostly too high), then aggregating those judgments will not improve judgment accuracy, even though the variability in judgments will be reduced.

- Good performance on many tasks has several features. For example, a good reader should not only be able to read quickly but with high comprehension as well. So, whether groups do better than individuals may depend upon how we define good performance. One such criterion, on which groups often have been found to be inferior to individuals, is productivity per person. Even when the average group is more productive than the average individual (e.g., can solve a problem more quickly), individuals may still be more efficient than groups (e.g., it would cost more to pay a group to achieve any particular level of productivity than to pay the same number of individual workers). Other popular performance criteria include the quantity and quality of production, how satisfied the performers

and other stakeholders are with the group's work, and whether group members want to keep on working together.

It is only meaningful to compare individual and group performance when there is some agreed-upon standard for good performance (e.g., a correct solution for a math problem or maximum productivity on an assembly line). There are many tasks, however, where no such standard exists (e.g., in most criminal cases, we cannot tell whether the defendant is *really* guilty or not), or there is little agreement about such standards (e.g., which is the "best" brand of champagne). For such *judgmental tasks*, it may thus be difficult to characterize groups as more accurate or productive than individuals. Even with such tasks, though, one can meaningfully compare the relative susceptibility of groups versus individuals to certain biases of judgment. For example, we may not be able to tell whether juries reach the "right" verdicts more often than individual jurors, but we can still see whether juries or individual jurors are more biased by proscribed information (e.g., inadmissible evidence) when they reach their verdicts. Once again, the answer to such questions seems to depend a great deal on aspects of the group's task. If there is widespread acceptance of a bias among individuals, groups tend to accentuate that bias, but when group members can easily recognize a bias, the process of group interaction can correct or mitigate it.

### Factors Affecting Group Performance

Whether groups perform better or worse than individuals, an important question whenever a task must be performed by a group is, "What factors will affect the group's performance?" Of course, the broadest answer is, "Many factors will matter, but their effects will usually depend upon the group's task."

#### *Group Composition*

As every sports coach knows, an important aspect of group performance is how the group is composed. Olympic teams are not representative samples of their nation's populations. Rather, their members are very carefully selected. There is an old saying, "If you want to make chicken soup,

first you need a chicken." Likewise, if you want to have a productive group, first you need productive group members (people with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the task and the interpersonal skills required to work productively with one another).

An obvious and basic feature of group composition is the group's size. Clearly, some tasks have specific size requirements (e.g., you can only build a human pyramid with groups of size 3, 6, 10, etc.); for other tasks (e.g., producing a loud cheer at a sporting event), the bigger the group, the better. For most tasks, variations in group size can potentially enhance or undercut group performance. Larger groups have performance advantages in that they tend to have a bigger and more diverse pool of resources (e.g., member abilities, connections with outsiders) and to be viewed (both inside and outside the group) as more legitimate and effective. However, larger groups also can have bigger problems with coordinating and motivating their members, monitoring and sanctioning unproductive behaviors, and meeting the idiosyncratic needs of particular members. And the impact of such size-related effects can be aggravated or mitigated by other actions the group might take (e.g., labeling member contributions might mitigate the adverse effects of member anonymity in large groups). A group's optimal size, then, is that size where such advantages are maximal and such disadvantages are minimal. Given the many factors that influence group performance, it is hard to specify that size a priori. Many particular groups working at particular tasks may only come to identify their optimal size through trial and error.

One aspect of this question is whether more productive groups generally include certain types of people—people in certain demographic, personality, or attitudinal categories. Research on group sex composition is instructive in this regard. In 1985, Wendy Wood reviewed studies comparing all-male and all-female work groups and found that, overall, groups of men outperformed groups of women. However, this conclusion was based on averaging results across all tasks. Many of these tasks required task abilities that favored males (e.g., physical strength). But if one focused on tasks that favored females (e.g., verbal tasks), then the opposite conclusion held—groups of women were more productive than groups of men. Likewise,

groups of men tended to do better at tasks that required their more task-oriented interaction style, whereas groups of women tended to do better at tasks that required their more interpersonally oriented interaction style. The same basic moral emerges from the study of other individual differences: There are few if any individual differences in group member demographics or personality that are consistently related to better group performance. One must carefully consider just what the task requires of the group to begin to identify what a good group member would look like.

Maybe the secret of good group performance lies not in particular individual traits or abilities, but rather in having just the right combination of member characteristics. To take a trivial example, effective American football teams require both burly linemen and smaller, faster backs. Much of the research on this question has focused on the effects of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of group membership and group performance. For example, Patrick Laughlin and his colleagues asked whether a group with homogeneous levels of ability (e.g., three medium-ability members, MMM) would perform a vocabulary task any better than a more heterogeneous group with the same average member ability (HML). For this task, it turned out that the heterogeneous group performed better. In much the same way, other research has asked whether heterogeneity with respect to other characteristics of group members (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, personality) helps or harms group performance. Some of the interest in this topic stems from widespread interest in the effects of diversity in the workplace, that is, whether diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, and so on improves or impairs work group performance. It appears that certain kinds of diversity (e.g., in task relevant knowledge and skills) can indeed be helpful to groups if they provide a larger pool of resources or help groups to examine issues more critically. When diversity leads to subgroup formation and conflict, however, it can undermine group productivity.

### *Group Structure*

In addition to a group's composition, its structure is also an important factor in how well it performs. A group's structure is the pattern of

links or relationships among group members. These links can refer to a variety of things, including who can communicate with whom, who has authority over whom, and who likes whom.

### **Communication Networks**

Sometimes the nature of the group or its task dictates who can communicate with whom. Sometimes group leaders or managers have the discretion to design their groups' communication networks. Sometimes channels of communication evolve informally in groups. Regardless of their origins, communication structures can have a strong effect on how effectively groups perform. One widely studied aspect of communication networks is their degree of centralization. Centralized networks tend to have a few "central" members who receive information from the rest of the group, process it, and then communicate back to the rest of the group. For example, the highly centralized "wheel" network has everyone in the group able to communicate with a single member at the group's "hub," but with no other members. The highly decentralized "comcon" network permits any group member to communicate with any other group member. Research on communication network centralization has shown, unsurprisingly, that different networks work best with different tasks—with fairly simple tasks, centralized networks tend to be more productive, but with more complex tasks, decentralized networks tend to be superior (in part because they avoid the problem of overloading central group members with more information than they can handle).

### **Authority Structures**

Groups can also differ in their authority structures—who has power over whom. A simple and obvious example is the distinction between hierarchical groups, where power flows from top to bottom, and egalitarian groups, where all members have similar levels of power. Clearly, the optimal authority structure depends on the group's task and even on the members' personalities. For example, John Wilson, Joel Aronoff, and Lawrence Messé showed that a hierarchical structure led to better performance at a model-building task than an egalitarian structure for groups composed of members with high safety needs (who are more

concerned with being in safe and predictable environments). They suggested that this structure provided more structure to members' work, minimized role uncertainty, and reduced the need to take initiative or risks when working on the task, all of which are important to safety-oriented people. However, the reverse was true for groups composed of members with high esteem needs (who are relatively more concerned with demonstrating their competence to others); with this task, the egalitarian structure gave members more of a chance to display their unique individual competencies.

The most interesting aspect of a group's authority structure is leadership. Given that some members have authority over the others, how should that authority be used to maximize the group's performance? Early research on leadership tended to focus on the question of what kind of person is likely to assume or be granted leadership in groups. Such work has shown that members who have status-endowing attributes (e.g., people who are taller, male, belong to higher status social categories), have resources that are useful for task performance (e.g., task ability, intelligence), show strong commitment to the group (e.g., never miss a meeting, talk a lot during group discussion), possess useful social traits (e.g., extraversion), and fit the group's prototypes of a good member (e.g., conform to group norms) or a good leader (e.g., self-confident, decisive) are more likely to emerge as group leaders.

Much subsequent work has focused on the question of what makes one leader more effective than another. An important line of research by Tom Tyler and his colleagues has shown that the procedures a leader follows when making decisions or resolving conflicts in a group are at least as important for evoking support from other members as the decisions the leader ultimately reaches. Most theories of leader effectiveness also have recognized that the nature of the group's task, membership, and norms have as much to do with a leader's effectiveness as does the behavior of the leader. For example, Fred Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership argues that a tough, task-oriented leader is most effective when facing either a very favorable group task situation (e.g., there is little conflict in the group, the task is well defined, the leader has lots of power) or, ironically, a very unfavorable situation. A leader who is less task

focused and more interpersonally focused, someone who works hard to gain acceptance by the group, is more effective when the favorability of a situation is neither good nor bad.

Other research on this topic, initiated by James Meindl, has suggested that leaders actually have less impact on group performance than their followers believe they have. This judgmental bias, called the "romance of leadership," may help satisfy our desire to believe that how well our group or organization performs is really under someone's direct control. In this view, leaders play a rather symbolic role in groups, one that convinces followers that success is possible and meaningful.

#### Evaluative Structures

Another important factor in task groups is how group members evaluate one another and the group as a whole. Methods of sociometric choice (e.g., each group member is asked how much he or she likes or respects each of the other group members) have often been used to summarize and analyze such evaluations. For most tasks, the existence of mutually antagonistic subgroups or cliques will interfere with effective group performance.

One widely studied consequence of mutual positive evaluations is enhanced group cohesiveness. Actually, scholars disagree about what it means to say that a group is cohesive. A common view is that a cohesive group is one whose members like each other and the group as a whole. Another view is that a cohesive group is one with which the members identify strongly. Yet another view is that a cohesive group is one whose members respect one another's task abilities, are highly committed to the group's goals, and are willing to work together (regardless of how much they like each other). These alternative aspects of group cohesion tend to co-occur. More importantly, cohesive groups are generally more productive. A notable exception to this rule is when the norms of a group discourage member effort, as in some industrial settings where there are sanctions for workers who work too hard (i.e., "rate busters").

#### Group Work Environment

There has also been considerable attention given to the effects of a group's work environment on its productivity. Every environment has certain physical

features, for example, that might influence a group's performance. Such features include levels of lighting, noise, and crowding in the environment. It has been shown that the absolute level of an environmental stressor is often less important for group performance than whether workers have some sense of control over that stressor. Of course, a group's social environment (e.g., relationships with other work groups in the organization, group, or organizational culture) and temporal environment (e.g., time pressures) can also affect its performance.

How group members interact with their tools and with one another can also be an important factor. The possibilities for improvement (and deterioration) of work environments have been broadened in the last few decades by striking advances in technology. These include new communication technologies (e.g., e-mail, meeting software) that enable asynchronous and distributed group work, new information technologies (e.g., large databases, the Internet) that expand the pool of readily available sources of information, and so-called group support systems. The latter permit groups to access and share information and to organize their interactions in novel ways. A good illustration is the use of computerized brainstorming, where members of idea-generating groups work at separate but interconnected computer stations rather than talking face-to-face. This avoids some of the inefficiencies of face-to-face interaction (e.g., being unable to contribute an idea while someone else is talking), but still preserves some of the distinctive advantages of group brainstorming (e.g., having access to others' ideas, which spur one's own thoughts).

### *Beyond Group Composition, Structure, and Environment*

The preceding description highlights a few of the more important performance-relevant factors that have been studied and a few illustrative findings, but this only scratches the surface of the group performance literature. This entry could just as easily have focused on other topics, such as, (a) the effects of groups engaging in some planning (it is generally helpful for performance), (b) the effects of groups reflecting on what they do (it appears not to be particularly helpful), (c) the effects of groups setting performance goals (it is generally

helpful, as long as the goals are specific and challenging), or (d) the (generally positive) effects of a collective sense of efficacy. (These topics are explored in the readings listed at the end of the entry.)

Although the focus here is on what affects group performance, keep in mind that sometimes it is at least as interesting to know what group performance affects—what are the consequences (e.g., for member commitment, for the group's future) of particular members or the group as a whole performing well or poorly. Many of the relationships discussed earlier are clearly reciprocal; for example, high group cohesiveness usually enhances group productivity, *and* high group productivity usually enhances group cohesiveness.

### **Actual Versus Potential Group Productivity**

As noted earlier, one informative baseline against which to contrast group performance is individual performance. Other baselines include those defined by some rule or function that predicts how group members combine their contributions. For example, at a task like a group tug-of-war, it might be predicted that group performance will simply equal the sum of the performances by individual members. Other popular combination rules include the average of members' performances, the best member's performance, or the worst member's performance. Such combination rules always make assumptions, if only implicitly, about the process whereby group members work together on their task. So, for example, the simple summative combination rule for a tug-of-war assumes that group members will repeat in the group what they do as individuals, and that they can combine their individual pulls efficiently (e.g., they will all pull together). By comparing actual group performance with the performance predicted by one or more combination rules, researchers can empirically test those process assumptions and thereby learn not only how well groups can perform some task, but also something about the social processes that produced that performance.

In a very influential book published in 1972, Ivan Steiner suggested that for any well-defined task, there was an optimal combination rule. That is, he suggested that given the resources individual members bring to the group (e.g., each member's task-relevant knowledge and ability) and the

demands of the task itself, there is some unique way of combining those resources that will maximize the group's productivity. He referred to that optimal level of productivity as the group's "potential productivity" and argued that this was a particularly interesting baseline against which to compare actual group performance. If the way that group members work together is less than optimal, then actual group productivity will be lower than potential group productivity. Steiner thought this was usually the case, and he called the shortfall "process loss." He suggested that process loss could stem from two things—coordination losses (when the group failed to combine or coordinate its resources in the optimal way) or motivation losses (when group members worked less hard when in the group than when working individually). By identifying and analyzing such motivation losses, one could improve group performance.

This approach is nicely illustrated by research on the Ringelmann effect. In what was history's first social psychological experiment, Max Ringelmann found that as groups pulling on a rope got larger, so did their process loss (i.e., the difference between actual productivity and potential productivity, defined as the sum of the individual members' abilities). Later research showed that this process loss was partly due to coordination losses (i.e., the more people pulling on the rope, the harder it is for them to pull at the same time and in the same direction) and partly due to motivation losses (the bigger the group, the less the average member pulls). The latter finding has led to considerable work on social loafing, revealing a number of aspects of groups that can undercut member motivation (e.g., the difficulty of identifying member contributions for many group tasks). More recently, it has been shown that the opposite can occur under some conditions—people can be more motivated when working in groups than when working alone. For example, research on the Köhler effect has shown that when people learn that other group members are less capable than themselves, or that the group may fail unless everyone does their best, motivation gains will occur.

### Conclusion

Many of our goals are pursued collectively, in groups, organizations, and nations. Given this

dependence on groups to attain so many goals, the study of group performance will continue to be a vitally important area of behavioral science. Although the general topic is extremely complex and there is still more to be learned, a great deal has already been learned in the approximately 120 years since Max Ringelmann first asked groups to grab a rope and pull as hard as they could.

Norbert L. Kerr

Adapted from David G. Myers, *Social Psychology, 9th edition*, with the permission of McGraw-Hill.

*See also* Brainstorming; Communication Networks; Group Cohesiveness; Group Motivation; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Group Structure; Group Task; Leadership; Process Gain and Loss; Ringelmann Effect; Social Facilitation; Social Loafing; Sociometric Choice; Teams; Virtual/Internet Groups

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## GROUP POLARIZATION

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*Group polarization* is the tendency for group interaction to enhance group members' initial inclinations. This group polarization phenomenon, which occurs both in experimental settings and in everyday situations, provides a window through which researchers can observe group influence. Experiments have confirmed two group influences: informational and normative. The information gleaned from a discussion mostly favors the initially preferred alternative, thus reinforcing support for it. This entry begins with a look at how this line of research evolved, describes a variety of examples of group polarization, and discusses two possible explanations.

### The Case of the “Risky Shift”

The discovery of the *risky shift* phenomenon illustrates how an interesting discovery often leads researchers to hasty and erroneous conclusions, which ultimately get replaced with more accurate conclusions. While trying to understand the curious finding that group discussion enhanced risk taking, investigators discovered that discussion actually tends to strengthen whatever is the initially dominant point of view, whether risky or cautious.

A research literature of more than 300 studies comparing individual and group decision making began in 1961 with a surprising finding by James Stoner, then an MIT graduate student. For his master's thesis in industrial management, Stoner tested the commonly held belief that groups make more cautious decisions than do individuals. He invited people individually, and then in groups, to advise imagined characters how much risk to take. Here is an example of the kind of hypothetical scenario Stoner used, created for my own research:

Helen is a writer who is said to have considerable creative talent but who so far has been earning a comfortable living by writing cheap Westerns. Recently, she has come up with an idea for a potentially significant novel. If it could be written and accepted, it might have considerable literary impact and be a big boost to her career. On the other hand, if she cannot work out her idea or if

the novel is a flop, she will have expended considerable time and energy without remuneration.

Imagine that you are advising Helen. Please check the *lowest* probability that you would consider acceptable for Helen to attempt to write the novel. Helen should attempt to write the novel if the chances that the novel will be a success are at least [intervals range from 1 in 10 to 10 in 10].

After making your decision, guess what the average person would advise.

Having marked their advice on a dozen such items, five or so individuals in Stoner's study would then discuss and reach agreement on each item. To everyone's amazement, given popular commentary about the conservatism of groups, the group decisions were usually riskier. During discussion, group members' opinions converged. Curiously, however, the point toward which they converged was usually a lower (riskier) number than their initial average.

Here was an interesting puzzle. The small risky shift effect was reliable, unexpected, and without any immediately obvious explanation. Dubbed the *risky shift phenomenon*, this finding inspired studies of risk taking by individuals and groups. These revealed that the risky shift occurs not only when a group decides by consensus—after a brief discussion, individuals, too, will alter their decisions. What is more, researchers successfully repeated Stoner's finding with people of varying ages and occupations in a dozen nations.

What group influences produce such an effect? And how widespread is it? Do discussions in juries, business committees, and military organizations also promote risk taking? Does this explain why teenage reckless driving, as measured by death rates, nearly doubles when a 16- or 17-year-old driver has two teenage passengers rather than none?

After several years of study, researchers discovered that the risky shift was not universal. They could write decision dilemmas on which people became more cautious after discussion. One of these featured “Roger,” a young married man with two school-age children and a secure but low-paying job. Roger can afford life's necessities but few of its luxuries. He hears that the stock of a relatively unknown company may soon triple in value if its new product is favorably received—or

decline considerably if it does not sell. Roger has no savings. To invest in the company, he is considering selling his life insurance policy.

Is there a general principle that predicts both the tendency to give riskier advice after discussing Helen's situation and more cautious advice after discussing Roger's? Most people advise Helen to take a greater risk than Roger, even before talking with others. Group discussion then accentuates these initial leanings. Thus, group members discussing Roger's dilemma become, on average, more risk averse than they were before discussion.

### Do Groups Intensify Opinions?

Realizing that this group phenomenon was not a consistent shift toward increased risk, researchers reconceived it as a phenomenon in which discussion typically strengthens the average inclination of group members. This idea led investigators to propose what French researchers Serge Moscovici and Marisa Zavalloni in 1969 called *group polarization*, the tendency for group discussion to enhance group members' initial leanings.

#### *Group Polarization Experiments*

This new view of the changes induced by group discussion prompted experimenters to have people discuss attitude statements that most of them favored or most of them opposed. Will group interaction not only lead risk takers to become riskier, but bigots to become despisers, and givers to become more philanthropic? The following are examples chosen from dozens of studies that confirm such group polarization:

- Moscovici and Zavalloni observed that discussion enhanced French students' initially positive attitude toward their president and negative attitude toward Americans.
- Mititoshi Iozaki found that Japanese university students gave more pronounced judgments of "guilty" after discussing a traffic case.
- Markus Brauer and his coworkers found that French students' dislike for certain other people was exacerbated after discussing their shared negative impressions.

- Glen Whyte reported that groups accentuate the "too much invested to quit" phenomenon that has cost many businesses huge sums of money. Canadian business students imagined themselves having to decide whether to invest more money in the hope of preventing losses in various failing projects (for example, whether to make a high-risk loan to protect an earlier investment). They exhibited the typical effect: 72% reinvested money they would probably not have invested if they were considering it as a new investment on its own merits. When making the same decision in groups, 94% opted for reinvestment.

Another research strategy has been to pick issues on which opinions are divided and then isolate people who hold the same view. Does discussion with like-minded people strengthen shared views, and does it magnify the attitude gap that separates the two sides? George Bishop and David Myers investigated this question by setting up groups of relatively prejudiced and unprejudiced high school students and asking them to respond—before and after discussion—to issues involving racial attitudes, such as property rights versus open housing. They found that the discussions among like-minded students did indeed increase the initial gap between the two groups.

#### *Group Polarization in Everyday Life*

In everyday life, people associate mostly with others whose attitudes are similar to their own. Does everyday group interaction with like-minded friends intensify shared attitudes? Do nerds become nerdier and jocks jockier?

It happens. The self-segregation of boys into all-male groups and of girls into all-female groups accentuates over time their initially modest gender differences, notes Eleanor Maccoby. Boys with boys become gradually more competitive and action oriented in their play, while girls with girls become more relationally oriented.

On U.S. federal appellate court cases, "Republican-appointed judges tend to vote like Republicans and Democratic-appointed judges tend to vote like Democrats," David Schkade and Cass Sunstein observed in 2003. That's understandable. But, as these researchers noted, such tendencies are accentuated when judges are among



other like-minded judges: “A Republican appointee sitting with two other Republicans votes far more conservatively than when the same judge sits with at least one Democratic appointee. A Democratic appointee, meanwhile, shows the same tendency in the opposite ideological direction.”

### *Group Polarization in Schools*

Another real-life parallel to the laboratory phenomenon is what education researchers have called the *accentuation phenomenon*: Over time, initial differences among groups of college students become accentuated. If the first-year students at College X are initially more intellectual than the first-year students at College Y, that gap is likely to increase by the time they graduate. Likewise, compared with fraternity and sorority members, independents tend to have more liberal political attitudes, a difference that grows with time in college. Researchers believe this results partly from group members reinforcing shared inclinations.

### *Group Polarization in Communities*

Polarization also occurs in communities, as people self-segregate. Liberal communities attract liberals and become more liberal, while conservative places attract conservatives and become more conservative. Neighborhoods become echo chambers, with opinions ricocheting off kindred-spirited friends. In the United States, the end result has become a more divided country. The percentage of landslide counties—those voting 60% or more for one presidential candidate—nearly doubled between 1976 and 2000. The percentage of entering collegians (in UCLA’s annual survey) declaring themselves politically “middle of the road” dropped from 60% in 1983 to 43% in 2008, with corresponding increases in those declaring themselves on the right or the left.

On college campuses, the clustering of students into mostly White sororities and fraternities and into ethnic minority student organizations tends to strengthen social identities and to increase antagonisms among the social groups.

In laboratory studies, the competitive relationships and mistrust that individuals often display when playing games with one another often

worsen when the players are in groups. During actual community conflicts, like-minded people associate increasingly with one another, amplifying their shared beliefs. Gang delinquency emerges from a process of mutual reinforcement within neighborhood gangs, whose members share attributes and hostilities. If “a second out-of-control 15-year-old moves in [on your block],” surmised David Lykken in 1997, “the mischief they get into as a team is likely to be more than merely double what the first would do on his own. . . . A gang is more dangerous than the sum of its individual parts.” Indeed, “unsupervised peer groups” are the strongest predictor of a neighborhood’s crime victimization rate, reported Bonita Veysey and Steven Messner. Moreover, experimental interventions that take delinquent adolescents and group them with other delinquents actually—no surprise to any group polarization researcher—increase the rate of problem behavior.

### *Group Polarization on the Internet*

E-mail and electronic chat rooms offer a potential new medium for group interaction. By the beginning of the new century, 85% of Canadian teens were using the Internet for an average of 9.3 hours weekly. Its countless virtual groups enable peacemakers and neo-Nazis, geeks and Goths, conspiracy theorists and cancer survivors to isolate themselves with like-minded others and find support for their shared concerns, interests, and suspicions. Without the nonverbal nuances of face-to-face contact, will such discussions produce group polarization? Will peacemakers become more pacifistic and militia members more terror prone? E-mail, Google, and chat rooms “make it much easier for small groups to rally like-minded people, crystallize diffuse hatreds and mobilize lethal force,” observed Robert Wright in 2003. As broadband spreads, Internet-spawned polarization will increase, he speculated.

### *Group Polarization in Terrorist Organizations*

From their analysis of terrorist organizations around the world, Clark McCauley and Mary Segal surmised that terrorism does not erupt suddenly. Rather, it arises among people whose shared grievances bring them together. As they interact in isolation from moderating influences, they become

progressively more extreme. The social amplifier brings the signal in more strongly. The result is violent acts that the individuals, apart from the group, would never have committed.

For example, the September 11, 2001, terrorists were bred by a long process that engaged the polarizing effect of interaction among the like-minded. The process of becoming a terrorist, noted a National Research Council panel, isolates individuals from other belief systems, dehumanizes potential targets, and tolerates no dissent. Over time, group members come to categorize the world as “us” and “them.” Ariel Merari, an investigator of Middle Eastern and Sri Lankan suicide terrorism, believes the key to creating a terrorist suicide is the group process. In 2002, he wrote: “To the best of my knowledge, there has not been a single case of suicide terrorism which was done on a personal whim.” According to one analysis of terrorists who were members of the Salafi Jihad—an Islamic fundamentalist movement, of which al Qaeda is a part—70% joined while living as expatriates. After moving to foreign places in search of jobs or education, they became mindful of their Muslim identity and often gravitated to mosques and moved in with other expatriate Muslims, who sometimes recruited them into cell groups that provided “mutual emotional and social support” and “development of a common identity.” Massacres, similarly, have been found to be group phenomena. The violence is enabled and escalated by the killers egging each other on.

### Explaining Polarization

Why do groups adopt stances that are more exaggerated than that of their average individual member? Researchers hoped that solving the mystery of group polarization might provide some insights into group influence. Solving small puzzles sometimes provides clues for solving larger ones.

Among several proposed theories of group polarization, two have survived scientific scrutiny. One deals with the arguments presented during a discussion, the other with how members of a group view themselves vis-à-vis the other members. The first idea is an example of *informational influence* (influence that results from accepting evidence about reality). The second is an example of *normative influence* (influence based on a person’s desire to be accepted or admired by others).

### *Informational Influence*

According to the best-supported explanation, group discussion elicits a pooling of ideas, most of which favor the dominant viewpoint. Ideas that are common knowledge to group members will often be brought up in discussion or, even if unmentioned, will influence their discussion. Other ideas may include persuasive arguments that some group members had not previously considered. When discussing Helen the writer, someone may say, “Helen should go for it, because she has little to lose. If her novel flops, she can always go back to writing cheap Westerns.” Such statements often entangle information about the person’s *arguments* with cues concerning the person’s *position* on the issue. But when people hear relevant arguments without learning the specific stands other people assume, they still shift their positions. Arguments, in and of themselves, matter.

But there is more to attitude change than merely hearing someone else’s arguments. Active participation in discussion produces more attitude change than does passive listening. Participants and observers hear the same ideas, but when participants express them in their own words, the verbal commitment magnifies the impact. The more group members repeat one another’s ideas, the more they rehearse and validate them. Just privately writing out one’s ideas in preparation for an electronic discussion tends to polarize attitudes somewhat.

### *Normative Influence*

A second explanation of polarization involves comparison with others. As Leon Festinger argued in his influential theory of social comparison, we humans want to evaluate our opinions and abilities, something we can do by comparing our views with those of others. We are most persuaded by people in our reference groups—groups with which we identify. Moreover, wanting people to like us, we may express stronger opinions after discovering that others share our views.

When we ask people to predict how others would respond to items such as Helen’s dilemma, they typically exhibit pluralistic ignorance: They don’t realize how strongly others support the socially preferred tendency (in this case, writing

the novel). A typical person will advise writing the novel even if its chance of success is only 4 in 10 but will estimate that most other people would require 5 or 6 in 10. (This finding is reminiscent of the self-serving bias: People tend to view themselves as better-than-average embodiments of socially desirable traits and attitudes.) When the discussion begins, most people discover they are not outshining the others as they had supposed. In fact, some others are ahead of them, having taken an even stronger position in favor of writing the novel. No longer restrained by a misperceived group norm, they are liberated to voice their preferences more strongly.

This social comparison theory prompted experiments that exposed people to others' positions but not to their arguments. This is roughly the experience we have when reading the results of an opinion poll or of exit polling on election day. When people learn others' positions—without prior commitment and without discussion or sharing of arguments—will they adjust their responses to maintain a socially favorable position? Indeed, they will. This comparison-based polarization is usually less than that produced by a lively discussion. Still, it is surprising that, instead of simply conforming to the group average, people often go it one better.

Group polarization research illustrates the complexity of social psychological inquiry. As much as we like our explanations of a phenomenon to be simple, one explanation seldom accounts for all the data. Because people are complex, more than one factor frequently influences an outcome. In group discussions, persuasive arguments predominate on issues that have a factual element (“Is he guilty of the crime?”). Social comparison sways responses on value-laden judgments (“How long a sentence should he serve?”). On the many issues that have both factual and value-laden aspects, the two factors work together. Discovering that others share one's feelings (social comparison) unleashes arguments (informational influence) supporting what everyone secretly favors.

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*See also* Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Groupthink; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Social Comparison Theory

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## GROUP POSITION THEORY

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The study of prejudice is a cornerstone of social psychological and sociological research. Traditionally, *prejudice* has been defined as negative attitudes toward a person due to his or her membership in a social group. *Race prejudice*, then, is a form of prejudice directed toward people on the basis of their perceived racial group. *Group position theory* is a sociological analysis of race prejudice which posits that its source lies in the structural relationship of racial groups in a given society. Fundamentally, it suggests that the features that make up prejudice are derived from the relationships between racial groups and a group's preferred position in a racialized social order, rather than in the individual feelings and experiences of group members. This entry discusses the historical foundations of group position theory, outlines its core tenets, and highlights empirical research that has investigated the theory. It closes by drawing connections between group position theory and existing lines of research, as well as offering suggestions and implications for future

research. In doing so, the entry integrates and elaborates on the basic premises of the group position theory of prejudice.

### The Theory

In 1958, the sociologist Herbert Blumer published a short essay urging researchers to move beyond a focus on individual feelings, such as antipathy and hatred, as an explanation for racial prejudice. At the time of its publication, the literature emphasized that these individual feelings derived from innate dispositions, such as having an authoritarian personality, and direct social experience. Blumer proposed that scholars should instead examine the positioning of racial groups in a given society and how dominant racial groups come to define and redefine subordinate racial groups.

Race prejudice begins with racial identification: People identify themselves and others as belonging to distinct racial groups. Beyond mere identification, groups form images of themselves and other groups. In a racialized social order, characterizing one's own racial group defines the characteristics of the other group. This ongoing process of definition and redefinition places the racial group in position vis-à-vis the other. For example, in the United States one cannot characterize Blacks without evoking, at least implicitly, a comparison with Whites.

A sense of group position is first set by the initial contact between the groups and later molded by ongoing relations. Factors such as power, skill sets, and opportunity play a role in this process. This arrangement reflects more than a vertical arrangement of groups based on social status—it reflects at least two distinct axes, one marked by domination and the other marked by exclusion. The structural relations of the groups need not reflect objective reality, but instead a subjective sense of where racial groups belong. The sense of group position is common to all who identify with the ingroup and provides a framework for members, acting as a powerful norm that guides its members and provides an orientation of what ought to be. Group position theory argues that it is when this orientation (i.e., the perception of where one's group stands in the social order) is threatened that race prejudice is manifested.

### Core Features

As the definition process suggests, initial conceptualizations of group position theory examined race prejudice toward the subordinate racial group(s) from the perspective of the dominant racial group. For dominant group members, racial prejudice comprises four features. First, the dominant racial group feels a sense of superiority to other racial groups. Second, inferior racial groups are viewed as qualitatively different from the dominant group. Third, members of the dominant racial group feel that they are entitled to certain privileges and advantages. Fourth, dominant group members also possess a basic fear of members of subordinate racial groups—they feel that the subordinate group threatens their dominant position.

Feelings of superiority place the subordinate group below the dominant group and may or may not be manifested in denigration of the qualities of the subordinate racial group(s), for example in the form of negative stereotypes. Categorizing the subordinate group as “alien” allows the dominant group to place it beyond the dominant group. Together, these feelings act to reflect, justify, and promote social exclusion. While superiority and distinctiveness may give rise to feelings of antipathy and aversion, this conceptualization reflects only a limited understanding of race prejudice. Additionally, while dominant groups' sense of proprietary claim and entitlement to important areas of life (exclusive membership in given institutions, claims to positions of prestige and power) excludes the subordinate group, according to group position theory, it does not fully explain racism. For example, within a caste system a sense of superiority, qualitative distinctiveness, and entitlement may be solidified into a structure that is accepted, or at least respected, by all of its members, regardless of their position.

These features point to a positional arrangement of the dominant racial group in relation to the subordinate racial group. With these features in place, race prejudice arises from a fear or suspicion that the subordinate racial group threatens the position of the dominant group. Perceived challenges may arise from a number of different sources—real or imagined attacks on the natural superiority of the dominant group, an intrusion into the sphere of group exclusiveness, or an

encroachment on areas of proprietary claim. Group position theory thus proposes that race prejudice is a defensive reaction to preserve the position of the dominant group.

### Research Examining Group Position Theory

Blumer placed perceptions of group position and the role of competition and threat at the core of racial prejudice. This was a distinct movement away from the literature of the time, which focused on individual processes. Blumer did not, however, conduct an empirical investigation of the premises of the group position theory. The majority of subsequent inquiries into the theory have been restricted to indirect tests of its core mechanisms. Studies that have not employed indirect tests of the model have relied on secondary data analyses with less than ideal measures of core constructs. A number of these empirical investigations reduce the theory to a structural-level claim of objective threat. These lines of research, however, are worthy of note because of their efforts to examine claims embedded in the approach, as well as their efforts to expand the group position theory to consider dominant and subordinate groups.

Lawrence Bobo has examined a number of social situations where dominant group members perceive that they are losing social standing to members of a racial minority group. For example, a heated dispute over the fishing, hunting, and gathering rights of the Chippewa Indians in the state of Wisconsin led to many Whites feeling deprived in relation to the Chippewa with respect to their perceived gains in resources. In this situation, it was not that the dominant racial group perceived the subordinate racial group as inferior or used negative stereotypes to characterize the group but, as Bobo's research suggested, that Wisconsin residents perceived the Chippewa Indians to be gaining resources at their expense.

In an intriguing line of research, group position theory has been expanded to examine race prejudice held by minority groups by looking at feelings of racial alienation. Racial alienation manifests in a profound sense of group deprivation and a weak, or nonexistent, sense of group entitlement. The more group members feel alienated, the more likely they are to regard other racial groups as competitive threats to their social position.

Assuming that members of dominant groups will rarely feel alienated due to their substantial institutionalized privileges, this extension of the group position model implies that alienated minority groups may hold the strongest feelings of racial prejudice.

### Limitations of Group Position Theory

While research highlights many of the components of the group position model, a fully elaborated empirical model of the elements of perceived group position has yet to be provided. Additionally, the process of identifying with one's ingroup and the formation of a group identity are missing from the literature. A number of researchers have argued that the use of statistical analyses of survey data can distort many of group position theory's primary claims, suggesting that quantitative methodologies reduce processes such as race prejudice to basic survey questions that fail to capture the complexities of the original concept. They further argue that race relations are in constant process of formation and variable analysis is too crude an instrument to capture this fluidity.

### Related Theories

Group position theory shares commonalities with other approaches, in particular Muzafer Sherif's realistic group conflict theory and James Sidanius and Felicia Pratto's social dominance theory, but there are clear distinctions. A sense of group position involves elements of realistic group conflict theory. Both theories examine groups that occupy unequal positions within a social order and the interests that attach to those positions. The two theories highlight the role of perceived threats to groups' interests and struggles over access to both real and symbolic resources. Group position theory, however, adds a normative and affective aspect that is not derived from purely material conflicts. Further, while realistic conflict theory stresses the importance of objective competition, group position theory stresses the subjective sense of group position. Both group position theory and social dominance theory share an emphasis on feelings of entitlement, but within social dominance theory perceptions of competition and threat are not clearly articulated.

### Conclusion

In examining the relationship between groups as a source of racial prejudice, group position theory draws attention to the collective process by which one group comes to define, and redefine, another group, as well as the manner in which individuals' sense of their group's position in a social order guides their behavior toward other racial groups. The theory incorporates concepts from both psychological and sociological literature on prejudice, such as attitudes, affect, stereotypes, group identity, and patterns of intergroup contact. By drawing on these sources, group position theory posits that prejudice is not a unidimensional construct. Prejudice involves more than negative beliefs and feelings, and to fully understand this multifaceted force, scholars must recognize that it concerns powerful commitment to a preferred group position.

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*See also* Prejudice; Racism; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## GROUP POTENCY

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*Group potency* is the collective belief within a group that it can be effective. There are two important

aspects of group potency: (1) it is a belief of mutual confidence that is shared by the members of the group and (2) it is a general belief that the group is effective across a variety of tasks or situations, rather than only in a specific context. Group potency is an important concept in fields such as group dynamics, management, and industrial/organizational psychology, because a large volume of research suggests that group potency and performance are positively and reciprocally related. However, when groups are overconfident, or possess too much group potency, their performance can suffer. This entry begins with a brief history of such research, then looks at factors affecting group potency, related characteristics, and applications of the research.

### Background

The notion of group potency stems from the seminal work of industrial psychologist Leonard R. Sayles, who studied work groups in manufacturing plants in the 1950s. Sayles found that “strategic” work groups—those with high levels of collective beliefs about their effectiveness—were successful in their work, and that “apathetic” work groups—those that lacked such beliefs—were unsuccessful. Sayles also noted that in strategic work groups, success breeds success in the sense that prior good performance can build collective beliefs of efficacy that then can lead to subsequent levels of high performance. Similar observations were made in studies conducted in the 1990s by team researchers such as Richard Hackman.

These findings parallel ideas developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, whose social cognitive theory identified self-efficacy and collective efficacy as powerful motivational forces for individuals and groups, respectively. Bandura described self-efficacy as an individual's belief that he or she could successfully complete a specific task, in contrast with collective efficacy, an individual's personal belief that his or her group can be successful in performing a specific task. While self-efficacy is an individual-level phenomenon targeting an individual's ability to meet a specific goal, collective efficacy involves the group's perceived ability to be successful. In each of these cases, in addition to ability, it is the individual's thoughts about himself or herself or the group that can make a critical

difference between being a low performer or a high performer on an individual or collective task.

Building upon this research, Richard Guzzo and Gregory Shea developed the notion of group potency (which involves group members' shared views) in the early 1990s through a series of experiments and field studies. These researchers developed a conceptual framework and a widely used measure of group potency. In addition, Guzzo and Shea demonstrated the distinctiveness of group potency from collective efficacy and other motivational concepts.

### Factors Affecting Group Potency

Group potency stems from factors internal and external to the group. Regarding factors external to the group, research shows that a supportive organizational context goes a long way in building group potency. Organizations that provide rewards, education, information, resources, and goals help to support potent groups. Adequate communication and cooperation among groups within an organization helps group members share information and resources so that they can feel more confident about their group's ability to perform. In line with Bandura's social learning theory, organizational leaders who model supportive behavior for team members encourage them to persist through difficult times, challenge them to rethink their ways of doing things, and coach and mentor them to build group potency.

These leadership behaviors are associated with transformational leadership, which research has linked to the development of group potency in both face-to-face and computer-mediated work groups. Transformational leaders enhance group potency by stressing the importance of group members working together and highlighting the link between group synergy and successful group outcomes. This form of leadership influence can become an internal force that builds group norms and shapes group processes. For example, the repeated emphasis on group members' interdependence and the cooperation–outcome link focuses members' attention on their collective abilities, thereby increasing the value and appreciation of their talents and skills. Such an appreciation builds collective confidence because a group's belief about its ability to be effective is influenced, in

part, by that ability. One study of officer cadets working in groups indicated that group potency was an important factor in predicting performance on a problem-solving task, regardless of the group's actual ability.

In addition to leadership, other factors internal to the group can shape members' potency beliefs. Groups that set clear goals early in the group's life are more likely to feel confident. Groups whose members are aware of and value each others' knowledge, skills, abilities, and life experiences may feel more potent. Prior research suggests that group size may also influence group potency—too few members may limit the knowledge and talent base, thereby decreasing potency, whereas too many members may lead to subgroup formation and conflicts that also can erode group potency. In general, functional diversity is positively associated with group potency. Research also indicates that group members' psychological state, such as experiencing “flow,” or being highly engaged in a task, can elevate group potency. In addition, when groups experience leadership *by* the group (each member shares leadership duties) rather than leadership *of* the group (by one group member), group potency may also increase. Thus, leadership can be an important internal and external force for shaping group potency.

There are also factors that can detract from group potency. One is group tenure. The longer a group works together, the more complacent members can become about their roles and abilities. A sense of confidence can be problematic when the group has performed well over a long period of time, but suddenly things change in the environment and members are too comfortable to adapt to the new situation. This is especially problematic in service industries where customer expectations and requirements for quality are constantly changing. Other deleterious effects of group potency can stem from unexpected changes in group membership, personal conflicts among group members, and free riding or social loafing by some members of the group.

### Correlates of Group Potency

Group potency has been linked to group cohesiveness and outcome satisfaction. Groups with strong bonds between their members appear to have high

levels of confidence in their collective ability to be effective. Potent groups also appear to be satisfied with their achievements. These group characteristics provide process gains that build the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Research suggests that group potency and performance are reciprocally related. In general, increases in group potency lead to increases in performance, thereby increasing subsequent levels of group potency and so on. This spiraling effect results from positive feedback that comes with high levels of performance. Such feedback reinforces group members' positive beliefs about their abilities and effectiveness, and can lead to winning streaks for sports teams.

The relationship between group potency and performance depends on the type of performance measured. Researchers have observed positive associations between group potency and creativity, work outcomes, product quality, and customer service perceptions. In contrast, group potency has been shown to have a negative effect on the profitability of service group operations. This is because the goals of customer service and profitability may be at odds due to the competing values of providing high levels of customer service, which can be costly, and reduce operating profits.

Group potency has been shown to reduce the harmful effects of a group's task conflict (i.e., disagreement about beliefs and/or methods related to tasks being performed) on processes and outcomes in computer-mediated settings. In one study, task conflict was negatively related to group cohesiveness, effectiveness, and outcome satisfaction only in groups with low levels of group potency. It appears that group potency may soften the impact of task conflict and help groups achieve desirable processes and outcomes.

### Applications

Group potency has several potential applications for organizations using groups or teams to complete tasks. Given the increasing use of face-to-face work groups and virtual teams in organizations, managers may consider developing training programs focusing on factors external and internal to the group that can build group potency (e.g., transformational leadership, reward systems). Building on the positive psychology literature, management

development organizations have recently created training programs that emphasize group members' hope, optimism, confidence, and resilience, which represent factors that may be related to group potency. Coordinators of teams may consider exploring the relationship between these positive psychological states and the development of group potency. Support from senior management (e.g., resources), the creation and maintenance of functionally diverse groups, and support from other groups in the organization may also be useful strategies for building group potency.

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*See also* Group Cohesiveness; Group Motivation; Group Performance; Transformational Leadership Theories

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## GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

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In the broadest sense, a problem is a discrepancy between an actual current state and a desired future state. Examples are the givens in an algebra word problem and the correct answer, the engineering specifications for a new SUV and the finished model, and the clues and the correct answers in a crossword puzzle. Similarly, in the broadest sense, a decision is a choice among alternatives.



Examples are guilty or not guilty for a jury, Mortgage X or Mortgage Y for a homebuyer, and Candidate A, B, or C for voters in an election. Social psychological theory and research on group problem solving and decision making abstracts from these examples by conducting laboratory experiments with simplified tasks, typically with college students. This theory and research distinguishes (a) the group task, (b) the group structure, (c) the group process, and (d) the group product. The group task is what the group is attempting to do. Group structure includes *member characteristics*, such as beliefs, competencies, interests, and preferences; *roles*, such as leader or ordinary member; and *norms*, such as carefully considering the pros and cons of proposed alternatives. Group process entails who says what, when, how, to whom, and with what effect, and the ways in which group members combine their different beliefs and preferences. Finally, the group product is the problem solution or decision of the group, which achieves or fails to achieve the group goal on the task. This entry summarizes the generalizations that have emerged from research on group problem solving and decision making.

### Group Tasks

*Intellective tasks* have a correct solution, such as mathematical problems, logical reasoning problems, or crossword puzzles. On intellective tasks, one or more group members who know a correct answer may demonstrate it to the incorrect members who have sufficient understanding to recognize a correct answer. *Judgmental tasks* are evaluative, behavioral, or aesthetic judgments and preferences for which no objectively correct demonstrable answer exists, such as whether George Washington or Abraham Lincoln was a greater president, blackberry or raspberry a tastier jam, or (absent conclusive evidence) a defendant is innocent or guilty in a jury trial. On intellective tasks, the objective for the group is to obtain the correct answer, whereas on judgmental tasks the objective is to achieve consensus on some response. Although “intellective-judgmental” is a continuous dimension rather than a dichotomy, the tasks used in research tend to fall at one end or the other of this dimension, and so it is convenient to organize research findings in terms of group problem

solving on intellective tasks and group decision making on judgmental tasks.

Group tasks may also be distinguished by the number (or proportion) of group members necessary for a collective response. On *conjunctive* tasks, all group members must succeed for the group to succeed, such as a team of mountain climbers roped together or a team of neurological surgeons removing a tumor. On *disjunctive* tasks, only one group member needs to succeed for the group to succeed, such as three students attempting to solve a geometry problem or a family trying to recall the name of a distant relative. Conjunctive and disjunctive tasks define the endpoints of a dimension of the number of members necessary for a group decision. This number is often formalized by constitutions and bylaws, such as unanimity in jury decisions for capital cases or simple majority to pass a motion using Robert’s Rules of Order.

### Social Combination Processes

Social combination processes map a distribution of group member beliefs, opinions, or preferences to a single collective group response. Examples include members who favor the correct or incorrect answer to a problem, jury members who believe that a defendant is guilty or innocent, and voters who prefer Candidates A, B, or C in an election. To illustrate, consider five people who attempt to solve an algebra problem alone and then as a group. All five members may be correct, four correct and one incorrect, three correct and two incorrect, and so on. Given these distributions of member preferences, do groups follow a majority process such that groups of five, four, or three correct group members will be correct and groups of three, four, or five incorrect members will be incorrect (a *majority wins* social combination process)? Is one correct member necessary and sufficient for a correct group response (a *truth wins* process)? Or are two correct members necessary and sufficient (a *truth-supported wins* process)? Finally, is the probability of a correct group response proportional to the number of correct group members (a *proportionality* process)? These and other plausible group processes may be formalized as social combination models, and the predictions of different models competitively tested against the responses of a number of

groups. Thus, the relationship between the nature of the task and the number of group members who are necessary and sufficient for a group response is an important research question.

### Generalizations About Group Problem Solving

#### *Group Memory*

Evidence indicates that the collective memory of a group is better than the average memory of its members. This has been demonstrated for both recall and recognition memory and for both verbal material and events. Typically two or three accurate group members are necessary for a correct group response. Experiments on mock juries have demonstrated that the collective jury memory is better than the individual memory of the average member and that a quarter to a third of the jury members will suffice for the jury to accurately recall the evidence and judge's instructions.

*Transactive memory* is the capacity of group members to learn and remember different things, which gives them more collective than individual memory. This has been demonstrated in social and work groups. The crucial factors are agreement on who will learn and know what and coordination of the group members to the task demands. For example, task demands may be conjunctive, requiring all members to learn the same thing, or disjunctive, allowing each member to learn and remember different things.

Information sharing has also been studied. Experimenters have distributed information among individuals in different ways and then asked them to make a collective decision. For example, each of three group members may be given two items of information that favor Candidate A (shared information) and a different item that favors Candidate B (unshared information). If the members each mention their unshared information and the group discusses it, they will make an optimal decision (say, Candidate B). However, if they discuss only the shared information, they will make a suboptimal decision (say, Candidate A). The initial experiments using this *hidden profile task* found that the groups tended to discuss the common information and not the unshared information, which led them to make suboptimal decisions. This robust *common*

*knowledge effect* has been demonstrated for various tasks, such as choosing one of three candidates for a position, identifying one of three suspects for a crime, and selecting one of three investment opportunities.

Further research has shown that the common knowledge effect may be overcome in at least three ways. First, the group may be instructed that the decision is an intellectual task with a correct answer rather than a judgmental task that is a matter of preference. Second, the experimenter may instruct each group member to concentrate on learning the evidence favoring a particular response and then tell all the members which person has which evidence. Third, a leader may encourage all group members to express all of the information they possess, even if it is not corroborated by other members.

#### *World Knowledge*

Groups perform better than the average individual on what are referred to as "world knowledge" tasks, such as vocabulary, geography, history, basic science, and verbal analogies. The basic social combination process on such tasks is truth-supported wins, where two correct members who support each other are necessary and sufficient to convince an erroneous majority.

#### *Mathematical and Logical Problem Solving*

Groups also perform better than individuals on mathematical and logical reasoning problems. The usual social combination process is truth wins, where a single correct member is necessary and sufficient for a correct group response. On these problems, a correct answer exists and a single correct member is able to demonstrate the answer to incorrect members, who have sufficient knowledge to recognize the answer.

Most of the research examining mathematical and logical problem solving has involved an equal number of groups and individuals. Such research compares groups and the *average* individual. Some recent research has compared groups and an equivalent number of individuals, for example 40 four-person groups and 160 individuals. This allows comparison of the groups with the best, second-best, third-best, and fourth-best individuals. On some tasks, groups perform at the level of

their best member. On other tasks, groups perform better than their best member.

### *Quantity Estimation*

Research has compared groups and individuals on estimations of quantities, such as the population of cities, lengths of rivers, and revenues of corporations, for which correct answers exist but are generally unknown by ordinary people. In general, groups perform somewhat better than individuals, and at the level of their average member, in quantity estimation. Both groups and individuals make better estimations when given a frame of reference, such as estimating the length of the Ohio River given the length of the Mississippi River or estimating the population of Florida given the population of Texas. These frames of reference convert a raw estimation into a more intellectual task by allowing reasoning from the given information to the estimated quantity.

### *Collective Induction*

Collective induction is the cooperative search for generalizations, rules, and principles. This is the essence of scientific inquiry. One research program has simulated this process using a rule-learning task with ordinary playing cards. The correct rule may be based on any characteristic of the cards, such as suit (e.g., clubs), number (e.g., larger than seven), alternation (e.g., red and black cards alternate), or any combination of these. The problem begins with a known example of the correct rule (e.g., the eight of diamonds for the rule two red and two black cards alternate). On each trial the group members propose individual hypotheses, agree on a group hypothesis, and choose any card to test their hypothesis. Examples of the correct rule are placed to the right of the previous example, and nonexamples are placed below the last card played, so that an array of evidence (examples and/or nonexamples in the order of play) develops over successive trials.

This inductive rule-learning task is both intellectual and judgmental: Hypotheses that do not fit the evidence may be demonstrated to be nonplausible (intellectual), but correct hypotheses may not be demonstrated to be uniquely correct relative to other plausible hypotheses that also fit the evidence

(judgmental). Four generalizations emerge from this research. First, if the correct hypothesis is proposed by a group member, it is virtually certain to be the final correct group hypothesis. However, groups do not form correct group hypotheses that no member has proposed. Second, groups perform at the level of the best of an equivalent number of individuals. Third, multiple examples and nonexamples of the correct rule are more important than multiple hypotheses (proposed rules). In other words, group members are able to generate sufficient hypotheses to determine the correct answer, but they need sufficient evidence to evaluate them. Fourth, positive tests (choosing a card that fits the current hypothesis) are more effective than negative tests (choosing a card that does not fit the current hypothesis), because positive tests are more likely to lead to further examples that make the correct rule more apparent.

## Generalizations About Group Decision Making

### *Mock Jury Decisions*

A large amount of research has studied mock juries making decisions in criminal or civil cases. In this research, individuals typically read a trial summary and choose their preferred verdict (e.g., guilty or not guilty). They then discuss the case as a group and choose a collective verdict. Because the pregroup individual decisions are known, the social combination process that underlies the group decision can be determined.

Several generalizations emerge from the research on criminal cases. First, there are few differences between the verdicts of smaller (e.g., six-person) and larger (e.g., twelve-person) juries. Second, groups follow a two-thirds majority decision process. Third, decisions for groups that do not have a two-thirds majority favor the defendant, a finding known as a *leniency bias*. Fourth, juries seem to follow two different types of deliberation and decision processes. *Verdict-driven juries* quickly divide into factions favoring different verdicts. Each faction proposes only evidence that favors its verdict, and the factions argue and take many ballots until enough jurors change to allow a group decision. In contrast, *evidence-driven juries* collectively consider evidence for and against the

defendant and construct a story of the sequence of events. After they have constructed this story, they consider which of the possible verdicts matches the story. Thus, verdict-driven juries approach the decision as an adversarial process, whereas evidence-driven juries approach the decision as a cooperative problem-solving process. While the decisions resulting from the two types of deliberation are similar, members of evidence-driven juries afterwards are more satisfied with the deliberation process and more likely to feel that both their own and others' views were fully considered. Fifth, the most important individual characteristic that predicts influence in the jury deliberations is world knowledge, which is acquired by education, reading, travel, and occupational and organizational experience.

Research has also investigated damage decisions in civil cases. Here, a rather different pattern of influence occurs. In civil cases, members who are closest to the group median have the most influence on the jury decision.

### *Choice Shift and Group Polarization*

In the early 1960s, an experiment was conducted in which college students considered hypothetical scenarios with two possible actions, one leading to a more desirable but less likely outcome, and the other leading to a less desirable but more likely outcome. For example, they were told that a student has been accepted in two graduate programs in chemistry, a rigorous program in a prestigious university in which few students succeed in obtaining their PhD, and a less rigorous program in a less prestigious university in which virtually all students succeed. Success in the rigorous program was described as leading to a better career, but as a more risky choice. When making group decisions about what odds of success they would accept in order for the student to choose the more rigorous university, participants made more risky decisions than the average group member had previously made as an individual. This result, which was replicated with many hypothetical scenarios and with many different populations, is called the *risky shift*.

However, scenarios were soon written in which groups accepted less risk than their average member in such situations as marriage and investment in an unstable foreign country, which is called the

*cautious shift*. Subsequently, it was realized that groups generally make more extreme decisions in the direction of the prevailing tendency of their members, which is called the *choice shift*. The important generalization is that groups exaggerate the prevailing tendency of their members. The two major theoretical explanations for the choice shift are *persuasive arguments theory* and *social comparison theory*. Persuasive arguments theory emphasizes that group members encounter new arguments during group discussion, which cause them to shift their position in a more extreme direction. Social comparison theory emphasizes that group members desire to look as good as or better than others, which causes them to adopt a more extreme view on the issue under consideration. These member changes are then aggregated by a majority social combination process, resulting in the choice shift.

In a related set of experiments, individuals who made attitudinal judgments alone and then discussed the issue were more extreme in their individual judgments after group discussion than before. This phenomenon is called *group polarization*, although it is more properly *group-induced polarization*. The important generalization is that group discussion and decision exaggerate the subsequent individual judgments of group members. For example, groups of conservative people make more conservative judgments as individuals following group discussion and decision, whereas groups of liberal people make more liberal judgments as individuals following group discussion and decision. This has been demonstrated with many judgmental tasks.

### *Groupthink*

*Groupthink* is the name given to deleterious group processes leading to decisions that turn out to be fiascos, such as the decision of President John F. Kennedy to invade Cuba in the Bay of Pigs and the decision of President Lyndon B. Johnson to escalate the war in Vietnam. According to Irving Janis's original theory, groupthink occurs in highly cohesive and isolated groups with a highly directive leader. These groups consider themselves morally superior to their adversaries and fail to consider all possible alternatives or the reactions of their adversaries. Members who may have doubts yield to the

directive leader and the apparently unanimous group opinion in order to “remain players” in the group. In contrast, analyses of successful decisions, such as that of President Kennedy to impose an embargo in the Cuban Missile Crisis, indicate non-directive leadership, division of the group into independent subgroups, consideration of the pros and cons of alternative scenarios, consultation outside the group, appointment of a devil’s advocate, and a reconsideration of the initial decision prior to the final decision. Experimental research testing this influential theory has shown that the most important factor is directive leadership, whereas group cohesion and isolation are less important.

### Conclusion: “Work the Problem”

In the movie *Apollo 13*, an oxygen tank in the spacecraft explodes on the way to the moon, the moon mission must be aborted, and the lives of the astronauts are seriously threatened. When the flight controllers at Mission Control erupt in angry mutual recriminations, the flight director makes a strong simple command: “Work the problem!” Everyone settles down to devote his or her energies and skills to the paramount problem of saving the astronauts. After a final radio silence, the reentering spacecraft splashes down near the rafts of the frogmen and television cameras. An enraptured world is suddenly unified. Just like the astronauts, the flight director, and the people of Mission Control, we are where we are—with the problems we must solve, the decisions we must make, and the human and material resources we possess. Research on group problem solving and decision making indicates that groups can be highly effective if we cooperate with each other to work the problem.

*Patrick R. Laughlin*

*See also* Common Knowledge Effect; Group Performance; Group Polarization; Group Task; Groupthink; Hidden Profile Task; Juries; Social Decision Schemes

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## GROUP SOCIALIZATION

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The life spans of groups vary widely. At one end of the longevity continuum are groups that exist for minutes, such as several strangers who cooperate briefly to help the victim of an auto accident. At the other end of the continuum are groups that exist for centuries, such as the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), a male Catholic religious order founded in the 1500s that continues to this day. Most groups fall somewhere between these two extremes, with life spans ranging from a few hours to a few years.

Groups that exist over time are not static entities. Instead they change in ways, large and small, that can profoundly affect their members’ interactions and outcomes. Some of these changes, labeled *group development*, involve alterations in the group as a whole. It has been proposed, for example, that many groups move through five consecutive stages in which members exhibit (1) polite efforts to get acquainted, (2) conflict regarding how the group should function, (3) consensus about group procedures, (4) cooperative efforts to achieve common goals, and (5) withdrawal from one another and the group as a whole. Other changes, labeled *group socialization*, involve alterations in the relationship between the group and each of its members. Although development and socialization can influence one another, they are different processes and hence warrant separate consideration. This entry focuses on group socialization, examining how the length and quality of individuals’ relationship with a group affect their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward one another.

### A Model of Group Socialization

Most of the work on socialization has focused on organizations rather than small groups. To correct this imbalance, in 1982 Richard Moreland and John Levine developed a comprehensive model of group socialization designed to explain the changes that groups and individuals produce in one another from the beginning to the end of their relationship. Although the model is relevant to many aspects of organizational socialization, it is meant to apply primarily to small, voluntary groups whose members interact on a regular basis, feel emotional ties to one another, share a common perspective, and work together to achieve joint goals. An important hallmark of the model is its focus on *reciprocal influence* between the two parties—not only can the group change the individual, but the individual can also change the group.

#### Basic Processes

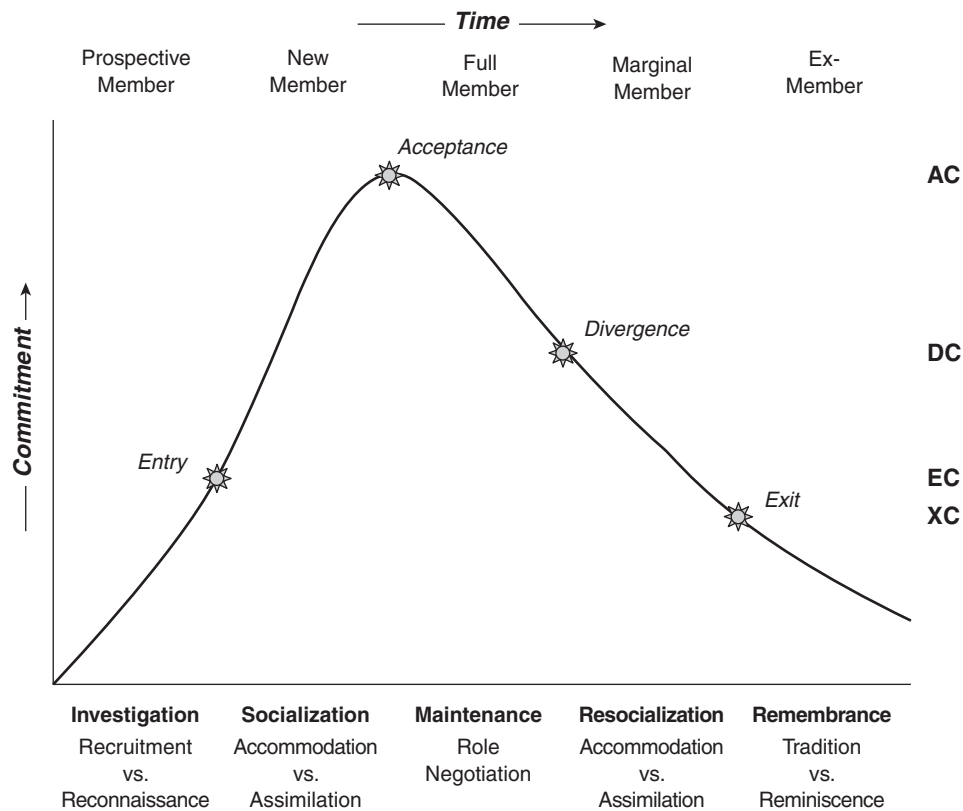
According to the model, three psychological processes underlie group socialization—*evaluation*, *commitment*, and *role transition*. Because groups want to recruit and retain members who will help them achieve their goals, they evaluate individuals in terms of their previous, current, and probable future contributions to these goals. Similarly, because individuals want to belong to groups that will help them satisfy their personal needs, they evaluate groups in terms of their previous, current, and probable future contributions to these needs.

These evaluations, in turn, affect how much commitment the group and the individual feel toward one another. The higher the group's evaluation of the individual, the more commitment it will feel toward him or her. Similarly, the higher the individual's evaluation of the group, the more commitment he or she will feel toward it. When a group feels strong commitment toward an individual, it will experience positive emotions toward the person, try to satisfy his or her needs, and seek to gain or maintain the person as a member. In a parallel fashion, when an individual feels strong commitment toward a group, he or she will experience positive emotions toward it, try to achieve group goals, and seek to gain or maintain membership in the group.

Groups' and individuals' evaluations of one another are typically not static, but instead change over time. When this happens, their commitment also changes, increasing when evaluations become more positive and decreasing when they become more negative. Both the group and the individual develop decision criteria (specific levels of commitment) that indicate when the individual should undergo a role transition signaling movement from one phase of group membership to another. Each party tries to initiate a transition when its commitment rises or falls to its decision criterion, but a transition will only occur if both parties agree that it is appropriate. Because role transitions significantly alter the relationship between the group and the individual, it is important that they both know when a transition occurs. For this reason, transitions are often marked with special a ceremony, or rite of passage. Following a role transition, the two parties continue to evaluate one another, often using different criteria. These evaluations can produce further changes in commitment and subsequent role transitions. Thus, an individual's passage through a group involves a series of membership phases separated by role transitions. Figure 1 illustrates a typical passage involving five membership phases (investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, and remembrance) and four role transitions (entry, acceptance, divergence, and exit).

#### Passage Through the Group

The first phase of group membership is *investigation*, during which the group and the individual decide whether to establish a formal relationship. In this phase, the group engages in *recruitment*, which involves first identifying and then evaluating prospective members. In some cases, identification is assigned to recruitment specialists; in other cases, all members are encouraged to keep an eye out for promising candidates. Once prospective members are identified, they must be evaluated in terms of the likelihood that they will make a positive contribution to the group. This process can be more or less difficult, depending on the ease of assessing the characteristics necessary for effective performance (e.g., knowledge of organic chemistry vs. ability to stay calm under pressure). At the same time, prospective members engage in *reconnaissance*, which involves identifying and evaluating potential groups



**Figure 1** A Model of Group Socialization

Source: Reprinted from Moreland, R. L., & Levine, J. M. (1982). Socialization in small groups: Temporal changes in individual-group relations. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 15, pp. 137–192). New York: Academic Press; reprinted by permission of Elsevier.

that they might join. These tasks can also vary in difficulty, depending on the number and visibility of groups in people's environment and their willingness to reveal information about themselves. If the group's commitment to the individual rises to its *entry criterion* (EC), it will extend an offer of membership. Similarly, if the individual's commitment to the group rises to his or her entry criterion, he or she will seek such an offer.

If both parties' commitment rises to their respective entry criteria during investigation, the person will make a role transition from prospective member to new member. The ceremonies that signal entry are designed to both test and increase new members' commitment to the group. Such commitment is important because current members often have doubts about new members' skills and their understanding and acceptance of group norms. In some cases, entry ceremonies involve positive treatment of new members, such as welcoming parties

and gifts. These kinds of ceremonies, which can vary in degree of positivity, are useful because they elicit gratitude from newcomers and motivate them to work hard. In other cases, entry ceremonies involve negative treatment, such as initiations that can vary from mild to harsh. Negative ceremonies are useful because they allow current members to assess newcomers' commitment to the group and also motivate them to rationalize their suffering in a way that increases their commitment ("If this group is so hard to get into, it must be valuable").

Once entry has occurred, the group and the individual enter the second phase of group membership—*socialization*. During this phase, the group attempts to change the individual so that he or she contributes more to the attainment of group goals. This involves providing the new member with the knowledge, ability, and motivation needed to play the role of a full group member. Groups use a variety of tactics in socializing

newcomers, ranging from formal training to informal mentoring. As Levine and Moreland have suggested, groups' success in socializing new members is influenced by newcomers' characteristics and behaviors (e.g., their familiarity with the group before joining and efforts to learn about it after joining), as well as current members' characteristics and behaviors (e.g., their prior experience dealing with newcomers and ability to integrate newcomers into group activities). To the extent that the group is successful in changing the individual, he or she undergoes *assimilation*. During the socialization phase, the individual also attempts to change the group so that it contributes more to the satisfaction of his or her personal needs. This involves providing the group with information about these needs and motivating it to satisfy them. The latter goal is easier to achieve in some cases than others. For example, the more committed the group is to the newcomer (e.g., because he or she possesses valuable skills), the more motivated current members are to satisfy the individual's needs. In addition, compared to a newcomer entering the group alone, two or more newcomers entering together often find it easier to convince the group to address their needs. To the extent that newcomers are effective in changing the group, it undergoes *accommodation*.

If the group's and the individual's commitment to one another during socialization rise to their respective *acceptance criteria* (AC), the person will make a role transition from new member to full member. As in the case of entry, the ceremonies that mark acceptance are designed to both test and increase members' commitment to the group. Although people who have completed socialization generally pose less threat to the group than do those who have just joined, the group is nonetheless motivated to make sure that full members are highly committed. Such commitment is important because full members have more power, status, and responsibility than do people in other phases of group membership. Like the ceremonies that mark entry, those that signal acceptance can be either positive or negative and can vary in intensity. Positive ceremonies often involve sharing secret information about the group and bestowing new rights and responsibilities. Negative ceremonies can range from mild harassment to harsh

punishment in which full members are forced to engage in degrading behavior and suffer physical pain.

Once acceptance has occurred, the group and the individual enter the third phase of group membership—*maintenance*. During this phase, the two parties feel strong commitment to one another and engage in *role negotiation*, during which the group tries to place the individual in a role that maximizes his or her contributions to group goal attainment and the individual tries to define that role in a way that maximizes satisfaction of personal needs. In seeking to fill a particular role (e.g., treasurer), the group looks for candidates who are likely to perform the role well and ask relatively little in return. Once a favorite candidate has been identified, the group must convince the person to accept the role. This can involve offering incentives (e.g., money, power) for taking on the role, making the person's current role less rewarding, appealing to the person's loyalty to the group, threatening the person with ostracism for refusal, and so on. In a parallel fashion, an individual who wishes to occupy a particular role must convince the group to allow this to happen. This can involve making a case that one is uniquely qualified to perform the role, offering to play the role without special incentives, performing one's current role with reduced enthusiasm, and so on. After a full member takes on a particular role, the group's commitment to the individual depends on how well he or she fulfills the role, and the individual's commitment to the group depends on how satisfying he or she finds the role. To the extent that both parties evaluate the situation positively, their mutual commitment will remain high.

However, if the group's and the individual's commitment to one another during maintenance fall to their respective *divergence criteria* (DC), the person will make a role transition from full member to marginal member. Divergence ceremonies vary in negativity, but they rarely have positive features. Their negativity can be influenced by several factors. For example, such ceremonies tend to be harsher when marginal members' behavior is attributed to controllable causes (e.g., motivation) rather than uncontrollable causes (e.g., illness) and when the group is performing poorly and is understaffed. Divergence ceremonies vary widely and



include demotion in rank, reduced privileges and responsibilities, less access to secret information, exclusion from informal cliques, and increased monitoring of one's behavior.

Once divergence has occurred, the group and the individual enter the fourth phase of group membership—*resocialization*. During this phase, the two parties try to repair their relationship. The group's efforts to resocialize a marginal member are more intense when the member's presumed reason for failing to meet group expectations is controllable rather than uncontrollable, when the member previously had high rather than low status in the group, and when the member will be hard rather than easy to replace. To the extent that the group is successful in changing the individual, he or she undergoes *assimilation*. During the resocialization phase, the marginal member also attempts to influence the group. His or her efforts are more intense when the group's presumed reason for failing to meet the member's needs is controllable rather than uncontrollable, when the member's prior status was high rather than low, and when the member has unattractive rather than attractive options outside the group. To the extent that the marginal member is successful in changing the group, it undergoes *accommodation*.

Resocialization can have one of two outcomes, depending on whether the group's and the individual's commitment to one another rise to their respective *divergence criteria* or fall to their respective *exit criteria* (XC). When the two parties' commitment rises, the person will return to full membership via a special role transition (convergence). Of all the decision criteria identified in the model, only the divergence criterion produces a change in membership status when crossed either from above (maintenance to resocialization) or from below (resocialization to maintenance). Although convergence might seem to cancel out the negative implications of divergence for both the group and the individual, this is frequently not the case. Often groups have a lingering distrust of full members who previously "fell from grace," on the assumption that they might do so again. And often full members who previously occupied a marginal status in the group feel a lingering estrangement from the source of their demotion.

When the two parties' commitment falls to their exit criteria, the person will make a role transition

from marginal member to ex-member. Like divergence ceremonies, exit ceremonies vary in negativity, but rarely have positive features. Moreover, the factors that influence the harshness of divergence ceremonies (the perceived controllability of marginal members' behavior, the group's performance and staffing level) have parallel effects on exit ceremonies. Harsh exit ceremonies, which subject marginal members to public humiliation, can take several forms. These include forcing the members to apologize for their misdeeds, requiring them to return membership insignia and previously obtained rewards (e.g., bonuses), and denying them future benefits typically given to ex-members (e.g., pensions). Such ceremonies serve several functions, including punishing deviates for their transgressions, warning other members about what will happen to them if they misbehave, and signaling to outsiders that the group does not tolerate certain forms of behavior. In contrast, mild exit ceremonies remove marginal members from the group while allowing them to save face. These include eliminating the individual's responsibilities (e.g., by downsizing the group), convincing the individual to resign quietly (e.g., by threatening exposure and/or providing a generous severance package), and helping the person move to another group (e.g., by writing inflated letters of recommendation). Such ceremonies may be used because of a feeling of responsibility toward people who once made valuable contributions to the group, fear of retaliation from angry ex-members, or concern that outsiders will think poorly of the group if it has flawed members.

Once exit has occurred, the group and the individual enter the fifth and final phase of group membership—*remembrance*. This phase can vary in length, depending on how long the individual was a member and how committed the two parties were to one another. During remembrance, the group develops a consensus about how much the individual contributed to its goals, and this retrospective evaluation influences its commitment to the ex-member. Commitment can also be influenced by how the person behaves after leaving (e.g., donating money to the group vs. airing its dirty laundry to outsiders). As time passes and the individual becomes less salient to the group, he or she passes into the group's *tradition*. Memories of the ex-member can affect the group's reaction to

current and future members. For example, an ex-member who embarrassed the group may reduce the likelihood that it will recruit prospective members with similar characteristics. In a parallel fashion, during the remembrance phase the individual thinks about how much group membership satisfied his or her personal needs, and this retrospective evaluation influences the ex-member's commitment to the group. Commitment can also be influenced by how the group behaves after the individual leaves (e.g., by including him or her in its activities vs. denying that he or she was ever a member). As time passes and the group becomes less salient to the individual, it is gradually incorporated into his or her *reminiscence*. Memories of the group can affect the person's reactions to current and future groups. For example, past membership in a highly rewarding group may increase the ex-member's expectations for groups that he or she later joins.

#### *Additional Considerations*

In summarizing the group socialization model, an idealized picture was painted of how a "typical" individual might pass through a "typical" group. However, passage through a group can be more complex, as the following examples illustrate. We assumed that group and individual commitment levels change gradually over time, but sometimes they undergo sudden and dramatic shifts (e.g., when a newcomer performs an heroic act that causes a surge in the group's commitment). In addition, we did not discuss the fact that decision criteria may vary in their positions relative to one another, which can have implications for the number of role transitions and membership phases that a person experiences. For example, while the acceptance criterion must be higher than both the divergence and exit criteria, the entry criterion could be either higher or lower than the exit criterion. And the length of a membership phase can vary greatly, depending on whether the two decision criteria that demarcate it are similar (leading to a short phase) or dissimilar (leading to a long phase). In unusual cases in which two adjacent decision criteria are identical (e.g., DC = XC), the phase they would have demarcated will not occur at all! Finally, although the figure assumes that the group and the individual share the same

set of decision criteria and are equally committed to one another throughout their relationship, this is not always the case. And when it is not, the two parties are likely to experience conflict regarding the timing of role transitions.

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*See also* Group Boundaries; Group Composition; Group Development; Group Structure; Identification and Commitment; Inclusion/Exclusion; Norms; Power; Roles; Role Transitions

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## GROUP STRUCTURE

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The discipline of social psychology is rooted in the quest to understand two aspects of how people relate to and interact with one another: stability and change. Regularities that engender observable, stable, and repeated uniformity in social interaction are generally attributed to group structure. Even change—or group dynamics—is often considered to have a predictable logic, which researchers link to *group structure*, defined as the uniform patterns in the relations among group members that are linked to social positions and categories. In this entry, a brief summary of the intellectual history and background of the concept of group structure is given, followed by a discussion of benchmarks in research that have helped scientists understand the nature of group structure and the role group structure plays in group processes.

### History and Background

From the very earliest studies of group dynamics, researchers have recognized that relations between group members play an important role in what people do and what happens to them. Widely recognized as the first social psychological experiment, Norman Triplett's *The Dynamogenic Factors in Pacemaking and Competition*, published in 1898, demonstrated that the physical presence of other people in a competitive relationship enhanced performance over that obtained when people performed alone. While these early studies of *social facilitation* did little to explore the actual nature of the group members' relationships, they firmly established the impact of those relationships, leading researchers to explore different facets of the relationships as well as regularities in them.

Early on, social philosophers and social theorists pointed to norms and values as the fundamental source of regularity in social relations, particularly in small groups and communities. Émile Durkheim, who is associated more commonly with sociology than psychology, offered the concept of *mechanical solidarity*—ties between members generated by shared values and experience—to define social relations. He proposed that mechanical solidarity made cooperation and civil society possible, and that mechanical solidarity

arose naturally from kin relations. As communities grew and individuals migrated from home communities to more urban areas and joined a differentiated workforce and society, family ties were strained. New forms of social patterns emerged, built on the basis of *organic solidarity*—the interdependence of functional positions in society. In the emerging industrial society, characterized by a division of labor, no single individual could survive on the basis of her or his own work. The role one played in any social group depended on the role others played. This interdependence became the foundation for patterned social relations, according to Durkheim.

In a parallel logic examining the structure of social relationships, Ferdinand Tönnies also picked up on the importance of structure as the key to understanding social life. He made an important distinction between community and society—the former is closely linked to the concept of a group. Tönnies referred to the rationality of order in social interaction derived from one's position in face-to-face groups (i.e., communities) whose members share a common purpose and values as *gemeinschaft*. In contrast, *gesellschaft* refers to macro relations born of social class position, interests, and control and formalized through laws and policies.

Concurrent with this early work, Georg Simmel (recognized by some as the father of modern sociology) was developing a theory of social life premised on patterns of association among individuals. Simmel posited that society was best conceptualized in terms of repetitive patterns of activities between individuals across time and place, or “forms-of-sociation.” Simmel's early interest was in patterns of reciprocity, hierarchy, and affiliation.

According to many researchers, Simmel included, norms and values are fundamental building blocks in determining the behavior of people vis-à-vis one another. Yet, it did not take social psychologists long to recognize that expectations for behavior (i.e., norms) and beliefs about appropriate or desirable behaviors and outcomes (i.e., values) were themselves tied to people's position in a social system. That is, for example, behaviors such as deference of one person to another are expected by virtue of people's relative status positions in the group within which they are interacting.

Society is possible, according to Simmel, Durkheim, Tönnies, and other early social theorists, because of such predictability in relationships. Simmel's work became the foundation for the study of social structure—uniform patterns of relationships between members of a society, emanating from the social categories members occupy. As Simmel at least implicitly recognized, those patterns arose in different but interrelated dimensions of interaction (e.g., reciprocity, hierarchy, affiliation).

To summarize, the concept of structure in social relations grew out of early recognition by social theorists that (1) there are recognizable patterns in social interaction, which (2) arise from the positions individuals occupy vis-à-vis one another, and (3) carry with them norms that govern behavior for individuals occupying one position in relation to those occupying other positions. Thus, we can conceptualize group structure as the uniform patterns across multiple dimensions of interaction within and between groups, arising from group members' social categories and the norms governing behavior within and across those social categories. As this conceptualization suggests, group structure defines interaction both among group members and across the boundaries of groups. To date, however, most research on group structure has focused on the effects of group structure on uniformity of behavior among members of the same group, *intragroup structure*, as opposed to patterns in the behavior of members across groups, *intergroup structure*. The following sections provide a brief overview of benchmark research programs in these two lines of research involving group structure.

### Structure in Intragroup Contexts

The vast majority of research on uniformity in the patterns of relationships in groups has focused on within-group analyses. The early work of Jacob Moreno, a psychotherapist, set the stage for the theoretical strategy and methodology of modern analyses of group structure. Moreno argued that individual well-being is rooted in interpersonal relationships. Consequently, documenting and understanding those relationships is the key for successful psychosocial interventions. To facilitate such understanding, Moreno developed a research methodology called *sociometry*, which uses graph

techniques to diagram and quantify relationships between group members along any of a number of dimensions of interaction. Moreno's early work focused on using sociometric methods to identify subgroups and alliances within groups, arguing that these "hidden structures" determined the climate of a group and, through it, the well-being of members. Sociometric methods took rapid hold, became the basis for the journal *Sociometry* (now *Social Psychology Quarterly*), and were the precursors of network analytic methods used in contemporary research on group structure and processes.

As the utility of graph theoretic methods as a means of generating insight on the nature and consequences of group structure became apparent, researchers began to rapidly adopt the strategy to understand a range of group structures. In a series of studies on the relationship between the communication structure of a group and how the group performed on a problem-solving task, Alex Bavelas and Harold Leavitt demonstrated that more centralized structures (i.e., those in which one or a couple of group members were directly allowed to communicate with all or the majority of meetings) generated quicker and less error-prone solutions to a group information-sharing problem, compared to less centralized structures (i.e., those whose members communicated only with one or two others). In addition, the studies by Bavelas and Leavitt revealed that centralized structures were perceived as more likely to involve a strong leader (usually one of the individuals occupying a more centralized position). Members of decentralized groups, however, expressed greater satisfaction with the group than members of more centralized groups. This work suggested that leadership may be differentiated into two roles: task leadership and socioemotional leadership.

Focusing on the socioemotional or affective structure of interpersonal relationships, Fritz Heider's seminal work, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, posited that perceptions of individuals (like objects) tended toward "psychological balance"—a logical and stable constellation of positive and negative affect within a network of people or objects. While anecdotal examples served to convey the principles of balance, extending them to large groups proved

challenging. Dorwin Cartwright and Frank Harary, however, used graph theoretic methods to formalize and extend Heider's principles of balance. The result was a compelling demonstration of the interrelations between group structure and group dynamics based on a single key assumption: Groups in balance tend to remain in balance, and unbalanced groups tend toward balance. This assumption and the application of network methods to document and track changes in groups led to new abilities to predict such phenomena as exits and entries into groups, changes in affiliations and communication patterns among group members, and the dissolution of groups.

Robert Freed Bales took up the differentiation of leadership roles (i.e., task oriented versus socioemotional oriented) as a part of his larger program of understanding patterns of interaction in problem-solving groups. Using "who-to-whom" techniques akin to network analysis, he examined the different kinds of verbal and non-verbal behaviors exchanged by groups, using this as a foundation for the development of an analytic method for examining groups, Interaction Process Analysis (IPA). Bales's IPA methodology approached groups as networks of actors engaged in act-by-act exchanges. Through analysis of these exchanges, Bales demonstrated that groups are demarcated by identifiable stages in their interactions, which focus on the resolution of problems. The six problems his IPA methodology identifies are problems of orientation, evaluation, control, decision, tension management, and integration. The former four (orientation, evaluation, control, and decision problems) reflect task-related issues that groups must resolve, while the latter two (tension management and integration) reflect socioemotional issues the group must resolve. Consistent with the work of Bavelas and Leavitt, Bales and his colleagues demonstrated that key actors emerge to lead the group through the resolution of these problems (i.e., the task leader and the socioemotional leader) and that the actors assuming these leadership roles could be identified by the pattern or structure of their who-to-whom acts.

Bales's seminal work influenced a host of colleagues and students, including Fred Strodbeck, who adopted the IPA methodology in his famous analysis of juries. His studies showed that patterns

of leadership and influence among members of trial juries could be predicted by the interaction patterns among members, as well as their social characteristics. Bales's work alongside that of Strodbeck, in turn, became an important foundation for research by Joseph Berger and his colleagues in their theoretical research program on expectation states. This program entails a number of theories relating interaction patterns to structural differentiation among group members, including status characteristics theory—a theory that details how states of social categories (such as "male" or "female" states of the category "sex"), which are imbued with greater or lesser social value in accord with the norms of the broader society and are tied to differentiation in the content and amount of interaction engaged in by those assigned to the states. For instance, men tend to be more valued in wider society than women (as reflected, for example, by men receiving greater earnings than women with comparable job types, ability, and experience). This differential social valuing bestows differential status on men and women in social groups. Research over several decades shows that as interaction in groups proceeds, lower status actors tend to be more deferential to higher status actors in group interaction, higher status actors tend to be more dominant and subsequently more influential in group problem solving, even when actual ability is unknown or even runs contrary to the status that social categories engender.

As graph-theoretic methods and social network analysis matured, they began to be applied to a host of other domains. Alongside interests in leadership, researchers gained an interest in the concept of power, or control over valued resources, which structures relationships among members in groups. George Homans viewed power in behaviorist terms, proposing that resources could be used to influence behavior of group members as a reward (positive reinforcement) or punishment (i.e., by denying resources to members). Examining the flow of resources using mathematical and network analytic methods, Richard Emerson offered an insight that served to change much thinking about groups and group structure. Power, he argued, was a characteristic not of a member of a group, but rather of the relations between group members. This key insight led researchers studying

not only power, but a host of other group structures (e.g., influence, communication, affiliation, affect) to explicitly articulate structure in terms of relations between members, as opposed to as emanating from an attribute of members.

A further development in the understanding of power, by David Willer and his colleagues, also served to change the landscape of group studies. Willer proposed that it is not power use that matters in shaping group relations, but rather the potential for power (as perceived by group members) that affects groups. This line of reasoning echoed earlier work by symbolic interactionists who, drawing on William James's work, recognized that "what men perceive to be real is real in its consequences."

The methods of exchange theorists drew upon and matured alongside social network analysis. In the 1970s and 1980s, significant computational and methodological advances by Harrison White, Linton Freeman, and other network analysts forged new paths in not only how structure is theoretically conceptualized, but how it is quantitatively measured. Owing partly to increased availability and growing processing power of computers, social network analysts developed empirically driven conceptualizations of patterns of relations among individuals, operationalizing structure in terms of such concepts as density (i.e., the interconnectedness of group members) and centrality (i.e., the extent to which the relations in a group are focused on one or a few members).

The methodological strategy of social network analysis is founded on empirically examining how relationships between individuals are organized and how that organization affects individual behaviors, attitudes, and interactions. As a result, network analysts tend to avoid a priori assumptions regarding who is or is not a member of a group, unlike other approaches to conceptualizing groups (i.e., on the basis of commonly shared traits or identities). Indeed, one of the most interesting implications of social network analysis is that groups may be best conceptualized as clusters of dense ties among individuals, who, in turn, are tied (albeit less densely) to individuals in other clusters. That is, social network analysis calls into question the notion of a group as a closed system of individuals, instead emphasizing the fluidity of group boundaries.

### Structure in Intergroup Contexts

In contrast to the extensive research on intragroup structure, relatively little work has been done to theorize the structure of relationships between social groups outside that of social network analysts noted above. The work that has occurred, however, has had a profound effect on the study of group dynamics. An early and influential line of work on intergroup structure and relations across group boundaries is the work by Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues, captured in a series of studies on the relations between groups of boys at a summer camp—the renowned "Robbers Cave" experiments. Sherif demonstrated that intergroup attitudes are conditioned by the structure of access to valued resources. When resources are acquired through a zero-sum competition, group members tend to develop hostile attitudes toward members of an outgroup and seek opportunities to undermine the outgroup's pursuit of those resources. In contrast, when resource acquisition requires cooperation across groups, positive attitudes and relations tend to arise across members of the groups.

Another line of research exploring intergroup structure is social identity theory, developed by Henry Tajfel and John Turner. This line of research remains one of the most prolific and influential research programs on group structure and action. Social identity theory is also a multilevel theory, linking self-concept to group membership and to attitudes and behaviors toward ingroup and outgroup members. At the core of this work is the assumption that individuals seek to enhance their sense of self. The self, in turn, is comprised of identities derived from membership in social groups. To the extent that the social groups to which one belongs are viewed favorably (by oneself or others), one's self-concept is enhanced. Furthermore, identities are assessed through a process of social comparison—that is, what matters is the extent to which one's group is viewed more or less positively compared to one or more other groups. Tajfel and his colleagues demonstrated that individuals engage in a variety of behaviors that generate advantages for members of the group to which they belong, including offering exaggerated positive evaluations of ingroup members, overrewarding them, and affording them greater influence in decision making.

In summary, group structure, the uniform patterns in the relations among group members, serves as both an independent and dependent variable in the study of group processes. The dynamics within and across groups can be conceptualized in terms of the way relationships are organized, the content of the relationships (e.g., friendship, communication, identity), and how those relationships affect individual attitudes, behaviors, and interactions.

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*See also* Communication Networks; Group Cohesiveness; Interaction Process Analysis; Leadership; Roles; Social Exchange in Networks and Groups; Social Identity Theory; Social Networks; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory

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## GROUP TASK

Groups exist for many reasons—some social (providing settings where we can satisfy our need to belong), some symbolic (contributing to our sense of identity), and some task related (e.g., making a decision, solving a problem, winning a sports competition). This entry deals with the latter reason—performing a *group task*—and considers some of the ways in which aspects of the group's task guide how the group and its members behave. This is particularly important because generalities about groups (e.g., “groups are better performers than individuals”) are all too often asserted as if they held true across any and every task that a group might confront. To the contrary, nearly any assertion about group behavior must take into account the nature of the group's task. With few (if any) exceptions, a statement about group behavior should always have an explicit or implicit qualification—“but, of course, this depends upon the following features of the group's task . . .” This entry gives a few examples of why this is true, describes some of the task distinctions that have been proposed and used successfully to analyze group behavior, and finally describes the most ambitious attempt to classify group tasks, which was developed by the late Joseph E. McGrath in his 1984 book, *Groups: Interaction and Performance*.

Groups often simultaneously work on several tasks or on complex tasks with rather different features. For example, a high school volleyball team wants to maximize student participation and fitness, to represent their school well, to entertain spectators, to win interteam competitions, and so on. Each subtask may place different demands on the group and may affect its dynamics, sometimes in contradictory ways. For example, increasing the size of the team may make it better able to maximize student participation, but may simultaneously undercut its ability to win (by including people who are not highly talented). The game of volleyball likewise is complex, and its different features prescribe and constrain the group's behavior in different ways. For example, composing a team of taller players improves its chances of blocking shots at the net, but may reduce its skill at other aspects of the game (e.g., setting the ball, digging

out low shots). So it is often an oversimplification to suggest that groups have a single, simply defined task. Nevertheless, the performance of a group on a complex or multipart task can often be analyzed in terms of more simply described subtasks.

Our understanding of just how important task features are for group behavior has developed in two rather different ways. Some scholars have proposed rather general theoretical models about how group tasks differ and how these differences might affect group behavior. The task classification, or taxonomy, of McGrath (described below) is a good example. Other scholars did not begin with a theory of group tasks, but rather discovered that focusing on certain aspects of the group's task helped explain apparently confusing or contradictory patterns of findings. Let us illustrate the latter approach first.

### Dependence of Group Behavior on Task Features: The Bottom-Up Approach

#### *Social Facilitation*

One of the first research questions in social psychology and in the study of small groups was, "How does the presence of other people affect a person's task performance?" The earliest studies, done near the beginning of the 20th century, generally found that the presence of others, either as passive observers or as people working at the same task (so-called coactors), seemed to improve individuals' performance. Such results were referred to as *social facilitation*. However, soon additional studies showed the opposite pattern—individual performers doing less well in others' presence than when working alone. One way of reconciling such confusing results was to suggest that they depended on the performance task—but what aspect of the task? Several were suggested (e.g., intellectual vs. physical tasks, simple vs. complex tasks), but none seemed to bring order to the confusion. It was not until Robert Zajonc proposed his drive theory of social facilitation in 1965 that a plausible task feature was identified. Zajonc's theory said that the presence of others increases drive or arousal. Well-established theory suggested that the effect of such drive increases was to make high probability behaviors more likely to occur (and to make low probability behaviors less likely to occur). So, a key task feature was shown to be whether the

correct response was likely or unlikely. For very well learned tasks, where the correct response was highly likely, the presence of others facilitated this response and, hence, improved performance. But for poorly learned tasks, where *errors* were highly likely, the presence of others likewise facilitated these responses, which, in turn, hurt performance. Identifying this key task feature brought order to a confusing research literature and increased our understanding of the effects of others' presence—a basic feature of most task-performing groups.

#### *Group Polarization*

A slightly more recent question to intrigue group researchers was, "Are groups more willing to take risks than individuals?" Societies entrust many important but risky decisions (e.g., whether to declare war or try criminal defendants) to groups rather than to individuals, so this is obviously an interesting psychological question. The results of the first studies, done nearly 50 years ago, were surprising—groups appeared to be more willing to endorse an attractive but risky course of action than individuals. This finding was referred to as the *risky shift* (from a more cautious individual preference to a less cautious group preference). But just as in the case of social facilitation, subsequent research on the risky shift found that sometimes group discussion had exactly the opposite effect, leading to more cautious group preferences than individual preferences—a *cautious shift*. It took some time (and insight) before it was recognized that the direction of shift depended vitally on one feature of the group's decision task—namely, whether individuals were initially generally more favorable toward the risky or the cautious choice. Group discussion served to strengthen or polarize opinion in whatever direction individuals already favored. This pattern of *group polarization* turned out to be very general, applying not just to risk decisions, but to collective attitudes, jury verdicts, and many other judgments.

#### *Contingency Theories of Leader Effectiveness*

A long-standing question has been, "What makes a good leader?" A number of people have argued that a good leader's main job is to keep his or her group focused on the demands of the task, even if this means being somewhat directive and critical,



thereby undercutting his or her popularity in the group. Others argue that one cannot lead effectively without nurturing positive relations with the group, even if such an emphasis on leader-member relations reduces the group's task focus. By the late 1970s, many studies had attempted to see which style of leadership (friendly/relationship oriented versus withdrawn/task oriented) leads to more effective group performance, but there was no clear pattern to their results. Then Fred Fiedler suggested that the answer to this question depended on aspects of the group's task and the leader's relationship with the group. In particular, the more structured the group's task (e.g., group members understand what is expected, the tasks are simple and well understood), the higher the leader's "situational control." Fiedler showed that groups were more effective with a more task-oriented leader when situational control was either very low (strong, directive leadership was essential) or very high (the leader did not need to worry about nurturing the group), but that when situational control was moderate, the opposite occurred (a more relationship-oriented leader was most effective).

### *Social Combination and Group Performance*

One influential approach to studying group performance is the *social combination* approach. It asks, "Can one predict the group's ultimate decision or product from a knowledge of what the individual members bring to the group?" A considerable amount of research has shown that for many group tasks, the answer is "yes"—one can often find a rule, or scheme, that reliably linked individual preferences or abilities and the group's final decision or product. For example, in jury decision making it has been shown that the jury verdict is nearly always predictable from some variation on a majority-wins social decision scheme, which holds that the verdict preferred by a majority at the outset of deliberation will be the jury's final verdict. However, some research has shown that for certain group tasks, majorities routinely fail to prevail. For example, at simple arithmetic problems, an incorrect majority will routinely yield to a correct minority. Patrick Laughlin recognized that the appropriate social combination rule depended on a key feature of the group's task—whether or not it had a solution that could be

widely recognized and accepted by group members. He called tasks with such a solution *intellective tasks* and showed that advocates for the correct solution to these tasks could and did routinely prevail, even when their number was fairly small. However, larger factions usually prevailed at *judgmental tasks*, which have no such correct solution.

### *Summary*

Many more such examples could be given (e.g., whether groups fall short of their potential to generate creative ideas depends on whether one person's generation of an idea interferes or blocks other members' thinking or expression; whether group members socially loaf depends on whether the task permits individual members' contributions to be publicly identified). These and other examples illustrate the basic insight that what a group does depends critically on what it is trying to do (i.e., its task). It should be clear, though, that such demonstrations usually come to narrow conclusions. They tend to implicate particular task features (e.g., how well learned the task is, whether there is a correct answer) as important for particular group phenomena (e.g., social facilitation, social combination processes). Other scholars have taken a different approach by attempting to identify task features that help explain a wide range of group phenomena.

### **Group Task Taxonomies: The Top-Down Approach**

One popular approach to analyzing group tasks is to try to identify key features that differentiate such tasks. This approach starts from an examination of the full variety of tasks groups work on and then seeks to divide them into useful categories or dimensions. For example, Marvin Shaw identified six ways that group tasks differ: (1) their requirements for intellectual versus motor skills, (2) how difficult they are, (3) how interesting they are, (4) how familiar they are, (5) how much they require member cooperation, and (6) whether they have few or many solutions. In another such classification, Richard Hackman suggested that groups usually work on production, discussion, or problem-solving tasks.

Another approach is to focus on a few basic task features, and then link those features to interesting group variables or processes. This approach is best illustrated by an influential task taxonomy proposed by Ivan Steiner, who suggested three basic task features:

1. Is the work required of members on the task divisible? *Unitary tasks* (e.g., solving a math problem) do not have subparts that can be assigned to different group members; *divisible tasks* (e.g., building a house) do.

2. Does the task emphasize the quantity or the quality of the group's product? *Maximizing tasks* (e.g., bailing water out of a ship) emphasize quantity; *optimizing tasks* (e.g., solving a math problem) emphasize quality.

3. How must individual inputs be combined to yield a group product, that is, what are the task's prescribed combination processes? For this latter task feature, Steiner focused on simple, unitary tasks. For *additive tasks* (e.g., a group tug of war), the group product is a simple sum (or sometimes, average) of member inputs. For *disjunctive tasks* (e.g., a unitary math problem), the group must choose one member's input (preferably that of the most able member). For *conjunctive tasks* (e.g., a tethered mountain-climbing team), the group product is defined by the worst member's input. Finally, for *discretionary tasks* (e.g., a group judging how many jelly beans are in a jar), group members can combine member inputs in any way they choose.

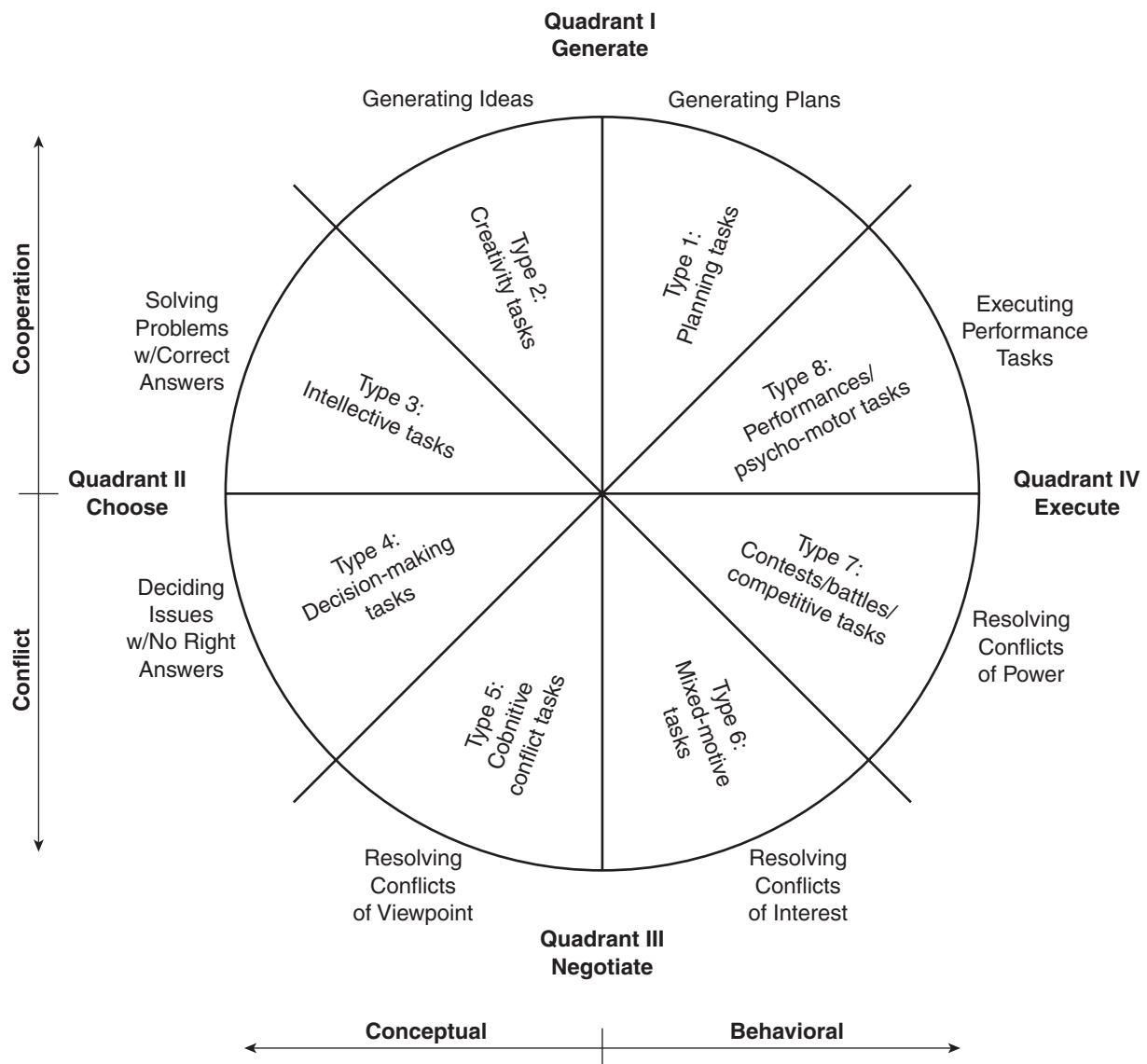
Steiner was then able to show how different variables should affect group performance differently for different types of tasks. So, for example, increasing a group's size or the heterogeneity of member ability should increase group performance at a disjunctive task, but reduce group performance at a conjunctive task.

Joseph McGrath combined the previous two approaches (Shaw's descriptive approach and Steiner's conceptual approach). His taxonomy, the *group task circumplex*, is pictured in Figure 1. McGrath proposed that there are eight types of tasks, which he arrayed like slices of a pie. The slices can first be divided into four quadrants, which distinguish the most basic differences in

what groups do. If one looks at the figure like a map, the two "northern" slices in Quadrant I include tasks where groups have to generate something, either plans (Type 1; e.g., an advertising campaign), or ideas (Type 2; e.g., creativity tasks). The "western" slices in Quadrant II include tasks where groups have to make choices among alternatives, either intellectual tasks with correct answers (Type 3; e.g., solving a math problem) or judgmental tasks without a correct answer (Type 4; e.g., judging a beauty contest). The "southern" slices in Quadrant III include tasks where group members have to negotiate something, either resolving opinion or value conflicts (Type 5; e.g., a group of politicians trying to hammer out a mutually acceptable political platform) or resolving conflicts of interest (Type 6; e.g., labor and management negotiators trying to reach agreement on a contract). Finally, the "eastern" slices in Quadrant IV include tasks where group members need to execute some action, which either involve conflict between groups or group members (Type 7; e.g., a basketball game) or do not involve conflict (Type 8; e.g., a group building a house). McGrath also suggests that there are two basic dimensions underlying these tasks—a vertical dimension dividing tasks that require higher levels of cooperation (those "above the equator") from those involving higher levels of conflict (those "below the equator"), and a horizontal dimension dividing tasks that focus on group members' intellectual or conceptual skills (the "western hemisphere") from those that require skilled overt behaviors (the "eastern hemisphere"). This taxonomy has many admirable qualities. It is comprehensive, potentially describing all the different kinds of tasks groups tackle. It is coherent, showing many of the ways that tasks are similar and different. Most importantly, it is conceptually powerful, in that it incorporates many of the task distinctions that have been shown to be important for group behavior.

## Conclusion

Human beings constantly draw distinctions because such distinctions can be useful in helping us describe, understand, and control the world we live in. Scholars who want to describe, understand, and control how groups function have found it useful to distinguish between the different



**Figure 1** McGrath's Group Task Circumplex

Source: Reproduced from Joseph E. McGrath, *Groups: Interaction and Performance*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984, Chapter 5. Reprinted with permission.

kinds of tasks that groups undertake. Although there is, as yet, no single model that fully describes and explains all the complexities of group life, considerable progress has been made in identifying useful distinctions regarding the tasks that groups confront.

Norbert L. Kerr

This entry is dedicated to the memory of Joseph E. McGrath.

*See also* Contingency Theories of Leadership; Group Performance; Group Polarization; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Job Design; Social Decision Schemes; Social Facilitation

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## GROUPTHINK

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*Groupthink* is the extreme concurrence-seeking displayed by decision-making groups that is predicted to result in highly defective decisions. The groupthink concept was first developed by Irving Janis in 1972 to explain such disastrous incidents as the United States's decision to invade the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, the failure of the United States military to foresee the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Great Britain's appeasement of Nazi Germany in World War II, and the decisions to escalate the Vietnam War and the Korean War. According to this perspective, groupthink is hypothesized to occur when particular antecedent conditions are present. These include high group cohesiveness, insulation from experts, limited search and appraisal of information, directive leadership, and high stress combined with low self-esteem and little hope of finding a better solution to a pressing problem than that favored by the group leader or influential members.

These conditions lead to extreme concurrence-seeking that in turn leads to two classes of faulty outcomes: symptoms of groupthink and symptoms of defective decision making. Symptoms of groupthink consist of the illusion of invulnerability (the group can do no wrong), collective rationalization, stereotypes of outgroups, self-censorship (individuals do not express any objections to the group decision), mindguards (group members who enforce conformity), and belief in the inherent morality of the group. Symptoms of defective decision making include incomplete survey of alternatives and objectives, poor information search,

failure to appraise the risks of the preferred solution, and selective information processing. These two categories of symptoms in turn are predicted to lead to highly defective decision making.

The concept of groupthink has had enormous popular appeal and captured the collective imagination of the public and analysts alike. For example, *groupthink* appeared as a dictionary term just 3 years after it was coined. In the popular press, the term is commonly used to refer to any group that appears to have made a poor decision without regard to existing evidence that conflicted with the group's choice. Researchers have continued to search for new examples of failed decisions that may support the groupthink theory. For example, recent work has used the groupthink concept to analyze the World Com accounting fraud incident, Nazi Germany's decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941, Ford Motor Company's decision to market the Edsel, Gruenthal Chemie's decision to market the drug thalidomide, the tragedy at Kent State during the Vietnam War, the Challenger and Columbia space shuttle tragedies, the European Union decision about imposing sanctions in the Chechnya conflict, and a city council's decision to ignore state-mandated earthquake preparation procedures.

### Research on Groupthink

Despite the popular appeal of the concept, empirical research evidence provides only equivocal support for the groupthink model. Case studies of decision making by intact groups frequently find inconsistent evidence for the complete model. Following the typical case study methodology, evidence for antecedents, symptoms, and consequences are inferred from archival documents and from interviews with observers and participants. For example, Bertram Raven's analysis of the decision-making processes of the Nixon White House suggested that the group's cohesion depended not on interpersonal liking (a typical definition of group cohesion) but rather on an esprit de corps based on the group members' desires to remain part of a prestigious team.

Similarly, analyses of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's fateful decision to launch the space shuttle Challenger also question the conceptualization of groupthink and the model

itself. Little evidence was found for the antecedent conditions of group cohesion (as defined by mutual attraction), lack of impartial leadership, and homogeneity of members' backgrounds, but some evidence was found that the launch team was in a highly stressful situation and for groupthink symptoms of illusion of invulnerability, rationalization, illusion of unanimity, pressure on dissenters, mindguards, and bias in processing information at hand. Evidence for other symptoms was inconclusive. In general, evidence supporting the complete groupthink model is limited, with only varying degrees of support for the existence of antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink and defective decision making.

Experimental studies have attempted to manipulate multiple antecedent conditions of groupthink while assessing groupthink symptoms and group decision effectiveness. In general, studies using traditional formulations of groupthink and its antecedent conditions have found only limited evidence for groupthink symptoms and no evidence for impaired group decision effectiveness. For example, research examining the effects of cohesion and leadership style (autocratic vs. participative) finds few effects consistent with the groupthink model. Cohesion rarely affects either groupthink symptoms or decision quality. Similarly, measures of decision quality and other symptoms tend to be unaffected by such conditions. However, one consistent finding supports the model's predictions. Groups with directive leaders or who are instructed to limit information sharing and discussion tend to do so.

In sum, research provides very limited support for the groupthink model and its traditional conceptualization. Both case and experimental studies question the causal sequences of the model, failing to document the full constellation of groupthink and defective decision-making symptoms and even the defective decision making that is supposedly the ultimate result of groupthink.

This lack of evidence has raised criticism about the theory that include (a) poor characterizations of the various components of the groupthink process, (b) poor specification of links between antecedent conditions and consequences, and (c) ambiguous definitions of the conditions under which groupthink should and should not occur. Responses to these criticisms and the lack of empirical research

evidence have taken two directions: examinations of other factors that might affect groupthink processes and reconceptualizations of the original model.

### Recent Developments

Several investigations have examined the impact of other variables on groupthink processes and outcomes and on the incidence of groupthink in novel contexts. Once again, results generally question the validity of the groupthink model and the utility of additional variables. Research examining factors such as accountability, certainty orientation, predisposition to conformity, and time pressure has produced limited support for the full groupthink model. In addition to examining the role of additional variables in producing groupthink, research has focused on investigating the incidence of groupthink in new contexts. As with investigations of other factors, only limited support has been obtained. For example, an analysis of archival news articles revealed that some groupthink factors (the salience of group membership, the positive evaluation of ingroup leaders, the negative evaluation of outgroup leaders, and the appearance of self-appointed mindguards) were higher during the Northern Ireland conflict. However, other factors were unaffected by the conflict.

Reconceptualizations and reformulations of the original groupthink model have focused on both refining the concept itself and exploring new approaches to defining the antecedent conditions. The social identity maintenance model of groupthink also was developed in response to the equivocal empirical support for the groupthink model. This perspective underscores the prominence of the group's social construction of its internal processes and external circumstances. According to this model, groupthink then becomes a process of concurrence-seeking that is directed at maintaining a shared positive view of the functioning of the group.

The model suggests that two antecedents of groupthink, cohesion and collective threat, are especially critical in producing groupthink as social identity maintenance. The first condition, cohesion that incorporates a social identity perspective, contributes to the development of a perception of the group as a unique identity, enhances

the development of a shared positive image of the group, and provides the basis upon which threat can operate. The second condition, a collective threat, is the catalyst for the intragroup processes that promote concurrence seeking and defective decision making. This approach has been supported in experimental studies in which the defective decisions associated with groupthink have been obtained and in case studies. However, all of the approaches discussed here require further testing and validation.

### Methods for Overcoming Groupthink

Irving Janis identified nine methods for preventing groupthink in decision-making groups. The methods were generally directed at overcoming the bias of the leader and promoting independent judgments and complete evaluation of all information. These methods included: (1) encouraging members to consult with outside experts to obtain alternative opinions, (2) assigning a devil's advocate (a member who would thoroughly question all group decisions) in each meeting, (3) asking members to consult with trusted associates, (4) assigning the role of critical evaluator to each member during all group meetings, (5) dividing the group into subgroups to pursue the same problem or issue, (6) requiring the group to construct alternative scenarios of any opponent's possible actions, (7) limiting the leader's expression of solutions preferences, (8) holding a second chance meeting after the decision is made to encourage reconsideration of alternative solutions, and (9) assigning independent groups to formulate solutions to the same problem or decision.

Janis noted that none of these strategies is a foolproof method for overcoming groupthink and that most involve significant risks. For example, he suggested that assigning the role of critical evaluator might lead to prolonged debates that would be difficult to resolve and costly in terms of time. It might also require special training for group members who are unaccustomed to such conflict. The use of multiple decision-making groups can diffuse responsibility and accountability. The involvement of large numbers of participants also may be costly in terms of time and money.

New perspectives on groupthink also suggest other drawbacks to these interventions. For

example, the social identity maintenance approach suggests that groups will be motivated to protect the group's identity and its image. In those instances, a group may use the recommended interventions to support its identity rather than enhance its decision-making processes. Thus, the group is likely to consult with outside experts and associates who support its preferred option. The group may also adopt superficial evaluation strategies that mimic true conflict about ideas but actually serve to reinforce and bolster its favored decision.

Other recommended strategies for overcoming groupthink have focused on interventions designed to reduce pressures for identity protection, to change the group's identity, and to stimulate constructive conflict (full evaluation of ideas, tasks, and decisions). Methods for reducing the need to protect the group's identity include the provision of an excuse or face-saving mechanism, the risk technique, and multiple role-playing procedures. Providing an excuse for potential poor performance appears to reduce the group's need to engage in identity-protection tactics and increases the group's focus on problem solving, in turn enhancing performance. The risk technique is a structured discussion situation designed to facilitate the expression and reduction of fear and threat. Finally, multiple role-playing procedures can be accomplished by having group members assume the perspectives of other constituencies with a stake in the decision or of another group member.

Another approach to overcoming groupthink is altering the group's identity. This approach is likely to be used when the identity is firmly entrenched and linked to a failed decision alternative. Procedures for stimulating constructive conflict include structured discussion principles and procedures for protecting minority opinions, as well as linking the role of critical evaluation to the group identity. One method is to provide training in discussion principles for the group leader or, preferably, for all members. A second is simply to expose group members to these recommendations; this approach appears to increase decision quality. Finally, constructive evaluation (as well as other interventions) can be made a part of the normative content of the social identity, as in jury instructions.

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*See also* Conformity; Deviance; Group Cohesiveness; Group Polarization; Normative Influence; Social Identity Theory

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## HATE CRIMES

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The term *hate crime* is of recent origin, dating from the late 1980s. Hate crimes constitute a class of criminal offense, defined by a country's laws, in which violence and other forms of aggression are perpetrated knowingly against members of a stereotyped minority group. While it is assumed that hatred is the principal cause of this aggression, it would be more accurate to categorize these actions as bias-motivated crimes. In the United States, bias crimes have long been recognized, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 offered protection based on an individual's race, color, religion, or national origin. From a modern perspective, sexual orientation is an omission from this federal list of protection. Any minority group whose members share a detectable attribute is a potential target for hate crimes.

Examples of hate crimes include physical assault, murder, and genocide; attacks on property; bullying and harassment at school or in the workplace; verbal threats or abuse; offensive graffiti, letters, posters, and pamphlets; and malicious complaints (e.g., to a local authority). Target groups include those defined by their ethnicity, nationality or national origins, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability. The evidence of hate crimes goes back to ancient times, but the widespread use of the term *hate crime* is modern. Popular interest in hate crimes reflects frequent reporting of such crimes in the media and an increased concern at the government and policy-making level to protect members

of minorities in their local, regional, and national communities. To fully understand hate crimes requires a knowledge of theory and research in prejudice and discrimination.

### Historical and Modern Targets

Examples of hate crimes from the past are not hard to find. Anti-Semitism in the pre-Christian era flourished in Egypt and Syria, triggered by the Jewish faith's insistence on monotheism. Similarly, Jews and early Christians were persecuted by the Romans for not recognizing the pantheon of gods. Other examples of anti-Semitism are medieval Christians labeling Jews the killers of Christ, and the Nazi Holocaust designed to obliterate Jews from the face of the earth.

The 20th century has witnessed systematic mass killings of Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda. Over the course of two centuries in the United States, bias-motivated intimidation and violence toward Native Americans has been frequent. Hate crimes received more public attention in 20th-century America with the lynching of Blacks, the erection of burning crosses on properties belonging to targeted families, and the painting of swastikas on synagogues.

More recent targets are gay men and lesbians. The United States Federal Hate Crime Statistics for 2006 reported the following order (and numbers) of bias offenses in five categories: race (4,737), religion (1,597), sexual orientation (1,415), ethnicity or nationality (1,233), and disability (94). The

most common targets within these categories were Blacks, Jews, gay men, Hispanics, and those with mental disabilities. Surveys in the United States have revealed that (a) more than 90% of homosexual people have reported being victims because of their sexuality and (b) one quarter of a student sample from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds admitted that they had verbally abused people they thought were homosexual.

As a hate crime, the murder in 1998 of Matthew Shepard received international attention. A 21-year-old gay college student in Wyoming, Shepard was kidnapped in a bar by two young White men. He was taken to a remote prairie where he was tied to a fence, whipped in the face with a gun until he lost consciousness, and left for dead in freezing weather. He was found a day later, but he died in the hospital. His killers admitted to laughing during the attack. The assailants were convicted, but they avoided the death penalty by plea bargaining and were helped when Shepard's mother appealed for clemency. Described at the time as a crime that shocked the nation, it became a rallying point for gay rights and also for promulgating tolerance of diversity.

### Theoretical Approaches

A key to understanding the origins of hate crimes is to apply what is known from social psychological research dealing with prejudice. The acceleration of anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930s, which was entwined with Nazi ideology, placed the explanation of prejudice high on social psychology's agenda. Several major theories of prejudice were developed in the decades that followed, in particular, several that offered accounts of why minority groups could become the victims of discrimination, including hate crimes.

#### *The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis*

One early and elaborate attempt at a theory to explain hate crimes was the frustration-aggression hypothesis. In 1939, John Dollard and Neal Miller and others argued that aggressive behavior arises from a preexisting frustration, with a mediating state of psychological disequilibrium that can be corrected only by aggression. In many cases the cause of frustration is intangible, such as the

economy. Because this hypothesis was a psychodynamic theory, derived partly from psychoanalytic principles, the authors argued that frustration-induced aggression is *displaced* onto an alternative target (a person or even an inanimate object) that can be hurt legitimately, without fear. In other words, a *scapegoat* is found.

Dollard and Miller linked the theory to the presence of prejudice in individuals and also applied it in a more general way to explain large-scale, intergroup aggression against minorities. If the cause of frustration is beyond reach, the need for aggression is displaced onto a weaker group, which functions as a scapegoat. From here, a search began for trends in bigoted violence that could be attributed to frustration arising from economic downturns. Historical examples included anti-Semitism, but Dollard's colleagues, Carl Hovland and Robert Sears, looked for supportive data closer to home. In a 1940 study, they noted that archival records in the southern United States across 50 years contained evidence of a relationship between an economic index (the price of cotton) and the incidence of racial aggression (the number of Blacks lynched). As the price of cotton fell (frustration), more Blacks were lynched (displaced aggression), even though the idea that Blacks were responsible for declining prosperity was far-fetched. However, when time-series analyses in later research were applied to contemporary data to test the link between economic conditions and hate crimes against minorities, there was scant support for the frustration-aggression hypothesis.

#### *The Authoritarian Personality*

There have been other approaches that have looked for the origins of prejudice based on personality characteristics. The most famous of these was a theory advanced by Theodor Adorno and his colleagues. Initially, they used a psychodynamic perspective in an attempt to trace the origins of anti-Semitism to a set of personality traits. As their research proceeded, they extended their argument to cover fascism, and then authoritarianism, since their data suggested that individuals who are prejudiced against one ethnic group were usually prejudiced against all minorities.

Such individuals are bigots and have an *authoritarian personality* that is defined by a constellation

of characteristics: a respect for and deference to authority and authority figures, an obsession with rank and status, a tendency to displace anger, resentment of weakness, an intolerance of uncertainty, and a need for a rigidly defined world. This syndrome of beliefs and behaviors originates in early childhood. Children whose parents adopt excessively harsh and disciplinarian practices to secure emotional dependence and obedience develop an ambiguity in which they both love and hate their parents. This ambiguity is stressful and seeks resolution. Owing to guilt and fear, the hatred cannot be expressed, so it is repressed and finds expression through displacement onto weaker others, while the parents and the power and authority they represent are idealized. This resolution of ambivalence provides an enduring framework for future life and is generalized to all authority figures. According to this theory, extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan would have large numbers of members fitting this personality profile, and at different times in their history such people would have little difficulty in carrying out extreme acts of violence against particular minorities, including Blacks, Jews, Catholics, and homosexuals.

### *Intergroup Perspectives*

A different approach to unraveling the causes of hate crimes comes from the field of intergroup relations. In 1972, Leonard Berkowitz applied the concept of *relative deprivation* to understanding how frustration could be retained as an underlying stimulus to collective unrest. The concept refers to people's feeling that their attainments fall short of their aspirations, and has two forms: (1) *egoistic* relative deprivation, where the shortfall is based on an individual making comparisons with other individuals, and (2) *fraternalistic* relative deprivation, where the shortfall is based on making comparisons between one's membership group and other groups.

The second form points to unrest as a consequence of frustration sensed by a whole group. This can be heightened during an economic downturn and could flair quite suddenly into violence against a comparison group. For example, in a context of rising unemployment, the 1992 Los Angeles riots erupted unexpectedly following the acquittal of White police officers accused of beating a Black

man, Rodney King. The assault had been captured on video and played on national TV. Against a background of deepening economic disadvantage, Blacks regarded the acquittal as a poignant symbol of the low value placed on American Blacks by White America. The riot started at the intersection of Florence and Normandie avenues, a relatively well-off Black neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles. A nearby liquor store was looted, cars were damaged, and the police were attacked. The police moved in reinforcements, but later withdrew in an attempt to reduce tension. The intersection was then in the hands of the rioters, who attacked Whites and Hispanics. Reginald Denny, a White truck driver who was driving through, was dragged from his cab and brutally beaten, a crime watched live on TV by millions and which came to symbolize the riots.

South Central Los Angeles is relatively typical of Black ghettos in the United States. However, the junction of Florence and Normandie was atypical, better off than other parts of the ghetto. It was a Black neighborhood where the poverty rate had dropped markedly during the 1980s. That the initial outbreak of rioting would occur there, rather than in a more impoverished neighborhood, is consistent with relative deprivation theories of social unrest.

Other theories do not deal directly with crime, but do address the issue of how prejudice arises. According to Muzafer Sherif's *realistic conflict theory*, stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice against members of an outgroup, as well as intergroup conflict, follow when the goals of groups collide by competing for scarce resources. Also relevant here is Henri Tajfel and John Turner's *social identity theory*, which is not constrained by focusing on group goals regarding tangible resources. Instead, the theory's main premise is that a group provides its members with a social identity, and in turn this should serve to make an individual member's self-concept more positive. Social comparisons with relevant outgroups do not always succeed in this way. When people perceive that their group has inferior status, believe that this status is illegitimate, and assume that there are viable alternatives, social competition is likely to ensue to create a positive social identity. Direct intergroup conflict often occurs, such as collective action, protests, and revolutions.

In summary, intergroup theories become relevant to hate crimes by pinpointing that individual crimes against members of a target group have their roots in supportive norms and often ideologies, that govern how ingroup members should behave toward minorities.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis; Genocide; Intergroup Violence; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Relative Deprivation; Scapegoating; Social Identity Theory

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## HIDDEN PROFILE TASK

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A *hidden profile task* is a method of distributing information among members of a decision-making group, leaving the optimal decision alternative hidden from members unless they thoroughly pool their unique knowledge. This task is an important tool in understanding when and why groups make decisions that fall short of their potential. Today more than ever, decision-making groups are composed of members with different expert knowledge.

The hope is that group members will thoroughly exchange information in their unique areas of expertise, helping the group to make an optimal decision. Unfortunately, research has shown that group discussion is an ineffective tool for pooling member expertise. Instead, group decisions tend to favor information that all the members knew before the discussion, thereby defeating the purpose of creating a group with diverse knowledge. Research using the hidden profile task has identified conditions under which group members are more likely to share their unique knowledge and help the group to make a better decision than any single member could have made alone. This entry looks at how the hidden profile task is used and discusses what it reveals about poor decision making and its remedies.

### Task Illustration

Hidden profile tasks typically are used in laboratory experiments on small decision-making groups. Groups may be charged with determining the guilty suspect in a homicide investigation, hiring the optimal job candidate, or selecting the best drug to market. In all cases, group members are given a finite set of decision alternatives and information about those alternatives. Some information about the alternatives is given to all group members. In addition to this shared or commonly known information, each member also receives information that no one else in the group receives. This unique knowledge is known as unshared information. A hidden profile task is one in which the shared information supports a suboptimal decision alternative, whereas the totality of information (shared and unshared) supports the optimal decision alternative.

As an illustration, imagine a three-person group choosing between two alternatives for a personnel selection task decision: Candidate A and Candidate B. In the total pool of information there are five pieces that support Candidate A and nine pieces that support Candidate B. Candidate B, therefore, is the better alternative. All three group members read the same five pieces of information that support Candidate A. That is, all information that supports Candidate A, the suboptimal alternative, is shared. In addition to this shared information, each group member reads a different set of three

pieces of supportive information about Candidate B. Individually, each member reads five pieces of information that support Candidate A and just three pieces that support Candidate B. Therefore, each member will enter the group deliberation preferring the same suboptimal candidate. Given that the group is charged with reaching a consensus on the best candidate, and all members already agree, they will have little motivation for discussing the information at length and hence will not discover that Candidate B is the better alternative.

The challenge is for group members to recognize that they have unique knowledge, thoroughly share that knowledge with each other, and be willing to change their initial decision preference. Unfortunately, several factors inhibit the likelihood that group members will share their unique knowledge and reach the best decision.

### Causes of Poor Performance

One reason why groups perform poorly on a hidden profile task is because of a discussion bias favoring shared information. When group members know a combination of shared and unshared information, they are more likely to mention first and later repeat shared than unshared information. Some scholars argue that the discussion bias favoring shared information results from simple probability. If group discussion of information is viewed as a random sampling process in which information is randomly sampled from members' minds, then shared information is probabilistically more likely to be discussed because there are more members' minds from which to select it (compared to unshared information, which resides in a single member's mind).

For the hidden profile task, the discussion bias leads members to give insufficient attention during deliberation to the very information that is critical for determining the optimal decision alternative. The result is poor group decisions. If unshared information supports the same decision alternative as shared information, then failure to discuss unshared information will not harm group choices. Therefore, the hidden profile task is the special case in which neglecting to discuss unshared information will harm group decisions.

Groups also perform poorly on a hidden profile task because individuals favor information that is

consistent with their preferences. In the hidden profile task, information is distributed such that members prefer a suboptimal decision alternative. Because the shared information supports the poor, yet preferred, decision alternative, group members evaluate this information more positively than the unshared information that is not preferred by all the members. If individuals are shown the entire pool of information after forming an initial preference for a decision alternative in a hidden profile task, individuals still positively evaluate shared information that supports their initial preference. The hidden profile task confounds shared information with information preference consistency, such that shared information is consistent with members' preferred alternative and unshared information is inconsistent with their preferences. In this way, the hidden profile task presents members with a twofold reason for avoiding unshared information—it is probabilistically unlikely to be sampled for discussion, and it is inconsistent with members' initial preferences.

Finally, information known or revealed to be shared is judged more important than unshared information, regardless of whether it is consistent with members' preferences. Shared information may acquire its value because it can be validated by others as relevant and accurate. Alternatively, if a member communicates unshared information, others must take the information at face value or question its authenticity. Because of the validation benefit that shared information possesses, those who communicate or know a lot of it (relative to others) are judged to be more capable decision makers than members who mention or know much unshared information. The evaluative benefits bestowed upon shared information and communicators of it (and likewise, the evaluative decrements associated with unshared information) may make it difficult for groups to successfully solve a hidden profile task.

### Remedies

More than two decades of research suggest potential remedies to the hidden profile problem faced by decision-making groups. One recommendation that helps groups is to take more time to discuss and reach a decision. Shared information is favored early in discussion, but it is less likely to be mentioned

later in discussion. Unshared information, in contrast, becomes increasingly more likely to be mentioned as group discussion progresses. If information exchange is viewed as a random sampling process, then unshared information is more likely to be sampled for discussion when group members run out of shared information to sample.

Diversity of opinion also facilitates a hidden profile solution. Despite the potential discomfort of dealing with a deviating opinion in the group, simply having one member who holds a different alternative preference from other members helps the group to reach the best decision in a hidden profile task. Group performance is aided equally when just one or all members of the group disagree on the preferred alternative. Opinion diversity benefits group decisions because it compels members to discuss information more completely and for a longer time compared to when all members initially agree. It also exposes members to information that is inconsistent with their preferences. Therefore, composing groups that have a diversity of opinions can help solve the problems that ensue when members have different information.

Finally, a hidden profile solution is more probable when members know one another's expertise. When group members are told of the domain in which each member holds unique knowledge, then members are more likely to discuss and remember this unshared information. Unshared information communicated by an expert may be more likely to be accepted as accurate and relevant than that mentioned by a nonexpert.

### Limitation

One limitation of the hidden profile research is that it has been conducted on participants in laboratory experiments. Little is known about the prevalence and function of hidden profiles in natural decision-making groups. Organizations are relying increasingly on cross-functional teams to perform work. These teams are composed of members who represent different units (and areas of expertise) in the organization. Often, each member holds unshared information that, if communicated, could help the group to make a better decision than any member could make alone. We can, therefore, speculate that some natural teams experience hidden profile tasks. Because members

rarely know whether their information is distributed as a hidden profile, it is wise to presume that it is and take the time to uncover the team's store of unshared information.

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*See also* Common Knowledge Effect; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Group Task; Hidden Profile Task; Opinion Deviance

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## HOLOCAUST

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The term *holocaust* derives from the Greek word for “sacrifice by fire” and refers to the systematic, state-sponsored attempt by Nazi Germany to exterminate the Jewish inhabitants of Europe, primarily during the World War II years of 1941 to 1945. It marked the final chapter of an escalating persecution of Jews that began as early as 1933. This entry begins with a brief history of the events and then discusses social psychological research that attempts to explain how the decision to act against the Jews might have been reached and why perpetrators and bystanders participated or stood silent.

### History of the Holocaust

Soon after Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party gained power in 1933, German Jews found themselves faced with a rapid succession of decrees that increasingly stripped them of their civil rights. The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 rendered marriage or any sexual contact between Jews and those of

German heritage (Aryans) a crime. State-sponsored violence soon followed the escalating discrimination against Jews. In one of the most massive outbreaks of violence, Nazi storm troopers destroyed thousands of Jewish businesses and burned hundreds of synagogues during the Kristallnacht (Night of the Long Knives) on November 9, 1938. In the wake of this attack, Jews were deprived of the right to own property.

Throughout the 1930s, increasing numbers of Jews were incarcerated in concentration camps initially established for the purpose of detaining political opponents and others deemed enemies of the Third Reich. In the wake of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*) moved behind German lines and, aided by the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), militarized police battalions, and units of Germany's regular army (*Wehrmacht*), killed roughly a million Jews along with thousands of Soviet and Communist party officials. That same year also marked increasing deportations of Jews from countries under German control to recently established concentration camps in Poland. Ghettos in major Polish cities were established to detain those still awaiting deportation.

By 1942, most of Europe and with it millions of European Jews were under German control, making it possible for the Nazis to carry out their extermination with greater speed and efficiency. To that end, a group of undersecretaries of state and officials of the Nazi party convened a conference in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to plan the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem in Europe." Europe was to be combed from West to East, and all remaining Jews were to be deported to concentration camps in eastern Europe where they would be "eliminated by natural causes" stemming from a combination of hard labor and starvation. Those who survived this treatment were to be "treated accordingly." The "Final Solution" was carried out with lethal efficiency. By the time allied forces liberated the concentration camps, approximately 6 million Jews—two thirds of the prewar Jewish population of Europe—had perished in the Holocaust.

### Social Psychological Perspectives

An extensive body of scholarship on the Holocaust can be found in a number of academic disciplines,

including history, philosophy, and political science. Social psychological research has addressed three specific and interrelated key issues:

1. The decision issue: How could one group (the German people) become convinced that another group (the Jews) deserved to be killed?
2. The perpetrator issue: How could the perpetrators bring themselves to carry out the systematic killing of men, women, and children, and how could they come to terms with what they had done?
3. The bystander issue: How could so many stand by passively and watch as the Holocaust unfolded?

### *The Decision Issue*

How could the German people become convinced that the Jews deserved to be killed? Most cases of genocide, the Holocaust included, were preceded by a set of difficult life conditions that are experienced by a majority. Whether or not difficult life conditions lead to violence depends on three factors: whether they are perceived as a threat to a group's collective ego and create widespread frustration, the extent and nature of prejudice against an outgroup, and the influence of powerful instigators of violence.

By almost all accounts, Germany felt humiliated by the terms of the Versailles Treaty that formally ended World War I. It called for harsh financial reparations and the ceding of territories historically considered German, as well as the occupation of the Rhineland by France, its former enemy. Many Germans found it difficult to reconcile the feeling of national humiliation with their deep-seated belief that their country was the most sophisticated, culturally refined, and advanced nation in Europe. Many individuals respond to threats to their inflated self with aggression and violence toward others, especially those they perceive as the source of the threat. The political, economic, and social chaos of the Weimar Republic, along with the worldwide economic depression that started in 1929, led to a further deterioration of living conditions and instilled a widespread sense of frustration, another well-known catalyst for aggression.

Neither threatened egotism nor widespread frustration is sufficient or necessary for collective violence to occur. Also, neither predicts which group will serve as the scapegoat to be singled out for violence. At the time of Hitler's rise to power, Jews made up only about 1% of Germany's population. Most of them were highly assimilated, thinking of themselves as Germans by nationality and Jews by religion, and many had records of distinguished military service during the First World War. They did not comprise an outgroup that could be identified based on easily observable features or by virtue of living in different areas than the majority, like most Jews in eastern Europe.

The integration of Jews into German society was so complete that many had attained positions of power and prominence in business, politics, and the arts. However, this may have rendered them subject to *envious prejudice*, a form of prejudice generally directed at high-status groups that are perceived to be in a competitive relationship with the majority. Targets of envious prejudice are often feared, yet grudgingly admired for their competence and achievements. It was all too easy for Germans to accept the Nazi propaganda that the Jews had the power to work in secret to undermine the nation's political and economic institutions for their own gain.

Unlike the virulent eliminationist anti-Semitism some erroneously suspected to have been prevalent among a majority of Germans prior to 1933, envious prejudice provided a form of resentment that was amplified by propaganda and escalating discriminatory policies devised by powerful instigators. The combination of these forces rendered the Jews the scapegoat for Germany's poor social and economic conditions. A simple sharing of this sentiment among the population may further have increased the strength and confidence with which the ingroup endorsed anti-Semitic prejudice by way of group polarization, that is, the tendency of attitudes to intensify as a result of group discussion.

#### *The Perpetrator Issue: The Continuum of Destructiveness*

How could the perpetrators carry out the systematic killing of men, women, and children, and how could they afterward come to terms with what they had done? Genocidal killings are almost

never the result of spontaneous and frenzied outbreaks of violence stemming from strong prejudice against an outgroup. To date, the Holocaust remains the most horrific example of an extermination project that was well planned, organized, and coordinated. It took an opportunistic leader to increase the propensity for violence and further escalate it once it was started, thus creating a continuum of destructiveness that allowed perpetrators to become increasingly brutal in the treatment of their victims. Social psychologists have identified several key processes that help explain how perpetrators may proceed along the continuum of destructiveness. Chief among them are reduction of cognitive dissonance, dehumanization, and action identification.

Cognitive dissonance results whenever individuals' actions conflict with their attitudes. To solve this conflict and reduce the dissonance, individuals frequently change their attitudes to match their behavior (to the extent that the behavior has not been compelled, has already occurred, and cannot be undone). For example, a soldier asked to round up Jews for relocation may have found that he could not do so without being coercive. Although he may initially have been reluctant to handle his victims in a rough manner, if given the assignment again, he may be more willing to be coercive and even violent from the start. The reason is that he may have adjusted his attitude toward his victims in light of his earlier behavior. He may have justified his action by adopting the attitude that his victims deserved the treatment he dispensed.

Attitude change of this sort was likely aided by the pervasive dehumanization of the Jews during the Nazi years. The escalating elimination of civil rights may have been the first step in adopting the view that the Jews were unlike the Germans. Nazi propaganda stressed the nonhuman nature of the Jews by comparing them to a cancer that was growing within Europe. And the infamous 1930s propaganda movie *The Eternal Jew* interspersed images of Jewish businessmen going about their work with images of plague-infested rats squirming through the alleys of German cities.

Just as important, the inhuman conditions of the concentration camps, as well as the similarly inhuman conditions under which Jews were rounded up at gunpoint and herded into railcars



designed for transporting animals, further contributed to the perception that the victims were, indeed, less than human. Ironically, the perpetrators may have been oblivious to the fact that they themselves created the inhuman conditions they subsequently used to justify the inhuman treatment.

At least some perpetrators may have been able to aid in the Holocaust because they were in denial about the meaning of their actions. Generally, individuals can identify their actions on several levels of abstraction. Loading people on trains, for example, could be construed as simply following orders (a low level of abstraction) or contributing to the manifest destiny of the German people (a high level of abstraction). This undoubtedly allowed many perpetrators to think of what they were doing as something other than “killing Jews.” Related to that, individuals’ self-deception about the nature of their actions may have further reduced any reluctance to aid in the killing. The Nazi death machine relied heavily on euphemisms (for example, “relocation for labor duty in the East”), and the highly organized nature of the Holocaust further promoted obedience to a malevolent authority. Thus, even Adolf Eichmann, the architect of the “Final Solution,” could proclaim at his trial in Jerusalem that he never personally killed a Jew.

### *The Bystander Issue: The Continuum of Passivity*

Although the massive scale of the Holocaust required the active participation of thousands of perpetrators, it could not have been carried out without the passive complicity of millions of bystanders who stood by as increased discrimination turned into genocide. Their acquiescence can be best understood through the psychological processes that lead bystanders along the continuum of passivity. Chief among them are dissonance reduction, obedience, conformity, pluralistic ignorance, and a belief in a just world.

Just as perpetrators may have changed their attitudes toward their victims based on their actions, bystanders may have changed their attitudes to match their inaction. Not speaking up against legislation that discriminated against Jews or failing to intervene when neighbors were dragged from their homes could be rationalized by bystanders who

changed their attitudes to justify their inaction. At the same time, many bystanders may have complied with the Nazi policies because of coercive pressures in the form of stiff penalties for failure to obey them.

Although conformity has often been cited as contributing to the widespread apathy, it is perhaps better explained by reference to pluralistic ignorance. Because the Nazis went to great lengths to disguise the Holocaust from the majority of the population, many Germans may have been unsure about what was really going on and may have taken a lack of concern or action on the part of others as an indication that perhaps nothing was wrong (for example, that Jews were merely being resettled rather than sent to their deaths).

Finally, inaction may also have been promoted by an ego-defensive belief in a just world. This belief implies that people get what they deserve, especially when we are unable to help them. To the extent that the Germans, by and large, failed to take action, they may have adopted the view that the Jews deserved what they got.

Although social psychologists have discovered a number of processes among individuals and groups that help explain why and how the Holocaust happened, their attempts in this regard should not be taken as trying to “explain it away.” Rather, understanding these processes may ultimately aid in keeping the promise “Never again!”

Ralph Erber

*See also* Anti-Semitism; Bystander Effect; Cognitive Consistency; Dehumanization/Infrhumanization; Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis; Genocide; Group Polarization; Relative Deprivation

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## HOMOPHILY

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*Homophily* is the tendency for there to be higher rates of contact between similar people than between dissimilar people. It is the social process reflected in that old bit of folk wisdom: “Birds of a feather flock together.” Homophily is crucial to the study of group processes because it conditions every interaction. It affects who people interact with, how interactions are structured, the process of group formation, and the course of interactions between groups. This entry describes the basic types of homophily, their origins, and their social implications.

The observation that “like attracts like” is by no means a recent pronouncement. It was Plato who stated that “similarity begets friendship” and Aristotle who noted that some people like those who are like themselves. Stated another way, homophily means that similarity breeds connection. Similarity in the case of homophily refers to *ascribed characteristics*, such as gender, race, and age, and *achieved characteristics*, such as education, social class, and occupation. In essence, homophily organizes society. Because individuals are more likely to interact with those similar to themselves, traits are concentrated in groups.

At this point it is useful to distinguish between homogeneity and homophily. *Homogeneity* is a descriptive term that refers to the degree of similarity within a group or relationship. Thus homogeneity is a way to characterize similarity in groups, while homophily describes the mechanism that leads to homogeneity. In other words, groups become homogeneous due to homophily.

### Types of Homophily

Some of the tendency to associate with similar others is a by-product of our more limited opportunities to interact with people who are different from ourselves. This type of homophily is called induced homophily. *Induced homophily* refers to the tendency for interaction partners to be limited by social structure in ways that generate homogeneous groups and relations. Induced homophily stands in contrast to *choice homophily*, which refers to the tendency of people to choose interaction partners who are similar to themselves.

In naturally occurring groups and relationships, it often is difficult to know how much observed homogeneity occurs as a result of induced homophily and how much results from choice homophily. So, in empirical contexts, researchers often begin by taking account of baseline homophily. We can think of *baseline homophily* as the amount of similarity within relationships that would be expected by chance, given the choices available. For example, taking into account population information only, we would not expect any baseline homophily based on sex, since sex is an equally distributed characteristic. Baseline expectations would be that an individual would have 50% male friends and 50% female friends. Therefore, if 90% of a woman’s friends are female, it indicates that something other than chance is guiding formation of her friendships. That “something” is called inbreeding homophily. *Inbreeding homophily* refers to any amount of homophily over and above what probability would predict based on the relative sizes of the groups in the population. In the example above, we would interpret the difference between the expected and observed rates of similarity (40%) as evidence of inbreeding homophily.

Baseline homophily reflects induced homophily. It tells us about the most basic, population-level constraints on our choices of interaction partners. It is more difficult to isolate choice homophily. Inbreeding homophily *can* reflect choice homophily, or ingroup preferences. However, inbreeding homophily can *also* be induced by social structures.

Consider the example of race in the United States. Taking into account the differential sizes of various racial and ethnic groups in the United States, a baseline model would predict a substantial degree of homophily based on race for members of the largest group (Whites), simply because of higher rates of exposure to ingroup members. In the 2000 census, 74% of U.S. residents self-identified as White only, while 12% self-identified as Black or African American only. Based only on these population distributions, high rates of baseline race homophily among Whites and low rates of baseline race homophily among Blacks would be expected. Whites whose networks are more than 74% White or Blacks whose networks are more than 12% Black would provide evidence of inbreeding homophily. Such inbreeding homophily could not automatically be interpreted as reflective

of choice homophily, however. Individuals interact within families, neighborhoods, schools, religious institutions, and workplaces that are all segregated to various degrees by race and ethnicity. Taking into account the amount of segregation within these various institutional settings, a substantial degree of homophily can be predicted on the basis of race and ethnicity, simply because of higher rates of exposure to ingroup members—well above and beyond the constraints imposed by population-level distributions.

Inbreeding homophily can also reflect the similarity that arises indirectly as a result of (induced or choice) homophily along other social dimensions that are correlated with the dimension under consideration. For example, friendships, romantic relationships, and group associations tend to be homophilous along the dimensions of wealth and education. In the United States, there is a correlation between race and wealth and between race and education. Consequently, when individuals choose interaction partners who are more like themselves in education, this will tend to consolidate relations along dimensions of race as well. In sum, then, inbreeding homophily reflects a variety of processes including both induced and choice homophily.

How exactly does the social environment induce homophily? The primary means is through opportunity structures. The most basic constraint on homophily is proximity. It is easier for us to form connections with individuals and groups that are closer in physical distance. Distance shapes our relationships on a local and global scale. At the most basic level, it is easy to see that a child living in Estonia and a child living in Canada have a very slim chance of becoming close friends. At a more local level, though, proximity remains a powerful constraint on homophily. We tend, in general, to like better those with whom we are more familiar. We feel more positively toward people we see more often at school, at work, where we live, and at businesses and other institutions we patronize. As mentioned above, these environments, along with other groups and organizations (e.g., book clubs, athletic teams, volunteer groups, religious institutions), tend to be already segregated along a variety of dimensions like class, race, religion, and sometimes sex. Therefore, the activities of our daily life tend to put us into more contact, and

often more meaningful contact, with people who are similar to us in a variety of ways.

It is important to keep in mind that homogeneity has sources other than homophily. Over time, we are likely to become more similar to those with whom we interact regularly. We learn things from one another and influence each another's ideas and attitudes and so become more similar in the amount of shared knowledge, attitudes, and values over time. We also have more of the same experiences and become members of groups to which our friends and acquaintances already belong. In these ways, individuals can become more like their friends and associates over time through a process of social influence rather than through homophily. With nonascribed characteristics such as attitudes, values, hobbies, and so on, it can be difficult to distinguish homophily from social influence. Consequently, some of the more compelling evidence for homophily comes from the study of ascribed characteristics. Ascribed characteristics are aspects of individuals, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and religion, that it is difficult or impossible to change in response to interactions with others. Accordingly, when there is homogeneity based on ascribed characteristics researchers can more confidently interpret the differences as resulting from a combination of induced and choice homophily rather than from social influence.

### Bases and Patterns of Homophily

In the United States, a variety of different types of network relations (including romantic relationships, friendships, discussion partners) tend to be homophilous with regard to ascribed characteristics. Race- and ethnicity-based homophily in our culture is observed at rates that are well above baseline expectations. Blacks' networks show higher rates of inbreeding homophily than do Whites' networks. Due to the drastically lower rates of baseline homophily discussed above, however, Blacks nonetheless have much more heterogeneous networks. In contrast, because male and female groups of equal size were observed, it is clear that homophily based on sex is almost entirely a result of inbreeding homophily. Gender homophily becomes visible in childhood and starkly structures friendships and play groups among school-age children. Age is one of the strongest bases of

homophily within friendships in the United States. Our closest friends, especially, tend also to be close to us in age. Our friendship and marriage relations are also homophilous by religion in the United States, as in many cultures. As with race and ethnic homophily, the largest groups (e.g., Protestants in the United States) display less inbreeding, but nonetheless end up with more homogeneous networks than smaller groups (e.g., Catholics and Jews in the United States).

Some research suggests that it is not just similarity, but the right amount of similarity, that is important for forming and maintaining ties. Marilynn Brewer's theory of optimal distinctiveness proposes that a balance is struck between fitting in and standing out. While being too unique may result in expulsion from the group, being too similar may contribute to loss of autonomy. A balance may happen naturally with homophily on one dimension complemented by heterophily on other dimensions.

Research has shown that, as an impetus for structuring networks and guiding interaction, homophily's effects can become more or less important throughout the life course. Gender and race are influential in homophilic processes in peer group formation during childhood. As individuals enter adolescence and adulthood, gender homophily becomes less forceful in structuring relationships. Specifically, most individuals in romantic relationships pursue members of the opposite sex. Research has also addressed how homophilic processes change as individuals adopt new identities and roles. For example, a new mother may seek out social groups where other individuals are also new mothers.

The effects of homophily may also vary over time. While it is true that homophily still rules as a guiding force in many kinds of interpersonal relationships, there is evidence to suggest that its effects are lessening, at least in certain domains. For example, while race homophily is still powerful in structuring intimate relationships, marriage between individuals of different races is becoming increasingly common.

### Consequences of Homophily

Homophily may have some benefits for individuals. Research suggests that people may benefit

most from the social support of network members who are similar to themselves in important ways. People who are going through major life transitions, for example, tend to handle those changes better when they have support from people who have experienced those same changes.

A potential negative outcome for decision-making groups is groupthink. Groupthink is a type of decision making that happens when a group tries to reach a consensus without properly and critically analyzing all possibilities. A cohesive group that is composed of highly similar individuals may reach a faulty conclusion when little or no dissent is expressed.

Homophily is critically involved in the processes described by social identity theory. Social identity theory states that people cognitively place themselves and others into categories. Then, individuals will form groups according to those categories. Finally, a group will compare itself to other groups, in an effort to view itself as superior. Homophily may drive people to categorize others according to their similarity to and difference from themselves. People's need to distinguish between those who are similar to them (i.e., the ingroup) and those who are dissimilar (i.e., the outgroup) and to assign value to these similarities and dissimilarities (i.e., "my group is better than your group") can lead to polarization between groups.

Because homophily increases people's chances of forming bonds with others who are similar to themselves, it tends to localize traits within networks. When people spend more time with those who are similar to themselves in age, gender, religion, and/or ethnicity, they are also spending more time with people who are similar in terms of shared experiences, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, and so on. This increases homogeneity within networks.

*Dawn T. Robinson and Laura Aikens*

*See also* Common-Identity/Common-Bond Groups; Group Formation; Groupthink; Optimal Distinctiveness; Social Identity Theory; Social Networks; Sociometric Choice

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## HOMOPHOBIA

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The term *homophobia* refers to the fear of or concern about being associated with homosexuality. Definitions used by social science researchers and theorists vary with regards to semantics. For example, some definitions state the fear as irrational; others specify that the fear is directed toward homosexual persons, homosexual behaviors, generalized belief systems, or some combination of these. However, there is overwhelming consensus that the term *homophobia* stems from the notion that homosexuality (actual or perceived) is devalued by society and that heterosexuality is the norm. There is also agreement among sociologists and gender theorists that attitudes and actions that result from this fear are a form of social control that supports intolerance. It should also be noted that this term has no direct clinical or medical association.

### Background and History

Seeking to label the prejudice toward homosexuals, psychologist George Weinberg (1972) coined the term *homophobia* to explain the “irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals.” Consistent with this term, early applications framed homophobia as an individual attribute, in which antigay prejudices are rooted in a person’s psychological makeup, without regard to wider structural sources of antigay prejudices and variations in attitudes held toward gay men and lesbians. Critics of the term argued that its suffix, *phobia*, implies that such fears and attitudes are inherently irrational and dysfunctional.

While earlier scholarship typically employed the term *homophobia* to describe the antigay attitudes of individuals, currently it is more often used to refer to the attitudes, social ideologies, behaviors, and belief systems of groups. At the societal level, the term *homophobia* has been used in congruence with the terms *heterosexism* and *heteronormativity*—all of which refer to the social opposition to same-sex desire. Gender theorists further assert that this opposition is highly associated with patriarchal ties and male dominance.

Homophobia is manifested at both the individual and social levels. At the individual level, homophobia is the fear of being identified as homosexual or as valuing homosexuality. However, the individual level and social level are linked, since society and culture dictate what is considered to be “gay” or “homosexual” and the treatment of certain classes of people. Thus, when homophobia occurs at the individual level it is still nested within the social level.

Attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexual issues are not evenly distributed among individuals and subgroups in society. Empirical research suggests that attitudes toward gay men and lesbians vary based on sex, age, race and ethnicity, social class, education, political and religious affiliation, and whether or not an individual has known a gay person. Cross-culturally, men are generally more homophobic than women. Studies in the United States consistently find that individuals who are older, less educated, and reside in rural areas express relatively high levels of prejudice against gay men and lesbians. Also, those with fundamentalist religious affiliations, those who frequently attend religious services, and those affiliated with conservative and Republican political parties tend to have higher levels of antigay prejudice. Individuals who have personally known a gay person manifest the lowest levels of prejudice, especially if the person is a close friend or family member. Individuals with lower levels of prejudice, such as women and the highly educated, are more likely to experience interactions with an openly gay person. Research exploring levels of prejudice among racial and ethnic minorities is less consistent. It suggests that racial and ethnic minorities are more prejudiced against gay men and lesbians than are their White counterparts. It has been suggested that this difference is due to White women’s

more favorable attitudes toward gay men and lesbians; however, there may also be a spurious relationship with class and education. Research also shows that interpersonal contact may not be as significant in shaping attitudes in all cultures. For example, the belief that homosexuality is a choice is a greater predictor of Black prejudices against gay people in America than the lack of interpersonal contact.

Some cultures view homosexuality as a White or American and European phenomenon. For example, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claimed in a 2007 speech that there are no homosexuals in Iran. This statement followed the 2005 execution of two men for alleged homosexual activity. These actions not only legitimated homophobia in Iran, but also illustrated how social institutions, including but not limited to the media, religion, and governments, perpetuate homophobic attitudes and discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

Gay men generally encounter more pronounced homophobia than do lesbians. However, in societies where social pressures on women to marry are great, such as India, lesbians may be more stigmatized than gay men. In America, homosexuals from racial and ethnic minorities and those with lower levels of education and income encounter greater levels of homophobia. Studies have found that young homosexuals are more likely to experience extreme acts of homophobia than are adult homosexuals. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth are also more likely to use drugs, experience homelessness, participate in sex work, and commit suicide than their heteronormative counterparts.

As with racism and sexism, homophobia is manifested in many forms, including but not limited to malicious gossip, name-calling and bullying, acts of intimidation, vandalism, isolation, rejection, death threats, and physical assaults at the individual level, as well as broad scale discrimination in the workplace, community, or by authority of the government at the societal level. Homophobia can also be internalized, where individuals struggle to resolve social (and often religious) beliefs concerning homosexuality and their own individual desires. This can lead to depression, violence, and even suicide.

Social theorists argue that homophobia and its manifestations not only enforce intolerance toward

gay men and lesbians but also intolerance of anyone not within the dominant culture, and foster a climate of prejudice including sexism and racism. From a micro-level viewpoint, homophobia should then be lessened in individuals through education, and larger scale social change would have to occur to affect homophobia at the macro level.

### Social Distance

In addition to conveying antigay prejudices and attitudes, homophobia is a way to solidify ingroup or outgroup associations and individual identities. Social psychological theories of identity suggest that behaviors can protect identities and indicate individuals' social group while simultaneously distancing members from outgroups. Thus, homophobic actions are a way to socially distance individuals from homosexuals and to reaffirm heterosexual identities in a heteronormative culture. This prevents heterosexuals (or people who want to be identified as heterosexual) from being associated with, labeled as, or treated as a homosexual. In an extension of this concept, a society that devalues homosexuality and associates it with negative (e.g., abnormal or immoral) behavior may have members who seek to socially distance themselves from the devalued behavior in order to reaffirm their identity as good and moral people.

As a category of people, homosexuals are devalued and have a lower status than heterosexuals and as such face greater social scrutiny and harsher punishments. In his work on stigma, Erving Goffman sought to understand how individuals, including homosexuals, gain, lose, and defend claims of status. Overall he found that homosexuals were stigmatized because homosexuality was devalued by society and only when homosexuals could "pass" as heterosexual were they afforded the same status and privileges as heterosexuals. Status construction theories seek to explain how group interaction contributes to structures of inequality. Perceived or actual sexual orientation may be one way in which interaction is ordered, and homophobia is a result of diminished status in that individuals and institutions do not want to be associated with devalued statuses.

Initial definitions of homophobia did not account for why some groups of people are

more homophobic than others. In response to this omission and in seeking to explain why men tend to be more homophobic than women, social and gender theorists began exploring the link between gender and homophobia. The body of literature generated by these theorists asserts that homophobia has important commonalities with sexism—both involve prejudice against gender nonconformity. General feminist thought suggests that what heterosexuals find threatening about homosexuality is that men are not being “men” and that women are not being “women.” Therefore, one way to punish individuals for gender nonconformity is to associate them with homosexuality, which leads to devaluing their status regardless of their actual sexual orientation. According to Suzanne Pharr, homophobia then becomes “a weapon of sexism” and gender conformity.

According to this analysis, in affirmation of the male identity, men must reject what is unmanly. Thus, to be “a man” in contemporary American society is to be sexist and homophobic—to be hostile toward the feminine, toward homosexuals and persons perceived as homosexual, and especially toward gay and effeminate men. R. W. Connell introduces the idea of a “hegemonic” masculinity that is organized around the psychological and social dominance over women, but which also enables the domination of other men. In explaining demonstrations of masculinity and dominance, Michael S. Kimmel asserts that men are under constant threat that they may be discovered as insufficiently masculine and therefore they experience extreme pressure to conform to an ideal masculinity that is unattainable. According to Kimmel, “homophobia” is the fear of being “unmasculine,” or feminine. Work focusing on attitudes toward lesbians seems to fit this fear less well; however, the prevalent suggestion is that men are threatened by the idea that women could live without men.

One of the most cited psychological studies, by Henry Adams, Lester Wright, and Bethany Lohr, found that higher levels of homophobia are associated with greater homosexual arousal in men. It is argued that this study empirically demonstrates Freud’s “reaction formation,” in which socially unacceptable impulses are converted into opposing behaviors as a way to mask the unacceptable impulses from society.

Another important study regarding homophobia, conducted recently by social psychologist Robb Willer, proposes and tests the masculine overcompensation thesis, which asserts that men display extreme demonstrations of masculinity as a reaction to masculine insecurities. Drawing on “reaction formation” and incorporating theories of masculinity, Willer applies theories of identities to show that overcompensation-type masculine behaviors are exhibited by men in an effort to protect their identities as men and indicate their social group while simultaneously distancing themselves from outgroups, such as women and homosexuals. Willer gave randomly determined feedback on a gender identity survey to men and women that suggested they were either masculine or feminine. Participants were then asked to fill out a series of surveys designed to assess measures of masculinity, including attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexual issues. Women showed no variation based on the feedback; however, men given feedback that threatened their masculinity expressed more negative attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexual issues than men given feedback confirming them as masculine.

More research that addresses homophobia has focused on men than on women. In addition, few studies explore why attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians are generally less negative than those toward gay men. There has also been little discussion of intentionality and whether individuals are aware that their homophobic attitudes and behaviors are homophobic.

### Importance

Homophobia influences many of our daily interactions and social identities. Research on homophobia is important because it reveals an important way in which people and social groups are stigmatized and the strength of the stigma to shape attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions. Homophobia is especially powerful because it has a pervasive effect on members of society via gender ideologies. In addition, it affects gay men and lesbians, and those perceived as gay and lesbian, through acts of intimidation, discrimination, and violence. Gay men and lesbians also have less access to social resources than do heterosexuals

and experience higher rates of substance abuse, depression, and suicide. By and large, homophobia provides a basis for unequal treatment, justifications for negative consequences, and support for the status quo.

*D’Lane R. Compton*

*See also* Deviance; Discrimination; Dominance Hierarchies; Feminism; Gender Roles; Prejudice; Reference Groups; Sexism; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## IDENTIFICATION AND COMMITMENT

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Groups rarely have complete control over members and, therefore, need to rely on them to behave in ways that benefit the group even when they are not being monitored. Whether this occurs depends largely on group members' attitudes toward the group. These attitudes are embodied in two closely related psychological constructs, *identification* and *commitment*. Across academic disciplines, researchers as well as practitioners who work with and in groups have investigated the conditions under which group members commit to a group, its work, and its values and the ways in which identifying with a group affects their self-concept. Researchers have viewed knowledge of identification and commitment as essential to understanding how people feel about the groups to which they belong, what they would be willing to do for those groups, and what they receive in return for their loyalty.

People's identification with and commitment to a group corresponds to their performance within it, which is the primary reason why organizational psychologists have been so interested in these phenomena. Typically, researchers have explored the bases for a person's attachment to a group and attempted to predict how it influences the willingness to transcend strict job descriptions to accomplish tasks necessary for the organization's well-being. They also have examined how

attachment influences people's desire to remain with or leave an organization.

Over the years, researchers have developed a variety of approaches to studying people's commitment to groups, resulting in some conceptual ambiguity. This has left lingering questions about the attitudes and behaviors constituting commitment, as well as about the factors that cause some people to be more or less committed to a group and the corresponding consequences of different levels of commitment. This entry discusses the approaches psychologists and group researchers have taken to the concept of commitment and how identification relates to commitment. It then examines the consequences of commitment for group behavior and how groups cultivate commitment among members.

### Dimension Models of Commitment

In 1986, Charles O'Reilly and Jennifer Chatman argued that the myriad definitions of and approaches to commitment contain the unifying premise that a core element of people's commitment is their psychological attachment to a group. Thus committed individuals willingly act in the interest of the group because the group provides them with a connection they need; that is, it contributes to their psychological well-being. Seen from this perspective, commitment is both fundamentally affective, characterized by the bonds that develop between an individual and a group, and motivational, driving individual actions that benefit the group.

Equally important, O'Reilly and Chatman stressed that rather than being unidimensional, commitment consists of multiple dimensions. Drawing on Herbert Kelman's research on attitude and behavior change, they identified three independent dimensions of commitment: *compliance*, *identification*, and *internalization*. Subsequently, John Meyer and Natalie Allen developed a model of commitment with three similar dimensions of commitment: *continuance*, *affective*, and *normative*.

Both the compliance and continuance dimensions suggest the most superficial and transactional form of commitment, in which an individual becomes instrumentally involved with a group to secure specific, extrinsic rewards. Because activities performed in the interest of the group originate from a desire for rewards from the group rather than from any personal, private motives, in compliance-based commitment there may be a discrepancy between individuals' private attitudes and the attitudes and behaviors they exhibit in public on behalf of the group.

Identification-based or affective commitment is more substantive. It involves attachment to the group driven by a desire for affiliation. Group membership implies certain obligations among members. Identification suggests that a person is motivated to act in ways that benefit the group because of a desire to nurture and maintain his or her relationship with the group. With identification, as with compliance, there may be inconsistency between people's private attitudes and their public actions on behalf of the group; however, in identification-based commitment, concerns about group affiliation rather than private attitudes motivate people's behavior.

Finally, internalization or normative commitment occurs when individual and group values converge. Commitment arising out of such internalized values does not need to be motivated by instrumental or affiliative concerns but, rather, originates from private, personal attitudes that correspond to those of the group. In this way, an individual's own preferences can lead to behaviors that benefit the group.

### Cultivating Normative Commitment Through Social Control

Interest in group-member commitment stems largely from the intuition that group members who

feel committed to the group are more likely to behave in ways that benefit the group than are those who do not feel a sense of commitment. Groups that foster a sense of commitment, then, should experience more long-term success. Researchers have focused on two theoretical reasons that commitment should have performance implications for the group. First, commitment helps to create and maintain social control systems that allow groups to regulate individual behavior more effectively than would formal control systems. Second, commitment to the group encourages individuals to align their behavior with the group's interests.

Traditionally, organizational researchers have focused on formal mechanisms used by groups and organizations to coordinate and control members' activities. These formal control systems emphasize surveillance and expectations about positive and negative consequences of different behaviors. Through members' sense of being monitored, as well as rewarded and punished, organizational leaders encourage behaviors that benefit the group and enforce penalties associated with prioritizing personal interests over those of the group. From this perspective, group member commitment is less important than formal mechanisms of control, such as supervisory monitoring, standardized rules and procedures, compensation schemes with explicit rewards and punishments, and planned and budgeted resource allocations.

Formal control systems, however, contain critical weaknesses that can result in a failure to align individual and group interests. First, one weakness is the difficulty involved in specifying ideal behaviors and group member or employee roles, particularly in ambiguous or quickly changing environments. Second, even after these behaviors are identified, it can be difficult to match rewards to these behaviors, and punishments to other behaviors, to produce desired outcomes. Add to this the fact that most jobs have complex or partially unobservable elements, and developing consequences for desired and deviant behavior becomes quite difficult, as does establishing and maintaining legitimate authority over group members. Finally, in relying on individuals' extrinsic motives for behavior that benefits the group, these systems risk undermining the intrinsic value of group membership. Even when formal control mechanisms produce

individual behavior that is perfectly aligned with group goals, these controls can be costly in terms of time, energy, and legitimacy and difficult to maintain over long periods of time. Instead, cultivating strong normative commitment among members can be a highly efficient method of organizing for groups and organizations.

Cultivating normative commitment requires using social, rather than formal, control. Researchers have explored social control systems that use a group's norms and values to achieve these efficiencies. Not only do these norms and values serve a similar function to formal control systems by communicating desirable and undesirable actions, but they do so in an informal manner, drawing attention away from formal group leaders and toward qualities that group members have in common. Thus, these informal mechanisms also increase social cohesion within the group. Strong social control systems, however, depend on group members sharing norms and values regarding important attitudes and behaviors that benefit the group.

#### How Groups Benefit From Members' Normative Commitment

The most striking and robust benefit of cultivating normative commitment among group members is that it promotes organizational citizenship behavior, or members' willingness to transcend formal job or role definitions to perform additional acts beneficial to the group. Because psychological attachment based on normative commitment enables people to take the perspective of the group, rather than just their own perspective, they are more likely to act in the interests of the group. Without such prosocial or extrarole behavior, groups would have to incur additional costs either to have those extra or unanticipated tasks performed or to create monitoring systems to ensure their performance by specified group members.

Substantial research has shown that commitment based on identification and internalization is positively related to prosocial behaviors—behaviors that benefit the group—and negatively related to member turnover. A meta-analysis found that all three forms of commitment led to reduced intentions to exit an organization and decreased overall turnover. In particular, affective and normative commitment predicted better attendance, performance,

and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as lower levels of stress and work–family conflict. Taken together, these studies confirmed that member commitment can have important consequences for groups.

#### Group Identification

Groups benefit from members' commitment, but what do members receive in return for their commitment? Normative commitment based on psychological attachment suggests that those who commit themselves to the group receive psychological benefits from their affiliation with the group. In exchange for their commitment, group members gain membership in the group and satisfy their need to belong.

One reason this belonging can be so rewarding is that it helps to define and enhance a person's social identity. Social identity theorists have argued that rather than just perceiving one, unitary personal self, people actually perceive themselves as having multiple "selves," corresponding to their memberships in various groups. Thus, an individual can perceive him- or herself as having a personal self, a family self, a work self, a national self, and so on. *Social identity theory* refers to the process by which people define their self-concept in terms of their memberships in various social groups. It can be situationally based, because different aspects of a person's self-concept may become salient in response to the distribution of characteristics of others who are present in a situation. When a person identifies with a group, the group's goals and values influence that person's perception and behavior as well as how others treat him or her.

The idea of individuals perceiving themselves as composed of many social selves is important because it means that membership in social groups helps to form one's *self-concept*, that is, how one sees and defines oneself. To the extent that a particular ingroup membership is salient, one's perceived similarity to others in the ingroup is increased. Increasing the salience of ingroup membership causes a *depersonalization of the self*, which refers to perceiving oneself as an interchangeable exemplar of a social category. Identifying with a group can satisfy one's attachment and belonging needs and can also foster pride, accomplishment, and self-esteem.

Researchers have also examined identification at the organizational level. Here the focus is on defining what an organization stands for, and it is typically viewed as the top leaders' role to create clarity for members about the organization's identity. This is the content that is the basis for an individual's level of identification with a group or an organization, and, while it is an important perspective, the psychological impact of such identification is the critical determinant of behavior. Similar to findings on commitment, those who find their organization's identity more appealing behave more cooperatively, are more concerned with the favorability of collective outcomes than with procedural justice, and have better relationships with external groups.

Clearly, there is overlap between the constructs of commitment and identification. Both imply an individual's attachment to the group. While identification specifies the content that is the basis for that attachment and helps people answer the question, "Who am I?" through membership in a group, commitment, as a construct, is broader. Commitment encompasses the expression of attitudes and behaviors that further the interests of the group. Some conceptual ambiguity exists about the construct of identification, with researchers calling for a more rigorous multidimensional conceptualization. But, given the conceptual overlap between commitment and identification, researchers should be careful not to needlessly proliferate redundant constructs rather than clarifying existing ones.

### **Cultivating Commitment Among Group Members**

In considering how groups promote member commitment, most research has focused on normative commitment. This is because increasing instrumental commitment is fairly straightforward, involving allocating sufficient extrinsic rewards to motivate a person to stay, whereas increasing normative commitment is more nuanced. Gradually increasing levels of participation in a group's activities can produce normative commitment, as research using incremental commitment to induce attitude and behavior change has found. For example, the foot-in-the-door strategy has been shown to convince people to engage in a wide range of behavior they ordinarily might refuse to do—from eating an

earthworm to converting religions—by asking them to commit to small acts of participation that gradually lead to larger acts of commitment.

Some companies have learned how to use this incremental approach to building commitment. For example, they use multiple steps to recruiting new employees, leading potential recruits to increase their commitment to the firm with each step, long before these individuals are asked to commit to joining the organization. Other companies avoid discussing salary before an employee is hired, emphasizing the relational benefits of group membership before introducing instrumental incentives such as money.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter has identified several commitment mechanisms used by utopian communities to recruit new members, including requiring new members to abandon their prior lives, move to secluded areas, and live in accordance with unconventional practices at odds with the wider society. Many of these mechanisms require new members to abandon elements of their previous lives through calls for abstinence or extreme austerity. Others asked new members to invest in the community, often in an irrevocable way, or to renounce the outside world, their family, and their prior lives. Many communities took steps to deindividualize new members, stripping them of their previous personal identities through processes of mortification, criticism, and punishment and making their group-based identity more salient. Finally, most communities used rituals, traditions, ideology, and charismatic leadership to help create feelings of communion or belonging within the communities and to reinforce group members' identification with the group. These mechanisms made individuals more likely to commit to the communities and more susceptible to the groups' values. In addition, the successful utopian communities, those that lasted longer, implemented more of these commitment mechanisms than did less successful communities. Interestingly, Kanter argued that while these mechanisms may be exaggerated within these utopian communities, more mild forms of the same mechanisms could regularly be found in other groups and organizations.

These commitment mechanisms have substantial influence on behavior. For example, one study found that individuals who made volitional and irrevocable job choices were more committed than

those who did not, a difference that endured for over a year. Further, mentoring programs for group members were associated with higher commitment and lower turnover of members. In addition, blurring the lines between work and family and strengthening networks among employees increased normative commitment to work groups. These findings suggest that groups can take steps to encourage commitment among their members.

Studying commitment and identification in groups is clearly important to understanding and predicting how people are likely to behave within groups. Research has focused, appropriately, on the underlying psychological bases for this attachment and has usefully clarified our understanding of commitment and identification in groups.

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*See also* Compliance; Conformity; Culture; Group Cohesiveness; Group Socialization; Normative Influence; Norms; Organizations; Personnel Turnover; Social Identity Theory

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## IDENTITY CONTROL THEORY

*Identity control theory* (ICT) focuses on the nature of people's identities (who people are) and the relationship of these identities to people's behavior. It also focuses on how people's behavior is an outcome of the meanings people attach to the world around them. People not only name and classify the world but also label each other and themselves in terms of the positions they occupy in society, organizations, and groups. Each of these self-labels represents an *identity*, which is a set of meanings a person uses to define him- or herself as a group member (e.g., American), as a role occupant (e.g., student), or as a unique individual (e.g., honest). Moreover, the social structure is a combination of the many role and group positions people hold in society, and these positions carry behavioral expectations that people internalize as their identities.

Each identity is made up of both meanings shared by members of society and each individual's own meanings for him- or herself. The shared meanings allow others in society to understand the identity a person is enacting in a situation, while the idiosyncratic aspect of an identity allows a person to enact the identity uniquely. In addition, people possess multiple identities, each of which is linked to the social structure through these shared meanings and expectations. It is therefore through their identities that people are intimately tied to the social structure.

### Meaning

Central to ICT is the concept of meaning around which identities are formed. What does it *mean* to be a "father" or "son"? What does it *mean* to be an "American"? An identity is a set of meanings applied to the self as a unique individual (e.g., honest), in a social role (e.g., student), or as a member of a social group (e.g., American); together, these meanings define who one is. In ICT, meaning is a response to a stimulus in the situation. In other words, a stimulus in a situation evokes meaning in an individual. A stimulus becomes a symbol when it evokes the same meaning in different people. When people have the same response to a stimulus, they understand each other through this shared meaning.

For example, thinking about oneself as a student (stimulus) calls up a set of responses (meanings) similar to those called up in others who understand what it means to be a student. These responses define what it means to be a student—for example, being studious, responsible, or social. These common responses lead to common expectations and understandings about what a student is, what a student does, how a student relates to a professor, and the position of a student in the university.

### Control of Perceptions

Each identity is a control system with four components: an identity standard, perceptions, a comparator, and behavioral output. The *identity standard* is the set of meanings defining a given identity. *Input perceptions* are of meanings in a situation that are relevant to an identity (mostly feedback from others about how a person is coming across in the situation). The *comparator* is a mechanism that compares the perceived meanings with the meanings in the identity standard and outputs any difference as an error or discrepancy. *Behavioral output* is a function of the discrepancy.

In any given situation, people enact behavior that conveys meanings consistent with their identity meanings but modified by the discrepancy. If people perceive that how they are coming across in the situation (meaning) is congruent with the meanings in their identity standard, the discrepancy is zero and people continue to do what they have been doing. If there is a disturbance to the meanings in the situation and the discrepancy is not zero, people feel distress and change their behavior to counteract the disturbance and reduce the discrepancy toward zero. By changing their behavior, people change meanings in the situation. These altered meanings are perceived and again compared to the meanings in the identity standard. In this way, each identity is a control system that controls perceptions to match meanings in the identity standard.

### Identity Verification

This process of people controlling their perceptions of identity-relevant meanings to produce congruency with meanings in the identity standard is called *identity verification*. The meanings in the

identity standard represent goals or the way the situation is “supposed to be.” People behave in the situation to create and maintain the situation in the way it is supposed to be. By verifying identities, people create and maintain the social structure in which the identities are embedded. Note that by controlling perceived situational meanings, people are bringing about and maintaining the situation, not behaviors. It is the outcome that is important, not the means that accomplish the outcome.

For example, when thinking about yourself as a student, you may see yourself as studious. To verify your identity as a studious student, you may study 12 hours a week, or read all the readings, or talk to your professors. Any of these behaviors can verify your identity of studious student. Perhaps one week you are unable to read all the readings for your class. This would represent a discrepancy because your self-meanings as a student require you to do all of your homework. To fix this discrepancy, you may go back and finish the reading after your class, or you may start reading earlier in the week next week. You will somehow compensate for this discrepancy to align your self-meanings and situational meanings.

### Bases of Identity

ICT distinguishes between three bases of identities. These are *role identities*, based on roles such as father; *social identities*, based on groups or categories such as American; and *person identities*, based on the unique biological individual, such as being honest. Identities formed on each of these bases operate in the same way, adjusting situations to seek verification. If the identity is a role identity, then appropriate role behavior will bring about the changes in the situational meanings to make them consistent with the identity standard. If the identity is a group- or category-based identity, behavior that maintains group boundaries and divisions in the social structure will verify the identity. If the identity is a person identity, then behavior exemplary of how an individual sees him- or herself will verify the identity.

### Multiple Identities

People have many identities, one for each of the many personal characteristics they claim, roles

they have, and groups or categories to which they belong. Each identity has its own perceptions, standard, and comparator. This complexity of the self with its many identities reflects the complexity of society. In ICT, the multiple identities are arranged into a hierarchy of control systems in which some identities are higher than other identities.

Higher level identities act as general principles that guide the programs of lower level identities. The output of the comparator of higher level identities alters the standards (identity meanings) for lower level identities, while the output of the comparator of lower level identities produces behavior that maintains or alters meanings in the situation. Higher level identities include such master statuses as one's gender, race, or class as well as many person identities that are enacted across situations, roles, and groups. One may, for example, be not just a friend, but a female friend; one may be not just an American, but a Black American; one may be not just a student, but an honest student. In each case, the master status of gender or race or the person identity of being honest acts to change the manner in which friend, American, or student is played out.

### Identity Change

The basic rule is that identities act quickly to counteract disturbances to meanings in the situation by altering behavior to bring perceived meanings back into alignment with meanings in the identity standard. However, sometimes people are in situations in which they cannot change their behavior to fix a discrepancy. In these situations, ICT recognizes that the identity standard itself also slowly changes to match the meanings in the situation and reduce the discrepancy to zero. Often, both processes occur simultaneously to verify identities.

### Emotions

In ICT, the verification of identities is tied to emotional outcomes that help guide the process. When the discrepancy between identity relevant perceptions and the identity standard is small or decreasing, people feel positive emotions. When the discrepancy is large or increasing, people feel negative emotions or distressed. Current work in ICT

examines the role of identity verification in the production of self-worth, self-efficacy, and feelings of authenticity. It is also developing predictions about the specific emotions that may be felt when identities are verified and not verified.

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*See also* Affect Control Theory; Looking-Glass Self; Social Identity Theory

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## IDEOLOGY

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*Ideology* is a term widely used in everyday language, in philosophy and literature, and in the social sciences. It is well represented in research in political psychology, and more recently it has attracted attention in social psychology. Definitions of the concept vary considerably. A common theme in the research literature is that an *ideology* is a set of beliefs, shared by members of a group or collective movement, organized into a doctrine that guides thinking and behavior. In social psychology, the term refers to a systematic and integrated set of beliefs whose primary function is explanation. This explanatory function of ideology links the concept to social psychological theories of how people attribute causes to behavior. An ideology circumscribes thinking and entails commitment; hence an adherent will usually find it difficult to escape its grip. Literature dealing with ideology is mainly in the arena of politics, where discussion of ideology usually includes reference to social or political plans and means of putting these plans into action. This entry looks at characteristics of ideology, reviews its expression in politics, and discusses its importance.

### Features of an Ideology

As commonly employed in social psychology, the concept of ideology is connected to discussion of the process of *attribution*, since both are forms of social knowledge and knowledge construction. This connection is clearest in the case of *societal attributions*, the explanations that people give for large-scale social phenomena. Such attributions are located within and shaped by wider, socially constructed belief systems. For example, explanations for poverty can be subject to attributional bias: Both the rich and the poor tend to explain poverty in terms of the way poor people behave rather than in terms of wider economic forces.

There is some overlap between the terms *ideology* and *value*. Both are used in social psychology to denote a higher order concept that provides a hierarchical structure for organizing attitudes. In Norman Feather's view, a value consists of a set of beliefs about desirable behavior and goals, and these beliefs have an "oughtness" or prescriptive quality to them. A value transcends attitudes, and it influences the form that attitudes take. This is partly echoed by Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken when they describe an ideology as a cluster of attitudes and beliefs that are interdependent. They add that an ideology is formed around a dominant societal theme. John Jost and his colleagues also emphasize the fact that an ideology is a belief system that is shared by members of a specific group, class, or community. It is also possible that not only beliefs and attitudes but also values can be subsumed by an ideology.

The important influences on the way a person acquires knowledge of the content of an ideology are the same as those that help shape a person's attitudes and values: parents, peer groups, and major reference groups (such as ethnic and religious groups). Although an ideology provides an overarching structure, not all of its detailed content is required before a person has some ideological understanding and commitment.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of ideologies is that their very existence invites confrontation. If an ideology defines an organized body of beliefs (and attitudes and values) held by its adherents, the chances are great that there will be other available ideologies that are different from and even opposed to it. If an ideology represents a

guiding doctrine for one group, then a different group with a different ideology can be a sufficient condition for intergroup conflict. Indeed, we are very familiar with the political and religious ideologies that serve as rallying points for many of the world's most intransigent factional and international clashes.

### Ideologies and Politics

An early political ideology was Machiavellianism, named after Niccolò Machiavelli, a 16th-century Florentine diplomat considered by some to have been the first social scientist. Machiavellianism is the notion that craft and deceit are justified in pursuing and maintaining power in the political world. The term itself was first used by Destutt de Tracy at the time of the French Revolution and meant "the science of ideas."

The conceptualization of ideology was developed further by the political philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and acquired the connotation of a social structure that enabled a group with power to retain control with the least amount of resistance. According to Marx, an ideology suggests a world system that is in accord with the nature of things. It should be seen as an example of progress, unfolding from history and having the prospect of eternity. The Marxian view is that for an anticapitalist revolution to be successful, people need to understand that the ruling class has an ideology based on domination over subordinate classes. Thus the key to the success of the ruling class prior to the Russian Revolution was that its members had found ways to legitimize the social order.

How is an ideology constructed? This question has been addressed differently by political scientists and by social psychologists. According to John Jost and his colleagues, political scientists argue for top-down processing, in which political attitudes are acquired through exposure to ideological clusters that are established by political elites. Social psychologists point to bottom-up processing, in which people's psychological needs and motives make them receptive to particular ideological positions. In both approaches, an ideology requires that people are taught how to think and how to act and to accept where they fit into society; in other words, the populace is reprogrammed. Historical



examples of mass political education abound. In the 20th century, anti-Semitism was carefully articulated during the rise of Nazism, and Mao Zedong orchestrated a “reeducation” of the populace to provide the basis of his cultural revolution.

From the perspectives of social, personality, and political psychology, there have been three areas of intensive research. The earliest of these was research on authoritarianism. Two modern conceptual developments are social dominance theory and systems justification theory.

### *The Authoritarian Personality*

In their work *The Authoritarian Personality* published in 1950, Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, and their colleagues described what they believed to be a personality syndrome that predisposed certain people to be authoritarian. The historical context for this theory was the role of fascist ideology in the Holocaust—Adorno and Frenkel-Brunswik were both Jewish and had fled Hitler’s regime (in Germany and Austria, respectively). The theory proposed that autocratic and punitive child-rearing practices were responsible for the emergence in adulthood of various clusters of beliefs. These included: ethnocentrism; an intolerance of Jews, Blacks, and other ethnic and religious minorities; a pessimistic and cynical view of human nature; conservative political and economic attitudes; and a suspicion of democracy.

With the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno reported that his group had constructed an instrument known as the California F-scale, intended at first to assess tendencies toward fascism, it was eventually purported as a measure of general authoritarianism. Despite substantial methodological and conceptual flaws, this work stimulated huge research interest in the 1960s and beyond. In later years, Robert Altemeyer developed a more restricted but better designed and more useful measure of right wing authoritarianism.

### *Social Dominance Theory*

According to this theory, developed by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, societies are generally structured as group-based hierarchies, in which dominant groups have higher social status, and more political authority, power, and wealth. Justification for the social structure incorporates

myths and attitudes, fosters particular values, and is elaborated in an ideology that enhances hierarchical social relations and maintains prejudice. A dominant group, such as the rich, is disproportionately advantaged (e.g., by the status or power of its members), whereas subordinate groups, such as the poor, are disproportionately disadvantaged (e.g., by lack of access to health care). A society’s institutions can enhance the existing hierarchy. For example, the criminal justice system may be biased toward harsher penalties for members of socially disadvantaged minority groups.

Social dominance theory also accounts for variation between individuals in the extent to which they accept societal ideologies that legitimize hierarchy and discrimination, on one hand, versus equality and fairness on the other. The underlying motivation is a view of intergroup relations that is exploitative and power based. People who want their own group to be dominant and superior to relevant outgroups have a high *social dominance orientation* (SDO). This encourages them to reject egalitarian ideologies. People with a high SDO are more inclined to be prejudiced than people with a low SDO. The SDO construct is correlated with measures such as ethnocentrism, nationalism, authoritarianism, racism, and sexism; with behaviors such as racial discrimination and the stereotyping of minorities; and with social policies such as death penalty views, welfare reform views, and support for military conquest.

The theory as originally framed was about the desire for the ingroup to be in command—to rule and govern outgroups. Recently, however, social dominance theory has been extended to account for a more general desire of group members for unequal relations between groups, irrespective of whether members’ own group is at the top or the bottom of the status hierarchy. In other words, both dominant and subordinate groups are parties to subordination. The ideologies adopted justify on moral and intellectual grounds the customs and conventions that determine what is valued in a society. This extension makes social dominance theory look more like system justification theory.

### *System Justification Theory*

According to John Jost and his colleagues, most political ideologies are located on a left–right

dimension, with the two poles also often called *liberal*, which calls for social change and rejects social inequality, and *conservative*, which resists social change and endorses social inequality. The basis of a particular political ideology rests on the differences in thinking and motivation that go with being either a liberal or a conservative. Liberals prefer progress, rebelliousness, chaos, flexibility, feminism, and equality; conservatives prefer conformity, order, stability, traditional values, and hierarchy.

Consequently, system justification is more common among conservatives than among liberals. Conservatives justify and protect the existing social system—the status quo—even if this means upholding an unfavorable position for their own group. There is an irony here. Why protect such an ideology when it maintains their position of disadvantage? Jost has suggested that one motivation for this may be to reduce uncertainty—better to live in reduced circumstances and be certain of one's place than to challenge the status quo and face an uncertain future.

### Are Ideologies Important?

Ideologies certainly are crucially important—they frame polarized worldviews and can be the source of intergroup behaviors that are highly conflictual. For example, the cold war spanned almost half a century—a period in which the world was balanced precariously, caught between two diametrically opposed ideologies. Their adherents possessed an arsenal of nuclear weapons capable of destroying life on this planet. One espoused Marxism–Leninism and the other described itself as “the free world.”

More recently an old ideological difference between Eastern Islam and primarily Western Christianity has joined the mix to split the globe in different ways. The “Threat to the West” now extends to China and various “terrorist” nations in the Middle East, whose lethal power is measured in a nuclear currency. As Philip Tetlock has noted, the older bipolar world has evolved quickly into one that is multipolar. It is unlikely that these various nations can be nicely aligned as units on a left–right political continuum. It is more likely that hawks (conservatives) and doves (liberals) will be found in each. The future of humankind is in the

hands of policymakers whose judgments are affected by their ideological commitments.

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*See also* Attribution Biases; Authoritarian Personality; Dogmatism; Nationalism and Patriotism; Norms; Power; Protestant Work Ethic; Right Wing Authoritarianism; Social Dominance Theory; System Justification Theory

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## IDIOSYNCRASY CREDIT

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The term *idiosyncrasy credit* was first coined by Edwin Hollander in a 1958 *Psychological Review* article in which he addressed the issue of how individuals gain support for their innovative ideas from other group members. The idea was particularly influential in the field of leadership research where, in light of evidence that those who deviate from group norms are often rejected, a critical theoretical and practical question centers on how leaders encourage followers to support and embrace new practices. Hollander's answer to this question revolves around the idea that to initiate change, individual group members (leaders) need to build up psychological credit with other group members (followers), so that the latter will be open to their idiosyncratic ideas. In this way, idiosyncrasy credit gives individuals latitude to deviate

but also ensures that when they do, their suggestions are taken seriously.

This entry considers the theoretical origins of Hollander's ideas and outlines some of the research that has supported his arguments. It also reviews some criticisms of Hollander's work—notably those that question the theoretical integrity of his analysis and its view that influence flows only from conformity and interpersonal exchange.

### Theoretical Origins

Hollander's ideas originated in theories of leadership and influence that were developed in the aftermath of World War II. Previously, much of this theoretical work had revolved around an appreciation of the “great person”—arguing that those individuals who were able to orchestrate and bring about change were distinguished from others by virtue of their superior character. Within this tradition, research was defined by an almost exclusive focus on leaders themselves.

A key contribution that Hollander made to leadership theory was to challenge the prevailing focus on leaders and throw the analytic spotlight onto followers. If leadership is defined as the process of influencing group members in a way that contributes to the achievement of group goals, then, he argued, the followership of those members should be every bit as important as the actions of leaders. From this perspective, the basis of leadership is seen to lie not in the qualities of the individual leader per se, but rather in the quality of relations between leaders and other group members.

In this way, Hollander advocated a transactional approach to leadership. This approach incorporates principles of interpersonal social exchange, suggesting that effective leadership flows from a maximization of the mutual benefits that leaders and followers afford each other. So, on the one hand, the leader acts in the interests of the group and its members but, on the other hand, the group validates and empowers the leader.

A central notion here is trust, since Hollander argued that before followers are prepared to go out on a limb for their leader, they need first to be confident that the leader is going to act in the group's best interests and take it on an appropriate path. Leaders, Hollander stressed, cannot simply barge into a group and expect its members to

embrace them and their new plans immediately. Instead, they must first build up a support base and win the confidence of followers. That is, leaders need to build up credit—to be understood, respected, and trusted—before they can influence followers to move in a new direction. There are two ways in which leaders typically do this: by displaying competence and by conforming to group norms.

In effect, then, *idiosyncrasy credit* constitutes a line of psychological credit that is built up early in a leader's tenure and then cashed in later in return for influence and license to deviate from established norms. Moreover, like other forms of credit, not only are leaders able to use idiosyncrasy credit for this purpose, but they are also expected to do so. Along these lines, Hollander argued that a leader who has gained credit in the eyes of followers needs to use it to take the group in new directions or else that credit will be diminished. Not only do leaders have to accumulate idiosyncrasy credit, they also need to “use it or lose it.”

### Related Research

Over the last 40 years, a range of studies have examined and tested these ideas. Those reported by Hollander and James Julian in 1970 are probably the best known. These studies showed that leaders who had been elected to their position, and hence had the explicit backing of group members (idiosyncrasy credit), were more likely to challenge poor group decisions than leaders who had been appointed to their position, and hence had no direct mandate from the group. On the basis of such findings, the authors argued that without the backing of followers, leaders lack the security to display genuine leadership when managing the group's interests and that the group as a whole will suffer.

However, even in these studies, it can be seen that the phenomenon of idiosyncrasy credit is not examined directly and is confounded with other potentially important factors (e.g., status, authority, involvement). In line with this observation, it is apparent that empirical research has invoked the notion of idiosyncrasy credit to account for a particular pattern of results more often than it has tested Hollander's ideas directly. Indeed, while Hollander's original article has been cited more

than 250 times (making it a “citation classic”), Web of Science lists only three papers with the term in their title (of which the original article is one).

In this respect, one particular difficulty with Hollander’s ideas pertains to the lack of theoretical specificity regarding the precise source and nature of idiosyncrasy credit. For example, Hollander noted that in organizational settings, men typically have more credit than women, as do those with seniority and status and those who are participative rather than autocratic. He also observed that individuals can have “derivative credit” as a result of their membership in other groups. At the same time, he cautioned that credit is always negotiated and proven in the immediate group context and so is fluid and context specific. These things may all be descriptively true, but what is the explanatory logic that binds them together?

Recently, one answer to this question has been proposed by advocates of a social identity approach to leadership. These researchers have argued that leaders’ capacity to engender followership derives from their capacity to present themselves, and be seen, as prototypical representatives of a salient group membership that is shared with followers. In these terms, idiosyncrasy credit is grounded in group members’ categorization of the leader as “one of us”—a category-based perception that can change as a result of normative and comparative factors that determine the meaning of that ingroup.

The social identity analysis is consistent with many of the observations that Hollander made about the dynamics of idiosyncrasy credit. Critically, however, it argues that the underlying process is not one of interpersonal exchange; rather, it centers on a higher order sense of group identity that leaders and followers share. Among other things, this helps explain how leaders are able to gain support for novel projects outside the small-group contexts in which idiosyncrasy credit is typically studied and where interpersonal exchange is not possible. The capacity for a leader to acquire credit by championing novel social identities (e.g., Nelson Mandela’s vision of postapartheid South Africa) also explains the capacity for individuals who represent minorities and radical groups to bring about change, even under conditions where they have no established credit with the majority. This is a problem that Serge Moscovici

identified with Hollander’s original formulation of the concept, which he faulted for placing too much emphasis on conformity and thereby being too conservative.

These objections notwithstanding, it is apparent that the notion of idiosyncrasy credit has proved to be of enduring value for the study of leadership and influence. Even if it does not fully explain the underlying process, it speaks to two apparent paradoxes at the heart of effective social influence: that deviation tends to be driven by those who are not seen as deviant, and that the capacity to influence others tends to be enhanced by their perception that they have influenced the person leading them.

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*See also* Great Person Theory of Leadership; Leadership; Minority Influence; Social Exchange in Networks and Groups; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Trust

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## ILLUSION OF GROUP EFFECTIVITY

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The *illusion of group effectivity* is the persistent and widespread belief, despite some evidence to the contrary, that group performance is superior to individual performance. The popular media

and quasi-scientific press often express strong and optimistic beliefs regarding the effectiveness of group-based work, and these beliefs seem widely shared within society. Sometimes, however, the scientific literature clearly shows that groups do not perform well at all and that certain tasks might be better left to individuals. The illusion of the superiority of the group over the individual may persist even when the individual has had extensive experience with a particular task, and therefore, it is not just due to cultural beliefs that are easily falsified through experience.

The illusion of group effectivity has been studied widely within the context of group brainstorming. However, it seems to be a more general phenomenon. It has been argued that group members routinely experience both social-emotional and competence-related benefits from working in groups, and that these benefits lead people to believe that group-based work is particularly effective. This entry discusses research on this illusion in brainstorming groups, examines evidence that the illusion of group effectivity is a more general phenomenon, and considers some implications of this illusion.

### Brainstorming

One of the most robust findings in group research is that people generate fewer ideas and fewer good ideas when they brainstorm in a group than when brainstorming alone. Furthermore, the bigger the group, the less effective each member becomes. For most people, this finding comes as a surprise because they believe that group interaction stimulates idea generation. Research has indeed shown that across different cultures (e.g., in the United States, Europe, and Japan), people strongly believe that brainstorming is best performed in groups. Furthermore, even after people have participated in a brainstorming session, those who worked in groups indicate more satisfaction with their performance than those who brainstormed alone, despite the fact that objective performance measures show that those who brainstormed alone had more reason for satisfaction.

Three different explanations have been suggested for the illusion of group effectivity in brainstorming, and all have received some support. The first suggests that the effect is due to memory

confusion. After a group brainstorming session, group members might no longer recall exactly who has generated which idea and may take credit for a disproportionate share of the group's performance. Consequently, group members think that they have done quite well and come to believe that group interaction stimulates their idea generation. In support for this explanation, it has been shown that group members often are uncertain about the source of specific ideas. Furthermore, group members claim that many of the ideas suggested by others had also occurred to them, whereas people who have brainstormed individually make this claim less often.

The second explanation suggests that the effect is due to social comparison processes. During a group brainstorming session, group members will compare their performance with that of other members. They will, on average, find that they have performed similarly and consequently are quite satisfied with their performance. Individuals generating ideas on their own, however, cannot compare their performance with that of others and therefore might feel insecure and worry that they have not done well. In support for this explanation, it has been shown that providing information about how someone else performed on the brainstorming task has a positive influence on the satisfaction of those who brainstormed alone. For example, just saying how many ideas another person generated reduces the individual brainstormers' uncertainty and leads to higher levels of satisfaction after a brainstorming session.

The final explanation suggests that during a brainstorming session, it will often happen that someone tries to generate more ideas but can temporarily think of nothing new. When brainstorming as an individual, these failures to come up with new ideas are highly salient and may lead people to conclude that they are not performing well. In groups, in contrast, people can listen to others when these failures occur, and failures are consequently not so salient. Because people experience fewer such failures in a group setting, they come to believe that group interaction actually stimulates idea generation (i.e., it appears to be easier to come up with ideas in a group). Consistent with this explanation, group members report fewer failures to generate ideas than do individuals. However, manipulations that increase the number of failures (such as greater

topic difficulty) decrease satisfaction with the group brainstorming session.

### The Romance of Teams

While the evidence for the illusion of group effectivity is strongest in brainstorming research, it has been suggested that the phenomenon is much broader. Specifically, many organizations enthusiastically embrace the idea that teamwork is highly effective, and more and more organizations structure their work around teams. Popular sayings, such as  $1 + 1 = 3$ , two heads are better than one, and together everyone achieves more (TEAM), reflect such beliefs about the benefits of group-based work. However, this contrasts with empirical data from laboratory as well as field research showing quite mixed support for the effectiveness of group-based work.

For example, laboratory results indicate that groups often fail to reap the potential benefits of collaboration when it comes to decision making and problem solving. And field research has shown that the implementation of team-based work leads to modest productivity improvements at best. How might this “romance of teams” (i.e., faith in the effectiveness of team-based work that is not supported by, or even inconsistent with, relevant empirical evidence) be explained?

One explanation is that team-based work is fashionable and that teams are just a passing fad. However, Natalie Allen and Tracy Hecht have proposed that teams provide social–emotional as well as competence-related benefits to their members. These, in turn, make teamwork enjoyable and create the illusion that teamwork is effective. For example, being a member of a team satisfies certain social needs, such as the need for affiliation and belongingness. Teamwork might thus enhance satisfaction and well-being rather than performance. Increased satisfaction, however, might be taken as evidence that group work is effective, while more objective performance indicators do not support this.

Besides these social–emotional benefits, there also are competence-related benefits of working in groups. For example, team members take personal credit for the success of the team, whereas they blame failures on other team members. Further, groups often have a tendency to see their

own group as superior to other groups: Well over 50% of groups agree with the statement “My group is better than most other groups.” In addition, working in a group decreases uncertainty about individual performance. In decision making and problem solving, for example, group members learn about other members’ preferences and problem solutions. When these are similar to their own, group members often take this similarity as evidence about reality; that is, when most members agree about a decision or solution, it is likely to be correct. As a consequence, groups often are quite confident about their decisions and problem solutions, even when objectively they have not performed well at all and have failed to identify the best alternative or solution.

### Implications

Does this imply that groups or teams should not be used at all because performance benefits are merely an illusion? Clearly, this is not the case. For some tasks, it simply is necessary to work together (e.g., shooting a movie can usually not be done alone). Furthermore, working in teams does seem to have certain benefits to team members, such as increased levels of satisfaction. However, simply using teamwork or performing certain tasks in groups does not guarantee high levels of performance. Consequently, it cannot be safely assumed that when people feel good or are satisfied it means that the team is actually performing well—performance has to be shown explicitly.

Further, true performance benefits might only emerge after team members receive appropriate training and have experience in working together, and when they work under conditions that foster high levels of performance (e.g., with good leadership and appropriate feedback and reward structures). It is important to keep all this in mind when one is involved in group-based work arrangements.

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*See also* Brainstorming; Common Knowledge Effect; Fads and Fashions; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Group Task; Social Comparison Theory; Social Loafing; Teams

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## ILLUSORY CORRELATION

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*Illusory correlation* refers to the tendency for someone to overestimate the frequency with which two events co-occur. The correlation is illusory because it is the product of biased information processing on the part of the perceiver rather than an accurate perception of the stimulus environment. An illusory correlation can result from aspects of the events or from biases of the perceiver. When the perceiver overestimates the frequency with which two infrequent and distinctive events co-occur, it is called a *distinctiveness-based illusory correlation*. Conversely, when a perceiver expects certain events to occur frequently, and consequently misremembers the number of times they co-occur, it is described as an *expectancy-based illusory correlation*. With respect to social perception, both types of illusory correlation shed light on the cognitive mechanisms that underlie stereotyping and prejudice. The research demonstrating how illusory correlation can lead to stereotyping pioneered the social cognition approach to the psychology of intergroup relations.

### Distinctiveness-Based Illusory Correlation

Events that occur rarely are more likely to grab an individual's attention than events that happen all

the time. For instance, pervasive social norms for polite and pleasant social interactions make unpleasant, negative social interactions infrequent. A good example of a distinctiveness-based illusory correlation involves the period before desegregation in the United States, when a person rarely interacted with someone of another race. If a White individual experienced or witnessed a negative social interaction with a Black person (two infrequent and distinctive co-occurring events), he or she might have overestimated the frequency with which these events co-occur. In this case, the illusory correlation between Blacks and unpleasantness would become a mental association, or stereotypic belief, about Blacks as a negative group. This type of illusory correlation explains one processing mechanism by which stereotypes about social groups are formed.

The original research to demonstrate the distinctiveness-based illusory correlation simulated group perception in a laboratory setting. The researchers used fictitious groups, A and B, to avoid any influence of participants' preexisting beliefs. Participants read sentences that described desirable and undesirable behaviors of members of Groups A and B. In reading the list, the participants witnessed two infrequently occurring events: There were more sentences about Group A than Group B and more sentences with desirable than undesirable behaviors overall. Importantly, the researchers made sure that Group A and Group B had the same ratio of desirable to undesirable behaviors. If participants relied on proportionality to make judgments in an unbiased manner, they would have rated Groups A and B with equal favor. However, participants overestimated the frequency with which members of Group B engaged in undesirable behaviors. Furthermore, Group B was rated more negatively than Group A on several personality dimensions. This study presented evidence for a cognitive processing mechanism that can result in biased evaluation of groups.

However, it is possible that the results were due to the fact that familiarity breeds liking (called the *mere exposure effect*); that is, increased exposure to Group A could have led participants to think more positively of Group A than Group B. Another study was conducted to rule out this alternative explanation. Participants in this study read a list in which sentences about members of Group B and

sentences about desirable behaviors were infrequent. As a result of this change, the two competing explanations for the previous results—distinctiveness and mere exposure—should have led to different outcomes. The distinctiveness explanation predicts that participants would overestimate the desirable behaviors by members of Group B, leading to more positive feelings about Group B in general. However, if mere exposure were responsible for the differential perception of the groups in the first study, then participants would end up liking the more frequently occurring group (Group A). Indeed, despite the fact that the ratio of desirable to undesirable behaviors was the same for both groups, participants overestimated the frequency with which Group B had performed desirable behaviors. Participants also rated the personality traits of Group B more positively. This study demonstrated that illusory correlation could be formed with distinctive positive events, resulting in positive stereotypes, in addition to excluding mere exposure as the mechanism by which illusory correlation results had occurred.

Further research was conducted to support the *distinctiveness* explanation for illusory correlation. This explanation argues that the co-occurrence of two distinctive events attracts the perceiver's attention, which leads to deeper processing and greater accessibility from memory. As a result of being able to easily remember these instances, perceivers are likely to overestimate how often they actually occur. That is, perceivers will misattribute the ease of retrieval of the co-occurrence to the frequency with which those behaviors occurred. Thus the distinctiveness explanation proposes that differential perceptions of groups result from biased encoding of social information rather than prejudiced memory of it.

Critics of the distinctiveness explanation have argued that perceivers may be accurately encoding the behavioral information, but that the differential group perceptions result from biased memory of that information. To show that the bias occurs at encoding, researchers used the illusory correlation paradigm with one important addition: After reading the list of behaviors (in which Group B and undesirable behaviors were infrequent), some of the participants were shown a frequency table in which the ratio of desirable to undesirable behaviors was equal across groups. If the differential perception of

groups resulted from biased memory of the information, then participants who had seen the frequency table would be able to correct for the memory bias and, consequently, would perceive the two groups as roughly equivalent. However, participants who saw the frequency table persisted in liking Group B significantly less than they liked Group A. This biased judgment of Group B could not have resulted from biased memory of their behaviors, since participants knew from the frequency tables that the groups had behaved equivalently. The fact that participants did not use the frequency information to override their biased judgments of the groups provides evidence that the differential perception of groups was based on biased encoding of the distinctive information. Another study provided further support for the distinctiveness mechanism by showing that the distinctive stimulus events are more easily accessed from memory.

Nevertheless, alternative explanations have been proposed to explain the illusory correlation effect. Some researchers have demonstrated that biases in retrieval from memory can produce the illusory correlation effect. Others have argued that the unequal amount of information alone is the reason that the most infrequent behaviors are overestimated. Because participants will naturally forget some of the behavioral information that they have learned about the groups, they will tend to overestimate the frequency with which the rarest events occurred. By this account, the asymmetry of the stimuli presented, rather than the distinctiveness of certain information, may be responsible for the formation of an illusory correlation. The debate about the process underlying illusory correlation remains unresolved, and it is possible that multiple cognitive processes lead to the formation of illusory correlations. Furthermore, a number of factors can influence whether or not an illusory correlation is formed. Aspects of the perceiver—such as mood, attitudes, and group membership—as well as the nature of the social information affect the formation of an illusory correlation.

### Expectancy-Based Illusory Correlation

Whereas the distinctiveness-based illusory correlation speaks to the formation of stereotypes, the expectancy-based illusory correlation details a



mechanism by which stereotypic judgments are maintained and strengthened. Once stereotypes have been formed, they are resistant to change and influence the individual's processing of new information about the group. In one study, researchers used groups about which people already have stereotypes (e.g., accountants). Participants read a list of sentences that used equal numbers of stereotype-consistent and stereotype-unrelated traits to describe the group members. When they were asked to estimate the number of stereotypic and neutral traits that had been used, participants reliably overestimated the frequency with which the stereotype-consistent traits had been used, compared to the neutral ones. Another study presented participants with equal numbers of stereotype-inconsistent and stereotype-unrelated traits. In this case, participants reliably underestimated the frequency with which the stereotype-inconsistent traits had appeared. These findings speak to the robustness of stereotypes; once they are formed, stereotypes can bias information processing so that the individual continually confirms them.

The studies on distinctiveness-based and expectancy-based illusory correlations demonstrate the ways in which cognitive information-processing mechanisms can produce biased perceptions and evaluations of groups. Illusory correlation research has demonstrated that there is a cognitively based propensity for erroneous judgments in the intergroup context. The findings demonstrate that the cognitive component of prejudice is easy to develop and difficult to overcome.

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*See also* Categorization; Prejudice; Racism; Stereotyping

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## IMMIGRATION

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*Immigration* involves the voluntary and nonvoluntary long-term relocation of people across national boundaries. It may be instigated by a variety of factors, including those that push individuals to leave their country of residence and those that pull individuals toward a new home nation. Immigration levels have reached historically unprecedented levels in recent years, often involving movement from less economically developed countries to more highly developed countries. Immigration has a major impact not only on those who relocate but potentially on both the source and target nations.

When individuals leave developing countries to find new opportunities in more economically developed regions of the world, their countries of origin may lose highly skilled personnel. This is known as the “brain drain,” and it may have a major impact on the economy of these countries. Immigrant-receiving nations differ markedly in their approach to immigrants and in their immigration policies. Nations like Canada see immigrants, particularly those who are highly skilled, as a valuable commodity and accept a large number of immigrants into the country each year on the basis of their potential economic contributions. Others, such as the United States, place more emphasis in their immigrant policies on family reunification. While still others, such as Germany, have historically denied that their country is an immigrant-receiving nation and have defined nationality on the basis of ethnic heritage (formal policies for accepting immigrants have only recently been put into place in Germany).

This entry first discusses the motivations that may lead individuals to migrate, and the forms that acculturation in their new home country may take. It then describes factors that influence the attitudes of members of host societies toward immigrants and immigration. These factors include economic and cultural considerations, perceptions of threat to physical health and safety, and the framing of national identity. Next, the entry focuses on the consequences of discrimination against immigrants, particularly its effects on the contributions that immigrants can make to their new country. It concludes with a discussion of the increasing recognition by developed nations of their need for immigrants, and the resulting shift in the discourse of immigration.

### The Push and Pull Factors of Immigration

One may choose to leave one's country of residence and resettle in a new country for a variety of reasons, some of which may be considered *push factors*—those that drive individuals from their country of origin, and others may be considered *pull factors*—those that attract individuals to a new country. Major push factors include sources of trauma or disaster that migrants wish to leave behind them as they search for a better life, such as life-threatening poverty, natural disaster, environmental degradation, persecution, and war. Individuals who leave their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion are defined as convention refugees under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Less severe push factors primarily include poor economic conditions in one's country of origin, and lack of educational and employment opportunities. In contrast, pull factors are those that attract migrants to a new home country. These may include educational and employment opportunities, a high standard of living, the presence of family members, a safe environment, and political and cultural freedoms.

Not all individuals respond to these push and pull factors in the same way, suggesting that there may be a "migrant personality." For example, it has been demonstrated that individuals who are motivated by opportunities for achievement and

power, and particularly those who consider work central to their lives, are especially likely to desire to emigrate for economic reasons. In contrast, those who are motivated by affiliation, and particularly those who consider family relations central to their lives, are especially likely to desire to stay in their country of origin.

### Acculturation: Immigrants and Members of the Host Society

When immigrants arrive in a new country, they are often faced with two important cultural issues: (1) whether to maintain their cultural heritage and potentially pass it on to the next generation and (2) whether to take on their new country's culture. Models of acculturation were initially developed to examine how immigrants resolve these two issues. Immigrants who wish to maintain their cultural heritage and do not wish to take on aspects of the new culture have been described as endorsing *separation*. In contrast, those who do not wish to maintain their cultural heritage but do wish to take on the new culture have been described as endorsing *assimilation*. Immigrants who strive to have the best of both worlds—those who wish to maintain their cultural heritage *and* take on the new culture—have been described as endorsing *integration*. Finally, those who wish to neither maintain their cultural heritage nor take on the new culture have been described as choosing *marginalization* (separation from both cultures) or, alternatively, as proponents of *individualism* (preferring to focus on the personal characteristics of individuals rather than on cultures).

Recent models of acculturation acknowledge that immigrants are often subject to the conditions of their host society, with both the immigration and integration policies of host nations likely to influence immigrant acculturation. Thus, the acculturation strategies preferred by immigrants are most likely to be successfully practiced when they are compatible with the preferences of the host society. When members of the host society prefer that immigrants give up their cultural heritage and fully take on the new culture, this is described as the *melting pot*. In contrast, when members of the host society prefer that immigrants maintain their cultural heritage and do not take on the new culture, this may result in *segregation*. When the host

society values cultural diversity and immigrants are encouraged to both maintain aspects of their cultural heritage and take on aspects of the host culture, this represents *multiculturalism*. Finally, attempts to prevent immigrants from maintaining their cultural heritage or taking on the new culture can be defined as a form of *exclusion* or as a preference for *individualism*. Of note, not all immigrant groups within a country are treated similarly, with a host society's preference for acculturation depending on whether a particular group is valued or devalued in that society. For example, research has shown that Anglo-Canadians seem to be more supportive of welcoming acculturation orientations (e.g., integration) for British immigrants than for Arab Muslim immigrants.

### Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration in the Host Society

Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration among members of a host society are important because they may influence support for immigration policies within a nation, the treatment and acceptance of immigrants, the success of immigration policies, the life outcomes for immigrants, and, ultimately, the degree of harmony or discord within a nation. Two important theories that have addressed attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are the *unified instrumental model of group conflict* and the *integrated threat theory of prejudice*. Both have aimed to explain the variety of factors that may influence immigration attitudes, including those discussed below.

#### *Perceived Economic Costs and Contributions*

Over the past few decades, there have been repeated debates as to whether immigrants contribute economically to their new society or are a drain on resources and compete for jobs with those who are native born. Of course, a general answer to this question is difficult to provide because the effects of immigration on a local economy are likely to depend on the immigration policy of the host nation, the concomitant type of immigrants who predominate, and the local economic situation. For example, as described earlier, many immigrants to Canada are accepted under

the economic class of immigration, and are thus specifically selected to be highly skilled and to fill needs in the labor market. Under these conditions, one would expect that immigrants would be more likely to contribute economically to their new society (though underemployment of new immigrants may reduce this likelihood). In contrast, employment-based immigrants do not constitute the majority of immigrants to the United States, so that concerns about the economic contributions of these immigrants may be greater. Thus, when economic times are challenging and unemployment rates are higher, members of host societies are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.

Irrespective of the *actual* economic contributions of immigrants, an important factor in determining attitudes toward immigrants and immigration among members of the host society is the *perceived* economic contributions and costs of immigration. Immigrants who do not do well economically are likely to be seen as a drain on social services (e.g., welfare), leading to negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. In addition, research has shown that immigrants who do well economically may also be seen as a threat to the economic conditions of the host society because their successes may at times be seen as coming at the expense of those who are not immigrants. These “zero-sum beliefs”—beliefs that the more immigrants obtain, the less is available for others—have been shown to lead to negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. This means that immigrants may face a dilemma: Whether they fail or succeed economically, they may be perceived negatively by some members of the host society. Fundamentally, it is the belief that immigrants are taking resources from members of the receiving society that drives these negative attitudes. Such a belief may be more or less likely to be part of the dominant discourse within a country, may be more or less likely to be promoted by the media, and may depend on individual difference variables, such as *social dominance orientation*. Research has shown that individuals who score higher in social dominance orientation (i.e., support inequality in society and believe in group hierarchies) are especially likely to see the world in general, and to see relations with immigrants in particular, as zero-sum in nature. As a result, they are especially

likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration.

#### *Perceived Threats to Physical Safety and Health*

Two other types of threats associated with immigrants are (1) threats to physical safety and (2) threats to the health of members of the receiving society. While the former has become particularly salient in the last few years, the latter has a long history of influencing attitudes toward immigration policies and immigrants. Concerns about threats to safety posed by immigrants have become more prevalent since September 11, 2001, due to the salient association of immigrants and terrorists caused by media depictions of the terrorist attacks at that time. Thus, it is now the case that immigrants, particularly those from Middle Eastern countries, are more likely to be viewed with suspicion and even hostility. Concerns that immigrants may bring in diseases that will spread to members of the host society have influenced immigration policies over the last century, despite the fact that immigrants are no longer a major vector of disease (particularly compared to tourism and military travel). Nonetheless, groups that wish to promote negative attitudes toward immigrants, as seen on anti-immigrant Web sites, continue to take advantage of host members' fear of disease by highlighting cases of unhealthy immigrants and those who are stricken with communicable diseases. This results in the dehumanization of immigrants and the promotion of negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration.

#### *Perceived Cultural and Value-Related Costs and Contributions*

In addition to being seen as a potential threat to tangible resources, immigrants are at times seen as threatening to the culture and values of the host society. Thus when immigrants maintain and celebrate their cultural heritage, some members of host societies may find this threatening. Just as some people under some conditions may see tangible resources as zero-sum in nature, some individuals may also see their nation's culture and values as zero-sum. As a result, they may believe that if immigrants are allowed to maintain their

practices and values, it will weaken the culture and values of the host society. Research has demonstrated that these zero-sum beliefs about culture and values lead to negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, particularly toward those who are ethnic and religious minorities and, therefore, more obviously different from the host majority. Just as with tangible resources, the belief that immigrants threaten the dominant culture and values may be more or less likely to be part of the dominant discourse within a country, and may be more or less likely to be promoted by the media. In recent years, the claim that immigrants are a potential threat to the dominant culture and values of host countries has become particularly prevalent within European discourse, resulting in increased support for restrictive immigration policies.

#### *The Framing of National Identity*

How national identity is defined within a particular country and by specific individuals within that country plays an important role in determining whether immigrants are seen as beneficial or detrimental. Two important forms of national identity are nativist/ethnonational and civic/cultural national identity. *Nativist identity* involves the belief that national identity is based on having been born in a country, or at least having lived there for a long time, and on being a member of the dominant religion. This is closely tied to *ethnonational identity*, in which national identity is defined on the basis of bonds of kinship and a common ethnic heritage. In contrast, *civic/cultural national identity* is based on the belief that national identity is based on a voluntary commitment to the laws and institutions of the country, and on the feeling of being a member of the national group. By definition, then, nativist/ethnonational national identity is much more narrow in its construal of who is, and who is not, a member of the national ingroup than is civic/cultural national identity. As a result, countries with a history of promoting a nativist/ethnonational national identity (e.g., Germany) are more likely to have restrictive immigration policies and to reject immigrants as members of the national ingroup. In contrast, countries that have a history of promoting a civic/cultural national identity (e.g., Canada) are more likely to

have relatively open immigration policies and to accept immigrants as members of the national ingroup soon after their arrival.

Definitions of national identity may also change over time. For example, it has been demonstrated that in times of national crisis and threat, the psychological boundaries defining the national ingroup tend to narrow and nativist sentiments tend to increase, resulting in more negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. In addition, large-scale immigration, particularly from new and unfamiliar source countries, can increase concerns about national identity and nativist beliefs, so that negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration become evident. Thus, narrow definitions of national identity and unfavorable views of immigrants and immigration may be mutually reinforcing.

### Discrimination Toward Immigrants

Negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are likely to lead to acts of discrimination. Immigrants to new countries have historically experienced a variety of forms of discrimination, including relatively blatant acts of violence and exclusion. Today, the discrimination that immigrants face is often more subtle, but it continues to limit their life choices. This discrimination may affect all phases of the immigration and integration process, from the restrictiveness of immigration policies to limitations on citizenship to more subtle discrimination in everyday encounters. Subtle discrimination may manifest in crucial aspects of immigrants' settlement and integration, including their ability to secure housing, to have their skills and credentials recognized, and to gain access to educational opportunities and social services. As with other forms of subtle bias, this discrimination is most likely to be evident when justifications other than prejudice are readily available. Thus, for example, research has shown that employers may discount the skills of an immigrant applicant due to prejudice, while using the uncertainty of foreign qualifications as a seemingly legitimate justification for this behavior. Whether blatant or subtle, however, discrimination may have a severe impact on immigrants and limit the contributions that they can make to their new country.

### Reciprocal Relations Between Immigrants and Members of the Host Society

The process of immigration has potentially large-scale influences on both immigrants and members of receiving societies. In the process of acculturation, it is likely that immigrants and host members will be affected, with more or less influence on each, depending on the acculturation preferences that predominate. By limiting the life choices of immigrants, discrimination not only affects immigrants and their families, but also affects host societies by influencing the type of society in which both immigrants and host members live and placing limits on the contributions that immigrants can make. Developed nations increasingly have a need for immigrants, particularly highly skilled immigrants, to fill their labor market needs and contribute to their diminishing populations. Thus, the discourse of immigration within these countries is rapidly changing from a discussion of "tolerance" to a discussion of "attraction and retention." That is, immigrants are becoming a commodity for which developed countries must compete. As a result, questions of immigration must now focus on how to best optimize the contributions of immigrants and promote positive relations with members of the receiving society so that immigrants and members of the host country alike fully benefit.

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*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Cooperation and Competition; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Multiculturalism; Nationalism and Patriotism; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Dominance Theory

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## IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST (IAT)

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The idea that human thinking and feeling can operate outside conscious awareness and without conscious control is well established. Researchers arrived at this conclusion less from complex theorizing about the nature of the mind than from evidence generated by several unique methods. This evidence revealed that much of social cognition occurs without conscious awareness, control, intentional thought, or self-reflection. Thus implicit forms of preference of both individuals and social groups have come to form a critical component in the understanding of intergroup relations.

One method that contributes to this understanding is the *Implicit Association Test* (IAT). The IAT is a measure of implicit cognition, assessing the relative strength of associations between semantic concepts that may not be consciously accessible. For example, the IAT might provide evidence that, in the person being tested, the category “woman” is associated more with family than with career, while the category “man” reveals the opposite association. Indeed, the presence of such associations can be detected by the IAT even if the person is not aware of them or if the person consciously endorses an opposing belief.

The IAT has been used to study a diverse range of psychological concepts, and its primary use has

been in the analysis of unconscious intergroup attitudes and stereotypes and group identity. Notably, the IAT has been used to study many aspects of implicit intergroup cognition, including its relationship to self-report, its development, neural correlates, and ecologically realistic behaviors.

### Description of the Method

The IAT is a computer-based reaction-time task that measures the relative strength of associations between concept–attribute pairs by instructing participants to classify four sets of stimuli into two superordinate categories using just two response keys. During a typical IAT, participants use two response keys to classify concept stimuli presented sequentially on a computer screen (e.g., faces of Blacks and Whites, representing the concept *race*); for example, pressing the left key to indicate the face is Black and the right key to indicate the face is White. In addition, participants use the same two keys to classify attribute stimuli (e.g., good words such as *happy, nice, pleasant* or bad words such as *terrible, awful, violent*).

For half the trials, a particular concept category (White) and attribute category (good) share the same response key, while the contrasting categories share the other response key. And for the second half of the trials, the pairings reverse so that the opposite categories share the same response key (Black with good, and White with bad). The logic of the IAT is simple: When two concepts are more strongly associated with each other, it should be easier for participants to classify them when they share the same response key than when they share different response keys. In other words, participants should be both faster to respond and more accurate when two closely related concepts share the same response key.

The IAT stimuli can appear in several formats, including pictures and words presented either visually or aurally. Response latencies and errors are recorded and compared to those generated by the first set of trials. The particular pairings described above are counterbalanced across participants to control for potential order effects. (For a sample IAT task, visit <http://implicit.harvard.edu>)

Each participant receives a single score upon completing an IAT, called the IAT score or the D-score. This score is a measure of effect size computed by

calculating the difference between the mean response latency for the two double-categorization blocks and dividing that difference by its associated pooled standard deviation. The D-score indicates the strength of an individual's association between categories and attributes, with larger scores indicating stronger associations. (For more information about how to score an IAT, please see the recommended readings at the end of this entry.)

### Discoveries About Intergroup Cognition

Perhaps because the IAT was first introduced using social groups as the target domain, it has been most heavily used by those interested in the implicit intergroup attitudes, stereotypes, and self-concepts of numerous groups: race/ethnicity, gender, age, nationality, religion, body weight, disability, sexual orientation, and political ideology, to name just a few. As such, the IAT has been instrumental in generating a vast body of descriptive work to document the nature of implicit social cognition in intergroup contexts.

Researchers interested in understanding dual-process theories of social cognition and intergroup relations have used the IAT to measure the degree to which (and the conditions under which) explicitly stated prejudices and implicitly measured associations are consistent. Moreover, the IAT has helped shed light on intergroup cognition by providing key insights into the nature of implicit bias among majority and minority populations, including the developmental origins and neural basis of implicit social cognition as well as the effect of intergroup contact on the reduction of implicit intergroup bias. Notably, the IAT has been implemented online at <http://implicit.harvard.edu>, which serves primarily as an educational site with an attached spin-off research site, allowing data to be gathered from samples well beyond the convenience of college.

### *Dissociation With Explicit Evaluation*

Assessments of bias as measured by the IAT do not always produce results consistent with self-report measures. In fact, a weak correlation or no correlation at all is obtained between the IAT and self-report measures of bias when there is a strong desire on behalf of the participant to self-report

egalitarian views. These results are particularly common in the United States when researchers are studying socially sensitive topics such as race attitudes and stereotypes. Indeed, research has documented that people are reluctant to endorse views that are frowned upon in their culture when anonymity is not assured (e.g., stating a preference for Whites over Blacks or agreeing with a negative stereotype about Blacks).

Thus, while race bias is typically detected using the IAT, such bias is more difficult to detect, if it is detected at all, using self-report measures. Such data relating the IAT to self-report measures of bias support the idea that social cognition derives from two independent pathways, one that is relatively automatic, unconscious, and inaccessible and another that is readily available to introspection and to willful efforts of control. Notably, when the groups involved are not socially charged, the IAT and self-report measures of bias tend to report similar findings.

### Evidence About Bias

#### *Majority and Minority Intergroup Bias*

Research with the IAT has revealed a striking finding among adult participants—only majority group members from socially valued groups exhibit positive implicit ingroup bias. Thus, White Americans consistently show strong ingroup bias, whereas Black Americans do not. Similar observations have been obtained for other majority–minority group contrasts in the United States and in numerous other countries around the world.

#### *Development of Implicit Intergroup Bias*

A child-friendly version of the IAT (Child IAT) was developed to measure the acquisition of implicit associations as they emerge. Collectively, this research has demonstrated that implicit intergroup biases emerge surprisingly early in life at adultlike levels of magnitude, casting doubt on the conventional view that such implicit associations form only over a protracted period of exposure to cultural beliefs. While implicit attitudes emerge very quickly and undergo little change across development, implicit stereotypes seem to take longer to form, appearing to be much more flexible. Ongoing developmental research using the

Child IAT promises to shed light on the cognitive and cultural origins of implicit intergroup bias, while revealing how and when such implicit associations can be modified.

### *Malleability of Implicit Intergroup Bias*

Considerable research has been concerned with understanding the malleability of implicit intergroup bias. Research using the IAT has shown that although the IAT taps an aspect of intergroup cognition that is difficult to control, this implicit cognition, contrary to intuition, is likely quite malleable. Indeed, studies have shown that the mere presence of members of an outgroup (Black) can reduce the degree of implicit anti-Black IAT bias, that imagery exercises can lower the degree of stereotypes of women, and that consistent exposure to women teachers can change girls' stereotypes.

### **Construct and Predictive Validity of the IAT**

Research examining the construct validity of the IAT has demonstrated that it is difficult to produce a desired outcome (i.e., fake the test) and that the strength of implicit associations are often uncorrelated with a person's self-professed beliefs, especially when the domain of interest is susceptible to the common desire to appear unbiased in the eyes of friends, family, and peers. This is precisely the sort of finding one would expect from a measure of *implicit* bias. Categories expected to elicit positive attitudes (e.g., flowers) compared to other categories (e.g., insects) do so. Known-groups tests give further support to the IAT by showing that those expected to have stronger positive associations between concept and attribute indeed show such effects (e.g., members of dominant social groups show greater implicit positivity toward their ingroup than do members of nondominant social groups).

The IAT is also known to be related to several measures of brain activity, with the first studies demonstrating greater amygdala activation to Black faces in those participants who also showed stronger anti-Black IAT bias. Given the strong involvement of the amygdala in emotional learning, such a result (the correlation between amygdala involvement and degree of attitudinal bias) ought to be expected from an attitude measure. Recently,

an identity IAT (measure of association of self with another) predicted activation in the medial prefrontal cortex, showing the activation of different neurons when individuals thought about someone similar to or different from them based on group membership.

The IAT measures the relative strength of association between different concepts. Research has revealed that differences in the magnitude of these associations correlate with differences in actual behavior. In answer to questions concerning the predictive validity of the IAT using real-world samples, a review of all peer-reviewed published papers exploring the predictive validity of the IAT has shown that although both explicit and implicit measures predict intergroup discrimination, the IAT outperforms explicit measures in this context. In particular, implicit intergroup bias measured by the IAT is a better predictor of nonverbal behaviors and decisions made under pressure than are explicit measures of intergroup bias.

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*See also* Children: Stereotypes and Prejudice; Implicit Prejudice; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Prejudice; Self-Esteem; Social Identity Theory; Social Representations; Stereotyping

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## IMPLICIT PREJUDICE

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Although there is some debate among psychologists as to what implicit prejudice is and how best to define it, *implicit prejudice* is most commonly described as a prejudice (i.e., negative feelings and/or beliefs about a group) that people hold without being aware of it. One can harbor implicit prejudice on the basis of race (implicit racism), sex (implicit sexism), age (implicit ageism), ethnicity (implicit ethnocentrism), or any number of other social groups. Of the various forms of implicit prejudice, implicit racism has probably received the most research attention.

Implicit prejudice is thought to operate automatically, with little intention or control on the part of the person. In addition, people are often unwilling or unable to acknowledge their implicit prejudice. Implicit prejudice can be contrasted with explicit prejudice, which is prejudice of which people are aware and that they agree with and endorse consciously. As discussed below, implicit prejudice can have a wide range of effects on judgments and behavior toward members of different groups. It tends to appear in people's judgments and behavior toward targets of their prejudice both subtly and accidentally. Because it seeps into the behavior of people who see themselves as unprejudiced, it is believed to be a particularly insidious form of prejudice.

For example, consider a White individual who considers himself a relatively open-minded, prejudice-free person. He tries to be fair to everyone and treat people equally. However, imagine he

harbors negative feelings toward, say, Blacks. These are feelings he doesn't readily acknowledge and wouldn't admit to others; indeed, he may adamantly deny them. However, in interactions with Blacks, he appears somewhat distant and aloof. Although he doesn't mean to, he makes less eye contact, smiles less, and generally exudes less warmth with them than he does with Whites.

We would consider this person to be relatively low in explicit prejudice—he would claim, and would perhaps believe, to feel neutrally or positively toward Blacks, and he would certainly disavow blatantly racist notions like racial discrimination in housing and employment. However, he exemplifies implicit prejudice because of his negative feelings and behavior toward Blacks and his lack of awareness of these feelings and behaviors. It is the coupling of unintentional negativity and a lack of awareness that is the hallmark of implicit prejudice. This entry describes the concept of implicit prejudice, explores its manifestations and measures, and summarizes critiques of the idea.

### Origins and Prevalence

Most researchers would agree that, to some extent, socialization processes affect us all. That is, our parents, teachers, peers, television, and other forms of media have an impact on our attitudes and beliefs. Implicit prejudice researchers point to the negative depiction of various groups, particularly Blacks, in popular culture and the media as a primary origin of implicit prejudice. Overhearing prejudicial remarks from our peers and parents is also thought to influence our racial attitudes. These cultural associations are likely incorporated into memory without our awareness or consent, and the process is said to begin in childhood. By adulthood, negative associations in memory involving Blacks (and other stigmatized groups) have become so ingrained that they are capable of being automatically activated upon seeing a Black individual.

While many people are aware of the fact that some minority groups are negatively depicted in society, people tend to be unaware of the impact of these negative associations on their attitudes. In fact, it is common for people to overtly deny that media and other socialization factors influence their attitudes. However, research shows that humans are capable of learning associations implicitly—without

their awareness or intention—in as little as 20 repetitions, and that racial attitudes can form and change implicitly as well.

People also tend to claim that they “choose” their attitudes based on personal experience, facts, and other forms of evidence, but implicit prejudice is a case of a person’s attitudes forming without any consideration of facts or evidence. In contrast to explicit prejudice, which tends to be based on deliberately held beliefs (e.g., that Blacks are violent or unintelligent), implicit prejudice is primarily feeling based. It is the sum of the large number of negative depictions of a given group, not the product of a single fact or negative experience with a given member of a negatively evaluated group. As such, it tends to take the form of “vague feelings” that exist without any specific reason (although after-the-fact justifications can easily be generated to rationalize a person’s prejudices).

An implication of this analysis is that nearly all members of the culture are thought to have some degree of implicit prejudice. Because people—particularly children—are often unaware of the effects of socialization on their attitudes, they do little to prevent socialization processes from influencing them. Thus, most members of a culture that negatively depicts a given group will harbor implicit prejudice against that group. In fact, research designed to measure implicit prejudice indicates that the vast majority of White Americans show implicit prejudice against Blacks. Furthermore, there is some evidence that these socialization processes similarly affect Blacks, leading to implicit prejudice against their own group.

### Manifestations

Because implicit prejudice tends to be more feeling based than fact based, it tends to appear in behavior where emotions tend to manifest. Nonverbal behavior in particular has been implicated as a common outlet for implicit prejudice. In the example mentioned earlier, the implicitly prejudiced individual smiled less and made less eye contact with Blacks than with Whites. Research has shown that implicit prejudice relates to these and other nonverbal indicators of negativity and discomfort, such as body orientation, fidgeting, and the like.

Implicit prejudice is also likely to influence judgments in ambiguous or uncertain situations. One

interesting study demonstrated that Whites who scored high on a measure of implicit prejudice were more likely to interpret a neutral facial expression on the face of a Black individual as angry or hostile than the same expression on the face of a White individual (the faces in this study were computer generated, so we can be certain that the only way in which they differed was race). In another classic study, White participants were more likely to interpret an ambiguous shove on the part of a Black individual as an act of hostility; the same shove performed by a White individual was more likely to be construed as playful. It is likely that implicit prejudice was at work here because people were probably unaware of the fact that they interpreted these behaviors differently based on race.

However, implicit prejudice can also influence people’s deliberate judgments and behavior. This is because people will not attempt to correct their prejudices if they are not aware of them or their biasing influence. For example, in making hiring decisions, employers often take pains to avoid bias and attempt to treat all applicants equally. But if while reviewing applications, the race of an applicant becomes apparent (through a name, photo, or affiliation), implicit prejudice may be activated in the mind of the employer, who would then have to actively correct that bias to maintain equal treatment of the applicants. Given that people are often unable or unwilling to admit to implicit prejudice, it is unlikely that the employer will attempt to correct it. Hence, he or she may inadvertently evaluate Black applicants more negatively than White applicants.

### Measuring Implicit Prejudice

Traditionally, paper-and-pencil-based survey questionnaires have been used to measure prejudice. Such questionnaires typically ask respondents to indicate how much they like or dislike various groups, or their agreement with such statements as, “Blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted.” This was, and still is, an effective way to measure explicit prejudice because it is a form of prejudice people are aware of and are at least somewhat willing to report to others.

However, researchers cannot effectively use questionnaires to measure implicit prejudice. This is because implicit prejudice is a form of prejudice that

people are either unwilling or unable to report. People are often unwilling to report their implicit prejudice on a questionnaire because they consciously disapprove of their own prejudice and do not wish to appear prejudiced to others, even on a questionnaire. They are sometimes unable to report their implicit prejudice if they themselves are not consciously aware of their own prejudices. So if someone appears to be low in prejudice according to a questionnaire, it could be because they truly are low in prejudice, because they do not wish to confess their prejudice, or because they do not know that they are prejudiced. Questionnaire measures cannot differentiate between these three possibilities.

Owing to the drawbacks of questionnaire measures, researchers have turned to *implicit measures* (sometimes called *indirect measures*) to assess implicit prejudice (see, for example, the entry on the Implicit Association Test). Implicit measures are capable of identifying a person's degree of implicit prejudice without having to ask directly any questions having to do with prejudice. In fact, implicit measures typically do not ask any questions at all. Instead, they assess people's reaction times to various prejudice-related stimuli and infer, based on those reaction times, the degree to which an individual is implicitly prejudiced.

One kind of implicit measure involves prime images that are presented for short durations on a computer screen (typically less than half a second), followed by target words that mean something good (e.g., *excellent*) or bad (e.g., *horrible*). The respondent's task is to identify the meaning of the target word as either good or bad by pressing one of two buttons on a keypad. The image that precedes the target is typically a picture of a person, for example, a White or Black person. A respondent would undergo many such trials of prime image–target word, all the while responding as quickly as possible to the valence of the target word (good or bad). Implicit prejudice would be revealed in the pattern of response times to the target words.

Specifically, people who are implicitly prejudiced against Blacks are relatively quick to identify negative words preceded by Black primes (and positive words preceded by White primes). This is because the racial group “Black” is automatically linked in memory to a negative evaluation; seeing the face of a Black individual activates negativity,

making people quicker to identify other negative items. In other words, quickness to respond on Black–bad trials indicates negative implicit associations to Blacks. By comparing response times to Black–bad, White–bad, Black–good, and White–good trials, researchers can arrive at an index of a given individual's degree of implicit prejudice.

One might ask what a high score on an implicit measure of prejudice might imply in terms of behavior in intergroup contexts. That is, do implicit measures predict behavior? Research has shown that they do. Recall the example mentioned earlier of someone who is high in implicit prejudice but low in explicit prejudice toward Blacks. This individual smiled less, made less eye contact, and exuded less warmth while interacting with Black individuals. Also mentioned earlier was the finding that White respondents scoring high in implicit prejudice were more likely to perceive Black faces as having more hostile expressions. It is precisely these sorts of perceptions and behaviors that implicit measures predict. Specifically, behaviors that are less controllable and less consciously monitored (like many nonverbal behaviors) tend to relate to implicit measures of prejudice; hence, individuals who score high in implicit prejudice smile less, make less eye contact, and so on while interacting with a Black person than with a White person. Explicit measures, in turn, tend to predict more deliberate and thoughtful behavior. For example, people who score high in explicit prejudice are more likely to report not liking a Black individual, and to consciously evaluate that individual negatively.

Much research has examined how explicit and implicit prejudice are related (for example, if someone is high in explicit prejudice, does it mean that person is also high in implicit prejudice?). Interestingly, there is often little relation between the two forms of prejudice. Someone can be high in one or both, low in one or both, or high in one and low in the other. Because of the pervasive impact of socialization processes on implicit prejudice, it is particularly common for someone to be relatively high in implicit prejudice but low in explicit prejudice, as the earlier example illustrates.

### Critique of the Concept

Although implicit prejudice research has received a lot of research attention in recent years, substantial

controversy surrounds it. The debate has centered on three key issues: (1) the prevalence of implicit prejudice (that is, is everyone implicitly prejudiced?), (2) whether people are actually unaware of their implicit prejudice, and (3) whether implicit prejudice and explicit prejudice are truly independent (that is, is implicit prejudice really a different form of prejudice from explicit prejudice?).

Regarding the question of prevalence, many researchers believe that implicit prejudice is an inevitable consequence of socialization, that everyone is at least “a little bit racist” (and sexist, and homophobic, and so on). Corroborating this claim is evidence from some implicit measures, like the Implicit Association Test, indicating that approximately 90% of Whites show evidence of implicit prejudice against Blacks. However, the priming measure described earlier reveals that only 50% to 60% of Whites harbor implicit prejudice. Moreover, as has been described, the variability revealed in implicit measures relates to behavior: People with more negative implicit prejudice scores tend to act more negatively to members of the negatively evaluated groups, and people with more positive implicit prejudice scores tend to act more positively toward members of those groups. Hence, implicit prejudice does vary among people—some have strong levels of it, some none at all, and some show implicit positivity toward groups that most other members of a society dislike.

“Culture” and “socialization” are simply not unitary, one-size-fits-all entities, and people vary in the extent to which they are exposed to negative depictions of various groups. So it is not surprising that although a good number (perhaps even the majority) of members of a culture that depicts some groups negatively eventually come to have implicit prejudices toward those groups, others will not be exposed to (or at least will not be as exposed to) these socialization processes, and hence will not be as affected by them.

The second issue—awareness of implicit prejudice—stems from the many claims that have been made that people are not consciously aware of their implicit prejudice. However, there is no documented evidence that people are, indeed, unaware of their implicit prejudices (and it would be difficult to provide such evidence). In fact, there is evidence precisely to the contrary. For example, some people try to “correct” for their

implicit prejudice, particularly those people who both have a lot of it and are motivated not to be prejudiced; these individuals would not be able to correct for their prejudice if they were unaware of it. Also, people who are particularly *unmotivated* to correct for their prejudice exhibit a similar degree of prejudice on both implicit and explicit measures; they appear to have a good deal of prejudice, and are comfortable admitting it. Finally, evidence from other areas of research shows that when people are implored to be honest, they will report attitudes on an explicit measure that correspond to their implicit attitudes, suggesting that people are aware of their implicitly measured attitudes, but that sometimes they don’t want to report them to others.

The third criticism of implicit prejudice is perhaps the most divisive. Although some researchers who advocate the concept claim that people essentially have two attitudes toward a given group (e.g., Blacks, women, homosexuals, etc.), one explicit and the other implicit, other researchers have wondered whether implicit prejudice and explicit prejudice really do amount to separate and distinct attitudes. Specifically, these researchers argue that prejudice at the implicit level gets at something closer to the “truth,” that is, people’s true feelings about a given group. Explicit prejudice, because of its susceptibility to motivational effects (as when people claim not to be prejudiced out of a concern that they might appear prejudiced), is not really “prejudice” at all, but is really comprised of people’s values or motivations concerning intergroup contexts.

So instead of two attitudes toward Blacks, homosexuals, or whomever, people have one true “gut” attitude, and it is a matter of whether people wish to be honest as to whether their levels of explicit prejudice look any different from their implicit prejudice. From this perspective, implicit prejudice is “true” prejudice, and explicit prejudice is an amalgamation of strategies people employ to appear a certain way in public. The issue then becomes whether to consider this amalgamation an attitude toward a given group. This debate—the relationship between implicit and explicit prejudice and whether they really are distinct—continues in the scientific literature.

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See also Implicit Association Test (IAT); Modern Forms of Prejudice; Prejudice; Racism; Stereotyping

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## INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

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*Inclusion* refers to being accepted as part of a group, organization, or two-person relationship, whereas *exclusion* refers to being rejected. Inclusion tends to have positive effects on behaviors, cognitive activity, physical health, and emotions, whereas exclusion tends to have negative effects. Making excluded people feel that they are able to gain inclusion reduces the negative effects of exclusion. This entry discusses the importance of inclusion and exclusion for understanding group processes, reviews the types of inclusion and exclusion people experience inside and outside the scientific laboratory, and discusses the positive and negative consequences of inclusion and exclusion.

### Belonging to Groups as a Fundamental Human Need

People depend on others for much of their well-being. Most humans do not grow the food they eat, make the clothes they wear, or build the shelter in which they live. People obtain these basic necessities from members of their group. To a large

extent, our lives depend on our ability to get along with and feel included by others. In our evolutionary history, exclusion from a group meant almost certain death. It therefore follows that people should be strongly motivated to gain inclusion in groups and avoid exclusion. Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary have suggested that people have a basic desire for positive and lasting relationships. According to this perspective, people try to think, feel, and act in ways that enable them to gain social inclusion and avoid exclusion. Moreover, inclusion is linked to a variety of positive outcomes, whereas exclusion often results in negative outcomes.

### Examining Inclusion and Exclusion Inside and Outside the Laboratory

It is common for members of a group to exclude certain people. People apply for membership in a country club, only to be told that they are not wanted. College students experience exclusion when a desirable college fraternity or sorority rejects their application to join the organization. Children are not picked to join a team for games on the playground or are told they cannot sit next to another person in a school bus. Exclusion is also a common theme in movies and television shows. For example, most reality television shows involve inclusion or exclusion: Some people are excluded because they have terrible singing voices, whereas others are excluded because they do not work well with other members of a group. These examples suggest that inclusion and exclusion are familiar experiences for most people.

Psychologists investigate inclusion and exclusion using several different methods. In contrast to the types of exclusion people experience outside of the laboratory (e.g., not being invited to a friend's party), the methods psychologists use to understand inclusion and exclusion involve exposing people to situations that are less distressing and of lesser importance. The main reason for using mild forms of exclusion in laboratory research is that it would be unethical to expose people to extreme events, such as learning that a loved one does not reciprocate one's feelings, for the purpose of research. Despite the fact that most laboratory manipulations involve rather weak exclusion experiences, the effects of these manipulations tend to be quite strong. In what follows, the six most

popular methods used to study exclusion and inclusion are described. In each method, people who experience exclusion are compared to people who experience inclusion (or some other event), in terms of their behaviors, cognitive activity, physical health, or emotions.

The first method (“lonely future”) involves participants completing a personality test and then learning that they have a personality type that predicts they will end up alone later in life. Other participants learn that they can anticipate a future filled with positive and lasting relationships, whereas still others learn that they will have negative experiences unrelated to their relationships, such as car accidents. The second method (“group exclusion”) involves participants completing a group interaction and learning that no other member chose to work with them on a later task, whereas other participants learn that all other members chose to work with them. The third method (“personal versus impersonal exclusion”) involves participants expecting to interact with a same-sex partner. After exchanging initial information with the partner, some participants are told that the partner refused to work with them, whereas other participants are told that they will not be able to meet the partner because he or she had to leave unexpectedly due to a forgotten appointment. The fourth method (“virtual exclusion”) involves participants playing an online ball-tossing game with two other players (whose actions are programmed by the researcher) and receiving very few tosses from the other players. Other participants receive an expected and appropriate number of tosses from the other players. The fifth method (“think of a time you were excluded”) involves having some participants write an autobiographical essay describing a time when they felt excluded, whereas other participants write about a time when they felt included. Finally, the sixth method (“chronic loneliness”) involves asking participants how much they tend to feel excluded. Researchers then examine the relationships between participants’ feelings of exclusion and their behaviors, cognitive activity, physical health, and emotions.

### Negative Consequences of Exclusion

Exclusion thwarts a fundamental motivation for belonging, and hence the effects of exclusion are

typically negative. This section reviews evidence regarding these negative effects.

### *Behaviors*

Aggression is one of the strongest and most negative consequences of exclusion. Case studies suggest that the majority of students who shoot classmates (such as those at Columbine High School) experienced chronic exclusion. Laboratory manipulations of exclusion produce similar results. In one study, people who were told that no one from a group chose them as a partner blasted a stranger with louder and more intense bursts of white noise than did people who were told that everyone chose them as a partner. Another study found that people who were excluded in a virtual ball-tossing game behaved more aggressively than did people who were included in the game. In this study, aggression took the form of doling out large amounts of hot sauce to a person who expressed strong dislike for spicy foods. Further research indicates that exclusion increases aggression toward both people who are involved in the exclusion experience and people who are not.

Exclusion also tends to influence helping in a negative way. Compared to people who have experienced inclusion, excluded people donate less money to charity, volunteer less, and cooperate less on activities with others. Excluded people cooperate less with others even when it is financially costly to do so and when cooperating will earn them money. Moreover, exclusion reduces helping mostly when the recipient of help does not represent a potential source of social inclusion.

People usually control their impulses because doing so increases their chances of being included in a group. They wait their turn in line, for example, because people who follow rules and act politely are more likely to be included than are people who do not follow rules and act rudely. When people experience exclusion, however, they are much less likely to control their impulses. One reason may be that excluded people do not believe that impulse control will earn them inclusion. Compared to included people, excluded people persist less on frustrating tasks, are less able to control their attention on listening tasks, and eat larger amounts of unhealthy foods and smaller amounts of healthy foods. Although exclusion

reduces impulse control, the relationship between exclusion and reduced impulse control wears off quickly (in less than 45 minutes) for most people. People who have high levels of social anxiety (i.e., are chronically worried about being excluded), however, tend to show poor impulse control for up to an hour after they experience exclusion.

Excluded people are also more likely than included people to behave in ways that allow them to avoid thinking about themselves. Results from one study showed that excluded people sat in a chair that was not facing a mirror (thus avoiding their own reflection) more often than did included people. The implication is that excluded people try to avoid being reminded of personal flaws that caused them to be excluded.

### *Cognitive Activity*

Excluded people do not perform as well as included people on various types of cognitive tasks, including analytical reasoning tests, IQ tests, and reading comprehension tests. Whereas excluded people perform as well as included people on cognitive tasks that do not require much effort (i.e., easy memorization), they perform more poorly on tasks that require large amounts of effort. Just as excluded people do not exert themselves on impulse control tasks, they are also unwilling to use large amounts of mental energy on cognitive tasks.

Exclusion also causes people to interpret other people's actions as aggressive. In one study, people were made to feel excluded or included and were then given vague information about another person. Compared to included people, excluded people were more likely to perceive the vague actions of another person as aggressive. Another study found that chronic feelings of exclusion were related to perceiving others' actions as aggressive. The tendency for excluded people to perceive others' actions in aggressive terms offers one possible explanation for why excluded people behave aggressively.

### *Physical Health and Emotions*

A growing body of evidence links chronic feelings of exclusion to negative health outcomes. Compared to people low in chronic feelings of

exclusion, people who report feeling chronically excluded have poorer immune system functioning, higher resting blood pressure, higher levels of stress hormones, and a lower chance of surviving 30 days and 5 years after heart bypass surgery. People who feel chronically excluded also have poorer sleep quality than people who do not feel chronically excluded.

It is commonly believed that exclusion causes emotional distress, and inclusion increases positive emotions. Indeed, there is evidence that exclusion causes people to feel negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and hurt feelings, whereas inclusion is generally related to positive emotions. When asked how they feel after being excluded, people use words that commonly describe physical injury. For example, excluded people typically report feeling "hurt," "crushed," or "broken-hearted."

Evidence from several studies suggests that describing exclusion as painful extends beyond mere metaphor. In one study using brain-imaging technology, Naomi Eisenberger, Matthew Lieberman, and Kipling Williams showed that the same brain regions respond to exclusion and physical pain. In addition, C. Nathan DeWall and Roy Baumeister demonstrated that excluded participants have lower physical pain sensitivity and higher pain tolerance than do included participants. Excluded participants also show signs of emotional insensitivity, as indicated by reduced empathic concern for another person's suffering and a tendency to predict an emotionally numb response to their favorite football team winning or losing to a rival team. Crucially, excluded participants' numbness to physical pain was related to their emotional insensitivity. Just as the body goes numb in response to serious physical injury, so people become numb physically and emotionally in response to exclusion.

### **Positive Consequences of Exclusion**

So far, we have focused on how exclusion negatively influences behaviors, cognitive activity, physical health, and emotions. There are some findings, however, suggesting positive consequences of exclusion. Most such consequences are due to excluded people wanting to connect with potential sources of social inclusion. Just as hungry people seek out food, so excluded people seek out social acceptance. In so

doing, their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional responses sometimes have positive consequences.

### Behaviors

There is some evidence that excluded people are helpful to others who could be sources of social acceptance. For example, excluded people are more likely than included people to give money to a stranger when they expect to meet the stranger. When no interaction with the stranger is anticipated, however, excluded people give less money than included people. Excluded people also tend to behave in ways that will impress others, possibly as a means of showing that they are worthy of social inclusion. Women who feel excluded, for example, are more likely than other women to work hard on behalf of their group. Exclusion also increases the tendency for people to agree with others, which can be interpreted as an effort to impress others by behaving similarly to them.

### Cognitive Activity

There is evidence that excluded people are more likely than included people to perceive neutral facial expressions as friendly. In addition, people who feel chronically excluded are better at identifying facial expressions and vocal tones than are people who do not feel chronically excluded. Excluded people are also faster than other people at identifying a smiling face (a sign of social inclusion) in the middle of many nonsmiling faces. When presented with a picture of many faces that display various facial expressions (sadness, anger, disgust, smiling), excluded people are more attentive to smiling faces than are people who have not experienced exclusion. In addition, excluded people have more difficulty pulling their attention away from smiling faces than do people who have not been excluded. The implication of all this is that excluded people are motivated to seek out potential relationships. As a result, their attention becomes captured by signs of social inclusion.

### Emotions

Exclusion thwarts a basic human need for positive and lasting relationships, which makes it likely that people will have a deeply ingrained emotional coping response to exclusion. In support of this

notion, there is some evidence suggesting that exclusion activates a coping response in which people seek out positive emotional information in others and in their environment. For example, excluded people are more likely than other people to complete word fragments (*jot*) with positive emotion words (*joy*) as opposed to neutral words (*jot*). When asked to judge which of two words (*cheek, smile*) is more similar to another word (*mouth*), excluded people are more likely than others to choose the option related to positive emotion (*smile*). Excluded people are unaware of this coping response, suggesting that this response to exclusion operates at an unconscious level.

C. Nathan DeWall

See also Deviance; Families; Group Cohesiveness; Need for Belonging; Ostracism

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## INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE

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What do we do when we are uncertain about how to think or act in a situation? One solution is to look to the attitudes and actions of other people. *Informational influence* (also known as



*informational social influence*) is a type of conformity in which individuals use the attitudes or actions of those around them as cues to correcting their own behavior. It is contrasted with *normative influence*, where people conform in order to be liked or accepted by others. Informational influence and normative influence are the two types of influence outlined in Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard's *dual-process theory of social influence*.

Characterized as influence to accept information obtained from others as evidence about reality, informational influence is based on a desire to make informed decisions. This influence is most powerful when being accurate is more important, when others are perceived as especially knowledgeable or expert, and when the situation is particularly ambiguous or uncertain. The more uncertain people are about the correctness of their judgments, the more susceptible they will be to informational influence. However, the more uncertain people are about the correctness of the judgments of others, the less susceptible they will be to informational influence.

Informational influence is not irrational; rather, it is a functional way of defining a position in the face of limited information or ambiguity and uncertainty. Indeed, if others have access to more, different, or more accurate information, it may be sensible to adopt their opinions or to be influenced by their opinions. Informational influence is seen as "true" influence, as the individual accepts and internalizes it—that is, conforms because of a genuine belief that others are correct, and it is seen to lead to long-term, private, attitude change. This is contrasted with normative influence, which is seen as leading to public compliance—that is, to conforming to the behavior of others publicly without necessarily believing such behavior is correct. This entry looks at the history of the concept of informational influence and discusses related controversies.

### History and Background

It could be argued that one of the first studies to demonstrate informational influence was Muzafer Sherif's work on the autokinetic effect. The *autokinetic effect* refers to the way in which a pinpoint of light appears to move of its own accord when it is

viewed in a completely dark room where there are no visible reference points. In Sherif's studies, people were placed in a darkened room either alone or in groups and asked to state how much the point of light moved. In this ambiguous situation, people were always influenced by the judgments of other people, even if they first made their judgments alone. The groups converged on a norm that was used to make their judgments. Influence was accepted readily with little awareness and persisted in the absence of the group for long periods of time.

One early account for informational influence was offered by Leon Festinger, who suggested that individuals are motivated to test the validity of their beliefs and prefer to do so through a process of physical reality testing. However, when we cannot rely on our own direct perceptual and behavioral contact with the physical world, as is the case in the autokinetic paradigm, the subjective validity of our beliefs depends on social reality testing and on the consensual validation of our beliefs by other people. In such cases, we will become susceptible to influence from others. If we discover that other people do not share our beliefs and opinions, we will question whether our beliefs and opinions are correct.

Informational influence was also illustrated in Solomon Asch's seminal work on conformity and independence. In Asch's studies, a group of seven to nine young men were gathered together, ostensibly for a psychological experiment on visual perception. Participants were presented with a target line and a set of three comparison lines and told that their task was to state publicly which of the three comparison lines matched the target lines. However, only one person was a true participant; the others were confederates of the experimenter, who had been instructed to give a unanimously incorrect response on certain trials. When alone, participants were able to complete this task with 99% accuracy, confirming that this was not a difficult or ambiguous task. However, in groups, participants conformed to the incorrect response of the group on about one third of the critical trials, a finding that has been replicated in many subsequent studies.

After the studies, participants were asked why they had conformed to the incorrect majority. Many participants reported that they knew that

the group was incorrect but went along with the group anyway because they did not want to stand out from the group and be subjected to ridicule—this is normative influence. However, other participants knew that they were out of step with the group but thought that their judgments were incorrect and the majority was correct, and some participants reported actually seeing the lines as the majority did. This is informational influence.

The distinction between informational and normative influence is associated most closely with the work of Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard. Deutsch and Gerard argued that prior research on social influence, such as that conducted by Asch, had confounded informational and normative influence. To test this idea, Deutsch and Gerard conducted a study that incorporated a number of modifications to Asch's study. Specifically, Deutsch and Gerard compared levels of conformity in face-to-face situations, in which participants had to state their judgments publicly after hearing the judgments of others, and in anonymous situations, in which participants had to state their judgments privately after hearing the judgments of others. Greater conformity was found in the face-to-face condition than in the anonymous condition, suggesting the presence of normative influence. However, there was greater conformity in the anonymous condition than in the control conditions, suggesting the presence of informational influence.

### Debate and Controversy

The distinction between normative and informational influence has proven useful in a broad range of research fields, including consumer behavior and marketing, persuasion and attitude change, group decision making, and computer-mediated communication. However, a number of researchers have questioned the value of the distinction between normative and informational influence.

Informational influence is seen to be a function of the validity of the information that others provide about reality. A critical question, however, is how the validity of such information is determined. Researchers who are proponents of social identity theory, such as John Turner, argue that our judgments about validity will depend on whether we share a group membership with these other people.

Information provided by members of our own groups will be seen as more credible, trustworthy, and valid than information provided by members of other groups.

Reference group norms establish the validity of information; thus, consensual validation (of social reality) is really normative validation. In *referent informational influence*, the theory of social influence associated with the social identity approach, the focus is not on distinguishing between normative and informational influence, but rather, on a single influence process in which the normative position of people categorized as similar to the self tends to be accepted as valid information.

Social influence researchers have traditionally assumed that informational and normative influence produces change through different mechanisms and are associated with different outcomes. Specifically, the desire for an informed and correct position prompts people to process persuasive content systematically and produces enduring private change in judgments. In contrast, the desire to meet normative expectations prompts a more superficial analysis of the persuasive content and produces public, context-dependent, transitory change. However, this analysis has been challenged by dual-process models of attitude change, which have demonstrated that informational motives, such as the desire for accurate and informed decisions, can lead to either extensive or superficial processing. Thus, the different motives associated with informational and normative influence are not preferentially related to the mechanisms or outcomes of social influence.

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*See also* Asch, Solomon; Conformity; Deutsch, Morton; Normative Influence; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Sherif, Muzafer

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## INGROUP ALLOCATION BIAS

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People have the tendency to favor members of their own group over members of other groups. This phenomenon, known as *ingroup favoritism*, surfaces not only in more positive evaluation of ingroup than outgroup members (i.e., ethnocentrism), but also in the allocation of more resources to ingroup than outgroup members, known as *ingroup allocation bias*. Given competition for critical resources such as jobs, promotions, and housing, ingroup favoritism can have a profound real and psychological impact; especially on members of groups that are based on imposed ascriptions such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, and language. It is precisely because discrimination is a pervasive phenomenon in most societies that social scientists have devoted so much effort to understanding its mechanisms and finding ways of reducing its prevalence. This entry describes how the concept of ingroup allocation bias was developed and how it has been explored through research.

### History

Early-20th-century social psychologists focused their research not only on discrimination in jobs and housing but also on discriminatory behaviors such as racist speech, hate crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. In his seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport explored the causes of prejudice and discrimination from a multidisciplinary perspective that included historical analysis, economics, sociology, and psychology. Within the psychoanalytic tradition, Theodor Adorno and his colleagues, in their classic book *The Authoritarian Personality*, proposed that certain family socialization practices could foster a personality that was intolerant of ambiguity and of the weak and powerless; thus creating a framework for

prejudice and discrimination toward devalued ethnic minorities.

Within social psychology, Muzafer Sherif developed *realistic conflict theory* as a functional explanation of prejudice and discrimination, which shifted the focus of explanation from a solely intrapersonal to an intergroup level of analysis. Sherif and his contemporaries showed that intergroup cooperation to attain a shared goal or to avoid a common threat was related to more favorable intergroup attitudes and the equal allocation of resources to ingroup and outgroup members, while objective competition for scarce resources (jobs, housing, territories) was related to unfavorable intergroup attitudes and antagonistic and discriminatory behaviors.

As a complementary approach, Henri Tajfel proposed a cognitive and motivational analysis that sought to explain circumstances when prejudice and discrimination prevailed despite the absence of objective conflict of interest. Tajfel and John Turner developed *social identity theory* in part to explain laboratory studies showing that the mere categorization of people into “us and them” could be sufficient to trigger ingroup favoritism in the distribution of resources between anonymous ingroup and outgroup members. Social identity theory proposed that group members may use discrimination to achieve a more positive and distinctive social identity relative to outgroups in polarized intergroup settings.

The endorsement of racist and nationalistic ideologies that legitimize the glorification of the ingroup and the disparagement of outgroups has also been related to prejudiced attitudes toward devalued minorities and associated mistreatment through social and institutional discrimination. Taken together, intrapersonal, intergroup, and ideological processes contribute to a social psychological account of prejudice and discrimination. Such processes also may account for intergroup allocation strategies ranging from ingroup favoritism to parity and outgroup favoritism.

### Discrimination in Minimal Groups

In the classic minimal group paradigm (MGP) experiments, Tajfel and his colleagues investigated the “necessary and sufficient conditions” for fostering parity and intergroup discrimination. In the

MGP, participants were randomly categorized (e.g., by a coin toss) as members of contrasting groups and assigned meaningless group labels such as group K and group W. Economic, historical, and ideological factors known to contribute to ingroup favoritism were systematically eliminated from the MGP. Thus, other than the “us/them” categorization, the MGP excluded the following elements: objective conflict of interest between the groups, personal self-interest, a history of rivalry between the groups, an ideology justifying the disparagement or mistreatment of outgroups, intra-group friendships, or intergroup contact. In addition, group membership was anonymous.

In the MGP, categorized participants had the task of distributing valued resources such as money or symbolic points between anonymous ingroup and outgroup members. Tajfel originally expected that such a minimal situation would foster the equal distribution of resources, as this was seen as the only fair and reasonable allocation strategy. However, results showed that the us/them categorization was sufficient to trigger not only parity as expected, but also discrimination in favor of ingroup members over outgroup members. These findings have been corroborated and replicated over the subsequent 40 years of research.

Social identity theory proposes that this minimal group effect reflects a competition for an evaluatively positive social identity. The us/them categorization provided participants with the cognitive structure on which to base their social identities. Individuals’ motivation for a positive social identity is achieved by seeking favorable ingroup–outgroup comparisons on the only available dimension of comparison in the MGP experiment, namely the allocation of more resources to members of their own group than to members of another group.

Discrimination in resource allocations allows individuals to establish the differentiation they need to develop a positive social identity relative to outgroup members. MGP studies showed that individuals who identified strongly with their own group discriminated, while those whose identification with their group was weak did not discriminate, but instead used only parity. Other MGP studies showed that group members felt happier, more satisfied, and “liked being members of their own group” more *after* they discriminated than

*before*, suggesting that people discriminate to achieve a more positive social identity.

### Resource Allocations Using the Tajfel Matrices

In the original MGP studies, participants distributed valued resources to ingroup and outgroup members using the Tajfel matrices. These matrices monitor the reasons for group members’ choosing contrasting allocation options, including parity, maximum joint profit, outgroup favoritism, and three ingroup favoritism strategies—maximum ingroup profit, maximum differentiation, and minimum outgroup benefit. While parity is always a clear option within the Tajfel matrices, laboratory and field studies show that group members choose resource allocation strategies representing compromises between the other options depending on the type of intergroup situation they happen to be in.

When people award an equal number of resources to ingroup and outgroup members, they are engaging in *parity* behavior. Psychologically, parity is a fundamental allocation orientation in the distribution of resources that is easy to conceive, execute, and justify. Results from real-life settings and laboratory experiments show that parity is often endorsed, especially when resources are plentiful rather than scarce and when intergroup relations are cooperative rather than competitive. Ideally, employers should award equal pay to men and women for equal work or for work of equal value. Yet, in most societies, pay differentials in favor of men persist even when men and women show equal qualification, equal performance, and equivalent involvement in the work setting. Clearly, while parity is the fair and politically correct allocation strategy, unequal distribution of resources between groups remains the rule rather than the exception in most intergroup settings.

The first *ingroup favoritism* strategy consists of achieving *maximum ingroup profit*: awarding the greatest number of resources to the ingroup with no consideration of awards made to outgroup members. This strategy is the simplest and most common discrimination strategy. Maximizing ingroup profit is largely a measure of “ingroup love,” without much concern for comparison to or differentiation from the outgroup.

A second ingroup favoritism strategy, *maximum differentiation*, involves maximizing the difference in resources allocated to ingroup versus outgroup recipients, with the difference in favor of ingroup members—but at the cost of maximum ingroup profit. Maximum differentiation is a discriminatory strategy par excellence, as it offers the greatest possible difference in the outcomes, and fate, of ingroup and outgroup members. Maximum differentiation is the consequence of intergroup social competition and reflects a concern for the attainment of a relative advantage of the ingroup over the outgroup. The use of this strategy has been documented in many MGP and field studies and is usually associated with strong ingroup identification, social differentiation processes, and the achievement of a positive social identity (as proposed by social identity theory).

*Minimum outgroup benefit* is a discrimination strategy that focuses on allocating as few valued resources as possible to outgroup members, without being too concerned by the amount of resources allocated to ingroup members. Minimum outgroup benefit is a vindictive discrimination strategy, as it seeks to deny outgroup members as many valued resources as possible. It can be considered an “outgroup hate” strategy, reflecting the most negative consequences of intergroup differentiation: strong derogation and distrust of outgroups seen as too different, socially inferior, or threatening. Thus the minimum outgroup benefit strategy may be seen as the behavioral outcome of “hot prejudice,” which is usually based on negative and hostile attitudes toward devalued outgroups.

Real-life examples in the 20th century of dominant groups having adopted these allocations include institutional discrimination measures such as the Nuremberg Laws of Nazi Germany and the apartheid laws of South Africa. These cases had in common the mistreatment of disparaged minorities, which included exclusion from employment and promotion, differential access to state services such as health care and education, housing segregation, and denial of voting rights. A mirror image of minimum outgroup benefit consists of the strategy of inflicting as many negative and painful consequences on outgroup members as possible.

Studies using modified Tajfel matrices have shown that undergraduates in MGP studies tend to be less discriminatory on such negative outcome

allocations than on positive outcome ones. However, field situations such as civil wars and ethnic conflicts testify to the use and abuse of minimum outgroup benefit strategies. Endorsement of ideological beliefs such as right wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, ethnocentrism, and nationalism have been invoked to account for the use of the minimum outgroup benefit strategies toward devalued and scapegoated minorities.

The choice of *maximum joint profit* is an attempt to maximize the total combined allocations to both ingroup and outgroup recipients. Measured using the Tajfel matrices, maximum joint profit is a more economically advantageous and rational strategy than parity. It maximizes benefit to both ingroup and outgroup members to the disadvantage of a third-party distributor of the resource, whether that is the experimenter in laboratory studies, the government, or the corporate employer. Studies using the Tajfel matrices have shown that participants rarely use the maximum joint profit strategy, although self-reports usually exaggerate the use of this socially desirable strategy. In contrast, self-reports of parity and ingroup favoritism usually match the actual use of these strategies in laboratory and field studies.

*Outgroup favoritism* consists of allocating more valued resources to outgroup members than to ingroup members. Outgroup favoritism as measured using the Tajfel matrices is the least economically advantageous strategy from the point of view of ingroup members, and compared to parity, ingroup favoritism, and maximum joint profit. Laboratory and field studies have shown that group members who have internalized their low-status ascription, relative to high-status or dominant outgroups, are likely to adopt outgroup-favoring resource allocations, especially on dimensions of comparison related to their status or power inferiority. Recent MGP studies have also shown that participants who were randomly assigned to a rich group used outgroup favoritism in distributing their money to outgroup members who were poor, while the latter endorsed ingroup-favoritism strategies (maximum ingroup profit and maximum differentiation) when allocating the little money they had to poor ingroup and rich outgroup members.

Taken together, the Tajfel matrices and other resource allocation measures can be used as subtle

tools for monitoring a broad range of parity, discriminatory, and outgroup favoritism behaviors in both laboratory and field settings, thus contributing to a better understanding of group processes and intergroup relations.

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*See also* Categorization; Discrimination; Ethnocentrism; Minimal Group Effect; Prejudice; Racism; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Identity Theory; Tajfel, Henri

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## INITIATION RITES

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*Initiation rites* are rituals that mark and facilitate the entry of a person into a group, that is, the person's transition from the status of outsider to insider. Such rites are often referred to as *hazing*,

*rites of passage*, *induction*, and *trial by fire*. Although initiations may have elements of fun, play, and silliness, they are often physically and emotionally demanding, embarrassing, strange, and even painful. Initiation rites serve to underscore that the group is an important entity in and of itself, helping newcomers to identify with the group and helping veterans to accept the newcomers as bona fide members. This entry provides a descriptive overview of initiation rites, discusses some of the reasons research has found for their effectiveness, and looks at groups that employ this strategy.

### Description

Initiation rites are practiced by many types of groups, such as athletic teams, work groups, sororities and fraternities, religious groups, and military units. For example, some football rookies, on their first day in the locker room, have been required to stand on one leg and sing Christmas carols to the starting players; pledges to a college sorority have been asked to undress and allow sorority members to circle areas of body fat with a permanent marker; neophyte Marines have experienced a “blood pinning” on successful completion of jump school, where senior Marines beat the sharp, newly earned golden wing pins into the neophytes' chests; and new fishers on an Alaskan trawler have been addressed as “new guys” rather than by name, denied pillows and blankets, and required to do unnecessary tasks.

However, despite the stereotype, not all initiation rites are harsh or demeaning. Indeed, Roy Lewicki explains how initiation rites are used in high-status organizations to “seduce” new members. By hosting welcoming parties, flattering newcomers as the chosen few, and showering them with gifts and fringe benefits, the organization creates a sense of indebtedness and loyalty.

As the above examples suggest, initiations vary widely not only in form and content but in formality, spontaneity, and intensity; they can be one-time or ongoing events; and they can involve individual newcomers or a cohort of newcomers. Indeed, it isn't always clear where to draw the line in labeling something an initiation rite. For example, is the full 9 weeks of U.S. Army basic training an initiation rite for membership in the army, or is the initial

induction—where recruits have their heads shaved and civilian clothes confiscated—more appropriately seen as the initiation rite?

Initiation rites provide one solution to the problem that all groups experience: how to forge a more cohesive and effective unit from a collection of disparate individuals and maintain the unit in the face of individual turnover. According to Arnold van Gennep, initiation rites are part of a broader set of rites of passage, where the initiate is separated from a former group (e.g., goes to a farewell party held for him or her on leaving an organization), moves through a transitional state where he or she is neither of one group nor another (e.g., takes a vacation to create a break between jobs), and is then incorporated into the new group (e.g., attends a welcoming party held at the new organization).

Initiation rites help communicate the identity and importance of the group to newcomers and encourage newcomers to at least partly define themselves in terms of the group. For instance, a study of a high school sorority by Gary Schwartz and Don Merten found that the initiation process sustained the social hierarchy of the school by defining sorority members as the highest status group, and induced members to think differently about themselves. Further, initiation rites can be used early in the socialization process to help facilitate the newcomer's entry into the group and used later in the process to test and certify that the newcomer has learned what was expected (e.g., the group's history, goals, values, beliefs, and norms, along with role-specific knowledge, skills, and behavior).

Also, the act of initiating newcomers may reinforce veterans' group identity and loyalty. For example, a study of the U.S. Naval Academy by Jana Pershing found that upperclassmen are responsible for initiating new students, which enables the upperclassmen to practice the leadership skills central to the identity of military officers. Further, veterans who suffered severe initiations themselves may desire the opportunity to conduct severe initiations of others as a means of exacting revenge and making newcomers "pay their dues."

### Explaining the Impact

Research in laboratory and field settings indicates that initiation rites may increase the initiate's

attraction to and compliance with the group. Although the precise reasons are unclear, eleven major reasons have been suggested. First, initiation rites test whether newcomers are willing and able to fit in by doing what the group requires. Newcomers who prove unwilling or unable to complete the rites are denied inclusion or acceptance, thereby increasing the compatibility of those who remain.

Second, initiation rites may be experienced as upending, causing newcomers to question their incoming knowledge and readiness, thereby predisposing them to learn from the group and evaluate themselves through the lens of the group's expectations. For example, Edgar Schein reported that one engineering manager asked newcomers to analyze a circuit that, according to their schooling, should not have worked—but did. The incident demonstrated that the budding engineers still had much to learn.

Third, initiation rites often provide clues about what the group values, believes, and expects, enabling newcomers to learn about the group's culture and better assess their degree of fit. Fourth, the unpleasantness of many initiation rites may induce dissonance in the newcomers ("Why have I allowed myself to be put in this position?"), thereby rendering the group more attractive as a means of resolving the dissonance ("I guess I must really like this group"). Ironically, it is precisely because newcomers are debased that they come to value the group.

Fifth, and conversely, initiation rites that are pleasant, like the "seductive" practices described by Lewicki, may foster a sense of gratitude and obligation that effectively binds newcomers to the group. Sixth, initiation rites may induce intense emotions and suggestibility, which make the newcomers more receptive to the group's influence. For example, initiates who are sleep deprived, uncertain about the initiation's outcome ("Will I be accepted?"), or cut off from their normal social relationships are more likely to comply with the group.

Seventh, initiation rites dramatize and therefore signal—both to newcomers and veterans—the newcomers' low status and dependence on the group, thereby reinforcing the status hierarchy and encouraging obedience. In groups that are isolated and powerful, such as in a military academy, newcomers have few options for relief. Much like children

of abusive parents, they may devote themselves to pleasing their “tormentors.”

Eighth, sharing the ordeal of initiation with other newcomers may foster an in-the-same-boat consciousness, which in turn may promote cohesion. When peers are subjected to challenging and intense experiences, they tend to look to one another for emotional and instrumental support, thereby cementing their initial bonds. Indeed, bonds forged under the stress of initiation may persevere throughout people’s tenure with the group. Ninth, because some types of groups (e.g., sororities and fraternities) are widely known to host challenging initiations, many newcomers actually look forward to their initiation as an opportunity to prove themselves, bond with their peers, and adopt their new status as insiders. In such cases, an additional irony of initiation is that newcomers may feel disappointed and even disrespected if their group forgoes a grueling initiation, and may question whether the group is worth joining.

Tenth, successfully passing the initiation may increase newcomers’ self-esteem and sense of inclusion, and may induce an afterglow of positive feelings that generalizes to the group. The initiation may test and certify learning, passing signals that the newcomer is no longer “on probation,” but is a bona fide member of and contributor to the group. Initiations may also, then, facilitate the acceptance of newcomers by veteran members.

Finally, Caroline Keating and her colleagues have argued that certain forms of initiation may foster acceptance of and compliance with the group through unique mechanisms. Initiations that involve violating societal norms (e.g., binge drinking, petty theft) emphasize the divide between the group and society, thereby underscoring the group’s identity and distinctiveness. Initiations that involve telling and keeping secrets help create bonds between otherwise unfamiliar individuals. And initiations may be tailored to the unique skills and abilities required of group members, as when an athletic team compels newcomers to withstand physical duress.

An example that illustrates all three unique mechanisms is violent youth gangs. Full membership in many such gangs requires committing a serious crime (e.g., robbery, arson, murder) and allowing other gang members to witness the crime

or retain evidence, thereby emphasizing the divide between the gang and society, creating incriminating information, and training newcomers in gang-related skills.

In sum, there are multiple routes through which initiation may increase the newcomer’s attraction to and compliance with the group. These routes are likely complementary in the sense that they reinforce one another to increase the impact of the initiation. A final irony of initiation is that what may have been experienced as unpleasant at the time is often recalled fondly later on.

### Group Characteristics

Groups that partake in initiation rites seem to walk a tightrope, trying to maximize the newcomers’ commitment without pushing them too far. The more severe or extreme the initiation, the stronger and more mixed the effects on newcomers and group outcomes are likely to be. Severe initiations are particularly demanding, humiliating, and/or dangerous. On one hand, severe initiations may increase attractiveness to and compliance with the group through some mix of the eleven causal mechanisms described above. For example, a severe initiation may increase the amount of dissonance experienced, thereby strengthening the newcomer’s conclusion that he or she must really like the group. On the other hand, severe initiations may be perceived by newcomers to be offensive, unnecessarily challenging, unduly humiliating, or otherwise to have gone too far. In such cases, the initiation may backfire, causing newcomers to withdraw psychologically or physically from the group (“This is not the place for me”).

Thus, severe initiations may polarize newcomers, driving some to bond more firmly with the group and others to withdraw from the group. Further, because severe initiations frequently violate societal norms, they may attract the unwanted attention of outsiders and jeopardize the group’s image. Indeed, the public outcry about initiations resulting in psychological damage, physical injury, and even death has caused initiations in some contexts to be stopped, toned down, or conducted in greater secrecy.

What kinds of groups are most likely to utilize initiation rites? First, groups that have strong and distinctive identities often need to remake newcomers



in the group's image. It's no surprise, then, that initiation rites are common among most of the groups mentioned earlier: athletic teams, sororities and fraternities, religious groups, and military units. Initiation—and socialization more generally—serves to inculcate the unique qualities of the group in the newcomers. Second, groups that require high levels of trust, confidence, and cohesion among members may view initiation rites as a means of imparting the importance of these qualities and getting a “quick read” on newcomers' willingness and ability to fit in. For example, hazing is relatively common among groups whose members are highly task interdependent and who often face danger, such as firefighters and coal miners.

Finally, refuting the argument that initiation rites are becoming less appropriate and less common in modern society, Wolfgang Mayrhofer and Alexandre Iellatchitch have argued that the increasing dynamism of careers and the wider social environment makes rites of passage even more important precisely because of the frequency of occupational changes. Initiation rites can help combat the anomie associated with transient groups not only at work but in other social domains by embedding individuals socially and psychologically in these groups.

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*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Collective Induction; Cults; Gangs; Group Socialization; Inclusion/Exclusion; Normative Influence; Role Transitions

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## INNOVATION

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To innovate means to change. Change and innovation are necessary to adapt to rapidly changing and challenging environments. Furthermore, innovations can substantially improve our living conditions: Think of innovative medical treatments that have greatly increased life expectancy, or innovations such as soil fertilizers that have substantially reduced food shortage. *Innovation* can be defined as the intentional introduction and application within a particular social unit (e.g., a team or organization) of ideas, processes, products, or procedures that are new to that social unit and that are designed to be useful. Examples of innovations include the introduction of a new computer program in an organization, the introduction of new products to a market, or the introduction of a new service to customers.

This entry focuses on team innovation (in which the social unit is a work team). A discussion of some basic distinctions between innovation and creativity as well as between different types of innovation follows. Finally, the entry examines the factors that determine the level of innovativeness of a team.

### Basic Distinctions

There is a close relationship between innovation and creativity (i.e., the generation of new and useful ideas). Creativity is often needed for innovation, but there are two important differences between creativity and innovation. First, innovation refers to change that is new only to the relevant unit of adoption; it does not require absolute novelty. Thus, adoption in an organization of a computer program that is widely used outside that organization can hardly be called creative but still counts as

innovation. The second is that innovation, in addition to the generation of ideas, also implies the implementation of these ideas into practice.

Thus, innovation often requires both the generation and the implementation of ideas, and these can be seen as different stages in the innovation process. It has even been argued that there is an inherent tension between creativity on the one hand and innovation implementation on the other: For creativity to flourish, certain conditions are needed (such as high levels of job autonomy) that might actually have detrimental effects on implementation (which would be easier with high levels of centralized control).

Related to this is the distinction between the products of innovation: incremental and radical innovations. *Incremental innovations* refine existing products, services, or procedures. *Radical innovations* are major transformations of existing products, services, or procedures that often make previous products, services, or procedures obsolete (e.g., the introduction of MP3 players largely made Discmans obsolete). A further distinction is between technical and administrative innovations. *Technical innovations* (not to be confused with technological innovations) are directly related to the primary work activity of an organization or other social unit. This may be the introduction of new products or services or the introduction of new production or service processes. *Administrative innovations* are innovations that apply to the social (rather than the technical) functioning of organizations or other social units. Examples would be new human resource management practices, new authority structures, and a new reward allocation system.

### Determinants of Team Innovation

Most research on team innovation has studied the factors that make teams more or less innovative. Studying the determinants of team innovativeness requires assessing the level of innovativeness of a team. This has been done in several ways. One way is to use more or less objective measures of innovativeness, such as the number of patents an R&D team has generated within a certain period.

Often, however, this is not possible, in which case researchers have to rely on subjective judgments. These judgments are given sometimes by people outside the team (such as department heads

or clients), but more often by the team leader or by the team members themselves. Measures include estimates of quantity (i.e., how many innovations have been produced by a team) or measures of certain quality dimensions, such as the level of radicalness (on a continuum from incremental to radical innovations) or effectiveness of innovations.

Researchers have often used an input-process-output model of team innovation, arguing that certain antecedents influence team processes and that these team processes in turn determine the innovativeness of a team. Roughly, two types of antecedents can be distinguished: team composition variables and team context variables. These variables, alone and in combination, are assumed to affect certain team processes, such as collaboration, interaction, and conflict, which in turn affect the level of innovativeness of a team.

## Major Findings

### *Team Composition and Innovation*

Team members bring certain resources to the team, most notably their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). These KSAs to a large degree determine what the team is capable of, given the task they have to perform. Not surprisingly, teams in which members have more creative abilities (e.g., because of their personality or general mental ability) tend to be more innovative than teams in which members are on average not very creative. However, the relation between individual-level creativity of team members and team innovativeness will depend on certain team processes: Only when the team members work together effectively (e.g., communicate effectively, effectively deal with conflicts that may arise) will teams benefit optimally from the KSAs of their members to create team innovations.

Furthermore, many authors have argued that team diversity may be associated with team innovation. If group members differ from each other on important task-related attributes, such as knowledge and skills (for example, because they have different functional backgrounds), combining their different resources would result in high levels of performance. Especially when tasks are nonroutine and require different insights, which is often the case when innovation is called for, team diversity has been argued to improve performance. However, the relation

between team diversity and innovation is very complex. For example, team diversity is often also associated with lower levels of trust and cohesion and with higher levels of conflict, and these negative effects may interfere with effective team functioning.

It is therefore likely that team diversity will lead to higher levels of team innovation only under conditions that foster effective team processes. Partly, these factors might be related to team composition. For example, teams in which members score high on personality traits such as agreeableness (being friendly, prosocial, and trustful) and conscientiousness (being thorough and industrious), develop more constructive team processes in which team members' resources might be used in more effective ways. However, team context variables will also influence the extent to which effective team processes develop.

#### *Team Context Variables*

While team members provide the resources (KSAs) for the team to work with, the team context determines whether these resources can and will be used in effective ways. Some factors that have been proposed to be of importance are team structure and task, team climate, task conflict, and leadership.

First, it has been suggested that team innovation can be stimulated by *team structure and task* conditions such as providing teams with enough autonomy to carry out their tasks. Further, teams should be made responsible for a whole task, and not just aspects of it, and the task should be seen as meaningful and important. These conditions would foster intrinsic motivation (i.e., doing the task because it is enjoying and satisfying, rather than because of extrinsic rewards) and would subsequently lead to higher levels of innovativeness.

Although this seems true to some extent, creating these conditions is no guarantee that teams will be innovative. For example, it has been found that team autonomy is related to the innovativeness of R&D teams only when work pressure is high and there is much support for innovation. While work pressure creates the need to innovate (i.e., to more effectively deal with the pressure), support for innovation ensures that innovations are in fact implemented.

Second, many authors have suggested that team climate affects innovativeness. *Team climate* refers

to shared perceptions of team members about team policies, procedures, and practices (i.e., "the way things are done in the team"). Several dimensions of team climate have been suggested, but one important dimension is participative safety: an atmosphere of nonthreatening trust and support. Because in a safe climate team members are more likely to take interpersonal risks, like suggesting new ways of doing things, such a climate may stimulate innovation. Again, however, creating high levels of participative safety might not be enough. While a safe climate might ensure that deviant ideas are taken seriously, instead of being rejected or ridiculed, it does not ensure that these ideas will be generated in the first place or that they eventually will be implemented.

A team process that has been related to team innovation is *task conflict*, precisely because it will lead to the generation of new ideas. Task conflicts (i.e., disagreement in opinions) may increase innovativeness because conflicts force teams to reconsider their way of working. Although there is some support for this, the evidence suggests that conflicts can easily escalate and that only moderate but not high levels of conflict are associated with innovativeness.

Further, conflicts will increase innovativeness only when they are effectively dealt with, which may require a positive team climate (e.g., high levels of participative safety). One particularly interesting finding is that it is not conflict per se, but rather minority dissent that leads to innovativeness. Minority dissent occurs when a minority in the team publicly opposes the beliefs, attitudes, and ideas assumed by the majority of team members. Often, minorities bring about change (even in society at large) because they question the dominant way of looking at things. The evidence indicates that minority dissent is in fact related to team innovativeness, but only when team members frequently discuss their way of working in a nonthreatening way. What seems essential is that the minority is taken seriously, that their ideas are thoroughly discussed, and that useless ideas are abandoned and promising ones implemented.

Finally, an important factor is *leadership*. Leaders may create the conditions under which team innovation can flourish. For example, participative leaders (i.e., leaders who encourage participation of their subordinates) have been found

to increase team reflexivity (i.e., collective reflection on the team's objectives, strategies, and processes). In turn, reflexivity is positively associated with team innovation, particularly in teams in which minority dissent often occurs. Furthermore, leaders can also motivate their followers to be innovative. For example, recent theories of leadership distinguish between transformational and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership rewards subordinates for performing well, and transformational leadership relies on charisma, intellectual stimulation, and personal consideration to motivate subordinates. These types of leadership are not independent (i.e., leaders can use both), and in fact, both types may be associated with team innovativeness when leaders use these strategies to motivate their followers to be innovative. However, definitive support for this hypothesis awaits further research.

Innovation is important for organizations and society at large. Because organizations more and more use team-based work structures, it is important to understand the factors that influence team innovation. From the evidence, it seems that two things are simultaneously needed: conditions that stimulate the generation or identification of creative ideas (e.g., creative team members, minority dissent), and conditions that stimulate the serious consideration and eventual implementation of these ideas (e.g., a safe team climate, good leadership).

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*See also* Brainstorming; Diversity; Leadership; Minority Influence; Team Performance Assessment

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## INSTITUTIONALIZED BIAS

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*Institutionalized bias* occurs when institutional practices, scripts, or procedures work to systematically advantage certain groups or agendas over others. The topic of institutionalized bias is important to those who study intergroup relations in part because it can account for how processes can advantage dominant groups in the absence of overt efforts to discriminate against marginalized groups. In other words, even in the absence of any intention to discriminate, institutional practices can produce the same outcomes as discrimination by advantaging certain groups over others. This entry provides a broader context for the concept of institutionalized bias and gives examples of how such bias can be manifest.

The key feature of institutionalized bias that distinguishes it from other forms of bias or from discrimination is that it is built into the fabric of institutions. For example, research has found that social welfare policy in the United States affects the access of gay men and lesbians to social services. Two pieces of legislation passed in the mid-1990s, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), appear unrelated but in fact establish an institutionalized bias that limits the extent to which gay men and lesbians can access social services. PRWORA expanded welfare-to-work programs and also placed restrictions on access to public assistance. DOMA defined marriage as a legal union between a man and a woman. Together, the acts constitute a national policy context that on legal grounds blocks access to social services for gay men and lesbians.

Although the concept of institutionalized bias has been discussed by scholars at least since the 1960s, current treatments of the concept are typically consistent with the theoretical principles of the *new institutionalism* (also called *neoinstitutionalism*) that emerged in the 1980s. This theory is broadly concerned with how institutions, particularly organizations, are influenced by their broader environments. It argues that organizations feel pressure to incorporate the practices defined by prevailing concepts of organizational work that have become institutionalized in society. *Institutionalism* is the process by which social processes or structures come to take on a rulelike status in social thought and action.

*Institutional theory* asserts that group structures gain legitimacy when they conform to the accepted practices in their environments. These practices are called social *institutions*. For example, it is commonly accepted in the United States that organizations should be structured with formal hierarchies, with some positions in the hierarchies subordinate to others. This type of structure is institutionalized. Many institutionalized practices are so widely shared, externally validated, and collectively expected that they become the obvious and natural course of action.

The best known statement of the institutional approach is from Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell. According to DiMaggio and Powell, organizations exist in fields of other organizations. As these fields become more mature, they influence organizations within them. DiMaggio and Powell propose that as fields become increasingly mature, the organizations within them become increasingly homogeneous. In an effort to attain legitimacy, organizations adopt institutionalized structures and practices that conform to their environments, such as structuring with formal hierarchies. Institutional theory proposes that change in organizations is constrained by organizational fields, and when it occurs, it is in the direction of greater conformity to institutionalized practices.

The institutional approach argues that organizations that conform to accepted practices and structures increase their ability to obtain valuable resources and to enhance their survival prospects. This occurs because conforming with institutionalized practices produces legitimacy. In the same way, the institutional approach argues that when

organizations structure in institutionally illegitimate ways, the result is negative performance and legitimacy consequences.

When organizations conform to institutionalized practices, then, the result is greater legitimacy. An example of an institutionalized practice is the Jim Crow laws that mandated separate yet equal status for Black Americans in many Southern and border states in the United States through much of the 20th century. State and local laws required separate facilities for Whites and Blacks, most notably in schooling and transportation. As more states and localities adopted these laws, it had the consequence of increasing the legitimacy of the laws, leading more and more people to see the laws as correct. The consequence of the separate yet equal laws was nearly always accommodations for Black Americans that were inferior to those for White Americans.

Institutional theory argues that because institutionalized practices and structures function as powerful myths, organizations that incorporate them increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects, regardless of whether or not the practices meet any efficiency needs. In fact, institutional theory argues that conformity to rules that are institutionalized often conflicts with efficiency needs. A formally structured hierarchy may not be the most efficient organizational structure for some particular company, for example, but if the practice is institutionalized in the company's environment, the company will feel pressure to adopt such a structure. A key argument in institutional theory is that the structures of many organizations reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the demands of work activities.

An element of new institutionalism that has important implications for institutionalized bias is that it gives less priority than other approaches (or in some cases, no priority) to norms and values. DiMaggio and Powell propose that it is not norms and values, but instead taken-for-granted codes and rules that make up the essence of institutions. In this way, institutions shape the behavior of individuals by providing taken-for-granted scripts. Individuals conform to institutionalized scripts not because of norms or values, but rather out of habit. Thus institutionalized bias can exist in the absence of norms that advantage one group over another.

Suppose, for example, that a work organization requires that executives rotate through each sector of the organization (e.g., sales, marketing, operations, and so on) before being eligible for promotion to top management positions. Such a policy might exist so long and be so ubiquitous in an industry that it has become institutionalized. Organizational members would thus take for granted that it is proper and reasonable that promotion decisions be made in accordance with the policy.

Although such a policy seems reasonable and likely would not have been driven by efforts at discrimination, the policy might disadvantage women, who have been more likely than men to take family leave in early stages of their careers. Without any efforts at discrimination, or the presence of any norms that advantage men, the policy could establish an institutionalized bias that favors men. In this way, institutionalized biases need not reflect any attitudes that favor more beneficial treatment of one group over another.

Another feature of institutionalized biases is that they can lead to accumulated advantages (or disadvantages) for groups over time. For example, institutionalized biases that limit the access of some groups to social services will in turn limit the extent to which members of these groups experience the benefits that result from receiving such services. Over time, those who received services may accumulate these benefits, while those who have been disadvantaged will remain so. An example of accumulative advantage exists in the awarding of research grants to academics. Institutionalized biases lead to several sources of advantage being associated with success in securing grants, independent of the quality of a grant proposal. Those awarded grants become more likely to receive future grants. Thus institutionalized biases can produce advantages or disadvantages that have cumulative effects on the outcomes of group members.

In summary, institutionalized bias exists when taken-for-granted policies or procedures systematically advantage certain interests over others. Rather than stemming from overt attempts at discrimination, institutionalized bias is instead built into the structures of institutions. A consequence of institutionalized bias is that it can produce outcomes that cumulatively benefit advantaged groups over time, even in the absence

of norms that tolerate or favor discrimination against disadvantaged group members.

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*See also* Discrimination; Organizations; Racism

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## INTERACTIONIST THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

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Are leaders of groups or organizations “born” or “made”? That is, can an individual be trained to be an effective leader, or do some individuals naturally possess traits, skills, and abilities that predispose them to become group leaders? This classic question has been the subject of continuous debate and controversy among leadership researchers for decades. Interactionist theorists hold that a leader is *both* born and made. Thus, leadership is held to be a function of both personal and situational forces that are fundamentally inextricable from each other. This entry reviews the debate over “born” versus “made” theories of leadership, then looks at interactive perspectives, their models of leadership, and the future outlook for this vein of research.

### The Person–Situation Debate

The idea of a connection between the individual and the environment was originally advanced by social psychologist Kurt Lewin as part of field theory. In 1951, Lewin outlined the famous formula,  $B = f(P, E)$ . Lewin held that behavior ( $B$ ) is a function ( $f$ ) of the interconnection between the person ( $P$ ) and the environment ( $E$ ). Personal factors include emotions, traits, beliefs, and thought processes, and the environment refers to both the social and physical atmosphere in which the person is located. Lewin argued that the person and the environment weave together in a dynamic interplay that operates as a psychological field (called the *lifespaces*) in predicting behavior. Therefore, to consider the person or the situation independently would, at best, provide a partial picture of behavior.

Lewin's  $B = f(P, E)$  formula echoes the basic proposition of the interactionist perspective. However, what is known as the interactionist perspective was first formalized as a result of a larger person–situation debate in psychology, which was triggered by the publication of Walter Mischel's famous book *Personality and Assessment* in 1968. In this book, Mischel criticized the individual difference (e.g., in traits, skills, abilities, values) approach to explaining behavior. Mischel reviewed various studies on personality and behavior and reported that only small correlations (below  $r = .30$ ) were usually evidenced between these factors. As a result, he argued that personality was a relatively weak predictor of behavior and that behavior is too inconsistent from one situation to another to be accurately predicted from personality traits. In advocating for a situational approach, Mischel held that behavior is more fruitfully examined by considering situational factors.

Scholars who studied individual differences (e.g., in traits, skills, abilities, values) put forth various refutations of Mischel's position. However, one scholar refuted the situational approach from a different perspective. In 1973, Kenneth Bowers wrote an article that criticized the methodological underpinnings of the situational approach, while simultaneously advancing the interactionist perspective. Since then, the interactionist perspective (also known as interactional psychology) has been refined by a number of scholars.

### The Interactionist Perspective

The interactionist perspective holds that individuals are active agents and perceivers of reality. Personal and situational factors cannot be detangled from one another in explaining behavior because of the nature of the human cognitive system. Individuals cognitively filter the social world based on personal factors such as cognitive proclivities (e.g., how information is processed, what type of categories are accessible), skills, and past experiences. Based on individuals' perceptions, situations are imbued with particular meaning and are actively constructed through behavior.

Thus, interactionists do not view situations as physical environments (as Lewin did). Situations are construed as psychological interpretations of reality. People perceive the situation and are influenced by the situation. But individuals are not passive agents of situational forces. They also actively influence the situation through their interpretations and behaviors. Put another way, individuals may choose their situations. For example, a potential CEO may turn down a job because of a lack of perceived fit between him- or herself and the organization. In this way, a bidirectional causation occurs between the individual and the situation, whereby personal and situational factors are highly interwoven into an interdependent dynamic that explains behavior.

### The Interactionist Perspective and Leadership

The controversy over whether a leader is born or made echoes the person–situation debate that continues among leadership scholars today. For example, in 2002, Robert Sternberg and Victor Vroom exchanged letters that were published in the *Leadership Quarterly* discussing the person–situation debate in leadership.

Traditionally, scholars who have contended that leaders are born have assessed various leadership traits or abilities in an effort to unveil a successful leadership profile. Great-person theories exemplify this perspective. Conversely, scholars who have argued that leaders are made have attempted to show that situational factors alone may predict leadership emergence or effectiveness. Research has shown that both sides have fallen

short of explaining leadership effectiveness. Some interactionist leadership scholars (among others) have argued that both of these positions are essentially myopic and deficient. Neither position addresses why leaders may act differently across various situations. For example, why is one leader successful during crises but not during stability? Interactionist leadership scholars also have argued that trait-based or situational accounts of leadership ignore how a leader can affect a situation or how a situation may influence leaders.

Many scholars today agree that leadership may be influenced by both personal and situational factors. Numerous leadership theories consider both person and situation variables, but not all of these theories may be considered interactionist. Take, for example, contingency theories of leadership. Generally speaking, contingency theories focus on optimizing the match between the leader's traits and behaviors and the situation to increase leadership effectiveness (which is usually defined in terms of group performance). Yet interactionist theorists such as Benjamin Schneider and Jennifer Chatman have noted that contingency theories do not typify interactionist models. This is because they tend to (a) overlook how leaders affect situations (e.g., tasks), particularly over time and (b) define personal and situational variables in a relatively narrow manner.

The interactionist approach to leadership provides a more complex, interactive, and dynamic account of personal and situational factors than do contingency models. While certainly valuable, contingency models have been likened to limited snapshots of the situations in which leadership phenomena are embedded. Yet situations are continuously evolving and changing as a result of interactions. Interactionist theories of leadership link person–situation variables in a network of multidirectional relationships that attempt to capture the evolving nature of leadership.

## Interactionist Models of Leadership

### *A Dramaturgical Model of the Charismatic Relationship*

A charismatic relationship model put forth by William Gardner and Bruce Avolio nicely illustrates how an interactionist perspective may provide an

interactive exposition of how leaders and followers jointly influence social reality. Using an interactionist framework, Gardner and Avolio advanced a model of leadership that builds on previous theory and research by emphasizing a dynamic *relationship* between charismatic leaders and followers. In the literature, charismatic leaders are commonly credited with having an almost magical ability to inspire followers to bring about a vision of social or organizational change. Results from a substantial number of studies show that charismatic leaders are associated with positive performance outcomes and increased follower satisfaction. However, charismatic leadership theories and research often have been criticized for perpetuating a heroic conception of leaders, and neglecting the important role of followers and the environmental context.

This charismatic relationship model considers how leadership and followership variables come together in a reciprocal relationship that affects organizational outcomes in a broader environmental context. Leadership variables such as the leader's sense of identity, perceptions of the situation, motives, and values are postulated to lead to a series of impression management tactics (including vision articulation) aimed at portraying an image of charisma to followers. These tactics may engage followers' identities, promote identification with the leader, and encourage internalization of the leader's proposed vision of change. Followers' motives and values may also develop more in line with those of the leader and they may experience increased self-esteem and self-efficacy. As a result, followers may be apt to make attributions of leader charisma. These processes are theorized to lead to a charismatic relationship between the leader and the followers, which promotes collective efforts toward vision attainment and may result in positive organizational outcomes.

### *Information Processing Model of Leadership*

Paul Hanges, Robert Lord, and Markus Dickson provide a compelling account of how connectivist networks can link leadership behavior and culture in an interaction that affects followers' environment perceptions and behaviors. Connectivist networks are conceptualized as units that are connected in a network of information processing. Units are responsive to each other and become activated in a linked network in response to environmental



stimuli. Over time, particular patterns of units become concurrently activated and form schemas of information processing. Schemas are invoked by contextual stimuli and possess the capability to evolve and change in response to each situational encounter.

Hanges, Lord, and Dickson surmise that individuals possess leadership schemas (i.e., prototypes) and cultural schemas. Each of these schemas consists of the same network units: values, affect, and self-concept. When each schema is activated, it concomitantly awakens the network units, a particular set of beliefs, and specific modes of behavior (known as behavioral scripts) to guide the individual in responding to the situation. It is postulated that leader behaviors and sociocultural events (i.e., external events associated with culture) may add information to the network that may activate leader and cultural schemas simultaneously. The activated schemas may influence how the follower perceives the leader. Since schemas are context specific, the leader's behavior may also influence each activated schema. This means that followers interpret the leader's behavior and the sociocultural event, and in addition, the leader and the event simultaneously possess the potential to affect followers' self-concepts and behavior. As such, the focal point of this model is the follower's mind. This perspective is an important contribution to the leadership literature, given the relative scarcity of follower-based models of leadership—particularly ones that consider the interplay of leaders, followers, and culture.

### The Future of Interactionist Approaches to Leadership

The interactionist approach to leadership provides a way to conceptualize leadership as a reciprocal relationship between the leader and the follower. In addition to adding layers of complexity, it also has the potential to expand current leadership models toward new horizons and levels of analysis. For example, an interactionist approach was employed by Steve Kolowski and Mary Doherty to connect the vertical dyad linkage theory of leadership to organizational climate concerns (i.e., perceptions of the atmosphere). Research results showed that the quality of the supervisor–follower relationship affected how

followers perceived the organizational climate. Other leadership theories may similarly be expanded to consider the interactive affects of both person and situation variables, which may broaden our understanding of leadership phenomena.

Viviane Seyramian

*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Leader Categorization Theory; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## INTERACTION PROCESS ANALYSIS

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*Interaction process analysis* (IPA) is a method for observing and categorizing social interaction among

the members of small face-to-face groups. This entry summarizes the content of IPA, the history of its development, and some of the ways in which it has been used to analyze group processes.

### The Content and Coding of IPA

Using IPA, observers can break down any sequence of verbal interactions among the members of a group into units, and then classify each unit as belonging to one of twelve categories of behavior. These categories are: (1) showing friendliness or solidarity; (2) displaying tension release or dramatizing; (3) agreeing or expressing acceptance; (4) providing suggestions; (5) offering opinions; (6) giving information or orientation; (7) asking for information or orientation; (8) asking for opinion; (9) asking for suggestions or direction; (10) disagreeing, expressing rejection, or withholding help; (11) showing tension; and (12) showing unfriendliness or antagonism.

Six of these categories involve socioemotional behaviors that maintain or weaken interpersonal relationships in the group. Categories 1, 2, and 3 represent positive socioemotional behaviors, and categories 10, 11, and 12 represent negative socioemotional behaviors. The other six categories involve task-oriented behaviors that focus on the goal the group is seeking to achieve or the problem it is trying to solve. Categories 4, 5, and 6 represent attempted answers, and categories 7, 8, and 9 represent questions posed. It is worth noting that the categories are polarized. Category 1 is the opposite of category 12, 2 is the opposite of 11, and so on. The first three categories involve positive emotions, and the last three involve negative emotions. Categories 7, 8, and 9 request assistance, whereas categories 4, 5, and 6 offer it.

### Development of IPA and Its Extensions

IPA was developed beginning in the late 1940s by Robert Freed Bales, a professor of social relations at Harvard University. Bales studied under the eminent sociologist Talcott Parsons, but his approach in developing IPA was multidisciplinary and drew on work in other fields besides sociology, such as clinical and social psychology and social anthropology. Bales was particularly influenced by the concepts of field theory, as elaborated

by the pioneering group psychologist Kurt Lewin. For many years, Bales taught a popular undergraduate course on group psychology in which the students were divided into self-analytic groups that explored their own interactions and made systematic observations of the interactions of other groups using Lewinian concepts.

The kinds of groups that can be analyzed using IPA vary widely in composition and purpose, and may include problem-solving teams and work groups, policymaking committees and government councils, recreational clubs and sports teams, children's play groups and school classes, nuclear and extended families, and so on. Bales hoped that in studying such a wide variety of groups he might be able to identify recurring or common patterns of interaction that could be used to predict, and perhaps even prescribe, how groups might be formed and managed.

Bales set forth his IPA methodology, and reported research based on it, in a book published in 1950. If observers are well trained, the use of IPA should yield data that are reliable and valid. *Reliability* refers to consistency of measurement across time, categories, and raters. For example, IPA has interrater reliability if different raters, coding independently, score a behavior as belonging to the same category. *Validity* refers to whether the method measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, IPA is valid if it measures the extent to which group members actually pose questions, attempt answers, and exhibit positive and negative socioemotional behaviors.

Over the years, Bales attempted to improve the reliability and validity of the IPA coding system. He revised the IPA categories in 1970, and later proposed a further elaboration of the entire system called *SYMLOG*, which stands for SYstem for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups. With *SYMLOG*, observers can rate each group member on each of 26 interaction categories. These categories can be combined to yield scores for each member on three fundamental dimensions: dominance/submission, friendly/unfriendly, and instrumentally controlled/emotionally expressive. *SYMLOG* has become the focus of a consulting group devoted to the practical application of the method in managerial settings for the assessment and training of team effectiveness, individual leadership potential, and related matters.

### Analysis of Group Processes Using IPA

With IPA it is possible to find out how frequently behaviors belonging to each category occur in any interaction that is being examined. By examining the frequency with which behaviors fitting different interaction categories occur, when they occur, and how they are distributed among the participants, researchers can gain insight into group functioning and structure. Researchers can study such matters as the nature and sequencing of group activity, the differentiation in roles among group members, and the emergence of leadership in the group.

Research by Bales and others has found that positive emotions (categories 1, 2, and 3) are expressed much more frequently than negative emotions (categories 10, 11, and 12) and that opinions and information are volunteered far more often than they are asked for. Moreover, interaction in task-oriented groups tends to progress from a focus on defining the problem or goal of the group to a concern with evaluating and making decisions about it. As this progression develops, emotions begin to be expressed with increasing frequency.

Bales and others also have found that participation is not ordinarily distributed equally among group members. Typically, there are large differences between the communication patterns of the two most talkative members of the group. In addition, the amount of talking that group members do tends to be related to perceptions of leadership, with the person who talks the most in the group being the most likely to emerge as the perceived leader. (This finding has been referred to as the “big mouth” theory of leadership.)

The person who talks the most and tends to be seen by others as the group leader also tends to be oriented toward attaining the group’s goals, and thus scores very highly on behaviors related to attempted answers (directing, summarizing, providing ideas). Such task-related behavior often creates some tension and hostility on the part of other group members. This raises a need for actions that help maintain effective working relationships among the members. This need is often satisfied by a second talkative person in the group, who tends to be warm and friendly and to engage in positive socioemotional behaviors (alleviating frustrations, resolving tensions, mediating conflicts).

Bales thus regarded leadership as involving two complementary roles. The first person, who is the most active and is oriented primarily toward goal achievement, Bales referred to as the *task specialist* or *task leader* of the group. The second person, who is less active but better liked and is focused mostly on sustaining positive social interaction, Bales called the group’s *socioemotional leader*. There is some research suggesting that leadership behaviors tend to be gender stereotypic, with women being more likely to emerge as socioemotional leaders, and men more likely to emerge as task leaders. Other research, however, finds no gender differences in leadership behavior. Moreover, research has shown that in some instances a single person may serve as both the task and the socioemotional leader of a group.

### Evaluation of IPA

Various criticisms have been leveled at IPA. For example, it has been criticized for failing to produce explicit and reliable accounts of the coding process, for not dealing adequately with interpretational problems associated with ambiguous behaviors that can fall into more than one analysis category, and for lacking sensitivity to the character of specific interaction environments, such as medical consultations. In addition, statistical examinations of IPA using factor analysis have provided no more than partial support for collapsing the 12 interaction categories into 4 groupings, or for treating the 12 categories as 6 pairwise opposites.

Partly as a result of such criticisms, the use of IPA has diminished in recent years, and new quantitative methods for the study of social interaction have been developed. The category systems in these new methodologies vary, but in all of them social interaction is treated as a process that unfolds in a sequence of identifiable behaviors that can be sorted into a limited set of categories. Therefore, even though IPA is now mainly of historical interest, its influence is still felt in most social psychological interaction research that categorizes interpersonal behavior and counts its frequency. IPA is the original, and still the best known, approach to observing and understanding social interaction.

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See also Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Leadership; Lewin, Kurt; Socioemotional and Task Behavior; SYMLOG

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## INTERDEPENDENCE THEORY

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*Interdependence theory* explains social interactions as they take place in the context of a particular situation (i.e., the interdependence structure) in which two people influence one another's outcomes by their behaviors.

Imagine a group of people gathered around a poker table. The players deal cards and throw poker chips on the board, and occasionally someone collects all of them and smiles. The players seem to think so hard you can almost see their brains ticking; they express disappointment, frustration, and joy; they call each other aggressive, conservative, and protective. How can such seemingly meaningless behavior evoke so much attention and emotion? And how can the players even

talk about each other's personalities based merely on random movements of cards and chips? To study social behavior without its context is like observing a group of poker players without knowing the rules of poker. It does not make much sense. Human interaction always takes place in a social situation, and to fully understand the determinants of behavior, we need to know the basic features of the situation in which the behavior takes place. What are the behavioral options in the situation? How does each of these options influence the actors' and others' well-being? How do others' actions influence the actors' well-being? Without understanding these structural properties, it is impossible to learn very much about the actors' personalities, motives, and relationships with other interaction partners. Focusing on small, interacting groups, this entry describes interdependence theory, which explains how particular patterns of social interaction may unfold and be sustained between people.

Interdependence theory, initially developed by Harold Kelley and John Thibaut, is one of the few theories within the social and behavioral sciences that provides a taxonomy of interdependence situations—a conceptual framework for defining the basic features of situations. The theory explains interactions as they take place in the context of a particular situation in which two people influence one another's outcomes by their behaviors. The way in which partners can influence their own and others' outcomes is referred to as the *interdependence structure*, which is assumed to be central to understanding the course of interaction that a situation may afford. Thus by virtue of their interdependence structure, some situations may call for our ability to coordinate well (or poorly) with another person. An example of such a situation would be when little information is available, yet two people are pursuing exactly the same goal—such as trying to find each other in a big city when neither has a cell phone. Other situations may call for helping (or not), cooperating (or not), competing (or not), sharing (or not), and so on. These situations are meaningful because our actions (or choices) inform the other (and us) about which motives were activated in us. Whether or not to do the dishes (or leave them for your partner, who comes home late) is one such dilemma in which we are confronted with the option to preemptively

help or not. In the final analysis, it is the interdependence structure that activates certain motives in us, and that helps us understand which motives we can communicate to others and which motives others can communicate to us. From this perspective, a central question is: What are the key features (or dimensions) of interdependence structure?

### Interdependence Structure

The concept of interdependence means that individuals' outcomes are influenced by their own as well as by others' behaviors. The source of individuals' outcomes, that is, whether they are controlled by their own or others' behaviors, is called *control*. *Actor control* (AC) means that individuals have direct control over their outcomes, and *partner control* (PC) means that individuals' outcomes are directly influenced by the actions of their interaction partners. Finally, *joint control* (JC) means that individuals' outcomes are influenced by the joint actions of themselves and their interaction partners.

*Level of dependence* is the first structural property of interdependence—the greater the degree to which an individual relies on an interaction partner, the higher the level of dependency. People are more independent when situations involve mutual actor control. People are more interdependent when situations involve more mutual partner control, joint control, or both. It should be intuitively clear that this definition of dependence can be construed as the converse of power. Individuals are dependent to the degree that their partners possess the power to move them through a wide range of outcomes.

*Mutuality of dependence* is the second structural property of interdependence, and describes the extent to which individuals are equally dependent on each another. That is, the control an individual has over others' outcomes is not necessarily equal for all individuals in the situation, but asymmetries often exist in the extent to which they can influence each other's outcomes. The higher the asymmetry, the lower the mutuality of dependence.

*Covariation of interest* is the third very important structural property of interdependence. It is defined in terms of the extent to which interacting partners' outcomes correspond or conflict. If covariation of interest is negative, a person faces a dilemma as to whether to place weight on his or

her own or someone else's outcomes (which is also called a *mixed-motive situation*).

*Basis of dependence* is the fourth structural property of interdependence, and is defined as the way in which people's actions influence others' outcomes. Dependence can be based on partner control (others' actions influence a person's own outcomes) or joint control (both a person's own and others' actions influence the person's outcomes).

In general, these four properties of interdependence systematically characterize the way in which the actor and the partner have control over their own and others' outcomes (these properties are fully discussed in Kelley and Thibaut's 1978 book, *Interpersonal Relations*). There are two additional properties of interdependence that have more recently been advanced by interdependence theorists. The fifth property concerns *response condition*, the pattern of when and in what order the behaviors can be enacted. Response condition represents the sequence and timing of behaviors. For instance, a person may wait for another person to react first.

The final condition represents *the degree of completeness of information*, which consists of two aspects: (a) the amount of information (who knows what) and (b) possibilities for communication (who can convey information to whom and by what means). It should be clear that situations of incomplete information may easily elicit misunderstanding (i.e., misinterpretations of others' intentions and behaviors), especially if the misunderstanding led to negative outcomes rather than positive outcomes.

### Transformation of Situations: What People Make of Situations

A basic assumption underlying interdependence theory is that behavior may be motivated by self-interest—the maximization of one's own outcomes—as well as by a variety of other concerns. In particular, interdependence theory assumes that people often seek to *transform* a given situation into a different (i.e., more effective) situation, and that such transformations are affected by broader concerns such as the tendency to maximize outcomes for the other, the tendency to maximize equality in outcomes, or the tendency to forgo outcomes in the short term to maximize future

outcomes. Transformations can be understood as “decision rules” that may or may not be consciously applied. For example, MaxJoint transformation represents motivation to simultaneously maximize one’s own and an interaction partner’s outcomes (i.e., cooperation); MaxOwn transformation represents motivation to maximize one’s own outcomes; MaxRel transformation represents motivation to maximize the difference between one’s own outcomes and the outcomes of an interaction partner (i.e., competition); MinDiff transformation represents the minimization of absolute differences between one’s own and a partner’s outcomes.

Transformations occur for various reasons. They can be dispositional, in that an individual has a stable tendency to engage in a similar transformation regardless of the interaction partner and other factors. These dispositions are called *social value orientations* and they are usually classified into three main categories: cooperation (= MaxJoint), individualism (= MaxOwn), and competition (= MaxDiff). These tendencies reflect individuals’ social experiences, since they undergo different experiences with their parents and peers and are presented with different opportunities and constraints; in short, individuals have different histories of interdependence.

A second type of transformational tendency exists at a more partner-specific level. Macromotives are relationship-specific solutions that can regulate individuals’ behavior when dealing with a fairly wide range of specific interdependence problems. For example, *commitment* and *partner-specific trust* can be construed as long-term orientations that lead individuals to engage in MaxJoint transformation in situations of moderate to low correspondence. That is, the committed and trusting individual may fairly automatically accommodate rather than retaliate when a partner engages in a potentially destructive act, or may fairly unthinkingly exhibit willingness to sacrifice desirable outcomes for the good of a partner or a relationship.

Transformations are often different for groups and individuals as agents. The *interindividual-intergroup discontinuity effect* documents that intergroup interactions are more competitive than interindividual interactions. Evidently, then, groups engage in a more competitive transformation of motivation than do individuals. While the original effect was demonstrated in the context of the

prisoner’s dilemma game, which is characterized by negative covariance of interest (a mixed-motive situation), it has recently been shown by Scott Wolf and his colleagues that the discontinuity effect disappears if the situation allows coordinated turn taking. They also found that individuals and groups behaved the same way in situations where mutual competition was associated with very low outcomes. This indicates that the general view that groups are more competitive than individuals is clearly an oversimplification. It is not an invariable pattern, but depends on a structure of the interdependence situation. While this study serves as an interesting start, clearly future research is required to systematically compare individual and group transformations over a wide range of interdependence structures. This would help us to better understand the exact cognitive and affective mechanisms that differ among individuals and groups.

### Conclusion

Interdependence theory provides a taxonomy of interdependent situations that is important for understanding the structure of situations that underlies the activation of motives (as well as cognition and affect), and it helps us understand behavior and social interaction in dyads and groups. Interpersonal behavior and social interaction can be explained in terms of transformation of motivation, the process by which agents (individuals or groups) reconceptualize specific patterns of interdependence and act on the basis of broader interaction goals, such as the pursuit of long-term goals or consideration of a partner’s outcomes. The power of the theory also stems from its capability to integrate diverse subfields such as close relationships, prosocial behavior, negotiation processes, organizational behavior, and intergroup behavior. Interdependence theory provides a way to analyze structurally parallel situations across subfields because it emphasizes underlying situational structures that are universal to all interpersonal phenomena.

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*See also* Commons Dilemma; Cooperation and Competition; Group Task; Interindividual-Intergroup Discontinuity; Negotiation and Bargaining; Prisoner’s Dilemma; Social Dilemmas; Trust

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## INTERGROUP ANXIETY

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*Intergroup anxiety* is the anxiety people feel when interacting with members of social groups different from their own (i.e., outgroups). For example, American employees who travel to Japan for work might be worried that they will unintentionally offend their Japanese counterparts. In essence, then, intergroup anxiety is a negative feeling or affective state. It is usually measured by asking people the degree to which they would expect to experience anxiety-related emotions, such as feeling uncomfortable, nervous, and anxious, during interactions with outgroup members (counterbalanced with questions

about feeling the opposite of anxious—comfortable and at ease).

People experience intergroup anxiety because of a cognitive appraisal that intergroup interactions will have negative consequences. The potential negative consequences include negative psychological outcomes for the self (e.g., being confused, feeling incompetent or vulnerable), negative behavioral outcomes for the self (e.g., being taken advantage of or physically harmed), negative evaluations from the outgroup (e.g., being rejected or ridiculed by members of the outgroup), and negative evaluations from the ingroup (e.g., being disapproved of by members of the ingroup for “associating” with members of the outgroup). Intergroup anxiety plays a crucial role in intergroup relations because it affects the way people feel, think, and act during intergroup interactions. This entry examines the causes and consequences of intergroup anxiety, then looks at strategies for reducing it.

### Causes of Intergroup Anxiety

The degree to which people experience intergroup anxiety depends on their previous experiences with outgroup members, their expectations concerning the conditions under which their future interactions with outgroup members will occur, and their perceptions of outgroup members. People who have had previous negative experiences, few positive experiences, or no experiences with outgroup members experience more intergroup anxiety than those with extensive prior positive experiences with outgroup members. For example, if a person felt uncomfortable or threatened during previous interactions with members of an ethnic outgroup, that person will probably feel the same way in future interactions.

In addition to previous experiences, expectations about future interactions also affect intergroup anxiety. In general, people who expect their future intergroup interactions to be voluntary, cooperative, or pleasant are likely to have less intergroup anxiety than people who expect future interactions to be competitive, superficial, or unpleasant. For instance, a person who is about to be in a work situation with a member of another group will probably express less anxiety when anticipating a cooperative interaction than when anticipating a competitive situation.

People's perceptions of the other group and themselves also influence intergroup anxiety. People who believe that their own group is dissimilar to the outgroup or that their own group is superior to the outgroup report higher levels of intergroup anxiety. Also, people who strongly identify with their own group—those who define themselves by their membership in the ingroup—experience higher levels of intergroup anxiety.

Negative stereotypes of the outgroup also can lead people to be anxious when anticipating an interaction with an outgroup member. For example, if a Black person believes that Whites are typically hostile and untrustworthy, that person will probably experience intergroup anxiety when anticipating an interaction with someone new who is White.

### Consequences of Intergroup Anxiety

Intergroup anxiety affects people's attitudes, cognitions (e.g., perceptions, interpretations, and memories), and behaviors (e.g., aggression or avoidance). Experiencing higher levels of intergroup anxiety leads people to have more negative evaluations (attitudes) of outgroup members—that is, to be more prejudiced toward them. Specifically, it has been found that people who experience higher levels of intergroup anxiety report more hatred and hostility, as well as less acceptance and warmth, toward outgroup members than people who experience lower levels of intergroup anxiety.

When people are experiencing intergroup anxiety, they focus their attention on that anxiety and pay less attention to the details of intergroup interactions. With attention drawn away from the situation, people are more likely to rely on information-processing shortcuts (heuristics) in perceiving, interpreting, and remembering the behaviors of others than they otherwise would. People experiencing high levels of intergroup anxiety tend to perceive outgroups as homogeneous, which prevents these people from noticing the individuality of members of other groups. For instance, if two groups are interacting and one person from the outgroup behaves in an especially friendly manner (e.g., smiles more, gives more compliments), people experiencing high levels of intergroup anxiety may not remember the friendly member of the outgroup and may believe all the members are unfriendly.

Moreover, when people are experiencing intergroup anxiety, they are more likely to rely on their stereotypic beliefs, which may explain why they are less likely to remember the unusually friendly behavior of an outgroup member. Reliance on stereotypes often prevents people from noticing information that contradicts their stereotypes, and it increases the likelihood that they will misinterpret or fail to remember behaviors that are inconsistent with their stereotypes.

Also, in intergroup interactions, people with high levels of intergroup anxiety tend to perceive outgroup members as very dissimilar to themselves and interpret the interaction itself as difficult. The consequence of perceiving, remembering, or interpreting intergroup interactions as less than positive may affect future intergroup interactions, because people who believe that their previous intergroup interactions have been negative experience high levels of intergroup anxiety.

When their attention is drawn away from the situation and focused internally on managing and coping with anxiety, people experiencing intergroup anxiety often become more concerned than usual with how they are being perceived by others (ingroup or outgroup members). They are also likely to attempt to reduce the anxiety. For example, people who experience intergroup anxiety are less likely to disclose information about themselves during intergroup interactions. They may also terminate the interaction sooner than if they were not experiencing intergroup anxiety. In addition, the experience of intergroup anxiety may augment their other emotions regarding outgroup members, such as annoyance and fear. People's concern for how others perceive them, desire to terminate the anxiety, and experience of augmented emotions all help to explain why intergroup anxiety affects their behaviors, and why in some cases, these behaviors are amplified or exaggerated in intergroup interactions.

Typically, intergroup anxiety leads ingroup members to behave in more negative and aggressive ways toward the outgroup (e.g., by acting impatient, annoyed, or worse) than they otherwise would. However, in some circumstances, intergroup anxiety can lead people to behave in unusually positive ways toward outgroup members. For example, when people wish to appear to be unprejudiced, intergroup anxiety may lead them to behave



in especially positive and accommodating ways (e.g., by initiating conversation or making eye contact more often). Due to intergroup anxiety, however, these positive behaviors may not appear to be entirely natural, and people who want to appear unprejudiced may instead be seen by outgroup members as overly solicitous, condescending, or just plain awkward. Members of the outgroup may also perceive this exaggerated positive behavior as an attempt to compensate for prejudicial attitudes.

The negative behaviors, exaggerated positive behaviors, and overall awkwardness created by anxiety during intergroup interactions may make the outgroup members uncomfortable, perhaps increasing their intergroup anxiety and negatively influencing their behaviors. Thus, the negative or awkward behavior of the ingroup could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which their behavior leads the outgroup members to feel anxious and behave in some of the negative ways that were originally anticipated by the ingroup members.

Although intergroup anxiety can influence a person's behavior during an intergroup interaction, one of the most detrimental consequences of intergroup anxiety is simply the avoidance of interactions with outgroup members. People who anticipate experiencing a great deal of intergroup anxiety tend to avoid intergroup interactions altogether. For instance, students who have higher levels of anxiety about interacting with foreign nationals at their university will be less likely to initiate contact with them. This leads to negative consequences, as avoiding interactions with outgroup members prevents people from having potentially positive experiences that could lead to reductions in their intergroup anxiety.

### **Reducing Intergroup Anxiety and Improving Intergroup Relations**

There is considerable evidence that lower levels of intergroup anxiety are associated with more positive intergroup relations and less avoidance of intergroup interactions, which suggests that one way to improve intergroup relations is to reduce intergroup anxiety. In particular, research indicates that positive intergroup contact is associated with lower levels of intergroup anxiety. For instance, people who have friendships across group boundaries report less intergroup anxiety than those who do not.

Unfortunately, positive intergroup interactions may not occur naturally, and persuading people who experience high levels of intergroup anxiety to seek out intergroup interactions and attempting to ensure that their intergroup interactions will be experienced and remembered as positive may prove to be difficult. It seems likely that creating the conditions specified by the contact hypothesis (e.g., equal status, cooperative activity, interaction of individuals), which have been shown to improve intergroup relations generally, would also lead to reductions in intergroup anxiety by providing controlled conditions in which positive intergroup interactions can occur.

In addition, helping people change their cognitive appraisals of the expected outcomes of intergroup interactions should help reduce intergroup anxiety. To change these expectations, it may be necessary to understand what negative outcomes are expected and address them in advance. For example, people who expect to feel confused or incompetent during intergroup interactions may benefit from an intervention that helps them learn about the culture of the other group or learn how to communicate more effectively. In a similar manner, people who believe that outgroup members are untrustworthy or who expect to be taken advantage of may benefit from interventions that help them feel more in control of the interaction.

### **Directions for Future Research**

After more than 20 years of research, a substantial amount of knowledge about the causes and consequences of intergroup anxiety has been acquired. Yet, there is much to be learned. For example, attempts to reduce intergroup anxiety through the use of intergroup relations programs have produced mixed results, and further research is needed to determine what program characteristics reduce intergroup anxiety. Also, we need a full understanding of the causal interplay between intergroup anxiety and cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. It seems likely that in many instances causality runs in both directions.

Thus, negative stereotypes may create intergroup anxiety, but intergroup anxiety may contribute to the creation of negative stereotypes. However, very little is known about how the behaviors of

people who experience high levels of intergroup anxiety affect the cognitions, emotions, and behaviors of outgroup members. More research is needed about these topics as well as about what types of people are most prone to experience intergroup anxiety and how this anxiety is affected by structural relations between groups. For example, it seems likely that power relations between groups affect intergroup anxiety, but this topic has received limited attention.

Also, because intergroup anxiety is dynamic and changes over time and across situations, it would be valuable to know what situational factors influence the experience of intergroup anxiety. The answers to these questions will provide a deeper understanding of intergroup anxiety and should make it possible to design effective interventions to reduce intergroup anxiety and ultimately improve intergroup relations.

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See also Identification and Commitment; Intergroup Contact Theory; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Stereotyping

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## INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY

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When people from different groups meet, what are the effects? That is the question that *intergroup contact theory* sets out to answer. This theory predicts the effects on participants' intergroup attitudes and behavior when members of two distinguishable groups interact. What was originally a modest “hypothesis” put forward by Gordon Allport in 1954 has developed into a full-blown theory of considerable complexity.

Popular opinion on the subject is split. Some hold that contact between groups only causes conflict; “good fences make good neighbors” is their contention. Others believe intergroup interaction is an essential part of any remedy for reducing prejudice and conflict between groups. So this intensively studied area of social psychology is marked by controversy and is directly relevant for such policy issues as desegregation and affirmative action. This entry looks at how intergroup contact theory developed, explores related findings, reviews critiques, and summarizes future implications and policy.

### History and Background

The newly emerging discipline of social psychology of the 1930s and 1940s soon began to study intergroup contact. This interest followed from the field's emphases on intergroup relations and interactions between people. Researchers often exploited field situations of unfolding intergroup change. Thus, after the racial desegregation of the U.S. Merchant Marine in 1948, it was found that the more voyages the White seamen took with Blacks, the more positive their racial attitudes

became. Similarly, White police in Philadelphia who worked with Black colleagues differed sharply from other White police. They objected less to Blacks joining their previously all-White police districts, teaming with a Black partner, and taking orders from qualified Black officers.

In 1947, the Social Science Research Council asked sociologist Robin Williams to review what was known about group relations. In his report, Williams presented the initial formulation of intergroup contact theory. He stressed that many variables influence a contact's effects on prejudice. In particular, he held that intergroup contact will maximally reduce prejudice when (1) the two groups share similar status, interests, and tasks; (2) the situation fosters personal, intimate intergroup contact; (3) the participants do not fit the stereotyped conceptions of their groups; and (4) the activities cut across group lines.

By 1950, research had tested the theory more rigorously. Major studies of racially segregated and desegregated public housing projects by New York researchers provided the strongest evidence. Striking differences emerged in interviews of White "housewives" in the two sets of projects. The desegregated White women had far more optimal contact with their Black neighbors, held them in higher esteem, and expressed greater support of interracial housing. The intimacy and frequency of the interracial contact were also important.

Armed with Williams's initial effort and the rich findings of the New York studies, Allport introduced in *The Nature of Prejudice* the most influential statement of contact theory, which guided contact research for five decades. He noted the contrasting effects of intergroup contact, which usually reduced but sometimes exacerbated prejudice. To explain these findings, Allport adopted a "positive factors" approach. Reduced prejudice will result, he held, when four positive features of the contact situation are present: (1) equal status of the groups in the situation, (2) common goals, (3) intergroup cooperation, and (4) the support of authorities, law, or custom.

### Does Intergroup Contact Typically Reduce Prejudice?

A major meta-analysis answered this question by combining the results of all the 20th-century

studies on intergroup contact that could be located. It found 516 studies with more than 250,000 subjects from 38 nations and obtained a mean correlation ( $r$ ) between contact and prejudice of  $-.21$ . It also found that 95% of the studies report a negative relationship between contact and prejudices of many types. That is, greater contact is associated with less prejudice.

Before we can accept this finding, however, three alternative explanations must be examined. First, there is the participant selection problem. Instead of optimal contact reducing prejudice, the opposite causal sequence could be operating: Prejudiced people may avoid contact with outgroups and tolerant people may seek such contact. Indeed, this reverse causal path has often been found, but research using a variety of methods has found that the contact-to-reduced-prejudice path is generally the stronger causal sequence. Second, there is the publication bias problem. Published studies may form a biased subset of the studies actually conducted, as the statistical significance of a study's results influences the probability of its being submitted and published. This points out the danger that only contact studies with positive results will be published. However, there are now numerous ingenious methods to test for such a publication bias, and they did not signal such a bias in the contact meta-analysis.

A third potential problem concerns the quality of contact research. If less rigorous research were largely responsible for the relationship between contact and prejudice, researchers would hesitate to accept it as established. But if the more rigorous studies produce stronger contact effects, it would lend credibility to the results. The contact meta-analysis showed the latter trend. More rigorous and recent research yielded higher mean correlations, with experimental studies producing a mean correlation of  $-.33$ .

Moreover, many types of intergroup prejudice have been studied and found to be lessened by contact, including subtle as well as blatant prejudice, and implicit association as well as direct measures. There is, however, great heterogeneity in effect sizes, with such affective measures as liking revealing significantly larger effects than such cognitive indicators as stereotypes. Moreover, majority participants in the contact typically yield larger average effects than minority participants.

These positive effects emerged not only for racial and ethnic target groups for whom the original theory was devised, but also for other, often stigmatized groups, such as homosexuals and people with physical and mental disabilities. This wide applicability suggests that contact effects may be linked to such basic processes as the *mere exposure effect*. Experimenters have repeatedly shown that greater exposure to targets, in and of itself, can significantly enhance liking for those targets. Work on the relationship between exposure and liking indicates that uncertainty reduction is an important mechanism underlying the phenomenon.

The meta-analysis also revealed that Allport's optimal contact conditions facilitated, but were not essential to, the decrease in prejudice. These results and their policy implications have initiated a focused effort to understand the process and maximize its established effect.

### Explanatory Models

Four different models for the process have been advanced. Marilynn Brewer and Norman Miller proposed a decategorization model, which holds that optimal intergroup contact reduces the salience of the group categories while it encourages an interpersonal orientation instead of an intergroup one. Samuel Gaertner and John Dovidio proposed that optimal intergroup contact will result when the original two groups develop a common ingroup identity. Later these theorists revised their model and proposed a dual-identity model in which the original group identities are retained within the new superordinate group ("different groups on the same team").

Finally, Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown offered a categorization model in which the original group memberships retain a sufficient degree of salience, with an intergroup orientation operating instead of an interpersonal one. These theorists had generalization as their primary concern. Maximum generalization to the whole group occurs when the outgroup participants in the contact are perceived as prototypical of their group, and this is only possible when the initial group categories are sufficiently salient.

Although these models appear to conflict, there is research support for each of them, and

the models are now integrated into a single model. For example, if one adopts a time-sequence perspective, all could operate in intergroup contact over time. Thus, in a rough sequence, the decategorization strategy seems optimal initially to ease threat; then the categorization strategy seems necessary to establish the generalization of effects; and, finally, the common ingroup identity and dual-identity options become viable once the intergroup interaction has been firmly established.

### Generalization of the Effects

If contact effects do not generalize beyond the immediate situation, then intergroup contact is of limited value. Consequently, social psychologists have sought to understand whether intergroup contact effects generalize to the entire groups involved, to new situations, and even to outgroups not involved in the original contact situation.

The meta-analysis found that contact effects typically do generalize to the entire groups involved. Following the Hewstone–Brown categorization model, this finding suggests that most intergroup contact involves an effective degree of group categorization. Ingroup participants come to like the outgroup participants, and this generalizes to more acceptance of the outgroup itself. Prejudice reduction is not the only indication of this outgroup acceptance; greater trust and a more differentiated view of the outgroup also often emerges.

Contact effects from one contact situation also typically generalize to new contact situations. And several studies have shown that reduced prejudice against one outgroup can generalize to other outgroups that were not involved in the original contact. Thus, Germans who have had positive contact with Turks reveal more favorable attitudes not only of Turks but also of West Indians, a group that does not live in Germany.

How could this happen? One proposal involves *deprovincialization*; that is, coming to like and trust an outgroup makes you less provincial about your own group. This new view of your ingroup may open you up to accepting other outgroups—even those with whom you have never had contact. This type of broad generalization may require some degree of similarity between the two outgroups.

### When and How Do These Contact Effects Occur?

Allport's optimal conditions specify when intergroup contact is likely to have positive effects. His situational specifications all moderate the contact and prejudice relationship. More recent research has uncovered additional moderators: Prejudice is more likely to be diminished when intergroup contact is not superficial and group salience is sufficiently high.

To answer how intergroup contact generally has positive effects, investigators have searched for the effect's mediators. Allport's original idea was that contact led to greater knowledge of the outgroup, and this cognitive change in turn lessened prejudice. But research shows that knowledge is a minor mediator. More important are two broad classes of largely affective mediators. One type involves positive predictors of prejudice that optimal contact reduces; the other involves negative predictors of prejudice that optimal contact increases. Physiological evidence shows that positive intergroup contact alleviates anxiety over interacting with outgroup members. This decrease in anxiety in turn decreases prejudice. Other negative emotions, such as fear, anger, and particularly threat to the ingroup, can also serve as mediators that intergroup contact alleviates.

Positive contact also enhances empathy for the outgroup and adoption of the outgroup's perspective. One begins to sense how outgroup members feel and view the world. This increase in empathy and perspective taking diminishes prejudice. Intergroup contact can also increase other mediators that decrease prejudice—such as positive intergroup emotions.

In addition, intergroup contact itself can act as an important mediator for major predictors of prejudice that develop early in life. For instance, contact mediates in part the universal finding that authoritarianism predicts prejudice. Authoritarians carefully avoid intergroup contact, and this contributes to their rejection of outgroups.

#### *The Importance of Cross-Group Friendship*

The contentions of intergroup contact theory are further supported by the special importance of cross-group friendship in promoting positive contact effects. Friendship invokes many of the

optimal conditions for positive contact effects: It typically involves cooperation and common goals as well as repeated equal-status contact over an extended period and across varied settings. Friendship also facilitates self-disclosure, and self-disclosure is an important mediator of intergroup contact's positive effects.

Contact theorists have long stressed the role intimacy plays in reducing prejudice. And research studies throughout the world have uncovered the special power of cross-group friendships to diminish intergroup prejudice and distrust. Moreover, such friendships lead to strong, positive attitudes toward the outgroup that are especially accessible and resistant to change. Consider research conducted in Northern Ireland. It found that intergroup friendship engendered forgiveness and trust of the other religious group even among Catholics and Protestants who suffered personally from the province's sectarian violence.

#### *Indirect (or Extended) Contact Effects*

Intergroup contact can also trigger a process of indirect effects. Studies in Germany, Northern Ireland, and the United States demonstrate that simply having ingroup friends who have outgroup friends relates to diminished prejudice. Recalling balance theory, the friend of my friend is my friend. This phenomenon is partly a result of changing norms. Seeing your friend have contact with an outgroup person helps to make it normatively acceptable.

But the changed attitudes produced by indirect contact are not as strong as those from direct contact; that is, the new attitudes from indirect contact are not held with the same degree of certainty and can be changed more easily. Nevertheless, indirect contact effects are important for those who live in segregated areas and have no outgroup friends; and it may act to prepare them for later direct contact.

#### *Negative Intergroup Contact Effects*

Not all intergroup contact reduces prejudice. Some situations engender enhanced prejudice. Such negative intergroup contact has received less research attention, but renewed consideration of the issue has shed light on this phenomenon. Negative contact typically involves situations where the participants feel threatened and did not

choose to have the contact. These situations frequently occur in work environments where intergroup competition exists.

Given the existence of these negative contact situations, why does the meta-analysis on intergroup contact report such generally positive effects? Several factors explain this apparent puzzle. First, surveys with probability samples demonstrate that respondents report far more positive than negative intergroup contact. These results may seem surprising since negative contacts are often publicized, while the more numerous positive contacts go unrecognized or are not viewed as newsworthy. But they help to explain why contact leading to increased prejudice is so relatively rare in the research literature.

Second, the effects of negative intergroup contact are moderated by whether the participant has entered the contact freely. When the contact involves voluntary contact, the effects of negative contact are far smaller than when the contact involves involuntary contact—again suggesting the importance of threat. Third, those who have lots of intergroup contact tend to report both positive and negative contact; and they tend to reveal less prejudice comparable to those who report only positive contact. Given these factors, the role of negative intergroup contact may not be as crucial as critics have assumed.

### Criticisms of Intergroup Contact Theory

Some critics of intergroup contact theory seem not to understand the theory. They mistakenly believe that intergroup contact theory simply predicts positive outcomes under all conditions. But important criticisms have been leveled by more informed critics. For instance, Hugh Forbes, a political scientist, maintains that intergroup contact often lowers prejudice at the individual level of analysis but fails to do so at the group level of analysis. Hence, he argues that contact can cure individual prejudice but not group conflict. Social psychologists take issue with Forbes's distinction. If reductions in prejudice generalize broadly from intergroup contact, the group level of analysis is necessarily involved.

Many critics are from nations, such as Northern Ireland and South Africa, that have witnessed intense ethnic conflict in the past. They raise two interesting points that compel a broader perspective in considering the role of

intergroup contact in reducing intergroup tensions. First, they often hold that separation is an effective means of reducing intergroup conflict, but walls and segregation have historically failed. Consider the repeated failures of "fences" from the Great Wall of China and Scotland's Hadrian's Wall to the more recent examples of the Berlin Wall, the Green Line of Cyprus, and Israel's new West Bank Wall. "Good neighbors" hardly resulted from any of these prominent experiments with "good fences."

More important, critics focus on the problem of establishing effective intergroup contact in the first place after centuries of intergroup strife and discrimination. This point, of course, raises a separate issue that intergroup contact theory was not initially designed to address. Yet the criticism is well taken. To be relevant for social policy, intergroup contact theory must be expanded to include how to bring past adversaries together in optimal contact situations.

### Future Directions

Despite the rapid progress of intergroup contact theory and research, there is still much to be done. Numerous directions for future work are indicated. First, there is a continuing need to specify the processes of intergroup contact that explain its many effects. This is a call for continued efforts to determine the many mediators and moderators that are involved beyond those already uncovered and to integrate them. Second, a greater focus on negative contact is required. Cross-group interaction that leads to increased prejudice has not been studied systematically. Third, rather than just a situational phenomenon, intergroup contact needs to be placed in a longitudinal, multilevel social context. Thus, not just personal friends but the social networks in which people are enmeshed must be considered. Researchers now possess the statistics and computing software to achieve this goal. Fourth, more study of contact's lasting effects on actual intergroup behavior is needed. Finally, more direct applications to social policy are needed in which the intergroup contact is viewed within specific institutional settings. This initiative would include addressing the problem that critics raise of how to bring old enemies together to achieve successful intergroup contact.

### Policy Implications

Specialists specifically deny that intergroup contact is a panacea for intergroup conflict. But it is clear that cross-group contact is an essential, if insufficient, component for lasting remedies. Strict segregation between groups, limiting positive intergroup contact, has failed around the globe. From the southern United States and Israel to India and South Africa, intergroup separation guarantees smoldering resentment and eventual conflict. Active structural remedies to achieve equal group access to high-quality education, good jobs, and comfortable housing necessarily involve intergroup contact in multigroup societies.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Decategorization; Extended Contact Effect; Intergroup Anxiety; Prejudice

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ingroup), which could be a committee, a fraternity, or a national, ethnic, or religious group, the group membership becomes part of the psychological self. Like any aspect of the self, the group therefore attains emotional significance. As a result, when people think of themselves as group members, they appraise social objects (such as competing groups) or events (such as group successes or failures) in terms of their implications for their group. Appraisals of the situation as positive or negative, certain or uncertain, deserved or undeserved (and so on) result in the experience of distinct emotions, such as anger at a rival group's threatening behavior or pride at a success experienced by one's ingroup. These emotions (like all emotions) are in turn linked to desires or tendencies to take specific types of action. For example, anger at a rival group may produce a desire to attack that group or its members. The unique aspect of this conceptualization is that emotions are produced by appraisals of situations in terms of their implications for the ingroup as a whole, not implications for the individual group member. Therefore, intergroup emotions can be generated even when the individual is not personally affected by the situation in any way.

Intergroup emotions are distinct from emotions experienced on the basis of empathy with other people. When our national team wins an Olympic medal, we do not feel happy because the individual members of the team are feeling happy and we empathize with them as individuals. Rather, we feel happy because the victory is a positive event for our national ingroup, a group that helps define our own self.

### Historical Perspective

In its broadest context, intergroup emotions theory renews a focus on emotions as key components in prejudice and intergroup relations. Even casual observation suggests that intense emotions are frequently aroused in situations of intergroup conflict. Emotions based on underlying psychodynamic conflicts were postulated as contributing to prejudice by theories of authoritarianism, popular in the 1950s, but received less emphasis over time as psychologists in general turned away from psychodynamic approaches and came to favor more cognitive viewpoints. Thus, from the 1960s and 1970s

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## INTERGROUP EMOTIONS THEORY

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*Intergroup emotions theory*, developed by Eliot Smith, Diane Mackie, and their collaborators, focuses on the role of emotions in prejudice and intergroup behavior. The fundamental idea underlying the theory, borrowed from social identity theory and self-categorization theory, is that when people identify with an important social group (an

onward, prejudice and negative intergroup relations were thought to depend largely on stereotypes (i.e., beliefs, often negative, about the characteristics of outgroups) and on cognitive processes favoring positive differentiation of the ingroup from competing outgroups. In these conceptualizations, emotions played at best a secondary role. By the 1990s, however, there was a resurgence of theoretical and empirical interest in emotion throughout psychology. Intergroup emotions theory fits with this renewed emphasis on the role of emotions.

### Focused Versus General Emotions

Individual emotions can be experienced in response to a specific object or event, such as fear at the sight of a snake or joy upon opening a much-desired birthday gift. In addition, people can experience individual-level emotions that are more general and less focused. That is, people may report feeling relaxed, anxious, depressed, energized, excited, or annoyed as a general affective state, not linked to any specific object or event. Emotions based on group memberships include the same two types. Intergroup emotions may be focused on specific group-relevant events (disappointment at a group's failure, guilt regarding the group's historical wrongdoings) or objects (such as anger, fear, or disgust toward threatening outgroups). Group-based emotions may also be more general, corresponding to feeling excited, proud, worried, or irritable when considering oneself as a group member. Research regarding intergroup emotions theory has examined both of these types of group-based emotions.

### Evidence Supporting Intergroup Emotions Theory

Several types of evidence support key postulates of the theory. First, it is well established that a history of positive, friendly contact with members of an outgroup reduces prejudice against that outgroup. Research shows that this effect is mediated by intergroup emotions. That is, a history of friendly contact with members of a racial outgroup leads to increases in positive emotions and decreases in negative emotions toward the outgroup. In turn, these emotions are associated with reduced levels of prejudice. Notably, contact does not reduce prejudice

by breaking down inaccurate negative stereotypes of the outgroup, as is often assumed; stereotypes play little or no role in mediating effects of contact once group-based emotions are taken into account.

Second, research has found that general group-based emotions (i.e., reports of how satisfied, anxious, proud, disgusted, and so forth people feel as an American or a member of another group) display a distinct pattern, compared to the emotions that the same people report feeling as individuals. This finding demonstrates that the shift from an individual to group identity is associated with a change in general feeling states.

Third, positive group-based emotions as well as anger directed at an outgroup are experienced more strongly by people who identify more strongly with the ingroup—that is, for whom the group constitutes a more significant and meaningful part of the self. In contrast, negative emotions (other than anger at the outgroup) are only weakly related to group identification. This suggests, as other research has shown, that people who identify strongly with the group are motivated to reappraise and reevaluate situations in order to avoid feeling negative group emotions such as anxiety, dissatisfaction, or guilt.

Fourth, when a number of members of the same ingroup (e.g., Americans, men, women, or students at a given university) are asked to report the general emotions they feel as members of the group, their responses tend to converge toward a group-typical profile of emotions. Thus, group emotions are socially shared to some extent: Levels of happiness, anxiety, guilt, and so on are more similar when people report their emotions as members of a common ingroup than when they report the same emotions as individuals. This convergence is found to be stronger for people who identify more with the group, as would be expected.

Fifth, patterns of group emotions, as specified in the theory, do predict group-relevant attitudes and behavioral tendencies, such as tendencies to support and affiliate with fellow ingroup members, to attack or confront outgroup members, or to avoid the outgroup. Notably, individual emotions are largely ineffective in predicting these types of behavioral tendencies, supporting the fundamental tenet of intergroup emotions theory that group-based (rather than individual) emotions play the key role in directing group-relevant actions.



Sixth, group emotions play a regulatory role by motivating and reinforcing appropriate group-relevant behavior. For example, anger motivated by an outgroup dissipates when confrontational action is taken against the group, and the anger is replaced with satisfaction. If, however, confrontational behavior does not occur, anger toward the outgroup remains high and increased anger may also be directed at the ingroup until it takes appropriate action. In this way group-level emotions, like individual emotions, regulate and are regulated by emotion-triggered behavior.

### Conclusion

In summary, two key insights arise from intergroup emotions theory and the research that has been conducted to date to support the theory. One is differentiation: Members of a group are likely to feel distinct emotions toward different outgroups or toward the same group on different occasions. These emotions, which might include anger, fear, disgust, resentment, or even positive emotions such as pity and sympathy, constitute qualitatively different types of reactions to outgroups that will be associated with different types of behavior. For example, fear or disgust may lead to avoidance of the outgroup, whereas anger may lead to confrontation and attack. Prejudice against an outgroup is not simple negativity or antipathy; rather, it can take multiple, highly differentiated forms.

The second insight is that shifts in identity from one group membership to another, or from an individual to a group identity, produce shifts in appraisals, emotions, and emotion-driven behaviors. It has long been known that people tend to act in somewhat different ways when a group membership is salient, and to hold distinct patterns of attitudes. Complementing those findings, intergroup emotions theory holds that emotions are similarly enabled and patterned by group identities. The implication is that emotions are tied to a psychological *identity*, susceptible to rapid shifts over time, rather than to a stable, unchanging biological entity. When shifting from thinking about oneself as American to thinking about oneself as a woman, for instance, one's experienced emotions will shift. In addition, group-relevant behavioral tendencies (such as actions toward non-Americans, or toward men) change accordingly—indicating

that the changes in emotions are not merely superficially learned responses, but meaningful feelings that actually drive behavior.

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*See also* Collective Guilt; Intergroup Anxiety; Prejudice; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## INTERGROUP EMPATHY

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*Intergroup empathy* occurs when members of one social group identify with the emotions or perspectives of members of another social group. Empathy plays a crucial role in intergroup relations because it helps members of groups with differing worldviews, interests, and histories to

develop an understanding of one another. Empathy holds great promise as a means of improving intergroup relations because of its potential to reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. It is not a simple panacea, however, but rather a complex and subtle process involving cognitive, affective, and communicative elements that develop over time. Understanding the causes and consequences of intergroup empathy will make it possible to facilitate interactions between members of different groups and refine intergroup relations programs. This entry describes the concept and looks at related research as well as some practical implications.

### Types of Intergroup Empathy

There are three distinct types of intergroup empathy: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. *Cognitive empathy* refers to the ability to see the world from the perspective of a member of another group (i.e., an outgroup). It is useful in acquiring knowledge about the cultural practices, norms, values, beliefs, standards, and views of outgroup members. Thus, cognitive empathy can make an outgroup seem less alien and lead to humanizing and individualizing outgroup members, thereby reducing cognitive biases in intergroup perception.

There are two subtypes of *affective empathy*: parallel empathy and reactive empathy. *Parallel empathy* occurs when an ingroup member experiences emotions similar to those being experienced by the outgroup member, although often of lower intensity. For instance, if an outgroup member is feeling depressed and this leads the ingroup member to feel a corresponding sadness, that is parallel empathy. Parallel empathy can involve identifying with others' hopes and joys as well as their anger, fear, and pain.

In *reactive* empathy, the emotional response of the ingroup member differs from that of the outgroup member. For example, if an outgroup member is suffering due to discrimination and an ingroup member feels sorrow in response to that person's plight, that is reactive empathy. In the context of others' suffering, reactive empathy can involve two contrasting affective responses: compassion and personal distress. Compassion-related responses are composed of emotions that are positive in nature, such as sympathy, kindness, and

concern. These emotions generally lead to improvements in intergroup relations. However, personal distress responses are composed primarily of negative feelings, such as anxiety, threat, and revulsion. Personal distress often leads to a distancing between ingroup and outgroup members and, as a result, is unlikely to lead to improvements in intergroup relations.

One especially complicated personal distress response is guilt, which may occur when a person perceives that injustices experienced by the outgroup were caused by his or her ingroup. Guilt might motivate actions to redress the wrongs against the outgroup, but it could also lead to defensive avoidance.

The two types of affective empathy are not mutually exclusive and can occur simultaneously. An ingroup member may experience positive reactive empathy, such as compassion for the suffering of an outgroup member, while at the same time feeling the parallel emotional reaction of resentment toward his or her ingroup for causing the suffering. Mixed emotions elicited while experiencing emotional empathy may be confusing to ingroup members and limit the degree to which improvements in intergroup relations occur.

Intergroup empathy also has a behavioral component. *Behavioral empathy* involves overtly communicating a comprehension of or insight into an outgroup member's experiences or emotional reactions. An outward show of concern in word and deed in response to another's suffering would be an example of the communicative aspect of empathy.

### Research Findings

Although it is clear that there are individual differences in empathy, it is equally clear that contextual factors can activate or inhibit empathy in most people. As is true for empathy in general, it is most likely that individual ability in intergroup empathy has a developmental trajectory because it is acquired gradually over time. Recent studies of twins have found that environmental factors, such as parental socialization, play a more important role in the development of general empathic abilities than genetic factors. It also appears that experiences with empathy have a cumulative effect—the more frequently empathy is experienced, the more empathic the individual becomes.

Research indicates that when intergroup empathy is activated in people, more favorable attitudes toward the outgroup often result. This finding has been obtained for a variety of outgroups, including ethnocultural groups, people with terminal illness, homeless people, and even prisoners on death row. However, researchers have found that empathy may not reduce attitudinal bias toward groups in which membership is seen as transitory and under individual control; for instance, empathy does not reduce negative attitudes toward obese people, apparently because obesity is thought to be both temporary and under these people's control.

Empathy has also been shown to play a role in promoting prosocial and preventing antisocial behavior. For example, in situations where people experience empathic concern, they are likely to engage in prosocial (i.e., altruistic) behavior. Research indicates that people who are experiencing empathy for others allocate more resources to them. In contrast, a lack of empathy is associated with a greater willingness to inflict pain and suffering on others (e.g., sexual aggression, child abuse, and violence). One study found that adolescent sexual offenders had low levels of empathy for their victims.

Because empathy can create conflicts between individuals' prior attitudes, emotions, and behaviors and their current attitudes, emotions, and behaviors, it can lead to cognitive dissonance. For instance, when an ingroup member experiences a positive empathic connection with a member of a previously disliked outgroup, a discrepancy is created between his or her prior attitude and current positive emotional response to the other. To reduce the internal conflict created by this dissonance, an individual may change the attitude so that it is in accord with the positive valence of his or her empathic response. Yet, there is also a danger that feelings of dissonance may lead to the dismissing or downplaying empathic reactions to make current behavior consistent with prior negative attitudes.

Empathy does not operate in isolation, but rather can be viewed as an intervening variable that helps to explain a complex web of causation between situational experiences and their ultimate effects. Intergroup contact, intergroup relations training, or acquiring knowledge of outgroup members may create intergroup empathy. This empathic response can then lead to changes in

individual attitudes and behavior, thereby contributing to improvements in intergroup relations. For example, interacting with an individual from a disadvantaged group, such as the disabled, may activate compassionate reactive empathy leading to a concern for the individual outgroup member, which may then generalize to the outgroup as a whole. Likewise, a person's anger toward his or her ingroup that is created through parallel empathy due to the injustices suffered by an ethnic outgroup can lead to a reappraisal of more general beliefs, such as beliefs in a just world.

### Practical and Policy Implications

Because of its potential beneficial influence on attitudes, emotions, and behavior, empathy is often an explicit element of programs designed to improve intercultural relations, intergroup relations, diversity in the workforce, and conflict resolution skills. For instance, in multicultural education programs, information regarding the similarities and differences between various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups is presented from the perspective of each group. Intergroup dialogue programs provide members of two groups that have a history of conflict, such as Muslims and Christians, with an opportunity to discuss their own experiences and listen to the experiences of others. Participation in such groups has been shown to increase empathy. Likewise, participants in multiethnic cooperative-learning groups display an increase in empathy.

For intergroup empathy to fulfill its promise as a tool to improve intergroup relations, there are many questions that remain to be answered. Do the different types of empathy have different consequences for intergroup cognitions, emotions, and behaviors? What are the most effective techniques of teaching empathy? At what ages can it be employed? What types of situations are most likely to activate it? How can the pitfalls of defensiveness and personal distress responses be avoided? Are there other types of empathy that need to be examined? And, finally, how long do its effects last and how can enduring effects be maximized? As the answers to these questions emerge, intergroup empathy will come to play an ever more prominent role in our understanding of intergroup relations.

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*See also* Collective Guilt; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Intergroup Anxiety; Intergroup Contact Theory; Intergroup Emotions Theory

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## INTERGROUP VIOLENCE

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*Intergroup violence* is aggressive behavior committed by one group against another that causes or is intended to cause physical and/or psychological harm. Intergroup violence takes place at the group level; it involves individuals within a group taking into account group interests and acting together at the group rather than individual level. Because it occurs at the group level, intergroup violence is likely to be large scale and to have a direct impact on numerous individuals. This violence can take a variety of forms, including discrimination, deprivation, harassment, destruction of personal property, bodily injury, and murder. In its most extreme form, intergroup violence may constitute such large-scale destruction as ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Indeed, although humans have evolved as social beings, and groups serve a variety of positive functions for group members, the seemingly inevitable nature of intergroup violence is a significant negative consequence of group formation. One might even suggest that throughout history and

up to the present day, the inability to prevent intergroup violence poses perhaps the greatest challenge to humanity. This entry begins by providing some background information on intergroup violence, particularly from an evolutionary and historical perspective. It then describes a number of factors that have been shown to cause and increase the likelihood of intergroup violence, and discusses remedies that hold promise as interventions to reduce intergroup violence and prevent escalation into its most extreme forms.

### Background and Origins

There is considerable agreement among researchers that the formation of groups or coalitions of individuals dates back to our prehuman ancestors. What is more controversial, however, is whether early hominids engaged in intergroup violence and whether this violence should be viewed as evolutionarily adaptive. One position suggests that early groups used violent means to defend or extend their territory, thus increasing their inclusive fitness. The position's proponents point to archeological evidence, and evidence of intergroup violence among modern chimpanzees, our closest living relatives, as supporting the position, and they suggest that competition for scarce resources, particularly food and reproductive females, lay at the heart of this aggressive behavior.

An alternative position is that the archeological evidence does not speak to the intergroup nature of violence, and that early hominids benefited more from intergroup cooperation than conflict. According to this perspective, peaceful interactions between neighboring groups entailed a significant fitness advantage in terms of allowing full utilization of food resources along group borders that would otherwise need to be avoided, and peaceful exchange of females for mating, without the costs incurred by violent encounters.

It is difficult to definitively determine the validity of one position or the other because of the dearth of available evidence. It is certainly the case, however, that since the beginning of recorded history, there have been accounts of intergroup violence, including raids on other groups, wars, and genocide. These violent encounters were often described as involving competition over resources including land, wealth, and power. This presages the causes

and precursors of intergroup violence identified by psychologists and other social scientists.

### Factors That Promote Intergroup Violence

#### *Realistic Group Conflict*

As suggested in historical accounts of intergroup violence, one of the basic factors identified as a cause of this violence is competition for resources. Scarcity of resources, or the perception that there are not enough resources to go around, has been shown to lead to intergroup conflict and violent encounters. Competition for resources as a cause of intergroup conflict was first described by psychologists under the rubric of realistic group conflict theory. This theory states that intergroup threat and conflict increase as perceived competition for resources increases between groups, and as the conflicting groups have more to gain from succeeding. In addition, the theory proposes that the greater the intergroup threat and conflict, the more hostility is expressed toward the source of the threat. Finally, and of particular importance, the theory suggests that when competition over resources is present, proximity and contact increase intergroup hostility rather than decreasing it.

#### *Unified Instrumental Model of Group Conflict*

Relatively recently, the unified instrumental model of group conflict has been developed to tie together the variety of factors that have been found to promote group competition and hence intergroup violence. This theory emphasizes that it is not necessary that actual competition over tangible resources exist in order for intergroup hostility and violence to occur. Rather, it is the perception of competition that is crucial—the belief that when one group gains, other groups necessarily lose out. This perception may be driven by situational factors, such as societal instability (e.g., economic upheaval) and challenges to the status quo (e.g., a group's attempt to gain a larger share of the available resources). It may also be driven by socially prevalent ideologies, particularly belief systems that promote group dominance (e.g., the belief that one's group is entitled to a larger share of resources) and exclusive cultural worldviews (i.e., the belief that one's cultural worldviews are better than others' worldviews and hold more "truth").

Thus, although intergroup violence may result from competition for relatively tangible resources, such as land or economic resources, it can also be the result of perceived competition over relatively intangible resources, such as religious dominance and group status. For example, many instances of intergroup violence seem to at least partially stem from competition between groups over establishing which religious system holds more "truth," which value system will be followed in a region, or which political system should be instated. In many cases, competition between groups seems to occur over both tangible resources and these more symbolic resources, so that competition over a variety of resources becomes the trigger for intergroup violence.

#### *Difficult Life Circumstances and Authoritarianism*

In general, difficult life circumstances have been described as frustrating basic human needs, leading groups to turn against each other. For example, economic crises within a society may lead to *scapegoating*—blaming an innocent group for the difficulties. Groups are especially likely to be scapegoated to the extent that they are viewed as powerful and ill intentioned. Devaluation of the group and exaggeration of the threat that it poses then allow the scapegoat to be harmed without censure.

Political leaders and those who aspire to these positions may take advantage of difficult life circumstances within a group to boost their own cause by blaming members of an outgroup and promoting intergroup violence. In this way, under the guise of ingroup protection, they are able to rally supporters, boost their own power, and promote the development of a strong ingroup identity. When such identity leads group members to believe that their group is superior to all others, intergroup violence may be further legitimated on the basis of obtaining and protecting group status. Individuals with high levels of authoritarianism who are especially willing to obey authority figures are the ones particularly likely to follow leaders who promote extreme behavior and thus engage in intergroup violence. It is also the case that when *deindividuation* occurs within groups (that is, when group members feel that they are

not acting as individuals but instead experience an increased focus on their *group* identity), group members are especially likely to act on behalf of their group, at times facilitating extreme forms of intergroup violence.

### *Historical Inequality and Conflict*

A history of unequal group relations and prior conflict, whether recent or centuries ago, also has the potential to promote intergroup violence and to ensure that, once initiated, intergroup violence is likely to escalate. Groups may remember past conflicts through the generations and these conflicts, particularly the sense of having been mistreated by another group, may become part of the group lore. As a result of this sense of having been a “victim” of another group historically, group members may find it easy to justify violence against that group as necessary to protect their own group.

### *Dehumanization*

Whether a cause of intergroup violence or a means of justifying violence that has already been initiated, extreme devaluation of a group to the point of dehumanization serves to allow intergroup violence to continue unabated, without the normal constraints on harming fellow human beings. Dehumanization involves viewing members of another group as less than human and thus not deserving of humane treatment. In the process of dehumanization, groups may portray each other as animalistic and subhuman, and use terms such as “cockroaches,” “rats,” “gooks,” and “terrorists” to refer to them. When members of other groups are removed from humanity, they may be excluded from the scope of justice and moral consideration, so that violence against them is acceptable. Thus, dehumanization plays an important role in the escalation of intergroup violence and the legitimization of its most extreme forms, including genocide.

Despite all of these factors that seem to point to the inevitability of intergroup violence, there are also remedies that have been shown to hold promise in reducing intergroup violence and preventing escalation into its most extreme forms. These remedies are examined next.

### **Strategies for Promoting Intergroup Harmony**

In his 1995 book *Long Walk to Freedom*, former president of South Africa and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nelson Mandela stated that, “People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” These words by Mandela, which question the inevitability of intergroup conflict and put forward the possibility of intergroup harmony, seem inconsistent with this entry’s discussion of intergroup violence. Although the discussion here suggests that intergroup conflict has been a constant in human history, there are reasons to believe in the promise of Mandela’s words. In this section, the focus is on intergroup conflict resolution strategies that have been shown to hold promise.

### *Intergroup Contact*

An important strategy that can be used to reduce intergroup conflict and violence is to increase contact between the conflicting groups. To be effective, however, contact must take place under clearly specified positive conditions. If members of two groups are brought together by a supportive authority (e.g., a governmental body) to engage in personal, cooperative, and equal status interaction, then group differences can potentially be resolved and peace between the two groups can be achieved. These specified positive conditions have been shown to be essential for group contact to promote intergroup harmony. If contact between the two groups is not sanctioned by the governing body, is only superficial rather than personal, is characterized by competition between the groups, or allows one group to have more control or power than another in the intergroup communications, then hostilities can actually be exacerbated.

Present-day South Africa and Rwanda illustrate the benefits of using positive intergroup contact as a means of reducing extreme violence between opposing groups. In the past, both countries have been marked by large-scale intergroup violence. Apartheid in South Africa was characterized by fighting between White Afrikaners and groups of oppressed people designated as Black, Colored, or Indian. Long-term ethnic hostilities between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda led to a genocide in

which the marginalized but majority Hutus killed in 100 days more than 800,000 Tutsis as well as Hutu “moderates” who opposed the massacre.

Intergroup contact was one strategy that these countries implemented to promote reconciliation and reduce intergroup violence. In both countries, a governing body organized and supported intergroup contact and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the Gacaca tribunals in Rwanda facilitated the coming together of the opposing factions. The governing bodies provided an opportunity for victims and perpetrators to speak and to listen to each other. Victims could tell about their suffering and losses. Perpetrators could admit their crimes, ask forgiveness from their victims, and request amnesty from prosecution.

In other words, victims and perpetrators were brought together to engage in public but highly personal discussions in which they had equal status to discuss the harm they had experienced or the harm they had done. They were encouraged by the governing body to share their experiences in order to heal past intergroup hostilities, which could otherwise become incorporated into the group lore of being victim or perpetrator. Intergroup cooperation was emphasized by the commission. Victims and perpetrators together were directed toward the mutual goal of rebuilding their country and working toward national peace and unity.

It is not yet possible to definitively conclude that the reconciliation processes implemented in South Africa and Rwanda have been fully successful; however, intergroup relationships have improved to some degree in both countries. The current promise of these forms of reconciliation has led other countries to adopt similar processes to reduce between-group conflict within their own nations.

### *Intergroup Cooperation*

There are several reasons why positive contact between previously hostile groups may help promote the reduction of intergroup violence. One important feature of positive intergroup contact is that it encourages cooperation between groups. Because cooperation shifts the attention from competing goals between groups to a superordinate or common goal among groups, this process can

undermine perceptions of intergroup competition and actually change the functional relationship between groups from one of opposition to one of unity. Given that perceived competition is a key source of violence between groups (as discussed earlier), reductions in perceived competition can generate reductions in intergroup violence.

### *Common Ingroup Identity*

Through its promotion of cooperation and inhibition of perceived competition, positive interaction between groups can also inhibit processes that encourage “us versus them” categorizations. As groups of people pool their efforts toward achieving a common goal, they are more likely to see themselves as members of a superordinate or common group (e.g., national group) than as two separate and competing groups (e.g., ethnic groups within a nation). Because inherent in social categorization processes is the tendency to perceive members of one’s own group in a more positive light and as more varied than members of other groups, recategorization of smaller groups as part of a larger group can greatly alter perceptions between groups. As “they” become incorporated into “we,” a one-time enemy can become an ingroup member and can be seen through the lens of positive rather than negative biases.

Thus, with the basis of categorization changed to an inclusive identity that encompasses both groups, positive contact via cooperation can be a powerful way to improve relations and reduce violence between groups. This strategy is being put into practice in Rwanda, where “Hutu” and “Tutsi” are being deemphasized in favor of a “Rwandan” superordinate identity.

### *Individuation*

In addition to promoting recategorization into a shared identity, positive contact can produce another important shift in identity: from group members to individuals. Because personalized intergroup contact exposes group members to others’ unique perspectives and experiences, it becomes apparent how each individual varies from other group members. Moreover, interpersonal interaction enhances a focus on the individual rather than the group and allows people to see others as

unique. In other words, intergroup contact can reduce the salience of intergroup boundaries by encouraging decategorization and reducing the importance of a group membership such as ethnicity. Because decategorization shifts attention to individual rather than group identity, it also reduces perceptions of intergroup competition and can thereby reduce intergroup violence.

Inducing people to see others as individuals rather than members of oppositional groups can have other benefits. The personalization of others can combat previous dehumanization practices that reduced opposing group members to “cockroaches” or “rats,” undeserving of moral consideration. As people individualize or personalize others, they are more likely to see these others as humans who should be included rather than excluded from the scope of justice. Further, as people personally interact and accept others’ humanity and individuality, they are more able to engage in perspective taking, and put themselves in the others’ shoes. Being able to adopt the perspective of another allows people to experience empathy for the others’ suffering and loss. When individuals experience this emotion, they are more likely to engage in positive, helping behaviors toward the targets of their empathy, rather than negative, harmful behaviors. That is, seeing others as individuals can reduce intergroup violence and promote helping behaviors. These positive effects of decategorization reinforce the importance of personal contact between group members. People from different groups need the opportunity to get to know each other—to see each other as individuals—for their initial negative attitudes and stereotypes to be changed.

### *Role of the State*

The State has a potentially important role to play in putting into place the conditions for promoting intergroup harmony within a nation. Just as political leaders can incite intergroup violence as a means of furthering their own agendas, these leaders may be able to do much to prevent intergroup conflict and advance cooperation. As indicated by the contact hypothesis, for positive intergroup contact to occur, the governing body must support and encourage cooperative, equal status interactions between the groups. In addition, a strong civil State

that ensures that the basic human needs of its citizens are met is more likely to maintain peace among its constituents.

Although intergroup violence might seem to be an inherent part of human life, it need not be inevitable. People may be able to achieve intergroup harmony if they are given the opportunity to engage in positive interactions and come to see others as individuals who share a common humanity.

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*See also* Categorization; Cooperation and Competition; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Genocide; Intergroup Contact Theory; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Scapegoating; Social Dominance Theory

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## INTERINDIVIDUAL–INTERGROUP DISCONTINUITY

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The *interindividual–intergroup discontinuity effect* is the tendency in some settings for relations between groups to be more competitive, or less cooperative, than relations between individuals. The discontinuity effect has been the subject of systematic research for a little over two decades,



but its history in intellectual thought spans centuries, as this entry shows. The entry also documents evidence from both laboratory and nonlaboratory contexts. Three questions are asked and answered regarding the discontinuity effect. First, what is the generality of the effect across different situations and samples? Second, what are the psychological mechanisms responsible for the effect? Third, what are possible ways of reducing the effect and promoting intergroup cooperation?

### Historical Background

The question of whether individuals are prone to behave in a more hostile, competitive, and aggressive manner when banded together in a group can be traced through centuries of intellectual history. Plato placed his faith in the rule of an enlightened individual (the Philosopher King) rather than in democracy because he believed that democracy offers power to irrational mobs. In the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay expressed a similar wariness of groups in the political arena. They were particularly concerned with safeguarding the rights of political minorities and placing checks on the power of majorities.

In a similar vein, the first systematic treatises of group psychology, formulated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, proposed that people assembled in a group are apt to act more instinctively, more primitively, and more destructively than are isolated individuals. Gustave LeBon, for example, argued that because people behave differently in groups than they do in isolation, they are clearly caught in the sway of a crowd mind—a mental entity that takes possession of group members. Floyd Allport is well known among social scientists for his critique of this crowd-mind concept. Nevertheless, in his later writings, Allport referred to the difference between individual and group behavior as the master problem of social psychology.

Much work has since focused on comparing the task performance of individuals and groups, as illustrated by research on social facilitation, individual versus group problem solving, social loafing, and brainstorming. However, when the goal of research is to determine whether groups are more hostile, competitive, and aggressive than individuals, the most useful comparison does not

involve the isolated individual and the isolated group. Rather, the appropriate test involves a contrast between interindividual interactions and intergroup interactions. Research on interindividual–intergroup discontinuity has examined this contrast in laboratory and nonlaboratory settings, both of which are discussed in this entry.

### Laboratory Evidence

Most of the laboratory research has structured the social interaction with the use of the prisoner's dilemma game (PDG). With the PDG, each of two players, A and B, has two choices, X and Y, yielding a total of four possible choice combinations. Each choice combination yields a unique set of payoffs or outcomes for the two players. If both A and B select X, they both receive a moderate payoff, say \$3. If, on the other hand, one player selects Y while the other player selects X, the player who chose Y, whether A or B, may receive \$4 and the other player may receive only \$1. Finally, if both players select Y, they may both receive \$2.

The 2 x 2 matrix of four choice combinations thus presents a dilemma. Either A or B can improve the outcome by selecting Y, but if both A and B are guided by self-interest, they will receive less than could have been obtained by mutual X choices. The X choice is a *cooperative* choice, and the Y choice is sometimes referred to as a *competitive* or *defecting* choice. If the Y choice is motivated by greed, or a concern with improving the outcome, the competitive label is appropriate. However, if the Y choice is motivated by fear, or a concern for minimizing a possible reduction in the payoff resulting from the other player's Y choice, the defecting label is appropriate.

The PDG models situations in which individual selfishness can lead to collective detriment. The PDG and *N*-person generalizations of the PDG have been used as abstract representations of such actual-life problems as military confrontation, political disputes, consumption of natural resources, provision of public services, competitive advertising and pricing in business, and resource distribution within organizations. Laboratory research has demonstrated that when individuals communicate prior to each PDG trial, they tend to be fairly cooperative. This communication has sometimes involved face-to-face meeting, sometimes exchanging notes,

and sometimes talking through an intercom. However, groups that are required to reach within-group consensus regarding the X or Y choice on each trial have generally been found to be less cooperative, or more competitive. Typically the communication between groups has involved the meeting of group representatives, but as with individuals, sometimes it has involved exchanging notes or talking through an intercom.

### Nonlaboratory Evidence

The nonlaboratory research has had participants record in diaries all social interactions in which they were involved that fell into one of five categories: one-on-one (participant interacting with another individual); within-group (participant within a group interacting with other group members); one-on-group (participant interacting with a group); group-on-one (participant within a group interacting with an individual); and group-on-group (participant within a group interacting with another group). After classifying each social interaction, participants then evaluated the interaction as cooperative or competitive. Data collected over a number of days revealed that one-on-one and within-group interactions were less competitive, or more cooperative, than one-on-group, group-on-one, and group-on-group interactions.

### Three Questions

#### *What Is the Generality of the Effect?*

Research on the generality question has found that the discontinuity effect occurred among both male and female participants. It occurred not only in the United States but also in Europe and Japan. It occurred when groups were composed of two, three, four, or five participants. It occurred when monetary payoffs were relatively small or large, when monetary payoffs were positive or negative, and when payoffs were points rather than money. It occurred when communication between sides was present or absent, although the effect was significantly smaller in the latter case. It occurred when communication was face-to-face, involved the exchange of notes, or involved talking through an intercom. It occurred when participants expected to interact only once or multiple times, although the effect was

significantly smaller in the latter case. It occurred when the PDG was substituted by a functionally equivalent set of rules governing the exchange of folded origami products.

Research has also examined the role of the correlation between the outcomes for the two players across the four cells of the PDG matrix. The more negative this correlation, the greater the conflict of interest between the players. With the PDG, the correlation is always negative, but the degree of negativity can be manipulated. Research has found that as the correlation becomes more negative (and higher outcomes for one player are increasingly associated with lower outcomes for the other player), intergroup competitiveness and the discontinuity effect increases.

Still, the effect also occurred in the game of Chicken, for which the correlation between players' outcomes is slightly positive. The effect did not occur in two other well-known experimental games: Leader and Battle of the Sexes. These games are characterized by a strong positive correlation between players' outcomes, and they allow players to maximize outcomes by coordinated alternation of X and Y choices. Finally, the effect occurred when interindividual interactions were contrasted with interactions between group leaders, even when these leaders could not interact with the other members of their group. Within-group communication, therefore, is not a necessary condition for the effect.

#### *What Are the Possible Mechanisms Producing the Effect?*

Research has sought to understand what differences between interindividual and intergroup relations could account for the finding that intergroup relations are often more competitive. In considering this question, it is important to remember why either player might in the context of a PDG select the competitive, or defecting, Y choice. One possible reason for selecting Y is the self-interest, or greed, associated with receiving the highest possible payoff (\$4 in the above-described example). Another possible reason is the fear of receiving the lowest possible payoff (\$1). Greed is based on the expectation that the other player will select X and is therefore vulnerable to exploitation. Fear, however, is based on

the expectation that the other player will select Y and therefore poses a threat.

To date, evidence for five different explanations of the discontinuity effect has been obtained. One of these centers on the greater fear in intergroup than in interindividual relations. The remaining explanations center on the greater greed in intergroup than in interindividual relations. First, the schema-based distrust, or fear, explanation suggests that there is greater distrust in intergroup than in interindividual interactions because the actual or anticipated interaction with a group activates learned beliefs and expectations that groups are relatively competitive, deceitful, and aggressive. Second, the social-support-for-shared-self-interest explanation suggests that, unlike separate individuals, group members can and do obtain active support for a competitive choice. Third, the identifiability explanation proposes that the group context provides a shield of anonymity allowing group members to avoid personal responsibility for a selfish, competitive choice. Fourth, the ingroup-favoring-norm explanation suggests that membership in a group implies normative pressure to act so as to benefit the ingroup. Finally, the altruistic-rationalization hypothesis proposes that group members can rationalize their self-benefiting competitiveness as flowing from a concern for benefiting ingroup members.

#### *How Can the Effect Be Reduced by Increasing Intergroup Cooperation?*

Research has identified a number of possible approaches to reducing the discontinuity effect by increasing intergroup cooperation. One way of achieving this is by responding to groups (and individuals) with a tit-for-tat strategy. A tit-for-tat strategy selects the cooperative choice on the first trial, and on subsequent trials reciprocates whichever choice the other player made on the preceding trial. Research has demonstrated that when individuals and groups are confronted with a tit-for-tat strategy (as compared with a naïve other player), the discontinuity effect is reduced by a decrease in intergroup competition. Tit-for-tat is thought to promote intergroup cooperation because it is both firm and fair, that is, it undermines the role of greed because it cannot be exploited for any period of time, and it undermines the role of fear because it will not initiate competition.

Another possible approach to reducing the discontinuity effect is to encourage group members to think beyond the immediate situation to the long-term consequences of their behavior. Research has found that when participants are told to expect multiple interactions with the other player (as compared to a single interaction only), the discontinuity effect is reduced by a decrease in intergroup competition.

Finally, there is evidence that intergroup cooperation increases in matrices where outcomes associated with mutual competition are markedly low compared to matrices where such outcomes are higher. This finding is consistent with the doctrine of mutual assured destruction, which relies on deterrence to promote cooperation. Note that all these approaches relate to outcomes; it is just that mutual assured destruction points to a way to avoid a drastic reduction in outcomes, consideration of long-term consequences points to a way to increase outcomes over time, and tit-for-tat can be said to combine the concerns with increasing and not decreasing outcomes. Of these three approaches, the emphasis on long-term consequences is potentially the least confrontational and carries with it the obvious advantage of not flirting with mutual disaster.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Crowds; Interdependence Theory; Intergroup Violence; Prisoner's Dilemma; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## ISLAMOPHOBIA

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*Islamophobia* is a phobic reaction of non-Islamic people toward Muslims, as well as feelings of negative emotions such as anger and contempt toward Islam and Muslims. The term is derived from the Greek word *phobos*, denoting overanxiety in relation to an object (such as being more anxious about Muslims than is justified by reality). In social psychology, the meaning of the term is even broader; it may refer to rejection and devaluation of Islam and Muslim people and may be synonymous with prejudice against Muslim people. In recent years, Islamophobia has become a more prominent topic in political and social debates. This entry briefly outlines the history of Muslim–Christian history and its effect on Islamophobia describes some social psychological causes that explain the emergence of Islamophobia, and identifies ways to prevent or reduce Islamophobic attitudes.

### Historical Background

Islamophobia is associated with a long history of conflict that distinguishes Islamophobic prejudice from many other types of bias. Although the term *Islamophobia* was coined relatively recently, negative attitudes toward Muslims in the Western world have been observed for centuries, dating back to the different Arabic and Osmani occupations of larger parts of southern Europe from the early 8th to the 19th century. During the colonial period, however, the Islamic world was largely dominated by European rulers. These historical conflicts shaped collective memories with embedded threat on both sides.

After World War II and the decline of the colonial empires that followed in the late 1940s, millions of Islamic immigrants from North Africa and the Middle and Far East settled in Europe, Australia, and North America. These immigrants from former European colonies had access primarily to low-skilled jobs and were paid rather poorly. As a consequence of this ethnic and religious stratification, the native and the immigrant populations were also residentially segregated.

One of the milestones in the Western public debate on the relationship between Muslim and

Western societies was a paper and a subsequent book, *The Clash of Civilization* (1993), written by Samuel Huntington. Huntington argued that future conflicts in a globalized world would be fought between the Western and Islamic worlds. Although heavily criticized as clichéd, Huntington's ideas contributed to Western fears of the Islamic East.

The term *Islamophobia* was first formally introduced in the late 1980s in Great Britain to distinguish public discourse about *xenophobia* (the general fear and dislike of people from other countries) from the increasing enmity directed specifically toward Muslims after the Iranian revolution in 1979. Such fears dramatically intensified after the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005. These attacks were said to have been supported by Islamist extremists. Since September 2001, the public discourse in politics and in the media has distinguished between “Islamic beliefs” (referring to a religious orientation) and “Islamist behaviors,” which are seen as the result of an extremist religious ideology.

### Psychological Causes of Islamophobia

A scientific understanding of the causes of Islamophobic attitudes has to take into account the specific historical background of East–West relations. Islamophobic prejudice can also be traced to personality, intergroup, and societal factors. Two of the most prominent personality variables related to Islamophobia are *authoritarianism* and *social dominance orientation*. Highly authoritarian people tend to emphasize conventionalism, which includes adhering to traditional religious beliefs (in the context of Islamophobia, Christian beliefs), rejecting deviants such as religious minorities, and supporting aggression against such outsiders, or outgroups. Very socially dominant people support inequality between different groups, thus upholding an ideology that justifies the devaluation of the Islamic religion and its followers.

Beyond personality variables, feelings of intergroup threat play a prominent role in Islamophobia. The feelings of threat associated with Islamophobia have a number of psychological origins. Walter Stephan and his coworkers have distinguished between realistic and symbolic threat experienced by people when confronted with an outgroup. According

to their analyses, the level of Islamophobia is directly related to the extent that people feel their physical security or their culture and their way of living is threatened by the influence of the Islamic culture.

Currently, many forms of outgroup rejection, such as xenophobia and anti-Semitism, do not come from people's experiences so much as from images and stereotypes transported by the media. This also holds true for Islamophobia. The media often contribute to feelings of threat through the portrayal of dramatic terrorist attacks (e.g., in New York, Washington, Madrid, and London) or more local stories about Muslims, such as a Muslim thief captured by the police, protests of Muslim parents against school swimming lessons for girls, and rumors about plans of a Muslim community to build a new mosque in the neighborhood. In other words, threats often originate from indirect exposure to Muslims through media reports, which can depict Muslims in different ways. For example, either the media can present their news about a deviant minority member in a rather neutral manner, deemphasizing the Islamic religious and cultural differences, or they can describe the situation in a way that gives the impression that the deviance displayed is typical of the Muslim outgroup.

A critical societal reason for Islamophobia involves the segregation of Muslims, which limits intergroup contacts. Outgroup rejection is stronger when group members have only a little or no contact with outgroup members. In other words, people with non-Islamic backgrounds who have personal contact with Muslims are generally more accepting and positive in their attitudes toward Muslims. In addition, those who have personal contact with Muslims also tend to be more resistant to political propaganda against Muslims and Islam.

### Prevention and Reduction of Islamophobia

Intergroup contact is a primary way of preventing or reducing Islamophobia. As specified by contact theory, Islamophobia is most effectively reduced when the members of the different groups pursue a common goal in a cooperative way, with equal status, and with the support of authorities. These preconditions for effective intergroup contact are realized, for example, in cooperative school teaching programs. Cooperative learning programs that

focus especially on intergroup relations bring students from different ethnic and/or religious groups together to work in small working groups to solve a specific problem. To ensure cooperation, a different piece of the needed background information is distributed to each working group member; this way, the working group can only adequately solve its problem if each participant shares his or her unique piece of knowledge.

Because of Islamophobia's long history and its continuous reinforcement in recent public, political, and scientific debates in Western societies, Islamophobia has increasingly become a collective attitude pattern in the Western world. Its widespread distribution in different societies and social contexts makes Islamophobia a very special kind of prejudice. Thus, changing Islamophobic attitudes and ideologies will require not only psychological interventions but also political and societal endeavors that counteract negative Western political propaganda and media images. The successful public intervention of American and European politicians against impending hostility toward Muslims immediately after September 11 and the later attacks are examples of good practice in this field.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Immigration; Intergroup Anxiety; Intergroup Contact Theory; Prejudice; Racism; Social Dominance Theory; Terrorism; Xenophobia

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## J-CURVE HYPOTHESIS

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The *J-curve hypothesis* is one of the best-known theoretical attempts in sociology and political science to specify the conditions under which perceived victims of injustice will rise up against the social system to engage in collective rebellion. First proposed by James C. Davies in 1962, it suggests that social and political unrest is most likely to occur when a prolonged period of improvement in living conditions is followed by a brief but sharp period of decline.

The basic argument is that persistent growth and improvement leads people to develop psychological expectations that things will continue to get better. When such expectations are suddenly thwarted, people experience an intolerable gap between what they have come to expect and the realities of their circumstances. At this point, Davies suggested, people are most likely to engage in revolutionary activity. This entry looks at the historical context of this idea, compares it to other theories, and examines some of its weaknesses.

### Background and History

In an article entitled “Toward a Theory of Revolution,” Davies sought to expound on the writings of two prominent political thinkers, Karl Marx and Alexis de Tocqueville, who offered seemingly alternative visions of the causes of collective violence. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx claimed that long-lasting deprivation would

lead members of underprivileged groups (such as the proletarian working class) to realize that they have “nothing to lose but their chains” and therefore rise up in a desperate attempt to better their living and working conditions. By contrast, de Tocqueville believed that overwhelming oppression only bursts into rebellion when there is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. Davies endeavored to integrate insights from both of these perspectives, hypothesizing that revolutions would be most likely to occur when a period of improvement is followed by a sharp worsening of circumstances.

Davies sought to illustrate the explanatory power of the J-curve hypothesis in several paradigmatic cases, including Dorr’s Rebellion of 1842, in which it seemed that a period of industrial prosperity in Rhode Island was followed by an economic depression, causing an uprising against the government on the part of frustrated workers. Davies also argued that the events surrounding the Russian Revolution of 1917 adhered to the pattern predicted by the J-curve hypothesis. Until 1905, Russians had enjoyed the benefits of several decades of rapid industrial growth and greater political emancipation, before being confronted with a severe downturn in economic circumstances (due in part to war with Japan) and a return to political repression. The rapidly increasing gap between the people’s subjective expectations of continued economic and political development and the objective reality of strict deprivation imposed by the czarist regime, according to Davies, led Russian workers and intellectuals to band together in the revolutionary effort that succeeded in abolishing czarism in 1917.

Soon after the publication of Davies's article in 1962, the J-curve hypothesis became one of the most (if not the most) popular of the social scientific accounts of revolutionary antecedents. The basic logic of the hypothesis was incorporated into several versions of relative deprivation theory. The central tenet of relative deprivation theory, shared by proponents of the J-curve hypothesis, is that collective frustration results from the failure to meet subjective rather than objective standards. However, relative deprivation theorists have offered significantly more complicated explanations of political violence arising from the frustration that is believed to accompany the sudden thwarting of rising expectations.

### The J-Curve and Relative Deprivation Theory

Due to the theoretical overlap between relative deprivation theory and the J-curve hypothesis, social scientists have disagreed about how closely the two theories are related. Davies made no direct reference to relative deprivation theory in his groundbreaking article, but many of the most influential statements of the theory were published after he wrote the article. In any case, relative deprivation theory addresses how objective social situations are translated into subjective feelings of deprivation; it also examines the effects of deprivation and frustration on consequential behaviors such as political violence. As a result, some of the most prominent researchers of relative deprivation theory have directly relied on the J-curve hypothesis, treating it as an apt description of one specific manifestation of relative deprivation.

For example, in his 1970 book *Why Men Rebel*, Ted Gurr argued that feelings of relative deprivation arise from a perceived discrepancy between what "is" and what "should be." In his model, a significant gap between people's expectations and their capabilities creates "the necessary precondition for civil strife of any kind." However, Gurr argued that the J-curve example is only one possibility for the creation of such a gap; he referred to it as a case of "progressive relative deprivation." Furthermore, whereas Davies emphasized individuals' past experiences in setting their expectations, Gurr and other researchers of the phenomenon of relative deprivation have emphasized that intergroup comparisons can also contribute to a sense of frustration.

In an impressive series of cross-national studies, Gurr and his collaborators showed that both short-term economic deprivation and long-term strains, such as social and economic discrimination, contribute to an increased likelihood of political insurrection. They also found that larger group-based inequalities, including differential opportunities for advancement of various social groups, can intensify feelings of envy and frustration directed against those who are privileged. These feelings can also create elevated and often unrealistic expectations of redress on the part of underprivileged groups.

The role of intergroup dynamics in the arousal of political violence remains unclear, however, as most of the research conducted to investigate the J-curve hypothesis has not systematically differentiated between what Gary Runciman and others have referred to as *egoistic deprivation*—the feeling of personal deprivation relative to other individuals, and *fraternalistic deprivation*—the feeling of group deprivation relative to other groups.

### Weaknesses of Research on the J-Curve Hypothesis

The J-curve hypothesis has received little empirical support that can be considered unequivocal. Many of the studies attempting to support it have been criticized for having imprecise theoretical conceptualizations and inadequate empirical assessments. The J-curve hypothesis focuses on the rising and falling of the subjective expectations of individuals, but research has generally made use of archival sources of data containing no direct measures of individual expectations.

For example, Gurr estimated feelings of deprivation on the basis of objective measures such as growth in the GNP rather than subjective perceptions. The lack of overlap between the theoretical variables as they were defined in classic statements of the J-curve hypothesis, as well as the ways in which those variables were operationalized and empirically investigated, has raised serious questions about the validity of the evidence offered in support of the J-curve hypothesis. Some studies that were designed specifically to address these criticisms by using more theoretically appropriate measures of relative deprivation failed to replicate many of the original findings that seemed to support the hypothesis.



There also have been critiques of the inherent reductionism in any attempt to explain group-based behavior in terms of individual processes such as violation of expectations. In line with these critiques, some studies have shown that social variables (such as the degree of intergroup discrimination in society) are better predictors of political behavior than is short-term deprivation. Furthermore, research on relative deprivation theory in social psychology has indicated that fraternalistic but not egoistic forms of deprivation are associated with support for collective action.

Critiques of research on the J-curve hypothesis have put its essential claims into fairly serious doubt. Despite its captivating promise to integrate a number of different perspectives and historical findings concerning the antecedents of revolution, the J-curve hypothesis has failed to attract consistent and valid empirical support. As everyday life seems to suggest, it is not the case that every form of injustice or violation of expectations brought on by a sudden setback produces support for collective action. Viewed in this light, one of the main strengths of the J-curve hypothesis, namely its theoretical parsimony, is also the source of its weakness.

Collective action, it seems, is extremely rare, and most likely involves the dynamic interplay of a complicated set of social, psychological, and political variables. The attempt to explain group-based political rebellion solely (or even primarily) on the basis of an aggregation of individual-level processes such as violation of expectations has so far been tried and found wanting.

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*See also* Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis; Relative Deprivation; System Justification Theory

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## JIGSAW CLASSROOM TECHNIQUE

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The *jigsaw classroom technique* restructures traditional classrooms to engineer reductions in tensions between groups of students and to improve academic performance. It is the clearest and most potent operationalization of the contact hypothesis, which itself is social psychology's preeminent theoretical perspective on reducing intergroup hostilities. This entry describes the jigsaw classroom technique's historical and theoretical context, as well as the implementation, outcomes, and evaluations of the technique.

Social psychology has long been concerned with understanding prejudice and working toward its reduction and elimination. Gordon Allport's 1954 volume, *The Nature of Prejudice*, provided the landmark social psychological analysis of prejudice and its etiology, as well as a framework—the contact hypothesis—for developing interventions to reduce prejudice and intergroup hostilities. The *contact hypothesis* asserts that prejudice and intergroup conflict may be reduced by giving conflicting groups equal status, common goals to pursue, no competition along group lines, and the sanction of relevant authorities. All four conditions must be satisfied; otherwise intergroup conflict may be exacerbated rather than ameliorated.

Coinciding with Allport's 1954 book was the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which was intended to end state-sanctioned segregation in U.S. schools. This court-ordered desegregation led to significant conflict in U.S. school systems, as some school districts fought in courts and elsewhere to avoid desegregation. One school system, in Austin, Texas, was closed in 1971 because of the extent of the conflict over desegregation. This led to psychologist Elliot Aronson being asked to devise an intervention to reduce the hostility wracking the system, and to the development of the jigsaw classroom technique as such an intervention.

Because of housing segregation, desegregation of schools was being achieved by busing children across neighborhoods into different schools to achieve a racial mix within each school. Aronson and his colleagues noted that classrooms are typically very competitive environments. Minority group children were systematically disadvantaged in those competitive environments because of the accumulative effects of previous segregation and disadvantage. The rewards in a traditional classroom, such as good grades, praise from the teacher, and the esteem of fellow students, are scarce, are usually controlled by the teacher, and are obtained competitively. This microcosm of the classroom violated the conditions of the contact hypothesis.

The jigsaw technique changes the structure, and consequently the interactional dynamics, of the classroom to meet the conditions of the contact hypothesis. However, it does not vary the curriculum to be taught, and it still allows the assessment of individual students' academic performance. The technique is typically applied in classrooms containing students from a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds. This involves dividing the whole class into *jigsaw groups* of about six students, with each group capturing the diversity of the broader classroom and of academic talents. Each student in a jigsaw group is also a member of a separate *expert group*.

The material for the lesson is divided into six pieces. For example, if the lesson is on the life and times of Albert Schweitzer, the material to be covered is divided into six parts—Schweitzer's childhood, his work as a missionary, and so on. Each expert group is provided with one of the six parts of the day's lesson. Children in each expert group learn their material together, with help from the teacher, before reconvening in their jigsaw groups. These students each have a unique set of information, and they now have to teach their fellow jigsaw group members what they learned in the expert group. The lesson ends with a test—an individual, not a group test of the whole lesson (in this case, of all six parts of the lesson on the life and times of Albert Schweitzer).

The name *jigsaw group* comes from the metaphor that each of the children in the group holds a unique piece of a jigsaw puzzle, and the task facing all the children in the group is to put the pieces of the puzzle together so that they all share the whole

picture. After the jigsaw groups have operated for a fortnight or so, students are reorganized into other jigsaw groups that expose them to a different group of students.

The jigsaw technique places considerable onus on the children to learn the material to be covered in the lesson, and to teach it to each other. This departs from standard classroom operations, in which it is the teacher's role and responsibility to teach the children. The role of the teacher in a jigsaw classroom is to prepare the material for use in jigsaw and expert groups, and to ensure that the jigsaw and expert groups operate effectively, including helping the children in the expert groups learn their material before taking it back to the jigsaw groups. This is not to discount the importance or difficulty of the teacher's new role—on the contrary, the role is demanding, and it requires considerable ability to manage the apparent chaos of simultaneous groups in the classroom. Teachers often require assistance in managing student learning in several simultaneous groups, especially when there are tensions between students.

Children also often require assistance in managing the group processes, especially when there are tensions between some students and when children are unaccustomed to working in jigsaw (or other) groups. A common early reaction of some children in the jigsaw groups is to belittle other children who are having trouble expressing what they know in language readily understood by their peers. Aronson notes that this reaction quickly dissipates once the children realize that belittling others deprives them of the knowledge those others hold, and consequently means that they are not able to do well on the end-of-class assessment. Belittling behaviors are soon replaced with behaviors designed to elicit information from students who are having trouble teaching what they know to their peers. An important role of the teacher is to facilitate this process.

Aronson and his colleagues report that relatively small experiences of learning in jigsaw groups—as little as a one-hour lesson three times a week for a couple of months—is enough to lessen students' intergroup prejudices, tensions, and hostilities (compared to students in traditionally structured classrooms). Furthermore, and again relative to students in traditional classrooms, students in jigsaw classes show significant gains in academic

performance. Most of these academic gains appear in minority group children, but majority group children also show gains, or at worst show no decrements. This last result is important, as without it, it is unlikely that the jigsaw technique would ever be supported politically. Also, compared to children in traditional classrooms, children in jigsaw classrooms have been shown to like their classmates more, like school more, have higher self-esteem, and empathize more.

The jigsaw technique differs from other peer tutoring and cooperative learning programs that have been shown to be effective in improving educational outcomes for all students involved. Although the jigsaw technique relies on peer tutoring, it has the additional characteristic of forcing the interdependence of students within jigsaw groups. Aronson asserts, and is supported by an occasional study, that it is this interdependence, and not the experience of working in a peer relationship with another student, that produces the positive changes in intergroup relations. This is theoretically consistent with the contact hypothesis.

Most studies evaluating the effectiveness of jigsaw classroom interventions have worked with primary school children, usually around age 10 or 11. However, the social psychological principles underlying the technique ought to be applicable to people of any age, and indeed a couple of studies have shown the jigsaw technique to be effective in university environments.

Some authors have suggested that the attraction of the jigsaw classroom technique stems more from the power of the jigsaw metaphor than from the learning technique. This view gains some support from a close analysis of the effect sizes reported in most jigsaw studies. Although most studies report statistically significant differences on a variety of measures between students in jigsaw classes compared to students in traditional classes, the size of those differences is often modest. Nonetheless, no other intervention routinely produces such positive effects. It is also the case that it is one of very few interventions designed to reduce prejudice and discrimination without relying on changing the beliefs and attitudes of individuals. It remains for future research to specify the conditions under which we would expect the jigsaw

technique to produce large effects, and when we ought not to expect the technique to have any effect.

*Iain Walker*

*See also* Children: Stereotypes and Prejudice; Cooperative Learning; Desegregation; Discrimination; Intergroup Contact Theory; Prejudice

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## JOB DESIGN

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*Job design* refers to the actual structure of jobs that people perform. At its most basic level, job design focuses squarely on the work itself—on the tasks or activities that individuals complete in their organizations on a daily basis. Individuals may be able to avoid contact with many aspects of the context in which they work, but not with their jobs. Therefore, the way jobs are structured and designed plays a significant role in determining how people respond in their employing organizations.

This focus on the work itself is undoubtedly most responsible for the popularity of job design as a research topic. For the past 50 years, few topics in the organizational sciences have received as much attention. This entry summarizes the most significant historical and contemporary developments related to this topic. It begins by defining job design and discussing its importance to the management of organizations, presents a contemporary approach to the design of jobs, and concludes with

a discussion of the benefits of this approach when considering the possibility of redesigning jobs in organizations.

### Early Work on Job Design

Most of the early ideas about job design originated in work by industrial engineers such as Frederick Taylor. Taylor and his associates were primarily concerned with maximizing the productive efficiency of employees by structuring jobs so that any unnecessary work was eliminated and the quickest and most practical work methods were standardized for all employees who performed the same job. By standardizing and simplifying work, the prerequisite qualifications for a job are reduced, and worker efficiency is maximized because all resources needed to complete a task can be centrally located.

The industrial engineering approach to job design gained tremendous popularity in many organizations during the first six decades of the 20th century. Yet despite the popularity, early research showed that employees were often very unhappy with standardized, simplified work. Employees often were late to work or restricted their productivity on such jobs, or they sabotaged their work or equipment, resulting in productivity losses. As a result, the gains in productive efficiency that were expected by early industrial engineers were more than offset by the losses incurred when these engineering principles were implemented.

To address problems that resulted from job simplification and standardization, behavioral scientists began considering ways to redesign jobs by expanding both their content and scope. Much of this early work was based on ideas developed by Frederick Herzberg, who argued that the primary determinants of employee productivity and satisfaction were factors intrinsic to the work itself, often referred to as *motivators*. These motivators included recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth in competence. Redesigning a job by increasing its standing on these motivators was expected to lead to beneficial outcomes, including enhanced productivity and employee satisfaction. The results of several research projects provided some support for these arguments.

However, despite its merits, there were several difficulties with the Herzberg approach that

compromised its usefulness. For example, Herzberg did not provide an instrument for measuring the presence or absence of motivators in jobs. Thus, it was difficult to diagnose a job's status on the motivators prior to redesign, or to measure the effects of redesign activities on the job after the changes had been implemented. In addition, Herzberg did not provide for differences in how responsive people would be to jobs with many of the motivators, suggesting that all individuals would respond in the same way. Yet early studies demonstrated that some people respond more positively than others to positions that are responsible and challenging.

### Job Characteristics Theory

In an attempt to overcome some of the shortcomings of earlier approaches to job design, Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham developed *job characteristics theory* (JCT). This theory focuses on several measurable characteristics of jobs and recognizes that people may respond differently to these job characteristics.

According to JCT, employees must simultaneously experience three psychological states if desirable personal and organizational outcomes are to emerge. The employee must (1) experience the work as meaningful and worthwhile by some system of values that he or she accepts, (2) experience personal responsibility for the results of the work, and (3) have knowledge of the results of his or her work efforts. When all three of the psychological states are present, JCT predicts the employee should be internally motivated at work (i.e., feel good when performing well and feel bad when performing poorly), be satisfied with the opportunities for personal and professional growth at work and with the job, and perform effectively. If one or more of the psychological states is absent, the theory predicts that fewer desirable outcomes should result.

The three psychological states are internal to individuals and therefore not directly open to manipulation in designing jobs. Thus, the theory suggests five measurable, changeable characteristics of jobs that prompt the psychological states and, through them, enhance work outcomes. The three characteristics expected to be especially powerful in influencing individuals' experience of meaningfulness at work are *skill variety* (i.e., the

degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving multiple skills and talents), *task identity* (i.e., the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole, identifiable piece of work), and *task significance* (i.e., the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people).

The fourth characteristic, which is expected to prompt feelings of responsibility, is *autonomy*, which is the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. Finally, *knowledge of results* is the fifth characteristic and is proposed to be affected by the amount of job feedback, that is, the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance.

JCT identifies three individual differences that influence the way employees react to jobs with high scores on the five characteristics. First, the theory posits that employees must have the knowledge and skills necessary for jobs with the core characteristics. When employees have such skills, they have the opportunity to complete successfully complex, challenging jobs and, therefore, to reap the psychological rewards these jobs provide. Second, JCT argues that only jobholders with high *growth need strength*, or GNS (i.e., the strength of an individual's need for personal development and learning at work) value the opportunities for self-direction and personal accomplishment provided by complex jobs and, as a result, respond positively to them. Individuals with low GNS may experience jobs with high scores on the five characteristics as threatening and balk at being "stretched" too far by the work.

Finally, JCT suggests that employees who are satisfied with aspects of the work context (such as pay, job security, managers, and coworkers) are likely to focus their attentions on and respond positively to the properties of complex jobs. Dissatisfaction with these contextual factors may distract employees' attention from the work itself and instead cause them to focus on coping with the problems they experience.

More than 200 studies have tested JCT using the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS), a companion instrument to the theory. Results of these studies

provide some support for the major tenets of the theory. In particular, results indicate that the higher the job scores on each of the five characteristics, the higher the employees' satisfaction, internal motivation, and work effectiveness. Moreover, research shows that job characteristics affect work outcomes via their effects on the three psychological states specified by the model. Finally, some evidence suggests that individuals with high GNS respond most positively to jobs with a high score on the five characteristics.

In summary, JCT overcomes several of the shortcomings associated with earlier approaches to job design. First, the theory suggests five characteristics that might be boosted in order to enhance work outcomes. Second, the theory identifies three individual differences that clarify the conditions under which jobs with high scores on the five characteristics should have their strongest effects. Finally, the JDS instrument that accompanies the theory can be useful in (1) diagnosing jobs prior to redesign to determine which characteristics (if any) require change, (2) determining whether the employees are ready for job redesign and are likely to respond positively to it (i.e., whether they have sufficient GNS and context satisfactions), and (3) evaluating the effects of a job redesign program on the job characteristics, satisfaction, and motivation.

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*See also* Group Performance; Group Task; Identification and Commitment; Organizations

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## JURIES

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Jury research is relevant to the study of group processes and intergroup relations for several reasons. The first psychological work on juries, Munsterberg's treatise on testimony, was published in 1908. During the century since then, juries have played an important role in the study of group processes and intergroup relations both as topics for investigation and as a setting in which to study group processes. Trial juries have intrinsic interest for their role in a democratic society. Juries are unique among decision-making groups in several ways. They have a public function, as serving on a jury is a prime means for citizens to play a role in government. In the U.S. tradition, harking back to colonial times, juries not only apply law to specific cases but, by their actions, they sometimes can be the impetus for changing laws. Use of the principle of jury nullification, whereby juries can blunt the effect of a disliked law via contrary verdicts, has waxed and waned in U.S. history, but is still alive. Jury actions also have real effects on people and issues, and at times, literally make life or death decisions.

Juries are prime venues for studying group processes. Juries make group decisions governed by rules that prescribe the information input, verdicts that may (or may not) be reached, presumption of innocence, voting quorum for a verdict, and threshold of certainty for verdicts. Trial rules limit information to evidence presented in courts, which is subject to examination and cross-examination by trial adversaries. Jurors may apply past experience to interpreting and weighing facts. Thus, such prior experience can have an impact on construals of the information, inferences about how it fits into a coherent story, and the credibility assigned to different pieces of evidence. Though all members of a jury are exposed to the same information, the interpretation and weight assigned to conflicting information is very much in their hands; different jurors will make different inferences and construct different stories of the case.

Deliberation is designed for jurors to resolve these differences in reaching a group decision according to a prescribed voting rule such as unanimity or a 10–2 margin. Discussion among jurors evokes a wide array of social influence processes,

from social conformity to persuasion to bargaining, hence the direct relevance of the study of jury decision-making for the science of group processes. This entry reviews group processes in the specific context of legal decision making by first examining the unique problems involved in studying juries. Next, the individual juror will be treated briefly, as knowledge of jurors is important if we are to understand juries. The bulk of this entry will then deal with the jury experience as a group process, focusing on the critical aspects of jury dynamics that have been discovered and the structural factors that moderate these dynamics.

### Problems in Studying the Jury

Because the jury is a real-world institution with unique rules and goals, a question arises concerning the ecological validity of research: Can we apply research-based conclusions to real juries? Since the requisites for an experiment, control and manipulation, and even mere observation are legally proscribed in real juries, how can we know we are replicating a real jury if instead we study artificial or mock juries? Some studies use summary data of real juries, but this tells little about intragroup *processes*, and because field studies lack experimental control, they cannot yield causal conclusions. In mock juries, real juries can be mirrored by incorporating underlying characteristics that distinguish real juries. For example, mock juries can mimic in an experiment the real-world rules by which evidence is presented and consensus decisions are reached.

But the central difference between real and mock juries is that the latter decide the fate of hypothetical litigants in an artificial setting, with no real-world consequences. Generally speaking, a high degree of involvement by mock jurors will enhance ecological validity. For example, researchers may create a situation in which mock jurors think they are making decisions with real consequences, even though they are not in a real court (e.g., participants could be told that they are judging real student infractions of a university judicial code to see if random jurors can make decisions similar to those of actual jurors).

Another drawback of research on juries is that most of it has been conducted on North American juries, which operate under unique procedural

rules and with legal and social cultures that differ from those of other nations. Many jury trials occur in North America and many scholars there have studied them, but the resulting knowledge of the U.S. jury might well not describe juries or tribunals in other cultures. Fortunately, the rest of the world has been expanding jury research recently.

Most research has focused on the behavior of individual jurors. The consensus-reaching group process has sometimes been studied as an afterthought, and rarely as a main focus, consequently there has been too little attention paid to group dynamics. This is partially because studying groups is harder than studying individuals, requiring more resources to conceive, design, and carry through a study, and employing more participants. Moreover, it is popular to study the potential shortcomings, the “dark underside” of trial juries, such as juror prejudices, and the effects of impermissible influences, such as defendant attractiveness, pretrial publicity, and the introduction of inadmissible evidence during trial. Such impediments to a fair trial prompt researchers to track the attitudes and biases of the individual juror.

### Jurors as Individuals: A Brief Survey

Research findings can be organized according to the unique personality and values of jurors and to the situational variables that affect juror behavior. Great effort, much of it in vain, has gone into identifying the personality characteristics that can predict individual jurors’ judgments. It is common to believe that a juror’s final decision can be predicted by knowing his or her attitudes, values, personality, or particular demographics. Moreover, to assume that juror behavior is largely determined by personal factors reflects the fundamental attribution error—the simplifying tendency to assume that most human behavior is internally caused. A sizable lawyer folklore and jury consultant industry has crystallized around this assumption. Researchers have had some limited success relating the leniency or stringency of individual jurors to broad personal variables such as authoritarianism, locus of control, identification with the defendant, and belief in a just world. There has been less robust evidence linking judgment tendencies to demographic markers of personality and attitudes such as gender, race, age, education,

and socioeconomic status. It is safe to conclude that the impact of jurors’ personal variables depends on factors such as judicial instructions, the nature of the issues evoked by the case, and the amount and strength of trial evidence.

Two basic value orientations of jurors are important because both are at the core of many legal disputes. The first is *concern for the individual versus the common good*. No issue has bedeviled the United States since its founding as much as the distinction between providing for the welfare and interests of the individual (the “pursuit of happiness”) and the welfare of the collective. In other words, how much individual regulation should be imposed in the name of the general welfare? Much of history and politics, and many court cases, both criminal and civil, are marked by this issue; unsurprisingly, many jurors go to trial with a disposition favoring one side or the other.

The second value orientation is adherence to *letter of the law versus conscience of the community*. This refers to the conflict between strict adherence to the letter of the law and people’s sense of justice, or what they see as the community’s values. This distinction is now a major criterion in selecting Supreme Court justices, and if it is a source of conflict for the Court, it must be even more troublesome for lay jurors.

Jurors clearly can be affected by *situational factors* that are legally irrelevant to the trial, such as the heinousness of the crime, pretrial publicity, and identity of the victims and defendants. Though such factors may be psychologically relevant to jurors in passing judgment (that is, they seem to be valid indicators of culpability), for complex reasons the courts have determined that these factors should not bear on the legal issues being tried, and may indeed be unfairly prejudicial. Courtroom conditions such as attorney behavior and trial length can also affect juror decisions.

To summarize, the same conclusion can be reached for situational as for personal factors: The more information provided at trial that is relevant and reliable, the less the effect of irrelevant internal and external variables. Jurors’ careful examination and understanding of plentiful and relevant facts will reduce use of simplifying heuristics such as personal values and biases and obvious but legally irrelevant trial events. Thus, juries’ systematic examination of relevant information is

dependent on their having optimum conditions for group processes during deliberation.

### Juries as Groups

The jury must reach consensus on an overall verdict (i.e., guilt or innocence in a criminal case or liability in a civil case) and often on additional questions posed by the court (e.g., “Are there special circumstances associated with a crime, such as use of a firearm?”). To do this, juries deliberate, sharing the information each member considers relevant, using influence strategies, bargaining, and so on.

Dynamic jury processes that have been investigated by researchers include the tendency of jurors to move in extreme directions after deliberation, the types of influence used during discussion, jurors’ overall deliberation style, and the level of reasoning used within juries. These processes will be examined here with reference to the structural features that produce them.

Structural features of trials include the timing of the first jury vote, the quorum necessary for consensus (unanimity vs. other voting rules), and the composition of the jury vis-à-vis differential status and faction size. Perhaps the most important structural features are the nature of the issues underlying the case and the types of evidence available to jurors.

### Group Polarization

Polarization is frequently observed in group decision making. After discussion, both individual and group decisions move toward a more extreme position than that expressed by individuals prior to group discussion. Polarization is not a simple process but an outcome dependant on several potential processes. First, if jurors are leaning in a particular direction (e.g., guilt), most of the facts and inferences they offer will likely be in that direction, and jurors will begin to use more facts of that nature in subsequent decisions. The tendency for an individual to rely on information provided by other group members to make his or her judgment is called *informational influence*. Second, jurors are guided by the decision preferences of others in modifying or strengthening their voting preferences. For example, jurors may reason, “If

most members think the accused is guilty, then the accused must be guilty” or “Anyone who opposes the jury’s majority will suffer rejection.” Such conformity to the opinions of others is called *normative influence*, a tendency to take other people’s judgments as evidence of correctness. These processes—of people’s modifying their position based on the information provided by others and of their changing to comply with the group’s norms—are central to understanding group dynamics, and apply not only to polarization but to any shift in a consensus-seeking group.

### Type of Influence

Juries are charged with reaching consensus on a specified legal issue (e.g., whether the defendant intentionally killed the victim). Thus, they are social groups that must reach a decision that is both accurate (that is, consistent with the evidence and the applicable law) and satisfying to the group (that is, one that all or most can agree on). This dictates that two forms of influence, normative influence and informational influence, will simultaneously emerge during deliberation. As a social group, jurors are exposed to social pressures to conform to the norms or expectations of others. In this normative influence, jurors compare their positions to others’ positions, using those positions to evaluate the adequacy of their own behavior. As a group charged with reaching a correct decision, jurors will also seek to maximize relevant information about the case issue, thus being liable to informational influence.

The form of influence most practiced, and in turn, most effective in a particular trial is at the heart of group dynamics, and is determined by a number of situational conditions. Of these conditions, the most important is the nature of the case being decided. *Judgmental issues* are matters of ethical, aesthetic, and normative preferences that depend on individual, cultural, and societal consensus for confirmation or denial. For example, does a particular behavior constitute harassment? Does a negative act rise to the level of a hate crime? Will a certain verdict serve the cause of justice? Such issues are ultimately decided by reference to norms, and are therefore more liable to normative influence. However, *intellective issues* are a matter of fact, and can (at least in principle) be resolved



by arguments appealing to trial evidence such as the defendant's motive, opportunity, and ability to commit the crime. The question of whether a certain act violates a social norm is a judgmental issue. Whether an act took place and whether a certain party is responsible is an intellectual issue. Hence, the way in which jury members influence one another depends strongly on whether the jury will center on the group's preferences or on the task of being correct.

Though juries are provided with a formal decision rule ranging from simple majority to unanimity applying to their final vote, they may devise their own functional rules for determining how they move from disagreement to consensus (a social decision scheme). Intellectual issues prompt a "truth wins" scheme, with consensus reached when someone communicates "truth," whereas judgmental issues evoke a "majority wins" scheme. Overall, criminal juries seem to adhere to a "majority wins" decision scheme; that means that in most juries, whatever verdict has a majority at the start of deliberation will be the jury's final verdict. There is also some indication that higher status jurors may be more influential than lower status ones, and that proacquittal factions may be more influential than proconviction factions in criminal juries.

The amount of information available to jurors is important. If the trial was information poor, that is, critical information to build a story of case events is sparse, the jury must fall back on normative influence to judge the correctness of its assessments. In addition, the trial process itself is adversarial, with each side presenting only that evidence that supports its position and discrediting the other side's evidence. The situation is ripe for jurors to discount much of the evidence and instead rely on normative influence, and perhaps preexisting personal biases.

Influence type is also affected by jury instructions. Judges and attorneys can choose to emphasize the factual or normative nature of the jury's task. For example, a common instruction to deadlocked juries is to continue deliberation and give weight to the verdicts of other jurors, a clear invitation to normative influence. However, in many cases the jury may be asked to consider a number of subissues, such as "Was the defendant aware of his actions at the time?" Highlighting specific questions would enhance informational influence.

Finally, jury composition can affect dynamics. In many instances the initial vote is unbalanced, that is, the jury is divided into majority and minority factions. The strength of majorities is in their numbers, and majorities optimize their power through normative influence, whereas minorities have to support their position by appeal to facts. Though this question has not been directly tested, we do know that minority disagreement produces discussion of a greater range of facts in the numerical majority, while majority argumentation leads minorities to focus on the arguments and norms of the majority. If broad and thorough discussion of evidence is desirable, having a numerical minority in the jury is beneficial. However, this benefit is blunted if the decision requires a less than unanimous vote or if the minority wavers, failing to argue a consensual and consistent position.

Minorities may also be comprised of jurors with lower status, expertise, or power. While this is not a great concern in North America, it is in Europe, where juries are often a mixture of laypersons and judges. Researchers have found that expert, higher-status jurors are more active and exert more normative influence, and thus are more influential in judgmental cases, which favor such influence. In addition, during the trial lower-status jurors concentrate more on evidence that will bolster their weaker position than on the total range of evidence.

### *Deliberation Style*

Juries may engage in a verdict-driven or evidence-driven deliberation style. A verdict-driven style focuses discussion on the alternative verdicts, with jurors tending to refer to evidence only to support their preference. An evidence-driven style focuses on the evidence, with jurors aiming to reach consensus on the "story" of the case before agreeing on a verdict. As expected, evidence-driven juries deliberate longer and attend more to numerical minorities. Though the styles correlate with timing of the first jury ballot (verdict-driven discussions are more likely in juries that take a vote early in deliberation), the timing of that ballot may not determine the deliberation style. Instead, issues involving judgment rather than intellectual deliberation may produce *both* earlier votes *and* more verdict-driven discussion.

### Level of Reasoning

The level of reasoning refers to how thoroughly jurors *think* about the legally relevant evidence. At one end of this continuum is *systematic reasoning*, in which people examine a broad range of evidence (not only that which supports their position) in an integrated manner, delving in depth into the meaning of the information. This requires that jurors be motivated and exert effort to reach the most accurate decision. At the other end of the continuum is *heuristic reasoning*, in which a narrower range of evidence is explored superficially by using rules-of-thumb to simplify decision making. Examples include stereotypes, descriptive norms (such as how many jurors interpret a fact in a specific way), and superficial guides such as defendant or victim attractiveness, attorney charisma, and number rather than quality of arguments for each side. There is a tendency for numerical and powerful majorities to expend less effort in their arguments, thus using more heuristic reasoning, and for numerical minorities to discuss the facts and issues more systematically. But more powerful trial factors may determine the extent to which the jury carefully scrutinizes all the relevant evidence. Inclusion of expert, experienced jury members—as in European mixed juries—should promote careful reasoning, as should the overt instruction to decide on the truth of each of several propositions needed to support a certain verdict. Conversely, complex cases with an overload of information can encourage use of simpler rules for dealing with a plethora of facts and convoluted issues. Consider the O.J. Simpson trial, where one heuristic—“if the glove don’t fit, you’ve got to acquit”—may have carried the day in the face of information overload.

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*See also* Group Polarization; Group Problem-Solving and Decision-Making; Informational Influence; Justice; Minority Influence; Normative Influence; Social Decision Schemes

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## JUSTICE

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The psychology of justice explores judgments about the principles used to decide what is fair or unfair within social settings. Issues of justice have been important in psychology ever since the World War II era, a period during which there was an explosion of psychology theory and research involving the study of social settings and group processes. During the same historical period, psychology also moved beyond psychological models that paid little attention to people’s subjective evaluations of the world and became more concerned with how people interpreted and reacted to their social experiences. This increasing attention to intrasubjective issues led researchers to recognize that people were strongly influenced by their assessments of what is just and fair when they were dealing with others. Recognizing the central role of thought and feeling about justice in shaping behavior, psychologists made efforts to understand what people mean by justice and how it shapes their thinking, their emotions, and their behavior.

The field of justice has become divided into three primary areas, each of which has been important at one time during the historical evolution of the field. The first and earliest is the study of

distributive justice. *Distributive justice* is concerned with the fair allocation or distribution of resources or opportunities within a social setting. The second, and subsequently developed area, is *procedural justice*, which studies the fairness of different procedures for making decisions. Finally, most recently studied is *retributive justice*, which focuses on when and in what way it is fair to punish people for breaking social rules. This entry describes the background of research on justice and examines its principal theoretical perspectives.

### The Roots of Justice Research

Concerns about justice emerged once the importance of subjective assessments of social situations was clearly recognized. Central to that recognition was the development of the idea of *relative deprivation* (i.e., people's feeling of being deprived of something they deserve). Building upon research conducted during World War II, social scientists found that it was difficult to understand people's feelings and behaviors as a simple result of their objective situations. This work has led to more modern research on subjective well-being that shows, for example, that well-being is not strongly related to income.

A core idea, first articulated by Walter Runciman in his relative deprivation theory, is that people can focus upon personal outcomes (*egoistic deprivation*) or they can be concerned about the outcomes obtained by the groups of which they are members (*fraternal deprivation*). Subsequent research has suggested that this distinction is important because collective action, such as rioting or in a more positive vein, the civil rights movement in the United States, is primarily motivated by fraternal deprivation. Hence, the manner in which people interpret their experience is important. If people feel that they are relatively deprived as individuals, they react individually. If they feel relatively deprived due to group membership, their response is collective.

### Distributive Justice

Although relative deprivation theory makes it clear that people's reactions to social situations depend upon their comparison standards, it is not clear whether those comparison standards are

linked to justice. Theories of distributive justice supply this missing link because they tie comparisons to issues of justice. They do so by arguing that people compare their outcomes to standards of what is a fair or deserved outcome. In other words, people have a sense of what they are entitled to receive, and they evaluate their outcomes against this standard.

The core premise of distributive justice theory is that people react to what they receive in relation to what they deserve. There are two potentially unhappy groups: those who receive too little and those who receive too much. As might be expected, those who receive less than they feel they deserve are found to be angry and to engage in a variety of behaviors in reaction, ranging from working less to rioting. Justice researchers have studied many instances in which people have received less than they deserve, and have shown that this leads to a strong negative emotional reaction and to efforts to seek restitution. Among disadvantaged groups, complex psychological dynamics are unleashed, because the disadvantaged often lack the power to compel justice and must therefore find ways to manage their feelings of unfairness.

Interestingly, and less predictably, those who receive too much are also found to be unhappy, and they engage in efforts to restore distributive justice either by mechanisms such as working harder or giving resources away or, if those solutions are not practical, by leaving the situation. This latter finding from distributive justice research is especially important because it suggests that the desire to act fairly can influence the advantaged to take actions on behalf of others.

Distributive justice research also develops the important distinction between psychological and behavioral responses to wrongdoing. When someone receives or provides unfair outcomes to others, a conflict is created. There are two types of response. One is for outcomes to be reallocated so as to be fair. The victim frequently advocates this response, while harm-doers have mixed feelings—they believe in justice but are also benefiting from the situation and thus reluctant to change it. Hence, harm-doers are motivated to psychologically justify the situation, coming to believe that they deserve the outcomes they have.

This motivation to justify brings harm-doers and victims into conflict because victims want

redistribution, whereas harm-doers seek to justify their gains. An important function of social authorities is to lend support to victims, or at least avoid social conflict, by supporting the application of objective standards of fairness, which resolves conflicts, and by discouraging psychological justification, which leads to long-term hostility.

Of course, while the distributive justice literature argues that people react to deviations from standards of fairness, that argument can be tested only if the standards being used to determine fairness can be determined. Morton Deutsch has presented three core principles of distributive justice: equity, equality, and need. Equality involves giving everyone similar outcomes, while equity and need differentiate among people in terms of either their productivity or their needs. Deutsch suggests that the use of each principle promotes different social goals: equity leads to productivity, equality to social harmony, and need to social welfare.

While most distributive justice research focuses on individual judgments about personal outcomes, it is recognized that people also make judgments about the overall distribution of outcomes in a group or society. This has been referred to as *macrojustice*. Research on macrojustice reveals an interesting inconsistency between levels of justice judgments, with people viewing the macro-level (i.e., group) distributions that result from micro-level (i.e., individual) principles as unjust. In particular, people strongly endorse rewarding people based on merit or productivity (the equity principle), but find the overall distribution of resources that results to be unfair.

### Procedural Justice

*Procedural justice* is the study of people's subjective evaluations of the justice of procedures—whether they are fair or unfair, are ethical or unethical, and otherwise accord with people's standards of fair processes for social interaction and decision making. Procedural justice should be distinguished from distributive justice, which involves subjective assessments of the fairness of outcomes.

Subjective procedural justice judgments have been the focus of a great deal of research attention by psychologists because these judgments have been found to be a key influence on a wide variety

of important group attitudes and behavior. Procedural justice has been especially important in studies of decision acceptance and rule following. One reason that people might comply with rules and authorities is that they receive desirable rewards for cooperating and/or fear sanctioning from the group for not cooperating. Such instrumental motivations can be effective in motivating compliance in a wide variety of social settings.

Another reason that people might comply is that they are motivated by their sense of justice to accept what they feel is fair, even if it is not what they want. A key question is whether justice is effective in resolving conflicts and disagreements when people cannot have everything that they want. To the degree that people defer to rules and authorities because allocation decisions are seen as fair, justice is an important factor in creating and maintaining social harmony. Research on procedural justice suggests that social justice can act as a mechanism for resolving social conflicts.

John Thibaut and Laurens Walker conducted the first experiments designed to show the impact of procedural justice. Their studies demonstrated that people's assessments of the fairness of third-party decision-making procedures predicted their satisfaction with the procedures' outcomes. This finding has been widely confirmed in many subsequent laboratory and field studies of procedural justice—when third-party decisions are fairly made, people are more willing to voluntarily accept them. What is striking is that such procedural justice effects are widely found in studies of real disputes, in real settings, involving actual disputants and are found to have an especially important role in shaping adherence to agreements over time.

In addition to people's acceptance of decisions, procedural justice also shapes their values concerning the legitimacy of the authorities and institutions with which they deal. Values and the feelings they engender determine people's willingness to defer to those authorities and institutions. Studies of the legitimacy of authority suggest that people decide how much to defer to authorities and their decisions primarily by assessing the fairness of these authorities' decision-making procedures. Hence, using fair decision-making procedures is the key to developing, maintaining, and enhancing the legitimacy of rules and authorities and gaining people's voluntary deference to social rules.

Studies of procedural justice also indicate that it plays an important role in motivating commitment to organizations. As a consequence, procedural justice is important in encouraging people's productivity and extrarole behavior in work organizations. Hence, procedural justice is a key antecedent of a wide variety of desirable behaviors in groups, organizations, and societies.

What do people mean by a fair procedure? Four elements of procedures are the primary factors that contribute to judgments about their fairness: opportunities for participation, a neutral forum, trustworthy authorities, and dignity and respect. People feel more fairly treated if they are allowed to participate in the resolution of their problems or conflicts. They are primarily interested in presenting their perspective and sharing in the discussion of conflicts that affect them, not in controlling decisions about how to handle such conflicts. That is, people often look to authorities for resolutions. They expect authorities to make final decisions about how to act based upon what those who are affected by those decisions have said.

People are also influenced by judgments about neutrality—the honesty, impartiality, and objectivity of the authorities with whom they deal. They believe that authorities should not allow their personal values and biases to enter into their decisions, which should be made based upon rules and facts. Basically, people seek a “level playing field” in which no one is unfairly disadvantaged. If they believe that the authorities are following impartial rules and making factual, objective decisions, people think procedures are fairer.

Another factor shaping people's views about the fairness of a procedure is their assessment of the motives of the third-party authority responsible for resolving the case. People recognize that third parties typically have considerable discretion to implement formal procedures in varying ways, and they are concerned about the motivation underlying the decisions made by the person in authority with whom they are dealing. Important assessments include whether the person is benevolent and caring, is concerned about their situation and their concerns and needs, considers their arguments, tries to do what is right for them, and tries to be fair.

Studies suggest that people also value having respect shown for their rights and for their status

within society. They want their dignity as people and as members of the society to be recognized and acknowledged. Surprisingly, such assessments of respect are largely unrelated to the outcomes they receive. Thus, the importance that people place on this affirmation of their status is especially relevant to conflict resolution. Unlike the outcomes that determine distributive justice, dignity and respect is something that authorities can give to everyone with whom they deal.

Studies of procedural justice have also explored why people care so much about the fairness of procedures. Early studies, such as the research of Thibaut and Walker, argued that people seek fair procedures as a way of ensuring fair outcomes. Subsequent studies, including those of Tom Tyler and his colleagues, have found that people are also interested in their social ties to others and value fair procedures, because those fair procedures communicate both that the group to which they belong is a desirable one and that they are valued members of that group.

### Retributive Justice

One of the core features of organized groups is that they create rules and enforce those rules by punishing those who break them. While societies differ widely in what their rules are and in how they punish those who transgress, punishment for wrongdoing is central to the maintenance of social order and is found in all societies. The nature of these punishments is the central focus of the study of retributive justice.

A first reaction to rule breaking is an effort to restore the prior material balance between people. The simplest way to do so is to right a wrong by compensating the victim or victims for the harm done. When people react to rule breaking that is judged to be unintentional or without malice, and where it is possible to do so, people often endorse such an approach to righting wrongs. However, when rule-breakers are viewed as having deliberately broken rules, either intentionally or because of negligence, their victims and society generally believe that some type of punishment beyond compensating victims is appropriate.

Studies exploring the nature of the motivation to punish often link punishment to the issues of deterrence and incapacitation. Some studies argue

that people punish to prevent future wrongdoing. Other studies suggest that the desire for revenge is a key issue. Recent studies have suggested that, on the contrary, people's primary reason for punishing is to uphold societal values. Rule breaking is viewed as a threat to those values, and appropriate punishment restores them. Evidence suggests that people are motivated to punish when they view wrongdoing as undercutting moral and social values, and that they choose the type and severity of punishment they believe will restore an appropriate moral balance. A consequence of this is that those people whose actions and demeanor show a defiance of or disrespect for society, social values, and/or the social status of their victims will be punished most severely.

The study of punishment is of particular societal relevance in the United States because, compared to other nations, America is a highly punitive culture with generally severe punishments for a wide variety of crimes. The United States has one of the largest prison populations in the world, relative to population size, and America is one of the few remaining major countries to retain the death penalty. Understanding the psychology underlying this view of wrongdoing is therefore both important to theorizing and central to major social issues and policies both in the United States and in the world.

The different aspects of the psychological study of justice that have been outlined are united by their finding that people are very sensitive to issues of justice and injustice in their dealings with other people in social settings. In fact, such justice-based judgments are found to be key drivers of a wide variety of reactions, including attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. John Rawls famously argued that "justice is the first virtue of social institutions," and the findings of psychological research on justice strongly support the parallel suggestion that people view justice as pivotal in shaping their evaluations of their relationships with one another.

*Thomas R. Tyler*

*See also* Civil Rights Movement; Collective Movements and Protest; Distributive Justice; Legitimation; Loyalty; Procedural Justice; Relative Deprivation; Trust

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## JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS

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The belief in a *just world* refers to the view that the world is a fair place in which people generally get what they deserve. This belief helps people feel that they have control over their lives and will not suffer unjustly; as such, it serves a protective function. People are motivated to hold onto their belief in a just world and attempt to interpret the events in their own and others' lives in ways that are consistent with it. For example, when people see others suffering, they will try to help, but if they cannot compensate the victims or ease their suffering, they will persuade themselves that the victims deserve to suffer. This has important societal implications. To maintain just world beliefs, people react to innocent victims by blaming them for the injustices they face. Thus, this motivation to believe in social justice could actually undermine real social justice. This entry looks at the history and social significance of the *just world hypothesis*.

## History and Background

Melvin Lerner formulated the just world hypothesis on the basis of a series of experiments he began in the mid-1960s. In the first experiment, participants were asked to observe two people completing a task, one of whom was randomly chosen to be paid for the work. Even though participants knew that payment was awarded by chance, they still believed that the worker who was paid was actually more deserving of payment.

In a second experiment, Melvin Lerner and Carolyn Simmons found that people will reinterpret events so they are consistent with their belief that people get what they deserve. When given the opportunity to restore justice and compensate a victim for her suffering, most participants in the experiment chose to do so. However, when participants could not compensate the victim and instead saw her suffering continue, they derogated the victim, especially when they thought the victim had agreed to endure such suffering out of altruistic motives. According to the just world hypothesis, watching an innocent person suffer threatens observers' just world beliefs. To restore the view that people get what they deserve, observers will devalue the victim. The less deserved or compensated the suffering, the greater the devaluation of the victim.

This early experimental work emphasized the motivation that all people have to believe in a just world, especially when they find themselves in certain situations. In the mid-1970s, Zick Rubin and Anne Peplau proposed that, in addition to situations varying in the degree to which they evoke just world concerns, individuals vary in the degree to which they endorse just world beliefs. To measure these enduring individual differences, they developed the Just World Scale with items such as "Basically, the world is a just place" and "By and large, people deserve what they get."

In their first study, groups of draft-eligible men listened to the live radio broadcast of the 1971 national draft lottery to hear their priority numbers for the draft. In reacting to the lots of others, participants with high just world scores were more likely to believe that the lottery was fair and condemn those who lost the lottery.

Rubin and Peplau also reported correlates of the belief in a just world. Those who have stronger

beliefs in a just world are more authoritarian, supporting the strong and powerful (societal "winners") and denigrating the weak and powerless ("losers"). They are also more politically conservative, consistent with their preference for order, control, and the status quo. In addition, people who strongly believe in a just world are more religious. The authors reason that religious tenets emphasizing the existence of an active God (who rewards and punishes) promote the notion that the world is a just place where good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds punished.

The belief in a just world shares essential features with the Protestant work ethic, which reflects faith in the value of hard work both for its own sake and for its role in ensuring success. Also central to the belief in a just world is an internal locus of control, which is people's view that they can control what happens to them through their own actions.

In the decades since these early studies, a great deal of research has examined just world phenomena. The literature suggests that the belief in a just world is fairly stable across the life span and prevalent in many cultures across the globe. In their recent review of just world research, Carolyn Hafer and Laurent Begue offer two current conceptualizations of the belief in a just world. One refers to the belief in a just world as an explicitly endorsed individual-difference variable, assessed by standard self-report scales and correlated with various measures of well-being, personality, and social attitudes in correlational research designs. According to this view, people are assumed to vary in the degree to which they believe in a just world, presumably because they differ in their basic need to believe that the world is a just place.

A second view contends that most people need to believe that the world is a just place. Thus, they are motivated to act in ways to preserve this "belief," even though they may not explicitly endorse a belief in a just world on standard self-report measures. This second view, which emphasizes the common need that people have to believe in a just world rather than individual differences in an explicitly measured construct, is examined through experimental studies in which people are confronted by certain situations, such as those involving innocent victims, that evoke just world concerns.

Hafer and Begue argue that the latter conceptualization of the belief in a just world is closer to the essence of just world theory. The theory proposes that children learn to delay gratification so they can achieve greater rewards in the future. Implicit in this “personal contract” is the belief that they will get what they deserve in the end. In return for the effort they expend delaying gratification and working toward long-term goals, children feel they are deserving of expected outcomes.

This early link between deservingness and outcomes sets the stage for the development of a general justice motive in adults, a motivation to see the world as a just place where they as well as others get what they deserve. If others do not get what they deserve, then individuals are confronted with the threatening possibility that they too may not get what they deserve. This would violate the personal contract that has guided so much of their past behavior and future expectations. People need to believe in a just world so that they may preserve their commitment to deservingness. To maintain the view that even unjust outcomes are deserved, people employ a variety of tactics, such as derogating suffering victims or denying the existence of victims’ suffering.

Although previous research has emphasized the negative consequences of just world beliefs, more recent research highlights the psychological benefits of these beliefs. They appear to reduce stress and depression and promote life satisfaction, well-being, and achievement motivation. People may be reluctant to alter their just world beliefs because these beliefs serve such important adaptive functions.

### Importance

The belief in a just world has important consequences for the way people feel and behave toward members of both socially valued and devalued groups. Strong believers in a just world admire successful people such as political leaders and support powerful social institutions such as the U.S. military.

They also blame various types of victims (rape victims, AIDS patients, poor people) for their misfortunes in order to restore just world beliefs, especially when the victims’ suffering cannot be ameliorated.

If people with strong just world beliefs think that the victims’ suffering is deserved, they will be less likely to try to improve the victims’ situation through social action. Thus the tendency to perceive that people deserve the suffering they endure may serve to perpetuate social injustice. However, when people are given the opportunity to restore justice and compensate victims for their suffering, most will choose to do so. Therefore, strong believers in a just world may try to help those in need if they perceive that their efforts are likely to be successful.

*Shana Levin and Miriam Matthews*

*See also* Attribution Biases; Cognitive Consistency; Conservatism; Distributive Justice; Ideology; Justice; Procedural Justice; Protestant Work Ethic; System Justification Theory

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## KÖHLER EFFECT

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The *Köhler effect* is a kind of group motivation gain effect—an instance where a person works harder as a member of a group than when working individually. In the Köhler effect, that person is, to some degree, a “weak link” for the group—that is, if he or she fails to do well, the group will not do well. There are many tasks where a bad performance by a single member can ensure a bad group performance; social psychologists refer to these as *conjunctive group tasks*. For example, a mountain-climbing team that is tethered together cannot climb any faster than the slowest climber in the group. The Köhler effect is the finding that incapable members—the “weak links”—tend to exert extra effort, especially at such conjunctive tasks; for example, a slow climber should climb harder and faster when tethered to faster climbers than when climbing alone.

Because there is a great deal of research that shows the opposite pattern—group motivation losses, often referred to as *social loafing*—some scholars have suggested that members of performance groups or teams may be generally less strongly motivated than individual performers. But the Köhler effect, like other motivation gain effects, shows that this is untrue—under the right conditions, members of performance groups can be exceptionally motivated workers. Because many important tasks are carried out by groups (more and more often in modern organizational work teams),

many people—in industry, in business, in sports, and in government—are naturally very interested in better understanding such effects. This entry examines several aspects of the Köhler effect, such as its history, why it occurs, and when it occurs.

### Historical Context

The Köhler effect was first discovered by German industrial psychologist Otto Köhler in the 1920s. He was interested in how differences in group members’ abilities affected group performance. He asked members of a Berlin rowing club to perform a hard persistence task—to do standing curls with a heavy weight (44kg per rower) until they were so exhausted they could not go on. Sometimes they did this alone; other times they did it in two- or three-person groups. When they worked in groups, they held a single weighted bar. The bar was twice as heavy for dyads; three times as heavy for triads. This group task was conjunctive; as soon as any group member quit, the rest of the group could not continue very long. Köhler found that the groups persisted longer than their weakest members had persisted as individuals. This surprising motivation gain was biggest when the members of the groups were moderately different in ability. If the difference in ability was very small, or it if was very big, the motivation gain was not as large.

These provocative findings were largely forgotten for more than 60 years, until a 1989 article by Erich Witte rekindled research interest.

Since Witte's article, Köhler's motivation gain effect has been replicated repeatedly, not only for physical persistence tasks, like those used originally by Köhler, but for several other tasks (e.g., simple computations, visual attention tasks).

### Causes of the Köhler Effect

Much research suggests that the Köhler effect may have at least two causes, one rooted in the process of social comparison, the other rooted in the effects of individual members being indispensable to the group. First, simply learning that others are performing better than you, can often be sufficient to boost your efforts. Such upward social comparisons can lead you to set a higher performance goal to try to compete with those others, or it may simply remind you of some of the stigmas that attach to those who are less capable. This process occurs in groups where you are less capable than your fellow group members, but it can also occur when the others with whom you compare yourself are not actually working with you.

Second, knowing that your work group is depending on you to perform well can also boost your efforts, if you care about how well the group does or about how the rest of the group will evaluate you. Although both processes seem to contribute independently to the overall Köhler effect, certain characteristics of the group performance situation and of the group members can affect their relative importance. For example:

The motivation gain is larger when the group's task is conjunctive, and the least capable members' efforts are highly indispensable, than when the group's task is additive (e.g., a group tug of war), where every members' efforts matter to some degree and, hence, the least capable members are not uniquely indispensable.

As Köhler showed in his original work, the motivation gain is largest when members' abilities are moderately different (vs. about the same or very different). This appears mostly to be due to the social comparison mechanism; for example, we stop comparing ourselves with others if they are too much more capable than we are because we see the task of matching or competing with them as unachievable.

The indispensability mechanism appears to be relatively more important to females, whereas the social comparison mechanism appears to be relatively more important to males. It has been suggested that these gender differences reflect more general gender differences in levels of concern for others and for relationships (stronger in females) versus for social status and dominance (stronger in males).

Certain aspects of the work group setting seem to facilitate both causal mechanisms. For example, the Köhler effect is stronger when group members are able constantly to monitor one another's level of performance, compared to when monitoring is difficult or impossible. Such monitoring makes it easier to make upward social comparisons, and for incapable group members to be reminded that they are indeed "weak links" in the group's chain. Likewise, the effect is stronger when group members are physically in one another's presence than when they are not (e.g., as in so-called virtual work teams, becoming ever more popular in the Internet age). Such physical presence seems to enhance concerns with how we are likely to be evaluated by others, either because we are not as capable as they are (upward social comparison) or because we may be holding the group back (indispensability).

### Other Group Research

Otto Köhler's original interest was in how group composition would affect group member performance. And he showed that the relative abilities of group members were critical for the motivation gain effect that now bears his name. In more recent research, other aspects of group composition have also been shown to affect the Köhler effect. For example, an incapable male working at a physical-strength task produces a much larger Köhler effect when his more capable partner is a female than when this partner is another male. Apparently, it is more embarrassing to males to be outperformed by a woman than by a man, at least at a task that requires physical strength.

And when social comparison is possible, the Köhler effect is larger when one's more capable dyad partner is a member of an *outgroup* (a group

to which one does not belong) than when he or she is a member of one's *ingroup*. Apparently, it is more embarrassing to be bested by someone in a "competing" group than by someone who is not. Both of these aspects of group composition appear to alter the social comparison mechanism, but some aspects of group composition also alter the indispensability mechanism. For example, if your more capable partner rejects or ostracizes you, you tend to become less concerned about the fact that your efforts are indispensable to the group.

The Köhler effect is in some ways like another well-documented group motivation gain—the *social compensation effect*. In both phenomena, being indispensable to the group's success prompts higher levels of effort. In social compensation, that higher level of effort comes from a relatively capable group member who believes that the others in the group either cannot or will not work hard enough for the group to succeed. Conversely, the higher level of effort in the Köhler effect comes from a relatively *incapable* group member.

Another interesting difference between the two phenomena is the emotional reactions of the people working extra hard. For social compensation, if the rewards of group success are shared equally in the group, then the capable and hard-working group member is likely to feel exploited, and hence upset, when he or she works harder than others but receives no more reward than those others. The tables are turned, however, for the incapable and hard-working group member in the Köhler effect. He or she has to worry about a more capable partner feeling frustrated by being "held back" by a less capable partner. In general, however, when the incapable group member works hard in the Köhler effect, his or her emotional reactions are more likely to be positive (e.g., relief, pride)

than are those of the capable member who works hard in the social compensation effect.

Norbert L. Kerr

*See also* Group Composition; Group Motivation; Group Performance; Group Task; Social Comparison Theory; Social Compensation; Social Facilitation; Social Loafing; Work Teams

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## LANGUAGE AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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Language is a tool people use to realize goals in groups. These goals can manifest in socially constructive ways such as democracy, cooperation, and altruism, but they can also manifest in socially destructive ways such as totalitarianism, hate speech, and genocide. The ways in which these social structures and behaviors evolve depends on the relations between groups, and it depends on language. Language can also be a defining attribute of a group that distinguishes it from other groups.

This entry describes some of the ways in which language is used to manage social distance, and reviews research on language and prejudice. Then, it discusses relationships between language and power, with reference to gender, status hierarchy formation in small groups, and linguistic devices used to mask acts of power. Finally, it describes some relations between language and social cognition.

### Language and the Management of Social Distance

People use language to socially approach or distance themselves from others. For example, we can mimic the idioms others use (“Dude, that is rad”) or approach their accents by changing our pronunciation, speech rate and/or volume, lexical diversity, and so on. These linguistic approach moves are referred to as *speech accommodation*. We can

also keep our accents, phrases, or language unaltered when talking with others to maintain social distance, or even intensify our use of these forms to further increase social distance. These maintenance and withdrawal moves are referred to as *speech divergence*.

Originally, sociolinguists thought that such shifts were dictated by social situations. More formal situations, for example, might lead one to use more “correct” pronunciation than less formal situations. This idea was overturned, however, when Howard Giles proposed his speech accommodation theory, now called communication accommodation theory. According to this theory, people are motivated to use accommodating language when they want to express similarity and attraction, and they do so when they believe their interaction partner has legitimate social status. Conversely, when people believe the social status of others is low or illegitimate, they are likely to use divergent language.

In a now classic demonstration, Richard Bourhis and Howard Giles asked Welsh second-language learners, who were highly committed to their Welsh identity, to participate in a study on second-language learning. In one experimental condition, an English experimenter who employed received pronunciation (i.e., nonregional accented English) challenged participants’ reasons for studying Welsh: “Why study a dying language with a dismal future?” These participants answered in a broader Welsh accent, used more Welsh terms in their replies, and referred to their Welsh identity more often than those not so provoked. The Welsh

speakers' divergent replies can be understood as attempts to maintain their ethnic heritage in the face of a threat from what they considered to be the illegitimately high-status English.

There is now a wealth of evidence that such linguistic shifts are driven by motivations and perceptions of status relations between groups. In the case of intergenerational relations, the elderly commonly experience patronizing speech from younger generations. Mary Lee Hummert and Ellen Ryan have shown that nonaccommodating language follows from negative stereotypes of the elderly (e.g., as lacking intelligence and basic competence); this then increases the likelihood that the elderly will further enact behaviors that confirm this stereotype (e.g., being helpless and confused), which, in turn, has a negative consequence for elderly cognitive functioning, health, and self-esteem. The bitter twist to this phenomenon is that these outcomes can then reinforce the original stereotype, producing a cycle of negative intergenerational relations that is difficult to prevent.

In the case of policing, evidence suggests that police officers who use accommodating language—who are polite, listen, and show respect—are more trusted, are viewed as more competent, instill greater satisfaction in civilians, and are more likely to gain compliance than are nonaccommodating officers. This has proven to be the case in the United States, Taiwan, South Africa, and China.

In these three examples, and indeed many others, it is evident that the management of linguistic distance affects the nature of relations between groups. An important conclusion here is that accommodating language is not just a path to ameliorating tensions between groups; it is also a path to producing positive and socially constructive relations between groups.

## Language and Prejudice

### *Hate Speech: The Case of Ethnophaulisms*

People are creative in their use of disparaging terms to refer to one another: *wetback*, *frog*, *mick*, *limey*. These ethnic slurs are *ethnophaulisms*, a term derived from the Greek words meaning “a national group” and “to disparage.” Ethnophaulisms can take many forms: derisive adjectives, metaphors (e.g., *Italian perfume* for garlic),

derisive verb forms (e.g., *to gyp*, *to go Dutch*), proverbs (e.g., *beware of the Hun in the sun*), children's stories, and ethnic jokes. Ethnophaulisms are a form of hate speech that is typically applied to ethnic and especially immigrant groups.

Brian Mullen's research shows that ethnophaulisms vary in complexity (some groups have many ethnophaulisms that refer to many qualities, some relatively few), and they vary in terms of the degree of negativity, although they are typically quite negative. A number of variables have an impact on ethnophaulisms. The smaller the immigrant group, the less complex the ethnophaulisms. So, for example, in the United States, there is one ethnophaulism for Pakistanis (*paki*), whereas five have been identified for Greeks (*asshole-bandit*, *greaseball*, *grikola*, *johnny*, and *marble-head*). Groups with low-complexity ethnophaulisms also tend to have more negative representations, and both complexity and the negative valence are associated with the degree of familiarity of the group within a culture (in terms of representations in books and songs) and the degree of foreignness of the group (in terms of linguistic difference, facial appearance, and complexion). Smaller, less familiar, and more foreign groups have more negative and less complex ethnophaulisms applied to them.

Ethnophaulisms have been linked with various indicators of social exclusion. Groups with less complex ethnophaulisms were more likely to have lower immigration quotas from the 1920s through to the 1960s, and they were proportionately less likely to become naturalized U.S. citizens from the early 1900s to 1930. Research has shown that less complex ethnophaulisms are associated with lower rates of intermarriage and employment in more hazardous occupations. More negative ethnophaulisms are associated with greater ethnically segregated housing. Most disturbingly, rates of suicide among immigrants are higher than rates of suicide of people in the immigrants' home country, and the more negative the ethnophaulisms for any given group, the higher the rate of suicide.

### *Language Attitudes*

In the United States, people of British heritage are often delighted to find that their accent, while often misunderstood, confers social prestige that implies that the user is sophisticated, cultured, and

intelligent. Extra service in stores, opportunities to persuade, and the receipt of glowing admiration—*Oh, I just love your accent!*—are not uncommon. For immigrants in other ethnic groups, less flattering evaluations are the norm. These evaluations of ethnic accents and accompanying discrimination are language attitudes—evaluations of speakers based not on individual personality or skills, but on stereotypes.

Language attitudes became a focus for study when Wallace Lambert devised the matched guise technique. In this experimental situation, bilingual speakers were recorded speaking in one of two languages or accents. Research participants were then informed that these speakers were different people and asked to evaluate the speakers' personalities. The first study to use this method was published in 1960 and presented French- and Anglo-Canadian respondents with tapes of four French-English bilinguals to evaluate on 14 traits (e.g., height, good looks, leadership, intelligence). Both French- and Anglo-Canadian research participants rated the English guise speakers higher than French guise speakers on almost all attributes. For Anglo participants, the only exception was sense of humor, and for French participants, the only exceptions were religiousness and kindness. Even so, the French-Canadian participants rated the English guise speaker much more strongly on good looks, leadership, intelligence, self-confidence, and character.

Subsequent research showed quite different patterns. For example, around the same time, research in Israel revealed a pattern of mutual downgrading among Palestinian and Israeli respondents. Later research in the U.K. revealed a pattern where the English were rated high on status variables (wealth, intelligence) but low on solidarity variables (friendliness, warmth), whereas the reverse was true for the Scots. While this area of research has yielded inconsistent patterns, these and other patterns of language attitudes ultimately became interpretable using the ethnolinguistic identity theory developed by Giles and his colleagues. The fundamental idea of ethnolinguistic identity theory is that groups vary in status factors (e.g., economically and historically), demographic factors (e.g., numbers of group members and rates of birth), and institutional factors (e.g., representation of groups in government and educational contexts), and the

higher the group scores on these factors, the higher the group is said to be in vitality. High-vitality groups tend toward competitive social relations with others and thus upgrade the ingroup relative to outgroup in language attitudes, whereas groups lower in vitality either avoid direct comparison with dominant groups or actually identify more strongly with the high-vitality outgroup.

### Language and Power

Sik Hung Ng and Jim Bradac have described five ways in which the relationships between language and power can be understood, and these can be grouped under two general headings. First, there is the idea of power behind language. In this case, language is incidental in comparison to the power that the individual or group is thought to possess. So, the perceived power of language ebbs and flows with the power of the group, and this is reflected in people's attitudes toward a particular variety of language.

The first study conducted on the language attitudes associated with French-Canadian speakers suggested a very negative appraisal. Since the 1960s, however, there has been a linguistic revival of French language and culture in Quebec, and with this increase in cultural power, there has been an accompanying elevation of perceived prestige of the language. Language can also be used to reveal the power of a speaker. "Everybody freeze! This is a hold up!" conveys to listeners that the speaker has the power that comes from having a loaded gun.

Language itself can serve as a source of power—the power of language. People can use language to create power where they had none, to depoliticize acts of power that others might find distasteful, and to construct or express social arrangements.

### Power Behind Language

There is a large body of research on powerful and powerless language styles. Powerless language is characterized by the relatively frequent use of hedges (e.g., "sort of," "maybe"), disclaimers (e.g., "I'm no expert, but . . ."), and tag questions (e.g., "That's interesting, isn't it?"). Research has shown that the absence of these features—powerful language—is typically associated with the belief that the speaker is credible, intelligent, competent,

and knowledgeable. The obvious expectation here is that people who use powerful language are more likely to be influential. There is evidence to support this, but there is also evidence that women who use powerless language with men are more likely to be persuasive than those who use powerful language, despite the negative evaluations of powerless language users.

Other research has focused on the evaluation of language as spoken or written by men and women. This work shows a gender-linked language effect. Feminine language (e.g., greater use of questions) is typically seen as being more aesthetically pleasing and intellectual but less dynamic than male language (e.g., greater use of directives). Interestingly, when given samples of male and female written language, even when people are unable to discern the gender of the writer, samples written by women are evaluated as nice and sweet and those by men as strong and active.

### *Power of Language*

Language conveys the material power of users, and it can be used to create power. A common situation is group-based decision making. People often find themselves in ad hoc situations with relative strangers and a task at hand. This is the case in juries, committees, and interdepartmental discussion groups at work. In these situations, people will typically create a psychological group with a consensually established status hierarchy with or without much knowledge of each other. Robert Bales, in the 1950s and 60s, showed that people who took more speaking turns, independent of the content, were more likely to emerge as influential in the discussion.

Subsequent research has demonstrated that the content of what is said is important. Research by Scott Reid and Sik Hung Ng has suggested, consistent with expectation states theory, that groups form these status hierarchies very quickly. Use of proactive language early in the discussion (i.e., offers of task suggestions, disagreement, and replies to questions) suggests that an individual has some expertise at the task and creates *performance expectations*. These early expectations suggest status difference in the group, and these status distinctions determine who gets to speak. Reid and Ng reasoned that if this is the case, then it should

be evident in the pattern of interruptions within the group. Indeed, those who emerged as high in status were more likely to have successful rather than unsuccessful interruptions when using proactive language. When those same high-status group members used reactive language (i.e., requested information or agreed with others' suggestions), they were more likely to have unsuccessful than successful interruptions. This suggests that the ability to gain turns in the group depends on what others in the group are willing to concede. Those presumed to have status are granted the right to speak if they are proactive, but they are blocked in their attempts to interrupt if what they say is reactive, and thus inconsistent with that status.

Language is also used to depoliticize acts of power. There are a number of techniques available to power users to maintain their power. When taking an unpopular action, leaders may employ the *passive voice transformation*. So, instead of saying "I expelled the illegal aliens from the country," the speaker might choose to say "The illegal aliens did not have the correct paperwork." The passive voice transformation can effectively remove the actor from the act of power, and this can decrease the degree to which such actors are seen as responsible for their actions.

A second device is *permutation*. One might say, "Employers always quarrel with unions," or "Unions always quarrel with employers." Clearly, the entity at the beginning of the sentence is assumed to have been the party responsible for the action. A third device is *generalization*. A speaker may say, "John punched Chris," "John hurt Chris," or "John is an aggressive person." Each sentence may be a reasonable description of the same behavior, but the sentences produce different impressions.

Over time, language can be used to routinize social relations, whereby powerful language consistently used over time may blend into the social landscape. In the case of English and many other languages, there are, as a matter of convention, masculine generics: "One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Of course, these words are intended to speak for all of humanity, not just men. Nonetheless, the use of masculine generics means that women may be rendered less visible and of secondary importance to men because of the way in which language is structured. Indeed,



there is evidence that people who hear these masculine generics do not mentally picture women.

### Language and Social Cognition

Gün Semin and Klaus Fiedler have shown that we can choose four linguistic forms to describe any behavior. These forms vary in abstraction, but all could potentially be used to describe the same behavior. Starting at the most concrete level, we can use *descriptive action verbs* (e.g., *find, run, kiss*), *interpretive action verbs* (e.g., *help, offend, loot*), *state verbs* (e.g., *believe, love, hate*), or *adjectives* (e.g., *honest, helpful, aggressive*), with the latter language forms considered increasingly abstract.

Ann Maass and others have shown that people tend to describe positive ingroup and negative outgroup behaviors in relatively abstract language, but negative ingroup and positive outgroup behaviors in relatively concrete language. This *linguistic intergroup bias* is particularly likely to manifest when groups are socially competitive (e.g., environmentalists vs. hunters), are of a similar social standing, and share a history of competition or conflict (e.g., rival Italian cities). It is believed that such language use effectively diffuses or maintains stereotypes. In other words, language is a contributor to stereotypes, and thus prejudice.

Other work that more directly investigates stereotyping has focused attention on the degree to which people discuss and maintain *stereotype consistent* (SC) and *stereotype inconsistent* (SI) information. Although SI information is novel and potentially surprising, which would lead one to erroneously think it memorable, SC information is more likely to persist in communication chains. Research suggests that some stereotype content is more communicable because it serves psychological functions. Stereotypes that accurately describe properties that distinguish groups from one another and that fulfill identity-enhancing functions are those that are more likely to be communicated interpersonally, and therefore most likely to survive and prosper.

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*See also* Ethnolinguistic Vitality; Identification and Commitment; Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB); Power; Prejudice; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## LEADER CATEGORIZATION THEORY

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*Leader categorization theory* (LCT), originally proposed by Robert Lord, places emphasis on the cognitive and perceptual processes underlying workplace leadership. It proposes that subordinates, through socialization and past experiences with leaders, develop *implicit leadership theories* (ILTs), that is, cognitive representations in the form of prototypes that specify the traits and abilities that characterize an “ideal” workplace leader. ILTs represent preexisting cognitive structures or prototypes that are stored in memory and come into play when subordinates communicate with leaders. In other words, when subordinates interact with someone in a leadership position, this activates their ILT from memory, and then they can evaluate the person’s leadership qualities against their ILT. This entry describes leader categorization theory and related research.

ILTs do not represent objective realities inherent in the leader, but rather, are perceptual abstractions, summary labels that subordinates use to categorize individuals in leadership positions. ILTs

are, therefore, subjective and reflect each person's assumptions of what characteristics and traits make an ideal workplace leader.

ILTs tend to form around a number of common factors, such as sensitivity, dedication, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, strength, tyranny, and masculinity. Each person's ILT represents a belief that an ideal workplace leader will have certain amounts of each of these factors. While people can vary in terms of their ILT profile, each person's ILT tends to be relatively robust, and it does not change markedly over time. In addition, while ILTs tend to be relatively consistent within the same culture, they can vary quite considerably between different cultures—especially between individualist (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Australia) and collectivist (e.g., India, China, Japan) countries. Thus, national culture plays a role in shaping the prototype of an ideal workplace leader. This has many implications for leaders who manage subordinates from different cultures (as is becoming increasingly common with globalization), as these subordinates may have different ILTs concerning what constitutes an “ideal” leader.

The subordinate's perception of the leader is determined by two processes. First, leadership can be *recognized* from the qualities and behaviors revealed through interactions between the leader and subordinate (e.g., the way the leader behaves leads to attributions concerning his or her leadership qualities). Second, leadership can be *inferred* from the outcomes of events determined by the leader (e.g., the performance of the leader can give clues concerning the qualities of the leader).

Leader categorization theory is a recognition-based approach to leadership. A person is evaluated as a leader on the basis of the perceived match between the behavior and character of the leader and those of the perceiver's ILT prototype. ILTs are the benchmark subordinates use to form an impression of their actual leader. Subordinates are assumed to engage in an “ILT vs. actual manager” matching process, and any discrepancies identified are subsequently thought to affect the overall impression that the subordinate forms of the leader.

In other words, when subordinates interact with a leader, they evaluate that leader against their own personal ILT profile. The better the leader matches the subordinate's ILT, the more positive will be the subordinate's judgment of the

leader. Since subordinates might have differences in their ILTs, the perception of the qualities of the same leader might vary among members of the same work group.

### Research Evidence

Some research has suggested that ILTs can act as a source of bias in leadership measurement. This is because subordinates might rely on their ILT prototype when they complete leadership questionnaires designed to evaluate their actual leader's behavior. In other words, individuals may simply regenerate their ILT prototype of an ideal leader when rating an actual leader, without paying sufficient attention to the value of the leader's behaviors and traits.

In support of the central tenet of leader categorization theory, however, research concerning the matching hypothesis shows that the more subordinates rate their actual manager as being close to their ILT prototype on several dimensions, the more likely the subordinate will be to report higher job satisfaction and general satisfaction with the leader. However, it might not be the case that every subordinate engages in the matching process in the same way. It is likely that there are many individual factors (such as personality) and situational factors (such as the degree of leader–subordinate interdependence) that might determine the extent to which subordinates evaluate their leader by comparing him or her to the ideal leader in their ILTs.

Leader categorization theory provides a different way to examine workplace leadership compared to other approaches. It does not focus on the style of leadership or the relationship between the leader and subordinate; instead, it focuses on the *perception* of leadership that results when subordinates compare the leader's traits and characteristics against their personal ILT prototype of an ideal leader.

The theory has many important implications for leadership development and training. It shows that leaders need to understand how their subordinates perceive their leadership qualities—through their actions and from the outcomes of their performance. Also, leaders need to understand that each subordinate will evaluate their leadership ability by comparing them against his or her individual ILT prototype. Since subordinates are likely to

vary in terms of their ILT prototype of an ideal leader, leaders need to be aware that their behavior might be interpreted differently by different subordinates.

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*See also* Categorization; Leadership

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## LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE (LMX) THEORY

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*Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory* is rooted in the idea that leaders and followers exchange benefits, and that their relationships are at the heart of the leadership process. Social scientists have long attempted to understand how people relate to each other, beginning with explorations of costs and rewards, interpersonal behavior, and human relationships. A number of theories have used the lens of interpersonal relationships to understand leadership, including Edwin Hollander's focus on idiosyncrasy credits, Tom Tyler's notion of procedural justice, Dave Messick's delineation of psychological exchanges, and James MacGregor Burns's conceptualization of transforming and transactional leadership. Most notably, George Graen and his colleagues constructed the formal leader-member exchange theory, which began by elaborating on the nature of the leader-follower relationship and its outcomes, and later created a model for effective leadership. This entry traces

the background of these ideas and discusses the Graen theory in some detail.

### Historical Context

Starting with their early work on learning, psychologists have recognized that rewards and punishments have a strong influence on behavior. At the end of the 19th century, Edward Thorndike at Harvard University published research on learning in cats, done in William James's basement in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which established "the law of effect"—the idea that reward stamps behavior in and punishment stamps behavior out, as Thorndike put it.

A great deal has been made of this basic idea that behavior is under the control of outcomes, specifically rewards and punishments, or more generally, benefits and costs. In social psychology, George Homans developed the idea that interpersonal behavior is an exchange where one individual's behavior provides costs or benefits to another person. Influence happens as a result of rewards and costs people can provide for each other.

Related work by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley developed the idea that each person in a relationship derives an *outcome level* (OL) based on the average degree of rewards minus costs that he or she obtains through the interaction exchanges in the relationship. Furthermore, they argued that the outcome level is evaluated against a *comparison level* (CL), based on all the outcomes a person knows about through his or her own and other people's relationship histories. The CL provides a baseline, or an expectation, of what level of outcome a person will or should get in a relationship. When the OL exceeds the CL, the relationship is satisfying. If the OL is less than the CL, people are dissatisfied and are likely to leave the relationship, depending on the available alternatives.

### Hollander's Idea

The idea that people in relationships engage in some kind of exchange, and that each must provide satisfactory outcomes for the other if the relationship is to continue, has been important in Edwin Hollander's exchange theory of leadership. The leader provides "adequate role behavior directed toward the group's goal attainment," and

followers accord the leader “status, recognition, and esteem.” In effect, the followers give the leader legitimacy, which obliges them to follow the suggestions and directives of the leader. The key concept in Hollander’s approach is the highly influential idea of *idiosyncrasy credit*. Leaders have varying amounts of credit given to them by followers, based fundamentally on individual leaders’ competence and conformity to group norms. Credit is essentially legitimacy. It is the resource leaders need to provide direction for the group.

The legitimacy that followers give in exchange for leader competence and conformity is called idiosyncrasy credit, because although credit is built up partially on the basis of conformity, followers expect that leaders will use their credit to innovate—and that might mean not conforming. A leader who deviates, or acts idiosyncratically, may simply spend the credit, or if his or her initiatives lead the group to a better place, to more rewards, the deviation may actually build up credits rather than depleting them.

An example of using idiosyncrasy credit is U.S. President Richard Nixon’s opening a peace initiative with China in 1972. The United States had shunned all public communication with “Red China” for more than 20 years. Conservative Republicans had been loudest in their condemnation of the “Chinese Communists” and their opposition to recognizing its government. When Nixon traveled to China, fellow Republicans swallowed their opposition and waited to see how the initiative would play out. A Democratic president, lacking credit with the political right, would have been pilloried. Nixon’s diplomacy deviated from the group norm but ended up building credit with his followers for further innovations.

Hollander defines the legitimacy given to leaders by followers as the basis for leaders’ ability to induce their followers to voluntarily comply with their directives for change. A leader without legitimacy will not be followed. According to Tom Tyler, the legitimacy of a leader or authority depends very heavily on the leader’s using fair procedures in making decisions, that is, on *procedural justice*. Procedural justice provides a benefit, but it is a psychological rather than a tangible benefit. Through treating the follower fairly, the leader signals that the follower is a valuable member of the group. By being fair and unbiased, by listening

to the follower’s ideas and viewpoints, and by treating the follower with dignity, the leader confirms the follower’s good standing in the group. In return, the follower accords the leader increased legitimacy, and more readily complies with his or her commands and suggestions.

### *Related Research*

The distinction between psychological and tangible exchanges between leaders and followers is highlighted in James MacGregor Burns’s concepts of transactional and transformational leadership. *Transactional leadership* involves the tangible exchange of benefits—as illustrated by the politician who promises no new taxes in exchange for election to office or the manager who offers an extra vacation day for employees who meet a lofty quota. In contrast, Burns’s concept of *transformational* or *transforming leadership* contends that leaders empower followers to achieve fundamental change through the exchange of psychological benefits that raise both the followers’ and the leaders’ levels of motivation and morality.

David Messick further delineates the mutually beneficial exchange of psychological benefits between leaders and followers in his *social exchange model* of leadership. People follow leaders because they get something valuable from them, and leaders in turn benefit from their followers. For example, leaders give their followers vision and direction in return for focus and self-direction from the followers. In addition, leaders give their followers protection and security, achievement and effectiveness, inclusion and belonging, and pride and self-respect. Followers reciprocate these benefits with gratitude and loyalty, commitment and effort, cooperation and sacrifice, and respect and obedience.

### **The Graen Team’s Work**

The principal theory that makes the individual leader-member dyadic relationship the fundamental component of the leadership process is George Graen and his colleagues’ *leader-member exchange* (LMX) theory. LMX theory has evolved through a number of stages. Originally, it was termed the *vertical-dyad linkage* (VDL) theory, and at that point, researchers examined the vertical linkages, or relationships, leaders created with their followers.

They found that followers with positive, high-quality relationships consisting of mutual respect, trust, and obligation become part of the leader's ingroup. Followers in the ingroup become trusted assistants going above and beyond their job descriptions for their leader. In return, the leader does more for ingroup than outgroup members and gives ingroup members more information and influence.

VDL theory subsequently became leader-member exchange theory, and the focus shifted to examining the nature of these relationships and the organizational outcomes associated with the quality of leader-follower relationships. At this stage, researchers noted that these dyadic relationships occur through a role-making process, and they identified a number of characteristics and behaviors of both leaders and followers that have an impact on the development of these relationships. For example, the quality of these relationships is influenced by the value agreement between leaders and followers, communication patterns and frequency, interaction patterns, and influence tactics, as well as by followers' optimism, dependability, and efficacy. High-quality relationships between leaders and followers are associated with a great variety of positive outcomes, including organizational performance, job satisfaction, and career progress.

The next stage in the evolution of LMX theory has shifted the focus from a descriptive approach to a prescriptive approach, emphasizing the development of effective dyadic partnerships in the leadership-making model. Thus, the focus has shifted from examining how leaders differentiate among followers to highlighting how leaders can develop effective relationships with all group members. There also has been a shift from a hierarchical leader-follower approach to viewing leadership as a partnership of group members. This model suggests that leadership making occurs progressively over three phases. The first phase, termed the *stranger* phase, is characterized by rule-bound, formal interactions focused on purely contractual exchanges; leaders give followers what they need to do their job, and followers do only the basic requirements of their job. This phase is akin to the transactional model of leadership and is characterized by low-quality exchanges and self-interested motivations.

When one of the dyad members makes an offer for improved relations, the relationship can move

to the second phase, *acquaintance*, which is characterized by increased social exchanges such as sharing information and resources of both a personal and work nature. Finally, the relationship can mature to the third phase, *mature partnership*, which includes even greater social exchanges such as respect, trust, and obligations. This final stage is marked by high-quality dyadic exchanges, with a shift in focus from self-interest to the interests of the group; thus, the relationship at this stage can be considered transformational in nature.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Idiosyncrasy Credit; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Procedural Justice; Relational Model of Authority in Groups; Social Exchange in Networks and Groups; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## LEADERSHIP

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We are consumed with interest in leaders. We animatedly gossip about “the boss”; airport bookshops bulge with leadership books; current affairs dissect the actions of leaders; and much of the organizational and management sciences is a study of leadership and the role of the CEO (chief executive officer). This is not surprising. Our leaders have enormous influence over us—they make decisions for us and shape the course of our lives and even the type of people we are, and so we focus on how effective they are; how we elect, appoint, and depose them; and whether they lead for good or for evil. This entry defines leadership, and then describes the major organizational and social psychological theories of leadership.

### Defining Leadership

Leadership is a process where an individual, or clique, is able to influence others, as a group or as group members, to internalize a collective vision, and mobilize them toward attaining that vision. Effective leadership transforms people’s goals and ambitions, even their identity, and replaces self-oriented behavior with group-oriented behavior. The exercise of power over people to force them, through rewards and punishments, to merely comply with commands and bend to one’s will is not leadership.

One important distinction is between effective/ineffective leadership and good/bad leadership. The effectiveness of leadership is largely a matter of fact (the leader can or cannot change attitudes and motivate action), whereas the difference between good and bad leadership is largely a subjective judgment hinging on whether the leader has attributes we applaud, uses means we approve of, and sets and achieves goals we value. Leadership research focuses on leadership effectiveness rather than the moral quality of the means and ends of leadership.

### Personality Attributes of Great Leaders

Although leadership is a group process (leaders require followers), leadership research has a long history of focusing on the personality attributes of leaders that make them great leaders. The

19th-century belief that leaders are born not made is no longer in vogue—research has failed to find “great leader” genes. However, the idea that some of us have personalities, however acquired, that predispose us to lead effectively in all or most situations, whereas others do not, has attracted enormous research attention. For example, modern transformational theories of leadership (see below) capture this idea with the concept of charisma—a charismatic personality or leadership style is critically important for leaders to be able to transform group goals and practices. James Meindl talks about “the romance of leadership” to capture our obsession with charisma as a basis of effective leadership.

A definitive review published in 2002 concluded that three of the “Big Five” personality dimensions identified by personality research are associated with effective leadership: They are extraversion/surgency, intellect/openness to experience, and conscientiousness. Overall, however, many leadership theorists believe that personality perspectives on leadership do not allow us very reliably to differentiate between effective and ineffective leaders.

### What Do Effective Leaders Do?

One reaction to a focus on stable personality correlates of effective leadership was a somewhat extreme stance that we can all lead effectively if the situation is right. Research shows this to be only partially true—some people still appear to be more effective across a range of situations. A less extreme reaction to personality perspectives is to focus on leadership behaviors: Maybe some *behaviors* are more effective for leadership than others. One reliable distinction that has emerged over and over again in many different guises is between a leadership style that pays more attention to the group task and getting things done (task-oriented leadership), and one that pays attention to relationships among group members (socioemotional leadership). Most groups require both types of leadership and people who are capable of being both task focused and socioemotionally focused tend to be the most effective.

### Contingency Theories

However, different situations and different group activities call for different emphases on the task or

on relationships—in which case the relative effectiveness of task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders may be contingent on properties of the leadership situation. This idea is reflected in Fred Fiedler's *contingency theory* of leadership. Very popular in the 1970s, one strength of this theory was that Fiedler had a way to measure leadership style—the Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) Scale, according to which people who rate their least preferred coworker favorably are relationship oriented, while those who rate their least preferred coworker unfavorably are task oriented—and to classify how well structured situations were. Generally, relationship-oriented leadership was most effective unless the group task was very poorly structured or very well structured, when a task-oriented style was more effective.

Another contingency perspective is *normative decision theory*. Leaders can choose to make decisions autocratically (subordinate input is not sought), consultatively (subordinate input is sought, but the leader retains authority to make the final decision), or as a genuine group decision (leader and subordinates are equal partners in shared decision making). The efficacy of these strategies is contingent on the quality of leader–subordinate relationships (which influences how committed and supportive subordinates are), and on task clarity and structure (which influences the leader's need for subordinate input). Autocratic leadership is fast and effective if leader–subordinate relationships are good and the task is well structured. When the task is less clear, consultative leadership is best, and when leader–subordinate relations are poor, group decision making is best.

A third contingency theory is *path-goal theory*. It assumes that a leader's main function is to motivate followers by clarifying the paths that will help them attain their goals—leaders do this by directing task-related activities (structuring) or by addressing followers' personal and emotional needs (consideration). Structuring is most effective when followers are unclear about their goals and how to reach them, and consideration is most effective when the task is boring or uncomfortable. Structuring can be viewed as meddling and micro-management when tasks are well understood, and consideration can be considered distracting and unnecessary when followers are already engaged and motivated.

A fourth contingency theory is *situational leadership theory*. A distinction is drawn between directive and supportive behavior that produces four leadership behaviors: telling (high directive, low supportive), selling (high directive, high supportive), participating (low directive, high supportive), and delegating (low directive, low supportive). Effective leaders need to tailor their behavior to the situational demands of subordinates' level of task ability and task willingness—for example, telling is best suited to low-ability followers, and participating to highly motivated followers.

### Transactional Leadership

Another way to view leadership is as a transaction between leaders and followers—the leader does something benefiting followers, and followers in turn allow the leader to lead. Underpinning this idea is an assumption that leadership is a process of exchange, similar to contractual relations in economic life that are based on good faith. Leaders transact with followers to get things done, setting expectations and goals and providing recognition and rewards for task completion. There also is an equity dimension to the leader–follower relationship. Because effective leaders play a greater role in steering groups to their goals than do followers, followers may reinstate equity by rewarding the leader with social approval, praise, prestige, status, and power—the trappings of effective leadership.

An early transactional approach is Edwin Hollander's analysis of *idiosyncrasy credit*. Leaders who initially conform to group norms, and therefore serve the group well, lay the groundwork for a transaction in which they are subsequently rewarded by the group by being allowed to be idiosyncratic and innovative—key features of effective leadership.

Another well-known transactional leadership theory is the *vertical dyad linkage (VDL) model*. Leaders develop different exchange relationships with specific subordinates, in which the subordinate can either be treated as a close and valued “ingroup” member with the leader or in a more remote manner as an “outgroup” member who is separate from the leader.

This model quickly evolved into the now better-known *leader-member exchange (LMX) theory* in which the dichotomous ingroup/outgroup

transaction was replaced by a continuum of quality of exchange relationships ranging from ones that are based on mutual trust, respect, and obligation (high-quality LMX relationships), to ones that are mechanically based on the terms of the formal employment contract between leader and subordinate (low-quality LMX relationships). Effective leadership hinges on high-quality LMX relationships. High-quality relationships motivate subordinates to internalize the group's and the leader's goals, whereas low-quality relationships lead subordinates to simply comply with the leader's goals, without internalizing them as their own. However, from a leader's point of view high-quality relationships are labor intensive; so over time leaders tend to develop them with only a small subset of group members and develop low-quality relationships with the rest of the group.

### Transformational Leadership and Charisma

Typically, effective leaders are innovative and able to mobilize followers to buy and implement their new vision for the group—they are transformational. Transformational leadership is characterized by (a) careful attention to followers' needs, abilities, and aspirations; (b) challenging followers' basic thinking, assumptions, and practices; and (c) exercise of charisma and inspiration. Charisma is critical for transformational leadership (there is much talk about charismatic or visionary leaders and leadership), which has engaged a debate among scholars about (a) whether this is a return to older personality perspectives on leadership and (b) how one can distinguish between charisma in the service of evil (e.g., Slobodan Milosevic) and charisma in the service of good (e.g., Nelson Mandela).

Transformational leadership and transactional leadership are foci on leadership, but both are also leadership styles that can be contrasted to other leadership styles. Transformational leaders inspire followers to adopt a vision, whereas transactional leaders appeal more to followers' individual self-interest. A third leadership style—*laissez-faire* (noninterfering) leadership, which involves not making choices or decisions, and not rewarding others or shaping their behavior—has recently been added to transactional and transformational leadership. The components of transactional and transformational leadership are measured by the

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which has been extraordinarily widely used and is the leadership questionnaire of choice of the organizational and management research communities.

### Perceptions, Schemas, and Stereotypes of Leaders

There are a number of perspectives on leadership that focus on the causes and consequences for leadership of our cognitive representations of what makes an effective leader. According to Robert Lord's *leader categorization theory*, we have stereotypical expectations (schemas) and implicit theories about the attributes an effective leader should have in general, or in specific leadership situations. Once we categorize someone as a leader we automatically engage the relevant leadership schema—the better the match between the leader's actual characteristics and the leadership schema, the more favorable are our evaluations of the leader and his or her leadership, and the more likely we are to follow his or her lead.

There are two other ways in which stereotypical expectations (schemas, implicit theories) might affect leadership. According to *status characteristics theory*, in a task-oriented group our evaluations of effective leadership rest on whether we believe the leader has the attributes to perform the group task, called *specific status characteristics*, and whether the leader is a member of a high-status group in society generally and therefore possesses attributes that are valued in society, called *diffuse status characteristics*. Influence, or leadership, is an additive function of perceived group task competence and perceived societal status.

*Role congruity theory* focuses primarily on gender and leadership. The argument is that social stereotypes of women typically do not match well with schemas of effective leadership, and thus in many leadership situations women find it difficult to be endorsed, by both males and females, as effective leaders. There is a lack of congruity between the attributes of the leadership role and the stereotypical attributes of women.

### Social Identity and Leadership

A number of approaches to leadership assign followers a key role—as noted above for transactional



theories and schema-based approaches. Other perspectives have argued that “followership” is critical to good leadership, as effective followers can guide leaders in the “right” direction—helping to contain any tendency for corrupt or ineffective leadership.

One aspect of leadership that is often underemphasized is its identity function—groups furnish members with a sense of identity, and people look to groups and their leaders to fulfill this function. This idea has been pursued by Michael Hogg’s *social identity theory of leadership*. According to the social identity theory of leadership, a key function of leadership is to forge, transform, and consolidate one’s identity as a group member—one’s social identity. The implication of this is that if membership in a group is important to you, particularly to your sense of self, you are more likely to be influenced by a leader who matches your understanding of what the group stands for (a leader who is *prototypical* of the group) than one who does not. Effective leadership in such groups rests significantly on the leader’s being perceived by followers as being prototypical—even to the extent that general attributes of good leadership decline in importance. One reason leaders who are prototypical members of subjectively important groups can be effective is that followers believe that because their identity and that of the group are closely matched, these leaders treat members fairly and must be acting in the best interest of the group—they are therefore trusted and allowed to be innovative.

For the social identity theory of leadership, and in line with James Meindl’s “romance of leadership,” charisma is an attributional consequence of effective leadership, not a cause—people unduly attribute leadership behavior to the leader’s dispositions rather than situational or contextual factors. Charisma constructed in this way further facilitates leadership.

Overall effective leaders are, or learn to be, what Steven Reicher has termed “entrepreneurs of identity”—they are adept at being able to maintain the group’s perception that they are highly prototypical of the group. They can do this in different ways: talk up prototypical aspects of their behavior and talk down nonprototypical aspects, characterize as marginal those members who do not share their prototype of the group, vilify and cast as deviant those who are contending for leadership,

identify as relevant comparison outgroups those that are most favorable to their own prototypicality, and engage in a discourse to raise or lower the salience of the group for its members (raising salience benefits more prototypical leaders, lowering salience benefits nonprototypical leaders). Nonprototypical leaders engage in group-oriented behaviors to strengthen their membership credentials.

Although leadership can be a matter of weaving a collection of individuals into a group with a single identity and vision, more often than not it is a matter of transcending intergroup divisions that can sometimes be deep and conflictual—for example, the challenge of providing national leadership in Iraq to Sunnis, Shi’ites, and Kurds. The challenge of successful intergroup leadership is the wider challenge of building social harmony and a common purpose and identity out of conflict among groups. A key issue is that intergroup leaders are often viewed as representing one group more than the other; they are outgroup leaders to one subgroup, and thus suffer compromised effectiveness. To overcome this problem, intergroup leaders need to build a common ingroup identity that does not threaten the identity of subgroups—a careful balancing of the superordinate identity and associated vision with recognition of the integrity and valued contribution of subgroup identities.

### Trust and the Group Value Model

A key dimension of leadership is trust. Can we trust our leaders; if we are to follow their lead surely we should trust them? One important basis of trust is shared group membership, and so we tend to trust leaders who we view as being “one of us”—prototypical members of a group we identify with.

We are also more likely to trust our leaders if they treat us fairly and with respect. According to Tom Tyler’s *group value model* and his *relational model of authority in groups*, fairness and justice perceptions are critical to group life. Trust in leadership is particularly influenced by members’ perceptions that leaders have used fair procedures (procedural justice) in their dealings with them. Distributive justice (the fairness of resource allocations within the group) is important, but procedural justice is more important. One reason for

this is that procedural justice serves a social identity function—it conveys a favorable social evaluation of followers as group members. The respect for group members conveyed by procedural fairness builds member identification and thus feeds into cooperative and compliant behavior. As members identify more strongly with the group, they care more that the leader is procedurally fair, and care less that the leader is distributively fair. This asymmetry arises because with increasing identification, instrumental outcome-oriented considerations (distributive justice) become less important relative to intragroup relational and membership considerations (procedural justice).

One ramification of this analysis is that leadership can be an effective structural solution to social dilemmas. Social dilemmas are crises of trust in which people fail to make short-term personal sacrifices for the longer term greater good of the group as a whole—instead they pursue their own short-term selfish interests. Social dilemmas are notoriously difficult to resolve. However, enhancing a sense of common social identity can build trust that resolves the dilemma. Leadership plays an often critical role in this process precisely because a leader can transform selfish individual goals into shared group goals by building a sense of common identity, shared fate, interindividual trust, and custodianship of the collective good.

*Michael A. Hogg*

*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader Categorization Theory; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Relational Model of Authority in Groups; Romance of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Socioemotional and Task Behavior; Status; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## LEGITIMATION

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When something is legitimated, such as an employment practice in an organization (e.g., a family leave policy) or a particular person in a managerial position, this means that its existence and prevalence is taken for granted by a “social audience” (i.e., real other people or the presence of others implied by social norms and ideologies). Thus, *legitimation* refers to the taken-for-granted support of an aspect of social life (e.g., acts, individuals, a position, or a structure of positions) by real or implied other people. Questions of legitimacy repeatedly arise in studies pertaining to political and organizational structures, status relations in and between groups, and inequality.

The early 20th-century sociologist Max Weber noted that people feel obligated to obey the norms or rules associated with a legitimated object (e.g., the rules of an authority structure in an organization), even when they personally disagree with

them. This taken-for-granted aspect of social life often becomes seen as what is right. For example, a person in a managerial position is perceived to be legitimate when there is a real or perceived consensus that this person is the appropriate person for the job. Subordinates, then, obey the manager's commands, even when they personally disagree with him or her.

Many things can be legitimated. For example, a particular act, such as a manager firing a subordinate or an individual holding a position (e.g., floor supervisor), or a structure of positions in groups or organizations, or intergroup status relations in a society become legitimated through a social process. This process involves people assuming that other people in general accept the object for what it is and, often over time, for what it should be.

Scholars who study legitimacy processes in groups focus on how the legitimacy of groups' status hierarchies emerges and how authorities acquire legitimacy in the eyes of their subordinates in organizations. Status hierarchies develop in groups (e.g., committees, task forces, gangs), where some members are seen as more worthy and esteemed than other members. Scholars also investigate the consequences of the legitimacy of status hierarchies in groups and status relations among groups, as well as the conditions under which these legitimate orders become inefficient and perpetuate inequality within groups, organizations, and society. They also examine the consequences of the legitimacy of authorities for interaction in organizations.

### Emergence of Legitimation

Legitimacy theories argue that low- and high-status members in a group expect that those with highly valued states of social characteristics (e.g., men in regard to the social characteristic gender, and Whites in terms of race) will occupy highly valued positions within the group because this is what they perceive to be typical around them (e.g., in groups within occupational, political, and religious structures). Consequently, when these individuals become high-status members within a group, low- and high-status members tend to react to this as if it should have happened this way because they, in fact, expected this to happen. Thus, low-status members express deferential behaviors such as esteem, respect, and honor

(communicated verbally or nonverbally) toward high-status members. This interaction creates a process where everyone believes that everyone else supports the person who is more worthy and who gets more influence (this process is called *endorsement* of the group status hierarchy). If no one challenges this deference, members will continue to act as if this should happen, and the hierarchy will become implicitly legitimate.

Sometimes, members who do not possess the more highly valued states of social characteristics still become high-status members because they possess specific skills that are relevant to the group's task (e.g., a Black member who is a legal expert working on a legal task). These people are at a disadvantage, however, in trying to gain legitimacy in their positions, because it is not typical or usual for people like them to occupy high-status positions. As a result, although they are influential, they face more obstacles in becoming legitimated in their positions. Members' endorsement (i.e., support) for these people's leadership is weaker, as are expectations for compliance with their directives.

Researchers also examine how individuals in authority positions acquire legitimacy. Previous studies have shown that individuals in authority positions are more likely to be legitimated when their appointments are based on qualifications and past achievements and are designated by someone at the top of the authority structure. Authorities also acquire legitimacy based on the ways they interact with subordinates—two specific ways are the use of fair procedures when making decisions and the benevolent use of power. Authorities use fair procedures when they make decisions that are seen as unbiased, respectful, and consistent across individuals and that take into consideration the subordinates' views.

An authority's use of fair procedures and treatment ensures that subordinates feel respected within their group, which in turn increases subordinates' feelings of self-worth. Many social psychologists assume that individuals are motivated by and desire positive social identities from their standing in a group and the value of their group. The use of fair procedures signals to the subordinates that they are respected within their group. Therefore, when an authority uses fair procedures to make decisions and treats subordinates fairly, the legitimacy of that authority is enhanced. For

example, when a floor supervisor acts respectfully toward assembly-line workers and treats them all consistently, those workers are more likely to see that supervisor as legitimate.

An authority also gains legitimacy by providing resources to subordinates that benefit their welfare. Authorities typically have more resources than subordinates, and therefore have opportunities to contribute to subordinates' welfare by distributing rewards that assist their subordinates in being successful in their jobs. For example, authorities often have access to valuable knowledge, skills, training, and strategic information that is useful to subordinates. They may also offer guidance, assistance, and advice to enhance and facilitate subordinates' work, and may be able to benefit subordinates in other ways, such as by allowing extra time for lunch, giving credit to subordinates for successful outcomes, providing bonuses, and upgrading offices.

When authorities provide rewards that contribute to the *collective* interest of subordinates, this creates obligations between the authority and the subordinates. Repeated successful exchanges (exchanges of rewards and cooperation) between authorities and their subordinates are likely to stimulate perceptions of trust and fairness and feelings of social obligation, leading to perceptions of the legitimacy of authorities. Taken together, using fair procedures in decision making and distributing valued rewards fairly among subordinates contribute to a collective sense of the legitimacy of an authority. That is, subordinates perceive that other subordinates support the authority (i.e., give the authority their endorsement) and this, in turn, perpetuates the authority's legitimacy.

Scholars recognize that women and minorities, in many contexts, are at a disadvantage in acquiring legitimacy compared to their White male counterparts. Women and minorities are more likely to receive fewer resources, support, and positive evaluations from their superiors, which is referred to as *lack of authorization*. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to benefit their subordinates and to create the joint obligations needed to gain legitimacy.

### Consequences of Legitimation

Researchers show how the legitimacy of groups' status hierarchies can lead to the maintenance and

persistence of inequality. Group members who possess more highly valued states of social characteristics are likely to be more assertive and influential in decision making than members who are status disadvantaged. Yet, this consequence often leads to inefficient decision making because the members who are in fact most competent are not always those who are most influential. Also, group members who actually may not be as competent at the group's task may still receive deferential behavior from other group members that, in effect, maintains the status quo. These patterns of deference are backed by the threat of informal sanctions from group members, creating a context where valuable opinions by status-disadvantaged members are ignored and poor decisions are made.

In addition, studies show that women and minorities who become high-status members in groups because they possess specific skills needed by the group are more likely to face resistance from others when they become "too directive." This resistance faced by members with status disadvantages is a reflection of a problem of the legitimation of the group's status structure. As a consequence of their lack of legitimacy, women and minorities are more limited in the range of their behaviors accepted by the other group members.

In regard to authorities, legitimacy is undoubtedly a key factor in predicting their success with their subordinates. Subordinates who perceive their boss as legitimate are more likely to comply and defer to his or her requests. Also, legitimated authorities are perceived as more effective and influential by their subordinates than authorities without legitimacy. They also have more leeway in the directives (e.g., work assignments, evaluations, and/or demands of performance) subordinates accept from them, even though these directives must fall within the scope of their authority. Legitimacy, then, obligates the subordinates to obey the authority's commands, and this *social* obligation is enforced through informal sanctions by the subordinates and through formal sanctions by those from above.

When authorities are not legitimated, subordinates are more likely to go over their heads or form coalitions with each other to resolve conflicts than when authorities are legitimated. Notably, research shows that the benefits of legitimacy are

greater for women and minorities in authority positions, in that they are less likely to receive cooperation and deference unless they are legitimated in their positions. Yet, ironically, they have the most difficulty in acquiring legitimacy.

In addition to reporting the findings of their studies on the emergence and consequences of legitimation, scholars also note that not all legitimated aspects of social life remain so. New practices, procedures, and ways of doing things emerge as the legitimacy of old ones is challenged. For example, status hierarchies in groups may become delegitimated when an authority external to the group negatively evaluates the leader's work and, in effect, questions the leader's right to his or her high status position. Research also suggests that when members of status-disadvantaged groups within society believe that their group's position is illegitimate and unstable, and that a different social order is possible, they are likely to engage in intergroup competition that directly challenges the legitimacy of current intergroup status relations.

The arguments above show that legitimation of certain aspects of social life can lead to negative consequences. The acceptance of widespread consensual beliefs in the larger society, such as status beliefs associated with social characteristics and cultural beliefs about intergroup status differences within a society, fosters nonoptimal decisions and practices and also fuels the reproduction of inequality in and between groups. Thus scholars in intergroup relations examine how dominant groups with high status and power in a society continue to impose the dominant value system that benefits these groups and, in turn, uphold the legitimacy of the status quo (i.e., the existing status differences between groups). However, legitimation of other social aspects can lead to positive consequences. The legitimacy of authority relations in organizations, for example, can foster stability and cooperation in interaction among organizational members. Whether legitimacy is bad or good in a particular context, however, it is a fundamental process that is basic to social organization.

*Cathryn Johnson*

*See also* Power; Procedural Justice; Social Identity Theory; Status; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory

*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theories of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Power; Procedural Justice; Relational Model of Authority in Groups; Romance of Leadership; Social Identity Theory; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## LENIENCY CONTRACT

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The *leniency contract* is an influential model of minority influence. It is designed to identify factors that affect the likelihood that a minority group will be able to persuade the majority to adopt its point of view. The essence of the contract is that majority members agree to hear a minority view they might otherwise dismiss out of hand—thus, the term *leniency*—on the implicit condition that the viewpoint is provided by a

member of the ingroup, and with the proviso that the majority will not be expected to change. In some cases, despite this understanding, the minority does influence the majority. This entry describes the theoretical background that gives rise to the leniency contract, and then considers elements of the contract in detail and summarizes some research that bears on its validity.

### Theoretical Context

Typically, the majority can bring considerable pressure on errant members to act in ways that most other group members consider appropriate. The majority can sanction members' beliefs and actions in many ways, including physical punishment and social ostracism, so it is natural that we think of the effects of the majority on the minority when we think of ways groups influence people.

Even so, the influence of the minority on the majority bears consideration. Think of the early Christian church: In the beginning, it had little power. Its members were ignored or ostracized and sometimes put to death for their beliefs. By the 3rd century, however, Emperor Constantine had become a Christian, and the Christian church was the unofficial religion of Imperial Rome.

How did this change occur? Social psychologists have been actively studying how minorities exert influence, trying to understand how groups with no power to enforce their views can prevail. According to many thoughtful researchers, this issue is important because minority groups are responsible for most creative and innovative social changes.

To understand the power of minorities, we must acknowledge the importance of our group memberships, which we value because they help us define ourselves and present ourselves to others. I am a teacher, a runner, a Democrat; she is a nurse, a black belt, a Steelers fan—our group identities help us create a picture of ourselves and present ourselves to the outside world.

In early minority influence research, individuals' membership in the majority or minority was recognized, but the significance of these groups as a source of self-identity was underappreciated. Today, the importance of group membership in explaining minority influence is better understood.

### Elements of the Leniency Contract

The leniency contract was created to identify the conditions under which the minority's message will have an immediate influence on majority group members' focal attitudes (the beliefs that are the target of persuasion), a delayed influence on focal attitudes, an indirect influence (i.e., an influence on attitudes related but not identical to the focus of the minority's message), or no influence at all. All these outcomes are found in minority influence research. Prior to the leniency contract, no theory could account for all of them.

The contract leans on social identity theory and the elaboration likelihood model to generate predictions. It uses information concerning the ingroup or outgroup status of the minority and the strength of its persuasive message. Minority status can be based on number, demographic features (race, sex, ethnicity), or the relative deviance of a position. In most research on minority-based persuasion, the factors of number and opinion deviance are combined, in that a small numerical minority advocates a deviant opinion. The leniency contract was devised to pinpoint the psychological processes that occur when a minority source voices a position at odds with established majority views.

The contract holds that the majority's first response to a persuasive message coming from a minority source is to determine the source's ingroup or outgroup status. If the source is an outgroup, their standing must be established: Is the outgroup favored or despised? If the group is despised, its message will be dismissed outright, unless it represents a severe threat to the ingroup. In that case, the majority might bolster its position to overcome the threat presented by the outgroup. If the outgroup is favored, its message may be influential if the topic is one in which the majority believe the minority source possesses great expertise. This influence is not the result of much thought, so minority influence in this circumstance will be temporary and easily undone.

A different set of decision processes occurs when the minority source is part of the ingroup (that is, part of the majority group, but voicing a position that is at variance with the position of most of the other group members). First, the minority's message is considered carefully or elaborated. Elaboration involves determining if the

message threatens the group's continued existence. If so, then to preserve the group, the majority will attempt to bring the deviant ingroup minority back into the fold. If this attempt proves unsuccessful, the ingroup minority is recast as an outgroup.

If the ingroup minority's message is not deemed threatening to the group's existence, a second elaboration phase begins. In this situation, the quality of the minority's message determines the outcome. Weak or uninvolved messages will have transitory effects, if any, on indirect attitudes (beliefs that are associated with the topic of the persuasive message but not identical to it).

Consider, for example, a persuasive message on the right to choose abortion that is contrary to the general beliefs of the majority. The message might not change anyone's mind about abortion, but it might affect views regarding contraception. Messages from minority sources will not affect focal attitudes because majority members are hesitant to be associated with the minority's position, which may attract considerable flak. However, indirect attitude change may ensue—but it will not persist if the persuasive message is not strong and compelling.

If the ingroup's message is strong, however, a number of interesting effects will occur. The message will be viewed positively; it also might result in a more positive evaluation of the minority and very likely will cause immediate indirect attitude change. Immediate focal change will not occur. So, for example, a message in favor of a woman's right to choose abortion that is delivered by an ingroup minority to the anti-abortion majority may result in a more positive majority view of contraception, even though the minority's prochoice message never mentioned contraception. This indirect attitude-change effect, which only occurs in response to an ingroup minority's message, is one of the most remarkable features of minority influence research.

### Related Research

Research consistent with these predictions was presented in 1997 by Eusebio Alvaro and William Crano, who prepared a strong counterattitudinal message, attributed to an ingroup minority, which advocated disallowing gays in the military. This position was contrary to the group's established

attitude. The message had no effect on the group's attitudes toward gays in the military, but that it had a powerful effect on their attitudes toward gun control. Earlier research had established that these two attitudes were strongly related, although participants were only dimly aware of this.

When the same message was attributed to an outgroup minority or presented as the majority's position, no attitude change was evident in those receiving the message. The leniency contract holds that indirect change in group members' response to a minority ingroup's counterattitudinal message occurs because of the implicit rules of conduct that guide behavior in groups. To placate the rebellious ingroup minority while maintaining group integrity, which is vital if the group is a source of social identity, the majority will consider the ingroup minority position leniently, with no disapproval of the messenger.

Ordinarily, such open-minded responses facilitate attitude change, but the leniency contract holds that this tolerant orientation is adopted because of the *quid pro quo* that is part of all contracts, namely, that in payment for a lenient reception of deviant (i.e., minority) views, no change will ensue. It is as if the majority were to say, "We will allow you to speak your piece, courteously and with little critique. In turn, we will not change." This contractual system placates the minority while simultaneously maintaining the stability of the majority group's belief structure. The contract need not be explicit or even conscious. It is a convention that fosters group preservation while allowing considerable ingroup attitudinal variation on noncritical issues.

This is not to suggest that the minority is an impotent change agent. When the majority open-mindedly considers a counterattitudinal message without condemning the source, it creates considerable pressure to change. Although focal change is precluded by the leniency contract, the reality of the pressure cannot be denied. The leniency model holds that this pressure to change spreads to other, closely related attitudes, and this is why ingroup minorities produce immediate changes on related attitudes.

Such changes can have substantial, if delayed, effects on focal attitudes. Strong minority-induced indirect attitude change will bring about delayed focal attitude change because attitudes are linked in

a cognitive network. Thus, a large change in one attitude will affect related attitudes. This delayed focal change pattern is common in the minority influence literature. The leniency contract supplies a plausible explanation of this pattern, while also explaining immediate direct change, or no change at all.

William D. Crano

*See also* Anticonformity; Categorization; Idiosyncrasy Credit; Informational Influence; Innovation; Minority Influence; Opinion Deviance; Social Identity Theory

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## LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

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Although groups necessarily contain individuals and have some relation to the larger institutional, cultural, and societal forces around them, group processes occur at the group level of analysis rather than at the individual or societal level. Likewise, intergroup processes are those that occur between groups, rather than between individuals or within a group, institution, culture, or society. And yet it seems clear that both group and intergroup processes may be affected by factors at other levels of analysis. For example, the way in which a work group operates may be affected by the characteristics of the individuals who make up the group (e.g., their cooperative or

competitive nature), as well as by the characteristics of the institution within which the group exists (e.g., its pay and promotion structure). Thus, a full understanding of group and intergroup processes requires attention to multiple *levels of analysis*. This entry describes those levels and their interrelationships.

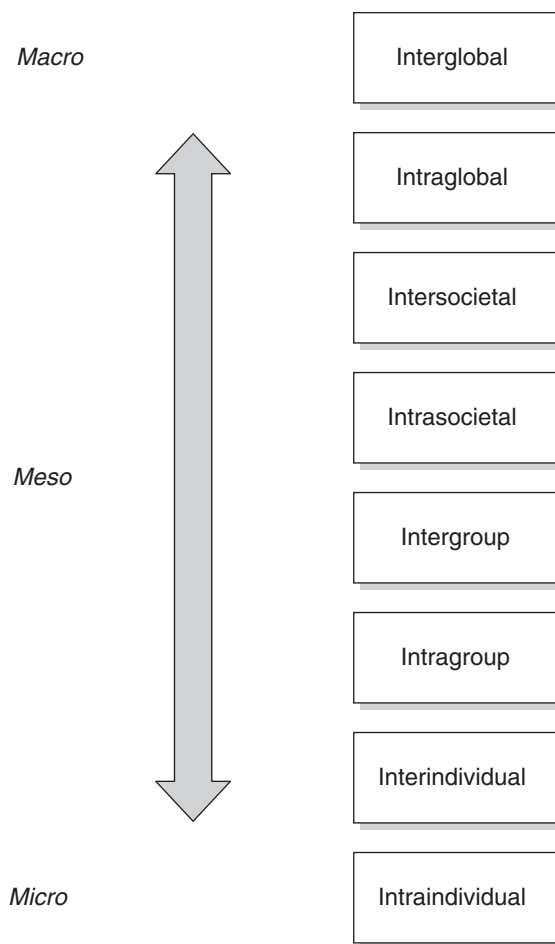
### Multiple Levels of Analysis

The eight levels of analysis relevant to group and intergroup processes vary from macro to micro (see Figure 1). In between the macro and micro levels lies the intermediate, meso level of analysis. In his 1996 book, *How to Think Like a Social Scientist*, Thomas F. Pettigrew argued that the meso level operates as a link between the macro and micro levels of analysis. This may be why social psychologists are often most interested in examining group and intergroup processes at the meso level. Some historians of the field, such as Rob Farr, have suggested that social psychology is a marriage of the sociological and psychological perspectives. This suggests that social psychologists give special attention to the meso level because it may be the level where sociological and psychological phenomena meet.

Although it is typically referred to only in science fiction, the most macro level of analysis possible for the study of group and intergroup processes is the *interglobal* level. When researchers examine people's attitudes toward space exploration and the existence of extraterrestrial life, they are examining the potential intergroup relation between beings on our globe and those on another. In practice, the most macro level of analysis studied is the *intraglobal* level. Research on people's concern for the effects of the warming of the earth's atmosphere is an environmental concern at the intraglobal level of analysis. At this level of analysis, global warming's differential impact on societies, as well as on plants, humans, and other animals, is put aside to emphasize the ways in which global warming affects everyone and everything everywhere on this planet.

Psychological approaches to group and intergroup processes often emphasize the intraglobal level of analysis. Because a good deal of psychology presumes that people operate in much the same way, regardless of how they vary at less macro levels





**Figure 1** Levels of Analysis

Source: Author.

of analysis, psychology is able to propose universal theories that aim to explain people at the most macro, global level. This perspective is often referred to as the *psychic unity of humankind*.

The *intersocietal* level of analysis operates at one step less macro than the intraglobal level. At the intersocietal level, attention is given to the similarities and differences between societies in norms; values; practices; and social, political, and economic structures. Recent political rhetoric about a purported clash of civilizations between “the West” and “Islam” claims that countries around the world can be characterized as either Western or Islamic. These two broad types of societies are presumed to be very different from each other. The clash of civilizations rhetoric also suggests that the two societies are locked in mortal combat, with each society seeking to impose its agenda on the other.

This level of analysis is most common in historical, political, and economic studies, where there is concern for empires, continents, and geographical regions. For example, historical studies of the Roman Empire’s relations to competing empires, such as those of Carthage, Macedon, and Egypt, focus on the intersocietal level of analysis. Although social psychologists may wish to use their research to comment on group and intergroup processes at the intersocietal level, psychologists rarely study the relations between large-scale societal-level groupings. However, there are exceptions. During the cold war, a number of peace and political psychologists examined people’s attitudes toward a potential nuclear war between “the West” and the “Russian bloc.”

A clash of civilizations may also be examined at an *intrasocietal* level of analysis. The notion that two civilizations are in conflict necessarily presumes that each civilization is a coherent entity within which individuals and (ethnic, religious, and economic) groups are unified enough to see themselves as part of two opposing societies in the world. Thus, at the intrasocietal level, one may examine the degree to which individuals and groups view themselves and their interests as connected to that of other Westerners or Muslims. For example, research at the intrasocietal level might assess to what degree people from around the world viewed the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center in New York as an attack on “the West.” Or, it might examine the degree to which the notion of a clash of Western and Islamic societies leads Sunni, Shiite, and other Muslims to view themselves as a coherent category of like-minded people whose interests are aligned against those of “the West.”

The intrasocietal level of analysis is most common in sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science, although it is also the focus of some social psychological research. For example, studies of the degree to which people from different countries in Europe identify themselves as European (rather than, for example, British, French, or Spanish) and participate in European politics examine the intrasocietal level of analysis.

The *intergroup* level of analysis is often pursued by social psychologists, who have a long-standing concern about how ethnic, gender, religious, and other groups within societies relate to each other.

Many sociologists and political scientists, and some anthropologists and economists, also study intergroup relations within complex societies made up of many groups. Unlike other social scientists, however, social psychologists tend to focus on the intergroup level to the near exclusion of the intrasocietal level within which intergroup relations typically operate. Thus, social psychologists that examine phenomena at the intergroup level pay special attention to the relation that a specific ingroup has to one specific outgroup. How the members of this ingroup compare themselves to, compete against, or act toward members of the outgroup are of particular interest.

*Intragroup* processes were studied widely by social psychologists in the first half of the 20th century. Topics such as conformity, compliance, and group polarization all focus on the ways in which interactions within groups affect individuals differently from interactions within society or between individuals. Based in the group dynamics tradition of research, championed by influential figure Kurt Lewin, social psychological work at the intragroup level of analysis examined individuals' interactions within small, co-acting groups. Based in a different tradition, called symbolic interactionism, microsociology also focused on the group-level processes present in small co-acting collections of individuals, such as families, clubs, and work groups. This differentiates microsociology from most of the rest of sociology, which tends to focus on more macro levels, such as the intergroup or intrasocietal level.

Although they operate at more micro levels than group or intergroup processes, the *interindividual* and *intraindividual* levels of analysis are relevant to such processes. For example, interindividual differences in the motive to gain power, achieve, or affiliate with others help determine to what degree individuals work toward group goals that facilitate or impede their individual motives. Thus, a good deal of social psychological work on group and intergroup processes takes the interindividual level of analysis into account. Not surprisingly, however, most research combines examination of the interindividual level with a focus on the more macro levels of analysis at which group and intergroup processes occur.

In a similar way, research may also take account of similarities and differences in the way that

individuals think, feel, and act over time or across situations. This represents the intraindividual level of analysis. For example, research on the commitment of individual workers to a political campaign might examine how consistently these workers come to work and perform their duties over the course of a month during the campaign.

## Relations Among Levels

### *Nested*

It may be apparent from the above that each level is contained (or nested) within the more macro levels above it. For example, phenomena at the intergroup level necessarily occur within the societies within which multiple groups exist. And, differences between individuals necessarily occur within the groups to which these individuals belong. Indeed, part of the way in which individuals know that they differ from others is by comparing themselves to other members of their reference group.

Early social psychological work on group dynamics was concerned with the way in which individuals being nested within small- and large-scale groups affected them. Today, advanced statistical techniques, such as multilevel modeling, enable researchers to carefully examine nested levels of analysis. For example, many studies of students' self-concepts now examine students not only as individuals but also as nested within classrooms, which are nested within schools, which are nested within neighborhoods, which are nested within countries, which are nested within one globe.

### *Independent*

Although the levels of analysis are nested within one another, what occurs at one level is not necessarily associated with what occurs at another level. Thus, phenomena at each level of analysis can operate independently of phenomena at other levels. This is part of the reason that it is important to be clear about which level of analysis is being examined in a given piece of research. For example, studies of the association between economic prosperity and satisfaction with life show somewhat different patterns at the interindividual level of analysis than at the intersocietal level. Although being richer than other individuals within your

country does not seem to bring much life satisfaction, people in rich countries tend to be much more satisfied than those in poor countries. Without an understanding that the former finding is specific to the interindividual level of analysis, whereas the latter finding is specific to the intersocietal level, one might be perplexed by the apparent inconsistency of these results.

### *Interactive*

That group and intergroup processes may operate independently at different levels of analysis also raises the possibility that there is an interaction between different levels of analysis. Contemporary multilevel modeling statistics enable researchers to examine such interactions, although these complex analyses remain relatively rare. It is clear, however, that a full understanding of group and intergroup processes requires examination of the multiple levels of analysis relevant to the process of interest. If this examination can analyze the ways in which individual-level phenomena interact with group- and societal-level phenomena to determine the process of interest, then the examination will begin to approach the complexity of life as it is lived. As we are all, at one and the same time, individuals, members of many groups, and members of at least one society, research methods that account for this multilevel reality will be best positioned to analyze it.

*Colin Wayne Leach*

*See also* Group Performance; Group Structure; Organizations; Research Methods and Issues

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## **LEWIN, KURT** **(1890–1947)**

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Kurt Lewin is remembered as a “practical theorist” and considered the intellectual father of the modern discipline of social psychology. Born in 1890 in a German village that is now part of Poland, Lewin was educated in Germany and served as an infantry soldier during World War I. His experience growing up as a Jew in an authoritarian society rampant with anti-Semitism shaped his view of human behavior and his focus on group processes. Trained in philosophy and experimental psychology, and influenced by the German Gestalt theorists, Lewin did his pioneering work in the development of *field theory*, a framework for understanding human behavior that focuses on how an individual conceptualizes and responds to physical and social environments. Field theory provides a paradigm for understanding and conducting studies of group processes and intergroup relations.

Lewin is known as the practical theorist because he linked the study of applied problems to theory. He saw theory as essential for understanding practical social problems, and he viewed the conduct of empirical studies of applied problems as essential for the development of theory. He was vitally concerned with the central social and political issues of his era, in particular the role of democracy in promoting effective interpersonal relations and group dynamics. His maxim was that “there is nothing so practical as a good theory,” and he was as concerned with the problems faced by world as he was with developing theory to explain human behavior.

### **Lewin’s Paradigm Shift in Social Psychology**

Lewin epitomizes Thomas Kuhn’s description of a scientific revolutionary. He was acutely aware of the gaps in our understanding of human behavior and our ability to predict and change relations

among people. In 1914, shortly after he completed his PhD, World War I began. As his biographer and daughter, Miriam Lewin, has written, he had a “strong revulsion” to militarism, but joined the military and served in an artillery unit. He was seriously wounded and spent nearly a year recovering in a hospital. Although we do not know precisely how his time on the front lines of this conflict between groups affected his outlook, it is not surprising that his subsequent theorizing and empirical studies focused on intergroup relations. His experience was exacerbated by the discrimination he experienced as a Jew, which in 1934 led him to flee Nazi Germany and immigrate to the United States.

No doubt, other psychologists and social theorists were similarly affected by the tumultuous events of the first part of the 20th century. What made Lewin unique and led to his enormous influence on modern thinking about group behavior is that he developed a broad theoretical framework that was linked to experimental methods. In Kuhnian terms, he created a paradigm that enabled us to think differently about human behavior and gave us the tools to study the complexity of social interaction. He was committed to developing psychology as a science but also mindful of the ways in which a science of the mind had to differ from physical science. His lasting contribution was reframing how we think about groups and the relationship of individuals to groups.

### Lewin's Field Theory

The fundamental postulate of Lewin's field theory was that human behavior should be understood as a function of the interaction between an individual and his or her psychological understanding of the physical and social environment. He used mathematical symbols to explicate his theory, and summarized the essence of field theory in this formula:  $B = f(P, E)$ . Behavior ( $B$ ) was broadly construed (including action, thinking, and valuing) and person ( $P$ ) and environment ( $E$ ) were dynamically related. Together, the person and the environment form the *life space*. Understanding the structure and influences on the life space became the focus of Lewin's work.

The mathematical language used by Lewin (which was drawn from topological geometry) has not survived, but his perspective on how behavior

is influenced by a person's perception of the environment continues to be a central influence on social psychology and, in particular, on the study of group processes. In its time, his approach was revolutionary and led to a host of discoveries about how human behavior is influenced by culture, education, and small group dynamics. Today, Lewin's approach is well represented in modern cognitive social psychology and in a variety of applications of psychology to group and societal problems.

Lewin's theorizing also spawned new ways of viewing collective behavior. In some ways it was more sociological than psychological, as it led to ascribing to groups the same kind of life space analysis that was used to analyze individual behavior. Thus, a group or institution could be seen not simply as the sum of the individuals or other units who make up the group, but as an entity that could be quite different. Groups could, for example, have their own norms, and the dynamic processes of the group were not necessarily predictable from understanding the life space of individuals.

### Lewin the Empiricist

Integral to his theorizing about person–environment relationships was his commitment and approach to empirical research and, in particular, to experimentation. He pioneered the integration of laboratory and field research. Lewin created a science of studying group behavior that has persisted for more than half a century. He was a master of taking the most complex social phenomena and creating paradigms to study them in simple ways. Two of his research efforts, both conducted after he came to the United States, illustrate his theoretical–methodological approach to the study of group processes and dynamics.

In the late 1930s, Lewin and his students conducted a series of studies to investigate the impact of different ways of organizing groups. Initially, his focus was to understand the impact of democratic versus authoritarian group leadership, operationalized in terms of whether the leader engaged the group in decision making or directed them without explanation; later, he studied what he called *laissez-faire* leadership, in which a group was allowed to function without direction from a leader. He studied the problem by conducting a series of experiments in which different leadership styles were tried

with groups of young boys. He demonstrated that distinctive “group atmospheres” could be created with each leadership style. The democratic style was the most effective, and the authoritarian style yielded the most aggression among the boys.

In a later program of research, conducted during World War II, he studied ways to change food preferences to mitigate the impact of rationing and food shortages. It began as a study of food habits and “channels” of influence in decision making, and evolved into a series of studies of group decision making. Parallel to his studies of democratic and authoritarian leadership, his food habit studies experimentally compared lecturing and group discussion methods as approaches to changing behavior. Groups of women were exposed to different presentations and discussions of food preferences. He demonstrated that the way in which the group was engaged predicted behavior change. Active involvement in group discussion led to significantly more change in participants than did passive listening to a lecture.

### Lewin’s Action Research

One of Lewin’s lasting contributions was his development of *action research*. It was based on his view that social problems should be central to the concerns of psychologists and that, to understand a phenomenon, one had to try to change it. Through action research, he promoted the systematic study of social problems and their solution. He saw it as a spiral process of data collection, theorizing, and assessment. Action research was, for Lewin, rooted in principles of group dynamics. He proposed that change occurred by phases: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. His goals, democratized by engaging researchers and practitioners, were to create knowledge, intervention principles, and support for those who carry out organizational and institutional change. One outcome of this work was the creation of the National Training Laboratory for Group Development (now known as the NTL Institute), dedicated to improving organizational effectiveness and the development of sensitivity training.

### The Legacy of Kurt Lewin

Lewin, through both his theoretical work and his approach to empirical studies of behavior, left a

rich legacy. He changed our conception of individual behavior and identified how, while experiences may shape a person, the key to understanding behavior is to understand a person’s life space—how individuals perceive the world, and how changes in the environment affect their perceptions and behavior. The range of Lewin’s work is extraordinary, in terms of both the issues he investigated and his efforts to integrate theory and method. When Kurt Lewin died in 1947, at the age of 57, he headed the MIT Center for Group Dynamics; after his death, the center moved to the University of Michigan. His students and research colleagues went on to become central figures in psychology and applied social science. His legacy is evident today, as it is difficult to view any topic in group processes and dynamics without seeing the influence of Lewinian thinking.

*Leonard Saxe*

*See also* Action Research; Anti-Semitism; Culture; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Minority Groups in Society; Organizations; Research Methods and Issues; Sensitivity Training Groups

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## LINGUISTIC CATEGORY MODEL (LCM)

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The *linguistic category model* (LCM), which classifies predicates on a scale from abstract to concrete, is a tool for systematic analysis of language. It has been used extensively to analyze not only

communication in experimental settings but also newspaper editorials and transcripts of current and historical court cases. The availability of the LCM opens novel ways of analyzing written and spoken language in communication by clarifying the processes driving linguistic choices in formulating messages and the impact of these messages on recipients. This entry begins by explaining the language processes underlying the model, and then discusses how the model works and some research applications.

### Using Language to Describe People

What types of words are available to describe others, their interactions, and their makeup? What types of words do people use when they are describing something that happens to a member of their ingroup or of an outgroup? Is there a systematic difference in how people communicate an event that happens to their ingroups or outgroups? Do such differences in the language they use provide any insights into their motives and their thought processes?

To answer such questions, we have to know something about the general properties of the language we use to describe ourselves, others, interactions between people, and people's makeup and to use this knowledge to examine how people represent social events when they communicate about them.

There are three different types of words or lexical categories that serve these purposes, namely, verbs, adjectives, and nouns. With verbs, we can describe not only the interactions between two or more people but also the types of feelings or states people have regarding others. Thus, we can describe an event, such as somebody's fist traveling rapidly in space only to connect hard with another person's chin, with "Jack punched Homer," or "Jack hurt Homer" describing the action. It is also possible to describe the very same event with the feelings or emotions that drove the action, as in "Jack hates Homer." Alternatively, we can represent the same event with "Jack is aggressive" or "Jack is a bully," respectively with an adjective or a noun. These lexical categories exhaust the possible range of word options that we have to represent interpersonal events, that is, terms by which we can capture what happened, what the psychological states

were in such events, and the features of those involved in a social event.

While we have only three groups of lexical possibilities (verbs, adjectives, and nouns), the range of events that we can cover with the multitude of distinct words that we can find in each category is virtually limitless. When we are talking about social events, we can access a lexicon, which contains virtually thousands of verbs, adjectives, and nouns. This vast range permits us to capture the nuances of each event with considerable flexibility. Are there some general features of this linguistic domain that allow us to systematically examine such language use? The linguistic category model provides such a handle.

### How the Model Works

In the LCM, verbs are classified into two broad groups, namely, verbs of state and verbs of action. *State verbs* (SV) are verbs that refer to invisible states, such as *respect*, *hate*, *dislike*, and *love*, identifying specific affective or mental states that a person feels or experiences toward another (e.g., "Jack hates Homer"). *Action verbs* (AV) are verbs describing activities with a clear beginning and end.

These verbs have been subdivided into three separate categories with distinct characteristics. Verbs in the first category, *descriptive action verbs* (DAV), have the unusual quality of mapping the action directly and retaining an unambiguous perceptual feature of the action. Examples would be *lick*, *kick*, and *pick*, involving, respectively, references to very specific actions involving the mouth, foot, and hand. Generally, these terms have no evaluative meaning but can acquire such meaning in specific contexts (e.g., "Jack *pushed* Homer under an oncoming bus" or "Jack *pushed* Homer away from an oncoming bus which Homer had not seen").

The second action verb category is *interpretive action verbs* (IAV). These also refer to actions with a clear beginning and end; however, these verbs subsume a large range of different actions. For instance, *cheat* is a verb that can refer to a wide range of different behaviors, as can the verb *help*. The direct perceptual correspondence between verb and action is lost in this category.

The third category, *state action verbs* (SAV), contains verbs that refer to the affective consequences

of actions (e.g., *amaze*, *thrill*, *stun*, and *surprise*) but conceal the nature of the action that led to the emotion. Nevertheless, these verbs describe emotional consequences (e.g., “Homer *bored* me to death”) in ways that allow the reasons to be easily specified (e.g., “with his lecture”). There is a difference in this respect between SAV and SV, since with SV it is perfectly possible to say, “I like him very much, but I really cannot explain why.”

The final category describes attributes of people. This category includes *adjectives* (ADJ), which describe qualifiers of people such as *friendly*, *aggressive*, and *helpful*, as well as *nouns* (NOUN) such as *thief*, *father*, and *athlete*.

### Features and Applications

One distinctive way in which these categories vary systematically is along the abstractness–concreteness dimension, with DAV being the most concrete category, IAV next, followed by SAV, SV, and finally, ADJ and NOUN as the most abstract categories. Abstractness–concreteness has been operationalized in terms of different inferential features in which these terms vary. These features are measured by asking people to respond to a set of questions about simple subject-verb-object sentences in which verb types and adjectives are varied.

These questions are (1) How enduring is the characteristic describing the sentence subject? (2) How easy/difficult is it to confirm and disconfirm statements constructed with these verbs or adjectives? (3) What is the temporal duration of the interpersonal event depicted by these terms? (4) How informative is the sentence about situational pressures or circumstances? and (5) What is the likelihood of the event reoccurring at a future point in time? These variables have been shown to form an abstractness–concreteness dimension on which the categories of the LCM are ordered systematically.

Thus, DAV is the most concrete category and, when used in sentence form (e.g., “Bill *punched* David”), does not describe an enduring characteristic of a person. Rather, the event these verbs describe is easy to confirm and of short duration, is highly informative about the situation, and is less likely to occur at a future point in time. If the same event is represented by an adjective (e.g.,

“Bill is *aggressive*”), the most abstract term, then the responses on all these variables are at the other end of the scale compared to DAV, with IAV, SAV, and SV falling in between. Finally, it should be noted that abstractness–concreteness is a generic dimension on which the linguistic categories can be represented—that is, it constitutes a property that runs across all words in the interpersonal domain.

One of the chief uses of the LCM is in examinations of strategic category use in communication. A prominent example is the *linguistic intergroup bias* (LIB). The question this research addresses is why and how people shape specific linguistic features of their communicative acts in the context of communicating stereotypes. How do people use different linguistic categories strategically and in particular how do they do so in the context of stereotyping? The LIB involves a tendency for individuals to describe positive ingroup and negative outgroup behaviors in relatively abstract terms. The choice of abstract words (e.g., ADJ) implies that the behavior is attributable to internal factors, that is, to the actor’s stable characteristics.

Conversely, negative ingroup and positive outgroup behaviors are found to be typically described in relatively concrete terms. Concrete terms imply situational specificity, and hence an external attribution of the behavior. In this context, the systematic investigation of strategic language use reveals two things. First, these differences in abstractness and concreteness reveal possible psychological processes driving biased language use. One possible mechanism underlying the LIB is motivational, based on the desire to see the ingroup as more positive than the outgroup. Thus, abstract descriptions of positive ingroup behaviors and of negative outgroup behaviors portray the ingroup in favorable terms and the outgroup in unfavorable terms, implying that these behaviors are due to enduring characteristics. In contrast, concrete descriptions of negative ingroup behaviors minimize their significance as evidence for corresponding group characteristics, as do concrete depictions of positive outgroup behaviors. In other words, those linguistic (and conceptual) tendencies serve to protect the perception that the ingroup is superior to the outgroup. Second, the analysis of strategic language use informs us also about how stereotypes are transmitted in communication and recent

research shows that systematic differences in language use shape the inferences of receivers to such messages.

The LCM has been shown not to be restricted to Indo-Germanic languages, but to be applicable across diverse linguistic communities, including Japanese, Chinese, and Turkish.

Gün R. Semin

See also Ethnocentrism; Language and Intergroup Relations; Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB); Prejudice; Stereotyping

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- See [www.cratylus.org](http://www.cratylus.org) (resources) for a detailed coding manual of the LCM.

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## LINGUISTIC INTERGROUP BIAS (LIB)

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*Linguistic intergroup bias* (LIB) is the tendency of speakers to describe the actions of individuals at different abstraction levels depending on the actor's group membership and the valence of the action. For example, imagine that you are watching your favorite basketball team and one of the players makes a slam dunk. A few minutes later, a member of the opposing team also dunks the ball. Would you describe these two actions in exactly the same way? What if the player's action was negative, such as committing a foul? Researchers have

discovered that in addition to directly expressing our thoughts and feelings about other individuals (e.g., by labeling them as heroes or villains), we can use more subtle ways to convey our opinions, such as varying the verb tense we use in describing their behavior, choosing active versus passive voice, or shifting the abstraction level.

LIB is an example of the latter strategy. Positive ingroup behavior is described more abstractly (e.g., "I always told you that he is fantastic!") than positive outgroup behavior (e.g., "Look, he managed to shoot a basket!"). In contrast, negative ingroup behavior is described more concretely (e.g., "Oh no, he pushed him accidentally!") than negative outgroup behavior (e.g., "What a dirty player he is!"). Whereas a concrete description implies a single event with little or no consequence for future situations, abstract language suggests stable behavior that is likely to be repeated in the future. In this subtle way, the LIB leads to ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination.

This entry describes the theoretical context of LIB and examines its measurement, underlying mechanisms, and applications.

### The Linguistic Category Model

The assumptions of the LIB are based on Semin and Fiedler's *linguistic category model* (LCM), which postulates an abstraction continuum with four different levels. For example, you can describe the same situation in the following ways: (1) the basketball player *hits* his opponent during the game, (2) the basketball player *hurts* his opponent during the game, (3) the basketball player *hates* his opponent, and (4) the basketball player is *aggressive*.

All four statements are accurate descriptions of the observed situation, yet they differ in abstraction. At the concrete end of the abstraction continuum are *descriptive action verbs* (e.g., *hit*), which provide an objective description of a single observable behavior. Descriptive action verbs are typically defined by at least one invariant physical feature of the action (e.g., one person *hits* another) and refer to a specific object (e.g., the opponent) and situation (e.g., the game).

*Interpretative action verbs* (e.g., *hurt*) represent the second abstraction level. They likewise refer to an observable behavior, but, in contrast to descriptive action verbs, they describe a more general class



of behaviors. For instance, there are many different ways to hurt somebody, such as by hitting or by kicking the person, or by attacking him or her verbally. As a consequence, interpretative action verbs generally go beyond mere description, allowing different interpretations of a given situation.

*State verbs* (e.g., *hate*) represent the next abstraction level. They describe a lasting emotional or mental state, are interpretative and evaluative, and are independent of the specific action and context, but they maintain a reference to a specific object. In the example above, the basketball player hates his opponent outside the specific game and can express his feelings in many different ways.

Finally, at the abstract pole of the continuum are adjectives (e.g., *aggressive*). They are not only independent of the situation but also of the object of the action. They describe abstract characteristics and offer a wide range of interpretations. In the example cited above, the aggressiveness of the basketball player is directed at his opponent in this specific game and also represents an enduring characteristic of the player that generalizes across targets and situations.

### Measuring the LIB

The LIB, namely that ingroup and outgroup behaviors are described at different abstraction levels depending on the valence of the behavior, has been assessed by the cued sentence completion procedure and by the multiple-choice method. In both cases, study participants are presented with cartoons showing a member of their own group or another group acting in either a socially desirable or undesirable way. The participants' task is to describe the scene.

In the cued sentence completion procedure, participants are instructed to complete a sentence such as, "A member of team Y . . ." in their own words. Responses are then scored for abstraction by independent raters on a continuum ranging from 1 to 4, with higher values reflecting higher levels of abstraction. In the multiple-choice method, four descriptions are presented, constructed according to the four classes of the linguistic category model, and participants are asked to choose one. In recent years, additional methods have been developed to measure the LIB, but comparable language biases have been obtained in a wide variety of intergroup

settings independent of the specific measure used to assess the LIB.

### Underlying Mechanisms

Two different mechanisms have been proposed to explain the LIB, involving either motivation or cognition. The motivational approach assumes that ingroup protective motives operate in the LIB. Social identity theory postulates that one's self-concept is, in part, defined by one's group membership, so that positive evaluations of one's group lead to a positive self-concept and negative evaluations lead to a negative self-concept. According to this perspective, the LIB can be used as a subtle means to enhance or protect one's social identity. Describing positive behavior of one's own group and negative behavior of an opposing group in abstract terms implies that the behavior in question is typical for the group and stable over time. In contrast, describing negative ingroup and positive outgroup behavior in a more concrete way suggests that the behavior is atypical and unlikely to be repeated in the future. Such language-based favoritism of the ingroup relative to the outgroup contributes to a positive evaluation of one's own group and, hence, to a positive social identity.

The social cognitive approach assumes that the LIB is driven by differential expectancies about ingroup and outgroup members. Regardless of its valence, behavior consistent with prior expectancies about a group is considered to reflect typical and stable action tendencies and is therefore described in relatively abstract terms. In contrast, behavior inconsistent with prior expectancies is considered atypical and hence is described in a more concrete way.

In many intergroup settings, the two explanations lead to the same predictions, because in general people expect more positive and fewer negative behaviors from their own group than from other groups. Therefore, experimental studies were conducted to identify the actual mechanism underlying the LIB. To test the two accounts against one another, some researchers investigated individuals in intergroup settings for expectancies involving stereotypes, that is, beliefs that associate a given social group and its members with specific traits or behaviors.

For instance, gender stereotypes are beliefs about the differential behaviors that men and women are expected to perform. If ingroup protective motives underlie the LIB, men and women should describe positive behaviors of their own gender (he/she is assertive; he/she is helpful) and negative behaviors of the opposite gender (he/she is rude; he/she is dependent on others) more abstractly than in the reversed cases, regardless of whether the behavior is viewed as typical of males or of females. In contrast, if the differential expectancy explanation is correct, people should describe role-congruent behaviors (he is assertive/rude; she is helpful/dependent on others) more abstractly than role-incongruent behaviors (he helps someone/asks for advice; she expresses her opinion/insults someone) regardless of whether the behavior is positive or negative.

Research has generally shown that in intergroup settings (such as those involving gender relations) in which stereotypical expectancies prevail, the differential expectancy approach offers the most convincing account because people share very similar expectancies about typical behaviors of different groups independent of their own group membership. In contrast, the motivational approach plays an important role in competitive or hostile intergroup settings. Under highly competitive circumstances, such as conflicting interests of hunters and environmentalists or hostile relations between nations in times of war, ingroup protective motives come to the fore, and positive ingroup behaviors as well as negative outgroup behaviors are described at a higher abstraction level.

Thus, there is support for both explanations, with cognitive processes being predominant when socially shared expectancies exist, as in the case of stereotypes, and motivational processes becoming relevant when the ingroup is threatened by highly competitive conditions. The two processes can operate both independently and additively. In order to distinguish between the two mechanisms, the term *linguistic intergroup bias* (LIB) is now used to describe differences in abstraction level evoked by ingroup protective motives. In contrast, language biases produced by differential expectancies are now labeled by the term *linguistic expectancy bias* (LEB). Empirical evidence for both mechanisms has been found in a wide range of intergroup settings.

### Interaction of Speaker Goals and Recipient Inferences

When people say something to someone else, their message is influenced by their individual motives, beliefs about the world, and communication goals. As described in the preceding paragraph, the LIB can satisfy self-enhancing motivations by causing one's own group to appear in a more favorable light, and the LEB can serve as a vehicle to express one's beliefs or expectancies. Moreover, irrespective of whether biased language use is intended or unconscious, it is likely to have an impact on the recipient of the message. Describing actions more concretely suggests a situational explanation, whereas describing actions more abstractly implies that the behavior occurs more frequently and reflects enduring characteristics of the actor.

Mass communication is a domain in which a single message can have an impact on thousands of people. Let's consider the two headlines: "Our secretary of state will not attend the peace talks" and "Rebels' boycott of peace talks continues." In both cases the peace talks do not take place, but the inferred reasons can be very different for the secretary of state and the rebels. The concrete description ("Our secretary of state *will not attend* the peace talks") suggests that the behavioral episode is an isolated event that can be attributed to many different causes and contextual factors not necessarily linked to the secretary of state's personal characteristics or psychological states. Describing the case in abstract terms ("Rebels' *boycott* of peace talks continues"), however, implies that the act of not attending the peace talks reflects an enduring negative characteristic of the rebels, such as hostility or aggressiveness.

By this subtle means, the recipient of the message forms a very different impression of the same situation depending on the level of abstraction in the language used by the speaker. This interplay between what the speaker says and what the recipient infers contributes to ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination (in the case of LIB) as well as to the maintenance and perpetuation of stereotypes (in the case of LEB).

*Christiane Schoel and Anne Maass*

*See also* Language and Intergroup Relations; Linguistic Category Model (LCM); Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## LOOKING-GLASS SELF

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The *looking-glass self* is a concept introduced by Charles Horton Cooley in 1902. Cooley was working to develop a theory of self as essentially social, and he used the image of a mirror to capture the idea of people imagining what they look like to others, then incorporating what they imagine into their own self-concept. This concept of self as a product of interaction with environment, and reflection based upon that interaction, has come to occupy a pivotal role in both psychology and sociology. Group interaction studies, a strain of sociology known as symbolic interactionism, and studies of both empathy and prejudice have all relied heavily on its core idea that people develop a self-concept based on their emotional reactions to what they believe others are thinking about them.

Cooley described three components or “principal elements” of the looking-glass self: “the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the

imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification.” He developed the concept through careful observation of his own children, particularly his third child, a daughter, “M,” whom he systematically observed from shortly after her birth until she was almost 3 years old. Cooley was particularly struck by the development in children’s speech of the personal pronouns *I*, *me*, and *mine*, which he reasoned could come only from children’s awareness of others and of themselves in contrast to others, and thus as distinct from others.

For example, he worked extensively with what he called *appropriation*, which refers to children’s taking and owning of things. Cooley observed that children begin appropriative processes with attempts to control the things closest to them, including their own bodies, and then move outward to the people in their vicinity, just as infants exert their social power to attract attention. From this observation, he reasoned that people’s sense of self emerges from relations with their immediate group (loved ones, caregivers, mothers) in particular, and continues to develop as they relate to an increasingly wide set of acquaintances. As children learn what they can and cannot control, they begin to define themselves in terms of the images they see others assigning to them; thus they begin to manipulate those around them, beginning with the ones who are easiest to control.

Adults, he reasoned, are not that much different; their imaginations are merely more complex and specific, and their manipulations of others more subtle. The process of imagining others’ perceptions and judgments and reconciling them with what one knows becomes a dynamic process of building self-concept. It includes reflection, but it puts emotional responses and feelings at the center of the development of self-concept. The self is inextricable from society, “twin-born,” as Cooley called it, because it emerges in interaction and becomes meaningful only in contrast to the society that is not of self.

This idea furthered the work of William James, and encompassed more than the processes involved in the concept of the looking-glass self. However, despite this and other major contributions to sociological thought (including the idea of the primary group), Cooley is today best known for the concept of the looking-glass self, if only because it captured

the imaginations of so many. His use of a couplet by Ralph Waldo Emerson was often repeated, and even mistakenly attributed to Cooley:

*Each to each a looking-glass  
Reflects the other that doth pass.*

Critics of Cooley point out that when carried to its furthest dimension, the concept of the looking-glass self makes the developing human appear to be passive, dependent upon others for approval, and constantly changing to fit his or her environment. Cooley argued, however, that the self-image also encompasses a more stable, autonomous image, one that resists the easy influence of rare or extraordinary events, and that is more heavily relied upon by the person of substantial character. In Cooley's conceptualization, children learn how to sympathize with others through their primary groups (caregivers and family members). Through early processes of appropriation and attribution of images, eventually children come to fuse their individuality to that common whole, and develop the kind of respect for the feelings of others that Cooley argued would make them mature members of society. Ultimately, they apply that sense of empathy to increasingly wider circles of acquaintances.

Some have pointed out that it is ironic that Cooley himself would be aghast at the idea of a person whose self-image had been entirely created by the impressions of others. But his colorful and dramatic use of the image of mirrors, and of the rhyme, so engaged the thinkers of his era that it ensured his fame for ensuing generations. With the concept of the looking-glass self, he had shown the way society and its values were taken in by individuals and internalized by their own mental processes.

His analysis continues to have great appeal to a wide swath of sociology, psychology, and group behavior studies. Relying on and expanding on Cooley's work, many branches of thought in many areas have flowered in the time since. For example, social identity theory, a foundational concept in the study of group processes and intergroup relations, holds that in interactions within and between groups, an individual calls on more than one identity. These identities start with the self, alone, but move outward in concentric circles to include

identities called upon in personal interactions, and then, in wider circles, in increasingly larger groups. People can thus be expected to behave differently in personal interactions and in different groups. They will also act differently within groups, depending on several factors, among them the extent to which they consider the group an ingroup, that is, a group to which they feel they belong. Finally, people can behave differently depending on the roles they assume, or tend to assume, within those groups—for example, leaders versus followers.

Ideas such as the relative nature of concepts of self and the notion of concentric circles, with an individual's relationships moving from personal and family relationships outward into more impersonal groups, draw heavily on Cooley's work. Social identity theory has also expanded to encompass ideas of national identity. How people come to see their own nation in relation to other nations or groups is an evolving image that may or may not be unified. It is certainly collective, however, and important in the shaping of national opinions and actions.

*Symbolic interactionism*, a branch of sociology with its genesis in the theorizing of the philosopher George Herbert Mead and its dissemination in a book with that title by Herbert Blumer, builds upon Cooley's idea by saying that we impute meaning to things around us, including other people, based upon our idea of what others are thinking. In taking the role of the other, especially the generalized other, we develop a sense of self in interaction, which can then be understood as dynamic and influenced by those with whom we are interacting. It is generally accepted that Mead built upon the work of Cooley, with Cooley providing the mechanism by which the mind internalizes and appropriates the values and views of society, whereas Mead's elaboration shows how society is in turn influenced and changed by the values of the individuals within it.

Cooley's looking-glass self, with its emphasis on individual reflection and the emotional aspects of developing one's identity, has strongly influenced all of symbolic interactionism, but was especially instrumental in the ensuing development of what is now known as the *sociology of emotions*. This branch of sociology studies how social situations affect emotions, the cultural rules and norms that

we learn about what emotions we can or should express and when it is appropriate to do so, how emotions shape action and interaction, and the collective emotions that maintain or alter social structures. Cooley called the feelings intrinsic to the looking-glass self “social sentiments,” and his focus on the cultural shaping of reflection and interpretation laid the foundation for the later work of C. Wright Mills, Erving Goffman, and Arlie Russell Hochschild.

Cooley’s concept of the looking-glass self stressed the role of the child’s attribution of others’ images, the first stages of empathy in the development of the child’s understanding. Empathy studies have furthered Cooley’s work by taking his description of the child’s development of empathy, of seeing others’ perspectives and reacting accordingly, and building on it. These scholars have stressed the role empathy can play in improving relations among, between, and within groups. Cooley considered increasing empathy for wider and more distantly related groups to be the essence of human progress; therefore, studying the nature, essence, and origin of empathy should be a worthy pursuit in and of itself. Empathy is now divided into two kinds, *cognitive* and *emotional*, with emotional empathy further divided into *parallel* (feeling what others feel) and *reactive* (reacting to what others feel). Cooley’s work in noticing that children’s development of self is based on their immediate observation of others and others’ reaction to them, and the role of emotion in developing this sense of self, was instrumental in the development of this field.

Perhaps one of the most profound manifestations of Cooley’s description of a dynamic, evolving sense of self, a self based upon the way one’s self-image interrelates with the images of one’s acquaintances, lies in the field of the study of prejudice. Prejudice was well known to be both deeply ingrained in human consciousness, and enormously destructive as a social force, by the time third-grade teacher Jane Elliott did the class exercises in 1968 that ultimately became the 1985 Frontline program “A Class Divided.” In her social experiment, based on a lesson on prejudice given to a class of children in Iowa the day after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she divided her students into a brown-eyed group and a blue-eyed group. She discriminated against

each group in turn, and observed the children doing the same, even as their test scores rose and fell accordingly.

This established the role of prejudice in developing not only one’s sense of community and one’s role in it, but also a view of one’s own abilities and, presumably as a result of that, one’s test scores and success or failure in quantitative measurements of skills and abilities. By artificially establishing groups, rules, and social norms that reinforced prejudice, Elliott’s experiment proved quite directly that images of oneself, attributed to members of one’s community or social group and based on their reactions, can undermine one’s self-esteem so dramatically as to influence one’s measurable performance levels on tests in such basic areas as math and reading. Test scores would presumably be based on one’s skills and abilities, which by other theories should be independent of the influence of the vagaries of one’s day-to-day emotional variation. Prejudice, in other words, by undermining our self-image at its very heart, can influence and undermine us so thoroughly as to affect every aspect of our performance in society.

Cooley relied on the image of the mirror, or looking glass, to express the idea that the image we create of ourselves is primarily the product of other images: the images we imagine that others have of us. The dramatic image of the looking glass attracted many thinkers of his time, partly because he carefully captured the process by which we internalize society’s values as part of our very core. It was also popular because it captured the way a society, particularly the small town, Midwest America of which he was a part, was displaying increasing absorption with appearance and the impressions of others. For this, the concept of the looking-glass self, and the shallow obsession with appearance that it represented, were roundly criticized. The concept survived, however, due to its utility in accurately portraying both the development of the self-concept of the child and the interrelationship of the society and the human perception that tries to make sense of it.

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See also Collective Self; Multiple Identities; Roles; Social Identity Theory; Symbolic Interactionism

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## LOYALTY

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*Loyalty* is a term used to describe an individual’s orientation toward something or someone, where that orientation is characterized by faithful adherence, devotion, allegiance, commitment, and a merging or overlap between the individual’s interests and those of the target of the loyalty. Loyalty can be extended to individuals, such as leaders, partners, spouses, friends, coworkers, or family, or it can be extended to groups or categories, such as companies, religions, volunteer organizations, professional societies, or countries. Loyalty can also occur with respect to ideals or principles, such as justice, fairness, freedom, honesty, equality, honor, and truth. This entry looks at these different kinds of loyalty and discusses related dilemmas and future research directions.

### Loyalty to Groups

There have been different operationalizations of loyalty across relatively few scientific examinations. For example, group loyalty is sometimes equated by researchers with group commitment. Other researchers do not formally define or operationalize

group loyalty but infer it based on the observation of biased evaluations. Despite these differences, there is an underlying similarity in much of the research on group loyalty, which is that loyalty is an adherence or faithfulness to a group, even in the face of countervailing pressure or when personal sacrifice must be made. That is, loyalty can be inferred when an individual chooses to remain in a group even when the individual would benefit more personally by leaving it.

Likewise, loyalty to a group can also be inferred when an individual leaves the group even when the individual would gain more by staying in it. Of course, loyalty is not always inferred based on decisions to remain in or leave groups. Individuals may defend their current groups from attack or criticism, and loyalty is inferred when doing so would endanger the defenders. Essentially, then, loyalty is putting the interests and image of the group ahead of personal interests.

Social psychological research examining group loyalty includes investigations of cooperation versus competition in social dilemma paradigms. In a typical social dilemma paradigm, individuals are consumers of a shared resource and must decide between individual self-interest and the collective good. In the short term, a strategy of maximizing personal outcomes may be beneficial to individuals. Over time, however, this strategy proves to be disastrous. By contrast, placing group concerns above personal interests can extend the life of the resource and optimize outcomes for everyone involved. Roderick Kramer and Marilyn Brewer have shown that identification with a group predicts whether individuals will exercise personal restraint in the use of a common resource and assign greater weight to group outcomes than to personal outcomes.

Social psychologists Bozena Zdaniuk and John M. Levine examined group loyalty by creating laboratory groups in which members were randomly assigned (a) to identify weakly or strongly with the group, and (b) to have few or many resources, relative to other group members. Group members were asked to make a decision about whether to remain in or leave the group. If they remained in the group, their resources would be divided among all group members. If they left the group, however, they would take their individual resources, leaving the remaining group members to divide what they had left among themselves.

For participants with many resources, it was considered loyalty to stay in the group because if they stayed, their many resources would raise the average payoff within the group (even though it would mean a personal sacrifice). By contrast, for participants with few resources, it was considered loyalty to leave the group because if they left, the average potential payoff within the group would be raised (but at a personal cost to the one who left the group). They found that, regardless of the level of resources, those who identified more strongly with the group were more likely to stay in the group than those whose identification with the group was weak.

Related research by Mark van Vugt and Claire Hart also has demonstrated that strength of identification with a group is a robust predictor of group loyalty, or choosing to stay in a group even at a personal cost. In addition, they found evidence that loyalty behavior was strongly correlated with positive group perceptions. Thus, it may be the case that identification with a group leads to greater liking for the group, as well as a consequent desire to remain even when attractive alternative options exist.

Loyalty is also an important topic in organizational research. In this arena, loyalty is conceptualized in a similar manner, namely, as the willingness to forgo more attractive work alternatives and stay with a company, organization, or union. Loyalty is also inferred when observing “organizational citizenship behaviors,” which are discretionary acts that benefit the organization. By definition, these behaviors are not required and received no immediate tangible compensation.

### Loyalty to Relationships and Individuals

Close relationships can be thought of as a type of group—an intimacy group—in which two people are similar, interdependent, and often goal oriented. In relationship research, the concept of loyalty has many similarities to the analogous concept in group research. That is, during difficult times in a relationship, or when attractive alternative partners are available, remaining in the relationship constitutes loyalty.

Caryl Rusbult, Isabella Zembrodt, and Lawanna Gunn have proposed four responses to relationship dissatisfaction. These vary along the dimensions of

constructive versus destructive responses and active versus passive responses. The active destructive response is called *exit*, which is separation or leaving the relationship. The active constructive response, *voice*, is discussing problems and working toward solutions. The passive destructive response, called *neglect*, refers to ignoring the partner, treating the partner badly either emotionally or physically, and refusing to discuss problems. Finally, the passive constructive response is called *loyalty*, which is waiting optimistically for the relationship to be mended and problems to be solved.

Rusbult and her colleagues have found that this type of loyalty increases as a function of relationship satisfaction and the magnitude of tangible and emotional investments in the relationship but decreases as a function of the quality of alternative partners. Thus the concept of relationship loyalty differs slightly from the concept of group loyalty, which involves staying in the group even when better alternatives are available.

As a conceptual subset of relationship research, social scientists who study organizational dynamics also examine loyalty to leaders or superordinates. This type of loyalty is typically conceptualized as subordinates’ public expressions of support for superordinates and their policies. Loyalty in subordinate–superordinate dyads has been shown to be distinct from organizational loyalty.

### Loyalty to Principles

Loyalty to principles, like the various forms of loyalty discussed above, is inferred when an individual behaves according to a ideal or standard even when there is pressure to do otherwise, or when adhering to a principle requires a cost or sacrifice on the part of the individual. Organizational whistleblowing is a quintessential example of loyalty to moral principles over loyalty to an organization.

### Related Constructs

As discussed above, identification with a group is a strong predictor of group loyalty. That is, the stronger an individual identifies with his or her ingroup, the more that person can be expected to be loyal to the group.

Apart from strength of ingroup identification, other social processes are likely to yield group and relationship loyalty. Groups may exert normative influence on members to remain loyal. For example, the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps is *semper fidelis*, often shortened to *semper fi*, which means “always faithful” in Latin. Such a motto makes loyalty cognitively accessible and thus influential on behavior. Religious groups sometimes publicly shame or shun those who fall away from or leave their faith, and such acts serve the function of communicating to remaining adherents that a similar fate awaits them if they choose disloyalty.

Another process likely to yield loyalty is being the recipient of trust and loyalty. Over time and through experience with an organization, group, or relationship partner, individuals may see that others are willing to trust them, defend them, and stay with them even when they could do otherwise. This creates a sense of obligation, and reciprocal loyalty can be expected.

Dissonance-based justification processes are also likely to be involved in the creation of loyalty. In a classic effort-justification experiment by Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills, participants had to earn membership in a group by performing a mild or severe initiation. Those who performed the more embarrassing tasks (i.e., the severe initiation) rated the group more favorably than did those who completed relatively mild tasks to gain entry to the group. If individuals can be induced to sacrifice freely for a group or relationship, they will justify that behavior by endorsing it and by coming to like the group more. Group or relationship loyalty is then a likely consequence.

Although loyalty is typically considered a beneficial behavioral orientation toward a group or partner, it can also be maladaptive in some circumstances. As a consequence of expressed or implied loyalty, individuals may feel pressure to engage in unethical, immoral, or destructive behaviors. For example, loyal employees may feel obligated to lie and cover up corporate wrongdoings. Many members of Jim Jones’s Peoples Temple cult were so loyal that they took their own lives by drinking the famous cyanide-laced Flavor Aid. The extent of true loyalty is unclear in this case, however, because those who resisted suicide were shot or injected with cyanide.

## Loyalty Dilemmas

Individuals may experience extreme psychological conflict if they have to choose between competing loyalties, where outcomes are in a zero-sum-like arrangement. For instance, if a child of divorced parents is asked by both parents to spend a holiday with them, the child is forced to choose between pleasing one parent and necessarily hurting the other. Likewise, individuals may simultaneously belong to two groups that have conflicting values or behavioral expectations. In such cases, total loyalty to each group is not possible. If an individual’s fraternity or sorority expects group members to engage in behaviors that are prohibited by his or her religious group, for example, the individual must make a choice regarding the relative importance of each group loyalty. Immigrants or exiles may also feel a sharp sense of conflict between loyalty to their country of origin and loyalty to their new host country.

Of course, many loyalty dilemmas occur not between competing groups or relationships, but instead between a group or relationship and some principle or ideal, as in the case of organizational whistleblowing or of soldiers who must decide whether to be loyal to a superior and follow illegal orders or to be loyal to the law and refuse to follow orders. Although there has been empirical research examining group and relationship loyalty, very little research, if any, has been conducted on the approach–avoid dynamics of competing loyalties.

Whereas loyalty conceptually represents an intriguing behavioral phenomenon, namely, the willingness to incur personal costs to protect, preserve, or benefit a relationship or group, it is relatively understudied. Further research is needed not only to refine the operationalization of loyalty, but also to develop a broader understanding of when loyalty is likely to arise, what other constructs are associated with it, and what various cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences arise as a function of it.

*Jared B. Kenworthy*

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Identification and Commitment



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## MEDIATION

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*Mediation* is a process whereby a person becomes involved in a dispute or decision between two or more others and attempts to affect the outcome. This person, the *mediator*—also known as the *third party* and sometimes referred to as the *neutral*, depending on the context—has no authority to dictate the outcome but rather exercises influence to affect an outcome. Mediation is a special case of negotiation in which the mediator helps the disputants, or *negotiators*, reach an agreement that they might otherwise not reach on their own. It preserves the voluntary, joint-decision features of negotiation: The disputants retain the right to accept or reject any suggestion made by the mediator. As such, mediation is a form of assisted negotiation, and it is helpful to understand negotiation as a precursor to understanding mediation.

There are many interesting aspects of mediation that reflect the complex social, cognitive, and emotional processes of how people think, feel, and act toward members of their own and other groups. Additional complexity derives from the fact that mediation often occurs in the context of complex social, organizational, institutional, political, and legal systems that have constraints and historical underpinnings. Mediation always involves communication processes, both verbal and nonverbal. A mediator, for example, might say to the parties, “Let me make the following suggestion to you about how to settle your problem” and may

distribute his or her visual attention equally between the parties while making that statement.

Another view of mediation is that it is a role in a specific setting: “I am the mediator in today’s pretrial court proceeding.” Mediation can also be a career choice, such as divorce or labor mediation, that entails specialized training and professional credentials and is guided by formal rules and regulations. Seen broadly, mediation occurs every day, informally, anytime someone attempts to influence the outcome of a decision being made by others. This entry looks at the history of mediation, describes the mediation process, and discusses its effectiveness.

### Background and History

Mediation appears to occur everywhere, among all peoples, in all societies and cultures. It is a universal, within and between cultures and within and between groups, organizations, and nations. The primatologist Frans de Waal has reported that even chimpanzees and other nonhuman primates mediate their disputes. Among humans, mediation has been important for quite some time. The earliest known writing, about 4,500 years ago, includes a stone carving that describes a Sumerian ruler in Mesopotamia who helped avert a war and develop an agreement between neighboring groups in a dispute over land and water. Indeed, mediation is arguably the oldest and most common form of dispute resolution.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a revolution of mediation in U.S. society, stimulated by passage of

state and federal laws. For example, public employees earned the right to bargain collectively, which led to the advent of state agencies such as the public employment relations boards and the public employment relations commissions that provide mediation, often as a required step in the event of a labor contract dispute. The landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act provided, in Article X, for the creation of the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice. This organization provides mediation in community disputes that relate to discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin.

The 1970s also saw the advent of community mediation centers, such as the Conflict Resolution Center in Chicago, which provide mediation services in a variety of disputes and are often associated with the courts. Family mediation has increased, as well as divorce mediation, which is required for all divorces in some states. And public resource mediation of environmental disputes has grown. This growth reflects U.S. chief justice Warren E. Burger's comments in the 1970s that the existing judicial system was too costly and inefficient, which encouraged the use of alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as mediation, especially in disputes involving divorce, child custody, adoptions, personal injury, landlord and tenant cases, and probate of estates. It is not surprising that law schools, and business schools as well, offer courses in alternative dispute resolution, including negotiation and mediation training. Middle and high schools often offer mediation training and programs in peer mediation, and many colleges and universities now include mediation training and programs for residence hall and other disputes.

Mediators are guided and aided by professional societies. For example, the document *Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators* was prepared jointly in the 1990s by the American Arbitration Association, the American Bar Association, and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution. Regional organizations, such as the Southern California Mediation Association (SCMA), provide guidance and support to professional mediators and to the legal community. For example, the SCMA filed in 2003 an amicus curiae brief with the California Supreme Court in a case (*Rojas v. Superior Court*) that led to a seminal decision affecting mediation confidentiality in California.

In international disputes, the use of mediation by organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and many other nonstate organizations has also increased. Moreover, representatives of organized religion often play a role in mediating international disputes, as the Vatican did in the early 1980s in the dispute between Chile and Argentina over property rights in the Beagle Channel.

### The Study of Mediation

Researchers have studied what mediators do, when they do it and why, and with what effect. In addressing these issues, researchers often consider differences between contexts of mediation. Following a distinction made by the political scientist Saadia Touval, many researchers distinguish between contractual mediation and emergent mediation.

#### *The Context of Mediation: Contractual and Emergent*

*Contractual mediation* occurs within a set of rules and guidelines that have been previously established by the community. It is usually done by a professional who has received formal training and is available for more than one case. Labor mediation, divorce mediation, community mediation, and any mediation that occurs in the courts are examples. The term *neutral* is often used to describe mediators in such cases because neutrality is a key source of mediator influence in these contexts.

In *emergent mediation*, the mediator typically has an ongoing relationship with the disputants and is an interested party who emerges from the organization or system in which the dispute has occurred. Examples include a dispute between two coworkers in a business and another coworker who steps in to help as a mediator or a dispute between two nations over the location of a common border and a third nation that offers to mediate.

#### *What Do Mediators Do?*

A good deal of research on mediation deals with descriptions and taxonomies of mediator behavior. The mediation literature offers many typologies and distinguishing factors of mediator interventions. The

social psychologist Ken Kressel developed an early influential framework that classifies mediator behavior into three categories: (1) behavior that addresses the substance of the issues (e.g., making an outcome suggestion to the parties or putting pressure on the parties to make concessions), (2) behavior that affects the context of negotiation (e.g., attempting to restructure the agenda of issues in discussions), and (3) behavior that lays the foundation for later success (e.g., developing rapport with parties or meeting with the parties separately in a caucus). The ability of mediators to control communications and modify information exchange is seen as a key element.

Other work has adapted research on social power and influence to mediation. For example, some scholars note that mediator behavior can reflect the use of rewards (carrots) and punishment (sticks), as well as the application of information in solving the disputants' problem (problem solving). Social psychologist Peter Carnevale developed a series of studies suggesting that a perceptual factor (the mediator's estimate of the likelihood of a win-win agreement) and a motivational factor (the mediator's concern for the parties' needs and interests) together predict the occurrence of different forms of mediator behavior.

### Contingent Effectiveness of Mediation

Mediator behavior can be adaptive, that is, mediators often act with *contingency*, in the sense that they first attempt to understand the problem they face and then try one thing or another to achieve their goals. In one study, an analysis of actual transcripts of a labor negotiation revealed that labor mediators adopted a more forceful style of intervention when the disputing parties became more intransigent. Other evidence indicates that mediators become more forceful when time pressure increases.

Many studies have also revealed that disputants adapt to mediation, which indicates that mediator behavior is contingently effective. In an early study by social psychologist Dean Pruitt, negotiators were especially receptive to a third party's suggestion if they simultaneously had impression management concerns and a strong need to reach agreement. This situation is referred to as the *face-saving function* of mediation.

There is evidence that mediation is more effective when conflict is moderate rather than intense

and when the parties are highly motivated to reach settlement, as they are in a *hurting stalemate*, an intolerable impasse so painful or costly that the parties search for a way out. Mediation also is more effective when the issues do not involve general principles and when the parties are relatively equal in power.

There is evidence that direct, forceful mediator behavior is effective when the conflict between disputants is so intense that they are unable to engage in problem solving. However, such intervention is counterproductive when the disputants are capable of engaging in problem solving. In a study of divorce mediation, agreement was more likely to be reached if the mediator interrupted the disputants when their discussion became hostile and refrained from interrupting when their discussion was friendlier.

The traditional view that mediator bias is totally incompatible with success has been challenged by several authors, who note that a biased mediator is sometimes the only one available to mediate the conflict and is often the person with the greatest influence over the party that most needs to change. There is evidence, which may apply mainly to emergent mediation contexts, that a mediator who is seen as biased in favor of the opponent at the outset of mediation is seen in a very favorable light if that mediator acts clearly in an evenhanded manner during the mediation and is seen even more favorably than a mediator who was initially perceived as completely impartial.

Mediation has also been shown to be more effective when arbitration is a next step. *Arbitration* is a procedure in which the intermediary listens to the arguments of both sides and makes a decision for the disputants. One exciting avenue for future work is the development and assessment of hybrid forms of third-party roles in disputes, such as combinations of mediation and arbitration.

Peter J. Carnevale

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Distributive Justice; Negotiation and Bargaining; Procedural Justice; Relative Deprivation; Team Negotiation; Trust

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## MERGERS

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Mergers are now commonplace in the corporate world as organizations seek to enhance their competitiveness and effectiveness in an increasingly complex and globalized corporate environment. A *merger* takes place when two previously separate organizations combine to form a single organizational entity. Over the past two decades in particular, numerous mergers have occurred. In both media reports and scientific papers, negative employee reactions to mergers are frequently reported. Moreover, although they are typically justified in terms of sound business assumptions, it is not unusual for mergers to be less successful than anticipated in business terms. Indeed, they may ultimately be dissolved. Hence, it is now widely accepted that mergers may be less successful than expected and that they may in fact fail because of the “us-versus-them” dynamics engendered by the situation.

Most organizational changes create stress and job insecurity, but organizational mergers represent a particularly stressful kind of change, given the large-scale nature of this change and the fact that employees must relinquish an identity that

was previously important to them and shift their allegiance to the newly merged organization. To account for the fact that between 60% and 70% of mergers fail to achieve their economic aims, commentators have proposed that relying on a strictly economic point of view is unlikely to provide insights into why mergers so often fail. Researchers have proposed that there is a considerable amount of unexplained variance in predicting why mergers fail or succeed and that various noneconomic factors need to be taken into consideration to account for what goes on during organizational mergers.

A number of psychological approaches have been proposed to explain employees’ reactions to organizational mergers. Studies using a stress and coping approach have focused on variables such as employees’ appraisals or subjective judgments of the merger situation and the coping strategies used to deal with it. Researchers who have studied mergers from the perspective of job characteristics have stressed that after a merger, jobs should be designed in a way that sustains or increases employees’ job satisfaction and commitment during this change. To design jobs in this way, management should directly involve employees in the job redesign process, train them to adjust to this change, and provide a clear rationale for the change. Such strategies should facilitate employees’ support for and adjustment to the merger and hence minimize resistance and conflicts.

Other approaches have focused more directly on the conflict and the rivalries that may develop between employees from the merging organizations. The goal of such approaches is to understand the processes by which two merging organizations come to fit together and form a new superordinate entity. The acculturation perspective on mergers, for instance, focuses on the intergroup dimension of the merger by proposing that the successful integration of both organizations into an overarching, merged entity depends on the degree of fit between the values and the practices endorsed by the management of the two merging organizations. From this perspective, when employees feel threatened by a merger and fear losing their accustomed way of doing things, acculturation stress and conflict will result, a state referred to as *culture clash*.

An intergroup approach goes further in an effort to clarify the conflict that may emerge during mergers. Mergers involve the imposition of a

new superordinate identity on employees, at the same time as they require the employees to relinquish their premerger organizational identity. For this reason, mergers are likely to trigger the social identification processes that are central to intergroup theories. Because employees of the two organizations will be motivated to establish an optimal position for their own group in the new organization, a merger may engender competitive and antagonistic intergroup relations. Case studies of mergers suggest that these negative us-versus-them dynamics and responses may well undermine the success of the merger.

A social identity perspective focuses on identification and recategorization processes as key factors that need to be considered in an effort to understand intergroup conflict in response to an organizational merger. *Social identity*, which can be defined as that part of the individual self-concept that derives from memberships in social groups, is a fundamental psychological variable that shapes individuals' feelings and behaviors. Organizational identity, as one specific type of social identity, represents an important basis for self-definition.

Because the self is defined in terms of the group membership, a social identity perspective assumes that people are motivated to favor their ingroup over the outgroup. This self-enhancement motive means that group members are motivated to acquire or to maintain a positive social identity for their ingroup. People seek to belong to groups that compare well with others. That is, to the extent that one's ingroup is perceived as better than the outgroup, a person's social identity becomes more positive. For this reason, people seek to belong to high-status groups. The desire for a positive social identity means that whereas members of a low-status group are motivated to acquire a more positive social identity, members of a high-status group are motivated to maintain such an identity, which involves maintaining both their membership in the group and its continued existence.

The nature of an organizational merger challenges employees' organizational identity, which is likely to result in antagonistic and conflictual intergroup perceptions and behaviors. In fact, the merger situation implies a direct confrontation between the two organizations as they both seek to optimize their position and standing in the new

organization. Furthermore, like many other intergroup contexts, mergers often involve organizations that differ in status—that is, one organization is likely to be more productive, resourceful, and competitive than the other. During a merger, such differences are likely to be accentuated. This means that members of the lower-status group are confronted with the reality of their disadvantaged position in the new intergroup structure. In contrast, members of the higher-status group are motivated to ensure their dominant position in the merged organization and, as a consequence, to impose their own premerger identity on the new, merged organization. Doing so will directly threaten the survival of the lower-status group's identity within the new organization. Hence, members of the lower-status group should be particularly threatened by a merger situation, a finding that has emerged in a number of studies. Nevertheless, if they see that the merger situation will improve or enhance their social identity (e.g., through open boundaries, in the new organization, between the lower- and higher-status premerger organizations), then responses of the members of the lower-status group to the merger will be more positive.

The temporal dynamics that emerge during the course of a merger and that influence intergroup relations are also important for understanding the impact and success of organizational mergers. The temporal dimension is important given that intergroup relations are likely to change as the merger evolves, which will influence how employees will come to identify (or not) with the new, merged organization. Longitudinal merger research has revealed interesting trends over time. There is evidence that just before a merger, employees are motivated to perceive continuity between their premerger organizational identity and the anticipated identity that will define the new, merged organization.

The intergroup tensions between the groups and the us-versus-them dynamics become more marked as the merger becomes a reality. At this point, the specific differences between the premerger organizations become salient, and status differences have tangible implications for members of each premerger organization. Increasingly, longitudinal merger research is revealing that identification with the new, merged organization is likely to decrease from the premerger implementation or anticipation stage to the stage when the merger is implemented.

In fact, over time, employees' views of the anticipated new organizational identity are likely to be revised, particularly because during the implementation stage, the threatening aspects of the merger are likely to become more salient and hence an issue of concern for employees. A merger is an important change that is likely to trigger feelings of uncertainty and threat because of its unstable nature and the risks that it potentially poses to employees' work conditions and social benefits. In addition, the fact that a merger poses a potential threat to one's identity can be felt more specifically. Such feelings of threat are important to address within organizations undergoing mergers because they are likely to undermine efforts to build both a sense of identification with the new, merged organization and the view that the new, merged organization represents one united social group.

Organizational mergers require employees from the two premerger organizations not only to identify with a new social group but also to manage different organizational allegiances, namely, their identity as a member of their premerger organization and the developing identification with the new, merged organization. In investigating how employees attempt to reconcile these different social identities, researchers have found that employees from the lower- and higher-status premerger organizations differ in how they come to see these identities fitting with each other rather than being in opposition to one another. In fact, merger research has shown that these two identities are more difficult to reconcile for members of the lower-status premerger organization, whose premerger organizational identity is more likely to be erased in the context of the new, merged organization. In contrast, members of the higher-status premerger organization are more likely to see these organizational identities as compatible and as continuous, given that the new, merged organizational identity is likely to retain more of the features (e.g., name, logo) of the higher-status premerger organization.

One solution to reconciling these potentially conflicting social identities involves developing a new, merged organizational identity that is complex and inclusive of the specific premerger organizations that constitute it. Such a superordinate organizational identity accounts for the specific characteristics of each premerger organization and

also recognizes the unique contributions of each organization to the new superordinate whole. Some commentators have suggested that keeping positive features from both premerger groups, rather than trying to erase all preexisting organizational characteristics or retaining only the features of the higher-status premerger organization, is key to facilitating positive intergroup relations during a merger and establishing a productive and successful new, merged organization. In fact, research has demonstrated that the more employees identify with their new, merged organization and come to recognize that the new, merged organization represents one united group, the more positive the consequences, whether these consequences are intrapersonal in nature (e.g., higher job satisfaction, well-being) or involve entire groups (e.g., lower ingroup bias).

*Deborah J. Terry and Catherine E. Amiot*

*See also* Categorization; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Cooperation and Competition; Group Boundaries; Identification and Commitment; Intergroup Contact Theory; Multiple Identities; Social Identity Theory

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## MINIMAL GROUP EFFECT

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Intergroup discrimination is a feature of most modern societies, and the question of why individuals seem to favor their own groups over other groups, as expressed in phenomena such as prejudice and discrimination, is one that has interested researchers in many disciplines for many years. There have been many accounts of the motivations for prejudice and discrimination, some focusing on aspects of the individual and some focusing on the role of conflict between groups over resources. It was in attempting to investigate why prejudice and discrimination occur that Henri Tajfel and Michael Billig developed the *minimal group paradigm* (MGP) and first observed the minimal group effect. The *minimal group effect* refers to the fact that individuals will express ingroup favoritism even when there is minimal ingroup affiliation, no interaction among group members, anonymity of group members, no conflicts of interest, and no previous hostility between the groups. Thus, it appears that the mere perception of belonging to two distinct groups—*social categorization*—is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination.

### History and Background

Tajfel and his colleagues developed the MGP to establish the baseline conditions for intergroup discrimination. The idea was to strip two groups of the features identified as important in triggering group discrimination, such as interaction among group members, group history, and conflict between the groups, to create minimal social categories. Then, different features of intergroup relations would be added cumulatively to determine at which point intergroup discrimination occurs.

In the MGP, individuals are classified as members of two mutually exclusive groups, ostensibly on the basis of some rather arbitrary performance criterion (e.g., overestimators vs. underestimators of dots projected on a screen, fans of the painters Klee and Kandinsky) or by a completely random procedure such as a coin toss. Thus, the groups are truly minimal: They have no content, there is no interaction among group members, group membership is completely anonymous, and the groups have no history or future outside the laboratory.

After being informed of their group membership, participants are asked to allocate points to members of their own group (the *ingroup*) and/or members of the other group (the *outgroup*). In some studies, these points represent actual outcomes, such as money or course credit, but in other studies, the points are meaningless. At no point during the experiment can participants allocate points to themselves, which rules out self-interest as an explanation for point allocation.

In order for researchers to assess responses in the MGP, participants are asked to make their allocation decisions using a series of matrices. These matrices, known as *Tajfel matrices*, contain pairs of numbers that represent points to be allocated to a member of the ingroup and a member of the outgroup. The targets of the allocation decision are identified only by group membership and an identification code. Participants are asked to choose the pair of numbers that represents the points that they wish to allocate to the ingroup member and the outgroup member.

There are three types of Tajfel matrices, which are presented twice to participants on separate pages of a booklet, and responses on these matrices represent four basic strategies of intergroup behavior. *Parity-fairness* is a strategy that awards equal points to ingroup and outgroup recipients. *Maximum ingroup profit* is a strategy that awards the highest absolute number of points to the ingroup, regardless of the points awarded to the outgroup. *Maximum joint profit* is a strategy that maximizes the total number of points distributed to both the ingroup and the outgroup. Finally, *maximum differentiation* is a strategy that maximizes the difference in points awarded to the two recipients, with the difference favoring the ingroup but sacrificing absolute ingroup profit. Thus, the strategy of intergroup differentiation is in competition with strategies based on more “rational” principles, such as being fair or obtaining maximum benefit for all.

One might expect that participants placed in this situation, in which group membership is arbitrary and meaningless, would allocate points on a random basis or allocate the points in a fair manner. However, this was not what was found. Rather, participants tended to give more points to members of the ingroup than to members of the outgroup. Indeed, participants preferred the

maximum differentiation strategy, even though it meant fewer absolute points for the ingroup compared with the maximum ingroup profit strategy. This striking finding, published in 1971, was contrary to predictions based on traditional theories of intergroup relations but has been found to be an extremely reliable effect.

The explanation of the minimal group effect was an important part of the development by Tajfel and John Turner of *social identity theory*. Drawing on the results of the minimal group studies and Tajfel's earlier work on categorization, Tajfel and Turner suggested that the process of making salient us-and-them distinctions changes the way people see themselves. When social categories are salient, individuals see themselves in terms of their social identity (rather than their personal identity) and are motivated to attain a positive social identity. Thus, the motivating principle underlying competitive intergroup behavior is seen as a desire for a positive and secure self-concept.

One way to achieve a positive social identity is through intergroup differentiation—favoring your own group relative to other groups. Social identity theory is often interpreted as stating that discrimination and ingroup favoritism are an inevitable consequence of categorization. However, although social categorization is a necessary precondition for discrimination, it is not sufficient—people must identify with the category and see it as part of their self-concept in order for discrimination to occur.

Early research on the social identity approach was dominated by studies using the MGP. One reason is that the MGP made it possible to manipulate the variables thought to be important in intergroup relations, such as status, legitimacy of status differentials, and permeability of group boundaries, and to test their independent effects on individual and collective behavior. However, this approach led to criticisms that the results of minimal group research might not be valid in broader, “real-world” contexts. Nevertheless, subsequent research that has used real-world groups and conflicts has borne out many of the insights obtained in minimal group research, demonstrating the power of social identity theory.

One point to note about the minimal group effect is that it is more reliable when participants are distributing positive outcomes, such as ostensible

salary increases, to members of the ingroup and the outgroup than when they are distributing negative outcomes, such as ostensible salary cuts. This phenomenon has been called the *positive-negative asymmetry effect*. The presence of the positive-negative asymmetry effect suggests that the MGP may be better suited to the assessment of ingroup favoritism than to outgroup derogation.

### Debate

The use of the MGP as a tool to study intergroup relations has been a topic of considerable debate. The MGP has obvious strengths: It eliminates the impact of external factors such as group history and prior bonds, and it reduces the cost and time associated with the use of real groups. However, the MGP is not without its critics.

One major criticism is that the minimal group effect is due simply to demand characteristics associated with the paradigm. That is, when a participant receives the information that there are two groups, one to which she or he belongs and one to which she or he does not belong, and is asked to allocate money to anonymous members of these groups, the participant may believe that intergroup differentiation is the only logical response to such a situation or is the response that is expected by the experimenter. However, studies by social identity researchers have demonstrated that demand characteristics are not solely responsible for the minimal group effect.

Another criticism of the MGP rests on the criterion used to categorize individuals into the two groups. Early studies categorized participants into groups on the basis of preferences (e.g., for the painter Klee or Kandinsky) or on the basis of performance (e.g., overestimators or underestimators). Thus, it is possible that participants perceive similarity with other group members, and this similarity underpins intergroup discrimination, as opposed to mere categorization into “us” and “them.” However, other research, in which arbitrary assignment to groups is used, such as a coin toss, has found the same minimal group effect.

Jacob Rabbie and his colleagues have argued that the minimal group effect results from mutual interdependence among individuals for the achievement of particular needs. The *behavioral interaction model* suggests that although participants

cannot allocate points directly to themselves, they can benefit indirectly through beliefs about reciprocity. That is, if participants allocate points to fellow ingroup members, they may believe that they will be allocated points *by* fellow ingroup members. However, research has generally found greater support for the explanations of the minimal group effect offered by social identity theory, based on identification and the need for a positive social identity, than for the explanations given by the behavioral interaction model.

In sum, several explanations other than social identity theory have been given for the minimal group effect. However, research has not supported alternative explanations based on conformity to cultural norms, the type of criterion used to categorize respondents, the unfamiliar character of the MGP, demand characteristics within the MGP, expected discrimination from outgroup members, or implied interdependence among participants.

Despite criticisms, the MGP remains an important tool for researchers interested in studying intergroup relations. Recent research has incorporated additional features designed to improve the external validity of the paradigm, such as placing the groups within a social context (e.g., branches within an organization) and by placing values on the points allocated in the matrices (e.g., salary increases and decreases). The minimal group effect is not merely an historical or experimental artifact but continues to be demonstrated and to influence current thinking on intergroup relations.

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*See also* Categorization; Discrimination; Identification and Commitment; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Tajfel, Henri

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## MINORITY COPING STRATEGIES

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Social groups such as ethnic and religious groups vary in a variety of ways, including whether they represent a numerical minority or majority within a culture and whether they are valued (high status) or devalued (low status) within that culture. In this entry, the term *minority* is used to refer to a social group or social identity that is devalued or stigmatized rather than numerically underrepresented. *Minority coping* refers to strategies that members of devalued groups use to manage emotion, thought, behavior, and their environment in order to deal with stress associated with possessing a devalued social identity.

Being (or being perceived to be) a member of a devalued minority group is often stressful. Members of minority groups are targets of negative stereotypes, social exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination, all of which can lead individuals to conclude that their social identity as a group member is devalued by society. Members of minority groups also often have poorer educational and occupational outcomes, less access to adequate housing and health care, and worse physical and mental health compared with members of socially valued groups. Some scholars believe that as a result of their negative experiences, members of devalued minority groups inevitably suffer negative psychological effects, such as low self-esteem. Research does not support this view. Although there is ample evidence that membership in a devalued minority group has many negative effects, it does not uniformly or invariably lead to negative psychological outcomes. Indeed, members of some devalued

minority groups (e.g., Black Americans) report higher self-esteem than do members of advantaged majority groups (e.g., White Americans).

This entry addresses theory and research about the ways that members of minority groups cope with their predicament. Perspectives on coping with social devaluation are discussed first, followed by a review of specific coping strategies. The entry concludes with a discussion of factors that influence the type of coping strategies that individuals employ and the effectiveness of coping.

### Coping With Minority-Related Stressors

Individuals differ in how they respond to membership in a devalued minority group. Responses differ depending on how individuals appraise their situation—for example, how much they perceive their identity to be threatened in a given situation. Stress appraisals can lead people to experience involuntary responses such as increased anxiety, increased blood pressure, vigilance for threat-related stimuli, decreased working memory capacity, and impaired performance on intellectually demanding tasks. Stress appraisals also lead to coping. *Coping* refers to voluntary attempts to regulate emotion, thought, behavior, and the environment. Coping is distinct from its outcomes—just because people engage in efforts to cope with a stressor does not mean their efforts are successful.

People who are targets of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination engage in a wide variety of cognitive and behavioral coping strategies. Classic texts such as Erving Goffman's *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* and Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* discuss some forms of coping used by targets of stigma and prejudice. Although scholars use different labels, several core dimensions of coping have been identified. One key distinction is between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused (or active) coping efforts are geared toward changing the problematic relationship between the person and the environment that is causing stress. For example, members of devalued minority groups may attempt to eliminate the stress associated with their group membership by changing themselves (e.g., attempting to shed a devalued identity), changing aspects of the situation that is generating stress (e.g., avoiding environments where

discrimination is likely), or changing others or the social context (e.g., confronting people who discriminate). Emotion-focused coping efforts are geared toward regulating negative or stress-related emotions rather than changing the problem that is causing the stress. An example of emotion-focused coping is lessening the sting of rejection by de-emphasizing the importance of a domain from which one is excluded.

In the next section, research examining minority coping strategies is organized according to the broad distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. The distinction is often blurred, however, because a single coping strategy may serve multiple functions. In addition, people typically use multiple coping strategies rather than a single strategy.

### Problem-Focused Minority Coping

Problem-focused coping strategies attempt to create an environment in which stressors (e.g., prejudice and discrimination) associated with minority group membership are reduced or absent. Some problem-focused coping efforts target the self to reduce the likelihood of experiencing the negative effects associated with membership in a devalued minority group. One example of a self-directed coping strategy is trying to *shed the identity* that is producing stress, such as by leaving the devalued minority group or attempting to shed the attribute that qualifies one for membership in a minority group. There are many examples of people attempting to cope with a devalued identity in this way. Overweight individuals, for example, spend millions of dollars each year on diet books and diet programs in order to be slim. People who regard themselves as physically unattractive spend millions of dollars on plastic surgery, and people who are addicted to drugs spend millions of dollars on therapy. This coping strategy of identity elimination, of course, is available only to individuals who have (or perceive themselves to have) control over shedding their stigma.

Another coping strategy is to attempt to *conceal* or disguise a minority identity from others in order to “pass” as a member of a more highly valued group. This strategy may enable people to protect themselves from personally experiencing discrimination and prejudice and allow them to preserve jobs or relationships with others who would reject

them if their true identity were known. Concealment, however, does not protect people from observing that others like themselves are rejected. Further, coping by concealment can be psychologically costly. Concealment prevents individuals from receiving social support from other minority group members. Concealing an identity also can make people feel inauthentic and untrue to themselves. In addition, attempting to conceal an aspect of the self can lead, ironically, to increased intrusive thoughts about precisely the thing one is trying to conceal. This development in turn can lead to increased stress and poorer mental and physical health. The coping strategy of concealment is available primarily to individuals whose stigmatizing social identity is not readily visible.

A third self-directed strategy used to cope with a devalued social identity is attempting to *compensate* for a devalued identity, such as by working harder, preparing more, or persisting longer in domains in which one is negatively stereotyped so as to improve one's likelihood of obtaining desired goals. People may also compensate by behaving in ways designed to disprove negative stereotypes of their group. Although the extra effort involved in compensation can help a person achieve desired outcomes, it can also backfire. Trying extra hard to overcome negative group stereotypes can lead to increased stress, impair working memory, and, ironically, cause poorer intellectual performance.

Problem-focused coping efforts also can be targeted at others or the larger social context. For example, members of devalued minority groups may cope by seeking to change others' negative attitudes toward their group through education or confrontation. They may try to prevent others from acting on prejudice or may engage in collective action to combat discrimination and change laws. Confrontational strategies aim to communicate discontent to others, thereby reducing the likelihood that threats to identity will reoccur. Confrontation can range from simply expressing displeasure with a discriminatory comment to participating in action to produce social change. Directly confronting perpetrators of discrimination has been shown to produce feelings of guilt in the perpetrator and reduce the likelihood that he or she will subsequently discriminate. Nevertheless, confronting discrimination is a relatively uncommon coping strategy. Research has shown that

minority individuals who claim they are victims of discrimination are perceived to be hypersensitive or troublemaking, even when it is very clear that they are in fact discriminated against. Thus members of minorities are afraid of being socially derogated and mistreated for complaining about discrimination.

Problem-focused coping efforts also can attempt to structure situations so as to avoid encountering minority-related stressors. For example, individuals may avoid situations in which they might be exposed to prejudice and discrimination or will be the sole member of their group. Overweight people, for example, may avoid places such as the beach or health club, which are especially likely to expose them to censure, and ethnic minority groups stereotyped as less intelligent may avoid academic settings. Members of minority groups also may selectively affiliate with members of their own group, thereby gaining a respite from prejudice. Complete segregation within one's minority group, however, may cut people off from many important life domains.

### Emotion-Focused Coping

Emotion-focused forms of coping attempt to minimize negative affect associated with minority-related stressors and protect individual and collective self-esteem. Several forms of emotion-focused coping with minority-related stressors have been identified. One is altering one's identification with the minority group by either strengthening or weakening it. Identification refers to the extent to which individuals value a social group to which they belong and integrate that group into their self-concept. Perceiving discrimination against the ingroup has been shown to lead to increased group identification among individuals already highly identified with their group but to decreased group identification among those not highly identified with their minority group initially. In general, members of lower-status minority ethnic groups (such as African Americans and Latinos) report being more highly identified with their ingroup (i.e., say that their group is more important to them) than do members of higher-status majority groups (such as Whites). When under stress, minority individuals may increase identification with their group because it provides them with

social support resources such as a sense of belonging, emotional support to cope with discrimination, and a positive conceptualization of the ingroup to contrast with the negative views present in the dominant culture. Hence selective affiliation with the ingroup may allow minority groups to reject negative stereotypes of their group that are present in the larger society. High identification with the ingroup often relates to positive outcomes such as greater self-esteem.

Another form of coping with devalued minority status is to selectively engage in social comparisons, that is, to compare one's own situation with that of other members of one's minority group rather than with the situation of members of dominant groups who have higher status and better outcomes. Comparing oneself to minority, rather than majority, group members can protect self-esteem and diminish negative affect in part because disparities between oneself and others are less likely to be noticed. However, socially comparing solely with minority group members can maintain the status quo by preventing minority individuals from becoming aware of inequalities in society between their own group and other groups.

Another coping strategy minority individuals may use is to attribute negative outcomes to discrimination based on minority status rather than to internal, stable features of the self, such as a lack of ability. In general, attributing negative events to external causes protects self-esteem better than does attributing negative events to internal causes. Attributing rejection to another person's prejudice is a more external attribution than attributing rejection to one's own shortcomings. Research has shown that blaming negative outcomes on prejudice instead of oneself can be an effective way of buffering self-esteem in the face of rejection if there are clear cues in the situation that prejudice was present. Attributing outcomes to prejudice in the absence of clear cues is not protective of self-esteem. Furthermore, since group membership is an aspect of the self, attributing negative outcomes to discrimination is not as protective of self-esteem as is making an attribution to a cause completely external to the self. There are also other downsides to attributing negative outcomes to discrimination. Doing so can dampen individuals' awareness of their own strengths and shortcomings and hence hinder accurate self-knowledge.

In addition, individuals who attribute negative outcomes to discrimination are often perceived negatively by others as complainers who fail to take responsibility for their own outcomes.

Members of minority groups also may cope with their situation by psychologically disengaging from domains in which they and other group members fare poorly. Psychological disengagement refers to separating one's self-esteem from a particular evaluative domain such that one's self-views are not affected by performance in that domain. For example, members of minority groups that are stereotyped to be less intelligent may disengage from academic situations by devaluing the importance of academic performance or by discounting the validity of academic performance evaluations. Through disengagement, minority individuals may preserve their self-esteem when they receive negative evaluations by deeming those evaluations insignificant. Although psychological disengagement can protect against threats to self-esteem, it may be a difficult strategy to employ when the culture highly values a domain in which one's group fares poorly. Disengagement may also reduce individuals' motivation to succeed in domains vital to success in broader society.

### Moderators of Coping

How a person copes with membership in a devalued minority group is shaped by characteristics of the person, situation, group, and larger sociocultural context. Individual factors that influence how a person copes with minority-related stressors include (a) the person's goals in a particular situation (for example, whether his or her goal is to feel good about the self or to get along with others), (b) the extent to which a person is identified with the minority group, (c) the extent to which a person expects to be a target of discrimination based on his or her group membership, (d) the extent to which the person internalizes society's negative views of the group, and (e) the person's beliefs about the stability and legitimacy of group status differences and the permeability of group boundaries. Situational factors that influence how people cope include the extent to which negative stereotypes and prejudice are blatant or subtle in the situation and whether members of the ingroup or

outgroups are present. For example, minorities are more likely to blame negative outcomes on discrimination when they are alone or with members of their own group than when they are with members of a dominant outgroup. Characteristics of the minority group also may influence coping. Minority groups differ in the extent to which membership is readily visible to others, perceived as under a person's control, and associated with a recognizable group identity. Concealment is not an option for individuals whose group membership is readily visible to others but is frequently used by those whose membership is not visible. Individuals who perceive they have some control over or can change their group membership are more likely to cope through self-focused efforts than are those who perceive no control over their group membership. Members of groups that are *entitative*, or have a recognizable group identity, are more likely to identify with ingroup members, attribute negative outcome to prejudice, seek out similar others for affiliation, and engage in collective efforts on behalf of their group than are those whose group has a less recognizable group identity.

### Conclusion

Members of devalued minority groups engage in varied efforts to regulate their emotion, cognition, behavior, and the environment. Coping efforts are influenced by characteristics of the person, the situation, the group, and the social context. Research on coping portrays members of devalued minority groups as active, motivated agents rather than passive victims. Current research does not point to a single minority coping strategy that is most effective. Rather, certain strategies are more appropriate depending on the person's goals and the particular situation encountered. Further, coping strategies that are successful in achieving one desired outcome (e.g., decreasing negative affect) may lead to other undesired outcomes (e.g., social isolation). Because prejudice and discrimination are social problems, the most effective strategies for coping are likely to be those that are directed toward changing the sociocultural context that fosters stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

*Brenda Major and Dina Eliezer*

*See also* Ageism; Collective Movements and Protest; Collective Self; Discrimination; Homophobia; Identification and Commitment; Minority Groups in Society; Prejudice; Racism; Sexism; Social Identity Theory; Stereotype Threat; Stereotyping

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## MINORITY GROUPS IN SOCIETY

Minorities are social groups whose members have less control over their fate than do members of dominant segments of society, who commonly hold minorities in low regard. Thus, minorities are defined with respect to their position within a society's hierarchy in terms of (a) power or control that group members have over their lives, (b) status or prestige afforded to group membership, or (c) both.

Frequently, minority groups are smaller than other groups in the society. African Americans in the United States and the French-speaking citizens of Canada are examples of numerically small minorities. Minorities, however, may be comparable in size to the rest of the society, as is the case with women in most societies. Or they can be more numerous than the rest of the society, as, for example, were Blacks in South Africa or Shiites in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's regime. Size in itself does not make a group a minority. Rather, it is the group's social position. Some groups with relatively few members may hold power or be high in status. Numerically small groups that exert disproportional power over the rest of the society (e.g., top military, political, or business leaders) or that enjoy high status (e.g., aristocracy in some European countries) constitute a separate social category that can be termed *elites*.

Salient characteristics shared by members of a minority group can be social, psychological, or physical. Thus, we may talk about racial, ethnic, gender, and religious minorities, as illustrated by the aforementioned examples. In addition, minority position may stem from political orientation (e.g., Libertarians), sexual orientation (e.g., gays), mental health (e.g., people with schizophrenia), physical health (e.g., AIDS patients), or physical disability (e.g., deaf people). For a minority to become a distinguishable social entity, most of its members must become aware of characteristics that distinguish them from the rest of the society and perceive that they are treated in the same, typically negative, manner by the dominant members of the society.

Disparity in power that distinguishes minorities from majorities leads to disparities in the distribution of positive and negative societal outcomes.

Minority groups get a smaller share of benefits but a larger share of social and economic burdens. For example, members of minority groups have less access to education, health care, and well-paid jobs than do members of the dominant segments of a society. At the same time, they are more likely to be unemployed, in poorer health, and incarcerated. It is not uncommon for a minority group to be kept apart (e.g., Jewish ghettos) or even directly persecuted (e.g., the Holocaust).

### Minorities as Targets: The Dominant Group's Reactions

In addition to these tangible disparities, there are important intangible burdens of being in a minority. These have been documented in social-psychological research on dominant groups' reactions toward minorities. Members of dominant groups tend to perceive minorities in a uniform, stereotypical way. Although characteristics believed to be associated with membership in a minority group need not always be negative, they tend overall to portray minorities as inferior. Minorities tend to be stigmatized, and membership in a minority group becomes a discrediting attribute. Minorities are suspected of being "less worthy until proven otherwise."

Negative views of minorities tend to be perpetuated through the process called *stereotype confirmation*. Members of the dominant group who enter interactions with minority members frequently hold negative expectations about the outcomes of such interactions. In a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, prejudiced individuals' expectations lead them to behave in a way that causes minority members to confirm their expectations. This is especially likely in social contexts that emphasize power and status differences (e.g., police interrogations, job interviews). For example, stereotypical expectations about minority members' violence may cause a police officer to treat a minority member aggressively. In response, the member may become violent, thus confirming the stereotype and feeding the vicious cycle of minority derogation.

*Stereotype threat* is another mechanism that may perpetuate negative stereotypes. Being aware that their negative behaviors, including their failures, are explained in terms of their group membership, minorities may develop the fear that their performance on achievement tasks will confirm the



stereotype. For example, being aware that they are stereotyped as inferior in mathematics, women taking a math test may become concerned that they may confirm the stereotype. Preoccupied with this concern, minority members end up underperforming and, therefore, confirming the stereotype.

Negative stereotypes and prejudice against minorities serve several purposes. Discrediting, for example, immigrants or gays makes those who devalue minorities feel superior. In addition to this symbolic benefit, those who devalue minorities may reap tangible benefits from doing so. Because of their group's historically privileged position, members of the dominant group often have a sense of entitlement to scarce resources in a society (e.g., jobs, education). When they perceive minorities as a competitive threat to what they believe "belongs" to them, members of the dominant group derogate minorities, especially if dominant-group members value hierarchical relations among groups in a society (*high social dominance orientation*). Their reactions justify their privileged positions and a view of existing power and status arrangements as fair. Interestingly, this system justification tendency need not be unique to members of the dominant group. Paradoxically, it sometimes may be observed among minority members who, in an apparent defiance of self-interest, may defend the status quo in the power hierarchy.

*Tokenism* is another mechanism that perpetuates the status quo. Members of the dominant group may admit very few, very qualified minority members (*tokens*) to positions that dominant-group members usually occupy, while denying access to all other members of the minority. Because they tend to perceive tokenism as a legitimate meritocracy, the dominant group members can use it to justify existing inequality. Although they are less likely to perceive tokenism as legitimate, minority members, including successful tokens, are less likely to challenge existing inequality through a collective action when positions of power are open to tokens than when they are completely closed to minorities.

### Minorities as Agents: Identity Protection Strategies

In spite of many disadvantages associated with their position, minority members can and do have

a positive view of themselves and their group. However, being targets of largely negative reactions, minorities need to protect their sense of worth. Strategies they use to protect their sense of personal worth (self-esteem) and value of group membership (social identity) range from disengagement from the dominant segments of a society to reinterpretation and restructuring of their mutual interactions.

In a form of *disengagement*, minorities learn to discount as irrelevant the negative feedback they repeatedly receive. For example, minority students failing in schools learn to attribute their failing to prejudice. Attribution of the failure to external factors rather than dispositions protects minority members' sense of self-worth, at least temporarily. However, its long-term effect may be detrimental in that it may undermine students' motivation and a sense of self-efficacy, ultimately resulting in helplessness.

Minority members who discount stereotypically negative feedback as irrelevant still need a point of reference to evaluate themselves. They find it in their own group. In addition to protecting their sense of self-worth, this ingroup comparison strengthens minority members' identification with the group. In turn, increased identification may further increase investments in the group and discounting of the dominant group, thus creating a self-sustaining cycle of reactions.

Withdrawing from the dominant culture is not the only way minorities can protect themselves against derogation. A strategy that allows them to remain engaged but protected is to be selective about dimensions of social comparison. For example, members of the Latino minority in the United States may emphasize their group's family orientation, a dimension valued by the dominant group, too. This strategic choice of a comparison dimension allows them to compare favorably with the dominant group and to be different on their own terms and not the terms imposed by the dominant group.

When the context narrows the choice of comparison dimensions to those on which a minority group is negatively stereotyped, minority members may protect themselves through downward comparison to another (typically minority) group that fares even worse on the salient dimension. For example, members of an older wave of immigrants

may compare their achievements with those of “new arrivals.” Although useful in protecting the older immigrant group’s social identity, this strategy may be an obstacle to forging coalitions among minority groups that the older group needs in order to improve its position in society.

In a direct defiance of the stereotype imposed by the dominant group, members of a minority group may *reevaluate* the stereotyped dimension, replacing the imposed negative interpretation with a new, favorable interpretation. An illustration of this strategy is the “Black is beautiful” motto espoused by African Americans. By celebrating their distinct characteristics, they turn what used to be marks of stigma into badges of honor.

Reevaluation of the stereotyped dimension, more than any other identity-protective strategy, may be a double-edged sword in intergroup relations. It may be a first step in changing the dominant group’s view of the minority and improving intergroup relations, but it also may exacerbate intergroup conflict. Improvement is more likely when the reevaluated characteristic contributes to realization of common goals shared by both minority and dominant groups.

When they feel threatened, members of minority groups may attempt to conceal their identity. For example, hiding their identity may well be the best survival strategy for gays in a homophobic environment or for Christians in present-day Iraq, as it was for Jews in Europe during the Nazi era. Although protective, this strategy is highly taxing because it requires that minority members hide who they are while trying to act what they pretend to be. Thus, there may be time limits to how long this strategy can be successfully employed.

### Rules of Engagement: Minority Group and Dominant Group Perspectives

Although negative stereotypes about minorities are pervasive, they are not harbored by all members of the dominant group. However, even if their reactions are positive at the explicit, conscious level, dominant group members may have negative reactions at the implicit, unconscious level. When this is true, dominant members’ interactions with minorities will be anxiety provoking. Every encounter with minority members puts to the test the

dominant members’ unbiased, nonprejudiced self-image. Tensions arising from such concerns tend to make their reactions toward minority members extreme (overly negative or overly positive) and highly variable.

Minority members, on the other hand, learn to anticipate negative reactions from the dominant group. As a result, they tend to be vigilant for signs of prejudice. Their “on guard” interaction style is a form of preemptive strike against possible prejudice and discrimination. Dominant group members’ anxiety and minority group members’ sensitivity make their interactions challenging, even when both sides enter them with the best of intentions.

One challenge that dominant and minority groups face in a pluralistic society is coming to an agreement about the value of their respective identities, customs, and cultures. The two most frequently advocated solutions are minority assimilation and multicultural integration. Assimilation occurs when minority members abandon their group values to adopt those of the dominant group. In contrast, integration occurs when minority members retain their group values and incorporate them into the larger society. The pros and cons of these two forms of intergroup relations are hotly debated in pluralistic societies, especially those with a large influx of immigrants. For example, members of the dominant groups in the United States and the European Union advocate assimilationist policies that require minorities to adopt a common identity as defined by the dominant group. In contrast, minorities prefer policies that allow them to integrate into the larger society by adopting a common identity that incorporates rather than negates their culture of origin.

These differential preferences have important implications for interventions aimed at improving intergroup relations. Most likely to succeed are those interventions that encourage members of the minority and dominant groups to work together toward common goals whose realization requires the distinct strengths of each group. This approach creates positive interdependence between groups such that each group benefits from the other group’s distinct qualities. Groups with complementary strengths and common goals are likely to develop mutual appreciation and therefore improve their relationships.

### Social Change Strategies: Minority Influence and Social Movements

Active minorities strive not only to protect themselves but also to reverse their position in society, from powerless and stigmatized to powerful and valued. As many historic examples illustrate, successful minorities try to engineer social change by altering existing power and status arrangements in a society. For example, the civil rights movement and the women's movement in the United States changed significantly the positions of African Americans and women in U.S. society. This is not to say that every minority-instigated change improves the human condition. Minority advocacy may fall anywhere along the ideological spectrum. Regardless of their agenda, however, all minorities advocating social change succeed when they sway dominant views so that many of their central tenets become commonplace, mainstream positions.

Given the disregard associated with being in a minority, active minorities advocating change must first address their targets' fear of being associated with a minority. This may be achieved by casting themselves as, for example, innovators or advocates of positions reflective of the zeitgeist. Emphasizing a common higher-order identity or values that they share with the targets increases the likelihood that the minority message is heard rather than immediately dismissed as deviant. For example, in their plea for acceptance, gays in Ireland emphasized "traditional Irish tolerance," evoking ethnicity and a core value they shared with their targets.

Minorities also must offer strong, cogent arguments for their position. Consistently repeating these arguments attracts their targets' attention. By persisting in their advocacy, especially in the face of possible punitive reactions, minorities demonstrate that they are certain of their position and committed to social change. This strategy may force their targets to think about the merits of the minority's request for change. If targets cognitively elaborate the minority's request and if the request is supported by strong arguments, targets may start questioning their view of the minority. Although they are not likely to accept immediately the minority's core requests, the targets' relatively open-minded consideration of the minority advocacy is likely to change the targets' position on

related issues. Over time, these changes on related issues may accumulate to put pressure on the targets to accept minority's core requests. The targets' eventual conversion represents a genuine, privately accepted change in its position.

Minorities are likely to adopt a collective strategy of social change to the extent that their members perceive that the only way to improve their condition is by acting together as a group. This typically happens when individual paths to social mobility are blocked. Once a large number of minority members joins forces to improve collectively their position in a society, they become a social movement. Social-psychological research shows that in addition to complex political, sociological, and organizational factors, identity factors play an important role in social movements. It is not identification with the minority group per se that turns minority members into activists. Rather, it is identification with a minority movement that underlies minority members' activism. Thus, a first challenge in minority groups' quest for change is to articulate their plight as a movement.

Successful minorities improve their position within a society, and in doing so, they change the society as a whole. If social change is framed in zero-sum terms such that minority gains are also the dominant group's losses, it likely will destabilize society. If, however, social change is framed in non-zero-sum terms of increased mutual acceptance and benefits, the overall increased integration may strengthen society.

### Conclusion

Minorities are social groups low in power and status that receive a smaller share of social goods but a larger share of social burdens than the dominant group. Negative stereotypes and prejudice against minorities serve to boost the dominant group members' sense of superiority and justify inequality between groups. To protect their sense of personal worth and value of their group membership, minorities use strategies that range from disengagement from the dominant segments of a society to reinterpretation and restructuring of their mutual interactions. These interactions are most likely to be mutually satisfactory in the context of collaborative efforts toward shared goals whose realization requires that minority and dominant groups

pull together their distinct but complementary strengths. Although minorities may exert social influence under a highly constrained set of conditions, they nonetheless may sway dominant views to effect social change. Their chances for success increase when they adopt a collective strategy of social change through a social movement. Clearly, in spite of or perhaps because of their position of low power and victimization in a society, minority groups can often serve as agents of social change.

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*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Collective Movements and Protest; Minority Coping Strategies; Minority Influence; Multiculturalism; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Social Comparison Theory; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; Stereotype Threat; Stigma; Tokenism

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unexplored by social scientists until the 1970s. Most prior research addressed the obvious impact that majorities have on the minority. Then French psychologist Serge Moscovici challenged this orthodox approach by reminding psychologists of the enormous power that minority groups sometimes wield. Think of the women’s movement, the struggle for racial equality waged by African Americans, Freud’s psychoanalytic circle of adherents, Galileo’s scientific advances, even the early Christian Church, and the (positive and negative) reactions they stimulated. All these groups or individuals began as feeble minorities, as voices in the wilderness, but over time emerged as powerful forces.

Moscovici maintained that the source of creativity, innovation, and social progress is the minority. He argued that if we are to understand how society changes, how innovations are adopted, then we had better understand the ways minorities wield their influence. This entry provides a historical context, defines some important terms, and then explores the growing body of research on minorities and their impact.

### Background

For many years in psychology, social influence research was much like a broad one-way street. Researchers focused on the impact of the powerful on the powerless, the strong on the weak, the expert on the uninformed, the majority on the minority. It was obvious that the powerful majority could exert tremendous pressure on the minority to do its bidding. This orientation assumed that most people wanted to belong to the majority group, an assumption borne out in considerable research. Threats of ostracism or expulsion from one’s social group are taken very seriously. They are a major source of the majority’s persuasive strength.

The stress on majority influence in social psychology was long-standing. It was encouraged by Solomon Asch’s famous line of judgment studies and carried forward by Carl Hovland’s persuasion experiments of the 1950s. Most influence studies focused on factors that affected the success (or failure) of the majority to induce the minority to do its bidding—or at least to agree publicly with the majority’s position.

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## MINORITY INFLUENCE

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*Minority influence* is the impact that minority groups have on majorities, an area relatively

## Definition of Minority Group

Minorities have been defined in a number of ways, along a number of dimensions, the most important of which are number, power, and normativeness. The simplest and most widely used dimension in research on minorities is number. The group with the most members is the majority, and those with fewer members constitute minority groups.

Power matters as well. The majority typically has considerably more clout than the minority. It has the muscle to reward or punish, to include or ostracize, and it uses this power to get its way and to maintain its superior position. Sometimes power and number are not synonymous. Before the end of White rule in South Africa, for example, the Black population was considered to be the minority, even though Blacks vastly outnumbered the White ruling class. The White power structure, however, wielded sufficient control to maintain its superior position. In this case, number did not define the minority, whereas a lack of power certainly did.

Finally, there is the normative dimension. Typically, the majority defines what is right or wrong, proper or improper. It is unusual for leaders of a victorious army to prosecute their soldiers for war crimes. Usually, it is the soldiers of the losing side who are defined as criminals—as those who violated the norms of good conduct, as defined by the winners (the majority). As such, the majority often views the minority as holding improper or illegitimate positions relative to the majority's definition of what is good and proper.

Putting all this together, we can define the typical minority group as one that is less numerous, wields less power, and holds counternormative beliefs relative to a larger, more powerful, and norm-defining comparison group, the majority. Sometimes, a group can be in the minority even if it does not satisfy all these criteria. For example, in many counties of the pre-Civil War South, Blacks far outnumbered Whites. Yet given their lack of power, Blacks clearly were the minority group, despite their numeric superiority. Further, their behavior often was branded as quaint, improper, or demonic (depending on the orientation of the perceiver) because it was contrary to standards defined by the majority as proper, appropriate, or godly.

## Research Studies

The early research on minority influence was concerned with determining whether the minority actually could affect the perceptions or attitudes of the majority. Because this had not been established, it was a necessary first step to jump-start this area of investigation. In an early representative study, Moscovici and his colleagues had groups of six judges view a series of 36 colored slides and report their perceptions of the color of each slide immediately after it was presented. The slides were uniformly blue, but two of the six judges (a minority) reported them as being green on each of the trials. Of course, these two judges were confederates of the experimenter. Over the course of the judgments, this two-person minority affected the estimates of the other participants. The effect was not great—about 9% of the time, the naive participants agreed with the confederates—but it did show that the minority could influence the majority, even when the correct judgment was clearly obvious.

The two-person minority could not impose its will on the four-person majority, so how did it have any influence? Perhaps the consistent minority was viewed as confident, certain, or brave, and thus worthy of respect. A second study bolstered this possibility. It showed that when the minority respondents were not absolutely consistent—that is, when they responded “green” on only 24 of the 36 judgment trials, their impact on majority respondents' judgments evaporated. They had no effect at all.

From this research, social psychologists deduced two important facts: First, the minority *can* affect the majority, even when the majority's view is clearly correct; second, unless the minority is unanimous and unequivocal, it is unlikely to have much of an effect. These results are difficult to understand from a rational perspective, but a number of useful theories have been devoted to capturing this understanding.

Moscovici's theoretical explanation for minority influence effects was based on majority group members' curiosity. When members of their own group advocate a position at odds with the majority's view, the members of the majority respond, “Why do they think that?” They focus on the minority's position and try to make sense of it. In

so doing, some might be persuaded by the minority. There is a problem, however, with agreeing with the minority, because it forces the person who has been persuaded to move from the safe, majority camp to that of the minority, an uncomfortable spot sometimes. As such, immediate agreement with the minority is most often resisted. However, as time goes by, the minority's arguments sometimes are accepted. Somehow, the threat of being associated with the minority dissipates, and minority influence becomes evident, even though it is delayed.

An interesting alternative to this explanation was proposed by Charlan Nemeth, whose theory on the workings of the minority still claims adherents today. She argued that being exposed to a minority viewpoint caused the majority group member to think divergently—to consider a wide range of possible solutions to the problem that was posed by minority dissent. On the other hand, being exposed to the majority viewpoint caused the deviant member to think convergently—to focus on the specific solution or perception suggested by the majority and to ignore other possibilities. Viewed in this way, minority dissent may be seen as stimulating creative thinking and problem solving, whereas the majority fosters conservative, rote, well-learned responses.

The implications of Nemeth's ideas are interesting and anticipate the results found in the minority influence literature. First, her theory, like Moscovici's, suggests that minority influence, if it occurs, should come about after some amount of cognitive work. That is, it will not happen immediately but will be delayed. In addition, if the minority's unexpected position causes divergent thinking in majority group members, then it seems likely that it might have an effect on beliefs that are associated with, but not identical to, the topic under consideration.

So if a liberal Episcopal priest argues for a liberalization of abortion policy to a group of conservative Roman Catholic bishops, it is not likely that they would adopt his or her position. However, Nemeth's research suggests that the bishops might become slightly more liberal on the issue of contraception, a practice that is related to abortion, in that both have to do with reproduction. This example seems far-fetched. Conservative bishops would probably never be swayed by the dissident

position of a liberal Episcopal priest, especially on issues of abortion and contraception.

What really would happen? At best, they would simply disregard the priest's position and view it as unworthy of their consideration. Who is this person to tell us what to believe? This response is common when the majority reacts to an outgroup minority's deviant views. To put it another way, the majority members would not see a dissident priest as part of their group—this person is an outsider, and what he or she has to say about these issues is not only false but irrelevant.

### *Factors That Affect Response to Minority Groups*

This likely response introduces another important feature of minority influence research that was neglected in early studies, namely, the membership group of the minority dissident. In many circumstances, the minority may not belong to the group it is trying to influence. This is important because we use our membership groups to help us identify who we are. As such, we are more sensitive to disagreements with members of our own group (the ingroup) than to disagreements with members of other groups (outgroups).

We can safely ignore the rants of outgroup members unless they are threatening the ingroup, in which case they have to be engaged and discredited. However, disagreement with members of the ingroup is unexpected and uncomfortable—they are, after all, just like us. In those circumstances, we carefully consider what they have to say. When the disagreement does not threaten the very existence of the group in which we share a common membership, and from which we derive our social identity, we will consider the ingroup dissidents' position.

Response to the dissident position depends on a number of factors. One of the most important of these is the strength of their message. Obviously, if the position is weak and unconvincing, it is not going to be influential. Out of politeness, the majority might acknowledge the importance of the ingroup minority's position, and certainly its right to raise the issue, but in the end, the majority will not concede to the minority.

Much the same outcome is apparent when the minority's message is strong and cogent. The change the minority seeks through its persuasive

presentation rarely occurs—at least not immediately. However, as time passes, some researchers have found that the initial rejection of the minority's position later gives way to acceptance. How this happens can tell us much about the ways minority influence works and has been the focus of considerable debate.

When confronted with a dissident ingroup communication, the majority will process the information carefully and with little defensiveness. This course allows the minority the chance to vent and to attempt to alleviate a perceived injustice. However, the majority is unlikely to accept the minority's position, for to do so might destabilize the group, resulting in a shift in the power structure in the group and generally threaten the status quo.

So a convention is set up that allows the relatively free exchange of ideas between ingroup minorities and the majority, but with the implicit understanding that no change will occur. This would seem a recipe for consistent minority failure, but there is more to it than this. Considerable research has shown that as a result of their open-minded processing of the ingroup minority's information, majority attitudes and beliefs that are related to (but not identical with) the focus of the minority's position might be affected.

For example, if the minority were arguing for the elimination of capital punishment, a practice of which the majority approves, the minority's position might have no immediate effect on majority group members' attitudes. However, if the ingroup minority's message is strong and persuasive, it is probable that the majority will move to a more lenient position on attitudes that are related to capital punishment, such as beliefs regarding punishment on noncapital offenses. Indirect attitude change of this nature is a common feature of much research on minority influence. It is an extremely intriguing feature of minority influence because the change on related attitudes can occur even if those particular attitudes are never even mentioned in the minority's persuasive appeal.

This is not to suggest that the minority can never persuade the majority on the issue that is the focus of the minority's complaint. Rather, the influence is not immediate. It is conceivable that the minority will prevail on the focal issue; however, it will not prevail immediately. Many studies in the minority influence literature reveal a clear minority influence

effect after a delay of some time. It also should be said that there are plenty of studies in this literature that *do not* show this delayed effect.

What accounts for this irregular pattern of results? Why should the minority sometimes cause delayed focal change and sometimes fail to do so? There are many possible explanations for this apparent irregularity, but the one that seems most probable is derived from the *leniency contract*. This explanation begins with some easily accepted propositions. First, attitudes are not held in isolation but rather are linked in people's minds. People's beliefs regarding global warming, for example, probably are linked to their attitudes regarding conservation. This set of linkages may be viewed structurally, with some attitudes more closely linked than others. Changing one element of the attitude structure may unbalance the structure. People do not like imbalance, and so this unpleasant state will be redressed somehow.

If an element of the structure (an attitude or a belief) is changed, but not too drastically, the inertia of the overall belief system might be sufficient to undo the change as time goes on. Thus, the changed belief will revert to its original position. However, if the change is drastic, this simple reversion is not likely. In that case, the change will pressure the entire structure to adjust to the newly revised belief, and the attitudes that are most likely to change to accommodate this new belief are the ones that were the focus of the original persuasive communication.

In terms of minority influence effects, this explanation, which was proposed and supported in research by William Crano and Xin Chen, illustrates how the process works. First, the ingroup minority proposes a position that is contrary to the general opinion of the majority. The minority's message, however, is strong and compelling and thus is difficult to ignore or brush off. In reaction, the majority refuses to budge on the focal issue; however, it does modify its position on beliefs related to the focal issue. A few weeks later, those who have shown the greatest change on the related attitudes have readjusted their attitudes on the focal issue as well. The attitude change the minority was seeking takes time, but it does occur. However, a different pattern is evident among those in the majority who showed rather little indirect change. For these individuals, the small changes in indirect

attitudes apparently were not sufficient to unbalance the overall system of beliefs. Thus, when these participants return later, their focal attitude remains unchanged, and the indirect attitude change that was observed has returned to the original position. The work of the minority was undone by the inertia of the overall belief structure.

### How Minority Groups Bring About Change

So how does the minority bring the majority to its way of thinking? First, it establishes its identity with the group it is attempting to influence. The minority must convince the majority that they are one and the same, that they all share the same identity. This is more difficult in some instances than in others, but failure to establish this connection seriously reduces the likelihood that the minority will prevail. Then, the minority must present its case as persuasively as possible. A strong and compelling message is essential.

Further, the minority must never deviate from its position. Compromise or a break in the unanimity of the minority is a recipe for failure. Having presented its case, the minority should not expect immediate results but rather attend to changes on issues related to the thrust of its message and endeavor to enhance these changes as well. Doing so will facilitate a delayed change on the central issue.

Obviously, this is not a quick or easy process, but it is essential if the minority hopes to influence the majority to adopt its position. On some issues, the first step is the hardest—how can a disadvantaged minority “prove” that its members are part and parcel of the majority? Often, they adopt a higher-order identification. In the civil rights movement in the United States, the minority gained traction when it shifted the terms of identity. Sure, members argued, we are of different races, but we share the common bond of being Americans. This took some time to sell, but when enough of the majority accepted this simple fact, progress toward racial equality was facilitated. Minority influence is not immediate, and the process is not easy, but it can be done and may indeed be, as Moscovici suggested, a major source of creativity, social progress, and innovation.

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*See also* Anticonformity; Asch, Solomon; Conformity; Leniency Contract; Minority Coping Strategies; Moscovici, Serge; Opinion Deviance; Social Deviance

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## MODERN FORMS OF PREJUDICE

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Significant improvements in intergroup relations during the past century have been spurred by heightened awareness of the problem of prejudice and its inherent injustice, legal prohibitions against discrimination, changing norms, and individuals' adoption of less prejudiced personal attitudes. Nonetheless, an undercurrent of internalized bias remains for many people. Individuals who may not outwardly express traditional forms of prejudice may harbor internal prejudices. Theories of modern prejudice seek to provide a psychological account of this incongruity. This entry reviews the historical context of prejudice, discusses a number of forms of modern prejudice, and looks at tools for detecting these less overt attitudes.



## History and Background

Many societies proudly profess that they are founded on principles of democracy and fairness, although prejudice is often a deeply ingrained part of their history and practices. For example, Gunnar Myrdal wrote of the “ever-raging conflict” in U.S. society in his 1944 book, *An American Dilemma*. On one hand are general principles of fairness, Christian precepts, and equality; on the other hand are the realities of individual and group motivations, needs, and habits that foster prejudice.

Historically, individuals’ prejudices have been encouraged and legitimized with the support not only of norms and customs but of laws. Such widespread sanctioning of inequality helped to keep any conflict people might experience over their prejudices at bay. Prejudice was expressed in unabashed and uncensored ways during these times, yielding consequences ranging from open verbal disparagement and segregation to lynching and genocide. Such overt prejudice is often referred to as “old-fashioned” prejudice.

After World War II and the Nazis’ attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, many started to see prejudice in a different light and to entertain the idea that it might be wrong and illegitimate. In 1954, Gordon Allport published his eminent book, *The Nature of Prejudice*. Allport treated prejudice as a social problem and, among many other contributions, described the concept of “prejudice with compunction.” Specifically, Allport contended that most people experience compunction or remorse in connection with their prejudices because they realize at an intellectual level that prejudice is wrong.

In U.S. society, important movements soon followed Allport’s publication that further reinforced the idea that individual and institutionalized prejudice was unethical and immoral. The U.S. civil rights movement (1955–1968) especially encouraged greater egalitarianism and reductions in prejudice. The “American dilemma” about which Myrdal had written became a salient reality for many people as the conflict between their self-image as decent and fair people and their continuing prejudice toward certain groups became more apparent.

With changing laws (e.g., desegregation) and social norms, people’s outwardly expressed attitudes eventually became less prejudiced. For

example, surveys showed that 68% of White people supported racially segregated schools in 1942, compared with 4% in 1995. In fact, this decline was so marked that the researchers claimed that racial stereotypes in the United States were fading. Researchers also noted declines in negative beliefs related to women and, to some extent, in prejudice toward gay men and lesbians.

Despite the evidence suggesting prejudice is becoming a thing of the past, the story is not quite that straightforward. Researchers found that negative stereotypes were not fading but rather changing in content and that prejudice was decreasing in outward expressions only. More subtle measures uncovered biased behavior in many forms. For example, an influential review article published in 1980 summarized many studies of subtle bias conducted around that time. These experiments showed that White people in the United States treated Black people in the United States more negatively than they treated Whites in helping situations (i.e., were less likely to give help to Blacks than to Whites), in interpersonal aggression studies, and in their non-verbal communication.

This phenomenon is certainly not confined to the United States. Similar findings are widely reported between nationals and immigrant groups in many European countries and, more recently, between nationals and immigrant groups in Canada. Researchers began to wonder whether people were complying with egalitarian and non-prejudiced ideology when they were obviously under surveillance but had not truly internalized the motivation to respond without prejudice and whether they had actually reduced their prejudiced feelings and beliefs. Researchers suggested that prejudice remained solidly entrenched beneath a veneer of professed egalitarianism.

Against this backdrop, researchers proposed a variety of theories, starting in the mid-1980s, that sought to describe and explain these modern forms of prejudice. The predominant theories of modern forms of prejudice are modern/symbolic racism, aversive racism, racial ambivalence, and prejudice with compunction.

## Conceptualizations of Modern Prejudice

An element of intrapersonal conflict is inherent in the various conceptualizations of modern prejudice.

That is, modern forms of prejudice are distinct from old-fashioned, blatant prejudice in that people experience a conflict between forces that encourage them to appear to others and perhaps even to themselves as if they are nonprejudiced and forces that encourage negative outgroup evaluations and behavior. This conflict may be consciously recognized, or people may be unaware of their conflicting tendencies and resulting coping responses. This is in contrast to old-fashioned prejudice, in which people are at liberty to openly express their inwardly felt biases.

What is common to each conceptualization of modern prejudice is that certain factors discourage an individual from holding and expressing prejudices while, simultaneously, other factors act to sustain prejudice. Although the various forms of modern prejudice are conceptually and empirically distinct, the same people may vacillate at different times in their lives or across situations in the form of modern prejudice that they exhibit.

### *Modern/Symbolic Prejudice*

The *theory of symbolic racism* (which is very similar to another theory, called the *modern racism theory*) describes a form of prejudice thought to apply mostly to the prejudice of right-wing White conservatives in the United States toward Black people. According to this form of prejudice, people adhere to abstract principles of justice and so do not want to be seen as prejudiced, which leads them to avoid expressions of outright bigotry. At the same time, symbolic racists experience anti-Black feelings that they acquired in preadult life through socialization. These feelings are not necessarily consciously recognized and are experienced as racial anxiety and antagonism. In addition, symbolic racists adhere strongly to traditional conservative values, including individualism (the idea that hard work brings success), and believe that Blacks violate such values.

The theory of symbolic racism maintains that negative feelings toward Blacks are justified and rationalized in a political belief system with the tenets that (a) discrimination toward Blacks is largely a thing of the past, (b) Blacks' lack of progress stems from their unwillingness to work hard enough, (c) Blacks are making too many demands and want results too fast, and (d) what Blacks get outweighs what they deserve.

### *Aversive Racism*

The *theory of aversive racism* describes a form of prejudice toward Blacks that many White people in the United States with liberal ideologies and strong egalitarian values are thought to hold. Given their strong desire to treat all people as equals, aversive racists desire to maintain a nonprejudiced image in the eyes of others and also in how they see themselves. Aversive racists therefore do not consciously act in obviously unfavorable or discriminatory ways toward Blacks. However, aversive racists have unacknowledged prejudiced tendencies related to negative feelings toward Blacks in the form of discomfort, uneasiness, disgust, and sometimes fear.

Three primary factors play a role in fostering and sustaining aversive racists' prejudiced tendencies. The first is the human need to simplify the complex social world by categorizing and stereotyping people. Second, motivational factors such as the need for self-esteem and superior status encourage racial bias. Third, sociocultural factors such as learning negative societal stereotypes at an early age and unfavorable media depictions of Blacks foster aversive racists' negative feelings toward Blacks.

The theory of aversive racism maintains that people engage in nondiscriminatory behavior and do not show their negative racial bias when social norms clearly dictate what would be appropriate behavior and when it is not possible to rationalize prejudicial biases. However, aversive racists will treat Blacks unfavorably when the normative structure is not salient or is ambiguous or when a negative response can be rationalized as unrelated to race.

Consider an example. A well-known finding in social psychology called the *bystander effect* indicates that people are much less likely to help someone (e.g., someone who has dropped a large stack of papers) if other bystanders are present who might also offer their aid. Applying this effect to aversive racism theory, researchers demonstrated that Whites showed the traditional bystander effect when the person who needed help was also White. More important, when the person who needed help was Black, White participants not only helped less when bystanders were present than when bystanders were absent, but Whites were less than half as likely to help a Black person than a White person when bystanders were present.

Presumably, norms clearly dictated helping regardless of victim race when there were no bystanders present, so equal help was given to Blacks and Whites. With other bystanders, the excuse “I thought someone else would help” becomes possible. This nonracial rationalization results not only in less help for Whites and Blacks alike (i.e., the bystander effect) but in especially low rates of helping for Blacks. Aversive racists differ from modern/symbolic racists inasmuch as they do not deny the existence of prejudice and discrimination but seek to attribute their discriminatory actions to factors other than prejudice.

### *Ambivalent Racism Theory*

The theory of racial ambivalence maintains that many White people in the United States are socialized to hold two conflicting value orientations that have conflicting implications for their attitudes toward and responses in relation to Black people. One value orientation is humanitarianism–egalitarianism, which has the ideal of social justice and concern for others’ well-being at its core. This value orientation encourages sympathetic reactions and attitudes among Whites toward Blacks, given their plight as a disadvantaged and mistreated minority group. The other value orientation is individualism, which involves adherence to elements of the Protestant work ethic, including personal freedom, self-reliance, discipline, dedication to work, and achievement. This orientation feeds anti-Black prejudices because people attribute negative behaviors that are stereotypically associated with Blacks (e.g., crime and unemployment) to personal weaknesses rather than to situational factors.

Awareness of one’s simultaneous tendencies toward pro- and anti-Black attitudes is experienced as psychological ambivalence. Individuals are motivated to alleviate the discomfort produced by their ambivalent attitudes and do so by amplifying their positive or negative responses toward Blacks, thereby discrediting whichever attitudinal inclination is not being acted on. For example, Whites may evaluate a Black criminal particularly harshly and link a multitude of personal faults to the criminal, thereby discrediting the relevance of their pro-Black attitudes to their evaluations.

### *Prejudice With Compunction*

The three forms of modern prejudice discussed thus far all posit that prejudice is maintained through rationalization and justification processes. People are either unwilling or unable to recognize their racial biases, so they persist unchallenged. Borrowing from Allport’s classic notion of *prejudice with compunction*, other researchers have argued that people may become aware of their racial biases, feel guilty about their inherent inconsistency with egalitarian principles and nonprejudiced personal motivations, and attempt to change their prejudiced ways. This conceptualization is rooted in Patricia Devine’s distinction between the automatic and controlled components of stereotyping and prejudice. Devine argued that, due to a lifetime of socialization and a multitude of factors that encourage intergroup stereotyping and prejudice, cultural group-based associations come to be automatically activated among most people.

For example, most Whites learn early in life the stereotype that Blacks are unintelligent. This association becomes strong through repeated activation until it can be activated automatically (i.e., with little conscious attention, awareness, or intent). In contrast, people’s low-prejudice attitudes often come to mind only with the operation of controlled processes, which require conscious attention, awareness, and intention for their activation. The result is that people may apply their automatically activated associations to intergroup situations before they have had the input of their low-prejudice attitudes. Thus, much like a bad habit, stereotypes and biased evaluations of various groups may determine impressions, judgments, and behaviors before people can consciously take their low-prejudiced attitudes into account.

However, researchers have also found that many people become aware that they are responding in ways that are more prejudiced than their personal standards suggest are appropriate. For example, a White woman may find herself clutching her purse when passing a Black pedestrian on the street and then may realize that her behavior is inappropriate. Much research has shown that people experience guilty feelings when they realize that they have responded with prejudice despite their personal low-prejudiced standards. Studies have also shown that such guilt often instigates

attempts to learn how to control and change patterns of prejudiced responding or to de-automatize the “prejudice habit” through self-regulation.

### *Beyond White–Black Prejudice*

Although modern prejudice has been studied in large part in the White–Black U.S. context, the theories can be applied to other intergroup prejudices within and outside the United States. Some research has indicated that the tenets of symbolic racism also apply to modern prejudice toward women in the United States and to modern prejudice in Europe. For example, although there are norms against discrimination and overt racism in the Netherlands, symbolic and aversive racism have been reported as distinct phenomena among Dutch residents toward ethnic immigrants. Symbolic racism is expressed toward Asians and West Indians in Britain, and aversive racism toward Asians has been studied in Canada. Prejudice with compunction has been studied in connection with women and gays in the United States, and it has been applied in other countries also.

### Tools for Measuring Modern Prejudice

Explicit measures such as surveys and opinion polls rely on individuals’ willingness and ability to accurately report their attitudes and beliefs. Modern forms of prejudice cannot be assessed directly with such obvious questions about intergroup attitudes because of people’s desire to maintain a nonprejudiced image. Thus, a variety of indirect means for assessing modern prejudice have been devised.

Symbolic racism is assessed according to extent of agreement with political attitudinal items such as “Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.” The aversive form of racism cannot be measured with any sort of explicit opinion or attitudinal items, because people sincerely embrace nonprejudiced attitudes. However, it can be assessed indirectly through behavioral responses when norms for nonprejudiced responding are ambiguous or racial bias can be justified in nonprejudiced ways—such as in the helping research described earlier. Ambivalent racism can be assessed by measuring pro- and anti-Black attitudes related to egalitarianism and individualism, respectively.

Finally, because prejudice with compunction involves an awareness of the discrepancy between how one actually responds in biased ways and how one personally believes one should respond, it can be assessed more directly. Specifically, the *Should–Would Discrepancy Scale* asks individuals to consider various situations and indicate how they would respond in the situations and how they should respond. For instance, Whites may report that they find themselves feeling uncomfortable around Blacks even though they believe that they should not and such discrepancies lead to feelings of guilt.

Regardless of the form of modern prejudice, all entail negative feelings and beliefs that can be assessed with implicit measures. Relying on computer-based reaction-time methods, these measures tap into the automatic activation of associations and attitudes in ways that largely cannot be altered or inhibited. One such measure involves stereotype or evaluative priming. For example, a stereotype-priming task involves the rapid (and sometimes subliminal) presentation of group exemplars (e.g., a picture of a Black person) followed by targets (e.g., the word *lazy*). Reaction times to targets are measured, and bias is indicated when responses to stereotypic words are faster when the prime is a member of the stereotyped group compared with when it is not. The well-known *Implicit Association Test* measures the ease with which people can associate category exemplars (e.g., Blacks vs. Whites) with evaluative concepts (e.g., positive vs. negative words). Bias is calculated by the difference in reaction times between evaluatively congruent pairs (e.g., Blacks and poison) and evaluatively incongruent pairs (e.g., Blacks and paradise).

The *Weapons Identification Task* assesses speed and errors when individuals are asked to quickly identify whether various targets (typically Black and White males) are holding guns or neutral objects. The typical finding is that White people are faster to identify Blacks holding guns than Whites holding guns, and White people are more likely to erroneously decide that Blacks are holding guns than they are to reach the same decision for Whites. These implicit measures and similar others all bypass people’s consciously held intergroup attitudes to reveal biases that may be deeply rooted in the subconscious.

## Conclusion

Theories of modern forms of prejudice provide explanations for the incongruities between many individuals' nonprejudiced outward expressions and internalized feelings of bias. The new measurement techniques that tap these internal and often unconscious biases enable researchers to explore the impact of these internalized biases on behavior and the extent to which they are amenable to change. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of modern forms of prejudice, combined with skillful measurement techniques, provides a framework and the tools for developing and evaluating interventions for the reduction of prejudice and discrimination.

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*See also* Ambivalent Sexism; Aversive Racism; Conservatism; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Implicit Prejudice; Modern Racism; Modern Sexism; Prejudice; Protestant Work Ethic; Racial Ambivalence Theory; Racism; Stereotyping; Symbolic Racism

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## MODERN RACISM

*Modern racism* is a form of prejudice against African Americans that developed in the United States after the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It is characterized by beliefs that racism is not a continuing problem, that African Americans should put forth their own efforts to overcome their situation in society without special assistance, and that African Americans are too demanding and have gotten more than they deserve. At the roots of modern racism are basic beliefs that Blacks violate cherished U.S. values. The idea that the quality of prejudice toward Blacks can shift over time has spawned important generalizations of the theory to other groups, such as women (see the entry titled “Modern Sexism”), recent immigrant groups (including Asians and Latinos in North America and Turks in Europe), the obese, and gays, among others.

The term *modern racism* was introduced in 1981 by John McConahay in the literature on group processes and intergroup relations, but the theory behind it had emerged in 1971 with the name *symbolic racism*. Because modern racism theory was derivative of symbolic racism theory, the two positions were originally closely aligned conceptually and, in fact, difficult to distinguish substantively. However, in recent years, developments in symbolic racism (e.g., concerning the origins of the attitudes) have distinguished the positions more clearly. This entry examines modern racism and relevant criticisms, describes measurement tools, and contrasts the concept with related theories.

### The Nature and Origins of Modern Racism

Modern racism is among the most widespread forms of verbally expressed negative racial attitudes in the United States today. It is thought to have replaced, to a substantial degree, older and more blatant forms of prejudice, characterized by beliefs that Blacks are a biologically inferior race and that institutionalized segregation and formal discrimination against Blacks are appropriate social policies. The civil rights movement made these old-fashioned beliefs largely socially unacceptable, and although old-fashioned racism still

exists in the United States, it largely has been replaced by modern racist beliefs.

Modern racism is also one of the most powerful influencers of racial politics in the United States today. It powerfully predicts voting against political candidates who are Black or sympathetic toward Blacks and voting on policies designed to assist Blacks, such as affirmative action and school integration programs. It also strongly influences policies that do not directly mention Blacks but disproportionately impact the African American community, including those involving welfare, unemployment, crime, and the death penalty. It predicts these political attitudes better than conservatism, education, identification as a Democrat or Republican, and, most important, personal interests in the outcomes of a vote.

One important characteristic of modern racism is the assumption that it is learned during socialization. In other words, people acquire modern racist attitudes through their parents, their peers, and the media. Emerging research suggests that modern racism is acquired as early as adolescence (earlier than other political attitudes, such as conservatism) and that it is stable throughout the life span.

As a theoretical construct, modern racism is not tied to threats to a White person's interests or personal experiences with African Americans. This is a point of some confusion: Some concepts such as *symbolic threat*, which seem to be similar to modern racism, assert that prejudiced beliefs are rooted in threats that Blacks pose to Whites' worldview. To be clear, the theory of modern racism was designed from the beginning to demonstrate the opposite, namely, that powerful negative racial attitudes can be rooted in constructs other than threat, fear, or personal interests.

### Theoretical Criticisms

Naturally, a construct as popular as modern racism has received considerable critical attention in the literature. These criticisms have helped shape our understanding of the modern racism construct. One major criticism is that the construct of modern racism really is not racism at all. Conservatives have suggested that modern racism actually captures core nonracial principles behind conservatism (such as opposition to excessive government intervention and that the mention of Blacks is incidental

for the construct, with the conclusion that racism is not an important political force today. Although strong evidence exists for an important link between raw negative racial attitudes and modern racism attitudes, this controversy is yet unresolved.

A second major criticism takes the exact opposite position, suggesting that modern racism really is racism, but not a particularly "modern" form of racism. These critics say that it is the same thing as old-fashioned racism but put in more socially acceptable terms. As they see it, regardless of the language used, modern racism serves the same function of rationalizing continuing discrimination against Blacks. However, although blatant prejudice toward Blacks and modern racism have some connection, they still act independently in predicting political attitudes. A person does not have to hold deep-seated blatantly racist views to react in a punitive manner on perceiving that Blacks (or any group) undermine cherished values. Nevertheless, this controversy, too, is an ongoing one.

### The Modern Racism Scale

Modern racism is probably most well known through the *Modern Racism Scale*, which is among the most commonly used methods for identifying modern racism. The original intent of the scale was to create a theoretically driven and more indirect measure of racism relative to old-fashioned, or blatant, forms of racism. The scale is typically administered using paper-and-pencil surveys or through telephone interviewing. The items capture the themes described earlier, such as agreement with the statement "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder, they could be just as well off as Whites." The original scale (developed in 1986) has since been updated with the *Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale*.

Some psychologists have criticized the Modern Racism Scale, suggesting that it does not capture racism but instead individuals' sensitivity to giving politically correct responses about race and their motivations to appear unprejudiced. Although the Modern Racism Scale may not be a true pipeline to people's negative racial attitudes and other measures should be considered, the scale and its variants have proven to be useful theoretical tools for understanding many race-related processes.

### Relations to Other Forms of Racism

Modern racism has many similarities to other concepts in use in the social sciences. It is essentially identical to symbolic racism and *racial resentment* and is related to concepts such as *subtle prejudice*, *racial ambivalence*, and *aversive racism*. Although these latter theories have their own unique perspectives, they all share the perceptions that the nature of racist expression has changed over time, that current expressions do not appear as much like racism as older expressions did, and that these newer expressions nevertheless contain a certain quality of racism.

Because modern racism is measured by means of survey methodology and requires deliberate responses, it is considered an explicit assessment of prejudice. It can be contrasted with implicit assessments of prejudice, such as the *Implicit Association Test*, which measures how easily negative versus positive concepts are associated with African American representations (such as names or faces) because negative concepts operate at an unconscious or automatic level. Although there appears to be some relationship between modern racism and implicit measures of negative racial bias, the evidence is mixed. What seems certain is that modern racism is better at predicting voting behavior and policy preferences, whereas implicit measures are better at predicting nonverbal and subtle behaviors in Whites' interactions with Blacks. The exact theoretical relationship between modern racism and implicit associations remains a point of controversy.

### Conclusion

Despite the controversies surrounding the theory of modern racism and its relatives (most notably symbolic racism), what is agreed even by the theory's harshest critics is that modern racist beliefs represent some of the most powerful attitudes underlying current U.S. racial politics. The precise nature of modern racism, however, is an important lingering question.

P. J. Henry

See also Ambivalent Sexism; Aversive Racism; Conservatism; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Implicit Prejudice; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Modern

Sexism; Prejudice; Protestant Work Ethic; Racial Ambivalence Theory; Racism; Stereotyping; Symbolic Racism

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## MODERN SEXISM

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Sexism consists of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and practices at the individual, institutional, and societal level that involve negative evaluations of people or promote unequal treatment based on gender. *Modern sexism*, which represents current manifestations of sexism, includes both older, overt forms of sexism and more subtle and less often recognized expressions. By definition, sexism can be directed against both women and men. However, most psychological research focuses on antifemale sexism.

Although gender relations have, as a consequence of cultural, political, and social movements, shifted away from considerable inequality to emerging egalitarianism, particularly in economically wealthier countries, egalitarian norms have not resulted in full gender equality. On a societal level, this is reflected, for instance, by the frequency of interpersonal violence against women, the ongoing gender-specific division of labor, and the overrepresentation of men in decision-making positions. On an individual level, women report more experiences with interpersonal forms of sexism than do men, with women reporting about one to two sexist incidents per week traceable to traditional gender stereotypes (e.g., expectations about women's and men's behaviors and expressions of traditional gender stereotypes) and unwanted sexual attention (e.g., staring at body parts or unwanted sexual touching).

Rather than appearing in blatant forms of sexist behaviors or open endorsement of sexist beliefs, sexism has changed its appearance to covert and subtle manifestations. Modern sexism is expressed by a new language and new strategies. These changes are reflected in researchers' development of concepts that mirror contemporary forms of sexism. The most important developments during the past 15 years have been the concepts of modern sexist behaviors, modern sexist and neosexist beliefs, and the concept of ambivalent sexist beliefs, which will be outlined below. Characteristics of current manifestations of sexist behaviors are described, and then current manifestations of sexist beliefs are discussed.

### Modern Sexist Behaviors

Modern sexist behaviors consist of blatant, subtle, and covert sexist behaviors. *Blatant sexist behaviors* still exist and consist of unequal and harmful treatment of women in family life, employment, politics, and religion, as well as quid pro quo sexual harassment and interpersonal violence. *Subtle sexist behaviors* can be intentional or unintentional and may be difficult to detect because many individuals do not perceive this type of sexist behavior as serious and harmful. Examples of subtle sexist behaviors are condescending chivalry (women are paternalistically protected but treated as subordinates), "friendly" harassment (sexually oriented

behaviors that appear harmless, such as flattery), and subjective objectification (women are treated as property or sex objects). Finally, *covert sexist behaviors* are conscious, intentional attempts to undermine women; they are hidden and therefore difficult to document. Examples of covert sexist behavior are *tokenism* (hiring a few representative women to prevent complaints about excluding all women) and *containment* and *manipulation* (e.g., undermining a woman's position to discourage her advancement into higher positions). Several of the sexist behaviors described above can be considered as forms of *backlash* against increasing gender equality.

There is some disagreement about whether certain behaviors are forms of modern sexism. However, it can be argued that those behaviors, even when unintentional, are sexist because of their negative consequences and implications for women on both an individual and a macro level. For instance, sexist jokes can elicit negative emotional responses in women, and patronizing acts by powerful men can negatively affect low-power female recipients' performance. On a macro level, paternalistic behaviors can lead to conceiving of women as incompetent for high-status positions, thus maintaining gender inequality.

### Modern Sexist Beliefs

Modern sexism is expressed not only in behaviors but also in beliefs. These include modern sexist, neosexist, and ambivalent sexist beliefs. All of them reflect contemporary forms of prejudice against women but do not match the mental prototype of what most people think to be sexist. Hence, the sexist nature of these beliefs is not as obvious as the sexist nature of blatant and old-fashioned sexist beliefs. These beliefs are problematic because they provide justification for the status quo and undermine the desirability or need to address gender inequality.

### Modern Sexist and Neosexist Beliefs

The concepts of modern sexism and neosexism have been developed to assess "hidden" prejudice against women. Both concepts derive from research that was done on modern and symbolic racism. Modern sexism manifests itself in terms of



downplaying the existence of discrimination against women and resentment of complaints about sexism and efforts to assist women. In theory, neosexism represents a conflict between egalitarian values and negative feelings toward women. Both of these beliefs represent resistance to efforts addressing the problem of sexism and imply an inclination to maintain current gender relations.

Modern and neosexist beliefs can be regarded as legitimizing ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for existing social arrangements and distributions. For instance, one prominent theory that helps explain endorsement of these beliefs is *system justification theory*. System justification theorists argue that people are motivated to give a positive evaluation not only to themselves and their groups but also to the superordinate societal system. People want to believe that social outcomes and arrangements are fair, legitimate, and deserved. Believing otherwise would imply that people might be treated unfairly and that the world is not a predictable place. As a consequence, members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups (e.g., men and women, respectively) show a tendency to justify existing status hierarchies, even when those hierarchies disadvantage their own group.

Methodologically, the *Modern Sexism Scale* primarily measures perceptions of discrimination, and the *Neosexism Scale* focuses mostly on the resentment of complaints about sexism and efforts to assist women. Endorsement of modern and neosexist beliefs in these measures is distinct from endorsement of traditional gender roles, but the two attitudes have several similar characteristics, such as negative reactions toward affirmative action, negative evaluations of feminists and feminism, greater use of sexist language, and lesser likelihood of judging particular incidents as sexual harassment.

### *Ambivalent Sexist Beliefs*

*Ambivalent sexism* is another expression of contemporary sexism. It describes how women can be oppressed and loved at the same time. According to this theory, sexism emerges within the context of patriarchal structures and heterosexual interdependencies between women and men. Ambivalent sexism is composed of *hostile* and *benevolent sexism*. Hostile sexist beliefs

include perceptions of women as seeking control over men through sexuality or feminist ideology. Hostile sexist beliefs are hidden by their benevolent counterparts: Benevolent sexism appears subjectively positive. It includes the belief that women should be protected and taken care of by men, characterizes women as wonderful, pure creatures, and may flatter women. However, it also reinforces patriarchy by portraying women as child-like, incompetent, needing men to protect them, and therefore best suited for low-status positions.

### Integration and Implications

Sexism against women is still prevalent all over the world, but it has changed its appearance, at least in economically wealthier countries. Modern sexist behaviors include covert and subtle sexist behaviors that are not easily detected, as well as the continuation of more blatant, obvious sexist beliefs. Modern sexist beliefs include those beliefs (e.g., denial of discrimination and negativity toward attempts for change) that legitimize and maintain the status quo, as well as ambivalent beliefs that combine beliefs that appear benevolent but still maintain gender inequality with hostile beliefs directed at women who challenge inequality and men's dominance. Whereas people are likely to identify hostile sexism and endorsement of traditional gender roles as sexist, they often do not identify other current manifestations of sexism (e.g., paternalism or denial of discrimination) as serious or harmful because these expressions of sexism do not match the mental prototype of sexism.

As a consequence, changing modern sexist behaviors and beliefs is a difficult task. Therefore, new types of interventions for both women and men are necessary to change the beliefs and motivations that underlie modern sexism. Research on reduction of sexist beliefs shows that drawing attention to the frequency of sexist behaviors and the harm of ostensibly "positive" sexism is a promising way to decrease endorsement of modern and benevolent sexist beliefs. However, sexism will decline only through changes on multiple levels. That is, besides changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at individual levels, changes in roles and opportunities at the societal level are necessary.

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*See also* Affirmative Action; Ambivalent Sexism; Aversive Racism; Feminism; Gender Roles; Implicit Prejudice; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Modern Racism; Prejudice; Racial Ambivalence Theory; Sexism; Stereotyping; Symbolic Racism; System Justification Theory

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## MOSCOVICI, SERGE (1925– )

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Serge Moscovici is a leading European social psychologist. Born in 1925 in Romania, he immigrated after World War II to France, where he studied psychology and philosophy. Along with Henri Tajfel, Moscovici played a crucial role in the development of European social psychology. He provided intellectual guidance and organizational leadership that helped to channel U.S. efforts to revitalize social psychology in postwar western Europe. Moscovici is one of the founders and the first president of the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology, established in 1966.

In the 1970s, Moscovici was at the forefront of a quest for social psychology with a distinctly European flavor. The goal was to replace then-prevailing U.S. ideas with theoretical models that would reflect European cultural and historical complexity. Moscovici's criticism of U.S. individualistic

thought and his innovative work, which emphasized the role of social and cultural factors in psychological phenomena, helped establish what came to be known as *European social psychology*. Although more a mosaic of orientations than a homogeneous school of thought, European social psychology is generally characterized by its emphasis on the social dimension of human psychological functioning.

This emphasis on studying psychological phenomena in the social and cultural context is evident in Moscovici's entire body of work, which includes several lines of research. They are tied together by a common theme of a social psychology of knowledge. Examining the role of social factors in the development, maintenance, and change of knowledge, Moscovici developed two influential theories—a *theory of minority influence* and a *theory of social representations*—both discussed in this entry.

### Minority Influence

Moscovici's theory of minority influence emerged from his criticism of the U.S. approach to social influence, which equated influence with conformity. He rejected the assumption underlying much of U.S. research at the time that influence can be reduced to change that individuals or minorities undergo under pressure from a group. Moscovici argued that influence also included change in the opposite direction. From innovators in science to revolutionaries in politics, history abounds with examples of minorities that prevailed in their opposition to a majority.

According to Moscovici's "genetic" model of minority influence, numerical minorities create conflict within a group at two levels: At the cognitive level, they question the established (majority) worldview; at the social level, they threaten interpersonal relationships. Initially, people try to resolve the conflict by attributing the minority position to undesirable psychological characteristics (e.g., deviance, insanity, naïveté). However, if the minority continues to advocate its position consistently, conveying commitment and certainty, its behavioral style may convince the majority to reconsider its initial reaction and adopt the minority position as a valid alternative.

In a revision of his initial model, Moscovici placed less emphasis on behavioral style and

elaborated on the ways that people resolve conflict caused by the dissenting minority. According to his conflict theory, the dissenting minority triggers a validation process through which people try to understand the minority position and examine their own position. This thorough examination of the minority position may cause people to convert. However, to avoid being associated with a minority, they are likely to keep their conversion private. In contrast, when exposed to majority influence, people are primarily concerned with potentially negative consequences of their deviation from the majority. They engage in the comparison process, through which they try to fit in with the majority. Because people change their views without close examination of the majority position, their change is superficial in that it represents public compliance and not private acceptance of the majority position.

Moscovici's theorizing that minorities, like majorities, can exert influence revitalized research on social influence in the early 1970s. Moreover, his ideas continue to stimulate research today.

### Social Representations

The original impetus for the development of the theory of social representations was Moscovici's attempt to understand how ordinary people gain ownership of scientific knowledge and how they transform scientific knowledge into public knowledge. Moscovici's concept of social representations has its intellectual roots in Emile Durkheim's collectivistic approach to social behavior, which, in turn, was influenced by Wilhelm Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie*. Social representations could be understood as a form of public (common) knowledge grounded in group membership. As a result, people have different social representations depending on groups to which they belong.

The theory of social representations postulates that people need a common frame of reference to orient themselves in the world and to communicate with others. Social representations provide such a reference. They emerge in the process of social interaction as people try to make what is unfamiliar and unknown into something familiar and known. This process of making sense of the world is constructive in that it involves anchoring or classifying the unfamiliar into already existing

categories. Situating the unfamiliar within existing categories removes the threat of the unknown and enables people to name it. People are then able to objectify the unknown, thinking about it not as an abstraction but rather as something real. In doing so, they create social reality. Social representations, therefore, do not mirror reality. Instead, they create it.

Social representations are both the outcome and the process of social construction. On one hand, they emerge as the outcome of the process of social interaction. On the other hand, they shape how people think, communicate, and relate during social interaction. Being a group-specific means of understanding the world, social representations also are a form of social identification. This becomes especially important when competing representations from different groups clash. The resultant conflict may stimulate innovation—an idea that Moscovici elaborated in his theory of minority influence.

Since its inception in the 1960s, the theory of social representations has generated research and dialogue not only among social psychologists but also among sociologists, anthropologists, and other social scientists. Its focus on a dialectic (two-way) relationship between individuals and social groups resonates well with the European orientation in social sciences. Not surprisingly, Moscovici's theory of social representations has been most influential in Europe; it has also gained popularity in a few Latin American countries.

In addition to his work on minority influence and social representations, Moscovici has made significant contributions to research and theorizing on several other topics, including crowding, conspiracy and collective decisions, psychology of language, history of psychology, and philosophy of science. In recognition of his intellectual contributions and leadership in the development of the discipline, Moscovici has received numerous professional and civic awards. Among other honors, he was awarded the highest decoration in France, the *Légion d'Honneur* (Legion of Honor); the International Balzan Prize; the American Psychological Association Wundt-James Prize; and many honorary doctorates. Moscovici is currently director of the European Laboratory of Social Psychology at the Maison des sciences de l'homme, in Paris.

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See also Conformity; Innovation; Minority Influence; Socially Shared Cognition; Social Representation

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## MULTICULTURALISM

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*Multiculturalism* as discussed in this entry refers to policies that support the preservation and egalitarian treatment of intergroup differences and distinct minority and majority group identities within a unified state. People of diverse cultural and linguistic groups have had contact with one another throughout known human history. However, contact now takes place in the context of rapid globalization, involving the movement of hundreds of millions of people around the world and the global expansion of communications, transportation, and trade. A major challenge confronting humankind at local, national, regional, and international levels is how to better manage intergroup contact, as well as cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism stands in contrast to *assimilation*, which is defined as the melting away of intergroup differences through market forces, government policy, or both, to create a more homogeneous society. The impact of *globalization* in many ways reinforces assimilationist trends, so lifestyles around the world become in important ways more similar. Just as diversity is decreasing among plants and animals, so is it decreasing among human cultures and languages. When Columbus landed in the western hemisphere, there were about 15,000 living languages in the world; today, only about 6,000 survive. Hundreds of languages have one or just a few speakers and are on the verge of extinction. Most people in the world today speak one of only about 10 major languages (e.g., Mandarin

Chinese, English, Spanish), representing a decline in diversity that is associated with assimilation.

Multiculturalism and assimilation are topics for social-psychological investigation because they are supported by assumptions about intergroup behavior. The original assumptions supporting multiculturalism were promoted in Canada, a historically immigrant-receiving country with a population one tenth the size of the U.S. population. Then prime minister Pierre Trudeau, in a speech on national unity to the House of Commons in 1971, argued that individual identity is both the base from which respect for others develops and the base for national unity. Although the origins of multiculturalism as an official government policy are Canadian, multiculturalism has gained broader international attention in the United States, in the European Union, and well beyond.

This entry assesses the five core assumptions that underpin policies of multiculturalism: (1) a cultural free market, (2) heritage culture retention, (3) ingroup confidence and outgroup acceptance, (4) ingroup affiliation and outgroup bias, and (5) minority and majority endorsement of multiculturalism and intergroup attitudes.

### Cultural Free Market

The foundational assumption of multiculturalism is that the cultural marketplace is one where (a) individuals freely select their cultural identities and (b) relations between cultural groups are egalitarian. While cultural groups do not have equal power, they are assumed to have equal merit. Cultural groups may compete in a free and open “market”; the government should not disrupt market forces by designating an official culture.

This assumption has been criticized for promoting a form of relativism that threatens both harmonious intergroup relations and social justice. If all cultures and cultural practices are given equal merit, it may be challenging or even impossible for a state body to resolve conflicts between cultural groups. Applying live-and-let-live ethics to minority groups that practice forced marriage or honor killings or otherwise relegate women to second-class status has already presented enormous challenges. The Nazi-led Holocaust is frequently brought forth as the most provocative case of the harm that can result from applying a free-market

ideology to the cultural marketplace. Indeed, a cultural free market appears to be unrealistic.

### Heritage-Culture Retention

This assumption is that all cultural groups are motivated to preserve the culture passed down to them by their parents. Empirical evidence testing this assumption is divided. Studies led by John Berry and K. G. O'Bryan in 1977 and 1975, respectively, generally support this assumption, at least in samples of majority culture members in Canada. However, the perspective of minority group members is mixed, and this is particularly true for minorities that are physically different from the majority groups (e.g., because of skin and hair color).

More recent studies in the United States, published by Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor in 1990, show that some minorities—working-class Blacks, Poles, Arabs, Albanians, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans—hold positive feelings toward their heritage cultures. Among minorities living in Europe, however, the trends are more difficult to generalize. The complexity of the European situation is important because the number of minorities in Europe has been increasing rapidly, resulting in millions of South Asians living in the United Kingdom, North Africans in France, Turks in Germany, and so on. About 20 million Muslims now live in the European Union.

One reason some cultural groups may not be motivated to retain their heritage culture is fear of discrimination. Maintaining heritage culture may involve public displays and avowals of one's heritage, practices that increase one's visibility as a cultural minority. This visibility, some minorities fear, may expose them to discrimination they would not otherwise experience. Such fears are not unfounded. Thomas Pettigrew surveyed western Europeans and reported in 1998 that discrimination against immigrants persists. It can be argued that members of minorities who choose not to preserve their heritage culture are rationally protecting their interests.

### Ingroup Confidence and Outgroup Acceptance

Multiculturalism is assumed to foster a positive, strong, and secure heritage identity, which in turn

leads to acceptance of other groups. The logic of this assumption supports a rational view of human beings. Presumably, people have no rational reason to hold biases against outgroups so long as their ingroup identity is secure. Outgroup bias is treated as the rational outcome of an insecure ingroup identity.

However, there are numerous examples of groups that take pride in their identity yet hold extremely biased views of, and implement aggressive practices against, outgroups. Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, and some religious fundamentalists are a few examples that challenge the assumption that ingroup security fosters outgroup acceptance. They display intense feelings of ingroup superiority and outgroup contempt, refuting the assumption that love of one's ingroup fosters acceptance of outgroups.

This critique of the ingroup-confidence-outgroup-acceptance assumption begins from an *irrationalist* view of human beings. The argument made is that unacknowledged feelings of intense insecurity drive group members to publicly proclaim their superiority. Shocking displays of ingroup pride mask hidden insecurities. The debate over whether public displays of group pride are authentic or part of a system of defenses has not been resolved by empirical testing and hence currently depends on the theoretical commitment of the interpreter.

### Ingroup Affiliation and Outgroup Bias

An optimistic interpretation of the multiculturalism hypothesis is that love for one's ingroup does *not* lead to hate for outgroups. This hypothesis has been controversial. The writings of Sigmund Freud, for instance, could be interpreted as implying that love for one's own group would inevitably be counterbalanced with hate for outsiders. This counterbalancing is thought to hold groups such as the family together. Social identity theorists, too, have weighed in on this hypothesis. One interpretation of social identity theory is that the more people identify with their ingroup, the less favorably they look on other groups. Charles Negy and colleagues reported in 2003 that among Whites and Latinos, the more positive regard they reported for their own groups, the more negative views they reported having against other groups (ethnocentrism).

These results, like those of many previous studies, support social identity theory predictions and refute this aspect of the multiculturalism hypothesis. However, Black people in the United States did not fit this pattern. They displayed no correlation between ethnic identity and ethnocentrism. They also reported higher self-esteem and ethnic identity than did Whites or Latinos. Thus, one factor that may moderate the relationship between ingroup affiliation and outgroup bias is the relative perceived status of each group, which is shaped by historical and cultural experiences.

### Minority and Majority Endorsement of Multiculturalism and Intergroup Attitudes

In countries where multiculturalism is official policy, the focus is on promoting minority rather than majority group heritage cultures and languages. This practice deserves careful scrutiny. The intended, if unstated, goal is often to instill pride and security in ethnic minority groups so that their attitudes toward outgroups are positive. Outgroups may be other ethnic minorities or the majority group.

However, how does this strategy address discrimination on the part of the majority against minorities? If multiculturalist policy is based on the assumption that outgroup bias results from insecurity and lack of pride in the ingroup, then to alleviate majority-led discrimination, it follows that the majority group rather than minority groups should be the target of multiculturalist policies. Increasing majority group pride and affiliation should presumably increase the majority's acceptance of minority groups. It could be argued, however, that majority groups already enjoy high security and affiliation: To the extent that majority groups are intolerant of others, the hypothesis of ingroup confidence and outgroup acceptance fails. Indeed, if we control for education, majority group members are not any more tolerant of outgroups than are minority group members. Along these lines, research by Maykel Verkuyten shows that majority groups tend to favor multiculturalism much less than do minority groups.

One might also consider the personal and group functions of multiculturalist and assimilationist orientations. For example, maintaining the salience of cultural differences can be important for minority groups to mobilize for social action.

Assimilation, which represents a colorblind approach, may support the status quo by limiting group-based initiatives.

### Policy Issues

The practical question of how states can best manage cultural diversity will likely persist and become more urgent in the next few decades, as globalization accelerates and intergroup contact increases. Finding adequate policy solutions requires developing and testing theories of how members of different groups are likely to respond. Thus, at the core of sound policy making is an understanding of human psychology and, most important, intergroup dynamics.

Multiculturalism has emerged as an attractive alternative to assimilation, and minorities generally look on this policy as more democratic and morally superior. Yet further theory building and empirical work are needed to address some of the shortcomings discussed in this entry. The notion of a culture-free market appears to be unrealistic because in everyday life, groups are not granted equal merit. The heritage-culture retention assumption is falsified by those ethnic minorities that choose to abandon their heritage culture. The relationship between how one feels about one's ingroup versus one's outgroups is not consistent across samples. There is also the complex question of which groups should be targeted in esteem- and confidence-building efforts: the majority, the minority, or both. Perhaps the largest challenge to multiculturalism is the question of how diverse groups can develop and maintain a core shared set of values.

Controlled laboratory experiments offer a crucial but partial picture. Such studies can be complemented with field-based analysis of events such as the formation and expansion of the European Union, which represents the most recent large-scale attempt to unify diverse groups. In the North American context, the largest field experiment in recent history is being carried out, involving the integration of an estimated 40 million to 50 million Latinos, their cultures anchored in Spanish-speaking enclaves in Florida, California, Texas, New Mexico, and some other states. These developments ensure that debates about multiculturalism will remain center stage in national and global contexts.

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*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Diversity; Ethnocentrism; Group Boundaries; Immigration; Intergroup Contact Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

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In large and complex societies, individuals are differentiated or subdivided along many meaningful social dimensions, including gender and sexual orientation, life stage (e.g., student, worker, retiree), economic sector (e.g., technology, service, academics, professional), religion, political ideology, and recreational preferences. Each of these divisions provides a basis for shared identity and group membership that may become an important source of social identification. Further, most of these differentiations are crosscutting in the sense that individuals may share a common ingroup membership on one dimension but belong to different categories on another dimension. Hence, having multiple group memberships reduces the likelihood that one's social world can be reduced to a single ingroup-versus-outgroup distinction. The fact that people have multiple, crosscutting social identities has important implications for ingroup identification and intergroup relations. This entry looks at the various ways in which people perceive their multiple identities and then examines the impact of

these perceptions on their level of tolerance for those different from themselves.

### Social Identity Complexity

The objective relationship between any two bases of categorization can take different forms. Within a given domain, groups may be hierarchically nested; that is, some groups may be completely embedded in others (e.g., all Catholics are Christians). In this case, an individual who belongs to one of the subgroups also belongs to the more inclusive, superordinate category, and an individual who is a member of the outgroup at the subgroup level is an ingroup member at the superordinate level. Antagonism between subgroups (e.g., Protestants and Catholics) may be reduced if members of both subgroups also identify with the common superordinate ingroup.

Membership in groups that are defined on different dimensions of categorization (e.g., religion or occupation or nationality) may be related to different degrees. Some categorizations may be completely uncorrelated. Knowing, for example, that people are Muslim does not tell us whether they are male or female because religion and gender memberships are uncorrelated. In other cases, group memberships may be correlated to some extent (e.g., gender and occupation; nationality and religion). In that case, ingroup members in one category (e.g., corporate executives) are also likely to be ingroup members in the other (e.g., males). Nonetheless, the groups overlap only partially because some members of the occupational group are of a different gender.

When there is extensive overlap between ingroups defined by different dimensions of categorization (i.e., the categories are highly correlated), identification is relatively simple—the individuals who constitute the ingroup versus outgroups are the same for either categorization. When ingroups defined by different dimensions of categorization overlap only partially, however, the implications for social identification become more complex. In this case, some of those who are fellow ingroup members on one dimension are simultaneously outgroup members on the other. Consider the case of a woman who is a corporate executive. When the social context emphasizes professional identity (e.g., a management conference), she is

likely to perceive a male colleague as an ingroup member. Nonetheless, she may be aware that in different circumstances (circumstances that emphasize her identity as a woman), that same colleague is an outgroup member.

How do individuals construct their social identities in relation to such multiple, nonconvergent ingroup memberships? Sonia Roccas and Marilynn Brewer developed the concept of *social identity complexity* to refer to a person's *subjective* representation of his or her multiple identities. More specifically, individuals with low social identity complexity see their ingroups as highly overlapping and convergent whereas those with high complexity see their different ingroups as distinct and crosscutting membership groups.

### *Bicultural Identity Patterns*

Individuals who are bicultural provide an illustration of the different ways that multiple identities may be combined. The prototypic case here is the member of an immigrant group or an ethnic enclave whose societal group membership (country of residence or citizenship) and ethnic or national group membership represent distinct cultures and partially overlapping group memberships. One form of bicultural adaptation is to locate one's ingroup identity at the intersection of the ethnic and societal categories and thus form a blended (hyphenated) bicultural identity (e.g., African American, Turkish Dutch). In this model, the ingroup is defined exclusively as those who share both ethnic heritage and residence in the host society. The two identities have been combined into a single, convergent social identity.

The second, more complex form of biculturalism is *intercultural identity*, which acknowledges multiple cultural identities simultaneously and combines and integrates membership, values, and norms of both groups. This conceptualization equates biculturalism with the acquisition of a more inclusive, complex group identity than that represented by any component cultural identity alone. With this representation, the cultural ingroup is expanded to include all fellow countrymen (regardless of their ethnic identity) *and* all members of the same ethnic group (regardless of the country in which they reside).

### *Individual Differences in Social Identity Complexity*

As illustrated by the bicultural identity example, two individuals who belong to the same multiple social groups may differ in how they combine their ingroup identities. An individual may perceive his or her ingroups as having highly overlapping sets of members, such that a set of group memberships may even form a single, exclusive, compound category (e.g., White Catholic Republican doctors). This would be described as a *simple* identity structure. The opposite end of the continuum would be characterized by an individual who recognizes that his or her ingroup memberships are composed of distinct and only partially overlapping member sets. This would be described as a *complex* identity structure (e.g., Whites *and* Catholics *and* Republicans *and* doctors). With a complex representation, the individual recognizes that each of his or her group memberships incorporates a different set of people as ingroup members and that the combined representation is the *sum* of all these group identities—more inclusive than any one ingroup identity considered alone.

For instance, a woman who is both White and Christian may think of her religious ingroup as composed primarily of White people (even though, objectively, there are many non-White Christians). Conversely, she may think of her racial ingroup as largely Christian (despite the fact that, objectively, there are many Whites who embrace other religions). In contrast, another White female Christian may be very aware of the fact that many Christians are non-White (i.e., do not share her racial identity) and that many Whites are not Christians in their religious affiliation. The difference between these two cases is whether the individual *perceives* her ingroups as highly overlapping (convergent) or as only partially overlapping (crosscutting). Roccas and Brewer define social identity complexity in terms of such differences in perceived overlap of multiple ingroups.

Research on social identity complexity indicates that high complexity is associated with liberal ideology, universalistic values, openness, and experience with diversity. Further, stress and threat influence social identity complexity. Under conditions of felt threat, individuals tend to reduce complexity and see their multiple ingroups as more convergent.



### Multiple Identities and Intergroup Tolerance

Roccas and Brewer also speculated that social identity complexity (as represented by perceived overlap among ingroup memberships) would be associated with tolerance for outgroups in general. Social identity complexity is based on awareness of cross-categorization in one's own social group memberships and those of others. A simple (convergent) social identity is likely to be accompanied by the perception that any individual who is an outgroup member on one dimension is also an outgroup member on all others. In contrast, if individuals are aware that their multiple ingroups do not completely overlap, then they are also aware that outgroup members on one dimension may be ingroup members on others.

For both cognitive and motivational reasons, a complex representation of one's multiple ingroup identities should influence intergroup attitudes and behavior in ways that reduce bias and discrimination. Multiple group memberships reduce the importance of any one social identity for satisfying an individual's need for belonging and self-definition, reducing the motivational base for ingroup bias and outgroup prejudice.

Results of survey research on the correlates of social identity complexity confirm that social identity complexity is associated with both tolerance-related policy preferences and feelings toward outgroups. The degree of perceived overlap among a respondent's multiple ingroups proved to be significantly correlated with attitudes toward affirmative action, multiculturalism, and feelings toward outgroups, after controlling for age, education, and ideology. Holding the number and diversity of ingroups constant, individuals who perceive low overlap among their ingroups are more accepting of multicultural policies, have more positive feelings toward ethnic and religious outgroups, and show less implicit racial prejudice than do individuals who see their multiple ingroups as highly overlapping and convergent.

In sum, then, the way in which individuals think about their own multiple ingroup identities affects the inclusiveness of their social world and their tolerance for difference and diversity. Promoting multiple social identities with awareness of crosscutting

memberships provides an effective formula for reducing intergroup prejudice.

Marilynn B. Brewer

*See also* Collective Self; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Cross-Categorization; Prejudice; Social Identity Theory

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## MUTUAL INTERGROUP DIFFERENTIATION MODEL

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The *mutual intergroup differentiation model*, proposed by Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, is an extension of the *intergroup contact hypothesis*, the proposition that contact between members of different groups will reduce intergroup prejudice. The model states that contact between members of different groups will be most likely to result in positive intergroup relations when those involved embrace their respective group memberships and acknowledge the differences that exist between the groups.

The model draws on *social identity theory*, which proposes that we are motivated to hold a positive perception of groups we belong to and that we tend to favor our own group over other groups to achieve this. It is argued that each group

can view itself positively during the intergroup encounter by considering itself to be superior on *different* dimensions from the other group.

The model is important for our understanding of group processes and intergroup relations because it identifies a key moderator of intergroup contact, highlighting *when* contact is most likely to improve intergroup attitudes. The theoretical and empirical background of the model, evidence for and drawbacks of the model, and recent developments that extend and clarify the model are outlined in this entry.

### Background of the Model

The contact hypothesis has generated an extensive body of research over the past 50 years that has, by and large, demonstrated that high-quality contact between members of different groups can reduce intergroup prejudice. The contact hypothesis has, however, a notable limitation: It fails to specify how the effects of contact would generalize beyond the immediate contact situation to other situations and from the individuals involved in the contact to the entire outgroup. Accordingly, research has shown that although participants who engage in cooperative contact with outgroup members develop more positive attitudes toward the specific outgroup members involved in the contact, their attitudes toward *other* outgroup members and the outgroup *in general* often remain unchanged.

To identify how and when the positive effects of contact are likely to generalize from individuals involved in the contact to the entire outgroup, researchers have drawn on social identity theory. According to this theory, when an individual's membership in a given group becomes salient, this membership becomes incorporated into the individual's self-concept, resulting in a social identity rather than an individual identity. We are motivated to hold a positive social identity, so when our group membership is salient, we have a tendency to show a preference for groups we belong to over groups we do not belong to; in other words, we show ingroup bias. The social identity approach has led to the emergence of three diverging perspectives with regard to when the positive aspects of the contact situation result in more positive attitudes toward the outgroup *in general*.

Given that we tend to show intergroup bias when our group membership is salient, the *deategorization* approach proposes that intergroup contact is most likely to reduce prejudice when those involved focus on one another's individual characteristics rather than their respective group memberships. It is acknowledged that, in the short term, information acquired about individual category members is not directly generalized to the entire outgroup. However, the long-term effect of such interactions is a decrease in category-based processing in general and therefore reduced intergroup prejudice.

The *recategorization* approach, also known as the *common ingroup identity model*, also proposes that group boundaries are eliminated but argues that, rather than removal of category boundaries altogether, the categories are altered so that both groups are included in one superordinate group. This transforms group members' cognitive representations from two groups (us and them) to one inclusive group (we). In this situation, former ingroup and outgroup members now share a new ingroup membership, and so former outgroup members no longer pose a threat to a positive social identity. Thus, ingroup bias associated with the original groups is reduced or eliminated.

There are, however, some difficulties with these two approaches to intergroup contact. First, if group memberships are completely eliminated, individual-to-group generalization is unlikely because the connection between individual outgroup members and the group to which they belong is broken. One may like an outgroup member, but if that person is not recognized as being an outgroup member, attitudes toward the outgroup in general are unlikely to become more positive. Second, group membership is often an important aspect of an individual's identity. To ignore its existence or to impose on individuals a superordinate category may result in strong resistance from group members, particularly when the two groups differ in size, power, or status.

### Evidence Supporting the Model

The mutual intergroup differentiation model provides an alternative solution to the issue of contact generalization that circumvents the problems presented by the decategorization and recategorization

approaches. It contends that the positive effect of contact between ingroup and outgroup members generalizes to the entire outgroup only when the group memberships of those involved remain psychologically salient during contact. The model acknowledges that group members seek a positively distinct social identity by elevating their group compared with other groups. It is, however, possible for both groups to maintain a positively distinct social identity by distinguishing themselves from the other group on *different* sets of traits. In sum, if there is mutual recognition of one another's superiorities and inferiorities, positive intergroup contact is possible. Supporting the model, research has shown that although positive contact with an outgroup member leads to more positive attitudes toward that individual, it leads to more positive attitudes toward the outgroup in general only when those involved acknowledged their respective group memberships at some point during the interaction.

The mutual intergroup differentiation approach is not, however, without its dangers. First, although intergroup contact with category salience may be more likely to generalize to the outgroup, if that contact is negative rather than positive, it could lead to an increase in generalized prejudice toward a group. Second, an overemphasis on group membership may lead to an increase in intergroup anxiety, the negative emotional reaction that may arise as a result of negative expectations about encounters with members of other groups. In turn, this anxiety may lead to an increase in stereotyping and prejudice. This creates something of a dilemma: Decategorized contact, in which the focus is on personal characteristics, is likely to induce positive feelings and therefore liking of individual outgroup members, whereas making category membership salient may reinforce stereotypes and result in anxiety. But it is contact that is intergroup rather than interpersonal in nature that is most likely to generalize to the outgroup as a whole.

### Recent Developments

The decategorization and recategorization approaches have recently been integrated with the mutual intergroup differentiation approach to overcome their respective limitations. Rather than seeing decategorization and mutual intergroup

differentiation as mutually exclusive, researchers now argue that interpersonal (decategorized) and intergroup (category-based) contact should be viewed as orthogonal dimensions, which together can create highly effective conditions of outgroup contact. Specifically, outgroup contact will be most effective when contact is both highly intergroup and highly interpersonal. In contrast, contact that is low on either or both intergroup and interpersonal dimensions is likely to be less successful at generalizing the effect of contact to outgroup attitudes. That is, high intimacy but low group salience will fail to generalize, whereas high salience but low personalization is likely to result in heightened intergroup anxiety. Research has shown that having an encounter with outgroup members who disclose personal information but who are also perceived as typical of their group is associated with more positive outgroup attitudes than is contact with outgroup members who are typical but do not disclose personal information or with outgroup members who disclose personal information but are atypical.

### Conclusion

The mutual intergroup differentiation model has made two important contributions to our knowledge of group processes and intergroup relations. First, it highlights category salience as an important moderator of intergroup contact, enabling the development of more effective contact interventions. Second, by generating a vigorous debate between the diverging perspectives of mutual intergroup differentiation, decategorization, and recategorization, it has provided a more sophisticated understanding of when intergroup contact will be most effective, recognizing the combined benefits of interpersonal and intergroup contact.

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*See also* Categorization; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Decategorization; Desegregation; Intergroup Anxiety; Intergroup Contact Theory; Prejudice; Social Identity Theory

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## NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

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Nationalism and patriotism, which are different aspects of national identification, are group phenomena of both theoretical and applied importance. Whereas *patriotism* represents attachment to one's country, *nationalism* refers to the tendency to favor one's own country over others. National identification can facilitate cooperation and cohesion within one's country but at the same time engender conflict directed at other national groups. This entry illustrates the relevance of patriotism and nationalism in present societies and discusses their functions for individuals and groups, as well as the conditions determining whether and when identification with one's own country translates into the relative devaluation or derogation of other countries and their members.

### Distinguishing Patriotism and Nationalism

Patriotism and nationalism refer to phenomena that can be encountered frequently and in various guises. In extreme situations such as interstate wars, but also during international sports competitions, it is quite obvious that belonging to a certain country has a strong impact on people's emotions, perceptions, and behaviors. In our everyday life as well, national categories are constantly present: To a large extent, politics is founded on national institutions and aims at pursuing the interests of one's country. Politicians often appeal to feelings of pride,

and newspapers subtly reinforce national categories by giving priority to domestic over foreign affairs.

*Patriotism* and *nationalism* are terms that have been used differently, regarding both their valence and their specific meaning, in different historical periods. Scientific disciplines such as history, political science, and psychology also exhibit differences as to the level of analysis—nations, social groups, or individuals—implied by these terms. In contemporary social psychology, *patriotism* and *nationalism* commonly refer to the individual level.

Patriotism, paralleling the concept of social identity, denotes the identification with, and feelings of attachment and commitment to, one's country and the people perceived as belonging to it. Hence, patriotism is defined by how closely an individual feels linked with his or her national group. Typical items used in scales measuring individuals' levels of patriotism are "I love my country" or "The fact that I am [a U.S. citizen] is an important part of my identity."

Nationalism, in contrast, usually denotes a tendency of individuals to support national interests of their country to the relative disadvantage of other countries and to see their own country as superior to other countries. One example is consumer nationalism, a tendency of consumers to favor goods and services produced in their own country or by domestic companies over "foreign" goods and services. Typical items for measuring individuals' levels of nationalism are "In view of [the United States'] moral and material superiority, it is only right that we should have the biggest say in deciding United Nations policy" and "The

important thing for the [U.S.] foreign aid program is to see to it that [the United States] gains a political advantage.”

Regarding patriotism, researchers have distinguished between different forms, such as between blind and constructive patriotism or between iconoclastic, symbolic, instinctive, environmental, capitalistic, and nationalistic-symbolic patriotism. In principle, these differentiations capture (a) to which degree patriotism encompasses an active and critical versus a passive and uncritical orientation toward one's country and its authorities and (b) to which degree patriotism is based on certain features of one's country, that is, how national identity is defined in terms of normative content. Often, there is a societal consensus, or at least a consensus between large groups within society, about which features are (and should be) constitutive of one's national identity. These can include, for example, national symbols such as the flag, a certain ethnicity, a particular ideology, endorsement of democratic aspects such as political institutions or basic rights of citizens, certain cultural or religious characteristics, or fundamental beliefs of group members about the country's situation vis-à-vis other countries.

Although both concepts refer to identification with one's country and national identity (i.e., social identity based on a national category), patriotism is an *intragroup* phenomenon that exclusively relates to one's own country, whereas nationalism is an *intergroup* phenomenon, a comparative orientation toward one's own and other countries. Despite this conceptual difference, however, both constructs are often closely interrelated: Under certain conditions, patriotic feelings can easily lead to nationalistic feelings of superiority of one's own country. Accordingly, many scholars have argued that patriotism is primary and nationalism can be considered a potential consequence of patriotism.

### Functions of Patriotism and Nationalism

Why are people patriotic, and why do they feel closely attached to their countries? First of all, belonging to a national group has instrumental benefits by providing access to education, economic resources, social security, health care, and so on. Although these benefits can provide a basis,

patriotism is also (and maybe primarily) rooted in symbolic issues. As with other social categories, identification with one's country can provide people with self-esteem and meaning. For the individual, it can reduce uncertainty relating to self-concept (e.g., Who am I? What did and can I achieve?), and it can help fulfill the fundamental need to belong to social entities. Moreover, close attachment to one's country can affirm relevant cultural worldviews linked to national entities. From an existentialist perspective, the belief in the rightness of the cultural values and standards of one's group helps individuals handle the threat implied by the awareness of their mortality.

At the group level, patriotism serves important functions of unity, cohesiveness, and mobilization, which together enable group existence. Because groups with members who do not show any patriotic feelings will have a higher probability of ultimate disintegration, groups establish political or cultural mechanisms that stabilize and reinforce such feelings. In other words, attachment to one's own group is evolutionarily adaptive.

Although evolutionary functions can explain why people are patriotic, these functions are also relevant to people's tendencies to differentiate their own national group from others. Because human survival strongly depends on cooperation, people need to rely on markers indicating whether a potential interaction partner can be trusted and expected to cooperate or not. Belongingness to an ingroup or an outgroup is such a marker. Clear group boundaries and, hence, in the case of national identifications, the combination of both patriotism and nationalism provide a good balance between the need to belong and the need to be distinct, thereby enhancing trust, cooperation, and feelings of security.

Moreover, nationalism helps ensure a positive self-concept by providing positive comparison outcomes in relation to other countries. The resulting positive distinctiveness of the one's own country serves people's striving for positively valued identities and, thereby, reduces uncertainty and buffers self-esteem.

### Consequences of Patriotism and Nationalism

On a normative level, lay people, but also scholars in social psychology, come to different conclusions

as to whether patriotism should be seen as a vice or a virtue. Whereas, for example, the former German president Johannes Rau was careful to emphasize that he was happy rather than proud to be a German, in the United States, there has been probably not a single presidential candidate who did not stress being proud to be an American.

In light of the above-mentioned multiple functions that patriotism fulfills for individuals and groups, one can argue that patriotism is quite healthy and positive. It relates to feelings of security, trust, and solidarity with one's fellow group members as well as commitment to one's group, and by satisfying the fundamental need to belong, it can exert positive effects on well-being and health. Yet the picture changes when one focuses on the implications for intergroup relations. As will be argued further, patriotism can easily translate into nationalism and derogation of national outgroups.

Nationalism is much more consensually considered a negative and undesirable phenomenon that may sometimes even lead to dehumanization of outgroups and international conflict. It correlates with negative attitudes toward outgroups and support for the use of military force for dominative purposes. Yet nationalism may also be seen as positive under certain conditions, such as when a country is illegitimately oppressed by another country and strives for liberation. Comparing one's own country with other countries and questioning the legitimacy of status and power differentials is necessary to motivate collective action and social change.

For example, beliefs about being as good as or even better than the so-called developed countries can help people from poor states in Africa to claim more voice and rights on the international stage. It is therefore important not to confuse scientific and normative aspects of patriotism and nationalism and instead take into account moderators that lead to different (positive and negative) consequences of both constructs.

Conceptualizing patriotism as identification with a country and nationalism as a potential consequence of national identification raises the questions of how closely and in which way the two constructs are correlated and, especially, how far high degrees of patriotism straightforwardly translate into nationalism and derogation of national outgroups. More generally stated, this question refers to the conditions under which ingroup love turns into outgroup hate. Clearly, such an interrelation is not a firm

given but rather contingent on characteristics of the context and the groups involved and on the processes leading to the conclusion that their own group is positively distinct from others. Therefore, it is not surprising that studies have revealed, on average, only moderate correlations between patriotism and nationalism.

As said before, nationalism implies an intergroup comparison between one's own country and other countries, whereby the former is typically seen as superior to the latter. However, such superiority can be obtained in two ways: by an above-average positive view of one's own country or by an explicitly negative evaluation of other national groups. The latter case is more probable when the national identity is insecure rather than secure, when there is intergroup competition for power or resources, and/or when the groups involved are, as clearly applies for national groups, political entities. In that case, especially in hierarchically organized social systems, the risk is high that political leaders will fuel distrust and hostility against outgroups.

Moreover, pride in one's own country need not necessarily be based on intergroup comparisons. Research has shown that the link between attachment to one's own country and negative evaluations of other countries depends on whether people focus on intergroup comparisons or on temporal comparisons at the intragroup level. For example, thinking of how one's own country has developed economically or politically during the past 10 years can enhance national pride without simultaneously fueling negative international attitudes. If, however, the focus is on how one's own country developed in comparison with other countries, feelings of pride imply that other countries are seen as inferior.

Threats to one's own country's safety, welfare, and positive regard are powerful contextual conditions that can affect both patriotism and nationalism. Such threats can be symbolic (affecting personal values or worldviews), materialistic (e.g., competition for limited tangible resources), or physical (such as in wartime or in the context of terrorist attacks). The tragic terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, provided a very strong example for the impact of being reminded of one's own and one's fellow country members' mortality: U.S. citizens' feelings of belonging, commitment, and loyalty to the nation strongly increased, as did the relevance of national symbols (e.g., the U.S. flag).

Yet even under threatening conditions such as in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the link between attachment and loyalty to the own national group and intolerance toward other groups need not necessarily be strong. It rather depends on how the country as an entity is defined: If it is conceptualized as having a strong common “essence,” obtained from a small set of shared and well-defined norms and common characteristics of its members, patriotism and nationalism tend to go together. If, however, the country is defined by the need to address common problems and objectives requiring cooperation and coordination, being loyal toward one’s own country need not translate into resenting those who are different.

In a similar vein, societies characterized by increasing numbers of immigrants and an increasing degree of cultural diversity differ in the extent to which they perceive diversity as a valuable and constitutive element of their identity. Although in Canada or New Zealand, for example, cultural diversity is recognized as an important aspect of the country’s identity, in other countries it is perceived as a threat to the clarity or stability of national identity. In these cases, high levels of patriotism can lead to within-nation differentiation and, possibly, discrimination against national minorities. The debate over how immigrants should acculturate often has, as a starting point, the proviso that some basic features of the host country (such as its language) need to be adopted. Some characteristics of immigrants and their culture are not tolerated by many host society members (e.g., Muslim women wearing headscarves at their workplace in modern western European countries).

### National Identifications as Social Identity: What Is Unique?

In which ways does identification with one’s country differ from other social identifications? In fact, the functions of patriotism and nationalism summarized earlier are to a large extent general and not specific to national groups. Both phenomena are in line with *social identity theory*, which assumes that people strive for a meaningful and positive self-concept, which they derive in part from their memberships in social groups. By taking pride in one’s groups and by positively distinguishing them from other groups, one can ensure a positive self-concept.

Yet there are some unique characteristics of a country as compared with other social groups. First, a country is a very large social category, which implies that its meaning is much more determined by formalized norms (e.g., a constitution) and value systems than by the quality of intra-group interactions. Moreover, as alluded to in the beginning of this entry, nationality is a feature that becomes relevant quite often in people’s lives: when traveling abroad, following the news about international economic and political alliances, or following international sports competitions. Hence, this social category is highly accessible; that is, people will often define themselves and others in terms of their national affiliation. In addition, national groups are quite impermeable: It is often difficult, or at least dependent on substantive administrative efforts, to become the citizen of another country.

Probably the most distinctive aspect of countries, however, is that they are political entities. As such, their meaning has a clear ideological loading, and their functioning can be strongly determined by political leaders, an element that can be especially strong in hierarchically structured societies. People typically have a need to define the meaning and the core features constitutive of their country. However, in times of globalization, multiculturalism, and rapid social changes, this is a difficult, controversial, and highly ideologically loaded issue.

### Implications

Both patriotism and nationalism are phenomena with great societal relevance. Both are aspects of identification with one’s country: Although patriotism is defined by the relation of the individual to his or her country, nationalism is comparative in nature and implies that one’s own country is evaluated more favorably than other countries. Although researchers have tried to clearly distinguish healthy patriotism from dangerous nationalism, it would be an oversimplification to see the outcomes of patriotism as positive and those of nationalism as bad. Moreover, a strong link between patriotism and nationalism is not a firm given; these concepts can be distinguished phenomenologically and psychologically. Under certain circumstances, such as a physical or economic threat between countries, however, patriotism and nationalism



go hand in hand, and the connection is often fueled by political leaders.

Of course, these social-psychological concepts can offer only some pieces for the multidisciplinary undertaking of understanding national and international problems such as terrorism, warfare, security politics, and international unions. Also, there is still much to learn about patriotism and nationalism. Among other questions, it would be interesting to systematically compare patriotism, nationalism, and their moderators across cultures and political systems and to monitor in longitudinal studies whether and how these two phenomena change in rapidly changing societies.

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*See also* Collective Self; Discrimination; Essentialism; Identification and Commitment; Optimal Distinctiveness; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Identity Theory; Xenophobia

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## NEED FOR BELONGING

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The *need for belonging* refers to the motivation to feel connected to and accepted by other people. While this need can operate at the interpersonal level (interactions between two people), humans are also motivated to feel included in groups. For most people, satisfying the need to belong is not difficult. However, for those who fail to gain acceptance, the consequences can be quite negative.

#### Background and Psychological Bases

The need to belong has been viewed as a critical motivation since the early 1900s. For example, Sigmund Freud highlighted the important psychological benefits of contact between people in groups. A few years later, Abraham Maslow, in his famous hierarchy of human needs, argued that only two other basic needs have greater priority than the need to belong: physiological and security needs. In recent years, the need to belong has been incorporated in many psychological theories.

To the extent that the need to belong is innate, it should be manifested from a very early age. Research on John Bowlby's *attachment theory* provides evidence that infants experience a strong need to feel connected to their caregivers. This need is met in very young children who develop secure bonds with their caregivers. Such children have higher social competence (they are more socially adept) and fewer problems developing relationships with other people later on in life than do children who fail to develop secure bonds with their caregivers. These latter children often experience anxiety and lack of trust in their later social relationships. Thus, meeting the need to belong as an infant is important not only for a child's early survival but also for his or her later social development.

The need to belong probably functions below conscious awareness. However, there are also conscious processes that lead people to affiliate and collaborate with others. These include the desire to compare one's opinions, abilities, and emotional reactions to those of others and the motivation to achieve collective goals (e.g., winning a basketball game).

Research on the need to belong tends to focus on what happens when people feel that they do not belong to (are excluded from) important groups. Rejection produces a host of problems. In terms of physical health, exclusion from groups is associated with increased risk for heart attacks, reduced blood pressure regulation, and increased insomnia. In terms of psychological effects, feeling that one does not belong is associated with negative feelings about oneself, anxiety, and lowered self-esteem. People who fail to meet the need to belong over an extended time are at risk for depression and have a reduced life expectancy.

According to Mark Leary's *sociometer model*, self-esteem reflects one's perceived belongingness in important relationships and groups. High self-esteem signifies that a person is meeting this need, whereas low self-esteem signifies that he or she is failing to do so. Therefore, people with low self-esteem should be motivated to increase their level of belongingness. Research on the sociometer model has found that people do indeed seek to establish social bonds when their self-esteem has been lowered, supporting the idea that self-esteem is an internal index of one's success in meeting the need to belong.

Other theories propose different mechanisms underlying the need to belong. According to *uncertainty-identity theory*, people who feel uncertain about themselves, their future, or their place in the world are motivated to increase their identification with groups—suggesting that one's level of uncertainty is the basis of the desire to belong. According to *terror management theory*, the need to belong is stimulated by an existential fear of death. By identifying with groups, people obtain a sense of symbolic immortality. While these theories disagree about the psychological mechanism underlying the need to belong (self-esteem, uncertainty, fear of death), they all assume that people possess a social monitoring system that alerts them to their level of belongingness and initiates actions to increase this belongingness when it falls below a critical level.

## Group Processes

In groups, people can coordinate their actions and cooperate to achieve goals that individuals acting alone cannot achieve. Groups also serve another important function: They provide people with a lens through which to understand the world. Stated differently, people construct and construe the world on the basis of the beliefs and values of their group. When people are excluded or made to feel that they do not belong to important groups, their ability to understand the world is reduced, which in turn produces anxiety and decreased self-confidence.

Failing to satisfy the need to belong can have a number of consequences for how people behave in groups. For example, research has shown that people who have been excluded from valued groups are more likely to derogate (put down, make fun of) those who are different from themselves, adopt ingroup stereotypes that make them feel like typical group members, and punish people who break group rules.

So far, we have focused on how people respond to being excluded. But it is also important to consider why this exclusion occurs in the first place. Normal group functioning hinges on the willingness of members to follow the norms (rules for behavior) of the group. When members do not follow these norms, the entire group is likely to suffer. Therefore, groups develop methods to motivate their members to follow norms. One powerful method for motivating normative behavior is the use (or threat) of exclusion, which capitalizes on members' need to belong to the group.

In all groups, exclusion of one sort or another is used to punish those who deviate from established rules for proper behavior. An example is prison sentences for those found guilty of committing crimes. Prison is a tool to socially isolate people who violate important norms. Even within prison, exclusion can be used in a punitive way. One of the worst things that can happen to a prisoner is to be placed in the "hole"—put in social isolation. Even on playgrounds, children use social exclusion as a punishment. For example, in the game of dodge ball, children who are slow or uncoordinated are hit with the ball and banished from the group activity until the game is over. Another familiar example involves being chosen last for an athletic team. Being chosen last signifies that one is

not really wanted in the group. Those so designated feel excluded and suffer reduced self-esteem as a result.

The need to belong is an important human motive, which has important implications for group processes. This motive is likely to have evolutionary roots, although personal self-interest plays an important role as well—people are motivated to belong to groups in order to achieve individual goals. Groups need people to follow norms and use exclusion to punish members who fail to do so.

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*See also* Attachment Theory; Conformity; Deviance; Identification and Commitment; Inclusion/Exclusion; Ostracism; Social Comparison Theory; Sociometer Model; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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to jump to conclusions and seek quick answers? The answer to this question may lie in people's need for closure. *Need for closure* (also known as *need for cognitive closure*) refers to an individual's desire to have any answer on a given topic rather than to have confusion and ambiguity. This can be contrasted with *need for specific closure*, which refers to an individual's desire to have a particular answer on a given topic.

Need for closure has been found to influence many aspects of our behavior, from information processing to group behavior, and it has been studied in many diverse fields, including political attitudes, organizational change, judgments in criminal investigations, susceptibility to delusions, attitude change, intergroup behavior, and consumer behavior.

#### History and Background

The notion that individuals may differ in their motivations toward gaining and using knowledge has been of interest to theorists in personality and social psychology for many years. Early theorists emphasized psychodynamic aspects, linking openness to new experiences to the successful completion of early stages of development or linking closed-mindedness to the prejudiced personality. In recent years, however, theorists such as Arie Kruglanski, the social psychologist most closely associated with research in this area, have emphasized the motivational aspects of need for closure and the myriad ways in which need for closure influences human behavior.

Need for closure is seen as an individual difference that varies across individuals and across situations. Individual differences in need for closure may emerge because of cultural values and norms, such as in societies where closure is valued highly, or because of family dynamics and socialization processes. However, situational factors that influence the perceived benefits of closure, such as freeing the individual from further information processing, or the perceived costs of closure, such as concern about making the incorrect decision, will influence need for closure. For example, need for closure may be heightened in circumstances in which action or quick decisions are required, such as when group members must work together to complete a task within a deadline or when an individual is suffering from mental fatigue or is engaged in a particularly dull task.

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## NEED FOR CLOSURE

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Why do some people seem to thrive on uncertainty and ambiguity whereas other people seem

Two tendencies are seen to underpin need for closure: a tendency toward urgency in judgments and decision making, or *seizing*, and a tendency toward permanency in judgments and decision making, or *freezing*. Need for closure may express itself in certain ways, such as a desire for definite order and structure, feeling uncomfortable with ambiguity, a desire for urgency in judgment and decision making, a desire for stable and predictable information, and an unwillingness to have one's knowledge challenged or confronted.

Individuals with a high need for closure may be more likely to jump to conclusions because they seek quick closure by relying on early cues and the first answer available. In addition, a person high in need for closure may exhibit rigidity of thought and a reluctance to consider alternative views. Indeed, such individuals may react negatively to having their sense of closure or order threatened by other people or other opinions. In contrast, individuals with a low need for closure (or a high need to avoid closure) may enjoy the freedom associated with ambiguity and uncertainty, express more flexibility in their ideas, and engage in more creative acts. However, a person with a low need for closure may prefer to suspend judgment on issues and may be reluctant to commit to definite opinion or judgment.

### Studying Need for Closure

Need for closure is mainly considered to be an individual difference in disposition but one that can be strengthened or weakened by situational factors. Thus, it is possible to study need for closure by assessing dispositional need for closure or by using well-established experimental manipulations of situational need for closure. Dispositional need for closure is assessed with the Need for Closure Scale (NFCS), developed by Donna Webster and Arie Kruglanski. The NFCS is a multi-item scale that assesses five dimensions considered to underlie need for closure: preference for order, preference for predictability, decisiveness, discomfort with ambiguity, and closed-mindedness. In addition, a number of situational factors are known to strengthen need for closure, such as time pressure, environmental noise, mental fatigue, a dull task, or the request for a judgment. Research across a number of domains has revealed that either measuring differences or manipulating differences in need for closure leads to identical effects.

### Areas of Research

Need for closure has a broad influence on the way knowledge is constructed and used and, as a result, influences a wide range of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group processes.

#### *Information Processing*

It has been argued that individuals with a high need for closure have a tendency to seize and freeze on early information. As a result, need for closure is associated with a narrow information search and decreased information processing prior to judgment. In addition, individuals with a high need for closure may generate fewer alternative hypotheses to a problem before reaching a decision. However, such individuals may actually be quicker to attain high levels of confidence in their judgments. Need for closure is associated with a tendency to use cognitive shortcuts to find solutions and a reliance on early or preexisting cues, such as stereotypes, to make judgments. These information processing biases express themselves in phenomena such as primacy effects in impression formation (impressions are more heavily influenced by initial information), anchoring effects in judgments (once made, judgments seem to be anchored and are slow and difficult to change), and correspondence biases (the tendency to map people's behavior onto underlying personality dispositions).

#### *Interpersonal Behavior*

Need for closure also influences a number of interpersonal behaviors. For example, people with a high need for closure may display lower levels of *perspective taking* and *empathic concern* for interaction partners. In addition, people with a high need for closure may use more abstract concepts in communication, which can create greater interpersonal distance between communicators and decrease liking for one another. Finally, research on negotiation behavior has found that people with a high need for closure make smaller concessions, engage in less systematic processing, and base their negotiation behavior on stereotypes about their opponents.

#### *Political Attitudes*

One of the areas in which the role of need for closure has been studied extensively is the domain

of political attitudes. Need for closure has been found to be associated with conservative ideologies, the endorsement of right-wing political attitudes, and membership in right-wing organizations. Indeed, in an extensive review of the literature, John Jost and his colleagues argued that conservative political ideologies—those that support a social order that is hierarchical, stable, and predictable—are more likely to satisfy a psychological need to avoid uncertainty and ambiguity. However, it should be noted that the desire for permanent and stable information suggests that need for closure should be associated with a preference to maintain the status quo, regardless of whether it is right wing or left wing. Research by Agnieszka Golec has found that the way in which high need for closure is expressed does depend on the political and cultural context and what is classified as the traditional position and what is classified as the modern position.

### Group Behavior

Individuals with a high need for closure desire firm and definite knowledge about social reality. Groups offer a shared social reality, which, for individuals high in need for closure, should prompt engagement in a range of intragroup and intergroup behaviors. Individuals high in need for closure are more likely to desire consensus and opinion uniformity within a group and to react negatively to people who undermine the shared social reality of the group by deviating in their opinions or by violating group norms. A high need for closure may also foster positive liking for the group and hostility toward other groups because the group is the source of firm knowledge about social reality. Moreover, individuals high in need for closure show a preference for autocratic and hierarchical group processes and strong leaders because such processes provide structure and predictability. Finally, people high in need for closure may show a greater tendency to be task oriented and cooperative in problem-solving groups in order to achieve group goals.

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See also Conservatism; Dogmatism; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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## NEED FOR POWER

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Individuals differ from one another in the extent to which they are motivated to control the environment and influence others. Some individuals actively seek opportunities to influence everyday situations, events, and people, whereas other individuals are more prone to be affected by circumstances and others. This personality tendency is known as *need for power* or *dominance*. It has implications for the ways individuals process information, how they perceive others, the goals they pursue, and ultimately for the ways society is organized in terms of distribution of resources.

The motivation to attain power reflects a desire to influence others and have an impact over the environment. Individuals who seek power network more, become more visible, define group agendas, and build alliances. They often attain leadership positions and are able to create a team spirit. Longitudinal research that assessed the future careers of university students found that those students who were high in need for power chose professions in which they could exert influence over others, such as teaching, psychology, clergy, business, management, and journalism. The desire for power in some individuals is an important ingredient in groups and in society because it acts as the

glue that coordinates interindividual behavior and facilitates group action. This entry looks at how dominance is conveyed and measured, then examines how it is expressed in social interactions.

Dominance is conveyed by verbal and nonverbal cues. The nonverbal behavior of dominant individuals displays comfort and relaxation. These individuals make more use of the space that surrounds them, including reducing the physical distance to others. When interacting with others, they speak more, are louder, interrupt others more, use fewer hesitations, and have a more varied speech code. They also touch others more. In dyadic interactions, dominant individuals exhibit equal amounts of looking the interaction partner in the eyes while listening and looking while speaking. Submissive individuals, in contrast, look more while listening than while speaking. These individuals assume more constricted body positions and expressions of tension or fear.

Dominance is usually assessed through self-report measures in which individuals are asked to estimate, using rating scales, how much they possess of several traits, such as being forceful or domineering. However, the power motive can be measured in more subtle ways. One implicit measure of power motivation uses projective tests that display pictures of interpersonal scenes. Participants are asked to describe the scenes. Their descriptions are then content analyzed regarding the extent to which they reflect dynamics linked to prestige, control, or influence.

Gender differences in dominance are complex. Studies that used implicit measures of need for power (i.e., projective tests) did not find significant differences between men and women. For both gender groups, need for power was associated with behavioral indicators of a desire for prestige and getting formal social power in society. Nevertheless, differences were found in the ways dominant men and women behaved. Dominant men displayed more incidences of negative impulsive behavior such as drinking, aggression, gambling, or sexual exploitation, compared with their female counterparts. In addition, studies examining nonverbal behavior found more gestures of dominance in men than in women. For example, in dyadic interactions, men usually exhibit the gaze pattern that is typical for dominant individuals, whereas women display the subordinate gaze pattern.

These differences in overt dominance between men and women are substantiated by differences

in levels of testosterone, a steroid hormone responsible for physical masculine attributes and for aggressive behavior in nonhuman animals. Men produce significantly higher levels of testosterone than women do. Furthermore, men who have high levels of baseline (rest level) testosterone exhibit more dominant behavior, especially involving aggression, than other men do.

Although dominance is a relatively stable attribute of the person, research shows that there is context-specific variability in the behavioral expression of dominance. When people interact with one another, one person's level of dominance is affected by the level of dominance of the other person. If one person acts in submissive ways, the other person tends to act in dominant ways, and vice versa. This tendency for complementarity in dominance occurs both on a moment-to-moment basis, without the person's awareness, and in more structured, long-term relationships. In other words, individuals adapt their level of dominance to that of their interaction partners; and they also actively seek to establish relationships with those who are complementary to them in need for power. An individual who has a high motivation to attain power tends to surround himself or herself with others who are more submissive and can validate his or her dominant position.

The extent to which a person is dominant affects how he or she makes judgments and decisions. Compared with nondominant individuals, dominant individuals rely more on their gut feelings and the subjective experiences that arise while thinking. For example, when it is easy to generate arguments in favor of a topic (e.g., when asked to generate a few arguments regarding introducing biometric ID cards), dominant individuals, but not subordinate individuals, will express a more positive attitude toward the topic compared with when it is difficult to generate arguments in favor of the topic (e.g., when asked to generate many arguments). Merely manipulating the number of arguments that individuals are asked to generate affects more the attitudes of dominant than of subordinate individuals.

Individuals with a high need for power tend to respond in similar ways to individuals who are given an actual power position. In both cases, they enjoy a sense of entitlement, are prone to use others for their own ends, have difficulty in taking the perspective of others, and pay little attention to

others' needs. Need for power also affects the ways individuals perceive others and is often linked with a tendency to rely on stereotypes rather than on individuating attributes of other people.

However, dominance can be associated with social responsibility, as shown by the behavior of many world leaders. The desire to influence others may serve the attainment of personal goals, ideals, and advantages for the self, or it may serve the attainment of group goals and ideologies that are deemed relevant by the individual. For example, high need for power is frequently found in religious leaders and political or social activists. Whether the behavior of dominant individuals is guided by social responsibility or by the desire to attain selfish ends depends, to a great extent, on the values of the individual. This occurs because dominant individuals respond in line with activated constructs, including values and worldviews. Nevertheless, when survival tendencies are activated, dominance creates the conditions for a fiery pursuit of self-serving goals.

Finally, asymmetries in dominance impact society at large. Legitimized social positions, such as occupational positions, differ in the extent to which they have an impact on others. Compared with low-power positions, high-power positions have a greater impact on how economic and social resources are distributed, as well as the development of social norms and ideologies. Individuals who are motivated to achieve power tend to occupy higher-power positions in the social structure and thereby have more influence on groups and society at large.

The tendency for powerful positions to be occupied by dominant individuals reinforces the status quo and contributes to maintaining social inequality. This occurs because dominant individuals tend to focus on their needs and the needs of their groups. Furthermore, dominance is linked to an asymmetric participation of individuals in the development of social norms and the distribution of resources. As such, dominance is a central mechanism for maintaining social inequality.

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See also Dominance Hierarchies; Gender and Behavior; Leadership; Power

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## NEGOTIATION AND BARGAINING

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*Negotiation* and *bargaining* refer to a communication process between two or more parties to reach agreement or strike a bargain. People frequently negotiate, and many of these negotiations can be solved in a mutually beneficial, integrative way. Unfortunately, individual negotiators often forgo such integrative agreements because they fail to be truly concerned about both their own and their counterpart's needs and interests and because they are bounded in their rationality. The negotiation context, however, drives concern for both self and other and motivates negotiators to deliberately process information in a systematic way. Thus, when time pressure is mild, when power differences are weak or nonexistent, when negotiators are accountable, and when cooperative incentives are being emphasized, mutually beneficial, integrative agreements are quite likely to emerge. This entry begins with some general parameters and descriptions of negotiation and then discusses the main theories that have been developed in this area.

### What Is Negotiation?

In a negotiation, parties may be individuals, as in the bargaining between a buyer and a seller of a Volvo 240 DL Estate, or between a boss and an employee about training and development opportunities or career goals and expectations. Alternatively, parties may be groups of people, as in the negotiation between prison guards and inmates about certain privileges or between the boards of two large companies about the terms of a merger.

When groups become larger or when issues require specific expertise, representatives may be engaged to do the negotiation. Examples of such representative negotiation include labor negotiations between union representatives and representatives from management and peace negotiations between representatives from the Israeli government and the Palestinian authorities.

The above examples should not be taken as if negotiation is confined to rather formal and

infrequent encounters in business and diplomacy. Quite to the contrary, and although often not recognized as such, negotiation is a basic aspect of most interpersonal and intergroup encounters. When settling in for a long air trip, we negotiate with our neighboring passenger about who gets what part of the shared armrest. We do not speak to each other about who gets what, but through nonverbal (and gentle) pushing and withdrawing, we coordinate into a mutually comfortably position. Likewise, driving down a narrow road may lead us to negotiate with an upcoming driver about who goes first and in what way. But we do not get out of our cars to talk and discuss. We remain behind the steering wheel and limit ourselves to shaking our heads, blinking our eyes, pointing our fingers, and if all this really doesn't work, we finally but reluctantly may use the horn and headlights.

Neither should the above examples be taken as suggesting that negotiation is about one single issue, such as the price of the Volvo, peace between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, or what part of the armrest you get during the flight from Reykjavik to Johannesburg. Far more often, negotiations involve several issues. In the case of the Volvo, one may negotiate the price of the car but also talk about delivery, tune-up cost, and warranty. Labor negotiations usually include discussions about salary increases, vacation, pension plans, and training and development. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization talk about Jerusalem, the settlements, the borders, Gaza, and issues concerning trade and security. And even in the case of the armrest negotiation, we may also deal with leg space and whether we are going to have long conversations or instead do some undisturbed reading. In short, negotiations often are about multiple issues, and in case they are not, parties can bring new issues to the table or break up issues into several smaller ones.

Negotiating about several issues at the same time may have interesting advantages. Mary Parker Follett, a pioneering scholar of negotiation, tells the story of two sisters quarreling over an orange. After a while, they decide to split the orange into two equal parts. One sister squeezes her part, throws away the peel, and drinks the juice. The other squeezes hers, throws away the juice, and processes the peel to flavor a cake she is

baking. Clearly, had these sisters talked about the juice and the peel, they could have reached a more mutually beneficial agreement (the entire peel to the one sister and all the juice to the other) than they reached by quarreling over one single issue—the orange.

Or consider Roger Fisher and William Ury, founding fathers of the Harvard Project on Negotiation, who tell the story of the Camp David negotiations between Israel and Egypt in 1977. Since the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israel had occupied the Sinai Desert, which Egypt wanted back. Instead of dividing the desert in more or less equal parts, it was decided that Egypt would get back the desert so that it could satisfy its historical claims and restore its reputation in the Arab world. But, critically, Egypt would keep the desert demilitarized so that Israel's need for safety and security was satisfied. Put differently, both parties achieved a much better deal by talking about historical claims and reputation as well as about the need for security and safety rather than focusing on the single surface issue of who gets what part of the Sinai Desert.

### Integrative Agreements

Agreements that take advantage of the fact that several issues are involved that are not all equally important to all parties are called *integrative agreements*. In integrative agreements, parties trade unilaterally important issues (important to one party, unimportant to the other—e.g., the peel, reputation among Arab neighbors) for bilaterally important issues (important to both parties—e.g., juice, security). Reaching integrative agreements—as opposed to simple split-the-difference compromises or victory-to-one settlements—has a number of critically important consequences.

First, integrative agreements tend to be relatively stable and to reduce the likelihood of renewed conflict between the parties. Second, integrative agreements generate positive feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pride and instill a sense of self-efficacy, allowing parties to approach new conflicts and negotiation in a more cool-headed and optimistic manner. Third, integrative agreements are implemented better—parties are more committed to their part of the bargain and more motivated to do the things they promised to.



Fourth, integrative agreements create more value to both parties than does any other type of agreement and thereby foster economic prosperity and wealth. Fifth, and last, integrative agreements foster mutual understanding, trust, and respect and create a sense of collective success. Thus, integrative agreements create stability, harmony, and economic prosperity; failure to reach (integrative) agreements creates frustration, conflict, distrust, and weakened social ties and hurts economic progress.

### *The Nash Equilibrium*

Partly because reaching integrative agreements is vital to societal functioning, many scholars in psychology, economics, and political sciences have tried to understand when and why negotiators do or do not achieve integrative agreements. Much of this work traces back to the early 1950s, when John Nash, as a postdoctoral fellow at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, published an article in which he proposed that many bargaining problems are best solved when individual parties follow their self-interest in a strict rational manner: They would choose those behaviors that maximized their personal outcomes and avoid those behaviors that would not do so. This would result in the achievement of a so-called *Nash equilibrium*, that is, a solution in which neither party could do better without the opposing party's doing worse. Most of the time, integrative agreements are Nash equilibria, and according to Nash's analysis, rational pursuit of self-interest leads parties to uncover these optimal and mutually beneficial agreements.

Nash provided a mathematical analysis based on assumptions about human behavior. Soon after its publication, Sidney Siegel and Lawrence Fouraker, Harold Kelley, and Dean Pruitt set out to experimentally test his theory. These authors created two-person negotiation tasks in which each party was shown a chart depicting several issues (e.g., the price of the car, delivery time, method of payment) and for each issue, several levels of agreement (e.g., for price, 5,000, 4,500, 3,000, etc.; for delivery time, 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, etc.; for method of payment, cash, credit card, bank transfer, etc.). Each party was also shown the payoff he or she would receive for a particular agreement. Thus, for price, the seller would see that 5,000 yielded greater payoff (e.g.,

100 points) than 4,000 (e.g., 75 points), and the buyer would see that 5,000 yielded lower payoff (e.g., 0 points) than 4,000 (e.g., 25 points).

Furthermore, the task was set up so that what was valuable to one party was less valuable to the other, and vice versa. For example, whereas the buyer could earn between 0 and 100 on price, the seller would earn only between 0 and 50, and on delivery the buyer could earn only between 0 and 50 whereas the seller could earn between 0 and 100. Thus, by trading the less important issue for the more important one, buyer and seller were able to earn more personally and collectively (100 to each = 200 together) than by splitting the difference on both issues (25 + 50 to each = 150 together).

Put differently, these authors created a task with integrative potential, allowing parties to integrate interests and achieve mutually beneficial agreements. But because each side was shown only his or her own payoffs and not those of the counterpart, negotiators could not immediately see the optimal, integrative outcome; through negotiation, exchange of information, and communication, they had to uncover this possibility. Nevertheless, according to Nash, rational, self-interested negotiators should be able to reach this optimally integrative agreement.

The integrative negotiation task has been used in literally hundreds of studies, and time and time again, results have shown that individuals have great difficulty achieving integrative agreements. This could mean that Nash was wrong and that rationally self-interested individuals do not achieve Nash equilibrium. Alternatively, his theory may have been correct, but the underlying assumptions were not. Indeed, most of the negotiation literature has been devoted to understanding the psychological mechanisms behind (not) achieving integrative agreements. A large part of this work is predominantly concerned with external conditions, such as time pressure and power differentials that motivate individuals toward certain behavioral strategies. These works thus question whether individuals are always and only motivated by self-interest or perhaps also, or even more, by other concerns, such as fairness, reputation, concern for the other and the relationship, and so on.

Another large part of the literature is predominantly concerned with the cognitive processes that

prohibit or facilitate the discovery of mutually beneficial, integrative agreements. The cognitive approach thus questions whether humans are rational or, instead, bounded in their rationality. The cognitive approach focuses more on such issues as reasoning errors and reliance on more or less inaccurate rules of thumb, how people see the negotiation and the opponent, and so on. The remainder of this chapter presents some of the key findings within each of these approaches.

### *Structural-Motivational Approaches*

The structural-motivational approach heavily relies on the notion that negotiators simultaneously face a *cooperative incentive* to reach agreement with their counterpart (i.e., agreement is better than no agreement) and a *competitive incentive* to do well personally. Whereas the cooperative incentives motivate negotiators to make and reciprocate concessions, to lower their demands, and to openly and accurately exchange information, the competitive incentives motivate them to withhold and retract concessions, to remain tough in their demands, and to deceive and mislead their counterpart. By implication, if cooperative incentives become relatively more important and available than competitive incentives, negotiators will engage in more cooperative behavior and are less likely to reach a mutually hurting stalemate.

Cooperative incentives gain or lose prominence relative to competitive incentives because of aspects of the negotiation setting. *Power and bargaining strength* are one good example. When a negotiator receives an interesting offer from an outsider, this circumstance may fuel the competitive incentive to increase personal outcomes from the negotiation. Thus, when during the negotiation about the price of the Volvo 240 your neighbor sends you a text message offering to pay 4,500, it is unlikely that you will settle with your current negotiation partner for anything less than 4,500. Or when an employee knows the director controls not only the budget for training and development but also whether annual bonuses are being paid, the employee may be more willing to give in and offer to follow work-relevant courses during holiday season. Put differently, when their bargaining strength and power increase, negotiators generally become reluctant to make and reciprocate concessions, and when one's power and bargaining

strength are less than that of one's counterpart, one's motivation to cooperate and concede increases.

Another good example of a factor influencing the balance between cooperative and competitive incentives is *time pressure*. Time pressure may emerge because the goods (e.g., fish or fruits) that are being negotiated may deteriorate or because an external or self-imposed deadline is approaching (e.g., the market closes at 5 p.m.; the divorce papers are being filed and take effect soon). Time pressure focuses parties on agreement and the consequences of failing to avoid impasse; it shifts the focus to the cooperative aspect of the negotiation and, in general, fosters concession making and cooperative exchange.

It was noted earlier that negotiators often operate on behalf of some constituents. In such representative negotiation, negotiators need to take into consideration not only their own and their counterpart's needs and desires but those of these constituents as well. Such accountability to constituents is another prominent factor influencing the focus on cooperative rather than competitive incentives in the negotiation. Research has shown, for example, that negotiators tend to comply with their constituents' desires—when the constituents want a tough game, representatives negotiate more competitively than when their constituents want an agreement no matter what. It is interesting that there is quite some evidence that when constituent goals and desires are unknown or unclear, negotiators tend to assume they should compete rather than cooperate. The mere fact that an individual represents one or more others generally increases toughness and competitive behavior.

### *Dual Concern Theory*

These factors—bargaining strength, time pressure, and accountability to constituents—all affect the extent to which negotiators care for their own outcomes, and these factors lead negotiators to resist making concessions. Other variables have been shown to influence the extent to which negotiators care for the outcomes of their counterpart. For example, when negotiators are friends, they may be particularly concerned about the outcomes their counterpart gets, so as not to jeopardize their friendship. Or when negotiators expect to work with the counterpart in the future, they are more motivated

to search for an agreement that satisfies their counterpart. And to give one final example, when some external party, such as a manager of one's constituent, refers to one's counterpart as *partner*, negotiators are more likely to be concerned about the other's needs and interests than when the counterpart is systematically referred to as *opponent*.

*Dual concern theory*, developed by Dean Pruitt and Jeffrey Rubin, summarizes these tendencies among negotiators to be concerned with their own outcomes and, independently, to be concerned with their partner's outcomes. When concern for one's own outcomes is high (e.g., there is high bargaining strength) and concern for the other's outcomes is low (e.g., one does not expect to work together in the future), negotiators are expected to engage in tough, competitive behavior aimed at dominating the partner. They are reluctant to make concessions and fail to listen to the other's demands and needs. When concern for one's own outcomes is low (e.g., there is high time pressure) and concern for the other's outcomes is high (e.g., the other is considered a friend), negotiators are expected to engage in conciliatory, cooperative behavior aimed at submitting to the partner. They are willing to make (unilateral) concessions and carefully listen to the other's demands and needs. When parties engage in mutual forcing—when they each have high concern for their own outcomes and low concern for their partner's—the negotiation is likely to end in a mutually hurting stalemate, and integrative agreements are unlikely. Likewise, when parties engage in mutual yielding—when they each have a low concern for their own outcomes and high concern for the partner's—the negotiation is likely to end in a quick, middle-of-the-road compromise. Again, integrative agreements are unlikely. In fact, the theory predicts that integrative agreements come about when the parties each have a high concern for both their own and the other's outcomes. On one hand, they resist making concessions because doing so hurts personal interests. On the other hand, they want to make concessions because doing so helps the other's interests. This dilemma leads negotiators to search for creative solutions that integrate both their own and each other's interests optimally.

Dual concern theory has received strong support in numerous studies. It thus appears that a pure and rational focus on self-interest does not lead

to integrative agreements. Instead, to achieve integrative agreements, negotiators need to combine a concern for their own interests with a concern for those of their partner. Any structural factor that promotes a negotiator's concern for his or her own outcomes will thus promote toughness when the negotiator has a low concern for the other's outcomes, but it will promote a problem-solving approach toward integrative agreements when the negotiator has high concern for the other's outcomes.

### *Bounded Rationality and the Cognitive Underpinnings of Negotiation*

Dual concern theory mainly concerns the role of selfishness and prosocial motivation and is rather silent on the cognitive underpinnings of integrative negotiation. But recall that in Nash's theorizing, it was assumed that negotiators are fully rational and able to see and process all available information optimally. This assumption is problematic, and research has shown time and time again that individual negotiators cannot process all relevant information—they are bounded in their rationality because their cognitive ability is limited and because not all relevant information is or can be made available.

Also, negotiators may try to mislead and deceive each other, and thus some of the available information is deliberately inaccurate and cannot be trusted. To deal with the cognitively taxing task, negotiators have been shown to rely on cognitive heuristics—shortcuts that help them make fast and satisfactory judgments and decisions. Thus, negotiators may infer their counterpart's intentions on the basis of stereotypic information—if the other is sharply dressed as a businessperson, one may be more likely to infer shrewdness and toughness than if the other is wearing jeans and a college sweatshirt.

Max Bazerman and Maggie Neale developed the *behavioral decision approach*, which encompasses a great variety of these cognitive shortcuts and how they affect the achievement of integrative agreements. One prominent example is the so-called *fixed-pie assumption*—at the outset, negotiators tend to assume that what is important to them (e.g., juice) is equally important to the other party, and what is irrelevant to them (e.g., peel) is equally irrelevant to the other. Given such a fixed-pie assumption, it makes no sense searching for integrative agreements; all we need to do is claim

value and try to get the biggest share of the pie (or orange). And this is indeed what has been found many times: A large majority of negotiators, novices and experts alike, tend to begin with a fixed-pie assumption, and if they do, they search for victory or, when fairness concerns prevail, 50–50 compromises. Only when negotiators realize during negotiation that their fixed-pie assumption is erroneous do they start searching for integrative agreements.

Recent studies have invoked the notion that negotiators may switch between more shallow and automatic information processing—in which case they rely heavily on cognitive heuristics—and more deliberate and systematic information processing. Under systematic information processing, the influence of cognitive heuristics is attenuated, and negotiators are more likely to reach integrative agreements. This work also shows that negotiators engage in more systematic information processing when they have low rather than high power, when time pressures are mild rather than intense, or when they are held accountable. Put differently, there are quite a number of structural, context-related variables that can lead negotiators away from their basic tendency to rely on cognitive heuristics that inhibit mutually beneficial, integrative agreements.

*Carsten K. W. De Dreu*

*See also* Coalitions; Cooperation and Competition; Distributive Justice; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Prisoner's Dilemma; Team Negotiation

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## NORMATIVE INFLUENCE

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*Normative influence* is one of the two main ways in which people influence one another in group

interaction. It is a form of influence in which pressure is exerted to cause someone to conform to the expectations and preferences of others. The expectations and preferences of others function as a reference group norm that conveys how individuals ought to behave or what decision they ought to make. Although normative reference groups may exist outside the immediate group setting (e.g., religious norms), more frequently the source of the influence is a norm established or detected among those people who are physically present in the group interaction.

It is instructive to contrast normative influence with the other major form of influence within groups. *Informational influence* refers to changing individual behavior by incorporating information about issues as evidence about reality. In contrast to normative influence, which is social in nature, informational influence is primarily intellectual, centering on the issues being considered by the group rather than the preferences of people within or outside the group. Having different bases, the two forms of influence differ in the motives and conditions that produce them, their distinctive interaction behaviors, and their consequences on group process. This entry looks at the conditions for and consequences of normative influence.

### Conditions Promoting Normative Influence

Normative influence focuses on the values and preferences of other people regarding the issues and tasks facing a group. It is a people-centered form of influence, and susceptibility to it reflects one or more of several underlying motives: to be accepted by others, to promote interpersonal harmony, and to use other people's behaviors as yardsticks to gauge the effectiveness of one's judgments and behaviors. Therefore, conditions that call attention to the preferences of others for resolving intragroup issues will foster normative influence. Conversely, conditions that emphasize the importance of the group's decision and its factually correct resolution will favor the use of informational influence.

Chief among conditions determining whether normative or informational influence prevails is the type of issue (judgmental versus intellectual) discussed by the group. *Judgmental issues* are matters of preference and values, such as judgments of right and wrong. They are not issues capable of resolution by the application of facts, such as

whether some event or state exists. Judgmental issues are resolved by appealing to the normative preferences of group members (e.g., numerical majority or high-status members) or to outside authorities (e.g., the Bible). But even *intellectual issues*, which rely on the gathering and consideration of facts (e.g., “What is the repair record of Toyotas?”), will provoke normative influence if they are information poor, a condition in which relevant information is lacking among group members. In such circumstances, the group will resort to normative influence as a criterion for correctness.

Aside from the nature of the issue under discussion, there are other conditions that foster normative influence; these include the goal of the group interaction, the personal orientation of group members, and the style of interaction. If a group considers its goal is to maintain harmony and cohesion, that is, if relations within the group are important, normative influence is likely to be enhanced. This would be a likely outcome in enduring groups, compared with groups convened only for specific, short-term tasks. If a group meets repeatedly, there is more opportunity to get to know one another and more pressure to maintain harmony for the sake of group continuance, conditions that favor normative influence.

Similarly, individuals with strong personal dispositions toward interpersonal harmony and the welfare of others (*communal orientation*) would be more likely to take the preferences of other group members into account than those inclined toward finding the correct solution of the issues facing the group (*task completion* or *agentive orientation*). Does the individual (or group as a whole) want to reach a mutually satisfying decision or a factually correct one?

Finally, if a group takes early and frequent votes on an issue, it is more likely to engage in normative than in informational influence. Taking an early public vote focuses attention on member preferences rather than the facts of the issue, and discussion will be driven by the decision preferences of members and defending their votes rather than by thorough discussion of relevant facts. This distinction in the style of group discussion is referred to as *verdict-driven* versus *evidence-driven style*.

### Forms of Argumentation

Normative and informational influences take distinctive forms. In the former, group members

argue on the basis of decision preferences of numerical or prestigious majorities in the group (e.g., “Most of us think Toyotas are better cars” or “Group members who know about cars prefer Toyotas”) or outside the group (e.g., “Toyota sells more cars”). Arguments are framed in terms of a particular decision alternative and supported by their internal (to the group) or external normative support. In informational influence, on the other hand, arguments are phrased in terms of observable facts and reasoning that support a particular decision alternative (or that disprove other alternatives), such as “Toyotas have the best gas mileage figures in the industry” or “Fords have a lower life expectancy.” Thus, the style of normative influence practiced in groups is consistent with the motive to compare one’s decision to that of others to foster group consensus and/or to resolve an issue in the absence of hard evidence.

### Consequences of Normative Influence

Generally, predominant use of normative influence in group discussions can lead to quicker decisions, especially when agreement is reached by a vote other than unanimity. In issues that inherently require social agreement, such as judgmental issues or intellectual issues for which little information is available, normative influence is indeed natural. But in issues with a factually correct solution, and where information is available to the group, normative influence inhibits accurate and creative solutions. It places emphasis on satisfaction with the outcome rather than the best solution to the issue.

In the real world of decision making—for example, political decisions—there are many striking instances in which, in retrospect, poor decisions were based on the pursuit of mutual satisfaction with the decision outcome rather than on incorporating the best available information. Predominant use of normative influence can retard the sharing of critical information possessed by group members, particularly those in the group’s numerical minority. Normative influence is a powerful tool of the majority, whereas the minority’s best strategy is to use informational influence on the majority. The critical contribution of a group minority is to provide the majority with fresh and novel information to improve decision making. The group conflict that is ostensibly avoided by normative influence can actually be productive in many instances, especially for intellectual issues.

Normative influence facilitates agreement and reduces conflict, but it also reduces the breadth and depth of information being shared during discussion. It encourages members to think about the issue in simpler, superficial ways. This is called *heuristic reasoning*, which refers to use of simple rules and a narrow set of information to make decisions—for example, “What do most people think?” Informational influence, however, enables systematic reasoning, a thought process whereby group members consider a broad range of relevant information, think about it in depth, and elaborate on the meaning of facts—for example, “Toyotas cost more than Fords but need fewer repairs and get better gas mileage, so they must be precision engineered and cost less in the long run.”

Normative influence can be satisfying, useful, and economical. Were it not, it would not be as widely practiced in groups. It is satisfying because it is a direct way to achieve consensus, and please the most people, among parties who differ in their decision preferences. It is useful because sometimes we do not have relevant information to make a well-considered decision or sometimes the issue is one that does not lend itself well to factual resolution—think of religious and moral issues. It is economical because it is simpler to find out what others prefer than to explore the bases of those preferences. In groups composed of experts in different fields that are relevant to an issue (e.g., marketing, finance, engineering, design, and aesthetics), using normative influence makes sense if one assumes that each person’s decision preference is based on systematic consideration of the facts in his or her domain.

But normative influence can compromise competent decisions by restricting the systematic use of a broad range of relevant information, considered in depth, and with the novel input of group minorities. These are the very components of creative decision making and require open sharing of information.

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*See also* Anticonformity; Conformity; Group Polarization; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Inclusion/Exclusion; Innovation; Minority Influence

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## NORMS

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*Norms* are social standards that describe and prescribe behavior. Norms serve as guides for one’s own behavior, help establish expectations about how others will act, and therefore promote greater coordination in social interactions. Norms may be descriptive in the sense that they specify the frequency and pervasiveness of some behavior. Norms may be prescriptive in the sense that they specify the behaviors that a person ought or ought not to perform. According to some theorists, the possibility of informal punishments and sanctions for failures to comply with prescriptive norms is a defining characteristic of a norm.

This entry examines the distinctions between norms that are primarily descriptive in nature and those that are more prescriptive. Although norms are often thought of as social standards, individuals may internalize the prescription of social norms and formulate their own personal norms to guide their behavior. Certain social norms (the norm of reciprocity and fairness norms) are so universal that they have been singled out for special attention because their influence is seen in such a wide variety of social situations. Finally, characteristics that are related to when and why norms are most likely to emerge will be discussed.

### Social Norms

The distinction between social norms that summarize how people behave and norms that specify how people ought to behave is reflected in the defining characteristics of descriptive and prescriptive norms.

### Descriptive Norms

Descriptive norms are inferred by individuals from their day-to-day observations of their own

behavior and the behavior of others. Descriptive norms reflect the frequency and pervasiveness of a given behavior; they may be thought of as summary statements about how people behave. These descriptive norms may be global and apply quite broadly across a wide variety of circumstances (e.g., using the title Mr. or Ms. to address a higher-status person), or they may be situational and apply to a more restricted set of circumstances (e.g., cheering at athletic events).

Global norms are useful when a person must determine his or her standing in terms of some ability, accuracy of some attitudinal position, or appropriateness of some behavior. For example, assume you are introduced to a stranger and say, "It is nice to meet you, Dr. Johnson." If Dr. Johnson replies, "Oh, you can call me Chris," you may infer that Dr. Johnson considers you to be a social equal. Although a global norm suggests that one shows respect to higher-status others by using a formal title, the norm also suggests that the use of first names is appropriate when speaking to an equal, and Dr. Johnson's reply has clarified your standing.

Situational norms play a similar role but are more dependent on the particular setting or context and more limited in their application. A situational norm defines how people act in a specific setting: Patrons are quiet in a library. When in novel situations, people will often use the actions of others to help decide on the appropriate course of action. The benefit provided by descriptive norms is that understanding and being able to predict how others are likely to act allows people to coordinate their actions for smoother interactions. When social norms are widely shared and the advantages of social coordination are recognized, certain behaviors (e.g., queuing behavior, shaking hands when introduced to a stranger, passing to the right when approaching a person on a sidewalk) are performed almost mindlessly because they are so deeply ingrained within the members of a culture.

In addition, people filling a particular social role (e.g., leader, teacher, emergency responder) may come to define and understand their responsibilities by identifying the specific norms that are associated with that role. For example, the norms of being a leader include maintaining order within the group, promoting the interests of the group, and distributing resources among group members fairly. These norms may then be considered role prescriptions that would apply to anyone occupying that particular social position.

It should be made explicit that just because many others are behaving in a particular way does not necessarily mean that the course of action is correct or the best way to act. Furthermore, some normative beliefs may be inaccurate and yet may still be used as guides for behavior. For example, many college students believe that the frequency of binge drinking on campus is far greater than it actually is, setting the stage for students to overindulge in the mistaken belief that "everyone is doing it."

### *Prescriptive Norms*

Prescriptive norms shift the emphasis from the question of "what is" to the question of "what ought to be." Prescriptive norms (sometimes called *injunctive norms*) specify what one should do as well as what one should not do. These prescriptive norms are informal standards of behavior that have evolved over time or within a given situation, and they are expected to be followed and obeyed to promote smooth social interactions. Violations of prescriptive norms may lead to expressions of disapproval from others who observe the transgression. The disapproval after the violation of a prescriptive norm may involve the administration of an informal social sanction, such as frowning or shaking of the head, comments to let the transgressor know that the norm violation was observed, explicit calls for some corrective action, social rejection, or overt retaliation for the offense. Because norms reflect informal standards, there are no formal institutional reactions to norm violations, but informal sanctioning systems will often emerge over time that establish how others might appropriately respond to norm violations. The sanctioning systems, therefore, come to be governed by their own prescriptive norms. According to some definitions, the presence of a sanctioning system is a necessary condition for an observed behavioral standard to be considered a prescriptive norm.

Although the notion of a social norm implies that a group endorses a particular standard of behavior, this does not necessarily mean that each individual within the group must accept that standard to the same degree. A given norm will influence an individual's actions most strongly if others respected by the individual endorse that norm as it applies to a particular behavior. This distinction is seen in the notion of subjective norms incorporated

into the *theory of reasoned action* as one of the factors that affects a person's intentions about how to behave.

According to this approach, people consider what they believe to be the normative beliefs of others and then decide how motivated they are to meet those normative expectations. For example, a teenager will consider the normative standards that his parents, neighbors, teachers, and friends might hold about a particular behavior (e.g., voting in an election, premarital sex) when trying to decide how to act. The teenager will also consider how much he or she cares about meeting the standards and normative beliefs of these other people. One implication of this approach is that the normative standards of those who are not considered to be particularly important to an individual (e.g., a neighbor) will exert relatively little influence on behavior. However, if others close to the individual (e.g., best friend, parents) have strong feelings for or against compliance with some social norm, the normative beliefs of these important others will play a greater role in influencing the person's behavior.

If prescriptive norms and their associated informal sanctioning systems are found to be insufficient to ensure compliance with social standards of behavior, formal standards may be instituted within the legal system to accomplish these goals. The legal system specifies the expected standards of behavior that are to be displayed by those within the system (e.g., laws enacted by legislative actions), the mechanisms by which violations are identified (e.g., law enforcement agencies), procedures that determine whether sanctions are required (e.g., the judicial system), and the nature of those sanctions (e.g., fines, imprisonment). Within the current discussion, these arrangements might be considered to be legal norms.

### Personal Norms

Personal norms are internalized standards that have been adopted as guides for one's own behavior. At a descriptive level, personal norms are roughly equivalent to one's habits—behaviors that an individual does on a regular basis (e.g., brushing teeth, buckling seat belts). Personal norms at this level reflect a routine pattern of behavior that serves to simplify life: I have no need to think about whether I am going to brush my teeth—it is just something that I do. Personal norms may also include a component

analogous to prescriptive norms, and deviations from one's personal norms can lead to a sense of guilt for failing to live up to one's own personal standards. For example, if a person believes that citizens should exercise their right to vote and has internalized this belief as a personal standard for behavior, failure to make it to the polls on election day will make the person feel guilty.

Once they are internalized, the individual follows these personal norms even when no social sanctions would be possible (e.g., when a person is alone or when in a large group so that no one else can monitor the person's behavior). If a person has fully accepted and internalized the social norm of commitment as a personal norm, that person will follow through with a promise to contribute to a friend's favorite charity even though the friend would never be able to determine whether the contribution had really been made. The normative pressure to make the contribution is driven by the person's desire to avoid feelings of guilt and pangs of conscience that would arise if the person deviated from the prescriptions of the commitment norm.

### Roles of Norms in Social Behavior

Social and personal norms play important directive roles in social behavior, but it is important to note that norms do not cause behavior. Instead, norms guide an individual's course of action by either offering information about what most people do in similar situations (serving the descriptive function) or reminding the individual what important others expect him or her to do (serving the prescriptive function), with some risk of social sanction if the person fails to comply with the social standards. It is also important to recognize that the existence of a norm per se does not necessarily mean that it will play any role in guiding one's action; according to the *focus theory of normative conduct*, an individual's attention must be focused on a particular norm in order to activate its influence potential.

For example, social norms associated with environmental issues (e.g., recycling) may not have any impact on a person's behavior until some event calls attention to the need for pro-environmental action (e.g., seeing someone throw an aluminum can in the trash). The individual has a norm-based potential for pro-environmental action, but for



that norm to be used as a guide for behavior, some situational cue must be present to focus the individual's attention on an existing norm.

Although some norms may emerge that satisfy the specific needs of a group or of a particular situation, there is a class of *general interaction norms* that apply to a broad spectrum of social situations and may be particularly accessible for easy activation. Two examples of general interaction norms are the *norm of reciprocity* and *fairness norms*.

### *Norm of Reciprocity*

The norm of reciprocity is one of the most prevalent social norms and one that is easy to understand. If someone does a favor for another, the recipient will feel a certain social (normative) pressure to return the favor, due to the norm of reciprocity. There have been suggestions that there are evolutionary roots for this norm, with instances of helping and cooperation being based in part on what is called *reciprocal altruism*: If I help you when you are in need, I believe—because of my belief in the norm of reciprocity—that you will help me when I need assistance, and we will both be better off in the long run because of our compliance with this social rule. Returning favors fulfills norm-based social expectations, but an inability to reciprocate will result in the person who had received the favor feeling a continuing sense of obligation until the social debt can be repaid.

The norm of reciprocity is particularly important in casual relationships in which those involved are primarily concerned with their immediate outcomes and with making sure that no one has taken advantage of them. The strength and pervasiveness of the norm of reciprocity are so great that those who fail to reciprocate may be punished for their failure to meet this social obligation. In extreme cases, those failing to reciprocate may even be expelled from a group if they do not live up to this normative standard.

### *Fairness Norms*

There are also fairness norms that govern how we deal with others. If social organizations are to keep themselves going by protecting the advantages gained by cooperative actions, each member of the organization must feel that the benefits

of being a part of the group outweigh the personal costs incurred for being in the group. For example, assume a Little League association requires parents to staff the concession stand during games. Parents may prefer not to serve in this role, but the league would have to cease operation if the stand were not open. The consequence of no one's helping would be the loss of a valuable resource (i.e., the league), but most parents recognize that the benefits of giving their children an opportunity to play ball outweigh the time spent working in the concession stand.

Two closely related fairness norms provide the basis for how the duties required by the group will be assigned. The *equal division norm* and the *equity norm* are the most frequently applied standards for the fair allocation of both benefits to be received and costs to be shared. Application of the equal division rule results in each group member's receiving an equal share of a reward (e.g., all children can play in the league) or making an equal contribution to the group's common need (i.e., each parent must work one game). The equal division scheme is easily applied and is seen as producing a fair outcome in many situations. However, imagine how parents who have only one child might feel while working in the concession stand with parents who have three children, all of whom are playing in the league.

Treating everyone the same when there are clear differences in benefits to be gained may not be perceived as fair. In such cases, the equity norm may be more appropriate. According to the equity norm, the relationship between what a person contributes to the group and what that person receives in return should be proportional to the relationship between the contributions and returns for others in the group. An equitable arrangement in the case described above might involve the parents of an only child working one game in the concession stand and the parents of three children working three games.

### **Additional Characteristics of Norms**

Social norms emerge from the experiences of people in a group because the norms serve some beneficial function for the group and, more specifically, for the individuals within a group. Norms are most likely to emerge in groups in

which members share common values and attitudes and generally agree on how people ought to act. Because social norms are social constructions based largely on the beliefs and behaviors of others, norms are most likely to emerge when powerful members of a group have, by their public behavior and pronouncements, given their support to a particular course of action. People often use powerful others as sources of information about how one ought to behave, and powerful others are in strong positions to offer reinforcements for compliance with norms and for punishment of transgressions.

In other cases, a given behavior may come to be accepted as part of a prescriptive norm with little justification: The mere fact that the majority of people behave in a uniform manner (i.e., the descriptive feature of norms) may be taken as sufficient evidence for a prescriptive social norm to arise and to be seen as “the way things ought to be.” Finally, there is a conditional nature to social norms that recognizes that people do not behave in blind obedience to norms in all situations. For example, most people strongly endorse a norm stating “Thou shalt not kill,” but many people believe that there are circumstances under which taking the life of another is acceptable (e.g., self-defense). The degree of conditionality represents a measure of the generality of the norm; in this regard, norms can be seen as socially

agreed on standards of behavior that are subject to modifications by the group as changing circumstances warrant.

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*See also* Emergent Norm Theory; Group Socialization; Normative Influence; Reference Groups; Roles

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## OBEEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

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*Obedience to authority* refers to the act of following orders or instructions from someone in a position of authority. Psychologists are particularly interested in situations in which people obey orders to perform an act they believe to be wrong. Much of the research on obedience to authority has been conducted with an eye to understanding morally questionable acts, and the findings have been used to explain atrocious events such as the Holocaust. However, the research also has implications for everyday situations, such as following questionable orders from physicians or airline pilots.

### Background

The first systematic effort by a social psychologist to study obedience to authority was conducted by Stanley Milgram in the early 1960s. Milgram's obedience studies are arguably the most well-known research in social psychology, both within the field and among the general public. The obedience studies were conducted between August 1961 and May 1962. With one exception, all the studies were carried out on the campus of Yale University. Participants were members of the community recruited through newspaper ads and direct mail solicitations. All of Milgram's participants were between the ages of 20 and 50, and in all but one version of the study, they were men. Participants believed at the outset that they would be participating in a "scientific study of memory and learning."

The basic experimental procedure involved three individuals: the participant, a confederate pretending to be another participant, and the experimenter. The experimenter explained to the participant and confederate that they would be randomly assigned to either the role of learner or the role of teacher. He further explained that the study was concerned with the effect of punishment on learning and that electric shocks would be used as the punishment in the experiment. The drawing was rigged so that the real participant was always the teacher and the confederate was always the learner.

The experiment was conducted in two rooms separated by a thin wall. On one side of the wall, the learner was strapped into a chair. Electrodes supposedly connected to a shock generator in the adjacent room were attached to his arm. A speaker allowed the learner to hear the teacher's instructions from the other room, but the learner could respond only by pressing one of four buttons within reach of his strapped-in hands. With the real participant watching, the learner mentioned that he had a heart condition and that he was worried about the effect of the electric shocks.

The participant-teacher was then seated on the other side of the wall in front of a large machine the experimenter identified as a shock generator. Thirty switches spanned the front of the machine, each identified with the amount of voltage it supposedly delivered. The voltage labels started at 15 volts (V) and continued in 15-V increments to 450 V. Labels on the machine identified the shocks as increasingly severe, ranging from *Slight Shock*

to *Danger: Severe Shock*. The 450-V lever was labeled simply with three red Xs.

The teacher read a list of 25 word pairs (e.g., blue-girl) for the learner to memorize. The teacher then tested the learner by providing the first word in the pair and four possible options for the second word. The learner gave his response to each test item by pressing one of the four switches, which lit up a corresponding light on the teacher's side of the wall. If the learner got the test item incorrect, the teacher was instructed to deliver an electric shock. The teacher was told to give a 15-V shock for the first wrong answer and to increase the intensity by 15 V for each successive wrong answer until the learner had memorized all 25 word pairs. In reality, the learner received no shocks. But he deliberately gave many wrong answers, forcing the teacher to deliver increasingly severe shocks. After pressing the 75-V lever, the participant heard the learner grunt in pain (actually, a prerecorded sound) through the wall. After the 150-V punishment, the participant heard the learner cry out that his heart was bothering him and that he wanted to be released. The learner gave increasingly loud protests after each successive punishment, including screams of pain and demands to be released.

After the 300-V shock, the learner refused to answer, which the experimenter said should be considered a wrong answer. After 330 V, despite intense screams earlier in the procedure, the learner no longer made a sound when shocked. Whenever the participant expressed a reluctance to go on, the experimenter instructed him to continue, using a sequence of four prods: *Please continue* or *Continue*, *The experiment requires that you continue*, *It is absolutely essential that you continue*, and *You have no other choice, you must continue*. The prod sequence started anew after each shock. If a participant refused to continue the procedure after receiving the fourth prod, the experimenter ended the session. Otherwise, the experiment continued until the participant had pressed the highest shock lever (450 V) three times.

The key measure was the point at which the participant-teacher refused to continue. That is, how long would the participant obey the experimenter's orders despite the obvious suffering of the learner? People hearing about the obedience studies for the first time typically assume that virtually every participant will stop long before reaching the

end of the shock generator. However, Milgram found surprisingly high rates of obedience. In the basic procedure described here, 65% of the participant-teachers continued to press the levers all the way to the end of the procedure. Milgram argued from these findings that whether a person engages in seemingly brutal behavior is often not a function of the individual's character. Rather, in certain situations, good people can be made to do bad things.

Milgram explored some of the causes of obedience by changing features of the procedure in subsequent studies. For example, he found obedience decreased when the learner was physically closer to the teacher, such as in the same room. Obedience also decreased when the experimenter was in another room and delivered his orders over the phone. Participants were less likely to obey orders from a confederate posing as another participant than orders from the experimenter. But conducting the study in an office building with no apparent affiliation to Yale University did not significantly reduce compliance. In the one study for which he recruited women, Milgram found that they behaved very similarly to men.

### Explaining the Effect

Most people find the high rates of obedience in Milgram's studies surprising and disturbing. Before conducting the research, Milgram described the procedures to a large number of people, including a group of psychiatrists, and asked them to predict the results. Everyone agreed that finding even one participant who went to the end of the shock generator would be extremely unlikely. The gap between this expectation and the actual results is often held up as an example of what social psychologists call the *fundamental attribution error*. That is, when explaining the causes of another person's behavior, people typically fail to fully appreciate the role situational forces play.

Individuals hearing about Milgram's research for the first time are often tempted to attribute the obedient participants' behavior to personal characteristics, such as a sadistic personality or a lack of conscience. But Milgram demonstrated that following the experimenter's orders was the normative response. What people fail to recognize are the features of the situation that made it difficult for

Milgram's participants to do anything but obey the orders.

What are these situational features? Milgram emphasized the power of the authority figure in this setting. He argued that people are raised to respect and follow orders from authority figures, such as parents, teachers, or police officers. The authority figure does not need to be forceful or charismatic but must simply be seen as legitimate. In the obedience studies, participants granted the experimenter this authority by virtue of his association with the experiment, the university, and perhaps even science. Observers have pointed out that Milgram's experimenter also may have been seen as an expert. Because the experimenter presumably knew all about the dangers of the shock generator and apparently was not concerned, participants may have deferred to his judgment and continued to deliver shocks.

Psychologists have identified other features in Milgram's procedures that most likely contributed to the high rates of obedience. One of these is the incremental nature of the task. As indicated previously, all participants began with the lowest level of shock—15 V—and worked their way toward the 450-V lever in 15-V increments. Researchers find that step-by-step progression of this sort is an effective tactic for changing attitudes and behaviors in other settings. Among the processes that come into play in such situations are the need for consistency and a change in the way people think of themselves as they move through the steps.

In most cases, pressing the next lever on the shock generator is different from pressing the last lever only in degree. If a participant pressed the 170-V lever, there is no apparent reason he should not press the 185-V lever. Consistent with this reasoning, investigators can identify in Milgram's data a few places in the procedure at which participants were most likely to refuse to continue. Each of these stopping points corresponds to a qualitative change in the task. For example, the most common point for participants to refuse the experimenter's orders is after pressing the 150-V lever. This is the first time participants hear the learner's protests through the wall and his demands to be released. Continuing to give shocks at this point is a noticeably different act than it was earlier. Similarly, refusals increase when the learner refuses to answer and when the learner turns suddenly silent.

Another explanation for the high rates of obedience in Milgram's research concerns the novelty of the situation and the behavior of the experimenter. Most likely, participants had little prior experience with psychology experiments or machinery like the shock generator. When they first heard the learner's protests, participants probably began to search for information about how they should respond. In most versions of Milgram's procedures, the experimenter provided the only source of information, and he assured participants that nothing was wrong and that they should continue the test. Thus, it was not entirely unreasonable for participants to conclude under these circumstances that continuing the procedure was the right thing to do. Results consistent with this interpretation come from one of Milgram's studies. Before being asked to press the levers themselves, participants in one study saw two other "teachers" refuse to continue. Obedience declined significantly in this version of the procedure.

The experimental situation also provided Milgram's participants an easy opportunity to diffuse personal responsibility for any harm that came to the learner. Research in a number of areas finds that people are often motivated to assign responsibility for undesirable acts to someone else. Moreover, removing the burden of personal responsibility typically increases the chances that people will act in socially inappropriate ways. Although they were the ones pressing the levers, participants in the obedience studies frequently attributed responsibility for continuing the procedure to the experimenter. In the participants' eyes, they were just following orders. Indeed, when participants asked about responsibility, the experimenter was instructed to say that he himself was responsible for any harm that came to the learner.

### Ethical Concerns

Milgram's obedience studies played an important role in stimulating debate among psychologists about the treatment of human participants in research. Critics pointed to the potential harm to Milgram's participants. Many participants experienced intense stress as they wrestled with what to do while listening to the learner's apparent suffering. Psychologists also worried about the long-term psychological consequences of going through such an experience.

Milgram was not unaware of or insensitive to these concerns. All participants were debriefed about the study immediately after the session, and obedient participants were assured that their behavior was normal and that their conflicted feelings were shared by other participants. Moreover, follow-up questionnaires found 84% of participants were glad they had been part of the study, and the vast majority agreed that more experiments of this kind should be conducted. Nonetheless, the obedience studies are clearly out of bounds by today's standards. No study using Milgram's full procedures has been published since the 1970s.

### Implications and Remaining Questions

Milgram's obedience studies continue to generate discussions inside and outside psychology, largely because of their implications for understanding the worst of human behaviors: atrocities, massacres, and genocide. Milgram often drew parallels between his participants' behavior and the obedience witnessed in Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. However, other psychologists urge caution when making the leap from findings of controlled laboratory studies like Milgram's to complex social behaviors like those involved in the Holocaust. Nonetheless, laboratory studies on obedience provide valuable insights into some of the conditions that lead people to act in seemingly uncharacteristic and sometimes horrific ways.

Researchers have also applied findings from the obedience studies to other important concerns. Investigations into airline crashes suggest crew members are often reluctant to challenge a flight captain's judgment, even when they believe a captain's instructions are in error. Similarly, medical personnel may follow a physician's orders, such as administering an unusual dose of medicine, even when they believe the action might harm the patient. Milgram's results have also been used to explain why followers of a cult leader sometimes obey orders to act in harmful or self-destructive ways.

One persistent question about Milgram's research is whether the results would be replicated if the studies were conducted today. Ethical concerns prevent researchers from unequivocally answering the question, but a recent partial replication of Milgram's procedure provides some insight. The investigator noted that most of the

participants who refused to continue in Milgram's basic procedure did so after hearing the learner's first verbal protests at the 150-V mark. If participants made it past this point, there was a nearly 80% chance that they would continue to the end of the shock generator. Thus, the researcher avoided many of the ethical objections to Milgram's investigations by stopping the procedure after 150 V. The study, conducted in 2006, found rates of obedience that were similar to those that Milgram had found 45 years earlier.

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*See also* Banality of Evil; Genocide; Holocaust; Just World Hypothesis; Leadership; Norms; Power; Roles; Stanford Prison Experiment

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## OPINION DEVIANCE

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Deviance can be loosely defined as any conduct that diverges from normative expectations. These expectations may originate from observations of what most people *actually* do or say in specific situations or from socially transmitted propositions that are internalized by individuals and stipulate what, in general, people *ought* to do or

say. For the present purposes, the important point is that people who fail to meet these expectations often attract disapproval from other people. Such disapproval may translate into negative evaluations of the deviants or even their expulsion from their group.

### Consensus in Small Groups

Social psychology is typically concerned with the impact of deviance on people who behave in normatively appropriate ways and with the conditions that shape their reactions toward deviants. Most of what is known about opinion deviance stems from traditional social-psychological literature on small-group processes. Small groups are typically conceived of as social units composed of 3 to 15 interacting individuals who are attached to one another by reciprocal positive affective ties (e.g., friendship), who interdependently achieve common goals, who share a common fate, and who perceive themselves as a more or less tangible entity. Perhaps the clearest way to understand the impact of opinion deviance is to ask why people join face-to-face groups in the first place.

Consider what happens when we enter a new social environment (e.g., a new school, a new job, a new neighborhood). Would we affiliate with anyone at random? Would we affiliate with people who have opinions and attitudes different from ours and who might therefore contribute a richer, more diversified, and, hence, more accurate understanding of the world? Or would we affiliate with people who, from the outset, are likely to agree with our own views, while we overtly or tacitly avoid those who have different opinions? Provided that everyone is equally available (for instance, in terms of geographical proximity), the last of the three alternatives is most likely.

Clearly, we do not see everyone as an equally attractive candidate for affiliation. We usually prefer to affiliate with people who espouse the same attitudes and beliefs as we do. These people strengthen our convictions and increase the likelihood that we can achieve our goals as group members. This is also why, once groups are formed, their members devote a significant amount of time and energy to establishing group norms, reinforcing group consensus, and preventing group deviance.

### Social Reality, Group Locomotion, and Group Influence

The foregoing ideas underlie Leon Festinger's classic 1950 *theory of informal social communication*. In this theory, Festinger stressed the paramount role of consensus in groups. In many situations, he argued, we validate our perceptions by means of objective reality checks, through clues that are immediately accessible to our senses (e.g., boiling water burns the skin; hitting a drum makes a noise). However, perhaps our most important and meaningful beliefs (e.g., whether the death penalty is right, whether God exists, whether abortion is acceptable) cannot be validated by direct evidence. Yet, if we could not validate such beliefs, we would experience a permanent state of uncertainty, with associated anxiety, perhaps even helplessness. The solution is to find an alternative process of validation, and this process is to check our beliefs against the opinions of others (i.e., social consensus).

According to Festinger, the stronger the social consensus for our beliefs, the more confident we are about their accuracy. Therefore, we are motivated to compare our beliefs, not with those of a representative sample of other individuals, but rather with those of a biased sample of individuals who are likely to agree with us. The theory of *informal social communication* thus proposes that group consensus helps fulfill a *social reality function*, allowing group members to gain a sense of validity for their beliefs through selective affiliation with those who share similar beliefs. Associated with this function, there is also a *locomotion function of consensus*, allowing group members to cooperate in order to reach goals that they could not accomplish in isolation. Consensus thus operates as a psychosocial source of subjective validity, as well as a means to accomplish one's aspirations. Clearly, the emergence of opinion deviance in such a context represents a psychological threat because it generates uncertainty and jeopardizes goal achievement.

Research shows that uniformity among group members is facilitated by two forces operating in the group. These are what Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard termed *informational influence* and *normative influence*. Informational influence is directly related to the social reality function of consensus and the motivation to avoid uncertainty.

It occurs when we accept information provided by other people as objective and trustworthy evidence about reality. In contrast, normative influence is associated with the desire to be liked and to avoid disapproval by relevant others. It occurs when we comply with their opinions or behavior, not because we agree with them or believe they are telling us the truth, but rather because we wish them to view us in positive ways. These two forms of influence facilitate group uniformity. On one hand, they are based on motivations that lead group members to express similar opinions and to display similar behavior. On the other hand, their operation reinforces such motivations, thus reducing the likelihood that group members will deviate from the group's normative views or behavior. However, they are not always enough to prevent divergence on the part of some group members. How do other members react when such divergence occurs?

#### Deviance and Strategies to Restore Group Uniformity

A classic study conducted by Stanley Schachter, in 1951, illustrates the typical social-psychological experiment designed to study reactions of group members to opinion deviance. In that study, groups of several university students participated in a discussion. Unknown to the other participants, three group members were confederates instructed to play either a *modal* role (involving full and consistent agreement with the modal opinion of the group), a *deviant* role (involving full and consistent disagreement with the modal opinion), or a *slider* role (involving initial disagreement followed by gradual movement to agreement). The issue under discussion was the best strategy to handle a case of juvenile delinquency. Schachter varied whether the group was high or low in cohesiveness and whether the case was relevant or irrelevant to the group's purpose. During the discussion, he observed the amount of communication participants directed to each confederate. Results indicated that the most overall communication was directed to the deviant, the next most to the slider, and the least to the mode. Moreover, communication to the deviant tended to increase over time in most conditions, whereas communication to the mode remained constant, and communication to

the slider went down. After the discussion, participants were asked to evaluate the confederates. In general, the deviant received more rejection than the slider or the mode, who were liked about equally, and the deviant was generally rejected more when the group was cohesive and the discussion topic was relevant to the group's purpose. From the participants' standpoint, the slider had been "socialized" to accept the group's views and hence was treated like a regular member (the mode). The deviant, however, was harming the group's social reality and locomotion and therefore was rejected.

#### Inclusive and Exclusive Reactions to Deviants

As suggested by John Levine and his colleagues, groups may deal with deviants in a variety of ways, depending on the relative power of the normative members and the deviants in the group. Some of these involve *inclusive* attempts to reintegrate the deviants into the group, whereas others involve *exclusive* reactions, in which the group redefines its boundaries by expelling the deviants.

Schachter's communication data illustrate a particular type of inclusive reaction, *attempted influence*. The normative members of the group directed their communication to deviants in a persuasive attempt to lead the deviants back to the group's modal opinion. Often, this communication pressure is effective, either because the deviants are truly persuaded by the group consensus or because they wish to avoid disapproval or a marginal status. It is interesting that persuasive efforts toward deviants do not depend on the need for a fully consensual agreement. Other studies show that communication pressures are also strong when the group must reach a majority, rather than a fully consensual, opinion. Cross-cultural research conducted by Schachter and colleagues in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom obtained results similar to those found in the United States.

Research has also established several factors that increase group members' motivation to exert communication pressures on deviants. For example, motivation to persuade deviants increases with the interpersonal similarity among group members, with their interdependence for rewards, with



their desire to be in the group, with deviants' perceived responsiveness to communication pressures, with the strength of situational demands for consensus, and with the amount of outside threat to the group.

It is interesting that some of the above factors also have been shown to affect the propensity to abandon persuasive efforts and to engage in exclusive reactions toward the deviants through redefinition of the group's boundaries. This latter reaction occurs when, in spite of communication pressures directed toward them, deviants persist in their position, thus making it clear that communication is ineffective. In this case, deviants may be deprecated, marginalized, punished, stigmatized, or even expelled from the group. This process is more likely to occur when, for example, a consensual agreement has to be reached quickly.

Expelling deviants can be beneficial to the group for reasons beyond social reality and group locomotion. To illustrate, in 1984, Patrick Lauderdale and colleagues conducted a partial replication of Schachter's experiment in which the future existence of a discussion group containing a deviant confederate either was or was not threatened by an external authority. At the end of the discussion, participants learned that their group had to be reduced in size and were asked to evaluate other members in terms of whether they should stay or leave. As might be expected on the basis of Schachter's findings, participants evaluated the deviant confederate unfavorably compared with the other members and ranked this person first to be excluded. In addition, negative evaluation of and desire to exclude the deviant were stronger when the continuity of the group was threatened than when it was not. More important, when the group's existence was threatened, the more strongly that majority members advocated the expulsion of the deviant, the stronger the solidarity (i.e., cohesiveness) they expressed toward each other. This result suggests that a group's redefinition of its boundaries in the face of deviance can have positive consequences beyond the removal of a disruptive person, in this case an increase in cohesiveness among normative members.

Most of the research on reaction to deviants has focused on influence pressures and redefinition of group boundaries. However, two types of inclusive responses to deviants deserve mention, namely

*compromise* and *minority influence*. Compromise refers to opinion convergence, in which deviants and normative members shift toward each other's position. Compromise is more likely when normative members are not certain about the validity of their position, such as in newly formed groups that have not yet defined their beliefs and values.

Minority influence, in which deviants cause normative members to move to their position, can be produced by both high-status and low-status deviants. The former kind of influence is illustrated by Edwin Hollander's work on *idiosyncrasy credits*, which demonstrates that members taking deviant positions can produce innovation in a group only after they acquire legitimacy and status by showing initial conformity to the group's norms. The latter kind of influence is illustrated by Serge Moscovici's and Gabriel Mugny's work showing that deviants without legitimacy or status can produce innovation if they generate uncertainty in normative members by using certain kinds of behavioral style. This can involve expressing their position in a consistent and committed way, demonstrating its coherence and situational adequacy, and showing flexibility by shifting from a prior extreme position to a more moderate one. Consistency and commitment to their position increase the deviants' salience. Once they are salient, deviants must demonstrate that their position is coherent and adequate and therefore should be attributed externally rather than to their personal dispositions. If this demonstration is successful, deviants create uncertainty as to the validity of the modal group position, which encourages normative members to accept their innovative views. In showing flexibility, deviants facilitate movement toward those views.

In brief, the kind of strategy groups adopt to deal with deviance depends on a number of factors, including the particular context in which deviance emerges (e.g., whether a quick decision has to be reached, whether the group is under threat), the internal characteristics of the group (e.g., whether members are similar to one another, whether they like each other and the group as a whole), the magnitude of deviance (e.g., the amount of discrepancy between the deviant position and the modal position), the relative power of the majority and the deviants (based, for example, on their expertise and status), and the deviants' response to the pressures for compliance (e.g.,

whether they consistently defend their point of view and show some sensitivity to the majority's reaction). The topic of reaction to deviance, although an old one in social psychology, continues to stimulate new theoretical and empirical work, as illustrated by current research on the *black sheep effect* and *subjective group dynamics*, which are discussed in other entries.

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*See also* Black Sheep Effect; Conformity; Group Socialization; Informational Influence; Leadership; Minority Influence; Normative Influence; Subjective Group Dynamics

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## OPTIMAL DISTINCTIVENESS

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“Everyone needs to belong.” “Everyone needs to be unique.” That fact that both these statements are true is the basis for Marilynn Brewer’s theory of optimal distinctiveness, which helps to explain why we join social groups and become so attached to the social categories of which we are part. *Optimal distinctiveness theory* is about social identity, that is, how we come to define ourselves in terms of our social group memberships. Secure inclusion in a distinctive ingroup serves human

needs for belonging and differentiation. The upside of achieving optimal social identity is that secure group identity enhances well-being and motivates positive social behavior. The downside is that insecure group identity motivates exclusion, intolerance, and possibly intergroup hatred. This entry begins with a fuller description of optimal distinctiveness theory and then examines how it affects self-identity and intergroup relations.

### Definition and Background

For group membership to satisfy an individual’s need for meaning and coherence, the clarity of the boundary that separates ingroup membership from nonmembership becomes particularly important. This calls attention to the importance of the *distinctiveness* of social categories as a factor in group identification. Optimal distinctiveness theory provides a model of the psychological motives underlying the preference for distinctive social identities.

According to the optimal distinctiveness model, social identities derive from a fundamental tension between two competing social needs—the need for inclusion on one hand and a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuation on the other. People seek social inclusion to alleviate or avoid the isolation, vulnerability, or stigmatization that may arise from being highly individuated. Researchers studying the effects of *tokenism* and *solo status* have generally found that individuals are both uncomfortable and cognitively disadvantaged in situations in which they feel too dissimilar from others, or too much like “outsiders.” On the other hand, too much similarity, or excessive deindividuation, provides no basis for self-definition, and hence individuals are also uncomfortable in situations in which they lack distinctiveness. Being “just a number” in a large, undifferentiated mass of people is just as unpleasant as being too alone.

Because of these opposing social needs, social identities are selected to achieve a balance between needs for inclusion and for differentiation in a given social context. Optimal identities are those that satisfy the need for inclusion *within* one’s own group and simultaneously serve the need for differentiation through distinctions *between* one’s own group and other groups. In effect, optimal social identities involve *shared distinctiveness*. (Think of adolescents’ trends in clothes and hairstyles: Each

teenager is anxious to be as much like others of their age group as possible, while at the same time differentiating themselves from the older generation.) To satisfy both needs, individuals will select group identities that are inclusive enough that they have a sense of being part of a larger collective but exclusive enough that they provide some basis for distinctiveness from others.

### Importance and Implications

Optimal distinctiveness theory has direct implications for self-concept at the individual level and for intergroup relations at the group level. Research testing the basic assumption of optimal distinctiveness theory has demonstrated that individuals adapt their self-image to maintain or restore optimal identities, prefer membership in groups that are relatively small and distinctive, and defend or restore group boundaries if distinctiveness is threatened.

#### *Optimal Identity and Self-Stereotyping*

If individuals are motivated to sustain identification with optimally distinct social groups, then the self-concept should be adapted to fit the normative requirements of such group memberships. Achieving optimal social identities should be associated with a secure and stable self-concept in which one's own characteristics are congruent with being a good and typical group member. Conversely, if optimal identity is challenged or threatened, the individual should react to restore congruence between the self-concept and the group representation. Optimal identity can be restored either by adjusting individual self-concept to be more consistent with the group norms or by shifting social identification to a group that is more congruent with the self.

Self-stereotyping is one mechanism for matching the self-concept to characteristics that are distinctively representative of particular group memberships. People stereotype themselves and others in terms of salient social categorizations, and this stereotyping leads to an enhanced perceptual similarity between self and one's own group members and an enhanced contrast between one's own group and other groups. Results of experimental studies have demonstrated that threatening an individual's standing in the group—that is,

giving the person feedback that indicates that he or she is on the margins of the ingroup—results in increased levels of *self-stereotyping*. Adopting the traits that are considered to be stereotypical of the ingroup and considering them to be more self-descriptive align the self more closely with the ingroup and make a person appear more representative of the group. Thus, enhanced self-stereotyping (assimilation to ingroup characteristics and norms) is one mechanism for restoring a loss of inclusiveness.

Because enhancing ingroup similarity also enhances contrast between the ingroup and outgroups, self-stereotyping also serves to preserve or restore ingroup distinctiveness. Consistent with the assumptions of optimal distinctiveness theory, research has found that members of distinctive minority groups exhibit more self-stereotyping than members of large majority groups. In addition, people tend to self-stereotype more when the distinctiveness of their group has been challenged.

#### *Identification With Minority Groups*

Optimal distinctiveness theory accounts for the pervasive finding that social identification and ingroup favoritism are greater for members of minority groups than for majority group members. Further, when individuals belong to multiple social categories, they prefer to be associated with their smaller, distinctive group memberships rather than larger, majority ingroups. This group size effect has been obtained in both laboratory and field studies, despite the fact that minority status is often associated with other social disadvantages. Experimental evidence indicates that when the need for differentiation is activated, individuals value minority category membership more than membership in majority groups, regardless of other status differentials between ingroup and outgroup.

Because they are distinctive and clearly bounded, minority groups meet their members' needs for optimal social identity more effectively than majority groups do. This helps account for the finding that identification and attachment to minority ingroups is often quite high, even when such groups are socially disadvantaged or stigmatized. In fact, evidence suggests that strong social identification provides a psychological buffer that protects self-esteem among members of groups that

are devalued or negatively stereotyped by majority group members. Thus, group identity may play a particularly important role in enhancing self-worth and subjective well-being for individuals who have stigmatizing characteristics or belong to disadvantaged social categories.

In effect, some of the potential negative effects of belonging to a social minority may be offset by the identity value of secure inclusion in a distinctive social group. Results of survey research have revealed a positive relationship between strength of ethnic identity and self-worth among minority group members, and some experimental studies have demonstrated that individuals' self-esteem can be enhanced by their being classified in a distinctive, minority social category.

### *Defending Group Distinctions*

Finally, because distinctive group identities are so important to one's sense of self, people are very motivated to maintain group boundaries—to protect the distinctiveness of their groups by enhancing differences with other groups and limiting membership to “people like us.” When individuals are told that their ingroup characteristics are very similar to everyone else in a larger, more inclusive category, ingroup distinctiveness and clarity are threatened. Individuals react to such information by reasserting the distinctive features of their group, enhancing intragroup similarity and solidarity, and becoming more stringent about the standards for inclusion in the ingroup.

For instance, when students in a particular university have been given survey data that suggest that they are “very typical of college students everywhere,” they increase the number of traits that members must have to be “good representatives” of their university and reduce the number of people who are included as “true” ingroup members. Thus, threats to distinctiveness lead members to define the ingroup in a more exclusionary way.

Being restrictive and excluding others from the group may serve an important function for group members' own sense of belonging. In effect, exclusion may be one way that individuals are able to enhance their own feelings of group inclusion. In fact, those who are the *least* secure in their membership status (e.g., new members of a group or marginalized members) are sometimes the most

likely to adhere to the group's standards and discriminate against members of other groups. For example, new pledges to a sorority are often more likely than the more senior sorority members to wear clothing with sorority letters and to attend functions held by the sorority. Ironically, these noncentral group members may be even more likely than those who truly embody the group attributes to notice and punish others for violating the norms and standards of the group.

When given the power, marginal group members may also be more discriminating in determining who should belong in the group and who should be excluded—for example, when it comes time to decide on the next group of new pledges. In experimental studies, it has been demonstrated that when individuals are made to feel that they are marginal (atypical) group members, they become more stringent about requirements for group membership and more likely to exclude strangers from their group.

When the clarity of the distinction between ingroup and outgroups is threatened, highly identified ingroup members also respond by becoming more competitive in dealings with outgroup members. Ingroup favoritism in the allocation of rewards or resources to ingroup and outgroup members becomes one way to restore the differentiation between ingroup and outgroup. Under these circumstances, a cooperative exchange that would benefit both the ingroup and the outgroup may be rejected in favor of a competitive option in which the overall benefit is less but the ingroup gets more than the outgroup. Ensuring that the ingroup gets more in comparison with the outgroup not only enhances the status of the ingroup relative to the outgroup but also increases intergroup distance. Thus, preserving the distinctiveness of the ingroup may motivate intergroup discrimination and bias.

*Marilynn B. Brewer*

*See also* Inclusion/Exclusion; Need for Belonging; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## ORGANIZATIONS

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An *organization* is a social structure created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals. Organizations can be found in a variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from very large, formal, bureaucratic forms in government to very small, informal, and decentralized collectives in cyberspace. Organizations serve as the building blocks of modern society and offer the possibility for individuals to accomplish things they could never accomplish in isolation. Whatever their shape or size, all organizations must address a number of common issues in order to work effectively. This entry discusses the issues that organizations and work groups experience in defining shared objectives, selecting and training members, developing systems for control and coordination, interacting with the environment, and providing leadership. It concludes with an overview of recent trends with respect to groups in organizations and the methods researchers use to examine these and other organizational issues.

### Defining Objectives

Although having a shared objective is part of the definition of an organization, many organizations struggle to develop *clear* shared objectives. Research on goal setting has shown that, at the individual level, the specificity and difficulty of goals are very influential in performance, as is the individual's level of commitment to achieving the goal. At the organizational level, however, setting clear and

specific goals is extremely difficult, and most members do not agree on what the organization's overall goals are, much less the relative priority of goals for the subunits in the organization. Classic organizational theorists Richard Cyert and James March proposed that organizations deal with this by setting a general *aspiration level*, which is adjusted through experience with the environment. Modern managers implement this idea through programs such as *management by objectives*. This approach emphasizes participatively set objectives that are tangible, verifiable, and measurable. Managers at all levels participate in setting objectives for each organizational unit, which are aligned with the overall organizational objectives. The approach facilitates goal commitment through the participation of managers at all levels.

One way that organizations attempt to keep members aligned with and focused on objectives is to base employee rewards on attainment of them. *Pay for performance* and *bonus programs* have become increasingly popular in organizations, with rewards based on how many objectives were met and how well they were met. Although this form of feedback is effective in many situations, some have argued that overreliance on such systems can bring about dysfunctional consequences. Pay for performance systems can breed dishonesty or encourage employees to focus only on specified goals while overlooking other activities that would also be beneficial to the organization. Research on internal motivation suggests that instead of relying solely on monetary rewards, it is important for management to give employees meaningful work, knowledge of results, and autonomy in making decisions about how work is done. High internal motivation leads workers to strive to do good work even in the absence of significant external rewards and to complete tasks for the good of the organization even when those tasks are not formally part of their job.

### Selection and Training of Members

Individuals joining an organization are generally expected to enact a certain *role*. A role is defined by a set of expected behavior patterns, which can include individual tasks and responsibilities as well as the ways in which work relates to that of others in the organization. Roles and role systems are key

defining features of organizations. Identifying roles and finding the right people to fill various roles in an organization occupy a lot of the time and energy of management in formal organizations. In more informal or fluid organizations, such as the volunteer organizations that work on Wikipedia or Linux, roles are defined and filled through more of a self-selection process.

As an individual joins an organization and comes to occupy a role, others in the organization attempt to influence the new individual's behavior so that it will conform to the norms and social values of the organization. Just as people living together in a nation share an identifiable national culture, people working together in an organization develop a shared *organizational culture*. Organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning developed and perpetuated by members that distinguishes the organization from other organizations. Different organizational cultures involve different rituals and social norms for how to dress, how to speak, what hours to keep, and so on. Organizational cultures vary in terms of their strength, or how intensely held and widely shared the members' beliefs are. Over time, new members are socialized to behave in ways that conform to the culture of the organization or else are forced out.

Because of this tendency of organizations to bring about conformity in behavior, there is some debate among scholars regarding the costs and benefits of membership turnover. Some research has demonstrated that membership change can be costly to an organization or group because it creates social disruption as well as a loss in knowledge and historical information about the organization's or group's work. Airline mishaps are much more common during a crew's first flight together, and long-standing research and development groups exhibit productivity declines with the loss or gain of members, both serving as examples of the costs of membership change. Other researchers argue that there can be benefits associated with membership change, in the form of new and more creative ideas as well as the possibility of breaking old and dysfunctional patterns. They point out that long-standing management teams in organizations frequently fall into ruts that they break out of only when new members are brought in to shake things up.

### Control and Coordination of Member Contributions

Once an organization has identified its objectives and the people to carry out those objectives, it must go about organizing people to complete the work. This involves decisions about how to control individuals' work as well as how to coordinate individual contributions so that they lead to the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Early work on the topic of organizational structure conducted by theorists such as Max Weber and Frederick Taylor followed an approach best described as *machine theory*. The organization is viewed as a machine that can follow precise specifications for turning inputs, such as people and materials, into outputs. Work done in this tradition assumes that tasks can be broken down into elemental parts, which can be assigned to individuals and then coordinated in such a way as to achieve maximum efficiency and uniformity with no duplication of function. In so doing, command is centralized, and supervision is provided in the optimal ratio of worker to manager, such that the manager can adequately control all subordinates. In the middle of the 20th century, theorists such as James March and Herbert Simon began to observe an increasing number of situations in which rules could not anticipate all the possible contingencies an organization faced, and in such circumstances, control was best decentralized and local, with decisions made by workers who were closest to the problems and had the best information. Today's organizations generally use a mix of the two approaches, with some decisions centralized at the top and others made by workers themselves.

The particular form an organization takes to coordinate and control member inputs is partially a function of the interdependence required among different subunits. James Thompson developed a framework to describe the different types of interdependence characterizing work. Standard factory piecework falls into what Thompson termed *pooled interdependence* because individual workers are responsible for a whole piece of work, and the total output of the workers is added together to represent the output for the organization. Classic assembly lines, such as those devised by Henry Ford at the beginning of the 20th century, reflect a *sequential interdependence*, in which the

output of one worker becomes the input of another. However, much of the production in today's knowledge work economy requires a more complex level of coordination, what Thompson termed *reciprocal interdependence*, in which workers both make use of and contribute to the work of others, often in iterative fashion. Software engineering, product development, and biomedical research all require this more complex approach to coordination.

The interdependence requirements of work inform the ways in which the organization is broken into smaller units. Most organizations are broken down into subunits, such as departments, projects, or teams. These smaller work groups are the major building blocks of organizations because they tend to be more effective for providing the supervision and social support that employees need. These units can be grouped by function, such as marketing, operations, and accounting. However, when highly interdependent work among units is necessary, organizations frequently create product- or client-based groups or teams to facilitate the reciprocal interdependence necessary among the different functions. Although traditionally these units were created and headed by a manager who made most of the decisions about how work was conducted, more and more organizations are decentralizing this control to teams, which manage themselves.

Creating small groups within an organization not only helps management attend to the technical needs of task interdependence but also enables managers to attend to the social and emotional needs of employees, which promotes good performance. The emergence of the team idea in organizations can be traced back to the late 1920s and early 1930s and the now-classic Hawthorne studies. These involved a series of research activities designed to examine in depth what happened to a group of workers under various conditions. After much analysis, the researchers agreed that the most significant factor was building a sense of group identity, a feeling of social support and cohesion that came with increased worker interaction. Other researchers focused on helping to solve some problems at the Harwood Manufacturing Company, in rural Virginia, by designing group-based interventions to increase worker involvement and participation in organizational improvements, with impressive

results. Since that time, much research has been done, in both field and laboratory settings, on the use of teams as an approach to organizational design. Beyond their initial use in manufacturing and service provision, teams have become a major engine of the growing knowledge economy, in which new ideas in many sectors, including business, medicine, and scientific research, are the product of the collaboration of team members who have different backgrounds and expertise.

Although initially managers were concerned that teams left to their own devices would underperform, researchers have found that team members often hold higher standards for one another's behavior than managers could contemplate enforcing, delivering tough sanctions to members who are perceived as not working hard enough. In addition, teams that are trained together and remain intact can evolve very effective systems of coordinating the knowledge and resources they hold through the development of *transactive memory systems*, which can operate much more efficiently than more formal role systems.

### Interaction With Environment

Although the decisions an organization makes internally with respect to motivating and coordinating work are important to its success, other organizations in the environment can be just as, if not more, important. Far from existing in a vacuum, organizations exist in an environment populated by other organizations and entities with which they must interact. These other organizations assert a strong influence in determining an organization's success in attaining its goals. These other entities might be competitors, suppliers, customers, or partners. Sometimes the same external entity might occupy multiple roles; a customer for one product, a competitor on another, and a supplier on yet another. Those who adopt the *open-systems view* of organizational boundaries argue that it can be difficult at times to delineate exactly where the boundaries of an organization end and the "environment" begins. In addition to the multifaceted relationships organizations have with each other, the relationships among the people who make up any organization can be similarly multifaceted. As more and more organizations are made up of contract, temporary, or even volunteer

employees, more of these individuals are affiliated with multiple organizations, making the boundaries among them less easily discerned.

Although organizational boundaries may be loose at times with respect to employment relationships, the marketplace is very clear about which entity absorbs the financial impact of its activities, creating serious competitive dynamics among organizations. Competition can be very motivating, but it can also fuel some of the negative intergroup dynamics discussed elsewhere in this volume. Members of groups that are in competition with one another exhibit cognitive biases, in which members overestimate their own group's abilities and underestimate those of competitors. Group members also generate stereotypes of the outgroup and judge outgroup members' actions more harshly and with more negative attributions than their own. In addition to the negative social impact such dynamics can generate, they can ultimately have a negative impact on an organization's survival, because biased interpretations of events can lead to a failure to recognize when a change in organizational strategy is needed.

Many organizational researchers concern themselves with understanding how organizations adapt to changes in their environment. One view, known as the *population ecology* tradition, maintains that organizations do not make large adaptations but simply die out, and new organizations form to take their place. An alternative view is that organizations can make even radical adaptations to stay afloat in a competitive environment. Research on *organizational learning* is concerned with the ways in which organizations adapt to the environment and improve their processes to enhance their performance. The changes that organizations make can vary in their level of difficulty to implement, with some consisting of *single-loop learning*, or changes that are made without altering underlying practices and routines, and others consisting of *double-loop learning*, which involves change in fundamental organizational policies and practices. Some researchers of organizational learning examine how organizations progress through learning curves by accumulating gradual improvements over time and incorporating the learning in the form of new routines, structures, and technologies. Most agree that learning is difficult for organizations: Research and experience both demonstrate

that it is challenging to get a group of workers to understand and endorse a new set of goals or processes and to change their behavior accordingly in a coordinated fashion.

### Leadership

Over time, the understanding of leadership reflected in research has shifted away from an understanding of leadership in terms of who a leader *is* and toward an understanding of what leaders *do*. Traditionally, research on leadership has focused on the kinds of people that were the most likely to emerge as leaders, identifying various personality and behavioral traits that correlated with leadership emergence. In the 1960s and 1970s, researchers began to explore contingency models of leadership, acknowledging the importance of the match between the person and the situation. Even more recent are the behavioral theories of leadership, the most comprehensive based on the Ohio State studies, which narrowed a thousand dimensions of leadership behavior down to two: *initiating structure* and *consideration*. Along with this more behavioral approach, researchers have explored different styles leaders can employ for carrying out these functions, with *charismatic* and *transformational* leadership among the more widely researched styles.

Leadership scholars generally agree that basic intelligence, courage, and interpersonal skill are all necessary ingredients for effectively carrying out leadership functions and are not easily learned. Beyond these basic components, most writers on the topic argue that leadership skills can be acquired through training and experience. Business and professional schools have launched many courses on leadership on the basis of this premise and strive to teach the best approaches for developing leadership.

In addition to the question of whether leaders are born or made, leadership scholars debate whether leadership is the domain of a single individual or can be shared. Successful top management teams, and groups such as the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, are heralded as examples of how leadership can be exercised by a collective. Research has explored the conditions that promote the success of a team to lead an organization, finding that these conditions are similar



to those needed for groups and organizations to succeed in general—a clear purpose, the right people, and the right strategy for coordinating members' work.

### Recent Trends in Teams and Organizations

Although traditional conceptions of an organization have involved notions of people working face-to-face in a shared organizational space, both globalization and the Internet have stretched the notion of what it means to be an organization. Thanks to technology, goods are purchased, services are rendered, and payments exchanged, all without tangible evidence of human involvement.

Although a growing number of organizations exist entirely on the Internet, even traditional organizations are increasingly convening work groups or teams that are “virtual.” In addition, as opposed to belonging to one group or department, organization members may be participants in multiple groups within the organization simultaneously, a phenomenon that poses new challenges for the development of group identity and the coordination of work. Both of these trends enhance the core difficulties that organizations experience.

#### *Distributed Teams*

Distributed, or virtual, teams are composed of members who reside in different physical locations and who carry out their work with few or no face-to-face meetings. Distributed teams can vary in the degree to which members are distributed. Some teams might simply be split in half, with members at two different locations, and other teams might have members who are each at their own unique location. In addition to degree of distribution, distributed teams can also vary with respect to how much *asynchrony* characterizes their communications. Synchronous communications consist of face-to-face meetings, conference calls, or video conferences, whereas asynchronous communications occur through e-mail, voice messages, or threaded online discussions. As increasing numbers of organizations have had experience with distributed teams, it has become clear that electronic communication among members is not a panacea. Distributed teams do relatively well with innovation tasks for which ideas and solutions

need to be generated, for example, but generally underperform face-to-face teams on decision-making tasks. Although decision support systems can improve performance slightly, decisions made from afar still tend to take more time, involve less exchange of information, and result in less participant satisfaction with the outcome than is the case with face-to-face teams.

#### *Temporary Project Teams and Multiple Team Membership*

A separate but related trend in organizations involves membership on temporary or multiple simultaneous teams. Although classic research on the conditions necessary for team success point to the benefits of stable, bounded teams that stay intact long enough for members to develop a solid base of trust and cohesion, organizational structures are becoming more dynamic and flexible and hence create the opposite conditions for many teams. An increasing number of organizations are structured around projects, involving teams that work on a temporary basis. Although some of these temporary teams work well, others struggle, and researchers are only beginning to understand the conditions necessary for effective temporary teams. It is also increasingly the case in project-based organizations that individuals divide their time among multiple teams simultaneously, leveraging their expertise in different areas as it is needed. In such a situation, the employment relationship as traditionally conceived is turned on its head: Instead of managers carefully devising roles and coordinating role systems, individual employees craft their own jobs through involvement in different projects and bear much of the responsibility for coordination.

Both these trends pose challenges in the areas that are challenging to organizations more generally: how to define and prioritize among competing objectives, select individuals and socialize them in such a diverse environment, coordinate work, interface among projects, and provide a unity of leadership when many leaders are involved. Although working in a distributed manner and on multiple projects can be tolerated well in some circumstances, allowing individuals and teams to experience increased autonomy and learning and enriched social networks, other circumstances lead

to individual stress and team disintegration. Ongoing research is investigating the conditions that allow such systems to operate effectively.

### Studying Organizations

The issues discussed so far require an eclectic set of research tools. Some phenomena are observable only in field settings, and so their investigation requires a variety of field research methods, including observations, interviews, and surveys. Such research requires a high degree of cooperation from an organizational sponsor, as well as a broad base of participation from organizational members. Conducting a quantitative field study necessitates a relatively large sample size (frequently upwards of 200 respondents) to ensure a broad cross section of the organization and enough intact groups for analysis. Researchers dealing with quantitative data from multiple organizational groups often must use advanced statistical techniques to account for the lack of independence of members of the same group, or clusters of individuals within organizational departments or units, because such nonindependence of observations violates the assumptions of traditional regression models. Locating good measures of performance in field research can also be a challenge because most organizations do not maintain systematic evaluations of performance. In addition to collecting survey or observational data, some researchers in organizations conduct *quasi-experiments*, for example, by introducing interventions to alter the behavior of experimental groups, which is then compared with the behavior of control groups that did not receive the intervention.

As an alternative to field research, some organizational researchers isolate variables of interest in an organizational setting but then study them in the more controlled conditions of a laboratory. These researchers typically use traditional experimental techniques commonly employed by researchers in other traditions of psychology, manipulating specific independent variables to observe their effects on dependent variables.

Regardless of the methods used, organizational research is a fascinating and dynamic endeavor, one that requires continuous innovation in methods and theories. Organizational researchers can be found in traditional sociology and psychology

departments, as well as in economics, business, medicine, law, computer science, and public policy, among other academic programs. The diversity of approaches to organizational research is very useful given the diversity of organizations themselves.

*Anita Williams Woolley*

*See also* Action Research; Boundary Spanning; Culture; Group Performance; Identification and Commitment; Job Design; Leadership; Personnel Turnover; Roles; Self-Managing Teams; Transactive Memory Systems; Virtual/Internet Groups; Work Teams

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## OSTRACISM

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*Ostracism* occurs when someone is ignored and excluded by others. According to Kipling Williams and his colleagues, the act of ostracism is an adaptive response that occurs within groups as a

reaction to burdensome members who threaten the group's strength or safety. Ostracism can allow the ostracized individual to correct his or her behavior or seek out other groups to join, thereby ensuring the individual's survival. Although considered largely a group phenomenon, ostracism can also occur within dyadic relationships, where it is commonly known as *the silent treatment*.

Since the mid-1990s, researchers have conducted hundreds of experiments assessing the impact of ostracism (and the related phenomenon of rejection) on an individual's physiological responses, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. A variety of paradigms have been used to manipulate ostracism and to measure its outcomes, resulting in converging evidence that even the slightest hint of ostracism is detected quickly and causes immediate pain, distress, an embodied feeling of coldness, threatened needs (belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence), and negative emotion. The evidence then diverges into different (sometimes paradoxical) behavioral responses.

Often, behavioral responses to ostracism appear to facilitate future inclusion in a group. For instance, ostracized individuals have been observed to pay closer attention to social information and to better interpret nonverbal social signals related to acceptance and liking (e.g., distinguishing between genuine and nongenuine smiles). Further, ostracized individuals are more likely to mimic (consciously and nonconsciously) others, to conform to unanimous but incorrect majorities, to comply with costly requests, and to behave in ways that make them appear more socially acceptable.

However, researchers have also observed ostracized individuals to feel emotionally numb and to be cognitively impaired (on complex tasks) or to retaliate and aggress toward nonresponsible others. When ostracism appears to be permanent or heavily thwarts a sense of control, the emotional system appears to shut down, self-regulation is impaired, and antisocial responses increase. Current thinking is that when future inclusion is unlikely, desires to control one's social environment and force others to acknowledge one's existence can trump desires to be liked, resulting in fewer prosocial actions (e.g., less volunteering, fewer donations, less cooperation), increased retaliation (e.g., noise blasts), and aggression.

## Methods to Experimentally Induce Ostracism

Ostracism research employs a variety of research methods, or paradigms. Whereas a robust and consistent response (e.g., pain, distress, negative emotion) occurs to all manipulations of ostracism, the variations noted above (emotional numbness, prosocial vs. antisocial responses) may reflect differences among the paradigms that are not yet fully understood.

### *Ball Tossing*

The ball-tossing paradigm is a face-to-face interaction among individuals who are typically waiting for an experimenter. The ball-tossing emerges, apparently spontaneously, when someone (a confederate) notices a ball, picks it up, and begins throwing it to the other participants. Only one participant is, in fact, naïve to the situation; the other two (both confederates) follow an inclusion or ostracism script. Once each person has had a chance to catch and throw the ball a few times, participants randomly assigned to the ostracism condition are never again thrown the ball, nor are they even looked at or responded to. The confederates continue playing enthusiastically for another few minutes. In the inclusion condition, participants receive the ball just as often as anyone else.

### *Cyberball*

In the cyberball paradigm, participants are led to believe they are tossing a virtual ball with other alleged players via computers connected to the Internet. The cover story for the study is that the researchers are interested in the effects of mental visualization on a subsequent task, and the participants are told that a good way to warm up is to engage in a mental visualization exercise. The participants are told to use the cyberball experience as a means to visualize the other alleged players, trying to imagine (for example) where those players are, what they look like, and so on. Actually, the computer software controls participants' levels of inclusion or ostracism. The researcher programs the software to direct the course and speed of the ball-toss game, the frequency of inclusion, player information, and iconic representations of every player. Ostracism is manipulated by how often the ball is thrown to a participant. Typically, the ostracized participant

receives one or two throws at the beginning, but after that, the other players throw the ball exclusively to one another. Inclusion occurs when a participant receives the ball just as often as anyone else. Typically, the game proceeds for 20 to 40 throws.

### *Life Alone*

The life-alone prognosis paradigm involves a manipulation of ostracism in which participants respond to a personality questionnaire, receive accurate feedback about their levels of introversion and extroversion, and then are given one of three additional forms of feedback. The participants in these studies are generally young individuals whose lives are mostly still ahead of them. In the accepted, high-belonging condition, participants are told that they are the type of person who has rewarding relationships throughout life, a long and stable marriage, and enduring friendships with people who care about them. In the rejected, low-belonging condition, participants are told that they are the type of person who ends up alone later in life, and that although they have friends and relationships now, by the time they are in their mid-20s, most of these will disappear. Finally, in a negative-feedback control condition, participants are told that they will endure a lifetime of accidents and injuries. The purpose of this condition is to distinguish the effects specific to ostracism from those associated with negative outcomes in general.

### *Get Acquainted*

This paradigm involves the use of a small group of actual participants engaged in a get-acquainted discussion. They are given examples of topics to discuss (e.g., movies, college majors) and take turns talking within the group setting. After this discussion, they are separated and asked to identify the person in the group with whom they would most like to work on an upcoming task. A few minutes later, they are told by the researcher that either everyone wanted to work with them (inclusion) or that no one wanted to work with them (rejection).

### *Additional Paradigms*

Researchers have also employed manipulations that involved conversations (i.e., face-to-face, chat

room, or cell phone text messages), role-playing, scenario descriptions of rejection and social exclusion, relived or imagined rejection experiences, daily diary entries, and virtual reality worlds.

## Responses to Ostracism

### *Reflexive Reactions to Ostracism: Pain and Distress*

*Reflexive* reactions to ostracism are relatively insensitive to individual differences or situational context. Thus, they appear to be triggered prior to cognitive appraisals. Reflexive measures include retrospective self-reports (“how were you feeling *during* the experience?”), online affective measures (“turn a dial to indicate your current feelings of positivity/negativity”), and physiological responses (blood pressure, dorsal anterior cingulate cortex activation). For self-reports, participants are typically asked immediately after an episode of ostracism how they felt *during* that episode. These measures contrast with *reflective* measures that ask participants at a later point (between 5 and 45 minutes after an episode of ostracism) how they are feeling *right now*. The “during” measures assess ostracism’s immediate or reflexive impact; the “right now” measures assess ostracism’s impact after the initiation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral coping mechanisms. The evidence suggests that the immediate or reflexive reactions to ostracism are painful and are not moderated by individual differences or situational factors.

Exceptions to unmoderated distress to ostracism appear to occur when the ostracism is more ambiguous. Less severe or more ambiguous manipulations of ostracism allow individual differences (e.g., social anxiety, loneliness, rejection sensitivity) and situational constraints (e.g., ostracism from ingroup vs. outgroup members) to moderate even immediate reactions. Partial ostracism is another way in which the ostracism experience is more ambiguous. Partial ostracism involves less exclusion than does complete ostracism and simultaneously provides the individual with a glimmer of hope for inclusion. Partial ostracism often involves “out-of-the-loop experiences,” in which individuals are included in some, but not all, aspects of group activity. These experiences also appear to engage cognitive appraisals that are

sensitive to individual differences among ostracized individuals and situational variations involving, for example, who is ostracizing whom, and why.

#### *Reflective Responses to Ostracism: Threatened Needs and Coping*

The available evidence suggests that the reflexive pain or distress signal is quickly followed by appraisals and coping mechanisms that direct the individual toward thoughts and feelings that alleviate the pain or fortify thwarted needs. In contrast to reflexive responses, reflective responses to ostracism are sensitive to situational factors and individual differences. Thus, one can repair damage to belonging or self-esteem needs by trying to behave in ways that will meet the group's approval, joining a new group, or even thinking about strong social ties in other realms of one's life. Repairing damage to control and existence needs, however, might involve exerting social control over others, provoking recognition from others, and even being aggressive toward others. Individual differences can also moderate a broad collection of coping responses to ostracism. Social anxiety, for instance, moderates reflective responses to ostracism and also affects the rate of recovery. Socially anxious individuals, when ostracized, are more likely to ruminate about and thereby prolong the negative impact of ostracism, and to experience threats to self-regulation, than are individuals who are less socially anxious.

#### **Conclusion**

Research on ostracism, social exclusion, and rejection has proliferated in the past decade, and the field of social psychology has benefited from a considerable amount of theory and empirical evidence about these processes and their impact. Clearly, even for brief episodes with minimal mundane realism, ostracism plunges people into a temporary state of misery, pain, distress, sadness, and anger. It is also clear that exposures to short episodes of ostracism, social exclusion, and rejection lead to robust behavioral consequences, many of which can be characterized as potentially dysfunctional to the individual's well-being, such as becoming socially susceptible to influence, eager for social attention, antisocial and hostile, or

cognitively impaired. Future research needs to address the role of personality variables and situational contexts that steer individuals down different behavioral paths. Other factors, such as whether individuals perceive the ostracism to be targeted at them as individuals or at their group memberships, also merit attention as researchers begin to consider ostracism on a larger scale, as when particular cultures, religions, and political ideologies are the sources (or targets) of ostracism.

*Kipling D. Williams and  
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*See also* Cliques; Deviance; Discrimination; Inclusion/Exclusion; Power; Sociometric Choice; Stigma

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## OUTGROUP HOMOGENEITY EFFECT

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“They all look the same to me.” This kind of statement about an outgroup is often heard. The tendency to perceive outgroups as more homogeneous, or less variable, than ingroups is called the *outgroup homogeneity effect*. This entry describes how the outgroup homogeneity effect was first experimentally demonstrated, reviews evidence examining the robustness of the effect, and discusses some factors that influence the magnitude of the effect.

#### **Background Research**

In some of the first work on the outgroup homogeneity effect, men and women were asked to rate men and women on positive and negative

dimensions that were stereotypically masculine or feminine. Results showed that over and above any overall ingroup preference (i.e., rating one's own group more positively than the outgroup), participants judged the outgroup more stereotypically than the ingroup. More specifically, when participants were asked what percentage of each group had attributes that were consistent with the group's stereotype and what percentage had attributes that were inconsistent with that stereotype, they reported that the outgroup had relatively more consistent group members and fewer inconsistent group members than did the ingroup. These results represent strong support for the outgroup homogeneity effect because ratings were collected from both groups, and the effect was found for the men's ratings and for the women's ratings. In addition, the effect was found on positive as well as on negative stereotypic attributes, indicating that it is independent of any tendency to see the outgroup as having relatively more members who are consistent with only negative attributes. And finally, the use of gender groups permits one to conclude that the effect exists even when familiarity is high for both the ingroup and the outgroup.

The outgroup homogeneity effect has been replicated with a wide variety of social groups in addition to gender-defined groups: sororities, experimentally created groups, and groups defined by age, nationality, and ethnicity. A meta-analysis of the effect across published studies concluded that the outgroup homogeneity effect is a small but nevertheless robust effect. In addition, it appears that the effect is smaller with experimentally created groups than with real groups.

One interesting research development has been the identification of two different forms of perceived group variability and, therefore, of the outgroup homogeneity effect. The first component of perceived variability is the degree to which a group is seen as having a relatively large number of people who confirm the stereotype, compared with the proportion of those who do not. This component, referred to as *perceived stereotypicality*, was originally examined when outgroup homogeneity was demonstrated with groups defined by gender, as described above. The other component is the *perceived dispersion* of a group, that is, the extent to which group members vary around what is

perceived to be the group mean on an attribute dimension. To make clear this distinction, imagine that one person sees a group on average more stereotypically than another person does. It might still be the case that they both agree on the actual variability within the group around the group average. Stereotypicality refers to the extremity of the group mean on stereotypic attributes. Dispersion refers to the perceived variability around that group mean. It has been demonstrated that these two components of perceived group variability need not be highly related to each other. However, outgroup homogeneity has been shown for both components, although it appears to be larger for perceived stereotypicality than for perceived dispersion.

### Causes and Consequences of the Outgroup Homogeneity Effect

To explain the outgroup homogeneity effect (why it occurs and what makes it stronger or weaker), researchers have asked participants to verbalize their thoughts while making group ratings. When reflecting on impressions of their ingroup, participants made frequent references to the self and to specific subgroups of the ingroup. When considering the outgroup, mentions of the self or of specific subgroups were notably scarce. From this and related results, it has been argued that the outgroup homogeneity effect is mainly due to the fact that people hold a much more complex representation of the groups to which they belong than of those to which they do not belong.

A difference in familiarity between ingroups and outgroups has been cited as a factor causing the outgroup homogeneity effect, and this seems a reasonable explanation in part. However, the fact that the effect has been shown with groups defined by gender suggests that there are other factors that are also responsible for the effect, because one is likely to be as familiar with the gender outgroup as with the gender ingroup. In experimental contexts, it has also been demonstrated that manipulations of familiarity (i.e., getting to know more group members) did not have a major impact on the magnitude of the outgroup homogeneity effect.

There have also been explanations of outgroup homogeneity that are more motivational in nature, suggesting that, to some extent, one is simultaneously motivated to be a part of one's ingroup and to

be distinct or unique as an individual. This means that although one values one's ingroup membership, one nevertheless also values a unique and distinctive identity. As a result, one may attribute these same desires to other ingroup members and hence come to see the ingroup as more diverse and variable than the outgroup.

Some have argued that the outgroup homogeneity effect is moderated by the size and status of the ingroup relative to the outgroup. What is clear is that smaller groups and perhaps lower-status groups are sometimes judged to be more homogeneous. And this effect of size and status on perceived variability may mean that participants who come from minority groups may see the outgroup as *less* homogeneous than the ingroup. However, strictly speaking, this difference in perceived variability is not attributable to perceiving the outgroup as less homogeneous than the ingroup, because in this case the outgroup–ingroup distinction is confounded with group size or status. We can think of this simply as a group size or status effect on perceived variability: Everyone agrees that smaller and low-status groups are more homogeneous, and this perception does not depend on whether the perceiver is a member of those groups.

Regarding the consequences of the outgroup homogeneity effect, research has shown that

outgroup stereotypes are more likely to be applied to members of the outgroup than ingroup stereotypes are to be applied to members of the ingroup. In general, group stereotypes are more potent, in that they have a greater influence on the judgment of individual group members, the less the perceived variability of the group.

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*See also* Categorization; Optimal Distinctiveness; Perceived Group Variability; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## PATH–GOAL THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

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*Path–goal theory* was initially developed by Robert House to explain workplace leadership. The theory builds heavily on two theories of work motivation: goal setting and expectancy theory. *Goal-setting theory* suggests that an effective way to motivate people is to set challenging but realistic goals and to offer rewards for goal accomplishment. *Expectancy theory* explains why people work hard to attain work goals. People will engage in behaviors that lead to goal attainment if they believe that (a) goal attainment leads to something they value (e.g., increase in pay, status, promotion) and (b) the behaviors they engage in have a high chance (expectancy) of leading to the goal. If people do not value the reward for goal attainment or believe that their behavior is unlikely to lead to goal attainment, then they will not be motivated to work hard.

Path–goal theory builds on these propositions by arguing that effective leaders are those who help their subordinates achieve their goals. According to path–goal theory, leaders have a responsibility to provide their subordinates with the information and support necessary to achieve the work goals. One way to do this is to make salient the effort–reward relationship by linking desirable outcomes to goal attainment (e.g., emphasizing the positive outcomes to the subordinates if they achieve their goals) and/or increasing the belief (expectancy) that their work behaviors can lead to goal attainment

(e.g., by emphasizing that certain behaviors are likely to lead to goal attainment).

The term *path–goal* reflects the belief that effective leaders clarify the paths necessary for their subordinates to achieve the subordinates' goals. Leaders can do this in two main ways. First, leaders can engage in behaviors that help subordinates facilitate goal attainment (e.g., by providing information and other resources necessary to obtain goals). Second, leaders can engage in behaviors that remove obstacles that might hinder subordinates' pursuit of their goals (e.g., by removing workplace factors that reduce the chances of goal attainment).

### Leadership Styles

Path–goal theory is a *contingency theory*, proposing that effective leadership is contingent on the leader's adopting a particular style of behavior to match the needs to the subordinate and the situation in which the subordinate is working. The theory identifies four main types of leadership behaviors, each of which can help subordinates attain their goals. *Supportive* leadership involves being considerate of the needs of subordinates and creating a friendly atmosphere to work in. *Directive* leadership involves letting subordinates know what is expected of them, giving clear guidelines, and making sure they know the rules and procedures to get the work done. *Participative* leadership involves consulting with subordinates and taking account of their opinions and suggestions when making decisions. *Achievement-oriented*

leadership involves setting challenging work goals, emphasizing the need for excellence in performance, and showing confidence that the subordinates will attain high work standards.

The choice of which style of leadership to use depends on two groups of contingency variables. One group concerns environmental factors that are outside the control of the subordinate (e.g., task structure, authority system, work group), and the other group concerns individual factors that are inherently part of the subordinate (e.g., personality, experience, and abilities).

The theory makes a number of predictions concerning which style of leadership will be most effective in particular situations and with types of subordinates. Because of the large number of contingency factors, there are many potential predictions; some of the main ones are described below.

Supportive leadership should be most effective when the nature of the work is stressful, boring, or dangerous. This is because a supportive style by the leader will increase subordinates' satisfaction and self-confidence and reduce the negative aspects of the situation. This should lead to an increase in the intrinsic valence of the job and the expectation that it will be performed well and lead to the attainment of goals. However, supportive leadership would have little benefit for those subordinates who are satisfied in their work and find it enjoyable (because they already find the work intrinsically motivating).

Directive leadership is most effective when people are unsure what tasks they have to do or when there is a lot of uncertainty within their working environment. This occurs primarily because a directive style clarifies what the subordinates need to do and therefore reduces task ambiguity. In addition, the directive style will make clear the relationship between effort and reward and therefore the expectancy that effort will lead to a valued outcome.

Participative leadership can be effective in unstructured situations because it can increase role clarity, and it can also be effective for people who have a high need to control their environment. Conversely, this style will be less effective for those people who like to be directed at the workplace and do not take on too much responsibility for their outcomes.

Finally, an achievement-oriented style is effective when the work is complex and the environment is uncertain. This is because it can increase

subordinates' self-confidence that they are able to attain the goals.

According to path-goal theory, leaders, to be effective, need to do the following: recognize the needs of those they manage and try to satisfy these needs through the workplace, reward people for achieving their goals, help subordinates identify the most effective paths they need to take to reach their goals, and clear those paths so that subordinates can reach their goals. The particular style of leadership that is effective in achieving these outcomes will depend on the contingency factors described above.

The theory has a great deal of intuitive appeal because it can be applied easily to the workplace. It emphasizes understanding the needs of subordinates within the context of their working situation and using the appropriate style of leadership to help subordinates achieve their work goals. One implication of this approach is that leaders need to adopt multiple leadership styles and be able to tailor these styles to the characteristics of the subordinate and the situation. Because of the emphasis on the role of leaders' behaviors rather than their traits, the theory has many applications for leadership training programs.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Group Performance; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Power; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## PERCEIVED GROUP VARIABILITY

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*Stereotypes* are beliefs about the attributes of social categories or groups that potentially affect

how the perceiver judges and behaves toward individual group members. They concern the attributes that are typically associated with a social group. But perceivers differ in the degree to which they assume that all group members resemble each other. Accordingly, the *perceived variability* of a group captures the degree to which stereotypes about that group are strong and, accordingly, the degree to which group stereotypes influence judgments of and behavior toward members of that group. If a group is perceived as relatively low in variability, then the social perceiver will expect all members of that group with whom he or she interacts to closely fit the stereotype of the group. In contrast, if a group is perceived as relatively high in variability, then the social perceiver cannot be sure that a specific group member fits the stereotype and will therefore pay more attention to individuating information about the member. Further, when confronted with a low-variability group, people are more confident in the behavioral predictions they make about group members than when confronted with a high-variability group.

### Measuring Perceived Group Variability

Different authors have used different methods to measure perceived group variability. Those measures can be grouped into two categories: (1) the *degree of stereotypicality* of the group on a given dimension and (2) the *extent of the dispersion* of the group around the group mean on that dimension. The stereotypicality of a group is measured by questions that ask for the percentage of group members who are consistent with the group stereotype and the percentage who are inconsistent with that stereotype. From these two percentage estimates, a researcher can compute difference scores (percentage consistent minus percentage inconsistent), with lower scores indicating greater perceived group variability (i.e., those who are inconsistent with the group stereotype represent a relatively larger percentage of the group). The dispersion around the mean can be measured in different ways. A researcher can ask about the perceived group range on various stereotypic attributes (where the highest and lowest group members fall) and take the difference between these two. Alternatively, a researcher can ask participants to indicate a perceived distribution of the group on stereotypic

attributes and then compute the standard deviation of that perceived distribution. Research has shown that the two components of perceived group variability (perceived stereotypicality and dispersion) are far from redundant with each other, which suggests that they are two different, relatively independent components of perceived group variability.

### Theories of Group Variability Perception

Interest in perceived group variability started with research on the outgroup homogeneity effect. Whether it is measured through group stereotypicality or group dispersion, people consistently perceive outgroups to be less variable than their ingroup. Studies that have demonstrated the outgroup homogeneity effect have used what are called *full ingroup–outgroup designs*, in which members of different groups (e.g., males and females) rate both their own ingroup and the outgroup, using both stereotypicality and group dispersion measures. Outgroup homogeneity has been demonstrated with groups defined by gender, by ethnicity, and by a host of other group categorization variables. It is important to note that this effect is independent of ingroup favoritism, which is the tendency to prefer the ingroup to the outgroup. In other words, although the outgroup homogeneity effect reflects a difference in the way ingroups and outgroups are perceived, it is not the same as dislike of the outgroup relative to the ingroup. Indeed, the outgroup homogeneity effect has been found even when an outgroup is rated on dimensions on which the outgroup stereotype is positive.

A presumed difference in familiarity between ingroups and outgroups has been identified by some as the main factor responsible for the outgroup homogeneity effect. Yet, as previously mentioned, an outgroup homogeneity effect has been demonstrated even with gender groups, which are arguably the two social groups for which there exists extensive familiarity with both the outgroup and the ingroup. It is true that not all research has been able to replicate the outgroup homogeneity effect with gender, and the magnitude of the gender effect may depend on whether perceived stereotypicality or group dispersion is the component of perceived group variability that is assessed.

A persistent question in the perceived variability literature concerns the informational basis of such

variability inferences. One model that has been advanced is an *exemplar-based model*, which argues that the different exemplars of a social group that one encounters are stored as separate memory traces and that when one is asked to give an impression about a group, one retrieves stored exemplars of that group and computes an impression based on those retrieved exemplars. Others, however, have argued for an *abstraction-based model*, which posits that one uses each new group member to compute an impression about the group and then stores that impression. The main difference between these two models in explaining perceived group variability is that in the exemplar-based model, the variability depends on which exemplars are used at the retrieval stage, whereas in the abstraction-based model, the variability is an aspect of the group impression that is computed at the encoding stage and revised in the light of subsequent information.

Experiments have been conducted to test the different predictions that are made by the different models. In one study, participants were presented with a group that was either high or low in variability. In addition, the memorability of particular group members was manipulated, with either the more moderate group members being more memorable or the more extreme group members being more memorable. Results were influenced by the variability manipulation but not by the memory manipulation, which lends credence to the abstraction-based model's assumption that variability impressions are constructed online at encoding and not at the retrieval stage, as posited by the exemplar-based model.

Based on the abstraction-based model, an explanation for the outgroup homogeneity effect is that social perceivers have low motivation to update their impressions of groups to which they do not belong. Accordingly, the variability of the outgroup is computed on the basis of the first few encounters with members of that group and is thereafter not likely to be updated. For the ingroup, in contrast, the social perceiver is motivated to construct a more complex and diversified impression. In support of this, researchers have asked participants to think aloud about their ingroup and an outgroup. These think-aloud protocols were then coded. Results showed that for the ingroup, participants made a lot of

references to the self and to different subgroups. In contrast, for the outgroup, participants made very few references to the self and to subgroups; instead, the outgroup tended to be discussed as a whole entity.

Perceived group variability is one of the two main factors that underlie the concept of perceived *entitativity*. Entitativity is the degree to which an aggregate of persons is considered to make up a meaningful, or real, group. An important component of entitativity is common fate, or group essence, defined as the degree to which all members of a group share a common core of values and outcomes. More homogeneous groups are perceived as more entitative, and therefore their members are treated more as group members than as individuals.

### Effects of Perceived Group Variability

Perceived group variability has been shown to have a variety of effects on social judgment and interaction. As already discussed, members of low-variability groups are judged to more strongly possess the group stereotype and are therefore responded to in a more stereotypic manner. In addition, the ease with which stereotypes are likely to change depends on the perceived variability of the stereotyped group in ways that may not be entirely intuitive. Most models of stereotype change suggest that one is likely to change a group stereotype if one encounters group members who disconfirm that stereotype. But the degree to which such group members actually disconfirm a stereotype is likely to depend in part on the perceived group variability. Someone who is discrepant from the perceived group mean may actually be seen as more discrepant if the group is perceived as very homogeneous than if greater group variability is perceived. As a result, that discrepant group member may actually produce less stereotype change in the case of the homogeneous group because of what has been called *subtyping*: The individual is judged to be such an exception to the rule that he or she is discounted as atypical. In contrast, in the case of a more variable group, that individual may not be discounted, and stereotype change may be more likely to occur.

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*See also* Categorization; Entitativity; Outgroup Homogeneity Effect; Stereotyping

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## PERSONALITY THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

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Are you born to be a leader? Are you a “natural”? Or is leadership a set of behaviors and competencies that anyone can develop, given the right experiences, circumstances, and training? The answers to these questions have been debated for centuries. Here, we focus on theories of leadership that would answer with a resounding yes to the first two questions, emphasizing that leadership is deeply embedded within our personalities or in the traits with which we were born. This entry defines and reviews *personality-* and *trait-based theories of leadership* before turning to critiques of these approaches.

Personality- and trait-based approaches to leadership argue that certain individuals have innate

characteristics that make them ideally suited for leadership, and these traits or characteristics are what differentiate these leaders from everyone else. Early approaches in this genre included the *great man theories*, which were based on the assumption that the capacity for leadership is inherent—that great leaders are born, not made or developed. These theories often portrayed great leaders as heroic, mythical, and uniquely destined to rise to leadership when their skills were needed. The term *great man* reflects an assumption of these early theories that leadership was a predominantly male quality, especially in the domains of political and military leadership.

One of the first systematic attempts to understand leadership in the 20th century, the great man theory evolved into personality- or trait-based approaches as more modern research revealed that leadership was not inherently male dominated and that leadership could be found and studied in more common settings rather than at the highest levels of organizations or nations. More than a century of research has been conducted on the traits that have been associated to a greater or lesser degree with leadership, and some traits have received consistent support while others have emerged in some studies but not in others. An overview of research on the *Big Five personality factors* and the degree to which each has been linked to leadership is followed by a summary of the five more-specific traits that have been most consistently connected to leadership.

### Leadership and the Big Five

Since the 1960s, researchers have examined whether there is a relationship between the basic agreed-on factors that make up personality and leadership. The Big Five personality factors are conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion, which some researchers have labeled the *CANOE* personality model as an easy aid to remembering each factor.

*Conscientiousness* is defined as an individual's tendency to be organized, thorough, controlled, decisive, and dependable. Of the Big Five factors, it is the personality factor that has been related to leadership second most strongly (after extraversion) in previous research. *Agreeableness*, or an individual's tendency to be trusting, nurturing,

conforming, and accepting, has been only weakly associated with leadership. *Neuroticism*, or the tendency to be anxious, hostile, depressed, vulnerable, and insecure, has been moderately and negatively related to leadership, suggesting that most leaders tend to be low in neuroticism. *Openness*, sometimes referred to as openness to experience, refers to an individual's tendency to be curious, creative, insightful, and informed. Openness has been moderately related to leadership, suggesting that leaders tend to be somewhat higher in openness than nonleaders. Finally, *extraversion* is the personality factor that has been most strongly associated with leadership. Defined as the tendency to be sociable (discussed in greater detail below), assertive, and have positive energy, extraversion has been described as the most important personality trait of effective leaders.

Although research on the Big Five personality factors has found some relationships between these overall personality factors and leadership, focusing on more specific traits has led to more consistent findings between effective leadership and the following five traits: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, sociability, and integrity.

### Specific Traits Associated With Leadership

#### *Intelligence*

A great deal of research suggests that leaders have above-average intelligence. Intellectual ability has been positively associated with cognitive reasoning skills, the capacity to articulate ideas and thoughts to others, and the perceptual ability to recognize important situational factors. Research has focused on the link between intelligence and a leader's development of good problem-solving skills, the ability to adequately assess social situations, and the ability to understand complex organizational issues. Although intelligence has consistently been shown, in a wide variety of studies, to relate positively to leadership, other research has pointed out that it is important that the leader's intellectual ability is not too dissimilar from that of his or her followers. If leaders far surpass their followers in intelligence, they may be unable to express ideas and issues in ways that appeal to or connect with their followers.

#### *Self-Confidence*

Additional research has pointed to a consistent relationship between a leader's effectiveness, on one hand, and confidence in his or her skills, technical competencies, and ideas, on the other. Having high self-esteem, a positive regard for one's own ability to lead, and assurance that one's vision or purpose is the right one all help a leader influence others. While some studies have examined self-confidence and others have focused on confidence more generally, it is clear that feeling and communicating certainty about one's own abilities as a leader is a common leadership trait.

#### *Determination or Perseverance*

Leadership is often a difficult, thankless, long, and arduous process. Perhaps as a result of this fact, a great deal of research has suggested that leaders must be determined to complete a task or get a job done, even in the face of adversity or when there is less than overwhelming support from others. Leaders show initiative and drive and frequently constitute the motivational energy behind a project or social change movement. Thus, the ability to assert oneself when necessary, be proactive, and continue to push on in the face of obstacles is a key component of leadership. In addition, this determination often involves displaying dominance and a drive to succeed even in the face of initial failures.

#### *Sociability*

Sociability is defined as a leader's desire for high-quality social relationships and the ability to maintain and restore positive relationships in difficult times that often involve adversity and crisis. Across studies, leaders often demonstrate the ability to be friendly, extraverted (outgoing), courteous, tactful, and diplomatic. In addition, leaders tend to be sensitive to the needs of others, even at the cost of attending to their own needs. In short, leaders care about the interests of others and put others' interests before their own. Leaders have good interpersonal skills that communicate their concern for others, and they work to smooth out conflicts and disagreements to maintain the group's social harmony.

### *Integrity*

None of the previous traits addresses the fact that smart, confident, determined, and sociable leaders can also be fundamentally immoral and corrupt. The fifth factor, integrity, addresses the finding that leaders tend to be honest and trustworthy, inspiring others to respect them and trust them with important decisions and resources. Leaders are often variously described as loyal, responsible, dependable, and honest. These characteristics inspire the confidence of others and provide evidence that leaders are authentic and have the best interests of the group at heart. This is in stark opposition to individuals who use the efforts and resources of the group for their own prosperity or power and manipulate the group's time and money for their own personal gain (e.g., cult leaders Jim Jones and David Koresh).

### **Leadership and Emotional Intelligence**

In the early 1990s, the concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Daniel Goleman and others, and it has captured a great deal of attention from practicing leaders and from organizations seeking to enhance the leadership abilities of their employees. Emotional intelligence, abbreviated variously as EQ or EI, is defined as one's ability to perceive and express emotions, understand and reason with emotions, and effectively manage emotions, both in oneself and in others. More recently, a number of assessments have been developed to measure emotional intelligence, and efforts have been made to link emotional intelligence to one's leadership abilities and even one's ultimate successes in life.

There has been considerable debate, however, as to whether emotional intelligence represents a unique construct that is sufficiently different from the five key traits and Big Five personality factors described above. Despite this debate, it seems likely that people who are sensitive to both their own emotions and the emotions of others, and who are adept at managing emotions and accurately discerning their impact, will be more effective leaders.

### **Critiques of the Trait Approach to Leadership**

Similar in many ways to the early great man theories, trait and personality theories assume that

people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them suited to be good leaders. By looking at a range of different leaders in a variety of situations over time, trait theorists seek to identify particular personality or behavioral characteristics that leaders share. However, this approach has been criticized for its lack of explanatory power: It is unable to consistently distinguish between leaders and nonleaders. If particular traits are key features of leadership, how do we explain people who possess those qualities but are not leaders? Does an individual need one of these traits, some of them, or all of them to be a good leader? And how do we explain people who have been leaders and exerted widespread influence without possessing some or all of these traits? These questions highlight the difficulties in using trait theories to explain leadership.

Other scholars have pointed out that the recent interest in charismatic leadership essentially represents a neo-personality approach to leadership. Use of the term *charisma* in the popular vernacular focuses primarily on a personalized magnetic appeal that allows leaders to charm and influence others. This approach emphasizes the personal characteristics of the leader to attract and influence others and suggests that charisma is a quality that some leaders can effectively capitalize on to galvanize others into action.

In a similar vein, a prominent critique of the trait or personality approach to leadership is that it discourages individuals from believing they have the "right stuff" to become effective leaders. Approaching leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers or as a set of behaviors and competencies that anyone can develop provides a much more optimistic, democratic, and inclusive picture of leadership. These latter approaches emphasize that given the right experiences, circumstances, and training, each of us has both the capacity and the ability to enact effective leadership, regardless of the specific traits and personality characteristics with which we were born.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Power; Social Identity Theory of

Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## PERSONNEL TURNOVER

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In today's organizations, in which human capabilities are the key source for competitive advantage, retaining talent has become critical. Turnover, a voluntary or involuntary withdrawal from the organization, exists in all organizations. The cost of turnover in U.S. organizations is estimated in billions of dollars per year. This high cost is primarily due to the need to recruit, select, and train new organizational members as replacements for those who depart. Turnover may interrupt the efficient management of the organization when experienced and knowledgeable employees leave and take with them essential know-how that cannot be easily replaced and can be used by the organization's competitors. Despite its negative consequences, turnover has some positive aspects. It creates an opportunity to replace ineffective employees with more highly skilled ones, opens promotion opportunities, allows newcomers with new ideas and knowledge to join the organization, and fosters innovation. It is not surprising, thus, that the topic of employee turnover in organizations has received substantial attention from both researchers and practitioners.

Voluntary employee turnover has been one of the most studied topics in organizational behavior research, with more than 1,000 studies on the topic in the past century. Research has addressed questions such as why and how people decide to quit their jobs, which factors encourage or disincline them to do so, and what personal and organizational consequences flow from turnover. This entry discusses the turnover decision process, identifies important predictors of turnover in groups and organizations, and describes the consequences of turnover.

### The Turnover Decision Process

Voluntarily turnover happens when employees are dissatisfied with their work and experience low commitment to their organization. The relationship between satisfaction and commitment on one hand and turnover on the other has been documented in numerous studies. The relationship between turnover and these predictors, however, is not very strong and is mediated by emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes. One of the early models that has shaped the course of turnover research was provided by Mobley during the late 1970s. The model describes the experience of dissatisfaction with one's work as arousing thoughts about quitting. These thoughts lead to evaluations of the expected utility of searching for another job and the cost of leaving the current job, to intentions to search, and to evaluations of alternatives. Finding an attractive alternative elicits the intention to quit, which in turn is directly associated with quitting. Research provided empirical support for the model, showed that relationships among the variables in the model can be reciprocal, and identified possible moderators that affect the relationships among the model variables. For example, it was found that in times of high unemployment rates, the relationship between satisfaction and the decision to quit was weaker than during times of low unemployment.

### Group Predictors of Member Turnover

Groups may affect members' satisfaction with their work, their commitment to the organization, and, as a result, their decisions to remain in or leave their jobs. The analysis of turnover in groups



includes topics such as the influence of group members' characteristics and their relative representation in the group (i.e., diversity) on the tendency to leave the group, the effect of group characteristics such as cohesiveness or culture on members' decisions to leave, the effect of the fit between members' characteristics and characteristics of the group on turnover, and the effect of the group's supervisor on members' decisions to quit.

### *Group Diversity*

Group composition refers to the configuration of members' attributes in the group, including demographic characteristics, education, experience, and attitudes. Group composition affects members' attraction to the group, their satisfaction with other group members, and the social interaction among group members. For example, group composition affects the cohesiveness of the group, as well as the level of task and emotional conflict. Cohesiveness diminishes the tendency to leave the group, whereas conflict increases it.

Several studies have shown that homogeneous groups have lower turnover rates than heterogeneous groups do. The *similarity-attraction* and the *attraction-selection-attrition* theories provide an explanation for this empirical finding. These theories maintain that individuals are attracted to organizations and teams whose members are perceived to be similar to them. Working with similar others contributes to positive self-identity and job satisfaction.

Compared with similar members, dissimilar members are more likely to leave the group. Specifically, members who are dissimilar on such dimensions as age, tenure in the group, date of entry, work experience, or race are more likely to leave their group than similar members are. Individuals who enter the group at the same time or who are the same age are likely to be more tightly bound to one another than are those who are demographically different. Dissimilar members find it more difficult to integrate with other group members and may feel pressure to conform to the group or to leave it.

### *Group Cohesiveness*

*Cohesiveness*, the degree to which members in a group are attracted to the group or attached to

each other, has also been shown to affect turnover propensities. In most cases, leaving a job also means leaving colleagues. The closer the relationships with colleagues, the more difficult leaving a job is. Indeed, group cohesion is associated with a higher commitment of members to remaining in the group. The attraction to group members hinders member turnover.

### *Person-Organization Fit*

Person-organization fit is the congruence between personal attributes of the individual and attributes of the work context. Personal attributes may include personality traits, attitudes, values, goals, and preferences. Work context includes the culture, norms, and values, as well as goals and other expectations, in the work environment. A better fit between a group member's attributes and the attributes of his or her group increases the likelihood that the member will feel professionally and personally committed to the organization. Poor person-organization fit is associated with higher levels of turnover. For example, it was found that creative members who worked in a relatively structured environment that encouraged habitual and systematic thinking were more likely to leave their jobs than were creative members working in a context that fostered innovation. Similarly, conformists and systematic thinkers showed higher turnover rates when working in an unstructured environment than when working in a structured environment that fit their preferences.

### *Satisfaction With the Supervisor*

Research suggests that the immediate supervisor plays an important role in the employee turnover decision. Supervisors, perceived as the representatives of the organization, can enhance employees' positive feelings and attitudes toward the organization. Supervisors may also form individual relationships with their employees that shape employees' commitment to the organization and reduce their intention to quit. Perceived supervisor support reduces employee turnover and attenuates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee turnover. Perceived organizational support becomes more important in the absence of perceived supervisor support.

### Consequences of Turnover

Although research on predictors of turnover has accumulated over many years, research on consequences of turnover is more recent. Consequences include *convergent outcomes*, such as the extent to which the group performs its task efficiently and meets quality standards, and *divergent outcomes*, such as whether the group innovates or develops new processes and products. Studies finding that turnover hurts task performance typically focus on convergent outcomes, whereas studies documenting beneficial effects of turnover generally focus on divergent outcomes.

Studies of sports teams, industrial concerns, and service organizations have documented a negative effect of turnover on group and organizational outcomes such as the quality and efficiency of task performance. The departure of members disrupts the smooth functioning of the group and weakens its *transactive memory system*. In groups with well-developed transactive memory systems, members know who knows what and who is good at what and are able to coordinate their activities effectively. When turnover occurs and new members arrive, they must learn not only to perform their individual tasks but also who in the group is good at what and how to coordinate their activities with those of other group members.

The effect of turnover has been found to depend on the extent to which roles in the group are well defined and procedures exist for accomplishing tasks. As examples of contexts that vary along these dimensions, consider two bookstores. One is part of a large chain, in which members have clearly defined roles, and procedures are specified for accomplishing tasks; the other bookstore is an independent establishment owned by an individual who has not developed task performance routines or specified roles for employees. Under the latter condition, much of the bookstore's knowledge is embedded in employees, so their departure would hurt the bookstore's performance. Conversely, in the former case, when jobs are standardized, turnover has been found to have a less negative effect on performance outcomes. When work is standardized, much of the group's knowledge is embedded in its structures and routines, so the loss of an employee has less

effect on performance outcomes than in less structured contexts.

Another important contingency in understanding the effect of turnover on groups and organizations is the quality of departing members. Several studies have found that the performance of employees who left an organization was lower than that of those who remained, even when the turnover was voluntary. If it is the poor performers who are leaving an organization, turnover should have a less negative effect on performance. On the other hand, if it is the high performers who are departing, turnover should have a more negative effect on performance. The position of departing members in the unit's social network is another variable likely to affect the relationship between turnover and group performance.

Although studies of convergent outcomes generally find a negative effect of turnover on those outcomes, studies of divergent outcomes, such as innovation, generally find a positive effect of turnover. The departure of organizational members often triggers the arrival of new members who bring new knowledge and approaches to the group. Thus, these newcomers can be a source of innovation—especially when they are high in ability or status, perceived as credible and concerned with the welfare of the group, and share an identity with other group members. Further, the presence of newcomers can stimulate old-timers to develop new ideas and task performance strategies. Thus, teams that experience turnover have been found to be more creative than teams with stable membership.

In short, although turnover can disrupt task performance, it can also stimulate creativity and innovation. More research is needed to understand the conditions under which turnover has negative or positive effects on group outcomes. Research to date has identified important contingencies, including characteristics of departing members and their replacements, features of the group's structures and routines, and whether the desired outcomes are efficiency, quality, or innovation.

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*See also* Diversity; Group Cohesiveness; Group Learning; Group Performance; Innovation; Minority Influence; Organizations; Transactive Memory Systems

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## PLURALISTIC IGNORANCE

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*Pluralistic ignorance* refers to widespread misperception of the attitudes and behaviors prevalent in one's group due to public misrepresentation of private attitudes. It can lead to conformity to apparent social norms in the absence of actual

private support by individuals. In the extreme case, it can lead every individual to believe that he or she is alone in holding an attitude or in practicing a behavior, when in reality every other group member does the same in private. Pluralistic ignorance is typically measured by asking individuals to indicate on a numerical scale how strongly they agree with a statement or how often they engage in a behavior, and then asking them to estimate how much their peers on average espouse the attitude or perform the behavior; the difference between the perceived consensus and the aggregate of individual ratings captures pluralistic ignorance. This entry looks at how pluralistic ignorance is expressed and then discusses its causes and consequences.

### A Ubiquitous Social Phenomenon

Many examples of pluralistic ignorance have been documented in small ad hoc groups. When individuals witness an emergency in the presence of others, they are less likely to offer help than when no other bystanders are present (*bystander nonintervention*), in part because when they are trying to understand the situation, they stay impassive, but they mistakenly interpret other people's impassivity as evidence that the situation is not an emergency—a vicious circle leading to less assistance. In a classroom, students confused by a teacher's utterances often mistake their peers' silence for comprehension, and, as a result, a majority of students stay silent and confused, not realizing that no one else understands the material (*the classroom problem*). When discussing an issue about which they initially shared moderate attitudes, group members typically become more extreme (*group polarization*), in part because deviant thoughts are suppressed, and discussants think that everyone else is more extreme than they are. This phenomenon leads groups, in some cases, to a course of action that virtually no member privately supports, again because misgivings are kept under wraps, even if the misgivings are shared by all (one cause of *groupthink*) or because everyone erroneously believes that they are pleasing everyone else (*the Abilene paradox*).

Pluralistic ignorance also explains the persistence of existing social norms in established social groups, which sometimes espouse norms that very

few members actually support in private. Thus, members of a campus fraternity were found to resist progressive admission policies that they privately approved because of the false assumption that the rest of the group did not approve of the policies. A majority of incoming college students believe that they are uniquely uncomfortable with heavy drinking, but they keep these misgivings to themselves, sustaining the illusion and leading some to drink excessively in order to match the imaginary heavy-drinking norm. Youth gang members believe that their peers support violence and crime more than they do, which explains the maintenance of deviant gang norms despite individual misgivings. Similarly, both prison guards and inmates believe that their peers hold attitudes much more antagonistic to the other group than those attitudes really are, explaining the maintenance of unnecessarily violent norms.

On a more global scale, pluralistic ignorance explains rapid societal changes, either because a seeming consensus is revealed to have had little real support by individuals (*conservative lag*) or because a minority is able to impose the appearance of consensus on a majority (*liberal leap*). Conservative lags explain why measures no longer supported by a majority live on until they are suddenly revealed to have little foundation. The dramatic fall of European Soviet-inspired regimes at the end of the 20th century illustrates this phenomenon. Private misgivings about these governments were widespread but hidden for many decades, and once expressed, might have led to the governments' quick downfall. In the United States, defunct policies such as Prohibition and racial segregation outlasted their popular support for similar reasons. It has in fact been argued that private opinion polling spelled the end of Prohibition.

Liberal leaps occur when the establishment of pluralistic ignorance allows rapid change. Thus, Tocqueville documented how French revolutionaries managed to strip religion out of daily life with apparent support of the majority—although religious practices were in fact maintained privately and resurfaced quickly once this illusion was dispelled. Revolutionary groups wisely seize first the means of mass communication, which lets the revolutionaries create an illusion of wide support and inhibits reaction by the general population.

### Roots of Pluralistic Ignorance

The basic cause of pluralistic ignorance is public misrepresentation of private attitudes. This misrepresentation takes two forms—what gets said, and what does not. On one hand, attitudes believed to be popular are overrepresented. Individuals are more likely to express attitudes believed to be normative, even if it means twisting their real preferences to fit in. Individuals who (earnestly or not) embody this perceived norm receive increased attention and are licensed to advertise their position more freely. Thus, students may boast about their drinking exploits if they believe them to be normative, and the antics of colorful drunkards are discussed with appreciative gusto.

On the other hand, public misrepresentation also involves the silencing of opinions believed to be rare, even if they are really dominant. For example, if some students think binge drinking is stupid, they may not express this opinion at the breakfast table if they think (erroneously) that they are alone in thinking so. One person's silence contributes to the next person's, and a *spiral of silence* ensues.

Pluralistic ignorance rests on a basic social-psychological principle: We believe that the behavior of others reflects who they are and underestimate the role of situations in bringing about their behavior, even when we realize that the same situations affect us. Behavior is seen as a more accurate reflection of character for others than for the self: During a water shortage when showering was forbidden, individuals who bathed thought that other bathers cared less about the community than they did, but nonbathers thought that other nonbathers cared more about the community than they did. This *fundamental attribution error* contributes to pluralistic ignorance because individuals take the behavior of others at face value and disregard the frequent dissembling and complications of social life.

The choices of others are believed to reflect their preferences. In fact, when seeing others choose between two options, individuals see this choice as reflecting liking for the chosen option more than disliking for the rejected option. This again contributes to pluralistic ignorance. Individuals know that they themselves are choosing the lesser of two evils (e.g., in an election between two unpopular

candidates) but interpret their peers' choice as reflecting true enthusiasm for the option that receives the most support.

### Consequences of Pluralistic Ignorance

The typical consequences of pluralistic ignorance are that unpopular or immoral norms live on, suboptimal decisions are made, and a group's subjective utility is not maximized. Individuals put up with things they should not have to, unnecessarily censor themselves, and conform to norms that very few endorse. One of the deepest theoretical questions raised by pluralistic ignorance is: What should count as the true norm—the perceived consensus that affects public behaviors or the aggregated private attitudes? What counts as the real standards of a community, for example, was questioned in an obscenity trial brought against a Utah video store in 2000, when the defense showed that the number of signatures on a public petition against the store's rental of adult videos was dwarfed by the number of individuals from the same aggrieved community who privately rented or purchased the offensive material.

Pluralistic ignorance can lead to widespread alienation due to individuals' believing they are alone in their views while they are in reality surrounded by a blind crowd of like-minded peers. The U.S. popularity of the Kinsey reports on sex, originally published in 1948 and 1953, can in part be explained by their data-heavy appendixes, revealing as statistically normal some behaviors believed theretofore to be rare and shameful oddities. Ideological isolation can also be felt in polarized debates (e.g., on abortion), in which members of both sides overestimate the extremity of both their opponents' and their peers' opinions (*false polarization*), often feeling like "lone moderates" who are uniquely able to see the complexity and nuances of the issues involved.

On a more positive note, by creating the illusion that new ideas are embraced by all, progressive activists, inspired artists, or visionary leaders can use pluralistic ignorance to bring about much-needed change in a society initially unsure about the proposed path.

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*See also* Attribution Biases; Bystander Effect; Conformity; Fads and Fashions; Group Polarization; Groupthink; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Norms; Reference Groups

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## POWER

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In social contexts, *power* may be defined as interpersonal or intergroup control over others' resources or outcomes. Occupying positions of power has been shown to affect power holders' cognitive, behavioral, and emotional processes. Findings from research on social power have implications for many psychological outcomes, ranging from close relationships to intergroup relations, as well as outcomes in organizations.

### Theoretical Background

Early theorists such as John French and Bertram Raven defined *power* as the ability to influence others, that is, to change others' beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. Theorists in this tradition have focused on *power bases*—resources that power holders can use to influence others. Power bases include rewards (e.g., offering promotions), coercion (threatened punishment), legitimacy (obeying authority), reference (role-modeling), expertise (knowledge), and information (persuasion). Contemporary theorists such as Susan Fiske, Dacher Keltner, and Deborah

Gruenfeld have drawn from John Thibaut and Harold Kelley's classic *interdependence theory* to offer an alternative definition of power that focuses on the structural properties—that is, the interdependent nature—of relationships between individuals or groups. Specifically, these theorists argue that power is best defined as control over outcomes that are valued by others. Defining power as *outcome control* identifies power as a property of relationships, whereas defining power as influence focuses on the outcomes of power. It is important to note that defining power in terms of outcome control captures the relative nature of power—the amount of control any one individual or group has may vary across situations, over time, and across relationships with different individuals or groups. This definition also distinguishes power from potential correlates, including status and prestige. For example, professors typically have control over their own students' outcomes (e.g., grades) but no control over other students' outcomes. Moreover, their control over student outcomes is independent of status (e.g., whether they have tenure) or prestige (e.g., whether they are recognized internationally by their peers).

Contemporary research on power as outcome control has been driven primarily by two prominent theories: *power-as-control theory* and *power-approach theory*. Power-as-control theory, first proposed by Fiske and colleagues, was developed to explain the role of power in *person perception*, how people process information about others and subsequently form impressions. Predicated on *dual-process* models of impression formation, which distinguish between automatic and controlled cognitive processes, this model argues that social power moderates perceivers' motivation and ability to process information. According to this theory, compared with people who are relatively less powerful, people who are relatively more powerful are less motivated to engage in effortful processing about those in the opposite role because accurate interpersonal judgments are oftentimes not required of them (i.e., their outcomes are not highly dependent on subordinates). Moreover, because powerful people may be subject to greater cognitive demands (e.g., supervising multiple subordinates), they may simply have fewer cognitive resources to attend to subordinates and therefore be less able to engage in effortful cognitive processing. Finally, the

power-as-control theory asserts that powerful people can be motivated to attend to subordinates when doing so benefits the power holders' own outcomes (i.e., when subordinates control outcomes of interest to power holders).

Power-approach theory, first articulated by Keltner and colleagues, provides a framework for understanding the consequences of power across a broader range of psychological outcomes, including social cognition. According to this model, having or lacking power has consequences for behavioral regulation—or the tendency to approach or avoid outcomes. Specifically, having power activates approach-related tendencies, whereas lacking power activates inhibition tendencies. These differences in behavioral regulation have important implications for behavior, emotion, and cognition. For example, if increased power is associated with less inhibition, people who hold powerful positions should be more likely to act on their own impulses than should people in less powerful positions.

### Methods: How Do People Study Social Power?

Across theoretical perspectives, contemporary researchers have employed two basic approaches to manipulate power differences in laboratory settings. The first approach involves assigning participants to different power roles (e.g., boss vs. employee) that vary in terms of relative outcome control versus dependence. For example, in a high-power role, participants may be told that they are the leader and are responsible for directing a given task, evaluating subordinate workers, allocating chances to win monetary prizes, and so forth. In contrast, participants in a low-power role may be assigned the role of worker and told they must follow the leader's instructions, be evaluated by the leader, and rely on the leader for any chance of winning a prize. In this case, participants are led to believe that the leader has control over the outcomes of workers, whereas workers lack any control over leaders' outcomes. Similar techniques involve role-playing, in which participants are asked to *imagine* themselves in various roles (e.g., art gallery director vs. assistant).

Intergroup power—that is, differences in relative control over group-level outcomes—is typically manipulated through similar techniques.

However, instead of an individual's having control, participants are presented with information that a particular group of individuals has relatively more control over another group's outcomes. Alternatively, researchers may use naturally occurring groups (e.g., men and women) that differ in power. Oftentimes, the use of naturally occurring groups to study intergroup power conflates outcome control with other, related constructs (e.g., status or identity), with implications for interpretation and application of research findings.

*Cognitive priming*—that is, increasing the cognitive activation of power-relevant constructs—is often used in lieu of manipulating actual outcome control. This technique is often easier to implement (e.g., it does not involve highly deceptive cover stories) and is arguably less susceptible to the potential confounds of naturally occurring power relations (e.g., status). Research has demonstrated that priming people to think about specific concepts or goals can influence emotion, cognition, and behavior outside conscious awareness. With regard to priming power, researchers have relied on a number of techniques. For example, completing word search puzzles that require participants to identify power-relevant words (e.g., authority, boss vs. employee, follower) can increase the accessibility of power-related concepts and subsequently influence behavior. Even subtle cues in the environment can prime power—seating participants in a large, cushioned chair behind a desk versus in a small wooden chair in front of a desk can activate high or low power, respectively. Some researchers have primed power in more overtly conscious ways, such as asking participants to recall a time when they had power over (vs. depended on) another person. Regardless of whether power priming is overt or subtle, the assumption is that the *influence* of the prime occurs outside conscious awareness: Participants are (presumably) not aware that the prime affects their subsequent behavior.

Manipulating power via either priming or role-based techniques typically produces similar results. Moreover, manipulating power in a laboratory setting affords experimental control that cannot be attained in more naturalistic settings where people have power in their daily lives. However, some critics have argued that these manipulations and laboratory settings are too artificial when it comes to assessing the impact of power on some

behaviors, such as employee evaluations. Thus, it will be important to replicate laboratory findings in more naturalistic settings.

### Interpersonal Power

*Interpersonal power* refers to power between individuals—when one person controls the outcomes of another (e.g., a boss and employees). Research demonstrates the effects of such power on behavior, emotion, and cognition, including tendencies to stereotype and derogate outgroup members and to sexually harass women.

### Behavior

Several empirical studies suggest that having power inclines people to act, consistent with power-approach theory. That is, people in power are more likely to engage in a given action than are people without power. For example, the priming of power has led participants to be more likely to take a hit in blackjack and to stand up to turn off a fan in the room. Parallel effects occur in group settings, where high-power group members tend to speak more often than low-power group members do. This action tendency also affects perceptions of behaviors. Behaviors generally considered risky (e.g., unprotected sex) are perceived as less risky when participants are primed with power.

Alarming, having power may also incline people to engage in sexual harassment. Indeed, *quid pro quo* harassment—when a supervisor withholds or rewards resources in exchange for sexual cooperation—is defined in part by power. Empirical evidence supports a link between power and harassment. For example, researchers have found that men who are predisposed to harass are also likely to cognitively associate the concept of power with sex. In addition, in laboratory studies, men high in the propensity to sexually harass females rate female subordinates as more attractive when the men have been primed to think about having power.

Unfortunately, the effects of power do not apply only to men who are inclined to harass. Additional research has shown that men given control over a hiring decision and asked to interview a female job candidate subsequently sat closer to her during the interview and asked her

more sexualized questions. Power may facilitate harassment for both motivational and cognitive reasons. For powerful men, motivated to maintain the status quo, sexual harassment is a way to enforce the existing hierarchy and keep women in low-power roles. Cognitively, power may shift perceptions of sexual harassment. For example, some research suggests that men primed with power rate sexually harassing behaviors (e.g., unwanted touching) as less inappropriate than do men primed with powerlessness.

### *Emotion*

Research examining the link between power and emotion has produced mixed results. Power-approach theory predicts that having power should produce positive emotion, whereas lacking power should produce negative emotion. This prediction is based on research demonstrating a positive correlation between behavioral approach tendencies and positive emotion, as well as between behavioral inhibition and negative emotion. Some empirical research supports the hypothesized power–emotion link. For example, one set of studies tested this prediction in the context of a dyadic interaction. In an initial study, romantic partners rated the extent to which they perceived that they and their partner each had power (defined as amount of influence) in their relationship. These romantic partners then discussed their relationships with one another. As predicted, participants who were perceived to have more power subsequently reported having more positive emotions when discussing their relationships, whereas those perceived to have less power reported more negative emotions. Additional research replicated these findings with strangers who were assigned to power roles and with dyads engaging in negotiations. Although these studies support the predictions of the approach–inhibition model, it is important to note that several other studies have found no effects of power on emotion. These mixed results may simply reflect differences in methods of inducing power. Although priming and role-playing typically yield similar results, parallel effects may not extend to emotion. Studies that employ manipulations of dyadic power roles often produce reliable differences in emotion, whereas those that employ

priming power produce inconsistent results. Further research is needed to resolve these discrepancies.

### *Cognition*

Both power-approach theory and power-as-control theory predict that power promotes relatively less effortful (i.e., more automatic) information processing, whereas powerlessness promotes more deliberative information processing. Recent research, however, suggests that power may have different effects on cognitive processing in different contexts. According to Ana Guinote's *situated focus theory*, powerful people engage in deliberative processing when available information is relevant to their current goals. Several recent studies support this argument. For example, power appears to moderate perceivers' ability to narrow or widen their attentional focus, depending on the demands of the task. In one study, participants primed with high power were able either to selectively attend to background information or to ignore this information as necessary in order to succeed at a cognitive perception task. In contrast, participants primed with low-power concepts were unable to adapt across tasks. More specifically, they performed significantly worse when the task required them to ignore background information, suggesting an inability to narrow attention to fit task demands. This study and others like it point to the need for a better understanding of the complex consequences of power for perception. Moreover, these studies demonstrate a heretofore unidentified cognitive benefit—in the form of cognitive flexibility—for those who have power.

Additional research suggests that power has important consequences for how people think about individuals who belong to different social groups (e.g., racial or ethnic or gender groups). More specifically, occupying positions of power can lead to stereotype-based impression formation processes. Research suggests these processes occur both by *default* (i.e., ignoring stereotype-disconfirming information) and by *design* (i.e., attending more to stereotype-confirming information). In other words, power seems to facilitate reliance on stereotypes for both cognitive and motivational reasons. Cognitively, power holders may have neither the cognitive resources to form



accurate impressions nor the motivation to be accurate—using negative stereotypes can legitimate the existing power differences. These attentional differences also translate into evaluations—power holders are more likely to rely on stereotypic information linked to social categories than on individuating traits that distinguish individuals from the social groups to which they belong. The link between power and stereotyping seems to be strongest when people feel less responsible for their judgments (e.g., responsibility norms are weak) and when they feel their powerful positions are less legitimate.

Not only do the powerful tend to rely on stereotypes when evaluating subordinates; they also tend to evaluate subordinates negatively. Meta-analytic studies (which statistically combine findings across a number of studies) confirm the link between power and derogation. In one laboratory study, for example, researchers manipulated whether members of a dyad believed they had power over one another while they engaged in a problem-solving task. When participants were aware that they had power over their partner, they rated their partner more negatively and themselves more positively. Similarly, meta-analyses of data from managers have revealed that as power increases, so do negative evaluations of others and positive evaluations of self.

### Intergroup Power

In contrast to interpersonal power, *intergroup power* refers to power *between* groups—when one group has more control over resources than another does (e.g., men typically have more power than women do). Intergroup power can occur between small groups (e.g., work groups or sports teams) as well as broader social groups in society (e.g., groups based on ethnicity or gender). Although power refers to control, it oftentimes is coupled with status at the intergroup level of analysis. This is particularly true when one is studying naturally occurring groups as opposed to those created in the laboratory. A bidirectional relationship between intergroup power and bias seems to exist. Intergroup power can facilitate bias in the form of discrimination. The reverse is also true—bias in the form of stereotypes serves to explain and maintain power differences.

One of the first studies to investigate the effect of intergroup power on intergroup bias used a modified version of the *minimal groups paradigm*. In this paradigm, participants are arbitrarily assigned to one of two groups and are asked to allocate a valued resource (e.g., cash or candies) between the two groups. Consistent with the idea that power can facilitate bias, a positive relationship was found between intergroup power and intergroup discrimination. As people perceived their own group to have more power, they were more likely to distribute resources in a way that disadvantaged the less-powerful outgroup. Additional studies manipulating group status have found similar results, but group power seems to better predict discrimination against outgroups.

Much research has focused on the role stereotypes play in maintaining and justifying existing power imbalances. Many theories have addressed this process, including *system justification theory*, *social dominance theory*, and the *stereotype content model*. Most germane to the discussion of intergroup power is the idea that stereotypes of groups differ in part because of the perceived status of the groups—which often signals differences in resource control. According to the stereotype content model, group status and competition lead to specific stereotypes about and emotions toward different social groups. Specifically, perceptions of different social groups vary along two dimensions: *competence* and *warmth*. For example, in the United States, poor people—who are viewed as low in both status and competition for valued resources—are perceived to be low in both competence and warmth. As a result, poor people are typically viewed with disdain. It is important to note that this theory argues that intergroup power and stereotypes are mutually reinforcing. Thus, controlling resources signals competence, which in turn justifies disparities in resource control.

### Current and Future Directions

Because power is a fundamental characteristic of human relationships, and one that varies across relationships, its consequences permeate daily life. Hence, power has far-reaching implications for understanding human behavior across social science disciplines. Currently, psychologists who study social power are moving

forward in a number of directions, studying power in a number of different contexts, from the bedroom to the boardroom. Although much research tends to focus on the potential for abuse that comes with having power, there is a renewed interest in recognizing the benefits of having power. Future research within and beyond the field of psychology will benefit from current theories that take a more nuanced approach, recognizing both the pros and the cons of having (or lacking) social power.

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*See also* Dominance Hierarchies; Interdependence Theory; Leadership; Need for Power; Power–Dependence Theory; Social Dominance Theory; Status; System Justification Theory

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## POWER–DEPENDENCE THEORY

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*Power–dependence theory* is a structural theory about power in enduring relationships. It describes how individuals' reliance on others for valued resources determines the distribution of power in relationships. Power–dependence theory represents a major shift in the way sociologists think about power. Many earlier theories about power view it as a trait or property of an actor. Power–dependence theory treats power as a characteristic of a relationship and thus focuses on the relationship rather than on the individuals involved in the relationship.

Power–dependence theory was developed by the sociologist Richard Emerson in the 1960s. Power–dependence theory builds on earlier work in sociology by George Homans and Peter Blau and in psychology by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley. Power–dependence theory, together with the earlier work, forms the basis of *social exchange theory*, one of the major sociological social-psychological traditions.

#### Definitions, Assumptions, and Postulates

Power–dependence theory posits that actors in social relations are dependent on each other to meet certain goals or needs. In an exchange relation, the dependence of one actor on another is determined by the ratio of how much the actor values the resources controlled by the partner to the number of alternative sources the actor has for those resources (resource value vs. resource availability). Power is defined as the potential of one actor to obtain favorable outcomes in an exchange episode at another actor's expense. In an exchange relationship, the first actor has power over the second actor insofar as the first actor controls resources that the second actor values. Power, then, is clearly related to the dependence of the actors on one another. The key postulate of power–dependence theory is that the power of A over B is equal to the dependence of B on A ( $P_{AB} = D_{BA}$ ). Therefore, as A's power over B increases, so does B's dependence on A.

Power–dependence theory has four key assumptions that allow predictions to be made about the behavior of individuals involved in exchange.

First, an individual's behavior is motivated by the desire to increase gain and to avoid loss of valued resources. Second, exchange relations develop in structures of mutual dependence. This means that both parties have some reason to engage in exchange with each other to obtain resources of value; otherwise there would be no need to form an exchange relation. Third, actors engage in recurrent, mutually contingent exchanges with specific partners over time (i.e., they are not engaged in simple one-shot transactions). Last, valued outcomes obey the law of diminishing marginal utility, meaning that after a certain point, each additional resource is of less value.

### Expansion Beyond the Dyad

Most interactions between individuals are not isolated. Instead, most social relations are embedded in larger social networks. In his structural theory of power, Richard Emerson expanded his theorizing to larger networks. For Emerson, the structure of the network, or how individuals are connected to each other and the availability of resources across the network, are vital factors necessary to understand power dynamics within a network. In Emerson's terms, networks are composed of relations that are interconnected, so exchange in one relationship affects interaction in other relationships within the network. These connections can be either negative or positive. Connections are termed *negative* if exchange in one relation reduces the frequency of exchange in another relation involving one of the original actors. For example, it is a negative connection if exchange in the focal relationship, A–B, reduces the likelihood of exchange in an alternate relationship between A and C. Conversely, connections are termed *positive* if exchange in one relation increases the frequency of exchange in another relation involving one of the original actors. In the prior example, a connection is positive if exchange in the A–B relationship increases the amount of exchange in the A–C relationship. In addition, networks can include *mixed* connections, which involve both positive and negative connections.

One of the major emphases in the application of power–dependence theory, beginning with the work of Richard Emerson and Karen Cook, was on the structure of connections in exchange

networks and the distribution of power. In this early test of power–dependence theory, Emerson and Cook verified that power was an attribute of a structural position in an exchange network rather than an individual trait. Despite the fact that participants were unaware of their position in the exchange network, those participants in high-power positions behaved in a manner consistent with their structural power. That is, those actors in high-power positions acquired more benefits from each exchange than did those actors in low-power positions. Cook and Emerson did find that concerns about equity of resources and commitment between partners reduced the use of power by the high-power actors. These findings shaped much of the subsequent research in the power–dependence paradigm (for more examples, see the entry Social Exchange in Networks and Groups).

### Other Key Concepts

In addition to power and dependence, there are four other key concepts that are necessary to understand behaviors in power–dependence relations: reciprocity, cohesion, balance, and power-balancing operations.

*Reciprocity*, or the cooperative interchange between exchange partners, is often considered to be a vital part of any study of an exchange system. Anthropological studies of exchange networks by scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marcel Mauss, and Bronislaw Malinowski placed a strong emphasis on the norm of obligation to reciprocate. In contrast, Richard Emerson viewed the diffuse norm of obligation to reciprocate as something that may emerge over time but not as something intrinsic to social exchange. Emerson argued that the reciprocity observed in ongoing exchange interactions is based on principles of reinforcement, such that in any interaction, if the behavior of A (which is rewarding to B) does not elicit a rewarding behavior from B to A, then there are two options: A will change his or her behavior to elicit a rewarding behavior from B, or the A–B relationship will be terminated.

*Cohesion* represents the strength of the exchange relation, as well as the likelihood that the relationship will survive a conflict. The relational cohesion of a relationship is the average dependence of the actors in the relation: The higher the mutual

dependence, the higher the relational cohesion. This concept has been explored further by Linda Molm and her colleagues, as well as by Edward Lawler and his colleagues. Molm and her colleagues have extensively explored the concept of reciprocity in exchange relations, as well as studying the effect of reciprocity on cohesion and solidarity. Lawler and his colleagues have primarily been concerned with cohesion and solidarity in exchange.

An exchange relationship is *balanced* if the actors are equally dependent on one another ( $D_{ab} = D_{ba}$ ). Therefore, an imbalanced relationship is one in which there are unequal dependencies, in which one party is more reliant on the other. Balance as described by Emerson is a rare state in exchange relations. The balance in an exchange relation is fragile because actors are motivated to maintain or increase their power in order to increase their benefits and minimize losses. Thus, relationships (even those that begin in a power-balanced state) are likely to ebb and flow between balance and imbalance.

Richard Emerson argued that power-imbalanced exchange relationships are unstable and tend toward balance. He described four balancing mechanisms by which the relationships tend to balance. The mechanisms focus on changes in the value of the resources exchanged or the alternatives for the resources being exchanged. By altering either one of these, the power and dependence of the actors on each other will be changed, but maybe not permanently.

Emerson's four *power-balancing operations* are withdrawal, status giving, network extension, and coalition formation. In a relationship in which A is more powerful than B (i.e.,  $P_{ab} > P_{ba}$  and  $D_{ba} > D_{ab}$ ), the power distribution can move toward balance by B taking one of the following actions. First, B can *withdraw* from the relationship. The second option available to B is called *status giving*. B can balance the relationship by increasing the value to A of the resources B controls. One way B can accomplish this in a relatively low-cost way is by giving status or prestige to A. The next option available to B is *network extension*. By increasing B's number of alternatives, B reduces dependence on A and thus increases B's power in relation to A. Finally, B can attempt to *form a coalition*. B and other alternatives for A join

together in a coalition (or some other form of collective action) and reduce the number of alternatives available for A. By decreasing A's alternatives, B and colleagues in the coalition have increased A's dependence on the coalition and thus reduced A's power in relation to the coalition. Of the four power-balancing mechanisms, coalition formation and network extension are the two studied most commonly.

### Influence of Power–Dependence Theory

Power–dependence theory has had influence across many domains both inside and outside social psychology. It laid the groundwork for social exchange theory, which is one of the major theoretical programs within sociological social psychology. Social exchange theory builds on the core assumptions and postulates of power–dependence theory to explore micro processes within social networks. Most recently it has been concerned with dynamics of exchange, trust, cohesion, emotion, and solidarity.

Power–dependence theory has also influenced organizational studies, particularly through Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik's *resource dependence perspective*. The key postulate of the resource dependence perspective is identical to power–dependence theory's central argument. Resource dependence theory asserts that organizations have a fundamental need for resources from both outside and within the organization. Those entities that exclusively provide the most needed or valued resources will have the most power in the organization.

Finally, power–dependence theory has influenced the study of social networks within organizations. Illustrative topics of investigation include strategic alliances, collaborative manufacturing enterprises, vertical integration of firms, interlocking directorates, network diffusion of innovative practices, and mergers.

As social scientists turn their focus to the effects of social networks, power–dependence theory provides a way to understand the behaviors of actors within networks and the dynamics of the networks that are likely to emerge over time.

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See also Power; Social Exchange in Networks and Groups; Social Networks; Status

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## PREJUDICE

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*Prejudice* is one of the defining topics of social psychology and a core theme in the study of intergroup relations. In common parlance and according to the simple definition proposed by Gordon Allport, prejudice can be thought of as “thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant.” Influenced strongly by Allport’s definition, prejudice has traditionally been conceived of as a negative attitude toward members of a given group, based exclusively on their membership in that group. Literally, the term refers to the process of prejudging people on the basis of their group membership, so in principle, prejudice can be both negative and positive. Thus, more recently, psychologists have expanded the scope of the definition of prejudice in two ways in order to include a broader range of biases that do not necessarily involve antipathy. First, prejudice may reflect more systematically positive

responses to members of one’s own group (the ingroup) than to other groups (outgroups). Second, prejudice can involve the lowering of the evaluation of a member of a group who deviates from the stereotypic role of that group (e.g., women who succeed in business). This expanded conceptualization serves to align prejudice closely with processes of *stereotyping* and *discrimination*, and, indeed, during the past 50 years, studies of these three processes have been closely intertwined.

### Prejudice as a Product of Psychodynamic and Personality Factors

Although topics related to prejudice have been of long-standing interest to psychologists, research in prejudice came to the fore in social psychology in the buildup to and aftermath of World War II. The horrors of the Holocaust fueled a desire to understand the psychological basis of the Nazis’ views about, and treatment of, the various social groups that they vilified and persecuted: Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, the disabled.

Much of this early theorizing was heavily influenced by Freudian psychoanalytic theory because of its prominence as a theoretical approach before the war. In the first instance, researchers argued that prejudice was a product of hostility and frustration that was displaced or projected onto members of particular groups that then functioned as scapegoats. According to this model, the behavior of the Nazis was explained by the humiliation that Germany had experienced after World War I and the economic turmoil of the early 1930s.

Among the most influential ideas of this form were those of John Dollard and colleagues, who argued that intergroup hostility and aggression could be understood as an outpouring of the built-up psychic energy produced by frustration. In line with Freudian theory, their model argued that an individual’s expression of prejudice had an important cathartic function in releasing pent-up energy and restoring the individual to a state of equilibrium.

Refinements of this idea argued that prejudice reflected the operation of a general process whereby individuals feel frustration toward individuals and groups with power over them and displace those frustrations onto members of other groups that are visible, identifiable, and vulnerable. In this way,

groups resolve conflict that they cannot deal with through the creation of conflict with a third party.

Other research in this tradition sought to explain why particular groups are selected as *scapegoats*. Projection theorists suggested that targets are chosen on the basis of characteristics that they are seen to possess and that prejudiced individuals also see in themselves but disapprove of or seek to draw attention away from. In these terms, prejudice is a defense mechanism and a form of denial: People are most prejudiced toward those who are similar to themselves and who remind them of their own limitations and failings.

However, the most influential work within the psychoanalytic tradition was that of Theodor Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School, as articulated in their classic text *The Authoritarian Personality*. In their exhaustive inquiries into the psychological substrates of anti-Semitism, these researchers interviewed and administered a range of psychometric tests to large numbers of participants. Within these data they identified a number of distinctive patterns of cognition that appeared to differentiate between participants who were prejudiced (authoritarians) and others who were more tolerant or open minded. Specifically, the thought processes of prejudiced individuals were characterized by intolerance of ambiguity, rigidity, concreteness (poor abstract reasoning), and overgeneralization. Such individuals were thus portrayed as being inclined to see the social world in black-and-white terms—evincing strong and disdainful rejection of others who were seen as inferior to themselves and their ingroup. The origins of the authoritarian personality were also traced to individuals' childhood experiences—specifically, to the hierarchical and abusive relationships that authoritarians had with their parents. In contrast, liberals (nonauthoritarians) were believed to be the product of a more equalitarian upbringing and as a result to be more creative and sublimated, more flexible, and less likely to endorse stereotypic representations of others.

### Prejudice as a Product of Realistic Group Conflict

The representation of prejudice as a manifestation of a distinct, dysfunctional personality was highly influential, not least because it fit with lay theories

that pathologized the prejudiced, representing them as abnormal and the “other.” However, this approach was called into question by a number of researchers (notably Roger Brown and, later, Michael Billig) on the basis of a reexamination of relevant data. Their work indicated that the analysis of authoritarianism was oversimplified and that prejudice was not confined to this group. Liberals also demonstrated prejudice in related ways. The principal objection to the psychodynamic approach to prejudice was that it sought to explain widespread phenomena in terms of processes that were mainly abnormal and unique to the individual. The key point about German anti-Semitism—the point that made it so important and so horrific—was that it was an aspect of an ideology common to a large number of people. In short, prejudice seemed to be a *group-level* phenomenon, and its analysis needed to speak to the social reality of *shared* beliefs and practices.

In line with this logic, researchers started to formulate theories of prejudice that focused on the way in which the psychology of prejudice was structured by a person's place within a broader social system. This endeavor was provided with strong empirical foundations by the famous Robbers Cave studies of Muzafer Sherif and colleagues. In this research, conducted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the researchers assigned boys at a summer camp to different groups and arranged for these groups to compete for goals that only one group could attain. Under these conditions, the groups displayed extreme hostility toward each other. Moreover, this hostility was underpinned by prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes. Significantly, this prejudice was displayed by normal, healthy youngsters in the absence of physical, economic, historical, or personal differences or a history of frustration, exploitation, or repression.

On the basis of these findings, Sherif formulated his *realistic group conflict theory*. This theory asserted that prejudice is an aspect of social conflict and results from social competition for resources. At the same time, as latter phases of the boys' camp studies revealed, prejudice can be ameliorated if group interests are realigned through the introduction of superordinate goals. When the boys had to cooperate and pool resources in order to achieve goals that neither could achieve alone

(i.e., if they had superordinate goals), the prejudice that had been displayed when they were in competition gave way to mutual respect and tolerance. Against the view that prejudice is the product of a pathological personality, Sherif had shown that it inhabited the minds of normal human beings and that the same minds that expressed prejudice toward another group could also treat that group with forbearance and understanding.

Recent work has extended the ideas of realistic group conflict theory to systematic differences in social ideology. In particular, work by Jim Sidanius, Felicia Pratto, and colleagues on *social dominance orientation* demonstrates that people differ in the extent to which they believe that the world fundamentally involves competition between groups and that it is appropriate for some groups to dominate other groups. People higher in social dominance orientation exhibit more prejudice toward members of a range of other groups than do people who are lower in social dominance orientation.

### Prejudice as a Product of Categorization

A further critical step toward recognition of prejudice as an aspect of a healthy rather than a diseased mind was advanced by Gordon Allport's landmark text *The Nature of Prejudice*, published in 1954. The central theme of this text was that prejudice was not an aberration but an aspect of normal human psychology. Thus Allport's answer to the question "Why do human beings slip so easily into ethnic prejudice?" was "They do so because [its] two essential ingredients—erroneous generalization and hostility—are natural and common capacities of the human mind." Central to the first of these points was Allport's recognition that prejudice relied on the propensity of individuals to engage in social categorization, whereby they reacted to other people in terms as their group membership rather than as individuals. He observed that the "human mind must think with the aid of categories" but also noted that "once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it."

Allport's major contribution was to expand on the nature of the social categorization process as an aspect of individual psychology. In particular, he proposed that prejudice was promoted by the tendency for social categorizations to be associated

with differences in value, the primary source of which was a person's group memberships. We tend to like people who are associated with the groups we belong to (ingroups); we are more inclined to dislike, distrust, and reject those who belong to outgroups.

Like Sherif, Allport noted that these things were not set in stone and had the capacity to change. However, like Adorno, Allport (and most other researchers) still clung to the view that categories could be used in a more or less rational manner and that people who are prejudiced are particularly inclined to use dichotomous categories (e.g., believing that ingroups are good and outgroups are bad). Indeed, it was only in 1969, when Henri Tajfel published his influential paper titled "Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice," that the full implications of the cognitive analysis that Allport had pioneered came to fruition.

At the core of Tajfel's treatise was a rejection of prevailing accounts that considered prejudice (and stereotyping) to be irrational and pathological, and an appreciation that prejudice arose from the structure of group memberships and intergroup relations that led to particular cognitions. Prejudice, he argued, is a reflection of people's group memberships and their attempts to understand and explain features of the social world (in particular, the actions of other groups) that impinge on those group memberships.

Tajfel saw three processes as central to this process, categorization, assimilation, and the search for coherence, but it was the first of these that his own empirical work brought to the fore. Coming from a background of research into processes of perceptual judgment, his particular contribution was to show how normal categorization processes could be the basis for biased judgments of individuals on the basis of their group membership. For instance, when participants were shown a series of lines of varying lengths, with the four shortest lines labeled A and the four longest labeled B, and were subsequently asked to recall the length of these lines, the participants tended to accentuate the difference between the two categories of lines by exaggerating the difference between the lengths of the A lines and the B lines and the similarities between lines that were in the same group (A or B). The point that Tajfel abstracted from the study was that the provision of category labels led to

systematic distortion in participants' judgment: They saw the two sets of lines as more different than they really were, and they saw lines in the same set as more similar than they really were. Moreover, the critical step that Tajfel took was to recognize the link between these categorization effects and features of prejudicial judgment. These results implied that if judgments of individuals were informed by awareness of their group membership, then those judgments could be systematically distorted such that, on dimensions perceived to be correlated with those group memberships, individuals viewed members of the same groups as more similar to each other and members of different groups as more different from each other than they really were.

This analysis opened the door to a "cognitive revolution" in the study of prejudice and stereotyping that underpinned the greater part of social-psychological research into these topics in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, it paved the way for an appreciation of prejudice as an aspect of general *social cognition*. In line with much of Allport's reasoning, this view understood prejudice to arise from cognitive processes (e.g., the accentuation of interclass difference and intraclass similarity) that were normal but nevertheless problematic because they introduced bias into the processing of information about individuals and groups.

A key metaphor here was that of the individual as a *cognitive miser*. Proposed by Shelley Taylor and Susan Fiske, this framework characterized prejudicial (i.e., distorted) stereotypes as a product of the requirement to engage in social categorization in order to preserve limited cognitive resources. Thus prejudice was still seen as erroneous and problematic, but it was now explained as an inevitable, if unfortunate, outcome of the limitations of humans as information processors.

### Prejudice as a Product of Social Identity

At the same time that Tajfel's ideas were informing the development of social cognitive approaches to stereotyping and prejudice, his own work was developing in a somewhat different direction. The groundwork for this direction was provided by the *minimal group* studies that he conducted with colleagues in the early 1970s. The purpose of these studies was to identify the minimal conditions that

would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of the ingroup to which they belonged and against an outgroup. In these studies, participants were assigned to groups that were intended to be as stripped down and meaningless as possible (e.g., based on participants' estimation of the number of dots on a screen or their preference for the abstract painters Klee or Kandinsky). The plan was then to start adding meaning to the situation in order to discover at what point discrimination would show its face.

The key finding of the studies was that even these most minimal of conditions were sufficient to encourage ingroup-favoring responses. That is, when assigning points to anonymous members of the groups, participants tended to deviate from a strategy of fairness by awarding more points to people who were identified as ingroup rather than outgroup members. Significantly, too, this pattern occurred in the absence of a history of conflict, animosity, or interdependence between the groups. There was also no prospect of personal gain. Further research also showed that the minimal group studies have broader relevance to issues of social perception and cognition. For example, participants assigned to minimal groups have been found to describe the outgroup in such studies far less favorably than the ingroup (e.g., as less flexible, less kind, and less fair).

As later argued by John Turner, the most important upshot of the original minimal group studies was that they suggested that the mere act of individuals *categorizing themselves* as group members was sufficient to lead them to display ingroup favoritism. In this, the results challenged established theories of prejudice by demonstrating that discrimination in favor of an ingroup need be underpinned neither by a prejudiced personality nor by realistic conflict or deep-seated (e.g., psychodynamic) motives.

Building on these insights, Tajfel and Turner's *social identity theory* extended this analysis by specifying how social structural factors determined, first, what strategy individuals adopted in their dealings with other groups and, second, whether these strategies were personal or collective. The theory argued that individuals would engage in direct collective competition with an outgroup (e.g., display discrimination of the form shown in the minimal group studies) only when



they believed that intergroup relations were insecure in the sense of being perceived to be unstable and illegitimate. In other words, members of low-status groups are predicted to embrace beliefs and act in ways that directly challenge high-status outgroups' status, and those high-status groups are in turn predicted to embrace beliefs and act in ways that defend and justify their position. These dynamics can clearly contribute to prejudice by reinforcing group-based treatment of others that disadvantages them relative to one's ingroup. Critically, though, social identity theorists see such expressions of prejudice as context-specific responses that arise in particular social-psychological conditions and reflect the position of one's group within a particular system of intergroup relations. This analysis was developed through the lens of *self-categorization theory* in Penelope Oakes, Alexander Haslam, and John Turner's 1994 text *Stereotyping and Social Reality*. This theory argued that rather than being irrational, prejudice can be understood to be an aspect of a political process that reflects and advances the perceived interests of those groups with which a person identifies in a particular set of social circumstances. In these terms, the problem of prejudice is a problem of politics and ideology (to do with different groups' disagreement about how those interests should be advanced) rather than of group psychology and social perception per se.

### Prejudice as a Product of Habit of Mind

Recent research on prejudice proposes that because of the fundamental cognitive and motivational forces that promote prejudice and the reinforcement of particular biases (most notably related to gender, age, race, and ethnicity) through early socialization and cultural experience, people develop prejudices that represent habitual ways of thinking. When individuals are exposed to members or symbols of the outgroup, those individuals' biased thoughts are automatically activated. This spontaneous prejudice, which may not be consciously recognized by people who possess it, is commonly measured with response latency techniques, such as the Implicit Association Test.

The evidence that people may have unconscious (implicit) biases provides support for a number of perspectives on contemporary prejudice (e.g., *aver-*

*sive racism, modern racism, symbolic racism*) that are different from traditional prejudice, which is blatant. In general, many researchers have argued that although the overt expression of many prejudices toward minority groups has declined over time, underlying prejudices remain stubborn and strong but are expressed in covert ways. Researchers have thus argued that while perceivers who belong to dominant groups have learned to control their overt displays of prejudice, they are not able to do so on covert measures. Contemporary prejudice is thus typically expressed indirectly, often couched in support of system-justifying ideologies (such as meritocracy) that benefit the dominant group, and it produces subtle forms of discrimination (e.g., mainly when negative treatment can be justified on the basis of some factor other than group membership). Nevertheless, there is evidence that, even at this unconscious level, processes of stereotyping and prejudice will be sensitive to the identities that are primed in a particular context and to the meaning of those identities in the particular situation at hand. Consistent with this point, there is evidence that social identity and self-categorization processes play a major role in the escalation and reduction of prejudice and in determining people's willingness to express prejudice openly. In particular, a number of studies have shown that people's willingness to express prejudicial attitudes increases markedly if they believe that such an expression is normative for their group and if they identify with that group.

### Conclusion

In summary, prejudice comes in several forms. It can reflect either direct negative feelings about members of another group, preference for one's own group or another group, or lowered evaluations of members of another group who violate stereotypic expectations. A number of personality, cognitive, motivational, social, and cultural forces contribute to the development and maintenance of prejudice. In addition, prejudice may be blatant and overt, or it can be harbored unconsciously and covert. In fact, many people who believe they are not prejudiced may be implicitly prejudiced. Under certain circumstances, such as when norms change, implicit biases are expressed more explicitly.

Understanding the causes and nature of prejudice can help guide interventions for reducing prejudice. For example, to the extent that prejudice is based in social categorization and social identity, interventions that alter the way people think about groups and their memberships can ameliorate prejudice. Strategies that encourage people to categorize themselves differently have been shown to lead to change in the treatment and representation of others, even on an implicit level. This is illustrated by a study in which Samuel Gaertner and colleagues defined participants as members of one of two groups, each comprising three members. As in the minimal group studies, this categorization led to intergroup discrimination. After this, however, some participants were induced to *recategorize* the people as either one group of six or as six individuals, and both these recategorization strategies served to reduce intergroup discrimination and prejudice. Specifically, the one-group manipulation increased the perceived attractiveness of former outgroup members, and the separate-individuals redefinition reduced the perceived attractiveness of former ingroup members. Consistent with this point, studies of intergroup contact—which examine the relationship between people’s exposure to members of an outgroup and their prejudice toward them—generally find that contact is effective to the extent that it is associated with a softening of the boundaries between ingroup and outgroup and with reduced anxiety about the implications and consequences of future contact.

A key point in the most recent developments in the study of prejudice is that although it is customary for prejudice to be thought of as a process that arises from the processing of information about others (“them”), prejudice is also very much driven by group members’ understanding of themselves (as “us”). In this regard, as Stephen Reicher and colleagues have noted, the most pernicious prejudices of the past century have arisen when group members have been encouraged by leaders to develop a theory of their ingroup that first excludes outgroup members, then defines them as a threat to the ingroup, and finally comes to celebrate prejudicial treatment of others as essential for the preservation of that ingroup. Rather than being a matter of cold, detached information processing, such prejudice is fomented

in a social cauldron of norms, values, and emotions that group members come to share and that fuel their collective actions in the world. Although much of this “heat” has gone out of social-psychological research in the past 30 years, there is little doubt that it is still keenly felt on the front line of intergroup relations.

*S. Alexander Haslam and John F. Dovidio*

*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Categorization; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Discrimination; Hate Crimes; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Implicit Prejudice; Intergroup Contact Theory; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## PRISONER'S DILEMMA

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In its simplest form, the *prisoner's dilemma* refers to a *mixed-motive conflict* in which two interdependent decision makers have to decide whether to cooperate with each other or to defect. For each decision maker, the defect choice strictly dominates the cooperative choice (i.e., regardless of what the other person chooses, defection yields a better payoff to the individual than does cooperation). Yet *both* decision makers will be better off if they each choose cooperation rather than if either defects. Hence, there is a choice dilemma.

The prisoner's dilemma derives its name from a prototypic situation in which the police have arrested two people suspected of having committed a bank heist and have placed them in separate, isolated cells so that they cannot communicate. Because the police do not possess adequate material evidence for conviction, they offer each prisoner the option of testifying against the other. If one of the prisoners agrees to confess to the crime (and, in effect, betray the other), that prisoner will be set free, whereas the other prisoner will receive the maximum sentence allowable, 12 years. If both prisoners confess, each receives an intermediate sentence of 6 years. Finally, if neither prisoner confesses, both receive a minimum sentence of only 4 months for the minor offense of loitering near the scene of a crime. Obviously, both prisoners would be best off if both refuse to confess. However, each is tempted to confess. If both do so, however, both are worse off.

When first introduced, the prisoner's dilemma was viewed by social scientists as a simple but powerful analogue of many real-world situations involving interdependent social actors for whom mutual cooperation is attractive but problematic. Such situations include social exchanges, bilateral negotiations, arms races, and the allocation of shared but scarce resources. This entry looks at this line of research as it has developed over time.

### Overview and History

The prisoner's dilemma game spawned an enormous amount of empirical research on cooperation and conflict. Part of the appeal of the prisoner's dilemma task as a research tool is that it

succinctly captures a fundamental tension between what theories of rational choice predict and what behavioral observations reveal about cooperation and competition in the real world. For example, although *game theory* predicts that both decision makers in a prisoner's dilemma will choose the defecting option, observed rates of cooperation—at least in experimental versions of the dilemma—are often much higher than expected. Moreover, empirical rates of cooperation observed in many natural settings are also greater than predicted by rational choice and game theory models.

Recognizing both its simplicity and its richness, social psychologists have used the prisoner's dilemma paradigm to conduct a very large number of experiments over the past five decades. These experiments have yielded invaluable and reliable insights into the antecedents and consequences of cooperation.

### Antecedents of Cooperation

Much of the early psychological research focused on identifying the psychological and social antecedents of cooperation. For example, early studies examined the role of decision makers' expectations about what the other party would do in the situation. These studies showed, for instance, that positive expectations regarding others' cooperativeness enhanced an individual's cooperation rates whereas expectations of competitive behavior predicted defensive competitive behavior in return. Similarly, a number of studies showed that trust in the other person's cooperative motives and intentions made the cooperative choice easier.

Still other studies demonstrated that individual differences in social values (defined in terms of people's distinct preferences for various self–other payoff patterns) influenced cooperation rates. In particular, people with more prosocial and altruistic motives were more likely to cooperate in a prisoner's dilemma situation than were those with more individualistic or competitive social motives. Other studies using the prisoner's dilemma investigated how properties of the choice itself influenced cooperation and noncooperation. For example, studies have shown that the way in which a choice is framed (e.g., whether it is framed in ways highlighting prospective gains or prospective losses to the individual) influences cooperation levels.

Finally, studies explored how the perceived social relationship between the interdependent decision makers influenced their construal of the task and their subsequent choice. For example, studies showed that cooperation rates tended to be higher when individuals believed they were interacting with other members of their own social category or group (ingroup members) than when they thought they were interacting with members of another social group or category (outgroup members).

Another important stream of psychological research on the prisoner's dilemma investigated mechanisms for actually increasing cooperation rates. These studies have generally adopted one of two approaches. The first approach has focused on exploring the efficacy of individual-level behavioral strategies for inducing mutual cooperation. For example, a variety of behavioral strategies employing variations on patterns of reciprocity have been shown to reliably elicit and sustain cooperation. One particularly famous strategy involved the use of gradually increasing cooperative initiatives. The premise behind this approach was that a small initial offer of cooperation would signal to the other party the willingness to be cooperative, without exposing the initiator to excessive amounts of risk. If the small cooperative gesture was reciprocated, then the decision maker could slowly increase his or her cooperation levels. As each level was reciprocated or matched by the other party, participants would move toward higher and higher levels of cooperation. Not surprisingly, studies in this vein also demonstrated that unconditional cooperation was not effective at sustaining cooperation because eventually the other party would be tempted to exploit the unilateral cooperator.

A second approach to eliciting cooperation has focused on the use of structural changes or arrangements that enhance cooperation. Studies in this vein have demonstrated, for instance, that certain forms of communication and discussion before choosing one's response can improve cooperation levels. Furthermore, increasing the salience and certainty of information regarding others' choices can affect cooperation. In particular, unequivocal evidence that others are cooperating has been shown to increase cooperation rates. Increasing the perceived duration of the relationship can enhance cooperation rates as well.

After a period of rather prolific research activity throughout the 1960s and 1970s, enthusiasm for empirical studies using the prisoner's dilemma paradigm waned somewhat. This decline in interest reflected, at least in part, a sense among researchers that the major research questions and most interesting variables influencing cooperation and non-cooperation had been investigated in previous research.

### A Resurgence of Interest: Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma Game Research

Beginning in the early 1980s, however, innovative research by Robert Axelrod revitalized scientific interest in this line of research. This new work, which focused on cooperation in repeated or *iterated* versions of the prisoner's dilemma, used a clever and, as it turned out, enormously generative computer tournament methodology. Using this computer tournament approach, Axelrod and his associates were able to systematically investigate the comparative efficacy of different choice strategies for inducing and sustaining cooperation over long periods of time.

His results demonstrated, most dramatically, that a very simple strategy known as *tit for tat* was able to outperform even highly complex and cognitively sophisticated decision strategies. In *tit for tat*, one initially cooperates on the first round of play and thereafter does whatever one's opponent or partner did in the previous round. Axelrod's systematic research further isolated the properties of *tit for tat* that contributed to its strong performance. In particular, *tit for tat* is nice (i.e., it always cooperates initially). It is also *provokable* (i.e., it punishes noncooperation immediately). Yet it is also forgiving (i.e., it is willing to return to cooperation after administering a suitable punishment). It also has the advantage, Axelrod suggested, of clarity, thus enabling it to avoid unintentional cycles of mutual defection. In a nutshell, *tit for tat* is effective at promoting cooperation and deterring exploitation.

Axelrod's computer tournament methodology spawned a large number of studies across multiple disciplines and subfields, including political science, behavioral economics, game theory, sociology, and social psychology. It has led also to the discovery of numerous alternative strategies for

eliciting cooperation across a variety of contexts. Thus, although tit for tat proved to be a powerful strategy for eliciting and sustaining cooperation in Axelrod's original tournament, subsequent studies showed that another simple strategy, called *win-stay, lose-switch*, turned out to be quite capable of producing strong and resilient results when paired against a variety of other strategies. As its name suggests, a player using the win-stay, lose-switch strategy continues to use the same strategy so long as that strategy is producing favorable payoffs in its transactions. As soon as it begins to produce inferior payoffs, however, the player switches to another choice.

Another subsequent and promising wave of research has examined the problem of cooperation in what are called "noisy" prisoner's dilemmas. In a noisy prisoner's dilemma situation, players operate under conditions of uncertainty regarding the true level of cooperation of the other player or players. It is interesting to note that when uncertainty of this sort is present, tit for tat performs much more poorly than many other strategies because it tends to set off costly cycles of mutual punishment or retaliation for perceived defections. Stated differently and perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, strict reciprocity does not work so well when information about others' actions is ambiguous. In contrast, strategies that display generosity or leniency by underreacting to others' apparent defections are able to sustain high levels of cooperative exchanges for long periods of time. In a sense, such strategies compensate for the deleterious effects of noise on the interpretation of others' actions.

Simulation work using the Axelrodian paradigm is enjoying considerable vogue and continues to generate new and important insights into the evolution of cooperation and the stability of cooperative regimes.

### Current Developments and Future Directions

As a simple but elegant prototype of mixed-motive conflict situations, the prisoner's dilemma game, in all its variations, continues to occupy a special place in the social sciences. Moreover, recent theoretical developments promise to enlarge and enrich early game theoretic perspectives. For example, sociologists and political scientists have become

increasingly interested in how group or team identities influence patterns of cooperation and competition. Similarly, there is a great deal of interest in how embedded social structures, such as neighborhoods and network ties, facilitate cooperation and its maintenance.

For example, research in this area has shown that the preservation of social context, even though decision makers within the neighborhood might be changing their individual strategies, can result in high levels of cooperation as well as neighborhoods that are resistant to invasion by predators or cheaters. Other studies have been examining the role of sanctions and norms on the stability of cooperation. The results of these sociological explorations will undoubtedly be more nuanced and refined psychological models of cooperative judgment and choice.

Recently, the prisoner's dilemma has even been viewed as a useful approach for studying cross-cultural or comparative aspects of cooperative choice in dilemma situations. Increasingly sophisticated agent-based modeling techniques suggest the future for prisoner's dilemma research remains bright.

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See also Cooperation and Competition; Negotiation and Bargaining; Social Dilemmas; Trust

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## PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

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*Procedural justice* refers to the fairness of decision-making procedures and of other social and organizational processes. In social psychology, virtually all research on procedural justice refers to *subjective* procedural fairness—the subjective feeling that one has been treated fairly under a given procedure. Early psychological studies of the impact of justice judgments focused on judgments of whether outcome distributions were fair or unfair—a topic called *distributive justice*—without paying much attention to the procedures used to arrive at the outcome allocation. In the early 1970s, however, experimental studies of psychological reactions to various legal procedures showed that procedures have their own impact on feelings of fairness. Psychologist John Thibaut, law professor Laurens Walker, and their colleagues showed that some procedures result in feelings of greater fairness, regardless of whether the outcome of the process was fair or unfair, favorable or unfavorable. The discovery of procedural justice effects was important because it showed that it is possible to increase feelings of fairness by using the right procedure, so that even those who lose or experience negative outcomes can feel fairly treated.

A good example of a procedural justice effect is seen in the first experiment that Thibaut, Walker, and their colleagues conducted on the topic. Participants in that study found themselves involved in a complex dispute resolution process because another member of their team had been accused of cheating. The experiment varied whether the participant knew that his or her teammate had in fact cheated, whether the outcome of the “trial” was favorable or unfavorable (the participant’s team was either exonerated or found guilty), and whether the dispute resolution procedure did or did not give the participant a voice in determining what evidence was considered or denied. The results showed a clear effect for the procedure the participant had

experienced. *Voice procedures* were seen as fairer than were procedures that placed all the control and input in the hands of the decision maker. In addition, regardless of whether the participant’s team won or lost the trial, and regardless of whether the outcome of the trial conformed to the participant’s private knowledge about the teammate’s behavior, the voice procedure led to greater satisfaction with the verdict and greater perceived fairness in the trial outcome than did the *mute procedure*. Of course, winning participants were generally more satisfied than losing participants, and correct decisions were generally seen as fairer than incorrect decisions, but in each combination of the other factors, the voice procedure prompted more positive reactions. Subsequent studies have shown that such *voice effects* have a powerful impact on procedural fairness judgments in a variety of organizational and governmental contexts. When people are given an opportunity to control what information is considered by a decision maker, especially when they are given an opportunity to express their views about the situation under consideration, the procedure is seen as fairer.

Subsequent work by Robert Folger and others showed that decisions that come from fair procedures are more readily accepted than those from unfair procedures, a phenomenon Folger dubbed the *fair process effect*. Later research showed that when people believe that the process used to reach a decision is fair, they are more likely to accept the decision. In many of these studies, the way processes were made fair was by including an opportunity for voice on the part of those affected by the decision.

Tom Tyler and his colleagues studied the workings of the fair process effect in political and social contexts and found that judgments of procedural fairness were strongly correlated with the acceptance of authorities’ decisions. Tyler also showed that an important factor in people’s willingness to obey a law is whether they believe that the process that generated the law was fair. Most of the early studies on acceptance of authority looked at the relationship between procedural fairness judgments and the acceptance of political decisions and laws, but later research showed similar effects for reactions to organizational authorities. In many of these studies, procedural fairness judgments exerted greater influence on the acceptance of

authorities' decisions than did distributive justice judgments. While willingness to accept a decision or obey a law can be affected by whether the outcome is favorable to the person in question, believing that the decision or law was generated by fair process has an even greater impact.

Early accounts of the psychology of procedural fairness and the fair process effect relied on assumptions about the role of procedures in ensuring that outcomes would be fair. For example, Thibaut and Walker explained the voice effect they found by suggesting that giving voice to litigants or defendants enhances the perceived likelihood of a fair verdict. Such "instrumental" theories of procedural justice had a difficult time explaining why procedural justice effects were sometimes stronger than effects of distributive fairness, however.

The need for noninstrumental explanations of the psychology of procedural justice is illustrated by an experiment conducted by E. Allan Lind, Ruth Kanfer, and Christopher Earley. Participants were given work goals, which affected their payments for the experiment, using one of three procedures. Some participants had an opportunity to voice their preferences for the goals—this is a typical voice procedure. Others had no opportunity to express their preferences. Instead, they were simply given a goal and put to work—a typical mute procedure. Finally, in a postdecision-voice procedure, the goal was announced, but then participants were given an opportunity to express their preferences. After they had voiced their views, the original goal was repeated and the participants were put to work. Even though the exercise of postdecision voice could not affect the outcome of the goal-setting decision, that procedure was viewed as fairer, resulted in greater acceptance of the goal, and led to better performance than did the mute procedure.

Lind and Tyler have offered a new theory to explain both instrumental and noninstrumental procedural justice effects. Their *group-value model* suggests that there are two ways that people process procedural information to judge its fairness. One way is to evaluate the benefit of the process for their own interests—using an *instrumental fairness processor*, as it were. The other way is to look at the procedure as a manifestation or symbol of how the person in question is valued by the group, organization, or institution that employs

the procedure—using a *group-value fairness processor*. On the one hand, if a procedure seems to recognize the person's standing in the group, organization, or institution, then the procedure is seen as fair. On the other hand, a procedure that seems to deny one's full standing is seen as unfair. From the perspective of group-value theory, voice effects occur because allowing an individual affected by a decision to have a say has positive effects for both the instrumental processor (the voice might convince the authority to make a favorable decision) and the group-value processor (voice indicates that one is a full-fledged member of the group). The fairness effect of the postdecision-voice condition in the Lind, Kanfer, and Earley study can be explained as follows: Even though the postdecision-voice condition had nothing to offer the instrumental fairness processor, it still had a fairness advantage for the group-value processor.

Later work on the psychology of fairness turned to why people should care so much about fairness and why, among fairness judgments, procedural fairness so often carries more weight than distributive fairness. One theoretical approach that addresses these issues is *fairness heuristic theory*, advanced by Lind and Kees van den Bos. Fairness heuristic theory says that people look at the fairness of their treatment as an indicator of whether they can trust a group not to exploit or exclude them. On one hand, when a person receives information or experiences treatment that seems fair, he or she goes into a mode of interaction that is cooperative and supportive of the group in question. On the other hand, when a person experiences unfair treatment, he or she adopts a narrow self-interest approach to the group. Because information is processed early and quickly to serve as the basis of the fairness heuristic, later fairness information is interpreted in light of earlier fairness information. This is where the extra impact of procedural fairness information comes from—we usually know about procedures before we know about outcomes. Van den Bos and others have shown that when outcome information is available before process information, distributive fairness has greater impact.

The psychology of fairness, procedural and distributive, occupies an important place in the psychology of groups and interpersonal relations because it goes to the heart of how people, as individuals,

relate to the groups to which they belong. As researchers explore this area, they learn more about the rules, norms, and psychological processes that regulate the person-to-group relationship.

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*See also* Distributive Justice; Justice; Just World Hypothesis; Relational Model of Authority in Groups

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## PROCESS CONSULTATION

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Group interactions involve both content and process. Content is *what* the group is doing. Content includes the group's objective, agenda, discussion topics, and so forth. The content defines the reason the group is getting together. Process is *how* the group conducts its work. Process includes how the group achieves its objective, moves through its agenda, discusses its topics, and so forth. *Process consultation* is an intervention in which an individual, typically from outside the group, helps the group members become more aware of how they do things and then use this awareness to enhance how they operate together.

Process consultation is important to group processes because it can enhance a group's ability to perform its tasks and develop positive relations among its members. This entry describes how process consultation enhances group performance, describes the kinds of behaviors that are observed during process consultation, and discusses how process consultation is conducted.

### Enhancement of Group Performance

Process consultation enhances group *functioning* because very few individuals are able to focus on a group's content and process at the same time. Most members have a vested interest in the group's outcome, and all members bring some bias to the group's interactions. Thus, it is difficult for them to be truly objective about how the group is functioning. Moreover, and especially when they have an interest in the outcome of the group's work, most individuals simply cannot attend to the group's process when they are absorbed in the group's content.

Consider the work of a task force that is assembled after a merger of two corporations to make a recommendation regarding which firm's information technology system to use. This is a high-stakes decision: If the two companies have different information technology systems—say that one uses Macintosh computers (Macs) and the other uses PCs—it is likely that employees from the company whose system prevails will get more jobs in the merged organization because they are more familiar with the system that is selected. Members of the task force will be enthusiastic participants in the group's deliberations, pushing for their way of doing things.

Their focus on the *content* of the group's work will detract from their ability to attend to the group's *process*. Deficiencies or dysfunctions in the group's process, in turn, can detract from the group's ability to conduct its work. If members do a poor job of listening to and considering one another's perspectives, then they have defeated the very purpose of using a group to make decisions: to leverage the multiple insights, experiences, and knowledge bases to produce a solution that is superior to what any individual could generate independently.

In cases like this, it is helpful to have a *group facilitator* who can attend to and help enhance the group's process. The facilitator is unbiased—he or she has no vested interest in the group's decision or recommendation. Thus, the facilitator can focus on *how* the group is conducting its work rather than *what* the group is deliberating. Another name for a facilitator is a *process consultant*—someone who is not a full-time member of the group but who attends and participates in group meetings with the



express purpose of fostering good group functioning. (Sometimes, a member of the group can act as the process consultant. This typically happens with effectiveness only when the group is relatively mature and has spent time in the past addressing group process issues. For example, an ongoing work team might have each member take a turn being the process consultant at one meeting.)

### Key Behaviors

The process consultant is concerned with how the group is functioning—how it achieves its objectives, moves through its agenda, discusses topics, makes decisions, and so on. As Edgar Schein—one of the earliest writers about process consultation—noted, there are two basic kinds of behavior that process consultants look for in examining a group's functioning: task-oriented behavior and maintenance-oriented behavior.

#### *Task-Oriented Behavior*

Task-oriented behavior deals with what people say or do to get something done. There are five major elements of task-oriented behavior:

1. *Initiating.* In order for a group to accomplish or make progress on its tasks (the content), there must be some initiating behavior. Examples of initiating behavior include stating the objective or definition of the problem, offering alternatives for working on or solving the problem, setting time limits, building an agenda, and so on.
2. *Information and opinion seeking and giving.* Communication is the essential process by which the group accomplishes its tasks. Information seeking and giving, and opinion seeking and giving, are vital task-oriented behaviors. Examples include questions and statements such as these: What more do we know about this problem? I've got more data that may help. What do people think about these alternatives? Here's my opinion on that issue.
3. *Clarifying and elaborating.* The reason for calling the group together in the first place rests on the assumption that no individual has the

answer. Clarification helps sharpen members' understanding of the specifics involved.

Elaborating on someone else's inputs is the essence of collaboration. By asking for clarification and by building on the ideas of others, a group moves toward creative solutions to complex problems that are beyond any single individual's capability.

4. *Summarizing.* To further help a group operate with full information, effective summarization is an important function. Reviewing the points that have been covered, the ideas under consideration, the decisions made and pending, and so on can help a group determine where it has been, where it is, and where it needs to go.
5. *Consensus testing.* Consensus testing is checking to see whether the group is close to a decision. Even if the group is not ready for a decision, testing can still serve the important function of reminding the group that it is there to achieve some objective and within some time constraint. This is a productive form of time keeping.

#### *Maintenance-Oriented Behavior*

Maintenance-oriented behavior deals with how people behave toward one another in performing the task and, ultimately, with how cohesive the group members feel. There are four main elements of maintenance-oriented behavior:

1. *Gatekeeping.* Group members often behave in ways that make it difficult for others to make their own contributions. For example, repeatedly interrupting a person and dominating the conversation can create a situation in which the interrupted person stops contributing. Gatekeeping—that is, regulating the communication gates—ensures that everyone has at least the opportunity to contribute. For example, a member may state, "We haven't heard everyone's opinion on this, so let's go around the table and see what people think."
2. *Encouraging.* Encouraging can serve a function similar to that of gatekeeping. For various reasons, some individuals do not jump in as quickly or consistently as others do as the group conducts its work. These individuals may need some encouragement if they are to be willing

and able to make a contribution or to continue making contributions if their first attempts fall flat, sound disorganized, or are immediately discounted by others.

3. *Harmonizing and compromising.* Harmonizing and compromising are efforts to bring the group together in a shared perspective. However, their use and value must be carefully examined in each particular situation. When used too hastily, they can detract from the group's effectiveness. In some situations, it may be very important first to confront the fact that a serious disagreement exists and then to strive to find a creative, integrative solution before resorting to a compromise or next-best solution. When used as a mechanism to avoid real differences of opinion, harmonizing and compromising result in a state of false security.
4. *Standard setting and testing.* These are efforts to test whether the group is satisfied with its procedures or to suggest procedures and standards. Standard setting and testing can involve pointing out explicit or implicit norms that have been set in the group.

### How Process Consultation Is Conducted

Process consultation also involves observing patterns of interaction among group members. One of the easiest aspects of group process to observe is the pattern of communication. Who talks in the group, for how long, and how often? Who do people look at when they talk—single others (possibly potential supporters of their point of view), the full group, or no one? Who talks after whom or who interrupts whom? What style of communication is being used (assertions, questions, tone of voice, gestures, etc.)?

Process consultation is done most often through direct observation of the group and, at appropriate times, through raising questions or making observations about what has been happening in the group. The group could be ongoing, such as a regular work team, or it could be temporary, such as the task force described earlier, charged to recommend whether the merged company should go with Macs or PCs.

In some cases, process consultation is used to identify and address deficiencies in group effectiveness

or dysfunctions in group interactions. For example, a group that repeatedly falters at implementing decisions made by its members may suffer from problems associated with clarifying support during the decision-making process. In other cases, process consultation can be used to make a relatively effective group even better. In these cases, the process consultant observes the group in action, provides the group members feedback on the observations, and then engages the members in discussing and applying the observations to their situation.

Although process consultation has been practiced for 40 years, only a modest amount of research has been conducted to assess its effectiveness in improving the ability of groups to accomplish work. Findings of research on process consultation are unclear, especially when the findings relate to task performance. A number of difficulties arise in trying to measure performance improvement as a result of process consultation. One problem is that most process consultation is conducted with groups performing mental tasks, such as decision making; the outcomes of such tasks are difficult to evaluate. A second issue is that process consultation typically is combined with other interventions; isolating the impact of process consultations from those of the other interventions is difficult.

Literature reviews on the effectiveness of process consultation have concluded that it has positive effects on participants, according to self-reports, in areas including greater personal involvement, higher mutual influence, and enhanced group effectiveness. One recent study noted that process consultation tends to be most effective when managers have the personal resources to engage in self-evaluation and personal development and thus to participate in such a process.

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*See also* Group Development; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Team Building; Teams; Work Teams

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## PROCESS GAIN AND LOSS

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*Process gain* and *loss* are labels covering a long research tradition in social psychology that examines how and to what degree group processes affect group performance, with the earliest work occurring over 100 years ago. Sometimes, group processes can lead to performance that exceeds expectation, referred to as *process gains*. More often, group processes lead to performance that falls below expectations, referred to as *process losses*. Work on process gains and losses has focused on both performance by the group as a whole and the effects on the performance of an individual who is working as a member of the group.

This entry looks at research about process gains and losses in two principal categories, coordination and motivation. Coordination gains and losses result from how well the group coordinates its efforts or resources while performing the task. Motivation gains and losses stem from the effects that group membership has on the amount of effort each individual member contributes to the task.

### Coordination Gains and Losses

#### *Group Problem Solving*

Early work on group problem solving seemed to show that group interaction led to process gains, in that groups were two to three times as likely as individuals to be able to solve basic logic and word problems. However, both gains and losses are relative and must be defined in terms of some baseline, or expectation. This early work used the “average” individual as the baseline to which group performance was compared. Research has shown that many basic group processes can lead groups to perform better than their average member. For example, simple majority or plurality processes (i.e., the alternative that has the most support in the group gets chosen by the group) often lead to superior performance by groups compared with the performance of the average individual. Such processes are quite commonplace in group decision-making situations because of their high level of accuracy relative to the amount of information gathering and cognitive effort that they require from the group.

Most social-psychological research on groups has used *potential* group performance as the baseline against which process gains and losses are measured. In problem-solving situations in which a particular choice alternative can be considered correct or best, a common baseline used is *truth wins*; that is, if any member of the group initially favors the correct or best answer (i.e., has truth), then the group will choose that alternative. Based on this baseline criterion, most groups show process losses in problem-solving situations.

Although groups typically perform better than their average member, they often do not perform as well as their best member. Research has shown that groups rarely perform as well as a truth-wins model predicts they should. On problem-solving tasks, groups often perform near the predictions of a *truth supported wins* model (i.e., a group will be able to solve the problem only if at least two of the members can solve the problem). This level of performance is still better than the average individual but is below the group’s potential performance.

#### *Brainstorming*

A second area in which results were interpreted initially as process gains but were later seen as process losses involved *brainstorming* in groups. Early research showed that groups asked to generate ideas or solutions generated far more items than did single individuals working alone. However, many later studies have shown that sets of noninteracting individuals, or nominal groups, often perform better than interacting groups of the same size. In regard to brainstorming, two of the major reasons for these performance losses are *production blocking* and *cognitive interference*. Production blocking occurs because group members try to produce responses at the same time, so someone must wait to contribute. This creates a coordination loss. In addition, ideas presented by other members tend to interfere with individual cognitive processes used to generate ideas.

#### *Information Sharing*

A third area in which coordination problems lead to performance decrements involves information sharing in groups. A number of group tasks require members to share information in order to

reach an optimal solution or decision. However, research has shown that members tend to discuss and place more weight on information that they all share than on information that is uniquely held by each individual member. Shared information is often relevant and valid, but if group members do not share task-relevant information that only they know, then their group is less likely to perform up to its potential. A number of studies have shown that groups will choose inferior options supported by shared information even though they have enough information to demonstrate that a different alternative is superior.

If group members each have unique task-relevant information and subsequently share that information during group discussion, then their groups can perform at levels above what is possible for any individual members. Recent research has argued that the unique information brought by members of multidisciplinary scientific research teams affords such teams better odds of making significant scientific contributions compared with teams whose members are drawn from a single scientific discipline. Recent empirical and simulation findings also show that members who bring complementary strategies to a decision problem can produce decision outcomes that are superior to those possible by groups sharing a single strategy. Unfortunately, if most of the members share a particular strategy or orientation toward a problem, then that particular strategy or orientation will dominate other strategies that may be available to the group, even if the shared strategy is suboptimal or invalid.

### *Implicit and Explicit Coordination*

A final area in which coordination losses have been demonstrated involves *implicit* and *explicit coordination*. Most groups rely on implicit coordination, which simply evolves (without discussion) as the group works on the task. Although groups learn to coordinate their actions, the process can be slow, and coordination rarely becomes optimal. Explicit coordination or planning is often viewed as a positive way for groups to begin a task. However, left to their own devices, groups rarely spend much time planning and often spend no time at all at it. Forcing groups to plan in advance of attempting to perform a task can thus improve performance.

### Motivation Losses

Much of the early research on process losses assumed they were due to coordination problems. However, research designs using tasks that allowed for estimates of performance decrements due to lack of coordination showed that actual group performance was often below estimates based on coordination problems alone. Thus, researchers began to focus on motivation losses as well and coined the term *social loafing* to describe them.

Social loafing occurs when group members are working on a common task in which individual contributions are difficult to assess and the odds of the group's achieving its goal are high or the goal is of little value to group members. Under these circumstances, members put less effort into the task than they do when working on the task as an individual. The actual presence of other group members is not necessary. Simply knowing that other people are working on the task and that there are no specific or assessable individual member goals can lead members to loaf. Loafing has been observed on physical and cognitive tasks, by both males and females, and in many different cultures.

Social loafing can also stem from more strategic aspects of behavior in groups. *Free riding* occurs when members can reap the benefits of the groups' behavior regardless of the amount of effort they extend. For example, if others refrain from dumping their garbage into a common lake, then the lake will remain usable, even if one member continues to dump garbage in it. Many group settings allow for free riding, so some groups create negative incentives (penalties or expulsion from the group) to reduce its prevalence. Free riding can also lead to further motivation losses by others who feel they are being played for suckers. If typically conscientious members think others are free riding, then the conscientious members will exert less effort themselves to avoid being taken advantage of.

Although social loafing is probably the most widely studied form of motivation loss in groups, other processes can also lead to effort reductions. For example, *social anxiety* created by evaluation apprehension can lead group members to limit their participation. In situations in which members are not confident of their abilities or ideas, they

may hold back to avoid the appearance of incompetence. Fear of evaluation can stem from characteristics of the specific group (e.g., other members are of higher status) or a general anxiety that some people have about working in groups. Groups composed of members who enjoy working in groups tend to perform better than groups of comparable ability whose members feel uncomfortable in group environments.

Motivation losses can also occur because of social comparison among group members. Often, group members do not know exactly how much time and effort they should devote to a task. In such situations, they will look to the other members of the group for cues. On idea generation tasks, for example, if one member of the group appears to have given up, then other members of the group will soon cease their performance as well. In highly cohesive groups, members may actually ostracize a member for expending more effort than others in the group are. And when groups set goals for themselves and for individual members, people often set lower goals for others than they do for themselves, maybe to ensure that all members can reach their goals. Thus, groups can generate norms for effort expenditure that are well below potential effort levels.

### Motivation Gains

Although much of the research on motivation in groups has focused on losses, recent evidence points to circumstances that produce motivation gains. These situations tend to be the opposites of those that lead to losses. When group goals are highly valued and some members feel that they have more resources than other members have, they will put in extra effort to compensate for the potential limitations of those other members. Such compensation effects occur when a group member fears that others will loaf or free ride, especially if the group goal is important for that member.

Another situation in which motivation gains have been observed involves tasks in which the least competent member determines the group's performance (conjunctive tasks). When members do not differ greatly in ability, lower-ability members will work harder so as not to keep the group from reaching its full potential. This has been referred to as the *Köhler effect*, after the German

scientist who first discovered the phenomenon. For such effects to occur, lower-ability members must be able to compare their performance to that of higher-ability members, and they must believe that their extra effort will lead to performance comparable to the performance of more capable members.

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*See also* Brainstorming; Common Knowledge Effect; Group Memory; Group Motivation; Köhler Effect; Ringelmann Effect; Social Compensation; Social Facilitation; Social Loafing

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## PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC

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The *Protestant work ethic* (PWE) is an ideology or worldview that emphasizes self-discipline and

commitment to work. Its main tenet is that hard work leads to success. A core value in the United States and many Western countries, this view is embodied in sayings such as “the early bird gets the worm” and stories such as *The Little Engine That Could*, a classic children’s book. Shared endorsement of the PWE helps create a common belief system that can explain both individuals’ status within a group and different groups’ relative status positions within society (i.e., higher-status individuals and groups must have acquired their status through hard work). Consequently, belief in the PWE is related to attitudes toward both advantaged and disadvantaged individuals and groups and has different meanings as a function of an individual’s own status and the status of a social group.

### History and Background

The term *Protestant ethic* was coined by Max Weber in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (first published in 1904 in German). Weber argued that Reformed Protestantism, through the teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin, redefined the value and meaning of work in humans’ lives and created a new work ethic, the PWE. In this belief system, work and the prosperity resulting from it were accorded a high value because they were taken to be evidence that an individual or group had been given the grace of God and was among “God’s elect.” In turn, PWE helped bring about and support economic growth through capitalism.

Contemporary social-psychological definitions and uses of the term commonly strip it of its religious foundations. Instead, it is conceptualized as an ideology or worldview whose main tenet is that hard work leads to success. It is often studied in conjunction with other core U.S. values and beliefs (e.g., meritocracy, individual economic mobility) that justify the status quo. The PWE provides a meaningful way in which individuals can perceive and interpret their social world, furnishing them with a sense of order and predictability.

As many ideologies do, the PWE contains both descriptive and prescriptive elements. Endorsers of the PWE think that it both describes the true nature of the world (i.e., that individuals and

groups who are committed to and disciplined in their work will achieve success) and prescribes how they should behave (i.e., that hard work should lead to success and that idleness should lead to failure).

A variety of self-report scales have been used to measure the PWE. Most measures primarily focus on the value of hard work, which is the fundamental dimension of the PWE. However, other scales also measure the related concepts of leisure, religion and morality, and independence from others. One of the first and best-known scales was created by Herbert Mirels and James Garrett. Recent assessments divide the PWE into two component meanings. The opportunity-focused component is thought to be primary and stresses the equal opportunity individuals and groups have to succeed through hard work. The status-focused component uses the PWE to explain existing status differences between individuals and groups.

Endorsement of the PWE is related to a variety of psychological and demographic variables. Specifically, individuals who endorse the PWE tend also to score higher on measures of self-discipline and willpower, perseverance and endurance, and autonomy. High-PWE people are also more likely to endorse other status-justifying beliefs, such as meritocracy and belief in a just world. Strength of endorsement of the PWE also differs among different groups in society (e.g., among racial or ethnic groups or between political liberals and conservatives). Therefore, although the PWE is a pervasive belief system in many Western societies, meaning that the majority of individuals endorse it to some extent, there is also considerable variability in level of endorsement among individuals and groups. In particular, low-status individuals and members of low-status groups are somewhat less likely to believe in the PWE (or to believe in it to a lesser degree).

### Consequences for Group Processes

Within groups, a shared belief in the PWE serves several important functions. First, it contributes to a common meaning system for understanding the world and provides an explanatory mechanism for individuals’ status within a group. For

group members to communicate effectively, they must have a shared system of meaning for interpreting and acting in the world. The PWE provides this system of meaning. Through a mutual endorsement of the PWE, group members share an implicit value of hard work and diligence. This common understanding helps foster a shared set of priorities and behavior patterns. For example, members of a group are able to take for granted that people will strive for success through hard work, and they will agree that such behavior should be rewarded. In addition, group members can rest assured that if they themselves work hard, they will be rewarded.

Second, belief in the PWE justifies the status hierarchy of the individual members within the group. Given a shared endorsement of the PWE, group members will be in agreement concerning each individual's position within the group. High status will be conferred only on those who work hard, and any individual who works hard will be assigned such status. Conversely, low status will be accorded to those who do not work hard. A common belief in the PWE will lead group members to share the belief that status positions are just and accurate reflections of each individual's hard work and merit, which will help maintain order and harmony within the group and legitimize the status quo. Thus, although low-status individuals will be seen as unable or unwilling to succeed, belief in the PWE means that all group members, low and high status, will agree with these attributions.

Finally, belief in the PWE can impact self-esteem. This can happen through an increase (or decrease) in individuals' personal self-esteem after their own successes (or failures), for which they are given "credit" because of their individual efforts and perseverance (or idleness and apathy). The PWE can also affect group members' collective self-esteem through attributions made by self or others for group-level success or failure. Endorsement of the PWE can heighten a successful group's level of collective self-esteem by crediting the group for the group's superior performance. However, for poor-performing groups, endorsement of the PWE can have the opposite effect. It can lead groups to be blamed for their failure, consequently lowering group members' collective self-esteem.

### Consequences for Intergroup Relations

Belief in the PWE also influences several intergroup processes. First, endorsement of the PWE influences perceptions of outgroups and their members. If the cause of differential group status in a society is generally thought to be the efforts of groups and their members, then belief in the PWE is often accompanied by the belief that a group's high or low status is deserved or legitimate. Through such a belief, the approbation of high-status groups and their members, as well as the derogation of low-status groups and their members, becomes justified. The more that individuals endorse the PWE, the more negative their attitudes tend to be toward groups that hold lower status in society, such as Blacks and people who are overweight, poor, homeless, or living with AIDS.

Individuals who strongly endorse the PWE are also more likely to exhibit negative behavior toward low-status individuals and groups. For example, the more individuals who are not themselves homeless endorse the PWE, the less charitable behavior they display toward homeless people. The PWE also is associated with greater ingroup blame among members of low-status groups. Blaming their own group's low status or disadvantage on their group's lack of hard work or discipline may lead individuals to lessen their identification with or commitment to their group.

Despite the negative effects that the PWE may have for attitudes toward and treatment of lower-status groups and their members, low-status individuals may continue to endorse the PWE given its explanatory power, its prevalence in the broader society (see above), and the sense of personal control over outcomes it may provide.

It is important to note that the relation between endorsement of the PWE and derogation of low-status groups and their members may depend on the particular aspect of the PWE that individuals endorse (e.g., opportunity focused or status focused). Whereas the opportunity-focused form of the PWE is egalitarian and does not address status differences between groups, the status-focused form explains existing status differences between groups and individuals as resulting from differing levels of ability and/or effort. This latter form thus justifies high-status groups' advantages and low-status

groups' disadvantages. It is only this latter dimension of the PWE that, when endorsed, leads to derogation of low-status groups and individuals. Endorsement of the former, the egalitarian and opportunity-focused dimension, leads to a belief that all groups and individuals are equal in their ability and chance to succeed.

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*See also* Ideology; Just World Hypothesis; Status; System Justification Theory

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## RACIAL AMBIVALENCE THEORY

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*Racial ambivalence theory* is an explanation of White people's attitudes and behavior toward Black people. The theory holds that many Whites are fundamentally ambivalent about Blacks. That is, their attitudes toward Blacks are a potent mixture of extreme positive and negative evaluations. Also, compared with their behavior toward other Whites, about whom they are not ambivalent, Whites' behavior toward Blacks is extremely positive or negative. Hence, there is an ambivalence amplification effect. Although racial ambivalence theory is grounded in race relations in the United States, it may, to some extent, be applicable in other contexts. This entry describes the theory and its application.

### Background and History

Irwin Katz, his colleagues, and other social scientists noted that White people's attitudes toward Blacks in the United States are not evaluatively straightforward. The researchers reasoned that Whites' complex attitudes toward Blacks are best understood as ambivalent. Katz and others found evidence that this ambivalence is based on conflicting values. Whites' negative attitude toward Blacks is the result of the former's endorsement of the Protestant work ethic, whereas their positive attitudes toward Blacks are the result of their support for humanitarian–egalitarian values. These values come into conflict because Blacks are viewed as

deviant—due to apparent lack of effort on their own behalf—and disadvantaged.

### *Ambivalence Amplification*

Katz and colleagues demonstrated that people's ambivalent attitudes toward Blacks can result in amplification of positive or negative evaluations, as manifested in actions directed at members of that minority. In a series of studies, Katz and colleagues demonstrated that Whites—especially if they were high in racial ambivalence—behaved in either extremely negative or extremely positive ways toward Blacks. Dependent measures included Whites' tendency to (a) help a Black phone surveyor, (b) do a favor for a Black person whom they unintentionally harmed, and (c) denigrate a Black person whom they harmed.

### *Mechanisms of Ambivalence Amplification*

Katz and colleagues' explanation for ambivalence amplification is largely psychodynamic: Whites experience psychological discomfort caused by their ambivalence, akin to the psychological discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance. This psychological discomfort can be resolved by eliminating the cognitive inconsistency that caused it—that is, by strengthening one side of the conflict. Thus, Whites act in accord with either their extreme positive or extreme negative evaluation. This behavior strengthens one side of the conflict, thereby reducing dissonance and the experience of discomfort.

Other researchers have proposed alternative explanations for the amplification effect. Walter Stephan and Cookie Stephan argued that intergroup contact (e.g., between Whites and Blacks) results in heightened anxiety. An increase in anxiety leads, in turn, to a host of consequences, including norm-based behavior (either good or bad) and biased information processing (due to a narrowing of attentional focus). Patricia Linville and Ned Jones, in contrast, highlighted the role of schema complexity in amplification effects. They argued that Whites' schemata for Blacks are less complex, resulting in a greater impact of positive or negative evaluative information about the minority. In support, the researchers demonstrated that White people have simpler cognitive schemata for Blacks than they do for Whites. Linville and Jones also established that possession of a simple schema for a group results in comparatively extreme evaluations of that group.

### Applications and Extensions

The ambivalence amplification hypothesis has been applied to other domains, including research on White Canadians' ambivalence about native Canadians, people's ambivalence about feminists, and behavior toward people with disabilities. Racial ambivalence theory is arguably the progenitor of subsequent theories of racism, including symbolic racism (Don Kinder and David Sears), aversive racism (Sam Gaertner and Jack Dovidio), and (in)congruencies in implicit and explicit racial attitudes (L. S. Son Hing).

As with racial ambivalence theory, those accounts hold that Whites' attitudes toward Blacks are a volatile mixture of contradictory cognitions and behavioral inclinations. Gaertner and Dovidio, for example, have argued that Whites' attitudes toward Blacks are positive and based on egalitarian values and sympathies for past injustices. Also, however, Whites have negative attitudes toward Blacks—of which they are unaware.

Similarly, Son Hing and colleagues have identified people who have positive explicit attitudes toward Asians but negative implicit attitudes. Compared with people who are truly low in prejudice, these aversive racists show prejudiced behavior and exhibit less prejudice when they are made mindful of their hypocritical stance.

Racial ambivalence theory and its findings demonstrate that Whites' attitudes toward Blacks cannot be understood simply as more or less negative. Rather, Whites' attitudes are a mixture of both positive and negative evaluations. This contention introduces a significant but essential complexity to any understanding of relations between the two races.

Moreover, the existence of these ambivalent attitudes does not mean that Whites' behavior toward Blacks will simply be some sort of average of Whites' positive and negative attitudes. To the contrary, this ambivalence means that Whites' behaviors toward Blacks will often be extreme and seemingly arbitrary. Katz and his colleagues' analysis is trenchant and compelling and has informed subsequent thinking and research on attitudes and behaviors involving minorities, racial or otherwise.

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*See also* Ambivalent Sexism; Aversive Racism; Implicit Prejudice; Intergroup Anxiety; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Modern Racism

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## RACISM

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*Racism* represents an organized system of privilege and bias that disadvantages a set of people on the basis of their group membership. Racism is enforced by the intentional or unintentional actions of individuals and the operation of institutional or societal standards that, in concert, produce disparities, by race or by social categories such as national origin, ethnicity, religion, and cultural beliefs or ideologies, that are *racialized* and assumed to reflect biological differences. There are two defining elements of racism. The first element is the culturally shared belief that groups have distinguishing race-based characteristics that are common to their members. The second factor is that the perceived inherent racial characteristics of another group are held to be inferior or that those of one's own group are superior to those of other groups. In its very essence, racism involves not only negative attitudes and beliefs but also the social power that enables these attitudes and beliefs to translate into disparate outcomes that disadvantage other races or offer unique advantages to one's own race at the expense of others. The term *racism* was popularized by its use in the 1968 *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*.

Racism is related to concepts such as discrimination (unjustified negative behavior), prejudice (an unfair attitude associated with group membership), and stereotypes (generalized beliefs about a group and its members), but it is a more encompassing term than any of these. Because racism is a culturally shared system of beliefs, it may be supported by "scientific evidence" of group difference and inferiority and may be sanctioned by social norms, policies, and laws. Although racism typically involves negative attitudes, it may instead reflect a paternalistic orientation, which fosters the dependency of a group or a set of beliefs that may ostensibly be favorable in some ways but that systematically limits the opportunities for group members and undermines their dignity.

Whereas psychologists have typically studied stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination in terms of intrapsychic (e.g., cognitive, motivational, or psychodynamic) processes and interactions between individuals, racism operates significantly at

broader social levels, as well. James Jones has identified three applications of the term *racism*. The first is *individual racism*, which relates to the joint operation of personal stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination to create and support disparities between members of different groups. The second is *institutional racism*, which refers to the intentional or unintentional manipulation or toleration of institutional policies (e.g., poll taxes, admissions criteria) that unfairly restrict the opportunities of particular groups of people. The third is *cultural racism*. Cultural racism involves beliefs about the superiority of one's racial cultural heritage over that of other races and the expression of this belief in individual actions or institutional policies. Thus, cultural racism includes elements of individual and institutional racism. Because of its broad scope and emphasis on institutions as well as individuals, racism is a common focus of research in political science and sociology, as well as in psychology. These three applications of racism—individual, institutional, and cultural—are considered in separate sections of this entry.

### Individual Racism

Individual racism is closely affiliated with racial prejudice. Although prejudice has generally been conceptualized as an attitude, prejudice scales often include items concerning the defining elements of racism—specifically, endorsement of statements about innate group differences, the relative inferiority of the other group, and policies that reinforce or exacerbate group differences in fundamental resources (e.g., employment opportunity, health). Approaches to individual racism have emphasized both blatant and subtle influences.

Some of these approaches focus on functional aspects of individual racism that fulfill personal needs and desires. Much of the traditional work on personality and prejudice was based on a Freudian psychoanalytic model that assumes that prejudice is an indicator of an underlying intrapsychic conflict. The consequences of this conflict are projection, displacement, and the development of an authoritarian personality—and ultimately the expression of individual racism. Alternatively, nonpsychodynamic models have proposed that prejudice and racism are the result of motivations to restore feelings of self-esteem, achieve a sense of

superior status, or support a social hierarchy that favors one's group. Social dominance orientation represents an individual difference in support for group-based systems of social stratification that typically benefit one's own group. Other approaches, which have focused on commonalities across people rather than on individual differences, have viewed prejudice and individual racism as attitudes, which, like other attitudes, are acquired through socialization and are functional.

Many contemporary approaches to individual racism acknowledge the persistence of blatant, intentional forms of racism but also consider the role of automatic or unconscious processes and indirect expressions of bias. For example, because of common socialization experiences that involve repeated exposure to racial stereotypes, Whites automatically activate stereotypes of Blacks on the actual or symbolic presence of Blacks. Although both high- and low-prejudiced people, distinguished by their scores on self-report measures of prejudice, are equally aware of cultural stereotypes and show similar levels of automatic activation, only low-prejudiced people make a conscious attempt to prevent those negative stereotypes from influencing their behavior. Moreover, low-prejudiced people are more likely to have personal standards prescribing that they behave in a nonprejudiced way toward Blacks, internalize these standards more strongly, and experience more compunction and guilt when they deviate from these standards—which in turn motivates efforts to behave in a less biased way in the future.

Regardless of conscious motivations, implicit stereotypes and prejudice form a foundation for pervasive bias associated with racism. In fact, implicit (automatic or unconscious) and explicit (deliberative or conscious) prejudice and stereotypes are largely unrelated. Implicit attitudes are typically assessed through techniques that tap stereotypic associations and require split-second responding that is usually beyond an individual's control; explicit prejudice is commonly measured through self-reports. Whereas the vast majority of White people in the United States, for instance, report explicitly that they are not racially prejudiced, the majority of Whites show implicit racial biases. However, there is some debate as to whether these implicit measures reflect merely knowledge of culturally shared stereotypes or the personal endorsement of these beliefs.

A dissociation between automatic responses and self-reported prejudice is also consistent with other conceptions of the contemporary nature of individual racism among Whites. In contrast to "old-fashioned" racism, which is blatant, *aversive racism* represents a subtle, often unintentional form of bias that characterizes many White people in the United States who possess strong egalitarian values, endorse a politically liberal ideology, and believe that they are nonprejudiced. Aversive racists also possess negative racial feelings and beliefs (which develop through normal cognitive biases and socialization) of which they are unaware or that they try to dissociate from their nonprejudiced self-images. Because aversive racists consciously endorse egalitarian values, they will not discriminate directly and openly in ways that can be attributed to racism; however, because of their negative feelings, they will discriminate, often unintentionally, when their behavior can be justified on the basis of some factor other than race (e.g., questionable qualifications for a position). Thus, aversive racists may regularly engage in discrimination while they maintain a nonprejudiced self-image.

Whereas aversive racism represents subtle bias among generally liberal Whites who endorse nonprejudiced values and beliefs, *symbolic racism* reflects subtle prejudice associated with traditionally conservative values. Specifically, symbolic racism reflects the unique assimilation of politically conservative, individualistic values and negative racial affect. It involves the denial of contemporary discrimination and negative beliefs about Blacks' work ethic, which produces resentment of Blacks' demands and special benefits given to Blacks because of their race. Like aversive racism, the negative effects of symbolic racism are observed primarily when discrimination can be justified on the basis of factors other than race. Thus, even though aversive racism and symbolic racism perspectives often predict similar behaviors, such as resistance to policies designed to benefit Blacks, they hypothesize different underlying processes.

Both traditional overt forms of individual racism and contemporary subtle forms can contribute to social policies that form the basis of institutional racism. In particular, blatant racial prejudice relates to support for policies that unconditionally restrict the rights and opportunities of minority groups, whereas subtle racism is associated with

support for the status quo or for restrictions when other justifications (e.g., lack of credentials) are available.

### Institutional Racism

Institutional racism involves the differential impact of policies, practices, and laws on members of racial groups and on the groups as a whole. Institutional racism can develop from intentional racism (e.g., limiting immigration on the basis of assumptions about the inferiority of other groups), motivations to provide resources to one's own group (e.g., attempts to limit another group's voting power), or as a by-product of policies with one explicit goal but with unintended systematic race-based effects (e.g., differential mandatory penalties for trafficking crack and powder cocaine).

Explicitly race-based policies are typically associated with the development of ideologies that justify them. Historically, for example, White people in the United States developed racial ideologies that helped justify the laws that enabled them to achieve two important types of economic exploitation: slavery and the seizure of lands from native tribes. Thus, although the belief that race is a biological construct is fundamental to racism, race is also regarded as a social construction that permits and ideologically justifies the exploitation of one group by another. The particular group that becomes racialized (e.g., Blacks, Italians, Jews) depends on the function it serves for the dominant group. For instance, during the period of significant immigration from southern Europe to the United States during the early 1900s, which generated social and economic threats to many people in the United States, Italians were characterized as racially intellectually inferior. In Nazi Germany, Jews were racialized and dehumanized for economic and political gain.

Moreover, although individual racism may produce actions such as political support for laws and policies that lead to institutional racism, institutional racism operates at a level independent of individual racism. Institutional racism does not require the active support of individuals, intention to discriminate, or even the awareness of discrimination. Racism becomes *ritualized* in ways that minimize the effort and energy individuals and groups must expend to support it.

Institutional racism is typically not widely recognized as being racist or unfair because it is embedded in laws (which are normally assumed to be right and moral), is ritualized, and is accompanied by racial ideologies that justify it. The media and public discourse often direct attention away from potential institutional biases and instead focus on common connections or shared identities that can promote more harmonious group relations while preserving group-based disparities, privilege, and disadvantage in the status quo. Once social norms, laws, and policies are established, awareness of unfair treatment and consequences is needed to stimulate individual or collective action for social change toward equality.

Because institutional racism is not necessarily intentional or explicitly race based, its operation often must be inferred from the presence of systematically different outcomes for different racial groups—outcomes that can logically be traced to the differential and unfair impact of policies, even those that might appear not to be race related. These effects may appear economically (e.g., in loan policies), educationally (e.g., in admission and financial aid policies), in the media (e.g., overrepresentation of groups associated with violence or poverty), in the criminal justice system (e.g., racial differences in receipt of the death penalty), and in mental and physical health (e.g., social stress). Racial ideologies and values often also become deeply embedded in the fiber of one's culture and thus define what is normal and appropriate for the society in general.

### Cultural Racism

Cultural racism occurs when one group exerts the power to define cultural values for the society. It involves not only preference for the culture, heritage, and values (ethnocentrism) of one's own group but also the imposition of this culture on other groups. As a consequence, the essence of racism is communicated to and by members of all racial groups in everyday activities and is passed on across generations.

James Jones, for example, has identified five fundamental domains of human experience on which cultures differ: time, rhythm, improvisation, oral expression, and spirituality (the TRIOS model). Dominant U.S. culture has valued a future time

orientation, stable and predictable rhythms of activity, planning ahead rather than improvising, written over oral expression, and a belief in personal control instead of an emphasis on spirituality. Beyond this model, cultures differ systematically in their emphasis on individual outcomes or collective outcomes. The United States reflects an individualistic culture. To the extent that adherence to these cultural standards is valued, rewarded, and defined as normal at the expense of racial groups who express other cultural values, cultural racism may be operating.

Racism that is institutionalized and becomes embedded in the culture can also affect the personal identities and ideologies of minority group members in fundamental ways. In particular, racial identities develop as a function of one's experiences as a group member and how one interprets, internalizes, and adjusts to those experiences. The racial identity and the culture of Blacks in the United States, for example, have been hypothesized to reflect an evolutionary component, which developed from the cultural foundation of an African past, and a reactionary component, which is an adaptation to the historical and contemporary challenges of minority status in the United States. Because of the pervasiveness of racism, Blacks in the United States may internalize racial stereotypes, which when activated, even without endorsement, can adversely influence their performance in significant ways (e.g., through the adverse impact of *stereotype threat* on achievement test performance).

Under some circumstances, members of the target racial group may adopt system-justifying ideologies of the dominant cultural group that distract attention from group-based disparities and inequity. Thus, members of a disadvantaged group may develop a "false consciousness," in which they fail to recognize and not only comply with but also endorse cultural values that systematically disadvantage them. For example, an exclusive emphasis on individually oriented meritocracy may obscure cultural and institutional forces in racism and lead to an overreliance on individual rather than collective action needed to address racism. Thus, the unique power of racism resides in how it can persuade members of different groups to think, interpret, behave, and react in ways that contribute to the perpetuation of racial disparities and reinforce racism, without necessarily involving their intention, awareness, or active support.

## Conclusion

In summary, racism represents a particular constellation of racial stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Stereotypic differences are assumed to reflect racial differences; prejudicial attitudes may be in the form of negative attitudes toward other racial groups or reflect positive beliefs in the racial superiority of one's own group; discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally and personally or impersonally. Whereas individual racism is closely affiliated with prejudice, institutional racism involves the operation of social and institutional policies that unfairly benefit the dominant group and/or unfairly affect other racial groups adversely. Cultural racism, which includes elements of both individual and institutional racism, represents the imposition of the dominant group's cultural standards on other racial groups in the society.

Although racism may involve overt antipathy and bigoted intent, it also can operate unconsciously but pervasively at the individual, institutional, or cultural level. Because it can become ritualized in custom and policy and rationalized by racial ideologies, racism can often go unrecognized or unacknowledged. Also, because these ideologies are so embedded within the fabric of society, once their consequences are recognized, there may be resistance to the changes that may be necessary to ameliorate the problem.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Aversive Racism; Civil Rights Legislation; Discrimination; Modern Racism; Prejudice; Slavery; Social Dominance Theory; Symbolic Racism

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## REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT THEORY

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*Realistic group conflict theory* (RGCT) states that competition between groups for finite resources leads to intergroup stereotypes, antagonism, and conflict. Such competition creates incompatible goals for members of different groups because one group's success in obtaining those resources prevents the other group from obtaining them. Such conflicts of interest lead to the development of ingroup norms that foster negative reactions to the outgroup, backed by punishment and rejection of those ingroup members who deviate from those norms.

Just as RGCT argues that *competition* for desired but limited resources creates intergroup conflict, it also argues that *cooperation* in pursuit

of superordinate goals, mutually desired outcomes that are unobtainable without such cooperation, has the potential over time to reduce intergroup conflict and to create positive relations among members of cooperating groups. This entry describes the background of RGCT, examines major research findings, and discusses the theory's importance.

### Background, History, and Major Research Findings

RGCT was given its name by anthropologist Robert LeVine and psychologist Donald Campbell, who formulated and cross-culturally tested propositions based on existing psychological, sociological, and anthropological research on ethnocentrism and group conflict. In the course of this work, they grouped theories explaining ethnocentrism into several categories (reference group theory, frustration–aggression–displacement theory, etc.), including one they dubbed *realistic group conflict theory*. They used this term to refer to “the set of all theories that generate the ethnocentrism syndrome from the competitive struggle of groups with incompatible interests” (LeVine & Campbell, 1972, p. 72).

As indicated above, the core idea in RGCT is that intergroup stereotyping, prejudice, and hostility emerge when groups have conflicting interests, and specifically when one group's success blocks the other's goal attainment. RGCT includes a large number of specific predictions about the way in which clashing interests between groups influence both ingroup functioning and intergroup relations. For example, RGCT predicts that conflict with outgroups enhances ingroup solidarity. It also predicts that the more another group stands in the way of one's own group's attainment of desired goals, the greater the hostility created toward that other group. Some of these propositions have stimulated much more research than others.

#### *Robbers Cave*

The research most commonly cited in discussions of RGCT is a series of three studies by Muzafer Sherif and colleagues conducted between 1949 and 1954, in which boys of 11 to 12 years of age attended summer camps that were set up to study intergroup behavior, although the boys were not aware of this fact. The third and most famous

of these studies was the Robbers Cave experiment. The goal of the first phase of this study was to have two sets of previously unacquainted boys each coalesce into a group, with differentiated status positions, group norms, and the like. To achieve this end, campers were divided into two groups, each of which engaged with ingroup members in a series of enjoyable activities (preparing food at a "hideout," deciding how to spend money the group had won, etc.).

During the next week, in the experiment's second phase, when the campers in the different groups interacted for the first time, the situation was structured so that the two groups had incompatible interests. Specifically, the groups were brought into initial contact in a series of competitive activities (baseball games, a treasure hunt, etc.), during which each accumulated points toward valued prizes to be given to the group with the highest cumulative score.

In the final stage of the study, during its 3rd week, the functional relationship between the groups was drastically changed by the introduction of superordinate goals. Specifically, a series of situations was engineered that required the cooperation of members of both groups to meet highly valued goals that neither group alone could achieve (the camp's water tank needed to be repaired to restore water service, etc.).

The development of norms and relationships within and between the groups at the camp under competitive and cooperative conditions was studied extensively by means of a wide variety of methods. Consistent with the main tenet of RGCT, when members of the two groups began to interact competitively in the study's second phase, negative relations developed between them. Specifically, as the boys began to interact under competitive conditions, outgroup members were derogatively stereotyped and became the targets of aggressive behavior, including name calling, stealing and burning the other group's flag, raiding the other group's cabin, and preparing weapons such as socks filled with rocks. In addition, members of both groups overrated the performance of members of their ingroup relative to that of members of the outgroup.

During the first day or two of the study's third phase, when the tournament sparking the competition between the groups was over, members of the two groups were brought into contact in situations

such as waiting for a movie to start and shooting off fire crackers, which involved neither competitive nor superordinate goals. Heckling and avoidance of outgroup members were evident. However, with the subsequent introduction of superordinate goals fostering cooperation, relations between the two groups gradually improved to the point that by the end of the study, the campers cheered the idea of returning home on one bus, and members of one group used prize money to buy all campers a treat.

### Later Studies

Subsequent research conducted by anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists has provided considerable support for the basic tenets of RGCT. For example, one study found that group threat (measured by group size and economic conditions) explains most of the variation in average prejudice scores in 12 European countries, and another replicated the finding that individuals overestimate the performance of ingroup members compared with outgroup members. A study conducted in Lebanon with Christian and Muslim 11-year-olds who were randomly assigned to one of two groups at a summer camp lent further support to the idea that realistic group conflict promotes aggression, although this study did not support all Sherif's conclusions.

In addition, some work has focused on extending RGCT's basic ideas. For example, Lawrence Bobo has argued that *perceived* threat to group interests can cause negative relations, regardless of whether the perception is accurate. This line of argument is supported by more recent findings suggesting that the perception of a realistic threat animates negative attitudes toward immigrants in the United States and toward ultraorthodox Jews on the part of Israeli adults who are not ultraorthodox themselves. It is interesting that the study conducted in Israel also suggested that ingroup identification moderates the link between perceived threat and aggression. However, generally speaking, RGCT has inspired relatively little research in the past two or three decades, possibly because its basic tenets are so widely accepted.

### Critiques and Challenges

No theory is without its critics, and RGCT is no exception. For example, one study concluded, on



the basis of a failure to replicate many of Sherif's findings in research on established patrols in a Boy Scout troop during a camp experience, that when individuals are initially well acquainted with each other, intergroup competition does not yield either the strong outgroup hostility and denigration or the increase in ingroup solidarity that RGCT predicts. However, this study ignored the fact that the patrols were also part of a larger scout troop, creating a shared superordinate identity that may well have influenced the way in which relations between patrols developed.

A stronger challenge to RGCT comes from *social identity theory*, where substantial research has demonstrated clearly that groups need not be in actual competition for ingroup bias to arise. However, RGCT makes no claim that it fully explains intergroup relations. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the kinds of negative attitudes and behaviors evidenced in Sherif's research were much more extreme than those typically studied by social identity theorists. So it is possible that mere shared group membership may foster ingroup favoritism but that conflicting interests are necessary to call forth the very strong negative attitudes and behaviors evident in Sherif's studies. Further, it may well be that the degree to which individuals identify with their groups influences the extent to which a conflict of interest between their group and another evokes negative attitudes and behaviors toward the outgroup.

Another challenge to RGCT comes from the observation that intergroup conflict often involves those with different amounts of initial power and status, which was not the case in the classic RGCT studies. In situations involving groups that differ in initial power and status, it may be difficult to establish superordinate goals, and even if that is possible, the result of working to achieve those goals might well be different from when the groups start out roughly equal to each other. It is also important to recognize that third parties often play an important role in creating or resolving intergroup conflicts and that their role is ignored by RGCT.

### Assessing Its Importance

In contrast to many theories that were prevalent when RGCT emerged in the 1950s and 1960s,

including work on the *authoritarian personality* and the frustration–aggression–displacement hypothesis, RGCT does not posit individual psychological processes as the underlying origin of intergroup tensions and conflict. Indeed, in order to provide a test of the basic idea that the functional relationship between groups causes intergroup conflict and stereotyping rather than preexisting tensions between members of different social categories or deviant personal proclivities, the boys selected to participate in classic summer camp experiments were all middle class, from the same racial group (White), and “normal” with regard to school performance, social relationships, and personal adjustment.

Instead of focusing on individual psychological processes, RGCT emphasizes the role that group processes play in creating and ameliorating intergroup tensions. It does this by highlighting the role of conflicting interests in creating intergroup tensions and emphasizing the ways in which ingroup processes can promote and support intergroup conflict. It also de-emphasizes individual psychological explanations for negative intergroup relations by stressing how a change from competitive to cooperative functional relations between groups can profoundly change the nature of relations between members of those groups.

RGCT is similar to *contact theory*, another very influential theory regarding intergroup relations, which had its origins at about the same time. Both stress the importance of the structural aspects of the contact situation in influencing the development of relationships between members of different groups. However, RGCT was a more radical departure from prevailing thought at the time because it focused attention on the way in which group processes rather than individual psychological processes lead to intergroup tensions. Although there is currently relatively little active theoretical or empirical work stemming directly from RGCT, it is widely acknowledged as having fundamentally enriched our understanding of intergroup relations.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Intergroup Contact Theory; Intergroup Violence; Sherif, Muzafer; Social Identity Theory

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## REFERENCE GROUPS

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A *reference group* is a group or collectivity that is used as a standard or frame of reference by an individual in evaluating his or her own abilities, attitudes, or beliefs or in choosing a behavior. Reference groups help orient people and may comprise noninteracting individuals, status categories, or members of social groups. Reference groups may be groups to which an individual currently belongs, groups to which an individual once belonged, or groups to which an individual aspires to belong. They may be real, tangible groups, present or not present, or even imaginary.

Psychological groups may be defined as reference groups when (a) the individual is aware of those composing the group; (b) the individual identifies himself or herself as a member, former member, or potential member; and (c) the group is seen as emotionally or cognitively significant for the individual. Most people have multiple reference groups, and the groups may be conflicting or mutually sustaining. Those groups may be positive (used to provide standards of comparison or as sources for values, norms, and attitudes) or negative (used to provide standards of comparison in direct opposition with those of the group or as sources of values, norms, and attitudes formed in direct opposition to the group).

### Early History

Herbert Hyman is credited with first using the term *reference group* in 1942 (although others at that time also conceived of the use of groups for relative evaluation) in an examination of the distinction between objective and subjective status. He was concerned with the factors that influence people's evaluations of their social standing or status. For Hyman, an individual's subjective status is relative; it is a person's conception of his or her own position in comparisons with others. He asked the participants in his investigations whether they ever thought about their social standing in relationship to others and found that not only did most of them think about their relative superiority in relation to others, but they sometimes did not use actual groups for comparison. Instead, they used general social categories such as occupation, race, or class.

Subjects rarely used the total population as a reference group but rather used smaller, more intimate groups. One person, for example, used authors who wrote the books he read rather than all authors as a reference group. Subjects were also more likely to use different reference groups for different domains, such as social standing, looks (physical attractiveness), and economic status.

About the same time as Hyman's research was being conducted, Theodore Newcomb was investigating the process of political attitude shifts among Bennington College students during their college careers. Although he did not use the term *reference groups* to characterize the source of influence, his

study did provide a systematic investigation of reference groups and their influence on attitudes. He focused on how students changed their beliefs from the standards of their families in the students' first college years to the standards of the more liberal college community in the students' junior and senior years. He found that the students beginning their college careers tended to use the seniors as their frame of reference instead of their own classmates, although the younger students tended to assume that their attitudes matched those of the majority of their classmates.

In a 1950 reexamination of *The American Soldier* studies conducted by Samuel Stouffer and associates, Robert K. Merton and Alice Kitt used the concept of *comparative reference groups* to explain relative deprivation. Men in the military used different reference groups as a source of comparison and, depending on which group they used, reported feelings of satisfaction and deprivation, feelings that were often inconsistent with their actual levels of suffering. Only when they thought that their suffering was relatively greater than others' did they express dissatisfaction. The men used reference groups to which they did not belong to define the relative quality of their circumstances. Merton and Kitt called these *nonmembership reference groups*. Also in 1950, Merton and Alice Rossi synthesized previous research in their work titled "Contributions to the Theory of Reference Group Behavior," creating visibility and prominence for the concept.

Another major refinement of the concept was presented in 1952 in Harold H. Kelley's paper on the two functions of reference groups. Kelley distinguished between the normative function and the comparative function of reference groups. First, individuals may be motivated to gain or maintain acceptance in groups, perhaps to find friendship, a mate, or simply a companion. This type of group has a normative function in that it encourages and enforces acceptable behavior, attitudes, and values through awarding or withholding recognition to the individual.

The college community in Newcomb's study at Bennington illustrates the normative function of a reference group. Not only did these college students develop a set of political attitudes that were largely accepted by the students as they progressed through their college careers, but students were

motivated to assimilate these values in order to be accepted by the group. In comparing the liberal students who shifted in their values with the conservative students who did not, Newcomb also distinguished between *positive reference groups*, in which attitudes are formed in accordance with the norms of the group, and *negative reference groups*, in which attitudes are formed in opposition to the norms of the group.

Reference groups may also provide standards of comparison for evaluations of oneself, others, and the world. Kelley called this the comparative function. Illustrated in Hyman's research, groups were used as standards or comparison points against which people evaluate their own prosperity.

It should be noted that although the features of the different types of reference groups led to their conceptualization as separate and distinct, different features may occur together within the same group. A group of classmates, for example, may have both a normative function (encouraging conformity to academic norms) and a comparison function (as a source of academic standards for evaluation) in its group influence.

Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard conducted a study in 1955 to confirm and extend Kelley's distinction by examining how reference groups could provide both normative social influence and informative social influence simultaneously. They used Solomon Asch's experimental paradigm to test hypotheses predicting greater normative social influence when members are more involved in a group and when a member perceives that his or her actions can be identified. In the first condition, the participants in the experiment made judgments about the lengths of lines while in face-to-face interaction with three confederates. In the second condition, the participants were separated by partitions and pressed a button to indicate their judgments anonymously. In the third condition, Deutsch and Gerard forced involvement of the participants in the group by instructing the participants that the most successful group would receive tickets to a Broadway play.

Confederates of the researchers in all three groups gave mostly inaccurate judgments about the lines on the cards, and normative social influence was measured by the degree of a participant's conformity with the confederates' judgments. Greater conformity was found when participants

were working for a prize and when participants' actions could be identified. The researchers reasoned that the groups of confederates served as normative reference groups because it was unlikely that subjects were using the groups to gain information. The correct judgments were somewhat obvious, and it is more likely that participants wanted to be accepted by the group, especially if they were working together to win tickets to a play. Participants likely did not want to be responsible for the group's losing the prize because then they would be rejected by the group, particularly if they could be identified.

In another condition with face-to-face interaction, in which participants were asked to judge the lines from memory, informational influence also was high. A group influenced its members by providing information about which line was correct, and participants thought that they were wrong in their own judgments and believed that the group was correct.

### Expansions and Criticisms

Although this distinction between normative and informational influence from reference groups has been the basis for much subsequent research, many researchers suggest that it is too simple a distinction. Jonathan Turner, in a discussion of role-taking and reference group behavior, suggested four kinds of reference groups: the *identification group* (a source of values when individuals take the role of another), the *interaction group* (members are conditions for an individual's action), the *evaluation group* (its influence is determined by how much an individual values the group), and the *audience group* (a normative group that attends to and evaluates an individual's behavior).

Eleanor Singer, who with Hyman edited a volume on reference group theory and research in 1968, made the point that the two types of reference groups differentiated by Kelley may not always be empirically distinct. In a later article, John Turner compared informational influence with normative influence, pointing out that informational influence can be socially mediated and is, therefore, normative. Norms also may be informative about the appropriateness or correctness of preferences and values. He suggested that the distinction more correctly refers to the source of change when reference

groups exert influence. When the influence is normative, the source of change comes from others; when the influence is informational, the source of change comes from the self.

Probably the most frequent criticisms have more to do with the largely circular explanation found in reference group theory rather than with the term itself. The theory specifies that reference groups determine behavior while groups that are found to influence behavior are reference groups. Theorists fight against this deterministic reasoning, however, and emphasize the process whereby individuals define the situation and how actors may accept or reject influence.

### Importance

For more than 65 years, the concept of reference groups has stimulated sociological and social-psychological research. The concept underscores the idea that reference groups are not simply one's membership groups. Groups that are not one's own or that one is not a member of also may be used as frames of reference.

The concept has been widely used in research, particularly through the 1950s and 1960s, when it reached its height in popularity. Since then, its theoretical prominence has diminished. As others have pointed out, because membership and non-membership groups are such an important part of life in complex societies, the value of the concept of reference groups is in assisting in the understanding of the relationship between the individual and the larger society. By far the largest number of empirical studies focuses on normative reference groups, beginning with Newcomb's early work on the normative influence of the college community on college students at Bennington. Subsequent normative studies measure reference group influence on such features as prosocial behavior, student alcohol consumption, and sorority binge eating. Lesser empirical attention has been given to the comparative effects of reference groups; comparative effects are found in studies of variables such as job satisfaction, class inequality perceptions, self-evaluations for the blind and for those who are mentally ill, and self-appraisals of academic performance.

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See also Asch, Solomon; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Group Socialization; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Norms; Support Groups

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## REFERENT INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE THEORY

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*Referent informational influence theory* is the social identity theory of social influence in groups. It considers normative influence and informational influence—separate concepts in the thinking of other social scientists—as part of a single influence process linked to group membership and social identity. This entry describes the background and content of the theory and then summarizes relevant research and implications.

Traditionally, social influence has been accounted for in terms of individual needs such as the need for approval and liking or the need for rational assessment of the social world. These two types of needs have been translated into two qualitatively different forms of influence: *normative influence*, which reflects public compliance as a result of social pressure, and *informational influence*, which reflects private acceptance of the nature of reality. However, according to *social identity theory*, this distinction is problematic because it artifactually separates aspects of social influence that need to be considered together as part of a single process. Within social identity theory, informational and normative influence emanate from a single process called *referent informational influence*.

### History and Background

Referent informational influence theory arises from social identity theory and, more specifically, *self-categorization theory*. It was developed by John Turner and his colleagues as the conceptual

component dealing with social influence. According to Turner and colleagues, *social influence* results from the process of self-categorization, whereby individuals come to see themselves as group members and thus in possession of the same group-defining attributes as other members of their group. Through the processes of self-categorization and referent informational influence, individuals come to learn about the appropriate ways of thinking and behaving as a group member and assign these characteristics to themselves.

In referent informational influence theory, the traditional distinction between informational and normative influence is replaced by a single process. For group members, what is normative is highly informative about appropriate and correct beliefs and behaviors in particular contexts. Moreover, the subjective validity of information is established by ingroup norms; information from members of our groups is seen as more valid than information from members of other groups.

In referent informational influence theory, conformity to the group norm is the result of a three-stage process. First, people must categorize themselves and identify as group members. Then, as a consequence of self-categorization, a context-specific group norm is constructed from available, and usually shared, social comparative information. Because the identity-consistent behavior of prototypical group members is a direct source of such information, these people often occupy an effective leadership role in the group—an idea that underpins Michael Hogg's *social identity theory of leadership*. The newly formed norm is represented as a group prototype that serves to describe and prescribe the beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that maximize the differences between groups and minimize the differences within groups (the *metacontrast principle*).

Finally, group members internalize these norms through assimilation of the self to the prototype (a process called *depersonalization*) and use them as guides to their own behavior. Moreover, because the norm is internalized as part of the individual's self-concept and is linked to his or her membership in that group, the norm exerts influence over behavior even in the absence of surveillance by other group members. Identification-based conformity is a process not of surface behavioral compliance but of genuine cognitive internalization of group attitudes as one's own.

Referent informational influence theory has little to say about the role of outgroups—groups to which the individual does not belong—and outgroup norms in group-mediated behavior. Although it is acknowledged that non-ingroup members can be informative about group norms—by informing the individual what not to do—the most immediate and direct source of information about group norms is seen to be other group members, particularly prototypical group members (i.e., individuals who seem to embody what it means to be a group member). Moreover, if outgroups do influence the behavior of ingroup members, this influence is seen to be the result of compliance, whereby individuals go along with social norms because of the power of the other group rather than because of its true persuasive influence.

### Evidence

Referent informational influence theory unifies our understanding of social influence in several respects. Processes such as normalization, conformity, and innovation are all seen as processes of influence related to the establishment, maintenance, or change of group norms. Research by Dominic Abrams and his colleagues demonstrated the role of referent informational influence in social influence phenomena previously considered or explained in terms of normative or informational influence, including norm formation, conformity, and group polarization. This research has supported the argument advanced in referent informational influence theory that informational and normative influence are inextricably linked to group membership.

Studies of norm formation, such as those conducted by Muzafer Sherif using the autokinetic paradigm, have found that under ambiguous conditions, people converge quickly on an agreed frame of reference—or norm. Such results are taken as clear evidence of informational influence: Under uncertainty, individuals accept the information provided by others as evidence about reality. However, social identity researchers have found that the group membership of the other people in the situation has a profound effect on norm formation. Individuals converge only with people categorized as similar to the self (i.e., other ingroup members) and actually diverge from people categorized as dissimilar to the self (i.e., outgroup members).

Studies of conformity using Solomon Asch's paradigm, in which people are confronted with a majority that makes incorrect judgments about unambiguous stimuli, have found that people go along with an incorrect majority in public but do not accept their judgments in private. This study is seen to be a classic example of normative influence. However, social identity researchers have found that levels of conformity in the Asch paradigm are a function of group membership. People do not necessarily conform blindly in public conditions; rather, individuals conform to the behavior of ingroup members and resist influence from outgroup members. In other words, normative pressure to comply is dependent on the self-definition of the target of influence. It is only when the individual and the majority share group membership that influence is likely to occur.

*Group polarization* is the tendency for group discussion to produce a group decision or position that is more extreme than the average of the individuals' prediscussion attitudes and opinions and is in the direction already favored by the group. This phenomenon has been explained in terms of either normative or informational influence: Opinions become polarized because of the perceived value of other opinions or because people are exposed to new information that produces an information shift. However, research within the social identity approach has demonstrated that group polarization is a function of the self-categorization of the individuals involved in the group discussion. Group polarization occurs only when people expect to agree with their fellow discussants—that is, when people are engaged in discussion with ingroup members and not outgroup members. Thus, group polarization reflects conformity to what people perceive to be the ingroup norm.

### Debate

One of the key concepts in referent informational influence is the idea of depersonalization. Through depersonalization, people come to see themselves and other category members less as individuals and more as interchangeable exemplars of the group prototype. Moreover, as a function of depersonalization and assimilation to the group prototype or norm, group members are seen to follow

automatically the behavior prescribed by the group norm. In other words, an automatic link is posited between thinking of oneself as a group member and group normative attitudes and behavior. However, it has been argued that this notion fails to account for individual variation in the way that people can express their group membership. Although the processes that make a social identity salient are often relatively automatic, responses to a salient identity, such as group behavior, are likely to be under some degree of conscious control and can be influenced by contextual factors, such as the presence or absence of an audience or power relations between the groups.

A description of the ways in which the behavior of group members can be strategic can be found in the *social identity model of deindividuation effects* (SIDE). The SIDE model, developed by Stephen Reicher and his colleagues, combines social identity with notions of self-presentation and strategic behavior to provide a fuller account of group behavior in social contexts and to account for individual variability in the relationship between the individual and the group.

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*See also* Conformity; Depersonalization; Group Polarization; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Identity Theory; Social Identity Theory of Leadership

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## RELATIONAL COHESION THEORY

*Relational cohesion theory* explains how and when people who are exchanging things of value develop stable, cohesive relations. It starts from the idea that people tend to interact or do things with others because they get something they value or want from those others. They give something to the other and receive something in return. This is termed a *social exchange*. The valued “goods” that are exchanged may be tangible or intangible. Employees exchange their labor for pay, clients exchange money for services, neighbors exchange assistance with each other’s yards, coworkers exchange advice and information, roommates exchange respect for each other’s belongings, and friends exchange emotional support for each other.

### Overview

Social exchanges are instrumental in the sense that people engage in exchange to get something for themselves, and they may not care what the other gets. Unless people have some sort of commitment to each other, you would expect them to always be searching or “on the lookout” for better exchange partners and to readily leave one relationship for another. Social ties or relations would be like economic markets in this sense, governed and shaped purely by self-interest. Relational cohesion theory asks, Under what conditions will people in social exchange develop a commitment to their relationship?

*Commitment* is defined as the tendency for people to keep exchanging with the same person or to stay in a relationship despite good or better alternatives. If people have a commitment, they will not be as inclined to search for better alternatives or to choose an alternative over their current relationship if one becomes available. Relational cohesion theory, as the name implies, argues that social cohesion produces a strong form of commitment that involves not just staying in the relationship but also giving gifts without strings attached (unilaterally) and partaking in new joint activities or ventures that require or imply trust in the other’s goodwill. The theory contends that such commitments form because social exchanges produce

emotions (or feelings), and under certain conditions, people associate their individual feelings with their relationship or shared group affiliation. When this occurs, people come to value not only the things they personally get from the exchange but also the relationship or group affiliation in itself.

According to the theory, social cohesion has a structural and a perceptual dimension. *Structural cohesion* is based on the degree of interdependence, that is, how dependent the people are on each other. Structural cohesion is strong if both people in an exchange are highly dependent on each other for valued rewards (high mutual dependence, or interdependence) and if they are equally rather than unequally dependent on each other. Structural cohesion, however, is an unrealized potential. It makes salient to people that they are involved in a joint task or activity with another and that they cannot accomplish the task alone or without the other.

The fact that they “need” each other for this purpose is important, but it does not necessarily lead to actualized or realized cohesion. Actual or realized cohesion has to be produced and perceived by the people themselves in their interactions with each other. Once cohesion is realized, people tend to become committed and thus are inclined to stay in their relationship, give each other gifts, and trust each other enough to partake in new cooperative ventures that expand or grow their relationship.

### Central Assumptions

Relational cohesion theory indicates that structural cohesion is realized through the emotions and feelings that emerge from repeated social exchanges among the same persons. An emotion is an evaluation state of the human organism that has cognitive, physiological, and neurological elements. When you feel an emotion, you “feel it all over,” so emotions refer to generalized states of the human organism. In relational cohesion theory, the emotions of concern are mild states that people often experience in their daily lives, such as feeling good, up, satisfied, bad, down, or dissatisfied. The theory identifies conditions under which such everyday feelings are attributed to relations or groups within which social exchanges occur. This is what causes relational or group commitments to become emotionally based. There are four main points in the theory.

First, social structures bring people together by making them dependent on each other and giving them incentives to interact and exchange. Who exchanges with whom and how often are determined by these interdependencies and associated incentives. People choose to exchange with those from whom they receive the greatest reward or payoff, and at this point, they are oriented only to their own rewards. However, relationships form and evolve when the exchange occurs frequently and repeatedly among the same people. The reasons for this are the next points.

Second, successfully arriving at exchanges with another is an accomplishment that gives people an “emotional buzz.” They feel good about accomplishing the exchange task, whereas unsuccessful efforts to exchange make them feel bad. Repeated exchanges or failures at exchange create patterns of feeling good or bad with another person. Moreover, because social exchange is inherently a joint task, people are likely to believe that their relationship is one reason they are able to repeatedly solve the task (or fail at it). People infer that their emotions, felt individually, are jointly produced by what they share, such as their relationship or group affiliation.

Third, the theory argues further that positive feelings make more salient the relationship people have to each other and lead them to perceive their relationship as a unifying force in the situation. Thus, repeated exchange produces positive feelings, and these feelings, in turn, foster perceptions of a cohesive relationship, that is, one coming together rather than coming apart. People orient their behavior more to the other and to this relationship than before because the relationship is now a distinct object or force in the situation. They are prepared to do more things on behalf of their relationship with the other, even if it involves costs or sacrifice on their part. Thus, the instrumental, self-interest foundation of their original exchanges evolves into an expressive, symbolic relation with intrinsic value. People continue exchanging with the same others in part to affirm and maintain a valued social relationship.

Fourth, combining the above three points, there is a three-part sequence or process through which a social structure (dependencies) produces commitment: exchange to emotion to cohesion. The effects of social structures are indirect and



occur only when this process is produced, that is, when exchange produces positive emotions and these emotions generate perceived cohesion. Commitments to relations will not occur if structures do not generate repeated patterns of exchange among the same people, if those exchanges do not give people an “emotional buzz,” or if the resulting emotions do not lead the people to perceive a cohesive relationship with each other.

### Related Research

Many laboratory experiments have been conducted to test the predictions of relational cohesion theory. These experiments bring two or more people together to negotiate agreements across a series of episodes of negotiations and vary people’s mutual dependence on each other (high vs. low) and also their relative dependence (equal vs. unequal). The evidence strongly supports the idea that equal dependence and more mutual dependence promote commitment behaviors, but only indirectly, through the exchange-to-emotion-to-cohesion process.

Second, the exchange-to-emotion-to-cohesion process has been supported under a variety of different conditions, such as in groups of three working on a joint venture, in networks with four people, and with different types or forms of social exchange. Thus, the idea that frequent exchange produces more positive feelings and more positive feelings produce more perceived cohesion is well founded at this point.

Finally, the theory suggests, more generally, that the effects of group processes on group commitments are strongest when the tasks generate a strong sense of shared responsibility among the people involved in social exchange. Highly joint tasks create a sense of shared responsibility among people doing the task together, and social exchange is one example of a joint task. If people give credit to themselves and not the others for success at a joint task (low sense of shared responsibility), then repeated success at the task should have no effects on cohesion and commitment.

On the other hand, if people give all those involved credit for success (high sense of shared responsibility), the effects of emotions felt on cohesion and commitment should be strong. In this way, the theory of relational cohesion helps explain

how and when group processes are likely to produce group cohesion and affective group commitments. Group cohesion and commitment should be especially strong when the structure of the task and the behaviors of people in accomplishing it generate a strong sense of shared responsibility for the results.

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*See also* Group Cohesiveness; Group Emotions; Group Structure; Social Exchange in Networks and Groups

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## RELATIONAL MODEL OF AUTHORITY IN GROUPS

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One of the primary challenges faced by leaders of all types of groups—work groups, organizations, student groups, athletic teams, and religious sects, for example—is how to get group members to follow the rules they establish and the directives they issue. More generally, authority figures face the challenge of getting group members to act in ways that advance group goals, such as getting them to work hard, organize their efforts with other group members, and do things that may be in the group’s interest even if they do not benefit the individual. Groups that cannot successfully master this challenge are not likely to be viable for very long. For this reason, it is essential that leaders focus on overcoming this challenge.

Indeed, it is this challenge that, in many ways, makes leadership necessary in the first place.

Many theories attempt to specify how group authorities can best master the challenge of shaping group members' behavior. The traditional perspective adopted by many of these theories is that leaders can best accomplish this by issuing directives and making strict rules that establish how group members should behave. Of course, leaders must also take steps to ensure that those directives and rules are followed, which requires close monitoring of group members' behavior, as well as the provision of rewards to group members who comply and punishment to those who do not. The principle that underlies these approaches is that group members cannot be relied on to follow the rules established by authorities, and thus, systems that entice them to do so must be put in place.

The *relational model of authority* (the *relational model*), however, takes a somewhat different approach. This model argues that when group members consider group authorities as legitimate—that is, as deserving of the power they wield and as using that power appropriately—members will take it on themselves to follow group rules and to act in ways that benefit the group. Furthermore, the model argues, group members will do this without close supervision and without the provision of rewards and punishments. This enables groups to devote their energy and resources to other functions and thus enables them to function more effectively. In this entry, both traditional and relational approaches are explored in more detail.

### Traditional Approaches

Many traditional theories about leadership and authority relations are based on the assumption that group members must be compelled and coerced into following the directives of group leaders and into submitting to rules set by the group. According to such theories, leaders must implement systems that directly control group members' behavior. This can be done by instituting reward and incentive systems for good behavior and/or punishment systems for poor behavior, both of which require leaders to closely monitor group members' behavior. This establishes a system that encourages group members to engage in desired behaviors and to refrain from undesired behaviors.

The underlying premise of this approach is that group members are fundamentally self-interested actors who engage in behaviors that benefit them and avoid behaviors that do not. Such a notion implies that group members will not follow the rules put forth by group authorities unless those rules have tangible benefits for them. Rewarding compliance and punishing noncompliance address this condition by aligning each group member's behavior with his or her self-interest. The ability of group authorities to lead, therefore, rests on their ability and power to monitor group members, as well as on the power they wield to provide rewards and dispense punishments.

To appreciate relational models, it is important to note some of the implications of these more traditional approaches. One such implication is that group members will follow group authorities only when they believe their behavior will be observed by those authorities. When their behavior is not observed, group authorities cannot determine whether to provide incentives for compliance or punishments for noncompliance. Given this, the group member's primary reason for engaging in the behavior has essentially been removed.

Another implication is that group members will follow group authorities only when the members believe those authorities can actually dispense the incentives and punishments associated with particular behaviors. Scarce resources, weak leadership, and inadequate support systems can all hinder the ability of group authorities to do this. As such, group authorities' ability to shape group members' behavior is highly contingent on whether group authorities have sufficient resources to closely monitor group members and follow through with the incentives and punishments they specify.

This approach is problematic because it requires that a considerable portion of group resources—which could be put to other uses—be devoted to ensuring group members' compliance with group authorities' directives. What's more, when groups experience periods of resource scarcity, they are unable to devote the resources needed to shape group members' behavior at precisely the time when it is most important to do so. It is also important to note that even when group authorities do have the resources to successfully monitor and reward or punish behavior, actually doing so comes at a significant cost. They risk communicating to group

members that the group does not trust them, which can in turn hurt members' commitment to the group. Similarly, this can damage the dynamic between group authorities and individuals because the relationship between the two comes to be dominated by these command-and-control processes. Finally, this approach sends a message to group members that following group rules may not be in their self-interest because they need to be coerced into compliance via extrinsic rewards and punishments.

### The Relational Model

The relational model of authority, which suggests a very different approach to getting group members to follow directives and rules, stands in contrast to these traditional leadership approaches. In particular, the relational model argues that group members will be intrinsically motivated to follow group authorities when the members see those authorities as legitimate. Legitimacy refers to group members' perceptions that authorities deserve the power they hold (i.e., that they have achieved their power through appropriate means and continue to exercise that power appropriately). When authorities are seen as legitimate, the decisions they make and the rules they establish are imbued with a sense of legitimacy and correctness, and group members feel that they *should* follow those decisions and rules. In contrast, when authorities are regarded as illegitimate, their decisions and rules may seem to have little merit, and group members are unlikely to feel any obligation to follow them. Perceptions of legitimacy, therefore, determine the extent to which group members feel that they should or should not comply with authorities. This, in turn, shapes group members' actual behavior.

In suggesting that members will follow their group's authorities even in the absence of monitoring, rewards, and/or punishments, the relational model's framework is a more viable model of how authorities can lead groups. According to the model, group members can be counted on to follow group authorities out of their own intrinsic desires, and thus, their compliance with rules and directives set forth by authorities is not contingent on outside rewards or other factors. The benefits of this perspective are readily apparent when contrasted with the downsides of other approaches.

First, the relational model does not require the expenditure of resources to gain group members' compliance, because members follow authorities of their own volition. This frees these resources for other, more productive uses. Moreover, members can be relied on to follow group authorities even when group resources are scarce. In addition, dynamics among members and between members and their authorities are not damaged, as this framework does not communicate the authorities' distrust of the group's members. Finally, this approach does not imply that following group authorities is not in the individual's self-interest.

There is a critical question that follows from the relational model: What are the factors that cause group members to regard authorities as legitimate? Legitimacy is a powerful tool that enables leaders to gain effective compliance from followers. The relational model argues that the roots of legitimacy lie in group members' judgments of the underlying fairness of group authorities' decision making and their treatment of the group's members.

Such fairness judgments, known as *procedural justice judgments*, have been shown to have a significant impact on judgments of the legitimacy of group authorities. Group authorities who make fair decisions (i.e., those who are consistent, unbiased, and accurate in their decision making) are more likely to be considered legitimate. In addition, group authorities that treat members fairly by showing appropriate respect for them, listening to them, and showing concern for them are also more likely to be viewed as legitimate. It is important to note that these procedural fairness judgments are different from the fairness judgments group members make about the outcomes received from group authorities—known as *distributive fairness judgments*.

The distinction between procedural and distributive fairness is comparable to the distinction between means (procedural justice) and ends (distributive justice). Although people care about both procedural and distributive fairness (i.e., they care about the fairness of both the processes they experience and the outcomes they receive), their judgments of procedural justice have the most significant impact on whether they view group authorities as legitimate. In short, legitimacy comes more from a sense that authorities engage in fair processes and less from the outcomes people receive from them.

Why is procedural justice so important to members' perceptions of their authorities as legitimate? The relational model argues that procedural justice is important because it is a cue that group members can use to evaluate their relationship with the group's authority figures. Judgments that a group authority is procedurally fair lead group members to view their relationship with that authority positively. This, in turn, makes group members feel that the authority recognizes their status within the group and that they can trust the authority. When their relationship with the authority is validated in this way, members are more likely to regard the authority's power as legitimate. As noted, this in turn makes them more likely to take it on themselves to follow policies established by those authorities.

The relational model's key tenet is that group authorities can best overcome the challenge of shaping group members' behavior by making decisions and treating members with fairness. In doing so, authorities communicate a positive message to group members about their membership in the group and their relationship to the authorities, which, in turn, leads group members to conclude that the authorities deserve the power they wield. This approach to shaping group members' behavior has many upsides—especially when compared with approaches that attempt to shape behavior via extrinsic means—because these strategies are far less taxing on group resources, less damaging to group dynamics, and more likely to yield desired behaviors across a wider range of circumstances and for longer times. Therefore, the relational model of authority represents an important framework for effective leadership.

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*See also* Leadership; Power; Procedural Justice

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## RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

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*Relative deprivation* is the sense of being deprived of something to which one believes one is entitled and the subsequent emotions, such as anger, frustration, and resentment. Feeling deprived is determined not by objective conditions of deprivation but rather by subjective comparison with others who are apparently better off.

The construct of relative deprivation has been around for a long time, more than six decades, and is employed in many social sciences, including social psychology, sociology, economics, and political science. It has been used to predict a wide variety of behaviors, ranging from the individual experience of stress and depression to civil insurrection and participation in political upheaval and other forms of collective action. Although researchers have theorized and operationalized relative deprivation differently, and sometimes inconsistently, its core is defined by the grievance of injustice.

Relative deprivation captures this sense of injustice, specifies the conditions under which it is expected to arise, and predicts its consequences. There are significant theoretical linkages with *social identity theory*, and there are significant and persistent conceptual and methodological problems in relative deprivation research. However, the relative deprivation construct continues to be of value in describing and understanding social behavior. This entry traces the theory over time, places it in a context of other ideas, and summarizes its primary challenges.

### Historical Background

The term *relative deprivation* was coined by the U.S. sociologist Samuel Stouffer in the classic *American Soldier* volumes (1949). Stouffer and his colleagues conducted extensive studies of morale among U.S. troops fighting in Europe in World War II. Their research program was vast, but of primary interest here is a seeming paradox they

observed in how satisfied different service units were with their promotion opportunities. Military police faced few prospects of promotion yet were more satisfied with those prospects than were air corpsmen, who had objectively much better prospects of more rapid promotion.

Stouffer and his colleagues suggested that these different levels of satisfaction could be understood as the disappointment of failed high expectations that had been formed through comparisons with others. Servicemen working in units with low rates of promotion were led to have low expectations of success when they themselves applied for promotion, and hence they were not terribly dissatisfied if they missed out on promotion. On the other hand, servicemen working in units with high rates of promotion were led to expect promotion when they applied, and hence they were dissatisfied if they missed out. Ostensibly the same objective outcome—failing to get promoted—led to significantly different experiences depending on one's prior expectations, which had been formed by the surrounding social context. Dissatisfaction stemmed from feeling deprived relative to others.

The idea of relative deprivation was similar to several other constructs and minitheories being developed in the social sciences in the postwar years, most notably Robert Merton's concept of reference groups, Harold Kelley's theorizing about comparison level of alternatives, and Leon Festinger's social comparison theory. Theories (or minitheories) about relative deprivation were also being developed, more or less independently, by researchers in social psychology, sociology, and political science.

All these different developments were brought together in 1967 in a significant theoretical synthesis by Thomas Pettigrew into what he termed *social evaluation theory*. Although that term has never gained currency, Pettigrew's specification of relative deprivation as a mesolevel process tying micro psychological processes to macro sociological processes has had wide and long-lasting influence. So too has his concern with the policy and political implications of social-psychological theories such as relative deprivation. Unfortunately, this policy dimension has been more in token observance than in material engagement.

Early formulations of a theory of relative deprivation treated it as the result of an intergroup

comparison and used it to explain various social phenomena. In the 1960s, relative deprivation was commonly employed to help explain participation in widespread civil unrest in the United States. These explanations focused on Blacks' dissatisfaction with access to jobs, education, fair pay, and so on, relative to Whites, as the primary grievance fueling participation in civil unrest.

Similarly, but in a converse manner, in his 1966 classic *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, the English sociologist Walter Runciman used the intergroup comparative nature of relative deprivation to help explain why members of the English working class did not participate in collective action to change the social order in which objectively they do not fare as well as other classes. Tackling the classic Marxist conundrum of why the working classes do not revolt in the face of objective evidence of their exploitation, Runciman proposed that members of the English working class do not evaluate the fairness of their conditions relative to members of other, more privileged classes. Instead, they make such evaluations relative to other members of the working class, often to people in their immediate social networks of friends and family. In other words, it is the failure to engage in intergroup comparisons that explains the absence of grievance in the face of intergroup inequality and exploitation.

Runciman introduced the distinction between egoistic and fraternalistic relative deprivation. These two kinds of relative deprivation have since come to be known as *personal* and *group relative deprivation*, respectively, at least in part because the term *fraternalistic* was awkward in later research examining relative deprivation in working women. The newer labels also provide a clearer link to social identity theory, discussed in more detail below. Egoistic or personal relative deprivation refers to feelings of grievance arising from comparisons between self and other individuals. In Runciman's research, those other individuals were usually friends and family members. The social comparisons involved are individualistic; group memberships are not involved, except to quietly circumscribe the range of other individuals with whom one might compare.

In contrast, fraternalistic, or group, relative deprivation arises from invidious comparisons between one's ingroup and some outgroup. It is

these social comparisons between groups that provide the fuel for intergroup conflict and social change. Research has consistently shown that the experience of individual relative deprivation predicts individual-level outcomes such as stress and depression, which are not predicted by the experience of group relative deprivation. Conversely, the experience of group relative deprivation predicts social or group-level responses such as engaging in social protest and attempting to change the status quo, which are not predicted by individual relative deprivation.

The theory of relative deprivation was, in its early years, clearly a theory focused on intergroup relations and social change. Despite this focus, the theory still remained concerned with relative deprivation as an experience of individuals situated in a social context. This theoretical complexion started to change in the 1970s. The U.S. political scientist T. R. Gurr formulated relative deprivation as a perceived discrepancy between an individual's value expectations and value capabilities and argued that fraternalistic forms of relative deprivation are best conceptualized as special cases of egoistic relative deprivation. This individualistic formulation reduced the construct of relative deprivation by removing it from the intergroup, social comparative context of earlier work. In contrast to this individualistic, reductionistic approach to the construct of relative deprivation, Gurr's empirical research inferred relative deprivation from aggregate measures of objective conditions of deprivation at a national level.

Other research on relative deprivation at this time was also becoming more individualistic, or at least more focused on personal forms of relative deprivation. Notable among this research was a significant and influential model of personal relative deprivation proposed by Faye Crosby in 1976. Crosby proposed a set of five necessary and sufficient conditions to define those in a state of relative deprivation: People must see others possessing something they lack, must want it, must feel entitled to it, must think it feasible to attain it, and must not blame themselves for not having it.

Crosby further specified three variables that mediate the effects of relative deprivation: whether one blames oneself or society for not having the desired object, one's perceived level of personal control (the extent to which one believes one's

actions can influence or affect society), and the actual opportunities for effecting change. Depending on the pattern of these mediating variables, the experience of relative deprivation will lead to stress symptoms, attempts at self-improvement, attempts at constructive social change, or violence against society.

Crosby's model significantly influenced relative deprivation research for many years. It provided a powerful attempt at a theoretical integration of the extant literature and a rare attempt at a formal specification of the construct of relative deprivation, its preconditions, behavioral outcomes, and variables mediating those outcomes. She was also the first to posit that relative deprivation is not a construct that can be measured directly but rather is a theoretical variable to be inferred from a set of preconditions.

Subsequent research came to be directed at assessing each of the model's preconditions to determine whether each is either necessary or sufficient as a precondition of relative deprivation and also at assessing the role of the proposed mediators. The model was limiting in several ways, however. Arguably, proposing that relative deprivation should be assumed from the satisfaction of a set of preconditions rather than measured directly became a diversion in the further development of the theory. Certainly, most recent research has returned to the direct assessment of relative deprivation, at least partly because attempts to empirically resolve issues about the preconditions never reached resolution. The model was naïve in its formulation of the behavioral outcomes of relative deprivation. And the model was too mechanistic and not sensitive enough to context-specific influences on the experience of injustice to accommodate the closer integration with social identity theory that was to come in the 1980s and later.

### Theoretical Linkages

One of the most notable, important, and influential theoretical developments in social psychology generally in the past two decades has been the development of social identity theory. Flowing from early work by the European social psychologist Henri Tajfel and first fully specified by Tajfel and John Turner, social identity theory articulates the linkages between social categorization processes, social comparison processes, and social identity.

Social identity is closely tied to social category memberships, the value of which to an individual can be assessed only through social comparison processes involving self, the ingroup, and relevant outgroups. Negative social comparisons threaten social identity, motivating various intergroup strategies to enhance the sense of positive intergroup differentiation. These strategies can include direct challenges to the intergroup status quo. Social identity theory has clear similarities to relative deprivation theory, a point recognized by Tajfel in his early, nascent formulations of social identity theory. The past two decades have seen significant work elaborating the relationships between relative deprivation and social identity theories.

The two theories primarily complement each other, synthesizing different historical and methodological traditions. Relative deprivation research has strong lineage from sociology and political science and has often relied on survey methods, whereas social identity research comes predominantly from experimental social psychology. Relative deprivation research has typically focused more on the consequences of relative deprivation, whereas social identity research has focused more on the cognitive processes linking categorization to social comparison outcomes. Relative deprivation research has focused exclusively on judgments of justice and injustice, whereas social identity research has had a broader approach to the dimensions of social comparison, out of which judgments of justice often naturally emerge as important points of comparison. Relative deprivation research has tended to assume which social category memberships (social identities) are important to people, whereas social identity research has focused intensely on this issue. These points of difference are not fundamental incompatibilities between the two approaches but rather points of differential emphasis.

### Conceptual and Empirical Challenges

The two approaches share some common theoretical problems too. These problems afflict all the family of Pettigrew's social evaluation theories and persist despite consistent research attention. Prime among these are problems in the social comparison process—namely, specifying which groups will be chosen as a comparison referent and along which

dimensions comparisons will be made. Festinger's original formulation of social comparison theory in 1954 set out careful predictions that, all other things being equal, people will seek similar, rather than dissimilar, others for comparison, that comparisons will be about particular opinions or abilities, and that in the case of abilities, the comparison other will be slightly better than the comparer.

Festinger's theory, however, was concerned only with individual comparisons that people make to evaluate their opinions and abilities. The comparisons at the core of both relative deprivation and social identity theories often involve inter- or even intragroup processes and are made by people concerned with evaluating procedural or distributive justice. Under such situations, people tend not to make comparisons with similar others but instead often compare with dissimilar others. And the dimensions of comparison are more varied than just opinions and abilities. However, all social evaluation theories suffer from an inability to predict which others (individuals or groups) will be selected as the comparison other, as well as an inability to predict what the dimensions of comparison will be. These problems continue to be the major theoretical hurdle facing relative deprivation and social identity theories.

Another major issue for relative deprivation research, and to a lesser degree for social identity research, concerns a distinction between cognitive and affective components of the construct. At its core, the construct of relative deprivation is a hot, affective, motivational response to a grievance. However, many operationalizations of relative deprivation are cold and cognitive. This disjunction helps explain why many studies find only modest relationships between relative deprivation and outcome measures; generally, stronger relationships are found when measures of relative deprivation include the affective component. This makes sense intuitively. Recognizing a discrepancy (the cognitive component of relative deprivation) translates into action only if one cares strongly about the discrepancy and the discrepancy violates one's sense of fairness and justice.

Recognizing the role of the affective component of relative deprivation has led researchers recently to expand the analysis of group-based emotions. Emotions are usually thought of as individual, psychological, private experiences.

However, emotions arise through social interaction, often involving groups, and are shared and regulated socially. Whether talking of personal or group relative deprivation, recognizing a discrepancy between what is and what one believes ought to be results in attempts to change the status quo only when that recognition makes one angry. Anger is the fuel of discontent. But it is not the only emotion that may be produced by the recognition of deprivation. Sadness, fear, shame, envy, and anxiety are all possible emotional responses, and each leads to a different sort of behavioral response.

Just as there are many possible emotional responses to the recognition of deprivation, so too are there different emotional responses to the recognition of advantage and privilege. The flip side of relative deprivation (sometimes referred to as *relative gratification*) has come to researchers' attention in recent years as an important component of political change. Some earlier analyses of personal and group relative deprivation suggested that those who are doubly deprived (i.e., suffering both personal and group relative deprivation) are the most likely to engage in collective action. Others suggested that the vanguard of collective action is composed of people who are group deprived and personally advantaged, because it is they who have the greatest resources available to tackle the group deprivation.

More recently, though, it has come to be recognized that the privileged have an important political role to play in addressing social inequalities. Many members of privileged groups do not recognize their group's superior position, or they explain it away as a legitimate reflection of deservingness. However, some accept that their group is unfairly privileged and that others suffer deprivation as a result. Common emotional responses to this view can be indignation and shame. These typically do not lead to political action, though. That comes from feeling outrage and anger.

Thus, it can be seen that emotions play a critical role in determining responses to perceptions of deprivation, whether one is deprived or privileged. The waxing of research attention to the emotional side of judgments of unfairness and inequality returns relative deprivation to its origins. Cognitive processes are essential in appraising the fairness of personal and group outcomes, to be sure, but

emotional processes provide the pathway to different kinds of behaviors.

Iain Walker

*See also* Justice; Social Comparison Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## RESEARCH METHODS AND ISSUES

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Group processes can be conceptualized as the mechanisms or intervening factors that connect properties of groups (e.g., group size, average skill level, diversity, or identity) to outcomes. Examples include the actions or communication that groups engage in while making decisions, negotiating, or coordinating their activities. These behaviors are driven by the group's task and associated performance goals, creating interdependencies among group members that lead to coordinated and actively integrated behavior. It is this set of behaviors that researchers investigating group processes attempt to capture and analyze.

Scholars have suggested that to fully understand how people organize, we must consider an



individual's behavior and how others react to that behavior before we can predict how that person will behave at a later time. Mapping this process of interaction can provide insight as to what triggers certain behavior, what patterns of behavior are likely to occur, and what patterns are likely to facilitate high-quality outcomes. Studying group processes thus enables the researcher to address "how" questions, such as how new ideas are introduced within groups or how the process of planning influences which ideas are finally adopted.

The measurement of group processes poses challenges to the researcher that are distinct from those posed by the measurement of group properties. This entry is thus an overview of the primary issues faced by researchers in measuring group processes. First, it presents an overview of group process research methods and their implications for theory and analysis. Second, it addresses specific methodological issues faced by group process researchers that pertain to capturing and analyzing data.

### Overview of Group Process Research Methods

This section provides an overview of the methods for capturing and analyzing group processes, focusing on the differences between capturing group processes via self-reports versus third-party observations and static versus dynamic approaches to data analysis. Because the survey methods that underlie self-report measures of group process are well known, this section pays more attention to methods of direct observation and associated data-analytic approaches.

#### *Capturing Group Process: Self-Reports Versus Direct Observation*

To capture group process data, the researcher typically has a choice of obtaining the data either from members' self-reports or from third parties directly observing the group. Self-reports measure group members' subjective perception of the group's actual processes, usually via survey responses after the group has completed the task. Direct observation methods, in contrast, rely on the (relatively) objective assessment of group processes by trained observers, either in real time or from recordings (typically audio or video). If the

researcher is interested in a global measure of group processes (e.g., cooperation), then Likert-type scales (e.g., scoring 1 for *never* through 5 for *always*) can be used by observers to assess the interaction. However, if the researcher is interested in dynamic processes, or if more detailed differentiation of behavior is required, then the raw data from these recordings need to be coded and analyzed.

The first step involves transforming the recording into meaningful units of analysis. This transformation typically occurs through a process of *unitizing* (i.e., identifying units of behavior) and then classifying behaviors according to a *coding scheme*. The coding scheme is a set of rules or guidelines for coders to identify the unit to be coded (e.g., thought, sentence, speaking turn, paragraph), category labels, definitions, and rules of thumb for distinguishing between categories and using context (i.e., statements surrounding the unit of interest) to interpret meaning. Regardless of whether a coding scheme is adapted from previous research or designed from scratch, its development is a pivotal step in the research process because the classification scheme has a profound influence on the researcher's ability to test and support hypotheses.

#### *Analyzing Group Process: Static Versus Dynamic Approaches*

There are two alternative approaches to analyzing group process data obtained from direct observation methods: static and dynamic. A *static* approach considers the total (or relative) amount of a given behavior collapsed over time. For example, cooperation might be measured by counting the instances of cooperative behaviors that occur during a team meeting. Using a static approach by aggregating group process data over time is appropriate when a researcher is interested in capturing the general approach used by a group or the relative usage of different task strategies (e.g., independent vs. interdependent work or cooperation vs. competition). Frequencies (or relative frequencies) are typically used to explain how inputs affect outcomes (e.g., group composition → *information exchange* → innovativeness).

The decision whether to analyze absolute or relative frequencies will be guided by one's theory of group behavior. If the given behavior is theorized to

influence a group outcome regardless of the amount of other behaviors present, then *absolute frequencies* are more appropriate. But if one is interested in the relative impact of a behavior within the overall interaction, then *relative frequencies* are more appropriate. Relative frequencies are typically calculated by dividing the absolute frequency of a given behavior by the total behavior exhibited by the group. Frequencies of behavior are subsequently related to the phenomenon of interest by means of regression techniques. The use of frequencies, however, assumes no temporal relationships among behaviors, no unique person-to-person interactions, and it does not allow for the possibility that low-frequency events can have a profound influence on the group.

Alternatively, group process can be measured using a *dynamic* approach, looking at group behavior over time. Using this approach, researchers can measure sequences of behavior at a very fine-grained level, or they can measure broader phases of behavior over longer periods of time.

Sequences capture the direct communication exchange between group members and can be used to predict group outcomes. For example, a group discussion in which members reciprocate information sharing so that there is a back-and-forth exchange throughout the meeting will have outcomes that differ from those of a group discussion in which information is shared sequentially by each member, followed by a vote. Outcomes in the former group can be expected to be more positive than outcomes in the latter group because members are building on one another's ideas. These differences in outcomes would best be explained by comparing the sequences of information exchange within the group. In contrast, reporting total frequencies of information exchange might result in the false conclusion that information exchange does not influence the quality of group decisions.

Phases of group process are also dynamic in that they capture the broader group processes that unfold over time. Phases can be predetermined via theory (e.g., phases of group development), time divisions (e.g., meetings divided into quarters), or observation (emergent phases based on patterns within the data). Researchers who study phases are often interested in understanding the process itself rather than using it to predict specific group outcomes. However, it is not

uncommon for prescriptive models to be developed on the basis of observations of phase patterns in successful groups.

Sequential analysis techniques identify patterns of recurring behavior over time. Such techniques typically look at transitions from one type of behavior to another. Recurring patterns are then identified and tested for significance. Popular analytic techniques include lag sequential, Markov chain, log linear, and phase analyses. *Lag sequential analysis* captures the effect of a given behavior on other behaviors that occur in lags (e.g., units) later. Thus, lag sequential analysis can capture immediate or later (lagged) responses. *Markov chain* and *log linear* analyses examine the likelihood that specific chains of behavior will occur. *Phase analysis* captures emergent phases in groups. The researcher first defines what constitutes a phase (e.g., clusters of similar behaviors or important events that serve as a transition in the process), and then the analysis is used to identify when phases actually begin and end within a given group.

Researchers interested in adopting direct observation methods to measure group process face a distinct set of practical and theoretical issues. These issues can be categorized according to whether they pertain to capturing or analyzing group process data.

### Methodological Issues: Capturing Group Process

Group processes are typically observed either in laboratory experiments or in in-depth, small-sample case studies in the field. Although experiments can be conducted in the field, they are rare because of the difficulties in both manipulating variables and recording group process for large numbers of groups.

#### *Research Design*

Group process research that uses traditional experimental design aggregates data across groups to look for similar patterns within conditions and differences in patterns across conditions. The research goals are typically to link group process to inputs or outcomes or to test for mediation. A prototypical study might manipulate the complexity of a group's task, examine how groups

plan and perform in each condition, and then use mediation analysis to examine how the task's complexity influenced planning and subsequent performance.

In contrast, when the process itself is of interest to the researcher, then it may be more appropriate to examine group functioning in real-world contexts through in-depth examination of specific situations. These studies typically focus on a single group or small set of groups and systematically examine behavior over time. This approach is sometimes used out of necessity, because of the difficulty in obtaining access to large numbers of naturalistic groups in organizational settings. Although the generalizability across contexts may be limited, the depth of understanding is often greater, and one can avoid potential biases associated with averaging data across groups to reach conclusions about the processes of any one group.

The decision about which research design to adopt eventually depends on the research goals and the feasibility of implementing a particular design.

#### *Direct Observation Versus Self-Reports*

Capturing group process from self-reports is appropriate insofar as members' perceptions guide their reactions and behaviors. However, relying on perceptual data to identify and measure group process introduces two sources of bias that can lead to measurement problems. The first source of bias, inaccurate recall, is introduced as a result of the situation, intervening events, or members' inattention to the group process. Furthermore, the relevant group process might not be identifiable by group members during the interaction. Important group processes could occur at an aggregate level that is not immediately discernible. Even the most helpful participants cannot describe broad patterns of the group interaction. Alternatively, group processes could also occur subconsciously when people react to one another's behavior. In both cases, self-reports of group process would not be able to capture the phenomena of interest.

The second source of bias involves subjectivity of assessment. A group member's perception of the group process might be influenced by a number of factors, such as past experiences, individual

differences, status within the group, and knowledge of performance. If the researcher's goal is to understand reactions to group interactions, then capturing these perceptions via self-reports is necessary. But if the goal is to capture the fundamental nature of interaction in the group, then these biases will create measurement problems and interfere with the research objective.

#### *Data Collection*

Collecting data on group processes can pose a unique challenge to researchers. Several decisions need to be made regarding the medium of data collection: Should the data be recorded or collected in real time? If recorded, are audio or video recordings necessary? Should the verbal portion of the recordings be transcribed, or can coding be done directly from the tapes?

##### **Recording Versus Real-Time**

Obtaining a recording of the group's process is always preferable to collecting all the data in real time. Recording allows one to code the data at the coder's rather than the group's pace. Ideally a researcher would also observe the group interaction while recording because observation provides an opportunity to detect nuances that may be lost in recording. However, it is not always possible to record group interactions, especially when studying groups in field settings, due to concerns of confidentiality. In many of these situations, coding in real time is the only option. Using a simple coding scheme and having multiple, highly trained coders will increase the likelihood of reliable data collection. More detailed coding schemes make real-time coding difficult because they require coders to make complex coding decisions quickly. This difficulty, combined with the inability to review a past code assignment, increases the risk of unreliable coding. Use of multiple coders can reduce this concern by providing multiple assessments of the interaction.

Regardless of whether interactions are captured in real time or via recordings, researchers must consider whether group members' awareness of being observed is affecting the group processes. Although basic research ethics demand that participants consent to being observed or recorded, the effect of this knowledge on group processes

can be minimized in a number of ways. Recording devices should be as inconspicuous as possible, such as behind one-way mirrors in the lab or strategically placed. When this is not possible, group members can be given more time to interact so that they can adapt to the presence of the observer or recording device.

#### Audio Versus Video Recording

Interest in nonverbal behavior and/or in identifying speakers will drive the choice of video or audio recordings. Whereas audio recordings are less expensive and easier to obtain, they preclude the collection of nonverbal behavior and make it difficult to identify speakers. However, the latter problem can be overcome by using a multitrack audio-recording device and recording each speaker on a separate track. Video recordings allow speakers to be identified, but camera placement is important to ensure a clear view of all group members. This might require the use of several cameras, depending on the configuration and size of the group and room. If multiple cameras are used, it is useful to link them to a common time code or use a video mixer to facilitate integration among the separate recordings.

Advances in software packages have improved the interface between video recordings and coding equipment, making the use of video recordings more attractive. The use of audio versus video recording is also influenced by the research setting. It is often difficult to obtain permission to videotape group processes in organizational settings where concerns about anonymity and confidentiality are strong. However, several organizations use videotapes of group decision making as sources of feedback for managers. Tapping into ongoing efforts might increase the odds of gaining video access.

Alternative recording media are also available. For example, computer-mediated communication involving e-mail and Internet chat systems is easily recorded with software programs that have been developed for such purposes. More recently, online communities have been used as an archival source of group interactions. Group Decision Support Systems software also provides the opportunity to record written interaction while employing the system. Handwriting recognition systems are also available for saving handwritten coding and field notes.

#### Transcriptions

Before coding recorded data on verbal interactions, the researcher must decide whether to transcribe the verbal interaction. With transcripts, one can code from the transcripts alone or in combination with the recording. Without transcripts, one must code from the recordings alone. Transcription, especially of videotapes, is time-consuming and potentially expensive if one must use professional transcription services. Although direct coding of recordings is tempting for this reason, it is more difficult to reliably identify the units to be coded (i.e., obtain unitizing reliability) without transcripts.

If one chooses not to transcribe verbal interaction but rather to work directly from the recordings, the recordings need to be indexed by means of time codes. The use of digital technology facilitates this process because each frame is indexed when it is saved. These time codes can be used by the coders to identify the beginning and ending of each unit to be coded. Behavioral coding assessments can then be linked to the location on the video through the use of the time codes.

### Methodological Issues in Analyzing Group Process

#### *Unit of Analysis*

An issue raised by adopting direct observation approaches to studying group process concerns the appropriate unit of analysis. When sequences are to be analyzed, the unit of analysis can vary from a single utterance that contains meaning to a speaking turn or to a back-and-forth exchange. When phases are to be analyzed, the units of analysis are the phases themselves.

At the lowest level of aggregation, an *act* refers to a single expressed idea or activity that is displayed by a group member. At the next level of aggregation, *speaking turns* are defined as beginning when an individual takes the floor and ending when that person stops talking or another group member begins. Hence, speaking turns can involve single or multiple acts. When the unit of analysis is at the level of acts or speaking turns, sequential behavior can easily be examined. When acts are the unit of analysis, the focus is on the flow of messages, regardless of who is speaking.

When speaking turns are the unit of analysis, the focus is often the interactive nature of the group process.

At the opposite end of the aggregation spectrum is a conceptualization of group process as a series of fixed *phases* or *stages*, the study of which can provide insight into such phenomena as group socialization and group development. In the literature on these topics, phases of group membership and stages of group development are assumed to affect the interactions among members. Phases can also be conceptualized as flexible. *Flexible models* account for the fact that group processes do not progress in an orderly fashion but rather advance in fits and starts, with regression to prior stages being a common event. Flexible models thus allow for more complex modeling of the group's process.

Decisions regarding choice of unit type must be linked to the research question being asked, with special sensitivity to the appropriate level of analysis and to where, in action and speech, relevant meaning resides. If too small a unit is selected, then meaning can be lost because the individual statements convey a different meaning from that conveyed by a speaking turn. Redundancy may also be added as a result of separating immediate restatements that simply repeat previous messages rather than add new information. In contrast, information can be lost if too large a unit is selected. If multiple categories of statements are made during a speaking turn, then the researcher must decide which code best represents the behavior within a given unit. To aid such decisions, *dominance schemes*, which identify the kinds of behavior that are expected to have the greatest impact on the interaction, can be developed. Alternatively, the first or the last code within the unit might be retained. Regardless of the approach that is used, the risk of losing valuable information remains.

An issue related to choosing an appropriate unit of analysis is whether to capture group processes at predetermined intervals rather than throughout a group interaction. This method, known as *time sampling*, provides a glimpse of group activities at a particular point in time. For example, one might be interested in the exertion of effort at the beginning, middle, and ending of a work session. The researcher needs to determine the window of time

to sample and an appropriate sampling interval. These issues will depend on the theory about what phases of work are meaningful and on how long it takes to get a representative view of the processes of interest. Time sampling can also be an expedient approach to data collection, transcription, and coding because it does not require attention to the entire interaction.

### *Coding Scheme Design*

#### General Versus Task Specific

In designing a coding scheme, one of the first issues the researcher has to consider is whether a general or a task-specific scheme is more appropriate. General schemes are exhaustive, logically complete classification systems that can be applied across task types, whereas task-specific schemes index behaviors associated with performing the specific task at hand.

Task-specific schemes complement the use of domain-specific theories of group behavior but lack the generalizability of general schemes. However, several researchers have noted that because of the large number of factors that can influence the interdependencies among group members, it may not be possible to generalize group process across tasks. The task-specific approach supports the call by these researchers for midrange theories relevant to performance effectiveness under specified circumstances.

#### Theory Derived Versus Data Derived

What is the basis for determining how a behavior should be classified? Should the classification system be derived theoretically or from the data? In practice, the distinction between the two is blurred because human behavior is too complex to anticipate all relevant behaviors without some direct experience with the group and its task(s). Thus, a hybrid approach is typically adopted, in which the coding scheme is continually refined by iterating between theory and data. An appropriate first step in this strategy is to develop categories based on theoretical predictions about the types of behavior that are expected to be important. This brings us to issues about how exhaustive and detailed a coding scheme should be.

### Exhaustiveness

Both theoretical and analytical concerns are relevant to this issue. If one is interested in detailed interaction patterns, then coding all verbal behaviors may be important. However, if some behaviors are not theoretically interesting, but all behavior must be classified (such as when conducting a sequential analysis), a “miscellaneous” or “other” category can be used. If the miscellaneous category turns out to contain substantial information, then the researcher can always create new codes to reclassify these behaviors.

### Depth of Coding Scheme

The more detailed the scheme, the more fine-grained the discrimination will be among behaviors. As the number of categories increases, the risk of combining two behaviors that potentially serve different purposes is thus reduced. However, the downside of the proliferation of categories is twofold. First, coding becomes more difficult as categories become less distinct. Coding errors are more likely, lowering reliability and potentially necessitating the combination of categories. Second, as the number of categories increases, the frequency of behavior in each category necessarily decreases. Low-frequency categories are problematic for most statistical methods, especially sequential data analysis techniques. The issue of how detailed the scheme should be ultimately depends on the goal of the analysis, that is, whether global or detailed interaction patterns are of interest.

### Code Application

The reliability and validity of a measure are issues that should concern all researchers. For group process research, the two kinds of reliability of concern are unitizing reliability and interpretive reliability. *Unitizing reliability* refers to the degree of agreement regarding identification of the units to be categorized, whereas *interpretive reliability* refers to consistency in applying labels to the units. High reliability of both types suggests that raters are coding from the same set of units and applying labels consistently to these units.

To ensure high interpretive reliability, it is best to unitize and code the data in separate passes because errors in unitizing will have a strong impact on interpretive reliability. When units do

not align, codes will be applied differently and cannot be compared. This is especially important when one is coding from recordings, in which it is more difficult to identify the specific unit to which a code was assigned.

Low reliability suggests that the interpretation and application of labels between coders is inconsistent. This could be due to an overexhaustive coding scheme that makes it more difficult for coders to distinguish among behaviors. Inconsistencies between raters could also be attributed to the imprecise definitions of labels. In the former case, reliability can be increased by collapsing categories. In the latter case, more precise definitions and additional practice will enable coders to better discriminate.

Interpretive validity refers to the degree to which a coding scheme produces the information it was designed to obtain. How accurately do the applied labels represent what group members actually mean? Coding schemes can be validated through the use of theoretically derived coding schemes, participants’ reflections and interpretations, or some combination of the two.

### Conclusion

Group processes are inherently complex, and that complexity is reflected in the methods that have been developed to study them. This has often discouraged researchers who are interested in group processes but are unfamiliar with the necessary measurement methods or daunted by their difficulty. Although time-consuming, these methods are tractable and worthwhile in that the direct examination of group process can provide insights that no other method can. Findings from research on group processes can illuminate critical interactions within groups, deepening our understanding of the relationship between group attributes and outcomes.

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*See also* Group Development; Interaction Process Analysis; SYMLOG

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## RIGHT WING AUTHORITARIANISM

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*Right wing authoritarianism* (RWA) describes a relatively stable dimension of individual differences in social attitudes and beliefs. At the low extreme of this dimension are beliefs and attitudes favoring individual freedom, personal autonomy, social diversity, social novelty, change, and innovation, while the high authoritarian extreme is characterized by beliefs and attitudes that favor maintaining traditional socially conservative values, lifestyles, morality, and religious beliefs; respect and obedience for established laws, norms, and social authorities; and strict, tough, punitive social control.

This dimension also has broader attitudinal implications. Persons low in RWA tend to be ideologically liberal and left wing, favoring the political Left and “progressive” social change; are more open and sympathetic to minorities, immigrants, and foreigners; and oppose nationalism, ethnocentrism, and militarism. Persons high in RWA tend to be more politically conservative and ideologically right wing, oppose social change, and tend to be more nationalistic and ethnocentric, being in particular less favorable to minorities, immigrants, and foreigners in general. This entry looks at the theory of the authoritarian personality and how it is linked to political and ideological conservatism, then examines current trends in this research.

### Theory of the Authoritarian Personality

This individual-difference dimension of RWA attitudes was originally identified in the 1930s by social scientists such as Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich. They suggested that these attitudes have their psychological basis in a particular kind of personality characterized by underlying needs for strong national authority and hostility to out-groups or minorities. This, they suggested, helped explain the rise of right wing fascist movements and virulent anti-Semitism in Europe at the time. The theory was developed and furnished with

some empirical support in 1950 in a classic volume, *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford.

Their research showed that prejudiced attitudes, such as anti-Semitism, were not held in isolation but were part of a broader ethnocentric pattern involving a generalized dislike of outgroups and minorities. Together, these attitudes formed part of the broader right wing authoritarian social attitude dimension. The authors classified these authoritarian social attitudes into nine categories or hypothesized traits that they assumed together constituted the authoritarian personality dimension. These nine traits were conventionalism (rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values), authoritarian submission (submissive, uncritical attitudes toward authorities), authoritarian aggression (tendency to condemn, reject, and punish people who violate conventional values), anti-introspection (opposition to the subjective, imaginative, and tender-minded), superstition and stereotypy (belief in mystical determinants of the individual's fate, disposition to think in rigid categories), power and toughness (preoccupation with the dominance–submission, strong–weak, leader–follower dimension; identification with power, strength, toughness), destructiveness and cynicism (generalized hostility, vilification of the human), projectivity (disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world; the projection outward of unconscious emotional impulses), and finally an exaggerated concern with sexual goings-on.

Adorno and colleagues' theory of the authoritarian personality suggested that these traits arose from underlying psychodynamic conflicts originating from harsh, punitive parental socialization in early childhood. This was presumed to create underlying feelings of resentment and anger toward parental authority, later generalized to all authority, and feelings that were repressed and replaced by deference and idealization of authority, while the underlying repressed anger and aggression were displaced as hostility toward deviant persons, outgroups, and minorities.

Adorno and his colleagues also developed a psychometric scale to measure this authoritarian personality, which they named the *F scale* (believing the items expressed implicitly profascist sentiments). Research did indeed show that persons

scoring high on the *F scale* were characterized by higher levels of generalized prejudice toward outgroups and minorities and were more ethnocentric, socially conservative, and politically right wing.

This theory attracted enormous attention initially, and the *F scale* became widely used. Critics, however, noted methodological flaws in the research and pointed out that the theory ignored authoritarianism of the left. The *F scale* was found to have serious psychometric flaws, most notably the all-positive formulation of its items, so that scores were heavily contaminated by the response style of acquiescence (the general tendency of people to agree rather than disagree). When this was corrected, the items of “balanced” versions of the *F scale* lacked internal consistency and so could not be measuring a single unitary syndrome or dimension. As a result of this and other non-supportive findings, interest in the *F scale* and the theory of the authoritarian personality largely dissipated during the 1960s.

#### Contemporary Developments: RWA and Social Dominance Orientation

In 1981, an important book by Robert Altemeyer reported the development of a new and psychometrically robust measure of right wing authoritarianism, the RWA scale. Altemeyer succeeded in this by narrowing and refining the concept to just three of the original categories or traits identified by Adorno and colleagues—that is, conventionalism, authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression—which correlated together strongly enough to define a single unitary attitudinal dimension.

During the past three decades, the RWA scale has been widely used to measure right wing authoritarianism and has been largely responsible for reviving social scientific interest in the concept and establishing its importance as an individual-difference construct relevant to social behavior. Research by Altemeyer and others has confirmed that the social attitudinal dimension measured by the RWA scale was highly stable in individuals during periods of as long as 20 years and was powerfully associated with right wing political orientation, religious fundamentalism, social traditionalism, resistance to change, preferences for structure and order, and general prejudice against outgroups and minorities. Some research suggests that persons



high in RWA are behaviorally less flexible and process social information in a more biased fashion, although other research suggests that this may be so only under stressful or threatening conditions.

Research on RWA has also not supported Adorno and colleagues' earlier hypothesis that these attitudes were formed in early childhood. Instead, Altemeyer's and others' findings suggested that RWA attitudes were largely formed through social learning and personal experiences and crystallized during late adolescence. Despite this, and the finding that these attitudes are generally stable over time, research has also shown that they can be substantially changed by experiences throughout the life cycle. Thus, RWA scale scores decrease substantially with liberal higher education and increase as a result of becoming a parent and being exposed to threats to societal security and stability.

A new development in research on authoritarianism came in the 1990s when Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto proposed the concept of social dominance orientation (SDO), which described a second relatively stable dimension of social attitudes in individuals, distinct from RWA. The items of their SDO scale, which measured this dimension, express a general attitudinal preference for intergroup relations to be hierarchical rather than equal, with more powerful groups having the right to dominate weaker ones.

Research has shown that the SDO scale powerfully predicts sociopolitical and intergroup phenomena similar to those predicted by the RWA scale, such as generalized prejudice, intolerance, right wing political party preference, nationalism, punitiveness, and militarism, but it is uncorrelated or only weakly correlated with RWA, indicating that they comprise relatively independent dimensions.

### Conclusion

In contrast to the early research of Adorno and colleagues, new findings have shown not just one but two distinct dimensions of authoritarian social attitudes. The original idea that these attitudes are expressions of basic personality has, however, survived. Many contemporary researchers, including Altemeyer himself, have argued that RWA and SDO directly represent two different authoritarian personality dimensions, with RWA a submissive

authoritarian personality and SDO a dominant authoritarian personality.

During the past decade, however, this "personality assumption" has been questioned. Critics have pointed out that the RWA and SDO scales consist of items solely assessing social attitudes and that there is no evidence that they measure personality in the sense of behavioral dispositions. Instead it has been argued that RWA and SDO seem to be attitudinal expressions of basic social values, with RWA expressing collective security or conservation values (valuing social stability, tradition, security, cohesion, and order) and SDO expressing enhancement values (valuing power, dominance, achievement, and superiority). This approach helps explain the kinds of social attitudes that constitute each of these dimensions, the relative stability of the beliefs constituting these dimensions in individuals, and their capacity to be changed by exposure to particular social experiences and events (such as social threat in the case of RWA).

John Duckitt

*See also* Anti-Semitism; Authoritarian Personality; Prejudice; Social Dominance Theory

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## RINGELMANN EFFECT

The *Ringelmann effect* is a systematic reduction of individual effort on a task as the number of people performing the task increases. The effect, named after Maximilien Ringelmann, who first reported it in 1913, was described in 1927 by Walther Moede in a German journal on industrial psychology. According to Moede, Ringelmann found that when groups of coworkers pulled on a rope, their collective group performance was inferior to the sum of their abilities to pull it individually. Furthermore, as a group increased in size from one to eight members, the discrepancy between the group's potential and its actual performance increased progressively. Assuming that men pulling a rope individually perform at 100% of their ability, Moede wrote that two-man groups perform at 93% of the average member's pull, three-man groups at 85%, and so on, with eight-man groups pulling with only 49% of the average individual member's ability. In other words, although a group's absolute pull increased with its size, its per-person performance declined.

Ringelmann's original 1913 article, on which Moede's report was based, was not rediscovered until 1986, by David Kravitz and Barbara Martin. They also learned that Ringelmann was a French agricultural engineer (not a German, as was assumed earlier), whose experiments were conducted in the 1880s. Thus, Ringelmann's studies are arguably the earliest truly social-psychological experiments ever performed, although their results were not published until much later (and after Norman Triplett's better known early experiments on social facilitation had been published). Moreover, Ringelmann did not specifically refer to rope pulling when he reported progressive performance declines with increases in group size. He had, however, interpreted his findings as attributable to poor social coordination, whereby the more people (or animals!) one adds to a group, the more likely it is that they will fail to coordinate their efforts effectively, that is, by not pulling at the same time or at the same angle.

### The Ingham Project

Although Moede's report was widely cited in the subsequent literature on group performance, no

replication of Ringelmann's research was published until 1974, when Alan Ingham, George Levinger, James Graves, and Vaughn Peckham reported a partial confirmation of Ringelmann's effect in two tightly controlled laboratory experiments. Their initial aim was to ascertain the generality of the effect. Having found some confirmation in their Study 1, their Study 2 investigated the relative importance of coordination versus motivation losses. Ingham and colleagues' work was inspired by Ivan Steiner's theorizing about a group's actual productivity, which he postulated is determined by potential productivity minus losses due to faulty process. Steiner identified two types of *process losses*: *coordination loss* and *motivation loss*.

Ingham built a 27-foot-long apparatus that could contain groups of up to six people pulling on a taut rope 1 meter above the ground, from which the force of their pulls was electronically recorded. (Six was the maximum number of pullers whose joint efforts could practically be studied in his laboratory.) Study 1 replicated Ringelmann's decrements for the pulls of two and three coworkers—finding decrements of 9% in two- and 18% in three-person groups—but it found almost no further losses after the addition of a fourth, fifth, or sixth coworker.

Study 2 was therefore designed to eliminate the possibility of coordination losses and thus to estimate the contribution of motivation losses to decrements in individuals' rope pulls. To ascertain this, individual participants (situated in the Number 1 spot in the apparatus) pulled in the presence of five experimenter confederates. The participants pulled in ostensible groups of 1 (alone), 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 (in random order across subjects) but actually pulled all alone in every instance. Without exception, all participants assumed (as they reported in postsession interviews) they had indeed pulled in groups of six different sizes. Once again, performance declined significantly with the addition of the first and second perceived coworker, but then it leveled off for perceived group sizes of four to six.

This second study, then, found strong evidence for a motivation loss, thus undercutting the sufficiency of the earlier coordination loss explanation. Note, however, that Ingham and colleagues' apparatus required all subjects to pull at the same angle, and their verbal prompts encouraged all subjects to pull at the same time; this may have minimized

possible coordination losses. In their conclusions, therefore, Ingham and his coauthors were careful to delimit the context in which their results were obtained and suggested ways in which groups might experience gains rather than losses in their performance.

### Later Research

Two contrasting lines of research have followed from the 1974 attempt to replicate Ringelmann. One line of work relabeled the term *motivation loss* as *social loafing* and extended it to other kinds of tasks. For instance, in an early and influential study, Bibb Latané, Kipling Williams, and Stephen Harkins found evidence of social loafing in their carefully designed studies of noise levels when subjects shouted or clapped either singly, in pairs, or in four- or six-member groups. Their per-member performance in Experiment 1 dropped from 100% singly to 71% in pairs, 51% in fours, and 40% in sixes. In their more tightly controlled Experiment 2, it dropped to 66% in pairs and to 33% in six-person groups. Parallel social loafing effects have been found in other laboratory research as well as in real-life social group contexts—such as in Soviet collective farms.

The second line of research has pursued the opposite tack, confirming the possibility of significant increases in group performance under specified conditions. One such motivation gain is the Köhler effect—based on O. Köhler's early research on motivation gains in coworking groups. Essentially, individuals working in a group context may under certain conditions boost their efforts and consequent output either when they feel they are competing with others in a comparative context or when they believe their own effort is indispensable to the group's success.

*George Levinger*

*See also* Group Motivation; Group Performance; Köhler Effect; Social Loafing

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## ROLES

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In society, people spend much of their lives in groups. In groups, people hold various positions. Tied to these positions are *roles*, which refer to the expectations that guide people's attitudes and behavior. For example, on a college campus, there is the position of student. Tied to the student position are roles or sets of expectations, including learning new knowledge and skills, establishing an area of study, passing courses, acquiring a degree, and so forth, that define what it means to be a student. We learn expectations tied to different positions in society from others, such as our parents, peers, educators, and the media. In general, if we have information about the roles people occupy in a situation, we are in a good position to predict their behavior.

This entry reviews several aspects related to roles. First, some general concepts found in the literature on roles are presented. Then four role theories are identified, along with what is central in each theory. Finally, four role processes that have received attention in the literature are discussed: role-playing, role-taking, role identity, and role differentiation.

### General Role Concepts

A social position is a category in society that an individual occupies. These categories are varied.

They can include one's occupation, such as nurse, pastor, or mother. They can refer to the kinds of people it is possible to be in society, such as rebel or intellectual. They also can refer to one's biological attributes, such as being female or young. When a person assumes a position in a situation, certain expectations are attached to the position, and others behave toward the person based on these expectations. It is these expectations that the term *role* designates. For example, the position of friend may include the expectation of being supportive, trustworthy, and loyal. The position of worker may include the expectation of being hard-working, efficient, and responsible.

More than one expectation may be tied to a social position. Furthermore, expectations can be specific or general in the behavior to which they refer. They can require specific performances, or they can simply suggest a script within which much flexibility is possible. For instance, a general expectation of a mother is that she be nurturing. Some women may fulfill this expectation by being physically affectionate while others may fulfill it through encouraging and supportive talk with their child. Expectations also can refer to a minimal part or a large part of one's range of interactions. For example, the role of male carries with it many expectations, such as being dominant and assertive and taking the lead. These expectations will be applicable to a wide range of interactions at home, at school, at work, and with friends. In contrast, the role of fraternity member carries with it expectations that typically are relevant with friends or at school; thus they are applicable to a smaller range of interactions.

Members of a society share the expectations associated with positions. It is through the socialization process that the members learn these expectations. The members of a society cannot be taught the expectations unless there is societal agreement or consensus as to what those expectations are. With consensus, individuals are expected to conform to or abide by those expectations. One way to ensure conformity is for people to verbalize the expectations and pressure others to follow them.

### Role Theories

Four major theories on roles have developed: functional role theory, structural role theory, symbolic

interactionist role theory, and cognitive role theory. *Functional role theory* developed in the work of the sociologist Talcott Parsons. For functionalists, roles are consensual expectations that guide behavior. In turn, behavior is functional for the maintenance of society. Roles are the shared normative expectations that prescribe and explain people's behavior as they occupy social positions. Individuals learn these normative expectations from others in society and are expected to conform. Conformity to roles helps explain how society remains stable and orderly.

*Structural role theory*, like functional role theory, considers society as a functional unit. As in functional role theory, roles are defined as patterned behaviors attached to social positions in society. Structural role theory emphasizes the idea that because society is composed of multiple and reciprocal social positions, such as parent-child, employer-employee, teacher-student, and so forth, there are corresponding multiple and reciprocal roles. The structural perspective was influenced by the work of anthropologist Ralph Linton, who made a distinction between *status* (position) and role. Status is a set of rights and duties, and a role represents the implementation of those rights and duties in interaction. For Linton, status and role are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other.

*Symbolic interactionist role theory* examines roles not from the point of view of society, as functional or structural role theory do, but from the point of view of the individual. Roles are expectations, but they may be heavily laden with norms, demands as to how to behave in a specific situation, and the evolving definition of the situation as understood by the actor. This perspective was influenced by the work of Erving Goffman and his concept of dramaturgy.

Goffman viewed social interaction as analogous to a theater in which actors have a script that they play out in front of an audience. Individuals take on roles in an interaction in the same way that actors take on their parts in a play. For Goffman, roles are the activities individuals would enact if they abided by the normative demands of a position. This is different from role performance, which is the actual conduct of an individual based on the person's interpretation of the role.

*Cognitive role theory*, like symbolic interactionist theory, addresses roles from the point of view

of the individual. The emphasis is on the expectations associated with roles. Theorists examine the social factors that give rise to the expectations, how these expectations are perceived by individuals, how these expectations can be measured, and the relationship between expectations and behavior. Bruce Biddle, one cognitive role theorist, has maintained that role expectations can appear in societal norms, preferences, and beliefs. In this way, role expectations are much more pervasive in society than simply being associated with societal positions.

The macro orientation to roles in functional and structural role theory and the micro orientation to roles in symbolic interactionist and cognitive role theory can be integrated into a general theory of roles. At one level, we can see how the patterns of behavior across individuals create general patterns that constitute the social structure and social order. At another level, we can see how roles guide behavior in interaction for any one individual. Both levels of analysis are important in understanding roles.

### Role Processes

Four important role processes have captured the attention of many researchers: role-playing, role-taking, role identity, and role differentiation. Role-playing emerged out of cognitive role theory, role-taking and role identity developed out of symbolic interactionist role theory, and role differentiation developed out of functional role theory.

#### *Role-Playing*

Role-playing, a term coined by psychologist Jacob Moreno, involves imitating behaviors that are associated with a social position. Role-playing is a basic strategy for learning roles. It appears spontaneously in the behaviors of children and grows in complexity as the child matures. When children role-play, they gain important information about how to perform a role. For instance, children may learn to play the role of mother by first observing their mother feeding, cleaning, and clothing her children. By imitating these observed behaviors while playing “house” with their friends, the children obtain a better understanding as to what is involved in the role of mother.

Role-playing has been used as a technique in laboratory studies to simulate difficult group situations to which researchers would not otherwise have access. For example, in the well-known Stanford Prison Experiment, Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues had Stanford University undergraduates play the roles of prisoners and guards to simulate the prison environment and study the interaction among guards and inmates. Within a short time, participants in the simulation found themselves deeply involved in their roles. Guards became hostile, and the prisoners became psychologically fragile. The researchers had to end the experiment before the scheduled deadline because of the emerging psychological harm to the participants. This study demonstrated that when individuals identify with their roles and play them out, they can closely approximate what happens in groups.

#### *Role-Taking*

The social philosopher George Herbert Mead made an important contribution to the study of roles by highlighting the process of role-taking, or taking the perspective of others into account in interaction. Individuals put themselves in the place of others and see the world as the others see it. Mead maintained that role-taking was crucial in the development of the self. Specifically, as we take the view of others into account and see things from others’ vantage point, we come to see how others view us and to view ourselves in a similar manner. When individuals evaluate themselves in the same way as others evaluate them, a *self* has emerged. Role-taking facilitates not only self-development but also coordinated interaction. In seeing things through others’ eyes, individuals are able to anticipate responses of others and adjust their own behavior accordingly.

Role-taking has cognitive and affective aspects. In *cognitive role-taking*, the individual infers another’s thoughts, motives, or intentions. In *affective role-taking*, a person infers the emotional state of another. Some have defined affective role-taking to involve empathy, which is feeling what another is feeling. In general, it is better to infer what others are thinking *and* feeling than to infer what they are thinking *or* feeling. In taking into account the cognitive and emotional dimensions of

others, observers have more information by which to gauge their own response in the situation.

Role-taking also varies along the dimensions of accuracy, range, and depth. In the first instance, one may take the role of others but not correctly discern others' thoughts or feelings. One may simply "project" onto others what one is thinking rather than accurately identifying the thoughts and motives of others. Role-taking range has to do with people's ability to infer the thoughts and feelings of a wide variety of people. Such individuals may be able to identify the views and emotions of both men and women, for instance. Finally, role-taking depth is the ability of individuals to infer what others are thinking and feeling across a range of areas in their lives. More generally, it is grasping another's total worldview. It is understanding others in depth and in detail.

Within groups, role-taking facilitates communication, a shared understanding within the group, and coordinated activity. If problems emerge in the group, acknowledging others' perspectives can ease conflict and tension. Role-taking is also an important mechanism for social control in a group. If a group member decides to engage in counternormative behavior, taking the role of other group members and inferring that their reaction will be negative may lead the group member to avoid enacting the counternormative behavior. Thus, persons inhibit behaviors they think the group will disapprove of and choose behaviors that support and maintain the group's goals.

### *Role Identity*

Most interaction in groups is not between whole people but between the different aspects of people having to do with their roles. For each role a person holds, there is a corresponding identity associated with it. Thus, people have role identities. A role identity consists of the meanings and expectations individuals claim for themselves while in a role. In other words, what does it mean to a person to be a student, a friend, or a worker? These meanings and expectations individuals attribute to themselves while in a role become their role identity standards. These role identity standards guide their behavior while playing out their roles in situations.

As there are roles and counterroles in situations, there are also identities and counteridentities.

When one claims a role identity in a situation, there is an alternative role identity claimed by another to which it is related. For example, in the role of student, the student identity is enacted as it relates to the corresponding counterrole of teacher. Similarly, the husband identity is played out in a situation as it relates to the wife identity, and so forth. Sometimes, one's expectations associated with a role identity may differ from the expectations others associate with that role identity in the situation. When this happens, individuals may discuss these differences and compromise on a set of expectations so that interaction can proceed.

Because individuals hold multiple roles in society, they have multiple role identities. The many role identities individuals claim are organized in a hierarchy. The role identities highest in the hierarchy of role identities are those that individuals are most likely to play out across situations. Individuals are more committed to these identities in the sense that the number of people they are connected to through having the particular identity is large, and the connection to these others is strong. For example, those who are more committed to the student identity should be tied to many others based on this identity, and the ties with those others should be deep.

The successful enactment of role identities in groups activates a sense of self-efficacy. Individuals see that they are effective in living out the expectations set by their role identity standards. They gain a sense of control over their environment and confidence in their own abilities. For this reason, claiming and playing out role identities in groups is an important source of feeling good about the self.

### *Role Differentiation*

Leadership role differentiation, an idea developed by Robert F. Bales and Philip E. Slater, refers to the emergence in groups of two specialized leadership roles: a *task leader* and a *socioemotional leader*. The task leader is often the person who provides the best guidance and ideas toward the attainment of the group's goals. In an effort to get things done, however, the task leader may be pushy and openly antagonistic. Although this person makes an impact on the group's opinion, his or her assertive behavior may create tension in the group. Thus, a socioemotional leader emerges to ease the tension and soothe hurt feelings in the

group. This person might tell a joke at the right moment or provide emotional support to someone whose feelings were hurt. The person helps release tension and maintain good spirits within the group. This is often the best-liked member of the group. Thus, we have the development of leadership into two distinct roles played by different individuals.

Later research on task and socioemotional role differentiation revealed that role differentiation does not always occur in groups. It tends not to occur when the leader is given the authority to lead in the group and when the task activity is seen as legitimate. When an experimenter appoints a person to be the leader in a group, thus giving the person the authority to lead, role differentiation is less likely to occur than when the leader is not authorized by the experimenter. Role differentiation also is less likely to occur when the task activity of the group is accepted, such that group members interact as if there is a "task ethic" (performing the task that is asked of them, arriving at conclusions, obtaining a consensus, etc.). Under leadership legitimacy and task legitimacy, fewer group members challenge the leader's role or the task activity. This leads to fewer problems in the group, and thus there is less need for a socioemotional leader.

Early research on the family applied the concept of role differentiation to men's and women's specialized roles in the home. Men took on the task or instrumental role by financially providing for the family through work in the labor force, and women assumed the socioemotional, or expressive, role by being the primary caretaker. This division of labor was functional for the maintenance and continuation of the family.

Alice Eagly has argued that given the specific roles that women and men occupy in the family and in society more generally, we come to have different expectations for them. This is her *social role theory* for understanding *gender roles* in society. She argued that the content of gender roles involves attributing communal characteristics to women and agentic characteristics to men. *Communal characteristics* reflect a concern with the welfare of others. They involve affection, interpersonal sensitivity, and nurturance. *Agentic characteristics* involve assertion, control, and confidence. These characteristics are consistent

with the greater investment of women in the domestic role and the greater investment of men in the worker role.

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*See also* Gender Roles; Group Structure; Leadership; Norms; Role Transitions; Symbolic Interactionism

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## ROLE TRANSITIONS

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A role refers to the normative expectations associated with a position in a social system. *Role transitions* refer to the psychological and, if relevant, physical movements between positions within or between social systems, including disengagement from one role (*role exit*) and engagement in another role (*role entry*). This process includes *macro role transitions* between sequential roles, such as a high school student's becoming a university student, and *micro role transitions* between simultaneous roles, such as a woman's shifting subtly between her roles of wife and mother at the dinner table.

Although most research focuses on either role exit or role entry, the nature of each can strongly influence the other. For example, an involuntary layoff can impair one's acceptance of the role of retiree, and a transfer to a better school can ease the pain of leaving school friends behind. Also, role transitions involve what Victor Turner refers to as *liminality*, wherein a person is temporarily between roles, and the psychological grip of each is reduced. Liminality allows time and psychological space to make sense of the old before having to

fully embrace the new, and it allows new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting to percolate.

This entry discusses role entry and role exit in the context of macro transitions, in which an individual goes from outsider to insider and vice versa, and then considers micro transitions.

### Macro Role Transitions

According to the work of Blake Ashforth, role transitions are particularly difficult if they are of high magnitude (the new role differs greatly from the old, such as a shift from a nonsupervisory to a supervisory role), socially undesirable (e.g., imprisonment), involuntary (e.g., job demotion), unpredictable (the nature of the transition is hard to anticipate, such as a minor league athlete awaiting a call-up to the majors), individual rather than collective (the person goes through the process without the benefit of peers), or irreversible (e.g., becoming a parent) and if the transition period is short (leaving little time to prepare for exit and entry, such as suddenly being widowed). The more difficult the transition, the less likely the newcomer will be effective and satisfied in the new role and its associated group.

### Role Entry

Regardless of how difficult the transition may be, role entry typically involves a period of mutual adjustment between the individual and the group. As Richard Moreland and John Levine have put it, newcomers tend to enter as *quasi-members* and become *full members*—with “all of the privileges and responsibilities associated with group membership”—only when they are socialized and accepted by the group. Accordingly, the group tends to exert a large impact on the individual. Because it is hard for the individual to anticipate the demands and nuances of the new role and the group(s) within which it is embedded, entry often fosters surprise and uncertainty, which motivate the new member to learn about the situation.

Elizabeth Morrison has stated that learning focuses on technical information about how to perform tasks, referent information about role expectations, social information about other people and one’s relationships with them, appraisal information about how one is evaluated, normative

information about the group’s nature, and political information about the distribution and use of power and status. Because newcomers are naïve and lack credibility, they are predisposed to adapt to the situation in order to fit in. Thus, individuals tend to be most amenable to personal change when they first enter a new situation. To that end, groups may actively socialize newcomers through some mix of mentors, initiation rites, training, “on the job” trial and error, and observation of senior members.

As for the flipside of the mutual adjustment—the individual’s impact on the group—individuals often take the initiative to learn about the situation and to shape it more to their own wants and needs. The more experience, knowledge, and skill they bring to the new role, the more leeway they are usually allowed to modify the role. Through seeking information about the status quo, seeking feedback about their behavior and performance, building relationships, negotiating with group members about their mutual expectations, and modifying the role directly, newcomers can influence the role and the group.

The result of this mutual adjustment between newcomer and group is that role entry is typically a combination of personal change in the newcomer, role modification, and group change. Although some theoretical models view personal change and role change as opposite poles on a continuum (either the newcomer changes or the role does), research suggests that they are relatively independent: Adjustment may reflect little personal and role change, much change in both, or change in one but not the other. Nigel Nicholson has argued that the more discretion a newcomer has and the more novel the role is to him or her, the more likely that adjustment will entail both personal change and role modification (and presumably group change).

Research on the *ABCs of role entry*, summarized by Ashforth, indicates that newcomers can feel (*A* for affect), act (*B* for behavior), or think (*C* for cognition) their way into becoming comfortable with their new role. For example, newcomers can identify with a role or group long before becoming able to act as competent members, and this identification may motivate role-consistent behavior; conversely, as newcomers begin enacting their new role, they may come to



feel more at home in it and see themselves as bona fide members (what Robert Granfield termed “making it by faking it”). The ABCs are mutually reinforcing such that positive adjustment is a meld of thinking of oneself as a member, feeling comfortable in the role, and performing it effectively. An important element in this process is *social validation*, in which one’s peers and other relevant individuals (e.g., group leader, external audiences) respond positively to how one enacts the role, to the *role markers* (e.g., attire, grooming) one displays, and to one’s performance outcomes. Validation, in short, involves recognizing and treating newcomers as legitimate members.

Finally, role transitions *within* a group should be mentioned briefly. Movement between positions within a group is less common than movement between groups. Examples of the former include a group member’s assuming the role of group leader, treasurer, or social events organizer. Because the group member in question is already known to the other members, the period of mutual adjustment is usually short. However, because the initial intragroup relationships were predicated on the member’s original role, the transition to the new role typically requires some recalibration of the relationships. For example, it may prove somewhat awkward if one’s peer suddenly becomes one’s supervisor.

### *Role Exit*

A role exit can be voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary exit occurs when a group decides to remove a member from a role, typically because of task or social problems. In Harold Garfinkel’s words, a *degradation ceremony*, such as being fired from a job, may be used to formally strip the role from the person, thereby communicating the separation to the individual and the group and reaffirming the values and standards of the role for remaining members. However, members often do not have the power to terminate peers in groups that lack a formal structure. Instead, more subtle actions on behalf of the group can coerce a member to leave, such as ostracizing the individual or revoking benefits that make the role desirable.

Voluntary role exits are more complex because of the role of choice in the process. This discussion of voluntary exits is adapted from Helen Rose Fuchs

Ebaugh’s landmark work. Voluntary role exits often begin when certain events—disappointments, external changes (e.g., relocating for a spouse’s job, seizing a sudden opportunity), milestones, and internal events (e.g., growing job burnout)—prompt doubts about the role or group. If the doubts persist, the individual may search for information to confirm or disconfirm them. However, the stronger the doubts, the more likely that he or she will seek—and therefore find—confirmation. Incidents that may have aroused little notice earlier may become imbued with meaning, and the doubts may spread from specific concerns to general ones. The individual may turn to trusted others both inside and outside the group for impartial advice, and depending on their responses, the doubts may be weakened or strengthened. However, if the doubts are strong, the individual is likely to seek others who will simply reinforce them. The individual may even act provocatively (e.g., complaining, breaking rules) to precipitate a reaction from the group, thereby bringing the issue to a head.

As doubts crystallize, the individual may seek and weigh alternatives. Often, the alternatives must outweigh the strong pull of inertia, personal ties, sunk costs (e.g., time invested), and so on. Where the transition is counternormative (e.g., dropping out of school), knowledge of others who have traveled the same road may normalize the transition. The more attractive the feasible alternatives, the more likely the role exit. If the individual is leaning toward exit, his or her psychological focus may shift from the current role to the anticipated one. Indeed, psychological exit almost always precedes physical exit in the case of voluntary role transitions (although psychological exit may well continue into the new role as one strives to make sense of the experience). Even with a concrete alternative in hand, a turning point—typically a further event such as a new disappointment—is often required to precipitate a break with the role and to justify that break to others. Indeed, a seemingly insignificant event can serve as a last straw. For example, Ebaugh reported that a convent’s decision to forbid smoking triggered the exit of a nun, even though she was not a smoker: The rule symbolized the disconnect between her values and those of the convent.

A farewell party or other rite of separation may be used to mark the transition and help the

individual and group reach closure. By a celebration of individual discontinuity, social continuity is preserved. Finally, the individual needs to come to terms with the role experience and fold it into his or her ongoing life narrative. Ebaugh referred to this process as constructing an *ex role* (e.g., alumnus).

Although voluntary role exit has been described here in fairly linear and rational terms, it should be noted that the process is fraught with emotion, bias, and contradiction and may involve iterations of the various steps. Role exits are typically associated with ambivalence because the individual may experience relief at resolving his or her doubts, excitement and apprehension at the prospect of beginning anew, guilt at abandoning role obligations, and grief at leaving peers. Thomas Schmid and Richard Jones found that even prison inmates felt somewhat ambivalent about their impending release from prison.

### Micro Role Transitions

Unlike macro role transitions, micro transitions tend to be temporary and recurrent, involving the juggling of simultaneous roles, such as mother, stockbroker, gym member, and so on. According to Christena Nippert-Eng and Ashforth, a given pair of roles can be arrayed on a continuum ranging from highly segmented to highly integrated. Highly segmented roles tend to have little similarity in their goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles, and time horizons, and there tends to be little overlap in the physical location or the membership of the respective groups.

Accordingly, highly segmented roles, such as mother and stockbroker, have boundaries that are relatively inflexible (i.e., tied to specific settings and times) and impermeable (i.e., permit few cross-role interruptions). Segmentation decreases the blurring between role identities and reinforces the role boundaries. The mother does not cease being a mother while at work; however, the role of mother is not usually salient. Generally, the greater the segmentation between two roles, the greater the contrast in their identities. Indeed, the stockbroker role may occasionally induce the woman to act in quite unmotherlike ways. Because of the relatively inflexible and impermeable role boundaries, high segmentation increases the magnitude of the role transition. The person must exit the stockbroker

role and enter the mother role, crossing the boundaries. Boundary crossing is facilitated by personal and collective rites of passage that signal a change in roles (e.g., turning off the office equipment and driving home). As with macro transitions, boundary crossing entails liminality while the woman suspends her role as a stockbroker, unwinds from her workday, and prepares to reengage with her family in the role of mother. Micro role transitions tend to become easier over time as individuals develop routines for transitioning between roles.

Conversely, highly integrated roles, such as a son's working in the family business, tend to have similar identities, be embedded in similar contexts, and overlap in the physical location and the membership of the respective groups. Accordingly, highly integrated roles have relatively flexible and permeable boundaries, and each role may interrupt the other unpredictably. The son may interact with his mother in terms of both their family relationship (son–mother) and their work relationship (employee–manager), with the focus oscillating between the two. As this example suggests, high integration decreases the magnitude of the role transition; indeed, the transitions tend to be frequent, perhaps irregular and unpredictable, and involve little conscious awareness. However, integration increases role blurring and thus confusion as to which role is operating. The challenge that individuals face in integrated roles, then, is to create and maintain artificial boundaries to reduce the role blurring to tolerable levels. Thus, the son may insist that the family not talk business when at home.

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*See also* Group Socialization; Inclusion/Exclusion; Initiation Rites; Multiple Identities; Organizations; Personnel Turnover; Roles

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## ROMANCE OF LEADERSHIP

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Leadership is one of the most discussed, studied, and written about topics in our society. Should it be? The *romance of leadership* (ROL) is an attributional approach to leadership that attempts to understand when and why we recognize and give credit to leaders for influencing and changing our institutions and societies. First introduced by leadership scholar James R. Meindl and colleagues, this approach highlights the fact that leaders and leadership issues often become the favored explanations for both positive and negative outcomes in organizations. In addition, subsequent research has demonstrated that people value performance results more highly when those results are attributed to leadership and that a halo effect exists for leadership: If an individual is perceived to be an effective leader, his or her personal shortcomings and poor organizational performance may be overlooked. This entry defines the ROL perspective and then turns to implications and critiques of this approach.

### The Theory

Based on a series of studies, the ROL suggests that we overwhelmingly tend to favor leaders and

leadership as the causal force behind the activities and outcomes of organizations. In part, a critical response to a prevailing emphasis on the importance of *leaders* in the leadership process (as opposed to an emphasis on followers or the situation), the ROL theory was developed to call attention to the fact that whatever the “true” impact of leaders and leadership in organizations and societies, leadership as a concept has attained an immense—and perhaps often unwarranted—popularity in our understanding of the world. Simply stated, despite centuries of study and decades of formal research, the concept of leadership remains largely elusive and resistant to attempts to unravel its mystique. Yet we continue to believe in its import and efficacy, even in situations in which we have no direct evidence to support this belief.

The ROL was introduced as one of the first explicitly *follower*-centric approaches in an effort to balance the many leader-centric approaches that dominated leadership research and practice. Meindl pointed out that leadership had attained a seemingly heroic, larger-than-life status and urged us to consider the implications of relaxing the often taken-for-granted assumption that leadership is important in its own right. Particularly in light of the growing appreciation of external factors and the surrounding environment in which organizations operate, he suggested that we need to question and systematically explore the value and significance of leadership in modern organizations.

The ROL approach helps highlight and question the esteem, prestige, charisma, and heroism attached to various forms of leadership. In addition, the vast majority of research and popular business attention has focused on leadership as a positive force on followers and society. As a result, the ROL perspective questions our collective fascination with leadership and our emphasis on heroism, charisma, and the glorification of leadership in the face of any real evidence that a given leader is really worthy of such praise.

### Implications of the ROL Approach

#### *Leadership Portrayals in the Media*

The ROL is often reflected in the images of leaders that are produced in the mass media. More often than not, leaders are presented in the form of portraits of successful individuals or images of

great leadership figures, and popular leadership books are touted as never-before-revealed secrets of leadership effectiveness. These images reflect our appetite as a society for leadership products and behaviors that promise to enrich and improve our lives. In addition, such compelling images of leadership appeal to our cultural fascination with the power of leadership and serve to fixate us on the personas and characteristics of leaders themselves (especially high-profile leaders). However, this one-sided emphasis on the positive forms of leadership can be dangerous, for it suggests that leaders are inherently positive forces for individuals, organizations, and humanity as a whole.

Exploring previous writing and scholarship on leadership provides an important window into our beliefs, both as individuals and as a society, about the topic: what constitutes leadership, why it is important, what makes it successful, and what decisions or assumptions we make about the effects of leadership. Our basic assumptions about leadership are influenced by how it is defined and discussed in popular books and media and by the types of leadership that are both publicly idealized and sometimes demonized as well. An analysis of popular leadership books, for example, reveals that leaders are seen as effecting change, possessing great experience and knowledge, and providing their followers with opportunities to reach their unique potential. These conceptualizations all fit our cultural stereotypes of “great” leadership. The ROL perspective encourages us to question and debate the functions that leadership serves within society, as well as the broader trends that inform our discussion about what leadership is, what good leadership looks like, and how we decide whether a leader has truly made an impact.

### *Followers and Followership*

The ROL also draws attention to followers’ perceptions of leadership as worthy of study in their own right, in parallel to or independent of how the leader actually behaves. As a result, the theory has fostered research into the needs of followers and situational factors that may create greater or lesser susceptibilities to leadership. In addition, the theory emphasizes that followers socially construct images of leadership, meaning that the interactions among followers about a

leader may be just as important as the actual behaviors of the leader in understanding the leadership process. As a result, researchers have examined issues such as how leadership influence spreads among followers, even in cases in which followers have had no direct contact with or exposure to a leader. Specifically, understanding followers’ emotional reactions to a leader plays an important role in followers’ conclusions about whether their leader is an effective or “good” leader, worthy of extravagant stock options or a vote to remain in political power.

Another important implication of the ROL approach is that sense-making processes are integral to understanding leadership and may help us understand why leadership is so enigmatic. Stated more simply, individuals learn what leadership is and what to make of leadership behaviors through their interactions with one another. Followers’ decisions to attribute leadership to an individual are to a large extent the result of their interactions and communications with each other, in which they share information about the leader and compare one another’s views about what his or her behavior means. Followers are thus viewed as active, powerful players in the leadership process and not passive, compliant, obedient “sheep” at the mercy of their leaders. In addition, followers’ psychological needs, ideas about what leadership should look like, and decisions about what leaders are responsible for all play crucial yet underexamined roles in the leadership process.

The ROL perspective also provides another view on charismatic leadership, suggesting that *charisma* is itself a socially constructed phenomenon that says as much about followers and the situation as it does about leaders. For example, Meindl found that individuals in leadership roles are perceived to be more charismatic to the extent that the organization they lead undergoes a crisis turnaround (e.g., moving from loss to profit) rather than a crisis decline (e.g., moving from profit to loss). In addition, attributions of charisma to a leader are not solely grounded in the direct interactions between leaders and followers but rather are strongly impacted by followers’ interactions with their peers as well.

Through this approach, we can more readily understand why there are so many discrepancies in perceptions of charisma and a given leader’s

charismatic appeal. We can also examine how followers vary in their susceptibility both to the belief in the efficacy of leadership and to the charisma of a leader. For example, research suggests that the first followers to succumb to the charismatic “virus” are likely to be high in agreeableness and emotional intensity. In addition, this approach highlights the importance of one’s social network in understanding perceptions of leadership and suggests that those who are more central and connected to others are more likely to spread charismatic appeal to others.

### Critiques of the ROL Theory

Despite efforts to characterize it as such, Meindl continually pointed out that the ROL perspective was not antileadership but simply an alternative to most existing theories and perspectives that place great weight on the leaders themselves and assume that leaders’ actions all have equal importance and significance. Thus, the ROL perspective does not reject or minimize the importance of leaders in leadership but simply argues that it is easier to believe in leadership than it is to prove it. In addition, Meindl pointed out that we need to continually question the prevailing emphasis on leaders to the detriment of followers. Overall, the ROL suggests that we need to complement existing leader-centered approaches with more follower-centered approaches and take into account the social-psychological processes among followers in understanding the leadership phenomenon.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories

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## RUMOR

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A *rumor* is an unverified account or explanation of an event that is transmitted from person to person. Rumors may be transmitted for specific reasons, such as to blame a person or group member for a particular action or to harm a reputation. However, rumors can also provide useful information in ambiguous situations.

At a group level, sharing information in the form of rumors can enhance group cohesion and strengthen emotional ties within the group. At an individual level, sharing rumors can help reduce stress due to uncertainty. Although rumors can be transmitted without distortion of the original account, they often become distorted as they are passed on from person to person. In the case of rumors about groups, the information that survives in distorted rumor transmission is most likely to be information that is consistent with preexisting group stereotypes.

### History and Background

One of the first psychological examinations of rumor was a study conducted by Gordon Allport and Joseph Leo Postman in 1945. In this study, participants were asked to describe an illustration to another person who had not seen the illustration. Then the recipient of the description was asked to reproduce it for another person and so on for several retellings of the description. Each participant’s account was recorded. Allport

and Postman found that many of the features of the original message disappeared as the message was passed along the chain of recipients. In particular, approximately 70% of the details of the message were lost in the first five or six transmissions. Similar findings occurred across many different types of pictures with different settings and contents.

Allport and Postman described three processes that occur in rumor transmission. The first—*leveling*—refers to the process whereby the rumor becomes shorter and less complex, a process that happens quickly. The second—*sharpening*—refers to the process whereby certain features of the rumor are selected for transmission and are often exaggerated. Finally, *assimilation* refers to the distortion of the information as a result of subconscious motivations, attitudes, and prejudices. There is some empirical support for this three-part process. For example, in 1951 T. M. Higham found evidence for distortion of messages transmitted from person to person in a laboratory setting. However, it was found that this was the case only for messages that did not affect participants' interests. For *ego-involved* messages that did affect participants' interests, the transmissions were less distorted.

More recent research also suggests that a rumor will not always be a distorted account of the original information and depends on other factors. In particular, the results of studies not based in laboratories show much less distortion of rumors than in Allport and Postman's study. Further, the amount of rumor distortion appears to be dependent on the recipients' anxiety and whether recipients take a critical or uncritical approach to the content of the message. Information contained in rumors can reduce anxiety in the face of uncertainty. People therefore transmit rumors in part to reduce stress in ambiguous situations. However, people can also take a critical or uncritical approach to the information contained in the message. If recipients take a critical approach, the rumor will not be distorted and may even be refined. On the other hand, when recipients take an uncritical approach, it is more likely that the rumor will become distorted. This is particularly likely in crisis situations, in which people are unable to attend to the information as closely as they normally might.

## The Social Functions of Rumor

### *Rumor and Motives*

Rumors are often initiated and elaborated for a reason. That is, the source of the rumor typically has an ulterior motive in passing it on to others. One reason is to harm the reputation of an individual or group. For example, a group member can propagate a rumor about another group so that the other group appears in a negative light to others; this increases the likelihood that the group will be disliked. In this respect, spreading a negative rumor about one group can enhance the position of the group responsible for the rumor. A group can also spread a rumor that blames another group for a significant event or wrongdoing. In this case, blame may be deflected from the ingroup, and the reputation of the target outgroup can be significantly tarnished.

In more extreme cases, spreading rumors about groups and group members can notably affect intergroup relations, provoke conflict, or reinforce group status hierarchies. A good example of this was the prevalence in the late 1800s and early 1900s of race-related rumors in which Blacks were frequently accused of crimes and put to death by illegal lynch mobs. These atrocities were based largely on hearsay and rumor for which no evidence was offered. Of course, the spreading of rumors also occurs at a more innocuous level and is commonly known as *gossip*, *idle talk*, or rumor about the private affairs of others. However, although the information transmitted in this manner is typically trivial, it can also be the result of a malicious attempt to undermine another person (or group member), harm the person's reputation, or worse.

### *Rumor and Information Sharing*

People devote a great deal of attention to gathering and sharing information about themselves and others. This information is very important. By understanding the self and others, people are more able to function in the social world. Rumor is a vital part of this information-gathering and information-sharing process. It can also help forge social cohesion and emotional bonds within a group. The evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar suggests that people spend about 60% of

their conversations gossiping about their own lives and those of others. Dunbar also argues that rumor and gossip are the human equivalent of social grooming among primates, which actually reduces stress and stimulates the immune system. Another, related function of gossip and rumor is that people use them to cope with and explain situations beyond their control. Some research carried out in organizational settings demonstrates that rumors thrive in contexts in which there is an absence of trust. For example, in unstable organizational settings containing distinct groups (e.g., manager, worker) with different agendas, rumor transmission can help people come to terms with their own position within the group.

Receiving rumors also gives people information about what is happening within the group. This information helps them keep in touch with their groups, which facilitates their survival within the group. Being out of touch means that people do not have the fundamental social knowledge they may need in order to understand and function within their group. Also, propagating rumors performs important social functions for the sender. In particular, being the source of a rumor within a group places the sender in a position of being a source of useful information that the group can use to answer questions and solve problems. This therefore identifies the person as a valuable member of the group.

Because social knowledge is so fundamental to social relationships, rumor can be characterized as a collective explanation process. In 2004, Prashant Bordia and Nicholas DiFonzo carried out a study that supports this idea. They analyzed a set of archived Internet message board discussions containing rumors. It was found that the plurality of the statements (nearly 30%) could be coded as sense-making statements, which in particular involved attempts to understand a social process or solve a problem. Bordia and DiFonzo also found that each rumor went through a specific pattern of development in which a rumor was introduced for discussion, then information about the rumor was volunteered and discussed, and finally a resolution was arrived at or interest in the rumor was lost. Rumors therefore performed the important social functions of information sharing and sense-making, and once those functions were achieved, the rumors were no longer interesting.

### *Rumor and Stereotype Communication*

When passing information about group members on to others, people can choose to transmit stereotype-consistent or stereotype-inconsistent information. What types of information people choose to transmit about groups has implications for how rumors about groups are spread. Yoshihisa Kashima and colleagues have carried out a program of research using the *serial reproduction* paradigm, in which participants are asked to tell a story about a person to another participant, who then tells the story to another participant, and so on for a small number of retellings of the story. Results demonstrate that communicators generally pass on more stereotype-consistent information than stereotype-inconsistent information. For example, in one study, in which participants were asked to retell a story containing gender-stereotypical and counterstereotypical information, more gender-stereotypical details than counterstereotypical details were transmitted. Researchers argue that this is one way in which stereotypes and prejudice are perpetuated. In terms of rumors, this finding can therefore potentially have negative consequences. One example is how rumors of violence, rape, and looting spread after the 2005 tragedy of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Louisiana. Details of these stereotypical behaviors of people in disaster situations were transmitted widely across the media although later evidence suggested that most of these reports were based on unfounded rumors. The spread of these wild rumors did very little good for race relations in the city.

Further research shows that transmission of information about groups is also dependent on the extent to which people feel as though they share beliefs in common with the people they are communicating to. If people perceive that they share common beliefs with others, then they are more likely to pass information on. Rumors about groups therefore may be transmitted to the extent to which people think that others will endorse the rumor.

### **Widespread Rumors: Conspiracy Theories**

A good example of widespread rumor transmission is the phenomenon of conspiracy theories. Scholars characterize *conspiracy theories* as attempts to explain the ultimate cause of an event (usually a

political or social event) as a secret plot by a covert alliance of powerful individuals or organizations rather than as an overt activity or natural occurrence. Attempts to explain why people believe conspiracy theories have focused on people's need to explain events that are beyond their control. In particular, some researchers view conspiracy theories as a response to powerlessness; in the face of increasingly vast and anonymous bureaucratic forces, conspiracy theories allow people to come to terms with the possibility that these underlying forces shape their future. Similarly, others view conspiracy theories as a means for less powerful individuals to imagine themselves in possession of powerful, or secret, information.

Conspiracy theories are therefore a powerful and attractive form of rumor. They are powerful because they can reach many people, especially in the age of the Internet, where information can be spread rapidly. Further, conspiracy theories are often the result of a hidden agenda by a smaller group of people and can facilitate their objectives. For example, one well-known conspiracy theory is that homosexuals are intentionally spreading HIV, which can have an adverse impact on how this group is perceived and treated in society. Spreading such a conspiracy theory is one way to propagate antigay attitudes and realize an antigay agenda. Conspiracy theories are also powerful because they are difficult to disconfirm. As a result, they can be very persuasive.

Finally, conspiracy theories are an attractive form of rumor because they help people deal with the uncertainty and anxiety caused by significant world events. Like rumors in general, conspiracy theories address ambiguous events with a definitive and persuasive explanation, which can minimize stress and anxiety.

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*See also* Conspiracy Theories; Evolutionary Psychology; Informational Influence; Normative Influence; Prejudice; Social Representations; Status; Stereotyping; Trust

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## SCAPEGOATING

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*Scapegoating* is an extreme form of prejudice in which people blame an outgroup as intentionally having caused their own group's misfortunes, motivating harsh actions against the scapegoated group. Scapegoating explanations have been offered for events ranging from the execution of "witches" in early modern Europe to 20th-century genocides such as the Holocaust. Initial theories of scapegoating relied on Freudian psychodynamics and, later, the frustration–aggression hypothesis. Both view scapegoating as a spontaneous venting of frustrations displaced onto an innocent group, chosen merely because it is weak and vulnerable, making it a convenient target. These theories, however, have difficulty explaining which minorities will be scapegoated and how scapegoating becomes a coordinated social movement that organizes violent actions (rather than a series of unconnected, individual hate crimes).

A newer model of scapegoating suggests instead that, during difficult times, socioeconomically successful (not "weak") minority groups face particular risk for scapegoating. Only successful minorities are popularly viewed as having the ability (e.g., social position, influence, and power) as well as the intent to cause widespread harm. This entry describes classical scapegoating theory and discusses how it has been modified to explain contemporary instances.

### Classic Scapegoating Theory

Freud hypothesized that unconscious motives, especially basic drives for sex and aggression (which constitute the *id*), often lead people to behave in irrational ways. The *id* inevitably comes into conflict with social norms that seek to shape, control, and limit how its drives are expressed. Individuals internalize these norms, creating the *superego* (or conscience), which represses socially unacceptable drives (e.g., to aggress). Repression, however, is insufficient because the *id*'s drives continually create mental energy that seeks behavioral release. Thus, unless individuals can channel their impulses constructively (e.g., express aggression through sports participation), they may displace aggression onto others while avoiding the *superego*'s censure by constructing socially acceptable justifications or rationalizations to legitimize their hostility.

Displaced aggression is rationalized through psychologically projecting one's own faults and conflicts onto others. For example, "I want to harm others" is mentally transformed to "They want to harm me and therefore deserve my hostility." Minority groups that society already derogates present convenient, socially acceptable targets for projection and displaced aggression, making it easier for people to scapegoat them. Freud believed that after people vent their frustrations through aggression, they experience catharsis (a sense of relief and temporary diminishment of the aggressive drive). This model is notoriously

difficult to test, and although there is some empirical support for projection, the notion that expressing aggression diminishes subsequent violence has been disproved: Acting violently (even by punching a pillow) makes subsequent violence more (not less) likely.

Frustration–aggression theorists preserved Freud’s displaced aggression assumption but argued that aggressive impulses are typically caused by obstacles to goal-directed behavior (not intrapsychic conflict). For instance, failing to land a coveted job might elicit frustration and, in turn, the impulse to aggress. When individuals cannot retaliate against the true source of frustration, perhaps because the other is powerful and might retaliate, they may displace aggression onto weak and vulnerable victims (e.g., a child who is mad at a parent might lash out instead against a younger sibling). In this view, minority groups become targets of displaced aggression because they happen to be in a weak position, unable to retaliate.

While the frustration–aggression approach emphasizes external obstacles and the Freudian view focuses on internal psychological conflict as initial sources of frustration, they have much in common. Both suggest that individual frustrations lead people to vent (much like a boiling kettle must release steam or explode), both characterize scapegoating as irrationally displaced aggression, and both suggest that the rationalizations people use to justify their hostility have nothing to do with the true reasons for their aggression.

Critics have long expressed objections to both the Freudian and the frustration–aggression approaches to scapegoating. Given that many minorities may occupy weak social positions, which one will be chosen? In instances of genocidal attack, why do so many people happen to choose the same group to scapegoat? Is it mere coincidence that a host of people simultaneously resolve their individual frustrations by venting on the same target group in a coordinated manner (as happens in genocides)? Because classic scapegoating theories remain rooted in psychological approaches focused on individualized frustrations rather than the social psychology of group identification, they are ill equipped to explain mass scapegoating as a collective event.

### Newer Approaches to Scapegoating

Subsequent approaches have focused on shared or collective (not individual) frustrations as the distal source of scapegoating. Ervin Staub noted that difficult life conditions frustrate basic human needs (e.g., for security, optimism, group esteem). Shared frustrations (e.g., an economic depression) motivate people to construct explanations that diagnose the source of acute societal problems and suggest possible solutions. This process has been labeled social or collective attribution. In this view, people are not necessarily irrational or driven by unconscious impulses. Rather, they attempt to use an adaptive problem-solving strategy to deal with pressing problems that have frustrated their basic needs.

Massive social problems, however, may defy easy explanation or solution. Peter Glick’s ideological model of scapegoating posits that only explanations that fit long-standing cultural biases and belief systems, such as group stereotypes, will appeal to large segments of a society. For example, imagine living in 17th-century Europe. You would probably accept the commonly held belief that some people (namely witches) are malevolent and possess supernatural powers.

Now imagine a plague that kills off one third of your village. In the absence of knowledge about how diseases are transmitted, how would you explain this horrible event? You might assume that somebody or some group must have caused the plague, and, in an early modern European cultural context, witches made likely candidates. After all, witches were “known” to have special powers that might produce diseases, as well as to have evil intentions. (By contrast, imagine how you might ridicule and reject a well-informed time traveler who tried to convince you that an invisible “virus” was the true cause.) Thus, a normally adaptive and rational motive to explain negative events can nevertheless yield wholly incorrect beliefs that lead people to scapegoat innocents (such as the tens of thousands burned as “witches”).

What leads people collectively to decide that a specific group caused their misfortunes? Logically, for a group to have produced collective ills such as a plague, an economic depression, or political chaos, they must be powerful (i.e., capable of shaping widespread social outcomes) and also ill-intentioned (i.e., have the desire to harm

others). Glick argued that socioeconomically successful or powerful minority groups are at particular risk of being the objects of scapegoating in times of shared, difficult social conditions. Such groups may be tolerated when social conditions are favorable but immediately suspected of malfeasance when things go bad.

*Conspiracy theories*, the hallmark of scapegoating, exaggerate the power wielded by the scapegoated group, which “explains” how it could have caused such widespread harm. However, many people may view a conspiracy theory as plausible when it is built on a kernel of truth—the relative success and influence of the minority group within the society. In addition, scapegoat ideologies fan the resentment that people often feel toward successful minorities (especially when most of society is suffering).

The Nazis, for example, complained bitterly of the prominence of Jews in business, science, government, and art. Indeed, as a group, the Jews were relatively successful in Germany before the Nazi era. Unfortunately, their very success fed into the Nazis’ belief that only an international Jewish conspiracy (which allegedly allowed Jewish industrialists to profit from German misery) could have caused Germany to lose World War I and suffer a subsequent depression. Similarly, in Rwanda, the Tutsi—who were subjected to a genocidal attack during the 1990s by elements of the Hutu majority—were traditionally a high status, powerful minority. Thus, they could plausibly be blamed for Rwanda’s economic depression and other social problems.

In addition to fixing blame, scapegoat ideologies offer a “solution” to society’s problems—typically the elimination of the group that allegedly caused the misfortunes (e.g., the Nazis’ “final solution” to the “Jewish problem”). From the perspective of people who adhere to such an ideology, aggression against the scapegoated group is psychologically justified as a necessary form of self-defense against a diabolically clever enemy. Genocides are organized affairs, initiated by a core of true believers convinced of the need to murder the group that allegedly caused their miseries. Thus, it remains vitally important to understand the psychology of scapegoating to prevent future genocidal attacks.

*Peter Glick*

*See also* Anti-Semitism; Authoritarian Personality; Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis; Genocide; Hate Crimes; Holocaust; Right Wing Authoritarianism

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## SCHISMS

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A *schism* refers to the secession of at least one *faction* (i.e., an ideologically distinct subgroup) from a social group. The breakaway faction(s) may either join a different group or create a new group. Schisms are common. They can occur in every type of group, including small aggregates (scientific expeditions, sports teams), middle-range groups (political parties, religious institutions, industrial organizations), and large communities (nations, ethnic groups). Whenever they occur, schisms have significant repercussions. They can quite dramatically affect beliefs, values, and behaviors *within* groups and transform relationships and equilibrium *between* groups. In sum, schisms constitute one of the most basic and consequential phenomena in the life of groups and in their interrelationships. This entry provides an overview of related research, presents a social-psychological model of schisms, discusses the model’s limitations, and briefly describes related constructs.

### Empirical Research on Schisms

Social scientists have long been interested in conflict and discord within groups. However, the dynamics of schisms remain relatively underresearched. Existing research can be classified into three distinct strands.

First, several researchers have conducted in-depth studies of specific schisms. In particular,

sociologists have investigated religious and organizational schisms, political scientists have studied schisms within political parties and institutions, and anthropologists have focused on schisms in small non-Western villages (note that anthropologists often use the term *fission* instead of *schism*). Although these researchers have proposed explanations for each schismatic event that they have studied, they have rarely attempted to create a general theoretical model.

One notable exception is the Scottish anthropologist Victor Turner. In the 1950s, he studied schisms in Ndembu villages located in the North-Western province of Zambia. He was interested in the process leading a subgroup within a village to detach itself and build a separate settlement. Turner contended that a schism takes the form of a *social drama*. This is a sequence of ritual actions that can be grouped into four distinct phases: (1) breach of regular social relations; (2) widening of the breach until it becomes coextensive with important subgroups; (3) implementation of adjustive mechanisms, such as legal procedures or public rituals; and (4) reintegration of the disturbed subgroup or recognition of irreparable breach between the conflicting aggregates. Turner's work has been very influential among social anthropologists. However, while it points to general patterns of behavioral manifestations that may punctuate all schisms, it does not describe underlying mechanisms that supposedly produce a schism, and therefore it does not offer a truly explanatory model.

Second, some sociologists have reviewed several schisms and offered a list of group structural characteristics that make a schism more or less likely to happen. For instance, John Wilson noted that schisms are more frequent (a) in either very dogmatic groups or groups in which there is a totally open truth, (b) in groups in which clique formation is easy, (c) in groups lacking institutionalized methods for resolving conflicts, and (d) in groups in which decision-making processes are either highly centralized or highly decentralized.

Third, a group of social psychologists led by Fabio Sani has worked toward the construction of a general model aimed at explaining the social-psychological mechanisms that produce a schism. Their model is based on extensive empirical research on various schisms. For instance, one piece of research was a retrospective investigation

of the split that took place in the Italian Communist Party in 1991 as a consequence of a change of name, symbol, and program. Another piece of research assessed the antecedents and consequences of the schism that occurred within the Church of England in the mid-1990s over the ordination of women to the priesthood. The model and its limitations are discussed below.

## The Social Psychology of Schism

### *Group Norms and Identity*

Some years ago, British social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner argued that members of a group share a powerful sense of "we" and "us," in that they feel part of something that transcends their individuality. To survive as a meaningful entity, a group needs some degree of unity. Therefore, the group's members assume that they should broadly agree on the norms (beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors) that characterize the group's identity and thus its members' social identity. But far from being set in stone, the group's norms are subjected to an incessant process of debate and negotiation. In the course of such a process, norms may be adjusted, modified, or even rejected and replaced with new norms.

### *From Perceived Identity Subversion to Schism*

Although normative change is an inherent aspect of all groups, group members tend to distinguish between changes that improve and strengthen group identity, which are welcome, and changes that deny and subvert group identity, which constitute a threat and therefore are feared. Because the nature of the relationship between a new norm and the group identity is arguable, there may be situations in which factions form around different understandings of such a relationship. Basically, while the members of a faction may see a new norm as fully consistent with the group's identity, or even as reinforcing it, the members of another faction may consider the new norm to be profoundly inconsistent with and even negating the group's identity and denying its "true" essence. This disagreement will often trigger a schism.

This is what happened in the schisms mentioned above. For instance, in the Italian Communist Party schism, the trigger was the fact that while the

majority saw the newly adopted symbolism and program of the party as a necessary development in line with the party identity, a substantial subgroup of party members saw the change as a profound rupture with the history and identity of the party. As a consequence, the subgroup that opposed the change left the party to create a new one, which in their opinion retained the identity of the Italian Communist Party.

The same mechanisms applied to the schism in the Church of England. That is, the majority group, which had voted in favor of the ordination of women to the priesthood, saw this change as fully consistent with scriptures and tradition and as a necessary development that strengthened the group's identity. On the other hand, a minority of members perceived the ordination of women as inconsistent with scriptures, tradition, and the will of God and therefore as transforming the Church of England into a completely different group and irreconcilably subverting its identity. Many of these members eventually left the Church of England to create a new, small, breakaway church or to join either the Roman Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church.

Why should the perception that the group's identity has been negated lead to a schism? The model points to three reasons.

First, witnessing a profound denial of the group's identity makes members acutely aware of the existence of two ideologically incompatible factions within the group and raises the all too real probability that the group will be deeply fractured and divided and will not really be able to function as a single entity any longer.

Second, recognizing their group as having a different and undesired identity lowers members' sense of group identification and collective self-esteem. Members feel estranged from the group and no longer feel a sense of pride in belonging to or being part of it.

Third, the fact that the changed group identity is radically different from one's ideal group identity, and from what one thinks the group's identity ought to be, generates negative emotions. In particular, this generates dejection-related emotions (disappointment, sadness), agitation-related emotions (apprehension, uneasiness), and, in some cases, even strong anger and resentment toward those members who are seen as responsible for the change.

These three reactions lead people to consider a schism to be a viable option. A schism would allow them to escape from a group that is divided, with which they do not identify any longer, and that causes them painful emotions.

The model described here also specifies that those group members who are dissatisfied with the change, and therefore experience the reactions described above, will be more or less likely to join a schism depending on how much voice they perceive they have within the group. If they believe that, because of their position, they will be marginalized and isolated within the group, then their likelihood of joining a schism will be relatively high. On the contrary, if they sense that they will be respected and valued, then their likelihood of leaving the group will be lower.

### Limitations of the Model

This model has two main limitations. First, it is derived from analyses of schisms in groups in which identity was of primary importance and, therefore, threats to identity caused turmoil and preoccupation that eventually led to schism. However, some smaller, face-to-face groups, such as a research team or a music band, might not place such importance on identity. This implies that the model might be more applicable to some types of groups than to others.

The second, related, limitation stems from the fact that the model is derived from situations in which a conservative faction secedes from a group because of an unacceptable change endorsed by a more progressive, reformist majority. However, there are situations in which a reformist faction secedes from the group because it advocates change that is staunchly opposed by a conservative majority. Whether the model can be adapted to this circumstance is yet to be established.

### Related Phenomena and Constructs

Some other phenomena studied by social scientists are strongly related to or partially overlap the notion of schism. One of these is *factionalism*, which refers to the existence of competing and conflicting factions within a group. This phenomenon is generally seen as a logical precondition of schism but not as a schism itself. For instance, in

his 1931 entry for the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Harold Lasswell stated that when factions turn into groups of higher order, the term *factionalism* is no longer appropriate. Consistent with this, the majority of research on factionalism focuses on descriptions and explanations of faction formation and development, rather than on schism as a consequence of these processes.

It should be noted, however, that some scholars, such as the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion and his followers, use the term *schism* to refer to divisions and conflict between small subgroups within psychotherapy groups, for which the concept of factionalism would be probably more appropriate. In contrast, other scholars use the term *factionalism* very broadly to apply to disputes between different political parties.

Another phenomenon related to schism is *defection*. Like the term *schism*, *defection* is used to indicate the departure of members from a group. Defectors are said to experience a sense of ideological detachment from a group and a loss of faith in the group's beliefs and values. However, in this case, the emphasis is on the action of one or more individuals rather than on collective action undertaken by members of a more or less organized faction. This notion is very similar to the notion of *exit*, which is used by Albert Hirschman to signify one of the possible options that members of firms, organizations, and states may choose in times of organizational decline. Finally, some sociologists, such as Lewis Coser and Stuart Wright, point out that some defectors make special efforts to attack their former group and to negate its worldview, and they use the term *apostasy* to indicate this specific phenomenon.

Fabio Sani

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Collective Self; Conformity; Group Development; Group Dissolution; Norms; Social Identity Theory

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## SELF-CATEGORIZATION THEORY

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*Self-categorization theory* describes how the cognitive process of categorization, when applied to oneself, creates a sense of identification with the social category or group and produces the array of behaviors that we associate with group membership: conformity, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and so forth. Self-categorization theory was developed by John Turner and his colleagues at the University of Bristol and described in a classic 1987 book. It is an integral part of *social identity theory*, often referred to as the *social identity theory of the group*, to differentiate its cognitive and general group emphasis from Henri Tajfel and John Turner's 1979 social identity theory of intergroup relations, which places more emphasis on motivational and intergroup dimensions.

In describing self-categorization theory, this entry gives some historical background and then discusses key features and elaborations of the theory. These include the structuring of social categories around prototypes, the processes of categorization and de-personalization, attraction among group members and the bases of group solidarity and cohesion, intergroup behavior, motivations associated with social and self-categorization, the process of psychological salience of self-categories or social identities, how groups influence their members, and processes that make some individuals influential while others are marginalized.

### Historical Background

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Henri Tajfel championed a cognitive perspective on intergroup

relations. He believed that basic cognitive processes associated with how we categorize people as members of groups lie at the psychological core of an array of intergroup behaviors, in particular prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping. This perspective gathered momentum through collaboration with John Turner and a focus on the comparisons people make between groups, particularly between a group they belong to (ingroup) and groups they do not belong to (outgroups), and on the role of self-definition and self-evaluation as a group member (*social identity*) in intergroup behavior.

This led to Tajfel and Turner's classic 1979 statement of the social identity theory of intergroup relations, which focused on how the interplay between social identification, the pursuit of positive intergroup distinctiveness, and beliefs about the nature of intergroup relations impacted cooperation and competition between groups. During the early 1980s, Turner and his colleagues turned their attention (back) to the mechanics of group identification, asking what exactly, psychologically speaking, a group is and what basic social-cognitive processes generate group identification and associated group processes and behaviors. In so doing, Turner and his colleagues revisited and greatly elaborated the role of social categorization in order to produce the social identity theory of the group—self-categorization theory.

The original 1987 statement of self-categorization theory was very specific in its focus on levels of inclusiveness (how categorical distinctions are made within high order similarities; e.g., people are categorized as Scottish or English within the context of all being British, and as British or French within the context of all being European) and on depersonalized self-perception (how categorizing oneself depersonalizes self-perception and behavior to conform to the defining attributes of the category to which one belongs). Very quickly, however, many, if not most, social identity and self-categorization researchers relaxed the focus on levels of inclusiveness and broadened the depersonalization concept to apply to the perception of other people as well. It is this broader perspective that is described here.

### Categories and Prototypes

Human groups are social categories that people mentally represent as *prototypes*, that is, complex

(fuzzy) sets of interrelated attributes that capture similarities within groups and differences between groups. Prototypes maximize *entitativity* (the extent to which a group is a distinct and clearly defined entity) and optimize metacontrast (the extent to which maximal similarity among members of the group is balanced with maximal difference between the group as a whole and a relevant outgroup). If I say to you “French,” what comes immediately to mind is your prototype of that national group—possibly something to do with berets, baguettes, and bicycles. However, if in thinking about the French, you are contrasting them to the Dutch, then bicycles may not be part of the prototype because it is not an attribute that differentiates the categories very sharply—the Dutch also do a lot of cycling.

Overwhelmingly, we make binary categorizations in which one of the categories is the group that we are in, the ingroup. Thus, prototypes not only capture similarities within the ingroup but also accentuate differences between our group and a specific outgroup. Ingroup prototypes can therefore change as a function of the specific outgroup to which we are comparing our group. In this way, prototypes are context dependent.

### Categorization and Depersonalization

The process of categorizing people has predictable consequences. Rather than seeing them as idiosyncratic individuals, we see them through the lens of the prototype: They become depersonalized. Prototype-based perception of outgroup members is more commonly called *stereotyping*: We view “them” as being similar to one another and all having outgroup attributes. We can also depersonalize ingroup members and ourselves in the same way. When we categorize ourselves, we view ourselves in terms of the defining attributes of the ingroup (*self-stereotyping*), and because prototypes also describe and prescribe group-appropriate ways to think, feel, and behave, we think, feel, and behave group prototypically. In this way, self-categorization, which generates a sense of belonging, attachment, and identification with the group, not only transforms the way we view ourselves but also transforms our behavior to comply with ingroup norms, producing normative behavior among members of a group.

### Feelings for Group Members: Social Attraction

Social categorization affects how we feel toward other people. Feelings are governed by how prototypical of the group we think other people are, rather than by personal preferences, friendships, and enmities. In this way, liking becomes depersonalized social attraction. Furthermore, because within one's group there is usually agreement over prototypicality, prototypical members are liked by all—they are “popular.” Likewise, less-prototypical members are unpopular and can be marginalized as undesirable deviants.

Another aspect of social attraction is that outgroup members are liked less than ingroup members. Outgroupers are very unprototypical of the ingroup. Social attraction also occurs because our ingroup prototypes are generally more favorable than our outgroup prototypes (we do all we can to secure an evaluative advantage of our own group over relevant comparison outgroups). Thus, liking reflects not only prototypicality but the valence of the prototype.

### Intergroup Behavior

This tendency for ingroup prototypes to be more favorable than outgroup prototypes represents *ethnocentrism*—the belief that all things ingroup are superior to all things outgroup. Ethnocentrism exists because of the correspondence, through social identification and self-categorization, between how the group is evaluated and how we are evaluated. Thus, intergroup behavior is a struggle over the relative status or prestige of one's ingroup—a struggle for positive ingroup distinctiveness and social identity. Groups with higher status fight to protect their evaluative superiority; groups of lower status struggle to shrug off their social stigma and promote their positivity. It is this aspect of social identity theory that is fully theorized by Tajfel and Turner's 1979 social identity theory of intergroup relations.

### Motivational Processes

For the social identity theory of intergroup relations, the key motivational process is self-enhancement in group terms and the management of collective self-esteem. At the group level, this motivation is

manifested as an intergroup struggle for positive distinctiveness. Self-categorization theory originally had little to say about motivation. Instead, it focused on process. However, it contained the implicit assumption that categorization might satisfy a basic human need to structure one's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors and locate oneself in the social world.

Building on this idea, Michael Hogg developed *uncertainty-identity theory*, first published in 2000 and then more fully in 2007, presenting it as a motivational explanation of social identity processes and self-categorization effects to complement the motivational role of self and group enhancement. According to uncertainty-identity theory, people strive to reduce feelings of uncertainty about their social world and their place within it. In other words, they like to know who they are and how to behave and who others are and how they might behave. Social identity, through the processes of self-categorization and depersonalization, ties self-definition and behavior to prescriptive and descriptive prototypes. Social identity reduces uncertainty about who we are and about how we and others will behave and is particularly effective if the social identity is clearly defined by membership in a distinctive, high-entitativity group. Research confirms that uncertainty, especially about or related to self, motivates identification, particularly with high-entitativity groups.

Another motivational perspective on social identity processes based on self-categorization is offered by Marilynn Brewer's 1991 *optimal distinctiveness theory*. According to this theory, people are simultaneously motivated to stand out and be separate from other people, on one hand, and to fit in and be included by others, on the other hand. As a resolution of these competing motives, they seek a state of optimal distinctiveness. Large groups satisfy the inclusiveness motive but not the distinctiveness motive, and small groups do the opposite. Thus, people prefer to identify with midsized groups, or they seek a degree of intragroup differentiation (based on roles or subgroups) against the background of identification with a larger collective.

### Psychological Salience

A social identity or self-category comes into play psychologically to govern perceptions, attitudes,



feelings, and behavior when it is psychologically salient. People draw on readily accessible social identities or categorizations (e.g., gender, profession)—ones that are valued, important, and frequently employed aspects of the self-concept (chronically accessible in memory) or self-evident and perceptually obvious in the immediate situation (situationally accessible). People use accessible identities to make sense of what is going on around them, checking how well the categorization accounts for similarities and differences among people (structural or comparative fit) and how well the stereotypical properties of the categorization account for people's behavior (normative fit). People try out different categorizations, and the categorization with optimal fit becomes psychologically salient. Although largely an automatic process, salience is influenced by motivations to employ categorizations that favor the ingroup and do not raise self-uncertainty.

### Influence in Groups

People in groups adhere to similar standards, have similar attitudes, and behave in similar ways. They conform to group norms and behave group prototypically. Self-categorization is the cognitive process responsible for depersonalization and thus for causing individual group members to behave prototypically or normatively—transforming their self-concept and behavior to be identity consistent. The social identity theory of influence, *referent informational influence theory*, builds on self-categorization theory but also discusses processes responsible for identifying and configuring the ingroup prototype or norm.

Clearly, members will be highly vigilant for and attentive to information that accurately conveys what the prototype or norm is. In gauging what the appropriate group norm is, people pay attention to the behavior of people who are most informative about the norm. Typically, these are people who are generally considered to be prototypical and who are behaving in ways that are not inconsistent with the wider parameters of the group's identity. In many contexts, these people are the group's leaders. Indeed, this idea is the foundation of the *social identity theory of leadership*. However, outgroup members and marginal ingroup members can also be informative in a more indirect way: What they are is what the ingroup is not.

### Relative Prototypicality and the Psychology of Marginalization

Flowing from this discussion of how group members determine the appropriate group prototype is the observation that in groups, not every member is equally prototypical. Instead, some members are considered more prototypical than others, and there can be more or less intragroup consensus on this. A member who is consensually perceived to be highly prototypical will be extremely influential within the group, functioning as an effective leader who can influence the group's identity and destiny. A member who is consensually perceived to be nonprototypical will find it very difficult to exert influence and will often be vilified and marginalized by the rest of the group and possibly ejected from the group. Where consensus on prototypicality is low, members are effectively disagreeing about what the group is or should stand for—conditions that produce conflict that may lead to schisms and possible group disintegration.

Michael A. Hogg

See also Depersonalization; Optimal Distinctiveness; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Schisms; Social Identity Theory; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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## SELF-ESTEEM

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The term *self-esteem* is attributed to William James, who defined it as feelings about the self

resulting from comparisons of the *actual self* to the *ideal self*. More recently, self-esteem has come to reflect an individual's evaluation of his or her *self-worth*. With regard to intergroup relations and group processes, the following issues are of primary importance: (a) types of self-esteem, (b) self-esteem as an outcome or a predictor of intergroup discrimination, (c) the impact of experiencing discrimination on self-esteem, (d) implicit self-esteem, (e) the role of self-esteem in terror management, (f) the differentiation of self-esteem from group identification and group status, and (g) contingencies of self-worth. The relationship of self-esteem to intergroup phenomena is the primary focus of this entry. However, a discussion of dimensions and types of self-esteem is necessary before discussing how self-esteem relates to group processes and intergroup relations.

### Types of Self-Esteem

Initially, researchers defined self-esteem as a stable personality trait relative to how individuals felt about themselves. More recently, however, the term *self-esteem* has broadened to encompass different dimensions. One way to classify dimensions of self-esteem is as global, trait based, or domain specific.

*Global self-esteem* refers to stable aspects of the self-concept (e.g., "I feel I have a number of good qualities"). Common global measures of self-esteem include the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale. Global measures of self-esteem are best conceptualized as predictor variables because their stability makes them difficult to change after experimental manipulation.

*Trait-based* measures of self-esteem address feelings that may fluctuate (e.g., "I feel inferior to others at this moment"). A common measure of trait self-esteem is the State Self-Esteem Scale. Trait self-esteem, because it can fluctuate, is appropriate for use as both a predictor (i.e., it can be manipulated) and a dependent measure (i.e., it may change after experimental manipulations).

*Domain-specific self-esteem* comprises specific aspects of the self-concept and may fluctuate (e.g., "I have good reading comprehension"). Domain-specific self-esteem measurement generally focuses on specific areas of mastery, such as academic or physical self-concept. Like trait self-esteem,

domain-specific self-esteem can be conceptualized as a predictor or a dependent measure.

For intergroup purposes, self-esteem may be further distinguished as measuring personal or collective (social) aspects of the self. *Personal self-esteem* reflects how much individuals value themselves. For example, a personal self-esteem scale might include items such as "I wish I could have more respect for myself." *Collective self-esteem* addresses how much individuals value the groups or collectives of which they are members. Typical collective self-esteem measurement items might include, "In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to."

Still another way to categorize self-esteem is as an explicit or an implicit measure. *Explicit* measures of self-esteem involve traditional paper-and-pencil tasks wherein individuals answer direct questions. Most self-esteem scales involve explicit measurement. In contrast, *implicit* measures involve computer-based reaction time tests. For example, a common implicit measure requires the individual to pair words relevant to the self, such as *I* or *me*, with positive or negative words, such as *worthy* or *useless*. Those who associate "self" words with positive traits more quickly than with negative traits attain higher implicit self-esteem scores. This approach is often termed *indirect* or *nonconscious measurement*. Implicit self-esteem deserves special mention because implicit or non-conscious measures are commonly defined as outside conscious control. This definition seems to conflict with the characterizations of self-esteem as self-evaluative. However, some researchers argue that, regardless of the nonconscious aspect of the measure, the feelings measured are in fact elicited by the self and do guide reactions to stimulus.

### Self-Esteem in Intergroup Discrimination

The role of self-esteem in group processes and intergroup relations is rooted in self-enhancement motivations. Individuals strive to focus on positive information about the self and to make evaluations and attributions that support positive self-evaluations. At an intergroup level, there also exists a group enhancement motivation. *Social identity theory* states that individuals define themselves in terms of their group memberships and seek to maintain a positive identity through association

with positively valued groups and through comparisons with other groups.

Social identity theory posits a central role for self-esteem relevant to intergroup relations. However, interpretations of the theory suggest competing perspectives on the role of self-esteem. One perspective states that intergroup discrimination, or ingroup-favoring evaluations, enhance self-esteem. Intergroup discrimination involves either evaluations that derogate members of other groups or evaluations wherein both groups are evaluated positively but the ingroup receives a more positive evaluation. In either case, discrimination involves enhancing the relative value of the ingroup. Because positive identities are a product of membership in positively valued groups, people show bias as a means of enhancing their self-esteem. A competing perspective proposes that depressed self-esteem promotes ingroup bias. That is, individuals with low self-esteem are motivated to enhance their group as a means of increasing deficient self-esteem.

Both perspectives suggest a central role for self-esteem in intergroup processes, but the two perspectives do not seem logically consistent. In particular, if ingroup bias improves self-esteem and people with low self-esteem are more likely to show bias, how is it that some individuals are chronically low in self-esteem? The different dimensions of self-esteem detailed below help resolve this inconsistency.

#### *Self-Esteem as an Outcome of Intergroup Discrimination*

There is some support for the proposition that discrimination against outgroups enhances self-esteem for those who discriminate. However, it appears that only trait, domain-specific, and social aspects of self-esteem increase after the opportunity to discriminate. This suggests that discrimination improves aspects of self-esteem that are not static (i.e., trait and domain-specific) and those that are relevant to feelings derived from group memberships (i.e., collective or social aspects).

#### *Self-Esteem as a Predictor of Intergroup Discrimination*

The question most commonly asked by researchers interested in self-esteem as a predictor of intergroup discrimination is, Who shows more bias,

individuals with high self-esteem or individuals with low self-esteem? Empirical evidence suggests that individuals with high personal self-esteem demonstrate more bias. However, under conditions in which self-consistency needs are met (e.g., people with low self-esteem can discriminate without making claims of superiority), individuals with high and individuals with low self-esteem show similar levels of bias on both personal and collective measures. Broadly, data suggest that individuals higher in global personal self-esteem show more ingroup bias, indicating that social identity theory predictions regarding the motivational role of self-esteem are not supported.

Research examining self-esteem as a predictor and as an outcome of discrimination behaviors highlights important issues about different domains of self-esteem. In the case of the link between self-esteem and intergroup discrimination, competing predictions were resolved through consideration of the different forms of self-esteem.

#### *Self-Esteem of Those Who Experience Discrimination*

Another issue of interest is how being the target of group-based discrimination impacts self-esteem. Black people in the United States, a long-standing target of discrimination, generally report higher self-esteem than do groups with fewer discrimination experiences. However, some other groups that have suffered discrimination, such as women and the overweight, show deflated self-esteem. Research examining effects of discrimination on self-esteem suggests that appraisals of the discrimination and how the individual perceives the outcomes of the discrimination mediate its impact on self-esteem.

#### **The Emerging Role of Implicit Self-Esteem**

Implicit self-esteem measures are relatively new. Although the source of some controversy, many perspectives suggest that consideration of both implicit and explicit measures is important because they predict different behavioral outcomes. In addition, implicit and explicit measures are often unrelated, suggesting that they are independent constructs.

Work on the impact of implicit self-esteem on intergroup attitudes suggests that increases in

implicit self-esteem motivate ingroup-favoring responses. However, other research indicates that individuals who possess low implicit self-esteem and high explicit self-esteem are more likely to demonstrate ingroup bias. Still other work finds that high implicit self-esteem is associated with ingroup favoritism only when the ingroup is high status. The relationship between implicit self-esteem and intergroup bias appears ripe for continuing investigation.

### Terror Management and Self-Esteem

*Terror management theory* posits that self-esteem serves a fundamental role in buffering anxiety derived from reminders of mortality. In this view, mortality reminders motivate a striving for self-esteem to offset anxiety. The primary mechanism for bolstering self-esteem is adhering more strongly to one's cultural worldview. Many outcomes corresponding to bolstering the cultural worldview are relevant to intergroup relations.

For example, one strategy for bolstering the worldview (and thus bolstering self-esteem) is evaluating the ingroup favorably and outgroups unfavorably, provided that the ingroup is viewed positively and outgroups are viewed negatively. However, when outgroups are viewed favorably, mortality reminders promote more positive outgroup evaluations. In short, mortality reminders make responses extreme. Individuals evaluate positively valued groups more positively and negatively valued groups more negatively.

### Self-Esteem Versus Status and Group Identification

Other useful distinctions are between self-esteem and group status and between self-esteem and group identification. There is a long tradition of investigation of the effects of status on ingroup bias. Often group status, defined as the relative standing of the group in relation to other groups, is equated with self-esteem. However, individuals who are members of low-status or stigmatized groups are no more or less likely to have low self-esteem than are members of high-status or nonstigmatized groups. Thus, it seems that negative aspects of social identity, such as low status, can become disassociated from self-esteem.

It is also useful to distinguish *group identification* from self-esteem. Although measures used to assess group identification often include items that tap aspects similar to those defined as collective self-esteem, group identification focuses on how strongly people are committed to their groups. In contrast, collective self-esteem addresses the feelings derived from group memberships. Collective self-esteem and group identification are sometimes viewed interchangeably. However, empirical evidence suggests that stronger group identification, but not greater collective self-esteem, predicts increased ingroup bias.

### Contingencies of Self-Worth

Recent work on contingencies of self-worth focuses on characteristics that constitute global self-esteem. That is, these contingencies are the domains that contribute to an individual's global self-esteem. Some individuals may base their self-esteem on physical appearance, others on academic performance, and still others on religious faith or some other domain. Contingencies of self-worth explain a number of paradoxical influences of self-esteem. For example, empirical data demonstrate that Black people in the United States are less likely to place value on approval from others and so are less likely to have their self-esteem impacted by discrimination (i.e., disapproval from others). Although there is presently little work examining the relationship between contingencies of self-worth and prejudice, this area represents an interesting avenue for future investigation.

*Christopher L. Aberson*

*See also* Collective Self; Identification and Commitment; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Racism; Social Identity Theory; Status; Stigma; Terror Management Theory

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## SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

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A *self-fulfilling prophecy* occurs when an originally false expectation leads to its own confirmation. One classic example of a self-fulfilling prophecy was bank failures during the Great Depression. Even banks with strong financials sometimes were driven to insolvency by bank runs. Banks make money by taking in deposits and then lending that money to others. If (as happened during the Great Depression) a false rumor starts that the bank is insolvent (incapable of covering its deposits), a panic ensues, and depositors want to withdraw their money all at once before the bank's cash runs out. When the bank cannot cover all the withdrawals, it actually becomes insolvent. Thus, an originally false belief has led to its own fulfillment.

Self-fulfilling prophecies are important to the understanding of intergroup relations. Under just the right (or wrong) conditions, inaccurate social stereotypes may lead to their own fulfillment. For example, members of groups stereotyped as more intelligent, competent, or likable can, through the operation of self-fulfilling prophecies, actually become more intelligent, competent, or likable

than members of groups stereotyped as less intelligent, competent, or likable. Thus, self-fulfilling prophecies may contribute to the maintenance, not only of stereotypes themselves, but of the group differences and inequalities that give rise to those stereotypes.

Such processes, however, are limited, and the extent to which they contribute to group differences and inequalities is the subject of considerable controversy in the research literature. This entry discusses what that literature does and does not tell us (including some common misconceptions) about self-fulfilling prophecies.

### Early Research

The earliest empirical research on self-fulfilling prophecies examined whether teachers' false expectations for their students caused students to achieve at levels consistent with those teachers' expectations. Repeatedly, although not always, research demonstrated that teacher expectations are indeed self-fulfilling—students (sometimes) come to perform at levels consistent with their teachers' originally false expectations.

This research has been interpreted by many scholars as providing a powerful insight into social, educational, and economic inequality. Teacher expectations seem to systematically advantage students from already advantaged backgrounds (e.g., Whites, middle-class students) and disadvantage students from already disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., ethnic minorities, lower-class students). To the extent that education is a major stepping-stone toward occupational and economic advancement, self-fulfilling prophecies, it would seem, constitute a major social force operating to keep the disadvantaged in "their place."

Further support for self-fulfilling prophecies was provided by additional early research showing that social stereotypes can indeed be self-fulfilling. Classic studies showed that both physical attractiveness and racial stereotypes could be self-fulfilling. When men interviewed a woman who they falsely believed was physically attractive (accomplished through the use of false photographs in non-face-to-face interviews), not only were the men warmer and friendlier to her, but she became warmer and friendlier in response. Moreover, when White interviewers treated White interviewees in the same cold

and distant manner they used with Black interviewees, the performance of the White interviewees suffered.

Self-fulfilling prophecies have been demonstrated in a wide variety of educational, occupational, professional, and informal contexts. They have been demonstrated in experimental laboratory studies, experimental field studies, to naturalistic studies. Indeed, it is fairly easy to string together a few of the classic studies to tell a compelling story about how teachers' expectations, employers' expectations, and expectations in everyday interactions victimize people from stigmatized social groups. And, indeed, that is exactly what some observers have done. The logic here is quite simple. Stereotypes are widely shared and inaccurate. Stereotypes lead to inaccurate expectations. These expectations, in turn, are self-fulfilling. According to this perspective, self-fulfilling prophecies constitute a major source of social inequalities and social problems.

### The Limits of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

For several reasons, however, evidence for the power of self-fulfilling prophecies is far from conclusive. First, some of the classic studies had major methodological problems. Second, many have proven difficult to replicate. Third, the overall power of self-fulfilling prophecies, especially as obtained in naturalistic studies that do not involve experimenters intentionally creating false expectations in participants, is not large at all. Fourth, there currently is about as much evidence that positive self-fulfilling prophecies improve the performance of low-achieving students as there is that negative self-fulfilling prophecies harm their performance. Fifth, considerable evidence indicates that people are not rudderless ships, relentlessly tossed around on the seas of other people's expectations. Instead, people have their own motivations and goals that enable them to successfully combat others' false expectations.

Overall, therefore, the evidence does not justify a simple picture of self-fulfilling prophecies as powerful and pervasive sources of social problems. But the picture gets even fuzzier when other research is added to the mix. Although not all stereotypes are 100% accurate, most of the empirical studies that have assessed people's beliefs about groups and

then compared those beliefs to criteria regarding what those groups are actually like (Census reports, results from hundreds of empirical studies, self-reports) find that people's beliefs correspond with groups' characteristics quite well. Indeed, the accuracy of people's stereotypes (the extent to which people's beliefs about groups correspond with what those groups are actually like) is one of the largest relationships in all of social psychology.

In addition, the shared component of stereotypes is typically even more accurate than is the individual or idiosyncratic component. People do not rigidly and powerfully apply their stereotypes when judging individuals. They readily jettison their stereotypes when clear and relevant personal information is available about the person being judged, and overall, the effect of stereotypes on judging individuals is generally quite small. Thus, some of the key assumptions underlying the "self-fulfilling stereotypes are a powerful and pervasive source of social problems" story—that stereotypes are widely shared and inaccurate and that they powerfully distort expectations for individuals—seem to be largely invalid.

A second important assumption underlying the argument for the power of self-fulfilling prophecies is that even if these prophecies are small in any given study, those small effects, because they likely accumulate over time, can become quite large and hence at least partially account for major social inequalities. For example, let's say that teacher expectations increase the IQ of high-expectancy students only 3 points per year and decrease the IQ of low-expectancy students only 3 points per year. If these effects accumulate, then at the end of 6 years, there would be a 36-IQ-point difference between two students who started out with identical IQ test scores but different expectancies.

However, empirical research on self-fulfilling prophecies in education has not provided any evidence of accumulation. Every study that has tested the accumulation hypothesis has not only failed to confirm it but has found the opposite. Rather than accumulating to become larger and larger over time, the effects of self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom dissipate over time—they become smaller and smaller. Why this happens is not currently well understood. Given the evidence for generally high accuracy in teacher expectations, strongly erroneous teacher expectations may be

the exception rather than the rule. Thus, students may be highly unlikely to be the target of the same type of erroneous expectation year after year, thereby limiting the likelihood that they will be subjected to the same erroneous expectation (and its self-fulfilling effects) year after year.

Nonetheless, the story about the role of self-fulfilling prophecies in social problems should not be completely discarded. Self-fulfilling prophecies probably do play some modest role in social inequalities. First, some of the largest self-fulfilling prophecy effects ever obtained have been found among students from stigmatized social and demographic groups (Blacks, lower social class students, and students with histories of low achievement). Second, even though educational self-fulfilling prophecies do not accumulate, they can be very long lasting. Some evidence shows that sixth-grade teacher expectations have self-fulfilling effects as far out as 12th grade. Third, the types of diagnostic labels often used in educational contexts—learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, neurologically impaired—are inaccurately applied sufficiently often that they may frequently create inaccurately low expectations that are indeed self-fulfilling. Because these labels have a veneer of scientific credibility, it may be much harder for students so labeled to shake the inaccurate expectations produced by them.

### Conclusion

Given the highly mixed nature of the evidence, what conclusions about self-fulfilling prophecies are currently justified?

- Self-fulfilling prophecies are a real phenomenon and occur in many settings, including laboratories, classrooms, courtrooms, and jobs.
- In general, self-fulfilling prophecies do not greatly influence people. Occasionally, however, they can be quite powerful.
- Self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom dissipate over time. There is insufficient research to reach any conclusion about whether they accumulate or dissipate in other contexts, such as the workplace or family.
- In general, self-fulfilling prophecies probably play a real yet relatively modest role in creating or maintaining social inequalities based on

characteristics such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and attractiveness. Nonetheless, there may be some contexts in which this role is quite large.

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*See also* Children: Stereotypes and Prejudice; Discrimination; Minority Groups in Society; Stereotyping

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## SELF-MANAGING TEAMS

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Teams are a fundamental part of most manufacturing, service, and high technology companies and most nonprofit organizations. Some teams operate in a face-to-face setting, whereas others are geographically distributed. Some occur within a single organization, whereas others contain members from multiple organizations. *Self-managing teams* (SMTs) share some features common to traditional work groups, including group goals, a set of interdependent tasks, and the challenge of coordinating tasks and member skills to create a group product or service. What distinguishes SMTs is their control over the decision-making process. In traditional work groups, managers decide who is in the group and how and

when members interact with one another. In an SMT, many of these decisions are made by the group. This entry examines the ways in which SMTs differ from traditional work groups, the outcomes of SMTs, challenges for future research on SMTs, and limitations of SMTs.

To understand the difference between traditional work teams and SMTs, consider the example of a manufacturing facility that produced blades for jet engines. The plant was organized into SMTs. Each SMT decided who could join the group, what jobs people would work on, and how the jobs were to be done. In addition, each SMT disciplined members of the group and evaluated members' competencies in order to determine compensation. In an SMT operation, activities such as maintenance and quality control are part of the group's responsibilities rather than independent support operations. The fundamental idea is that the responsibility and authority for all the major work decisions are held by the team rather than by some organizational hierarchy. However, all SMTs are not the same. The major differences among SMTs concern the scope and number of decisions the group controls. The critical criterion of an SMT is that the majority of work decisions are made by the group.

### Impact on Outcomes

How do these structural features of SMTs affect group and organizational effectiveness, and what is the rationale for designing groups this way? Some key mediating mechanisms have been proposed to account for the presumed effectiveness of SMTs. First, compared with traditional work groups, SMTs provide workers with greater levels of autonomy, responsibility, freedom, and variety—factors documented in the literature to create high levels of motivation. Second, SMTs demand greater levels of coordination than do traditional work groups. The group members, rather than a supervisor, are responsible for making coordination effective, and they have control over their environment. In well-designed SMTs there are high levels of cohesiveness and strong norms supporting cooperation. Third, given the group's responsibility for managing the major production decisions, most SMTs exhibit high levels of problem solving. Instead of relying on a supervisor or others in the

organization to solve a problem, the group takes responsibility. A fourth mediating mechanism, related to the three listed above, is a focus on learning. In SMTs, the group strives to continuously develop new repertoires to enhance performance.

The potential consequences of these higher levels of motivation, coordination, problem solving, and learning are that SMTs should achieve high performance goals. Also, group members should express high levels of satisfaction and commitment over time. Furthermore, SMTs should be characterized by lower absenteeism, turnover, and accident rates than are traditional work groups.

What are the empirical findings regarding SMTs? Evidence suggests that SMTs can improve performance, but only when they are effectively implemented and institutionalized in organizations. Performance is measured both objectively (in terms of productivity and quality) and subjectively. High customer satisfaction is another outcome sometimes associated with SMTs. Finally, there is some evidence that withdrawal behavior (e.g., turnover, absenteeism) is lower in SMTs. In regard to mediators of SMT effectiveness, research suggests that SMTs produce greater effort and problem solving, which in turn lead to higher performance. To date, little effort has been made to investigate how SMTs influence other important group processes, such as leadership, conflict management, role ambiguity, and emergent control systems.

### Challenges for Future Research

One challenge for future research is clarifying how SMTs differ from traditional work groups. Asserting that a group is an SMT is common in the literature. But the definition of an SMT is based on the group's control over a variety of decisions. In many studies, the specific decisions the group does or does not make are not well specified, and hence ambiguity exists about whether the group is indeed an SMT. A second challenge is understanding the evolution of SMTs over time. When a group is initially given control over a new set of decisions, it is not surprising that there are positive performance changes. Longitudinal designs are needed to assess how SMTs evolve over time and whether the changes associated with new groups persist. A third challenge involves increasing the use of control



groups, which are absent in most of the studies on SMTs. A fourth challenge is being clear about the level of analysis for measuring the consequences of SMTs. Because SMTs are group-level phenomena, measurement needs to be at that level. A final challenge involves carefully specifying how the organizational contexts in which SMTs are embedded affect their performance.

### Limitations of SMTs

Several constraints on the diffusion and long-term effectiveness of SMTs deserve mention. First, because SMTs represent a fundamental change in the way organizations are structured, they are often resisted. Second, if SMTs are introduced into organizations in which traditional work teams also remain in place, conflicts between the two kinds of groups may reduce the long-run viability of the SMTs. A third limiting factor involves the group's task structure. Because SMTs are designed for groups in which members have high task interdependence, they are unlikely to be effective in situations in which members primarily work alone (e.g., service technicians).

SMTs are likely to remain part of the organizational landscape. At the same time, the nature of work is changing—it is becoming more distributed and global and placing a higher premium on knowledge work. It will be interesting to see how SMTs adapt to this changing environment.

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*See also* Group Cohesiveness; Group Learning; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Job Design; Team Performance Assessment; Teams; Work Teams

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## SELF-STEREOTYPING

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*Self-stereotyping* occurs when individuals' perceptions of their own characteristics correspond to the characteristics attributed to a social group to which they belong (i.e., stereotypes of their group). Researchers commonly measure self-stereotyping in one of two ways. The first way involves measuring the extent to which individuals attribute to themselves those characteristics commonly thought to describe their group. For example, it is a common belief that women in general are poor at math. Assessing whether individual women feel as if they are poor at math would be consistent with this way of measuring self-stereotyping. The second way researchers assess self-stereotyping is by measuring how similar individual group members think they are to their group or to a typical group member. For example, a researcher may ask individual members of an ethnic group how similar they are to a typical member of their ethnic group.

Some researchers use the term *self-stereotyping* more broadly to describe circumstances in which individual members of a group embrace stereotypic beliefs about their group, when group members behave in line with prevailing stereotypes of their group, and when members of a group have low self-esteem because their group as a whole is devalued within society. However, these uses of the term are less common and do not conform to the definition provided above.

### History and Importance

Historically, self-stereotyping was assumed to be an unavoidable negative consequence of membership in a socially devalued group. Conceptualizing self-stereotyping more broadly than is done today,

classic theories of the self and intergroup relations argued that the way society views a group undoubtedly shapes how individual group members see themselves. It was believed that members of socially devalued groups must see themselves negatively because they internalize society's negative image of their group. Thus, the importance of self-stereotyping was derived from the assumption that it represented a pervasive harmful consequence of being socially devalued.

In more recent thinking, the importance of self-stereotyping is thought to rest on the functions that it serves. According to some researchers, most notably system-justification theorists, self-stereotyping serves to justify inequitable social systems. That is, self-stereotyping among members of disadvantaged groups is thought to translate into beliefs and behaviors that excuse and perpetuate their disadvantaged status, lending credence to existing group inequalities. Other notable perspectives contend that self-stereotyping is a means by which individuals can feel close to or distinct from others.

At the intergroup level, self-stereotyping can increase a sense of connection to members of one's own group, thereby creating a sense of group cohesion and solidarity, or decrease the degree to which one's group seems similar to other groups. At the interpersonal level, self-stereotyping can facilitate positive interactions with people who believe group stereotypes to be true. Research delineating other functions needs to be done.

### Theory and Evidence

Several perspectives describe the circumstances in which self-stereotyping is more or less likely to occur. One important perspective, *self-categorization theory*, contends that the likelihood of self-stereotyping depends on whether people are categorizing themselves in terms of either a personal or a group identity at a given moment in time. As individuals shift from a personal identity to a group identity, the likelihood of self-stereotyping increases. This is because individuals who are thinking about themselves in terms of their personal identity define themselves using characteristics that differentiate them from other members of their group. In contrast, individuals who are thinking about themselves in terms of a group identity compare themselves with members of other groups, defining

themselves using shared ingroup characteristics that differentiate their group from other groups.

Two forms of evidence support this perspective. First, factors thought to increase the degree to which people think of themselves in terms of group identities have been shown to increase self-stereotyping. For example, situational cues that increase the degree to which a group membership comes to mind, such as completing a demographics sheet containing items inquiring about one's group membership, increase self-stereotyping. Self-stereotyping also increases as the distinctiveness of a given group membership within a particular situation increases. For example, being the only Black person at a board meeting should increase the likelihood that one thinks of the self in terms of this group membership, and therefore this situation should increase self-stereotyping. Second, self-stereotyping has been shown to depend on those to whom people compare themselves. Men and women in social or cultural contexts that foster cross-gender comparisons have been shown to exhibit greater self-stereotyping than those in contexts that foster within-gender comparisons.

The motivation to feel close to one's own group or differentiate one's group from other groups also determines self-stereotyping. Investigating the role of the former motivation, researchers found that individuals whose desire to feel included in important ingroups is threatened engage in greater self-stereotyping to fulfill this need. For example, if a sorority member momentarily feels that she is very different from the other members of her sorority, an important group identity, she may attempt to quell this feeling by engaging in self-stereotyping.

Exemplifying the role of the latter motivation, individuals who feel their group is threatened because of low status or insufficient distinctiveness from other groups will engage in self-stereotyping as a means to enhance the sense that their group is unique. An honors student who learns that honors students and other students on campus are fairly similar, for example, may engage in self-stereotyping by seeing himself or herself as highly academically motivated in order to restore a feeling of being distinct from other students. People who are highly identified with their group are particularly likely to respond to such temporary and chronic threats to the group with increased self-stereotyping, even when the relevant group traits are negative.

Finally, stereotypes have been shown to influence how people see themselves via shared understandings about the self developed in long-term relationships and in the course of daily social interaction with others. Self-stereotyping is more likely if one thinks that a close other holds stereotypic beliefs about one's group than if the other person is thought to hold counterstereotypic beliefs. For example, self-stereotyping is more likely if a woman thinks that her mother believes that women are poor at math than if she thinks her mother believes women are good at math. Also, people who think a new person with whom they want to get along holds stereotypic beliefs, as opposed to counterstereotypic beliefs, about their group are more likely to see themselves in a stereotypic manner.

### Future Directions

The understanding of self-stereotyping has advanced over time. The nature of self-stereotyping as well as those conditions that give rise to it are better understood. However, many fertile avenues for research remain. One important task is further distinguishing the circumstances under which self-stereotyping occurs with respect to positive group characteristics only, negative group characteristics only, or both. In some research, self-stereotyping is selective and occurs only for positive traits. In other research, self-stereotyping occurs for both positive and negative traits. Another important question is whether and when self-stereotyping translates into corresponding behavior. For example, for members of groups commonly associated with poor academic abilities, does self-stereotyping translate into poor academic performance?

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*See also* Categorization; Self-Categorization Theory; Self-Esteem; Social Identity Theory; Stereotyping

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## SENSITIVITY TRAINING GROUPS

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*Sensitivity training groups* provide training in a small-group setting for people who want to gain greater awareness and understanding of themselves and of their relationships with others. In contrast to psychotherapy groups, in which people seek relief through therapeutic intervention from an emotional disturbance (such as depression), sensitivity training groups generally involve people who are healthy yet have a desire for personal growth. Examples of problem areas in which growth is often sought include shyness, talkativeness, inability to express anger, and discomfort with emotional closeness.

Understanding sensitivity training groups is important because their focus on healthy individuals has widespread societal applicability. These groups are offered by organizations and agencies to help members of a community learn how to better understand and appreciate differences in other people. They often address societal concerns such as gender sensitivity; multicultural sensitivity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered cultures; and sensitivity toward those who are disabled in some way. This entry examines how such groups developed and how they work; it also reviews points of debate and current use of such programs.

### History

In the early 1900s, scholars began to take an interest in crowd psychology, which translated by the 1920s into an interest in studying normal social groupings and interactions to find solutions to

social problems. In the 1930s, Kurt Lewin developed his field theory to understand the nature of individuals in the context of their experience of their social environment. Lewin also began research aimed at promoting social change.

The development of what was called the *training laboratory* was a collaborative effort of Leland Bradford, Ronald Lippitt, and Kenneth Benne, all of whom joined with Lewin in the summer of 1946 to run a workshop at Connecticut's State Teachers College. According to Lippitt, one evening, as they met to discuss the day's training, three of the training participants came in and indicated they wanted to listen to the discussion. Lewin agreed, and he and his colleagues tried to proceed as if the participants were not present.

When the discussion's focus turned to the behavior of one of these participants, that participant became agitated and declared that the scientists' view of her group's interactions was not correct, and she commenced to offer her own perceptions. Later in the discussion, the same happened with one of the other participants—she, too, had a different perception of what had occurred within the group that day. At the end of the discussion, the three trainees asked if they could come back the next night for the discussion of that day's training events. The next night all 50 of the trainees came, and they all continued to come back every night of the training. According to Lippitt, this feedback and process review session became the most significant training event of the workshop.

This account of the emergence of the sensitivity training group is compatible with Lewin's three-stage model of group decision making: (1) *Unfreezing* occurs when the participant has a basic attitude, belief, or behavior disconfirmed or called into question; (2) *moving* occurs when the participant feels safe and secure and uses information obtained from the group's feedback to arrive at new attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors; and (3) *freezing* reflects the extent to which the new changes are internalized. According to Kurt Back, the training group (T-group) provided a new method for unfreezing a group, and the strong interactions and emotions that came with feedback were a sign of accomplishing this change.

At the time of their inception in the 1940s, T-groups focused on teaching U.S. communities

techniques for participatory democracy. In the 1950s, the groups shifted to a focus on individual growth, self-knowledge, and maturation. In the mid-1960s, the original aims of the laboratory method were renewed with the launch of the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* as a forum to critically reevaluate this field.

Thirty years after the birth of T-groups, there were three main types of these unstructured learning groups. The traditional T-group, also called *laboratory training*, emphasized interpersonal relationships and the development of interpersonal skills by allowing group members to interact in an unstructured environment and then analyze the dynamics of what had occurred. *Organizational development groups*, also called *human relations training*, used T-groups to address interpersonal problems at work and to change the culture of their organizations. Because group members were also coworkers, dynamics of the interactions would often have long-term positive and/or negative effects in the work environment. Finally, *personal expression groups* focused on personal growth and development, including the examination of personal beliefs, biases, and prejudices. With the shift away from a focus on dynamic group learning, personal expression groups came to be known as sensitivity training groups. *Encounter groups*, a type of sensitivity training group that gained popularity in the late 1960s, are sensitivity training groups that allow group members opportunities to have interpersonally intimate experiences with other group members. These latter two terms are often used synonymously in the literature.

### Goals and Format

The goals of sensitivity training groups are to help participants develop sensitivity to and awareness of their own feelings and reactions, to increase their understanding of group interactions, and to help them learn to modify their behavior. These goals include specifics such as increasing one's awareness of one's own feelings in the here and now, increasing one's ability to give and receive feedback, increasing one's ability to learn from experiences, increasing one's understanding of the impact of one's behavior on other people, and increasing one's ability to manage and use conflict.

To accomplish these goals, sensitivity training groups do not focus on discussion of a particular topic, the presentation of information, or problem solving but rather on the process of the group's interactions, such as the feelings of group participants and the communication of those feelings. Participants' concerns about issues such as intimacy, authority, and inclusion or exclusion in the group come to the surface and become the content and work of the group.

The format most commonly used for sensitivity training is a group consisting of 7 to 12 people who meet together with a group leader on an outpatient basis once a week for a specified time. However, *marathon groups* meet continuously for lengthy periods, such as 12 to 24 hours, providing a highly intense experience without interruptions. The leader of the group is referred to as the *trainer* but is more of a facilitator than an expert or teacher, helping the group make its own decisions and maximize its resources.

In general, these groups are highly experiential, including activities such as discussions, games, and exercises that produce high levels of involvement by participants, thereby producing increased learning. Although experiential, groups are relatively unstructured; indeed, the group itself is accountable for developing the structure, and in this process, interpersonal styles and habits of the participants become evident. Participants who are self-centered, manipulative, rebellious, or pacifying, or who continue to remain disengaged, reveal themselves, and the group gives them feedback on their behavior.

This process takes on predictable developmental stages. These stages are given various names throughout the literature, but their descriptions are the same: (a) *initial encounter* describes the beginning of the group, when participants are cautious about exchanging personal material; (b) *interpersonal confrontation* describes the work stage, in which the focus of the group is directed to individual members and there is substantial negative feedback and/or invalidation of participants' personal beliefs, which provides participants with an opportunity to reconstruct their beliefs and/or expectations of others; and (c) *mutual acceptance* refers to the concluding phase, when the work has lessened, participant relationships become more relaxed and positive, and participants make efforts

to patch up sources of conflict and tension from earlier training sessions.

Some researchers believe that the disconfirmation of a participant's beliefs creates a motivation or "felt need" to learn, that the acceptance or support offered by the group creates the climate in which the participant can change, and that these paradoxical stances are essential for effective learning in sensitivity training groups. The groups thus provide a testing ground for group members to "try on" new behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.

### Points of Debate

Sensitivity training has been controversial because of suggestions that participants could suffer emotional harm that would render the training method unethical. For example, the group may promote exposure, frankness, or even attacks within the group that participants would not normally engage in or be exposed to in their lives outside the group. Such experiences might have undesirable enduring consequences for participants.

Furthermore, despite some researchers' firm beliefs that confrontation or disconfirmation of a participant's basic feelings, attitudes, or behavior is necessary for change to occur, research does not support this belief. Favorable outcomes have also been reported by participants who received only support from the group, allowing them to feel safe or accepted. These findings provide an invitation to current sensitivity training group leaders to eliminate controversial confrontational methods and replace them with those that would provide more support of group members. Doing so would allow leaders to facilitate personal growth in group members without the risk of harming them emotionally.

There are two other main points of debate in the literature. First, there is concern about the moral implications that this type of encounter may have for an individual and for the community at large. Within sensitivity training groups, standards and norms are relative: They are determined in situ by the group and hinge on a basic assumption that the group should be trusted. Organizations that believe in universal moral standards or absolutes, such as some churches, do not support the use of sensitivity training groups.

Second, findings from research examining the effectiveness of sensitivity training are mixed. In

some studies, participation in sensitivity training groups has been shown to change behavior. However, there is a question about the persistence of these changes over time. Also, some research suggests possible negative outcomes for some participants. Furthermore, in hospital settings, research found that social skills groups that focused on learning appropriate behaviors and eliminating inappropriate behaviors through the use of behavioral techniques such as rehearsal, feedback, and modeling fared significantly better than sensitivity training groups did in producing changes in their participants.

Research on sensitivity training groups has largely faded. One reason is that although such groups were originally associated with basic laboratory-based psychology, these groups now have a very successful life of their own outside scientific psychology. Sensitivity training is now largely a clinical and applied discipline. With no identifiable basic social science discipline to call their own, sensitivity training groups have few norms for performance or evaluation.

### Current Status

Concerns and research issues led to a virtual extinction of sensitivity training groups as they had existed in the 1960s and early 1970s. For example, in the early years, sensitivity training groups and human relations training were the focus of many books and were included in psychotherapy literature reviews, yet in current publications it is difficult to find mention of either of these topics in other than a historical sense. However, as reported by John Beck, many sensitivity training group participants reported highly fulfilling experiences, in addition to expressing positive sentiments of excitement, involvement, enjoyment, and fun.

In the 1970s, efforts were made to develop training programs to address the continued interest of participants through widely marketed for-profit companies. For example, the company LifeSpring, founded in 1974 by John Hanley, used Large Group Awareness Training to present training in a seminar format but split participants up into dyads to accomplish the small-group training experiences and goals of the earlier groups. By 1989, more than 300,000 participants had enrolled in these seminars. Although the company no

longer exists, the *personal growth movement* continues with widespread fervor in other formats, and many companies, such as Momentus and the Great Life Foundation, offer intrapersonal training based on LifeSpring. There are also groups that have a greater focus on interpersonal training, such as Conscious Loving and Living, developed by Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks. The ongoing popularity of these programs provides contemporary evidence of the personal value participants place on this type of training.

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See also Cooperation and Competition; Group Learning; Lewin, Kurt

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## SEXISM

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*Sexism* refers to attitudes and behaviors based on sex stereotypes, or cultural assumptions attached to being male or being female that disadvantage and discriminate against individuals on the basis of sex. Central to sexism are beliefs that men and women have inherently and essentially different traits. Manifested in socialization, interactions, and institutions, these beliefs maintain differences between men and women, affecting individuals in

many different ways. This entry begins by reviewing common stereotypes based on gender, then examines the consequences for women, and briefly summarizes discrimination against men.

### Sex Stereotypes

Studies find that widely held gender beliefs exist in the United States. In general, these beliefs hold that women are more *communal* and men are more *agentic*. Accordingly, women are often believed to be more competent at tasks that are characterized as more expressive and socioemotional in nature (e.g., nurturing and caring for others), while men are believed to be more competent at tasks that are more instrumental in nature (e.g., starting a business). In addition to these specific assumptions, men are considered to be generally more status worthy and more competent at tasks that “count.” Because communal tasks are often devalued, women are usually seen as less competent than men, although they are generally considered the “nicer” sex.

Sex stereotypes are pervasive in that they are learned during childhood and maintained throughout the life course. From an early age, children learn that sex is a significant attribute of self and that being female is supposedly different from being male. To make sense of this difference, children often imitate behaviors of their same-sex parent, and parents may in turn encourage gender-appropriate behaviors through endorsing gender-specific hobbies (e.g., cooking for girls and sports for boys), rewarding gender-typical acts (e.g., girls behaving well and boys being assertive), and punishing or discouraging gender-atypical acts (e.g., girls acting aggressively and boys playing with dolls).

In addition, in childhood and adolescence, teachers and peers may help reinforce not only the notion that women and men are different but also the belief that men are more status worthy than women. Within the classroom, teachers may subconsciously pay more attention to boys, thereby creating a heightened sense of superiority and importance among the male students. Outside the classroom, peers may ostracize both girls who are tomboys and boys who “act like girls,” but such stigmatization is often harsher on boys than on girls. The differential sanctioning of gender-deviant behavior is hence suggestive of men’s higher status

because it implies that it is more acceptable for women to partake in male-typed activities but less acceptable for men to exhibit feminine behaviors.

The early socialization of gender beliefs can significantly constrain perceptions of self-competence. For instance, research finds that given the cultural belief that boys are better at mathematics than girls are, parents often attribute boys’ successes in mathematics to talent but girls’ successes in mathematics to effort. Such attribution bias can lead to feelings of competence among boys and feelings of incompetence among girls, even if the two groups do not objectively differ in their actual performance in mathematics. Thus, sex stereotypes can prevent and discourage girls from pursuing a male-dominated field even if they are as competent as the male sex in that field. Indeed, a number of studies find that, when exposed to the belief that men are more competent than women at a task, men develop not only higher ratings of self-competence in that task but also higher aspirations to work in a field related to that task, even if there is no actual gender difference in competence. One implication, then, is that sex stereotypes can help explain the persistent segregation of men and women in different fields of study, occupations, and jobs.

Aside from early socialization, sex stereotypes are maintained in interactions throughout the life course. In this light, two theories in social psychology, *status characteristics theory* and *expectation states theory*, provide useful frameworks for understanding the mechanisms by which gender beliefs are created and upheld.

According to status characteristics theory, an attribute is a status characteristic when cultural beliefs attach a greater value and competence to one category of the attribute than another. Gender is therefore a status characteristic in that cultural beliefs denote not only sex differences in general levels of competence (thus making gender a *diffuse* status characteristic) but also sex differences in specific types of competence (thus making gender a *specific* status characteristic). The beliefs attached to the different categories of gender, in turn, have implications for how individuals see and act toward one another in social relations.

According to expectation states theory, cultural beliefs attached to a status characteristic translate into performance expectations and ultimately

behaviors when the status characteristic is salient in the particular social relational context. Specifically, in collective, task-oriented situations, to the extent that a status characteristic is related to the task outcome, the stereotypes associated with that status characteristic shape expectations that actors form for themselves and others. What this theory predicts, then, is that in situations in which gender is salient, sex stereotypes will influence what individuals expect from one another. Congruent with this prediction, experimental research in mixed-sex settings finds that men have an advantage over women in task behaviors (e.g., visual dominance, assertive gestures) when given a masculine task or a gender-neutral task, whereas women have an advantage over men when given a feminine task.

The resulting implication is that in interactions in which gender is salient, individuals expect others to treat them in ways that are consistent with widely held gender belief. That is, men and women are better at different tasks, but men are generally more competent than women. Behaviors then follow expectations in self-fulfilling ways: Men are given more opportunities to act and more positive feedback when they are presumed to be more competent at the task, whereas women take the dominant role when the task is considered a feminine one.

The maintenance of sex stereotypes in interactions thus reinforces and legitimates the belief that men and women are different. This belief can serve as a basis of discrimination, especially in situations in which individuals enter a group or position that is dominated by the other sex. In particular, research finds that women in traditionally male-dominated work settings (e.g., engineering) or positions (e.g., CEOs) often face a double bind: Whereas their work requires them to be agentic and aggressive, they are also expected to be communal and warm. As the requisite behavior contradicts gendered expectations, women in these situations often experience a *backlash*, as they are seen as too aggressive, unfriendly, and therefore deviant from the way others believe they should be. As a result, women looking to work in customarily male occupations or jobs may be less favorably considered or evaluated, and their legitimacy may be questioned. This, in turn, can disadvantage women in their career choices, advancement, and mobility.

## Consequences of Sexism

Sex stereotypes thus affect not only individual behaviors and social relations but also larger social structures. In particular, research suggests that gender inequality in the labor market can be at least partly explained by discrimination based on sex stereotypes. It is important to note, however, that sex stereotypes often emerge in subtle and nonconscious ways. Gender beliefs emerge in social relations through the process of sex categorization, that is, the labeling of self and others as either male or female. Studies in cognitive psychology suggest that sex categorization often occurs automatically and unconsciously; that is, sex is one of the first categories with which individuals sort and make sense of self and others. As categorization inherently exaggerates differences between groups and minimizes differences within groups, sex categorization activates ingroup preferences as well as sex stereotypes, thereby distorting and biasing perceptions and evaluations of others.

### *Workplace Discrimination*

Men tend to be predominant in the workplace, and this can be disadvantageous to women. As individuals in powerful positions are often male, ingroup preferences can result in the favoring of men over women in hiring and promotion practices. Furthermore, widespread beliefs about gender and competence can lead not only to the placement of men and women into different jobs but also to the placement of men in higher positions and women in lower positions. Given the assumption that men are generally more competent than women, employers may also credit men more often for their successes, leaving women with less recognition for their achievements.

Although they are subtle, acts of nonconscious discrimination can over time accumulate into real advantages and disadvantages. Discrimination based on sex, however, can also occur in other ways. Related to gendered assumptions about competence are gendered assumptions about men's and women's roles in the family. Though women's participation in the labor force has increased, women are still seen as wives and mothers before they are workers and providers, whereas men are seen as workers and providers before they are husbands and fathers. The persistent assignment of



the nurturing role to women and the provider role to men can lead not only to increased work–family conflicts for women but also to discrimination against mothers in the workplace. Like gender, motherhood can be seen as a status characteristic with its own set of stereotypes. In particular, it is often assumed that mothers are less competent and less committed to work, given their primary child-bearing and childrearing responsibilities. Given this belief, employers may see mothers as less hireable and less promotable, in turn disadvantaging mothers in their workplace pursuits. This belief can also affect women who are not mothers, because employers often assume that most women will become mothers.

Discrimination based on motherhood therefore constitutes another barrier for women in the labor market. Indeed, recent research indicates a wage penalty for motherhood, suggesting that employer discrimination against mothers can be one reason for the depression of women's earnings. Furthermore, studies suggest that employers could also "statistically" discriminate. According to this perspective, employers are seen as profit-maximizing actors who use sex stereotypes as a means to screen applicants with respect to work productivity and commitment to work. As mentioned earlier, given the cultural assignment of domestic responsibilities to women, employers often assume that women are less productive, less committed to work, and more likely to quit than men are. As such, hiring or promoting female workers poses significant risks and high costs, and employers may accordingly not hire women or not promote women, or they may allocate women to lower positions with lower turnover costs. In this sense, although employers may believe that they are making rational decisions, their actions may nonetheless constitute discrimination based on inaccurate beliefs.

### *Other Outcomes*

In general, employer discrimination based on sex stereotypes occurs in fairly subtle and covert ways. However, sex stereotypes can emerge in a more overt manner through sexual harassment. Broadly, sexual harassment refers to unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature directed at a person or group in institutional settings such as education or the workplace. Such

behavior can come from authority figures (e.g., teachers or employers) as well as peers (e.g., classmates or coworkers) and often involves disparagement or disapproval of a certain sex based on beliefs about that sex. For instance, research finds that women studying or working in customarily male fields often encounter sexist remarks that question women's abilities (e.g., women's management skills), imply their inappropriateness for studying or working in those fields (e.g., calling law "a man's game"), and maintain their difference from their male counterparts (e.g., the doctor vs. the "lady doctor"). Such experiences with sexual harassment can lower women's satisfaction with their work, elevate their levels of stress, and increase their likelihood of changing their academic or career plans.

In addition to discriminatory behaviors, sexist beliefs may be embedded within institutions in more direct ways. One example is the devaluation of women's work. It is widely documented that there is a wage penalty for working in occupations that are female dominated. That is, controlling for occupational characteristics and occupational demands, female-dominated occupations tend to pay less than male-dominated occupations. Research further finds that there is a wage penalty associated with nurturance. That is, jobs that require nurturing skills pay less. Given that nurturance is a trait usually linked to women, these findings imply that occupations are valued in ways that are consistent with the stereotype that men's abilities, and hence tasks associated with men are worth more than women's abilities and feminine-typed tasks. Thus, as much as the gender gap in pay may be due to discrimination against women, it may also be due to systematic gender bias in the compensation structures in the labor market.

Knowledge-producing institutions are also not impervious to gender beliefs. Up until the mid-20th century, most academic research focused largely on men in both methodology (e.g., studying only men) and scope (e.g., studying only men's issues). Interpretations of research findings also favored men and reinforced sex stereotypes. As an example, the finding that men and women have different brain sizes was interpreted as evidence for actual gender differences in competence. Since then, women have increased their participation in research, and studies including women

have likewise expanded. However, it remains true that women's issues are often marginalized or neglected. Men continue to be seen as the standard for the typical human subject in research, and findings continue to compare women against an implicit male norm rather than assess gender differences on equal grounds. Further, though most studies now incorporate both men and women in their research methods, findings regarding gender differences are not always discussed or applied in the real world. Gender bias hence exists even in institutions where objectivity is the ideal, and given that these institutions are linked to the production of knowledge, such bias may result in the further reproduction of sex stereotypes.

It has also been argued that there is a general lack of gender sensitivity in social institutions. Research on professional education (e.g., medical school and law school), for one, finds little inclusion and little discussion of gender issues in the classroom and in educational texts. The marginalization of gender not only can result in a lack of gender awareness but also can leave individuals unprepared for gendered experiences in later career practices. Likewise, at the workplace, gender insensitivity can go beyond sexual harassment in that characteristics that are considered inherent in jobs may be laden with gendered connotations. In some cases, gender-specific job titles (e.g., stewardess) may be used to imply the gender-appropriateness of different types of work, and specific job requirements (e.g., heavy lifting) may be used to favor a particular gender in hiring and promotions. Moreover, despite legal sanctions against blatant discrimination based on sex, the underreporting of sexual harassment and the lack of intervention and resolution for cases that are reported indicate a need for effective policies and stronger enforcement of policies. Similarly, despite the prevalence of work–family conflicts, there remains a dearth of family-friendly policies at the workplace. The lack of discussion and action regarding the work–family balance can be particularly disadvantageous to women because most women shoulder the bulk of domestic responsibilities.

### Sexism Against Men

Although the term *sexism* is generally applied to the treatment of women, there is recent discourse

regarding sexism against men, or *reverse sexism*. In this perspective, widely held gender beliefs are seen as disadvantageous not only to women but also to men. A recent example is a court suit filed by a male high school student against his school, claiming that schools are designed to disadvantage boys in that they reward behaviors more often expected from girls (e.g., compliance) while punishing behaviors more often expected from boys (e.g., rebelliousness).

Discrimination against men, however, has been documented in more than the educational setting. In the criminal justice system, the gender gap in conviction and imprisonment rates may partly reflect the stereotype that men are more aggressive and therefore more capable of violent crimes. Specifically, some research finds that although men and women are equally likely to initiate violence, women are less often charged with domestic abuse than men are because of the belief that women are less aggressive and therefore less capable of abusive acts. Bias against men has also been documented in the legal system. In family court, fathers are much less likely than mothers to obtain child custody in divorce cases. Possibly this reflects the stereotype that women are more nurturing and therefore better parents than men are.

Discrimination in the labor market can also be directed at men. Just as women in male-dominated occupations face significant gender bias at the workplace, men who wish to pursue female-dominated occupations (e.g., nursing, elementary school teaching) find themselves discriminated against by others, who label these men as effeminate, weak, and passive. The overarching sentiment is that these men are not only acting inappropriately against norms of masculinity but are also stepping down in status by pursuing female-typed work. As sanctions for gender-deviant behaviors are usually harsher on men than on women, such discrimination can strongly discourage men from pursuing female occupations, thereby contributing to men's dramatic underrepresentation in female-dominant fields.

Even men who choose to pursue and work in female-dominant occupations face discrimination from those within. The nature and consequences of such discrimination, however, could be seen in a positive light. In particular, because of the assumption that men are generally more competent than women are, specifically at instrumental

tasks, men in female occupations are often encouraged to “move up” into higher-paying administrative positions (e.g., head nurse, school principal). This is a sharp contrast to women’s experiences in male-dominated occupations, in which they face backlash and hence difficulty in moving up the ladder. Thus, whereas women in male occupations face a *glass ceiling*, men in female occupations face a *glass escalator* that ultimately leads to better career outcomes. However, while these are considered positive outcomes, men may not necessarily intend or desire them, even though they may nonetheless take positions in higher ranks.

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*See also* Ambivalent Sexism; Discrimination; Feminism; Gender and Behavior; Gender Roles; Modern Sexism; Prejudice; Sexual Harassment; Stereotyping

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## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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Most legal and scholarly definitions of *sexual harassment* refer to any form of unwanted sexual attention that occurs at work or in school. Sexual harassment may include, among other behaviors, unwanted touching, exposure to offensive materials, offensive joking, or demands for sexual favors. In the view of many scholars and activists, sexual harassment is best conceived of as a form of sexual violence.

The term *sexual harassment* entered public consciousness during the second wave of the feminist movement, in the 1960s and 1970s, and attention to the problem of sexual harassment was raised further after the 1979 publication of Catherine MacKinnon’s groundbreaking book, *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*. Since that time, social psychologists, sociologists, and other scholars have developed a large literature on the topic, and legal protections against sexual harassment have been enacted and increasingly expanded. Sexual harassment shapes intergroup relations at school and work and highlights how various dimensions of power such as gender and age shape experiences within these important social institutions.

This entry reports sexual harassment prevalence rates, outlines the two major types of sexual harassment covered under U.S. law, and then describes social scientific explanations for sexual harassment.

### Prevalence and Reporting

The experience of sexual harassment is not limited to one age or gender. Studies show that women and men of all ages may be subjected to sexual harassment. As many as 70% of women and 45% of men have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, while up to 80% of students in Grades 8 through 11 and 65% percent of college students say they have been sexually harassed. Even so, many experts believe that sexual harassment remains underreported. Those who experience harassment may be reluctant to report it because of concerns about possible retaliation such as demotion, job loss, or stigmatization.

Indeed, research has shown that targets of sexual harassment may face such consequences as a result of reporting harassment. Oftentimes harassers hold some power over their targets, making reporting potentially even more difficult. Although sexual harassment is sometimes popularly represented as the result of some misunderstanding or overreaction, research shows that it is in fact a powerful tactic used by some individuals to exert power over others through sexual intimidation tactics.

### Types of Sexual Harassment

In the United States, two forms of sexual harassment are recognized under the law. The first, *quid*

*pro quo* or “something for something,” refers to instances when sexual demands are made, or threatened to become, a condition of or basis for employment or school-related decisions such as grades or access to school activities. This type of harassment is usually directed at a subordinate by a person of power within an organization.

The second type of sexual harassment, *hostile environment*, can occur among individuals who have the same amount of power within an organization or among those of different statuses. Hostile environment harassment refers to the existence of sexual conduct or materials in the workplace that unreasonably interfere with a person’s ability to perform her or his job or school tasks or when such conduct creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working or learning environment. In most cases, a pattern of unwelcome sexual conduct must typically be shown in order to qualify as hostile work environment harassment. On very rare occasions, a single incident may qualify as hostile work environment harassment if the event is particularly severe.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson* in 1986, employees have been protected from sexual harassment under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Students in educational programs and activities that receive federal funding are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Most sexual harassment complaints fall under the category of hostile environment harassment.

A recent legal trend in the United States is that courts have begun to recognize and apply sexual harassment protections in same-sex cases in addition to more typical male-on-female harassment cases. For example, in the 1997 case of *Doe v. Belleville*, a federal appellate court considered the case of a young man who was physically harassed and threatened with sexual assault by his male coworkers, and in 1998 the U.S. Supreme Court considered a case (*Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services*) in which a man was subjected to numerous sexual humiliations, attacks, and threats of rape by male coworkers.

### Explanations for Sexual Harassment

At its core, sexual harassment is about power. More specifically, research shows that sexual harassment is

a gendered expression of power used to regulate and modify gendered behavior within the social institutions of school and work. In particular, because it exists within the present cultural context in which masculinity is valued over femininity, sexual harassment may be used to assert men’s dominance over women, as in the case of male-on-female harassment. Social scientists have found that organizational settings where women work in occupations traditionally thought to be men’s domain may be especially likely locations where sexual harassment occurs. Public awareness of such organizational cultures has increased in part because of recently popular films such as *North Country*.

Sexual harassment may also be used to force individuals to adhere to mainstream gender norms. For example, men who do not adhere to masculinity norms associated with power, dominance, and heterosexuality may be subject to sexual harassment. Men with egalitarian gender views and those who do not adhere to masculine norms for self-presentation, perhaps by wearing earrings or dressing in other ways considered feminine, have also been found to be more likely than other men to experience harassment.

In addition to gender, dimensions of power such as age, social class, and sexuality have been linked to instances of and explanations for sexual harassment. Young people tend to be in positions at school and work in which older individuals wield power over them. Research has shown that young workers specifically may be more vulnerable to sexual harassment than their older counterparts because their lack of experience in the workplace tends to coincide with a general lack of knowledge about workplace rights and appropriate workplace interactions. Workers and students from disadvantaged social class positions may also be more vulnerable to sexual harassment. In the workplace particularly, those from lower social classes may be less willing or able to leave harassing job situations. Finally, research shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals are more likely to experience sexual harassment than are others. Thus, sexual identity is yet another dimension of power that shapes sexual harassment experiences.

It is important to note that gender, age, sexuality, and social class are not simply individual characteristics. Instead, these dimensions of power are imbued throughout organizations and social institutions

and therefore shape experiences of and responses to sexual harassment in schools and workplaces. In sum, multiple dimensions of power operate together to form the context of group processes and intergroup relations. Sexual harassment is an expression of power to which a range of individuals may be subject and that occurs within a variety of social contexts and institutions.

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*See also* Affirmative Action; Discrimination; Feminism; Gender and Behavior; Gender Roles; Power; Prejudice; Sexism; Stereotyping

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## SHARED MENTAL MODELS

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When it comes to the interaction between humans and machines, it is clear that people develop an understanding of how machinery works. This understanding, or *mental model*, guides how the individual interacts with machines. Cognitive psychologist Philip Johnson-Laird used this term to describe a reasoning process that could be applied to practical problems. He argued that mental models help people draw conclusions about how things work, deduce the relationship between units, and predict outcomes. The notion of mental models has since been widely used to describe internal cognitive representations of complex systems.

During the late 1980s, interest in team performance increased dramatically, due in part to several well-publicized incidents that were attributed to faulty teamwork (e.g., the downing of a commercial airliner by the Navy's USS *Vincennes*, the close call at the Three Mile Island nuclear energy plant, and an Air Florida crash in Washington, D.C.). Given the urgent need to understand and improve the performance of such critical teams, researchers extended the construct of mental models to teams. Most notably, Jan Cannon-Bowers and her colleagues began to analyze *shared mental model*—knowledge that is common or shared among team members. Shared mental models allow team members not only to understand their own work requirements but also to predict the needs and actions of their teammates. When accurate, these predictions should lead to better coordination and thus better teamwork.

Good examples of shared mental models are often seen in sports teams. Take basketball, for example. One player passing the ball to a second player without looking is called a *blind* or *no-look pass*. In analyzing this skill, we have to assume that the player who passes the ball is predicting that his or her teammate will be in a position to catch it (or else the pass would not be made). By the same token, the player receiving the pass is likely to have put himself or herself in a position to catch the ball. At a minimum, he or she is probably not caught completely off guard by the pass. This case illustrates how two team members are coordinating *implicitly* (without communicating) and demonstrates the use of shared mental models.

Researchers have described four types of mental models that might be shared among group members and thereby improve the group's performance. Each model contains different types of information about the task and the team.

1. A *task model* includes the overall goals and requirements of the task, task strategies, and parameters that circumscribe and limit the task.
2. A *team interaction model* includes the roles and responsibilities of individual members and the group's understanding of interaction requirements.
3. A *team model* includes team members' understanding of one another's knowledge,

skills, abilities, preferences, strengths, weaknesses, personal styles, and so on.

4. An *equipment model* includes a shared understanding of the use of available equipment in accomplishing the task and of how the performance of various team members needs to be coordinated to be successful.

So, for example, if team members have different task models, then they may approach the task differently and have trouble coordinating their actions. By the same token, if team members have different ideas about how they are supposed to interact (team interaction models), they will probably run into difficulties. When team models are not shared, team members will not have a good sense of one another and can make bad assumptions about what teammates need or are likely to do. Taking the basketball example, even highly skilled players can fail when they are not familiar with each other. Several Olympic “dream teams” have suffered this fate. Finally, in situations in which the team interacts with complex equipment, different equipment models can hinder coordination (a cockpit crew is a good example).

Although there is much agreement among analysts about the existence of shared mental models, there is still much debate about exactly how to define them. For example, some have interpreted the term *shared* to mean knowledge, implying that team members need to hold identical models. However, this interpretation is not completely accurate. For example, it is clear that surgical teams must coordinate their actions, but individual team members certainly do not have identical knowledge. Instead, each team member brings his or her own unique set of knowledge and skills to bear. So it is more reasonable to conclude that some *portion* of the individual members’ mental models must be shared to ensure coordinated performance.

### Measuring Shared Mental Models

Empirical research on shared mental models has lagged far behind theoretical analyses of them. This gap may be attributed, in part, to the difficulty in measuring this rather elusive construct. Obviously, there are no direct measures of mental models or shared mental models, because both are cognitive processes that occur in the minds of team

members. Hence, researchers are forced to infer the existence of shared mental models from team members’ questionnaire responses or from observations of a team’s performance. Both techniques are imprecise and have been the subject of some criticism. For this reason, efforts to improve them continue.

In one popular method to assess shared mental models, task experts are first asked to generate a list of important concepts related to performance of the task at hand, including the steps that must be taken to complete the task. This list of concepts is then given to another set of experts, who are asked to rate how similar each concept is to each of the others. Sometimes this is done by printing each concept on an index card and asking experts to sort them into related piles (*card sorting*). The goal is to figure out the relatedness among concepts. These data are fed into statistical packages (e.g., *Pathfinder*) that produce an overall “map” of the experts’ mental models. To assess the sharedness of mental models among team members, each team member is asked to do the same concept-sorting task, and the software calculates how similar the representations (maps) are among team members.

Although methods such as this are widely used, focusing only on the similarity of knowledge among team members may be misguided. Some suggest that it is important to assess the *accuracy* of these models as well. For example, if team members have a highly shared mental model of a situation, but that mental model is incorrect, then they will all be wrong (and likely fail). Obviously, both sharedness and accuracy are likely to be factors in performance.

### Empirical Research on Shared Mental Models

As noted, research on shared mental models has progressed rather slowly. Most research has focused on establishing the relationship between shared mental models and team performance. For the most part, a small to moderate positive relationship has been found. Moreover, the accuracy of team mental models explains a significant amount of variance in performance when added to the similarity of models as a predictor.

Other researchers have investigated training approaches that might help create shared mental

models within teams. At least three approaches have been proposed. The first of these is *cross training*, in which team members are allowed to experience the roles of their teammates. The rationale here is that if team members play one another's roles, then they will have a much better appreciation of how to support one another later on. Researchers have demonstrated that this is indeed a promising approach. However, there have also been some negative results, so more work is needed. A second approach is *interpositional knowledge training*. This entails training team members directly in the roles and responsibilities of their teammates. This approach has undergone little research (although what exists is encouraging) and thus requires further attention. The third approach is *team self-correction training*. This approach emphasizes intrateam feedback skills that help team members refine their mental models following performance. For example, this kind of intrateam debriefing often occurs in softball teams (frequently in a bar after the game): Team members recall individual plays from the game and discuss ways they could have handled things better. These exchanges are natural mechanisms that teams use to try to improve their performance. To date, however, few studies have been done to assess the utility of such exchanges.

#### Future Directions in Shared Mental Models Research

Several challenges exist in fully understanding the nature and development of shared mental models. Recent critiques have suggested that the concept of shared mental models is too limited to clarify the role of cognition in team performance and that issues such as the accuracy of shared mental models need further exploration. From the empirical perspective, there is a need for more research on shared mental models. Relatively little is known about how these models evolve, what they should contain, or how to improve them. For example, a recent statistical review of team training found only seven empirical studies that evaluated the effectiveness of training approaches thought to improve shared mental models.

*Jan Cannon-Bowers and Clint Bowers*

*See also* Group Mind; Group Performance; Socially Shared Cognition; Team Performance Assessment; Teams; Transactive Memory Systems

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## SHERIF, MUZAFER (1906–1988)

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Few can match the impact that Muzafer Sherif had on social psychology in the mid-20th century. His interests were wide ranging, including the self, social judgment, communication, reference groups, and attitude formation and change. But his most influential work was his early research on social norms and perception in the mid-1930s and his intergroup relations experiments carried out some 20 years later. The latter experiments provided the basis for his *realistic conflict theory*. It is his work on these two topics, based on an innovative use of the experimental method, that had major impact on both theory and research in social psychology. The common threads in his work were the ways that attitudes, internalized norms, and aspects of the self provide people with a frame of reference and anchor the way that they perceive, judge, and think.

### Sherif's Personal and Intellectual History

According to the historian Gardner Murphy, who also supervised Sherif's PhD dissertation, social psychology in the 1930s saw the disparate contributions of F. C. Bartlett's studies of (socially transmitted) remembering, the German school of Gestalt psychology, and Kurt Lewin's field theory to North American social psychology. What Sherif supplied was the alignment of an experimental commitment with real-life observations that together defined how people respond socially. This holistic approach was new in its time and was the substance of two major publications, *Some Social Factors in Perception* (1935), based on Sherif's dissertation, and its expansion in his *Psychology of Social Norms* (1936).

Sherif was born in 1906 in Turkey, completed a master's degree there, and then earned a second master's degree at Harvard in 1932. He returned to a post as instructor at the Gazi Institute, in Ankara, Turkey, where he commenced an investigation of norm formation. He then reentered the United States to continue his work at Harvard and completed his PhD dissertation on this topic at Columbia University in 1935 under Murphy's supervision. He returned to Turkey again in 1937, taking the first of several academic posts there and doing both basic and applied research in social psychology. He was ultimately appointed to a professorship at Ankara University. He left his homeland for the last time in 1945, extremely concerned by Turkish support for Nazism. In particular, he rejected the acceptance of genetic racial theory by the Turkish government and by officials and colleagues at his university. His protests led to his temporary arrest. His eventual release and return to the United States was sponsored by the U.S. State Department and aided by several American academics, including influential figures such as Hadley Cantril, Leonard Doob, and Murphy.

In 1945, Sherif married Carolyn Wood, who became an eminent social psychologist in her own right. Together, they coauthored several publications, including key works reporting experimental studies of intergroup relations. He held posts at several institutions, spending the longest time at the University of Oklahoma, and finally moved to his last position, at Pennsylvania State University, where he worked until his retirement in 1972. He

received a number of prestigious awards and honors throughout his distinguished career.

### Sherif's Major Contributions

#### *Social Norms*

In the mid-1930s, Sherif commenced his seminal work on social norms. He argued that, to establish a range of possible behavior, individuals use the behavior of others to provide a frame of reference. By default, people accept the average or middle views of others as likely to be more correct than their own. Further, he believed that this process underlies the origins of social norms. Sherif put this theory to the test in a series of classic studies designed to induce a group norm. The task was based on the autokinetic effect, an illusion in which a fixed pinpoint of light in a completely dark room appears to move. In fact, the apparent movement is caused by eye movement in the absence of a physical frame of reference. In the experiment, people in small groups were asked in turn to estimate how far they thought the light had moved. Making a response in this task is difficult, so people are highly uncertain. To counter this uncertainty, individuals used what others in their group had to say as a frame of reference, and over time group members converged in their estimates. This convergence was evidence that a norm had emerged. For example, one group might judge that the light had moved 2 inches, and another group might judge that it had moved 6 inches. In contrast, people tested alone were much more variable in their estimates over the same number of trials. The group norm persisted when members were later tested individually, indicating that the norm had been internalized.

Sherif's autokinetic experiment signaled his strong commitment at the outset of his career to the experimental method and was hailed as a pioneering study. Together with Solomon Asch's experiments on conformity to group pressure and Stanley Milgram's studies of obedience to authority, Sherif's experiment is one of the most often cited studies in social psychology dealing with social influence. It was his demonstration of the experimental formation of a social norm that prompted Asch, as he himself acknowledged, to study conformity to group pressure.



### *Realistic Conflict Theory*

Sherif believed that an explanation of group behavior could not result from the analysis of individual behavior and that the origins of *ethnocentrism* lay in the nature of intergroup relations. He argued that ethnocentrism is based on intergroup conflict and that this conflict arises when groups compete for scarce resources.

Sherif based his theoretical ideas on three field experiments conducted in boys' summer camps between 1949 and 1954, the most famous of which was the Robbers Cave experiment. These experiments were organized as follows:

1. The boys arrived at the camp, where they engaged initially in various campwide activities through which they formed friendships.
2. The boys were then divided into two separate groups, such that some of their friends were in the ingroup and others were in the outgroup. The groups were isolated from each other by living in separate bunkhouses and playing and working separately. In a short time, the two groups developed different norms. Even without intergroup contact, some outgroup stereotyping occurred.
3. Next, the two groups were brought together to engage in organized intergroup competitions in sports and other activities. This led to fierce competition and intergroup hostility, which was manifested in various ways. Ethnocentrism and intergroup aggression increased, often leading to an even higher level of ingroup solidarity. Even harmless encounters became hostile: If the groups shared the camp dining room, a meal was a chance for the groups to throw food at each other. Intergroup relations deteriorated so dramatically that two of the experiments were terminated at this point.
4. In one experiment, it was possible to proceed to a fourth stage. The two groups were provided with *superordinate goals*—ones that they both desired but were unable to achieve alone. In one instance, during a day's outing, the boys discovered that their truck was stalled, a real setback because it was their only means of driving for food. It took the combined effort of both groups pulling on a rope to get it started.

In other words, the groups needed to share their efforts and to work for a common cause. Sherif found evidence for a gradual improvement in intergroup relations following a series of cooperative intergroup interactions that allowed superordinate goals to be achieved.

These classic experiments demonstrated a number of things:

- Stereotyping occurred before actual competition between the groups.
- Prejudice and discrimination arose as a consequence of real intergroup conflict.
- Personality factors, such as authoritarianism and dogmatism, did not play an important role in the intergroup hostility.
- Ingroups formed despite the fact that some initial friends were outgroup members.
- Simple contact between members of groups in conflict was not enough to improve intergroup relations.

Realistic conflict theory was the most widely accepted theory of intergroup conflict prior to the development of Henri Tajfel and John Turner's *social identity theory*. According to realistic conflict theory, incompatible goals lead to tension and hostility between groups, and intergroup harmony depends on the shared perception and realization of goals that require intergroup cooperation for their achievement.

Realistic conflict theory has been further supported by other naturalistic experiments. Competition for scarce resources appears to be a sufficient condition for conflict to occur. *Social identity theory* argues that the mere awareness that two separate groups exist may also be sufficient to prompt intergroup discrimination. The two theories do not contradict each other. Rather, they highlight complementary factors that account for prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict.

*Graham M. Vaughan*

*See also* Asch, Solomon; Conformity; Cooperation and Competition; Ethnocentrism; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Minimal Group Effect; Norms; Obedience to Authority; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Reference Groups; Social Identity Theory

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## SLAVERY

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*Slavery* is an ancient and complex social system that permits the control of and often the actual ownership of an individual and his or her labor by another. This institution often blends into other forms of forced labor, which include a vast array of relationships that extend from formal systems, such as serfdom, indentured servitude, and conscription, to informal systems of family labor and to even illegal control of labor and other services. This complex and constantly changing system of servitude has played a central role in many societies since before the agricultural revolution and still exists in informal and illegal manifestations today. This entry focuses on the history of slavery within North America and the United States and its relationship to the development of intergroup relationships among races, classes, and sections within the United States.

### Early Development of Slavery

Racial slavery helped fuel a virulent racism that became and has remained a central theme in the history of the United States until this day. The institution also led to class tensions within the South between slave owners and poorer Whites and created sectional tensions that led to the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865). This system began with the Portuguese voyages down the African coast

during the later 15th century. These early adventurers purchased slaves from Africans located along the coast and transported the slaves back to Portugal or began to use them to produce sugar on their Atlantic islands or a little later in Brazil. By 1600 a new form of racial, plantation-based slavery had taken root in the Americas.

Slavery quickly spread throughout the Americas. During the early and mid-17th century, the British and other European powers moved into the West Indies and began producing sugar. In North America, Dutch and British colonists began to import slaves, and by the early 18th century, plantation-based racial slavery had become well established in Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina.

The British and their colonists established a system of slavery that differed considerably from the ancient system and less decidedly from the Portuguese and Spanish models. Unlike those in most of the ancient institutions, slaves in the Americas faced perpetual servitude not only for themselves but also for their descendants. Slavery also became associated with color or African background. Slavery, as a legal institution, had died out in northern and western Europe during the Middle Ages, and although individuals from this region could be forced to labor as indentured servants, criminals, or prisoners of war, they could not be perpetually enslaved. Africans, on the other hand, even if baptized as Christians, could be kept in perpetual bondage. The British system treated individual slaves as real or personal property. Owners could buy or sell them as individuals, could use them as collateral for loans, could rent or hire them out to others, and could will them to their descendants. Unlike other systems in which slaves performed a variety of roles as soldiers and bureaucrats owned by the state or became incorporated into families, British North American slavery became based on large-scale commercial agriculture. Slaves also worked as artisans, domestics, urban and rural laborers, and sailors and at a wide variety of occupations, of course, but the plantation remained the economic foundation of the American institution.

Race, unlike the situation in earlier and other forms of slavery, played a central role. Slavery became limited to Africans, and race became a symbol of freedom and slavery. The British also imported large numbers of indentured servants

and convicts, but these individuals became free after their term of servitude. Unlike the situation in the Iberian colonies, the difficulties of manumission in the British system led to a much smaller proportion of free Africans and thus intensified the linkage of race to slavery.

By 1776 the conditions of servitude had become well established in all the British North American colonies. Every one of the colonies had legislated a slave code that gave owners control over their property and awarded only extremely limited rights to slaves. The codes differed from colony to colony, but all accepted the ideal of perpetual servitude and the protection of the property rights of owners. The colonists through their legislatures passed these slave codes, which were unknown in northern and western Europe.

The American Revolution brought independence to the United States but only limited changes for slaves. Between 1776 and 1804, several of the newly created states began the process of ending slavery. Vermont led off by ending slavery in its 1777 constitution, and New York and New Jersey ended this process in 1799 and 1804, respectively. New Jersey would be the last state until the Civil War to move toward eventual abolition. Because none of the southern states followed this lead, the United States, after 1804, became sectionally divided by slavery between the northern, so-called free, states (the North) and the states to the south (the South), which continued the institution.

### U.S. Slavery, 1790–1860

During the 1790s, the industrial revolution, spearheaded by the rapid development of the British textile industry, fueled the demand for cotton, which quickly became the leading cash crop of the Carolinas and Georgia. When the United States purchased Louisiana in 1803, sugar and cotton production based on slavery spread into these new territories. Meanwhile, the action of Congress to outlaw the importation of slaves in 1807 led to the rapid development of an interstate slave trade as owners in the Chesapeake and other areas of the upper South began to sell or transport slaves to the cotton and sugar lands in the central states of the South.

Between 1810 and the Civil War, slavery played a central role in the economic, social, cultural, and eventually the political history of the United States.

From the 1820s to the Civil War, slave-produced cotton alone accounted for around half of the value of all exports from the United States, and tobacco and other slave-produced commodities added another tenth. U.S. commercial and financial institutions became heavily involved in supporting the shipment of these products to Europe, and a rapidly developing textile industry in the northeast became dependent on Southern cotton. The U.S. merchant marine, the second largest in the world, transported most of the cotton to Liverpool and other ports in Britain and Europe. By the eve of the Civil War, slaves accounted for around \$4 billion worth of property, which accounted for at least 20% of the total wealth of the United States and which compares to a gross domestic product of \$4 billion for the nation in 1860. Slavery had become big business.

Slavery created a powerful, wealthy elite that played an important role in Southern and national history. This small group dominated the economic activity in the Southern states and played a vital role in their social composition. Slavery intensified class divisions within the South as the minority of households that owned slaves looked down on the majority of poorer Whites. A virulent racism also became associated with the system. Many Southerners saw it as a system of racial control while Northerners associated Africans with slavery. Thus the endemic racism prevalent in the nation during these decades continued after the Civil War and continued to play a powerful role in U.S. history well after the destruction of slavery.

Life for slaves within this powerful institution remained controlled yet complex. In theory, slaves possessed very limited rights, but in practice, the amount of control slaves actually possessed depended on the constant interactions among themselves, their masters, and other Whites. Even under slavery, many found space to create and protect families, to develop cultural and religious practices, and to sell products in local, often illegal markets. Different situations also produced diversity. Life on a large sugar plantation in Louisiana differed from the life of a single slave on a small western Virginia farm. The status of a field hand in Mississippi differed from that of a skilled iron worker in the Shenandoah Valley. The situation of slaves hired out to a railroad company differed from that of slaves working as domestics in Baltimore, Richmond,

or New Orleans. There was a variety of environments for slavery, but the power to buy and sell, to hire out, or to punish meant that the owner retained an enormous amount of control.

### Abolition and Civil War

This institution, which had become central to the nation, created both attackers and defenders. Some people in the United States, influenced by Enlightenment and/or evangelical ideals, began to criticize the institution, and by the 1830s a small but active group of abolitionists had sprung up in several Northern, or free, states. Africans, both freed and enslaved, also attacked the institution. Many freed Africans joined the abolitionists or aided fugitive slaves to escape into enclaves for free Blacks in the North or in Canada. Slaves ran away, sometimes rebelled, and committed other actions against the institution. Slavery always had its defenders, and these attacks brought forth a full-fledged defense based on the deep cultural and historical roots of the institution, its acceptance in the Bible and among early Christians, and the virulent racism common to all regions of the nation. The North never became dominated by the abolitionists, but many people in the United States began to question the morality of the institution. On the other side, Southerners, now influenced by a powerful proslavery rhetoric, began to demand Northern acceptance of the institution.

Slavery had long been a sporadic political issue. Debates at the Constitutional Convention, in the early 1790s, and over Missouri between 1819 and 1821 had riled politicians, but the Mexican War, in the 1840s, placed the slavery issue in the midst of national politics. When the United States seized Mexican territory, the debate flared over whether slavery should be permitted in these newly acquired possessions. The Free-Soilers, not abolitionists, wanted to contain the extension of slavery, but many Southerners, now convinced by a proslavery argument, believed it to be in the best interest of the nation for slavery to expand. After serious sectional confrontations, Congress cobbled together the compromise of 1850, which failed because Free-Soilers, in the North, attacked the Fugitive Slave Law and many extreme Southerners believed their section had gained little. The passage of the Kansas–Nebraska Act in 1854 led to the battles

over “bleeding Kansas” and the formation of a new Free Soil Republican party. The efforts of President James Buchanan and his administration to admit Kansas as a slave state inflamed politics so much that when abolitionist John Brown attacked Harper’s Ferry in 1859, leading Southern politicians demanded that Congress pass legislation that would protect slavery in the national territories. This demand led to the division of the Democratic Party in early 1860, the election of Lincoln in late 1860, and the secession of slave states. By the spring of 1861, the Civil War had begun.

At first the Lincoln administration merely wished to reverse secession, but in early 1862, Congress passed legislation ending slavery in the territories and providing for compensated emancipation in the District of Columbia. The war continued, and Lincoln moved forward with his famous Proclamation, which freed slaves only in areas under Confederate control as of January 1, 1863. Congress, realizing that such a proclamation might be eventually ruled unconstitutional, passed after serious division the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ending slavery as a legal institution, in early 1865.

The courts later decided that the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, also prohibited peonage and other forms of forced labor. This ended the ancient institution of slavery within the United States. Abolishing the institution of slavery did not end its impact on intergroup relations, however. Racism remained a central feature in U.S. politics and society. While class conflict based on slavery died away in the South, the results of slavery, the Civil War, and abolition helped create a strong Southern sectional identification that persists to this day. The ancient institution ended in the United States in 1865, but its impact remains with us today.

*Van Beck Hall*

*See also* Apartheid; Dehumanization/Infrahumanization; Discrimination; Minority Groups in Society; Prejudice; Racism

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## SOCIAL CLASS

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The *social class* of individuals or groups refers to their hierarchical position in society. The bases of class are complex and sometimes ambiguous and vary among societies and historical periods. In contemporary industrialized societies, social class is generally determined by a small set of socioeconomic factors including educational attainment, occupation, income, and ownership of assets. In such societies, we may refer to an individual's membership in a social class, being a group of people who typically have a designated name or label (such as *working class* or *upper middle class*). However, this categorical judgment is not as simple as it seems. For example, people with low-prestige occupations may nonetheless be very wealthy. Relatively uneducated people may rise to very prestigious occupations in corporate life or the arts. The appropriate weighting of each of the socioeconomic factors we have mentioned in determining class is implicit, ambiguous, and often controversial. People may see themselves as working class whereas others may see them as middle class. The bases of class are contested by sociologists as well as by lay people. The primary focus of this entry is the social psychology of class.

### Defining Social Class

For the most part, social class is not inherited in the sense that a person is guaranteed to retain the class status that he or she was born with. However, some societies retain aspects of ancient hereditary class systems, such as the caste system of India and the aristocracy of Britain. Further, even when there is no formal inheritance of class, one's family

background remains an important factor in determining one's social class in adulthood. For example, an upper-class heritage is often signaled by an individual's manners, accent, and taste. These help the individual win the esteem required to maintain that class position through life. These and other forms of *cultural capital* are also used in fine-grained class distinctions such as that between *old money*, or people who have been upper class for some generations, and the *nouveaux riches*, who have risen in class ranks via the recent attainment of wealth.

It also helps upper-class individuals that they tend to have access to social connections, education, and other factors that open up opportunities for them to acquire resources and prestige. Further, class systems tend to be upheld by differences in the expectations of higher- and lower-class individuals. Those born into highly disadvantaged backgrounds may not expect to occupy esteemed positions in society as adults. This diminished expectation, relative to those from higher-class backgrounds, may lead to diminished motivation.

The number and type of social classes in a society appear to depend largely on the dominant mode of economic production. Anthropologists have observed that some tribal hunter-gatherer societies are non-stratified. In these societies there are no nominal social classes, leadership is not inherited, and indeed in some cases it is not even assigned permanently to individuals. On the other hand, as agriculture begins to dominate an economy, a class distinction often arises between those who own productive land and those who work it for them. This specific class distinction is a manifestation of the most fundamental class distinction possible—that between the *powerful* and the *powerless*. Even so, small and isolated agricultural communities such as the crofters of the Scottish Highlands are sometimes characterized by a relatively classless *smallholder* mode of organization, in which each family owns and works a small plot of land.

With the rise of industrialization and the associated expansion of trade, the class system typically begins to get more complex, in particular with the appearance of new middle classes, comprising merchants, professionals, highly skilled workers, and bureaucrats. Although the middle classes typically do not have power over others (unlike the upper classes), they have a greater degree of autonomy

than working classes do by virtue of their possession of assets such as land, housing, stocks, and economically valuable skills. Although most contemporary social scientific models make finer class distinctions (such as upper middle class vs. lower middle class), most reflect the essentially tripartite structure of upper, middle, and working classes.

### Theories

Different theories within the social sciences take different views, sometimes radically different, of the origins and nature of social class. For the sociobiologist E. O. Wilson, class inequality may be a consequence of the evolution of people who are genetically suited to occupy high- or low-status positions. However, this position is difficult to reconcile with the variety and fluidity of class structures in human societies. Furthermore, genetic evidence for the hypothesis is lacking.

In contrast, for Karl Marx, class ultimately stems not from human nature but from excess production. When agriculture and industry are efficient enough to produce more than is required, a ruling class that owns the means of production emerges, as does a working class that supplies the labor required to produce things. In capitalist systems, these classes are the *bourgeoisie*, or *capitalist*, class and the wage-earning *proletariat*, respectively. Relationships between these two groups of people are characterized by a particular kind of antagonism termed *class conflict*. Class conflict stems from the fact that the bourgeoisie is motivated to perpetuate its exploitation of the proletariat, whose members for their part are motivated to overthrow it.

The Marxist analysis of class has, of course, been hugely influential both in social science and in many of the important political events of the previous two centuries. The political impact of Marxism is perhaps the most striking demonstration yet of the reactivity of social science: The study of social processes has the potential to change those processes, in ways both intended and unintended. However, Marxist social theory has attracted a fair amount of criticism. One criticism is that its essentially bipartite model of class, which distinguishes the bourgeois from the proletariat, glosses over class distinctions of much economic and cultural significance, such as that between the

middle and working classes. Another is that it tends to overemphasize the conflictual aspects of class relationships and to underemphasize the cooperative dimension. In the corporate environment, wage earners, executives, and shareholders have common as well as divergent interests and may express a high degree of identification with the corporation regardless of their role within it. Even a class system as stark as feudalism was characterized by reciprocity, whereby the lower classes pledged their homage, loyalty, labor, and/or military service in exchange for the right to use land. Another criticism is that Marxism gives priority to class compared with the other social categorizations—such as gender, race, and religion—which also organize human experience and society and provide fertile ground for conflict. The notion of a society divided and in conflict along unidimensional class lines seems to be almost an ideal in Marxist theory—at least as a necessary stage in the realization of a classless utopia.

Despite the controversy that has surrounded it, some of the key insights of Marxist theory have been enormously influential in social psychology. Three of its most prominent theories, *social identity theory*, *social dominance theory*, and *system justification theory*, are heavily indebted to Marx. For example, each theory is concerned with the distinction between what Marx called *false consciousness* and *class consciousness*, which refer to ignorance and awareness, respectively, of one's position in the class system, the inequalities and injustices of the class system, the common interests of individuals within class groupings, and the competing interests of those in different social classes.

### Key Research Findings

Each of these theories is also concerned, in part, with one of the key findings to emerge from empirical investigations of class. Namely, individuals from lower social classes are more likely than upper-class individuals to engage in self-defeating behaviors. These findings are consistent with Marx's claim that individuals from lower classes are prone to participate in their own oppression. Jim Sidanius and his colleagues have labeled this phenomenon *behavioral asymmetry*. For example,

lower social class is one of the strongest psychosocial predictors of poor health indicators such as obesity and Type II diabetes, as well as adverse health behaviors such as smoking and consumption of refined sugars. It also predicts low motivation and disengagement in educational settings, contributing to educational underachievement. Class is a major risk factor for many forms of criminality. Furthermore, individuals from lower-class backgrounds are more likely than those from upper-class backgrounds to vote for political parties whose policies are contrary to their economic self-interest. Social psychologists have helped make explicit, refined, and complemented Marx's analysis of the psychological mechanisms that work to perpetuate systems of social class.

For example, according to the *relative deprivation hypothesis*, aggressive behavior is potentiated by a sense of frustration at being denied opportunities that are afforded to others. According to both *system justification theory* and *social dominance theory*, individuals from lower classes are motivated, as are people from higher classes, to perceive the economic system in which they are embedded as just. As a result, individuals from lower classes are prone to see their relatively lowly position as deserved and to internalize negative stereotypes of their social class, with adverse impacts on self-esteem and motivation. According to social identity theory, individuals from lower social classes may be diverted from collective action by the perception that class boundaries are permeable. Under these conditions, pursuing social mobility as an individual may seem more attractive and fruitful than doing so on behalf of one's class group. Further, working-class people may seek to preserve some of the very characteristics that tend to perpetuate economic disadvantage, such as a lack of participation in university education and a high degree of manual skill, as cherished tokens of a distinctive and subjectively positive social identity.

Researchers have recently shown that a phenomenon known as *stereotype threat* can also adversely affect persons of low socioeconomic status. Stereotype threat is the tendency for people from stigmatized groups to perform poorly because they fear confirming a negative stereotype. The performance of people from lower social classes on a test of scholastic aptitude declined when they were merely asked questions about their socioeco-

omic status shortly before the test, compared with members of a control group, who were not given those questions. Answering the questions appeared to make their social class salient to the members of the experimental group, together with the associated stigmatizing stereotypes about low academic ability.

One of the most intensive lines of social-psychological investigation into social class has been literature on the consequences of accent. Spoken accents in many countries convey information about social class. In the United Kingdom, speakers with strong regional accents (e.g., a Birmingham accent) are perceived to hail from a lower-class background. Much the same thing is true in the United States, where certain accents, such as those hailing from parts of the South, are sometimes accorded lower class status. In Australia and New Zealand, accents vary much less according to region than they do according to class. Observers ascribe less prestige and aesthetic value to lower-class accents and rate the quality of an argument lower when it is expressed in a lower-class than in a middle- or upper-class accent. These findings are consistent with the notion that accents are a form of cultural capital used to denote and thus to regulate and perpetuate class distinctions.

### Additional Considerations

Despite the valuable insights that have been provided by social psychologists, it is clear that overall they have paid much less attention to social class than to other systems of inequality, such as race and gender. Although there is a popular conception—shared by some scholars—that the relevance of social class is declining, it is clear that people are still aware of class and discriminate on the basis of class and that the disadvantages confronting those from the working or lower classes are many. According to national health statistics in the United Kingdom, the life expectancy of those in the lower socioeconomic brackets is some 8 years less than that of the middle classes. Similar to other stigmatized minorities, *ethnophaulisms*, or derogatory labels, such as *chav*, *oaf*, *oik*, *bogan*, and *working stiff*, are reserved for members of the working classes. There are also Internet hate sites devoted to them, and these sites use language that would be unthinkable and indeed illegal if applied

to racial or gender groups. It appears therefore that there is scope for further social-psychological contributions to the study of class.

Robbie M. Sutton

See also Discrimination; Power; Prejudice; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; Status; Stigma; System Justification Theory

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## SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY

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A good many things that people need to know about themselves, they learn by observing the actions of other people and reasoning from what they observe to implications for themselves. They interpret the meanings of those observed actions and decode the implications of those actions for their own opinions and abilities. Sometimes this is a simple process. At a faculty–student picnic, I foolishly join in the 100-yard dash and learn that all the students finish considerably ahead of me. I thus infer that my previous belief that I am a really fast runner needs to be corrected. Or I hold the opinion that a new television show is clever and cool and make the mistake of saying so, only to discover that my ingroup of friends unanimously thinks it is stupid and boring.

## Social Comparison of Abilities and Opinions

Many social scientists had recognized aspects of these phenomena, but Leon Festinger was the first to systematize them in his 1954 theory of social comparison processes. Festinger initially cast the theory as a theory about how an individual could self-assess. In the first example above, what I'd learn about is my own abilities; in the second example, it is the validity of my opinions. And learning from the actions of others about one's abilities and opinions was the process that Festinger sought to analyze.

Festinger's theory assumed that the goal of individuals was to form accurate perceptions of their abilities, and that is certainly a reasonable goal to hold. Knowing my abilities will enable me to make sensible decisions about what I should attempt and not attempt. If I can jump about 12 feet, then I'd better not try to clear a 15-foot creek! If I am a really good mathematician, I have some ideas about careers at which I could succeed.

However, other motives are also involved when one compares one's ability to that of others. Having a high and having a low level of ability are equally informative about what we should attempt but are quite different in their impact on us. Having a high level of ability generally heightens one's self-esteem, while discovering one has a low level of ability is harmful to self-esteem. *Abilities* are qualities that it is good to be good at, and self-esteem is bolstered and enhanced by possessing those qualities. Similarly, doing poorly at something that matters is a blow to one's self-esteem.

Having accurate assessments of one's own abilities and having high self-esteem can be thought of as motives of the individual, the sorts of motives that Festinger suggested social comparison facilitated. However, more interpersonal motives are in play in social comparison situations as well. How well I perform when I am performing in public influences people's perceptions and opinions about me. Because I am often surrounded by groups whose opinions matter to me, I am often concerned with managing the impressions that people form of me. The *impression management* problem arises most acutely when I give a poor performance—that is, a performance that normally would be interpreted as signaling a low ability. Social com-



parison therefore is as much about dynamics within and between groups as it is about motives within an individual.

But a performance is not always a perfect guide to the underlying ability of the performing individual. More specifically, a flawed performance does not always indicate an inadequate person. I can run slowly because I am out of practice or have leg cramps or am distracted by problems at work or have any number of other momentary or long-term “handicaps.” Call this the *performance-ability gap*. If we broaden our discussion here, we can access what psychologists call the *psychology of excuses*. Although I can act in ways that seem to signal a poor moral character or a crude set of standards about how to behave, I often try to convince others that I am not personally flawed.

Skilled excuse makers are able to convince others that the performance they have just given, which ordinarily would signal something discrediting about them, should instead be attributed to some external cause—the hidden difficulty of the task, the fact that they have been misinformed, and so on. The task here is to manage the attributions that others would otherwise make about us. More specifically, we seek to make sure that performances that typically would be interpreted as revealing something unfavorable about us are instead attributed to other causes. The ability to carry this off requires great tacit knowledge and subtle signaling skills, things that many of us possess.

The process of comparing our opinions with those of others requires a separate analysis. First it is important to distinguish between opinions that have a factual content and those that are based on taste, preference, or social convention. If I am comparing my opinion about a factual matter with that of a person who is an expert on the topic and discover we disagree, I do not need to take his or her opinion as certainly true, but I had better check further to see if he or she may be right. If my opinion is about a matter of taste, preference, or social convention, then I need to understand what it is that I would be signaling if I were to express that opinion. One way of understanding this is by learning the opinions of others on the topic and doing some social calibration regarding the social standing of those others and the consequences of agreeing or disagreeing with them. This is difficult to describe in the abstract but easy in a specific

case. Imagine that I secretly prefer paintings of an idealized version of the late Elvis Presley on black velvet backgrounds to paintings by Mondrian. I discover that a group of bikers at the local bar also prefers the Elvis paintings, while my superiors in the law firm where I work prefer Mondrian. I then have some idea of what it would cost me to express my preference for Elvis while at work. I might also try to discover the reasons behind the Mondrian preference of my superiors. As a result, I might decide that my reasons for preferring Elvis are good ones, and so I would silently maintain that preference, or I might decide that their reasons are more compelling than mine, and so I would move toward their preference.

### Reference Groups

The central message of social comparison theory is that people are greatly affected by the information they get from the persons around them. Yet we know that there are people who are able to maintain an opinion about how to dress or whom to vote for that is at odds with the opinions of others. How do they sustain their views? One answer is given by *reference group theory*, which is a version of a social comparison theory. Reference group theory presumes that the persons whose opinions sustain and validate our opinions are not necessarily those who are physically near us but rather those to whom we “refer our behavior.” An example would be a high school football player who learns what “cool” behavior is by comparing his behavior with that of the clique of “jocks” in his high school. He pays no attention to the behavior of those ordinary students who physically surround him in the classroom—their views on how to behave mean nothing to him because he does not care about their opinions of him.

This analysis suggests an interesting interpretation of how it is that people who are deviant according to the standards of the group in which they are physically embedded sustain their deviance. They do so by referring their behavior to the standards of some other group that is psychologically present in their remembered experience and agrees with their own standards, in contrast to the “uncivilized” group in which they currently find themselves. One way of describing what is going on here is that people who are apparently deviants

in the group that physically surrounds them do not feel anxious and fear rejection, as most deviants do, but instead are serene in their conviction of the superiority of the standards of some other group. In some cases we genuinely admire people who show such convictions. An example might be missionaries who go into other cultures and attempt to model a life based on the Golden Rule. In other cases, such as crusaders who violently tried to convert others to their religion, we see evil or perhaps mental illness. Being sustained in our beliefs and behaviors by reference to the opinions and standards of a group of absent others is an intrinsically complicated endeavor but a very human one.

### Social Comparison, Happiness, and Well-Being

Another aspect of social comparison deals with the consequences of comparing aspects of our lives with the lives of those around us or those in the public media. The general suggestion arising from the social comparison perspective is that our level of happiness with our lives, or more generally our sense of well-being, depends on these comparisons. In materialist societies, such as contemporary Western, capitalist countries, these comparisons are often assumed to generate largely negative consequences for large groups of citizens who are below other groups on one or more of the standard dimensions of comparison. Because the communications media—now largely television and magazines—tend to feature the lifestyles of the “rich and famous” disproportionately, these negative consequences may be quite common.

To equip ourselves to examine this topic, we need to distinguish between two kinds of deprivation. On one hand, *objective* or *physical deprivation* occurs when an individual falls short of the conditions and resources necessary to sustain life. Lack of nourishing food, clean water, and adequate shelter are prototypical examples of physical deprivations, but today we would perhaps extend the list to include medical care for illnesses and wounds, education sufficient to succeed in modern societies, chances to engage in remunerated labor, and many similar services and commodities. In our society, the earnings from remunerated labor are generally what we exchange for these commodities and services. And we have a term to describe the situation of those

who fall below adequate sustenance—they fall below the *poverty line*, that is, below the level necessary to purchase the necessities of life.

On the other hand, *relative deprivation* occurs when an individual believes that he or she lacks conditions or resources that others possess, coupled with the feeling that he or she is either *entitled* to possess them or can at least *aspire* to possess them. Relative deprivation can be sufficiently powerful to trigger *revolutions of rising expectations*. The notion here is that when a country that has had a constant low supply of services and commodities available to citizens suddenly experiences a rise in the supply of these services and commodities, but they are available only to the more powerful segments of society, then those who do not have access to these services and commodities feel relatively deprived. This in turn motivates these “deprived” people to overthrow the power structure to gain access to services and commodities that they did not previously aspire to possess.

Services and commodities that one aspires to possess may also have powerful effects on individuals. Kurt Lewin made the point that affluent people in the United States need only a few of the things they want. We need nourishing food, but we go out for sushi; we need water, but we pay extra to drink designer water. Moreover, things like sushi and designer water motivate us to work. Lewin called them *quasi-needs*. John Kenneth Galbraith commented that our current affluent Western societies count on our desires to acquire these goods to keep the demand for them high enough to keep the economy moving forward.

The psychological mechanisms of social comparison that create a desire to possess goods that others possess are useful to think through. The usual answer is that envy is the mechanism that creates a strong desire on the part of “deprived” individuals to possess those goods that more privileged individuals possess. However, this may be too simple an analysis, as well as one that allows those of us who can afford luxury goods to be comfortable owning them while those of us who are less well-to-do must go without.

Another explanation suggests that possession of certain goods conveys status to the possessor. Call these *positional goods*. In order to function as a positional good, a good must be public in nature. That is, people must see the possession and know

who the possessor is. Large, elegant houses fit the definition, as do expensive cars, fine jewelry, and fashionable clothes. In every behavior setting, certain goods signal that the possessor has high status.

Thus, more than envy drives the desire to possess whatever the trappings of high status are in any particular setting. Having high status is an advantage. For example, it can signal respectability and reliability. Advice columns for job seekers consistently stress the importance of “dressing professionally,” which often means looking just a bit better than the other candidates. In housing markets, real estate agents know that a house in a “good neighborhood” is worth much more than the same house in a less desirable neighborhood. In addition to conveying status, owning the house in the good neighborhood may have other advantages. “Good neighborhoods” tend to have good schools, to some extent because in the United States, for example, property taxes support schools. What is a good school? Among other things, a good school is one with a good record of getting its graduates admitted to good colleges. Living in good neighborhoods with good schools thus confers real advantages on children. More generally, cues of high status convey real advantages on the people who possess them.

Consider next a different kind of status, namely, one’s “standing” to participate in group functions. Norman Rockwell nicely illustrated this kind of status in his painting titled *Town Meeting*. In the center of the painting is a workman addressing the yearly meeting that small New England towns hold to decide issues that are important to their citizens. Around the workman are seated other, better-dressed people, often in coats and ties, while the workman is wearing a flannel shirt and a worn leather work jacket. But the better-dressed citizens are listening attentively to the workman, presumably because his residence in the community gives him the standing to command other townspeople’s attention to the ideas he is expressing. Having the standing to participate in group functions not only allows a person to influence group actions but is also a major determinant of a person’s sense of self-worth.

### Conclusion

Two related themes are included under the heading of social comparison. The first emphasizes

learning about one’s own qualities, generally abilities and opinions, by comparing manifestations of these qualities with those of other people. The second theme involves justice and personal aspirations. Given the possessions that others around us have, to what are we entitled? Stated differently, how does observing the possessions of others affect what we aspire to possess? This second theme is sometimes thought of as an envy-driven process, but it can also be based on the desire for status.

Social comparison began as a relatively narrow theory about how people assess their abilities and opinions but has been transformed into a more general framework for explaining many of the phenomena that are central to social psychology. As Serge Guimond has recently reminded us, social comparison processes drive a variety of assessment processes among individuals, among groups, and across cultures.

John Darley

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Distributive Justice; Festinger, Leon; Justice; Procedural Justice; Reference Groups; Relative Deprivation

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## SOCIAL COMPENSATION

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*Social compensation* is superior effort exerted when an individual works on a collective task as compared with working individually or coactively. Collective tasks involve combining all group members' contributions, which means that members are evaluated together. Coactive tasks involve individuals working in the presence of others but not combining their contributions, which means that evaluations can be made individually. Social compensation involves working hard to make up for other group members whose performances are expected to be inferior.

For example, a group of product executives might be asked to generate as many uses as they can for a new product. If someone believes that other group members are not capable of or willing to perform well at this task, and the outcome of this collective task is important, then that person will work especially hard to generate more uses for the product in order to make up for the possibility that other group members will not generate many uses. If someone is working alone, then he or she will not be concerned with a group's overall outcome and will not try to make up for others' lack of effort. If someone believes that others can or will work hard, then the typical response is *social loafing* (putting less effort into a collective task than if one were working alone or coactively). This entry looks at the phenomenon of social compensation, related research, and practical implications.

### Background

Tasks are often completed in groups, such as committees, sports teams, juries, marching bands, and quality control teams. Numerous tasks are completed collectively, in that an individual's contributions are pooled with the contributions of coworkers to form a single outcome, such as a decision, a score (in a sports game), a musical performance, or an inspected product. Some of the earliest social-psychological research investigated how groups work together to complete a task. Social psychologists were particularly interested in how working in groups affects the motivation, effort, and productivity of individuals.

In early research on this topic, Max Ringelmann wanted to understand why, when he added a

second ox to a team pulling a plow, the plowing did not get done twice as fast. Ringelmann explored this issue by studying the performance of men pulling on a rope. He found there was a loss of motivation when the men collectively pulled on the rope, compared with when they pulled as hard as they could individually. He speculated that this reduction of individual effort on a collective task was merely an artifact of coordination problems and was not psychological in nature.

However, researchers in the 1970s found that when lack of coordination was ruled out, *social loafing* remained a robust psychological phenomenon. Social loafing occurs when individuals expend less effort collectively, when the outcome is dependent on how everyone performs, than they do coactively, when individuals work by themselves but in the presence of others. Social loafing can be reduced or eliminated through several means, such as increasing the identifiability or evaluability of the individual members' contributions, enhancing personal involvement with the task, elevating the uniqueness of individual contributions, or strengthening group cohesiveness.

When social loafing cannot be reduced through these tactics, however, an individual may feel he or she has to compensate for the loafing of other group members. Take a classroom project, for example. Teachers often divide a class into small groups, and each group member will receive the same grade for whatever project the group is instructed to complete. From the beginning, one individual in the group may recognize that the other group members are less motivated to earn a high grade than he or she is. The highly motivated individual may then try to make up for the other students' lack of motivation by working especially hard on the project.

### When Social Compensation Occurs

Two conditions must be present for social compensation to occur. Otherwise, social loafing is the more likely outcome. The first condition is the expectation that other group members will contribute insufficiently to the group effort. The expectation that group members will perform insufficiently may result from a general predisposition to have little trust in others' ability or reliabil-

ity or from particular information that other group members are unable or unwilling to perform on the specific task.

Ironically, high-trusting individuals are more likely to take advantage of others during a collective task by letting them do most of the work (socially loafing). Individuals high in interpersonal trust expect the other group members to carry their weight, whereas those low in interpersonal trust expect others to loaf. Similarly, particular information implying greater effort or ability by coworkers is more likely to lead to social loafing.

The second condition that is necessary for social compensation to occur is that the outcome be important or meaningful to the individual. If the outcome of a task is not important to an individual, then there is no need to compensate for poorly performing coworkers. However, if the outcome of a task is meaningful, then an individual will be motivated to avoid group failure by compensating for poorly performing coworkers. This is consistent with *expectancy-value models* of effort and with *self-validation theories*, which argue that people will exert effort on a task only to the degree they believe their effort will produce a valued result. Individuals may not necessarily demonstrate a complete lack of motivation, but their motivation will be based on how directly related they think their efforts are to producing a favorable outcome.

Even if the two qualifying conditions are satisfied, social compensation may not occur for other reasons. For instance, when it is possible to leave a group, individuals may just abandon the collective task to avoid a negative evaluation caused by the poor performance of other, loafing group members. Only when there is no other option are people “forced” to socially compensate. And after compensating repeatedly for other group members, a person may come to feel “used” and thus stop compensating. Continuing to socially compensate may lead to the *sucker effect*, whereby a person realizes that he or she is being exploited and thus chooses to stop compensating and join the other group members in their loafing. Finally, as group size increases, so too does the difficulty associated with compensating for the increasing number of group members who are loafing. Social compensation is thus less common when people are working together in large groups.

## Conclusion

By understanding what causes some group members to loaf and others to compensate, researchers can understand how to optimize group performance by reducing motivation losses. Researchers can investigate conditions that promote social compensation so that it occurs more often. Increasing social compensation might be especially helpful during emergency situations, where detrimental bystander effects can occur. The *bystander effect* occurs when an individual is less likely to aid in an emergency situation when others are present compared with being the only one available to help.

Social compensation has implications for working groups and organizations. Persistent experiences of social compensation may cause employees to avoid jobs or settings that involve group work. Being forced into situations in which social compensation might be needed could cause distress to potential compensators. A student, learning that her grade would depend on a collective group assignment, once lamented to one of us, “I know that I will have to work harder than everyone else in my group.” She knew from past experiences that she would likely have to compensate for other group members because they were unlikely to help her get the high grade that she desired.

More often than not, people who are concerned to ensure that their group succeeds are people who are valuable to an organization. Understanding how to prevent such persons from always being forced to socially compensate (which could cause them to burn out) might help organizations retain these workers. Finally, it is interesting that social compensation has primarily negative origins: distrust or knowledge of inferior effort or motivation on the part of one’s coworkers. A more positive wellspring of social compensation, *esprit de corps* (group spirit), has yet to be demonstrated.

*Kipling D. Williams and James H. Wirth*

See also Group Performance; Köhler Effect; Social Loafing; Sucker Effect

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## SOCIAL DARWINISM

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*Social Darwinism* is the belief that the fittest or strongest among individuals, groups, or nations should survive and flourish, while the weak or unfit should be allowed to perish. This view was advocated by Herbert Spencer, a British sociologist who attempted to apply Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution to the development of human societies. Social Darwinism became popular in the late Victorian era in England, the United States, and elsewhere. Another social interpretation of Darwin's biological views was promoted by Francis Galton. His view and its theoretical offshoot, later known as eugenics, have also been associated with social Darwinism. This entry first reviews Spencer's and Galton's views on developments of human faculties and human societies and then describes the trajectory that social Darwinism took in societies and social sciences in the late 20th century. It then explains how advocates of social Darwinism commit a common but fatal logical fallacy (the *naturalistic fallacy*) and confuse Darwinian science with a particular ethical position, a position that is incompatible with contemporary moral values.

### Spencer's Evolutionary Progressivism

In 1857 Spencer, under the influence of Thomas Malthus's 1798 work (*An Essay on the Principle of Population*), published his major work, *Progress:*

*Its Law and Causes*. It was 2 years before Charles Darwin published his seminal, 1859 work, *On the Origin of Species*. Spencer's later theorizing (e.g., see *First Principles*, published in 1860) was strongly influenced by Darwin's ideas.

Spencer applied Darwin's ideas to interpret social phenomena. He coined the term *survival of the fittest*, maintaining that through competition and natural selection, social evolution would lead to prosperity and personal liberty unparalleled in human history. Spencer argued that the individual (rather than the collective) evolves, and thus government intervention should be minimal in social and political domains. This view fit well with the dominant ideologies of the capitalist economics in the late 19th century, especially those of laissez-faire economics, and it was strongly supported by both intellectuals and businessmen, including Andrew Carnegie, who hosted Spencer's visit to the United States in 1883.

Spencer's theory was essentially a prescriptive, ethical theory. He did not simply argue that natural selection descriptively works with humans much as Darwin theorized it worked with animals and plants, but that the survival of the fittest in human society is morally correct and should be promoted. As a result, social Darwinism was used to justify various political and economic exploitations that are generally inconsistent with modern moral values, including colonialism, imperialism, neglect of poor living and working conditions, oppression of labor unions and similar organizations, and so on.

Among others, a major problem with social Darwinism as an ethical theory is that the theory commits what is called the naturalistic fallacy in philosophy, whereby an *ought* statement is derived rather directly from an *is* statement. That is, it is a logical error to assume that what is natural is equivalent to what is morally correct. Social Darwinism made this fatal error in using the principle of survival of the fittest not only to explain how human society might actually operate (a statement that could, in principle, be verified empirically) but also to prescribe morally how social institutions (and human society in general) ought to be designed. Although social Darwinism arguably had some beneficial effects (e.g., providing the poor with resources for production and education rather than simply with handouts), its moral basis is now widely rejected.

### Galton's Eugenics

Intrigued by Darwin's 1859 work, Galton, a British scientist and Darwin's cousin, became interested in heritability of many aspects of human variation, ranging from physical characteristics to mental characteristics and from facial appearance to fingerprint patterns. Using various biographical records, Galton developed statistical techniques to quantify the heritability of human abilities. In *Hereditary Genius*, published in 1869, he summarized these findings and argued that biological inheritance is much more critical in determining human character and intelligence than are environmental influences. Besides reporting his scientific findings, Galton went on to argue that the notion of heredity should occupy a central place when one considered social morals. According to his view, certain social welfare policies (e.g., asylums for the insane) allowed "less fit" members of society to survive and reproduce faster than "more fit" ones, and this trend eventually would lead to degradation of the society by "inferiors." Galton thus maintained that social morals should be changed so that people would become more conscious of heredity in their decisions about reproduction.

In his 1883 book, *Inquiries Into Human Faculty and Its Development*, Galton coined the term *eugenics* from the Greek word *eu* (well) and the suffix *-genes* (born). Although Galton did not personally advocate eugenic social policies that promoted governmental coercion of so-called inferiors, such mandatory eugenics began to be practiced in the early 20th century. The most infamous example was provided by Nazi Germany's eugenics programs, which led to the sterilizations of thousands of individuals whom the Nazis viewed as mentally and physically "unfit" and to mass killings of "undesirable" people, including Jews, Roma, and homosexuals during the Holocaust.

### Social Darwinism in the Late 20th Century

Social Darwinism gradually lost its popularity and support after World War I. Ironically, the term *social Darwinism* was later popularized by a U.S. historian, Richard Hofstadter, in his 1944 work, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, which discredited Nazi Germany's ideologies along with its eugenic policies.

Around the same time, anthropologists Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others also severely criticized social Darwinism. They emphasized the role of culture in differentiating humans from other animals and rejected social Darwinism's biological foundations. It is important to note that the criticisms from these anthropologists (Boas in particular) were originally directed only against the notion of "evolutionary progressivism" advocated by Spencer—the notion that assumes that all societies progress through the same stages in the same sequence and that societies can thus be ordered, from less well-developed, inferior ones to more highly developed, superior ones. Obviously, Spencer's is a notion with little scientific basis. However, later generations of anthropologists also broadly rejected Darwinian, biological approaches to the development of human societies in favor of a sociocultural approach. Such resistance to applying Darwinian concepts and analyses to the study of human society rapidly became dominant in the social sciences.

During the 1960s, biological approaches to study human social behavior and human society resurfaced, after the "modern evolutionary synthesis" was completed in biology. Biologists such as William Hamilton, Robert Trivers, and others extended their theories to explain origins of human cooperation, mate selection, and human sociality in general. In 1988, the Human Behavior and Evolution Society was founded by investigators who unapologetically used evolutionary theory to analyze human nature. Since then, the Society has expanded substantively to overlap with many social science disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, psychiatry, economics, law, political science, and sociology. Sharing a common metatheoretical perspective, the biological and evolutionary approaches have yielded highly successful cross-disciplinary collaborations, including modern behavioral genetics, analysis of human sociality, and research on neural underpinnings of social cognition. In social psychology, these approaches have also spurred reexaminations of traditional questions, including research on adaptive efficiencies of group behavior, biological roots of intergroup behavior, and so on.

However, despite its broader scientific acceptance, biological and evolutionary approaches to studying human behavior and society have also met

with substantial opposition. For example, in 1975, when biologist Edward Wilson argued in *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* that genetics exerts a greater influence on human behavior than scientists had previously thought, he was labeled as a racist by both liberals and conservatives who favored the idea that human behavior was determined by enculturation. But in fact what Wilson claimed in his book was not particularly extreme: He maintained that human behavior cannot be understood without taking *both* biology and culture into account.

### Confusion of Social Darwinism With Darwinism

As exemplified above, many negative reactions to Darwinism arise from the confusion of Darwinism with social Darwinism. Darwinism is a scientific theory whose ultimate value can be judged only empirically. On the other hand, social Darwinism is an ethical theory purporting that the fittest should flourish while the unfit should be allowed to die. Aside from their names and a couple of basic Darwinian notions that social Darwinism misused (e.g., directional evolution that underlies survival of the fittest), these two theories share very little. Nevertheless, many of the negative reactions to a Darwinian approach to understanding human behavior and human society continue to stem from antipathy for social Darwinism, its unconventional moral values, and its illogical foundation (viz the naturalistic fallacy).

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*See also* Eugenics; Evolutionary Psychology; Holocaust; Racism; System Justification Theory

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## SOCIAL DECISION SCHEMES

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*Social decision scheme* (SDS) theory provides a mathematical framework for predicting group choices from group member preferences. A *social decision scheme* is a representation of a decision process that yields predicted group decisions given the initial preferences of members. As an example, consider a committee of employees who must choose among three health insurance plans being considered by their employer. The committee is composed of four employees, and each has a preferred plan. The four members may agree or disagree, but the goal is to endorse collectively one plan. Combining such individual preferences to obtain a collective decision encompasses both voting rules and a social influence process. Voting or decision rules are explicit or implicit rules for determining the group choice based on members' final votes. Common rules are majority (the alternative with 50% + 1 votes wins), unanimity (the alternative with all votes wins), and plurality (the alternative with more votes than any other wins). In addition to using voting rules, small groups also typically discuss the decision options, and preferences change as a result of information exchange, persuasion, and social pressure. In the aforementioned example, assume that the committee adheres to a majority decision rule: Three of the four members must ultimately agree to adopt a particular health plan. Unless they begin with such a majority, they will likely discuss the health care plans, and the preferences that individuals bring to the group may change during this discussion. SDS theory captures how different alignments of initial preferences are channeled through voting and social influence processes to yield a collective choice.

The fundamental question in the SDS approach is, What is the committee likely to decide, given the initial preferences of its members or, more gener-



ally, given the preferences of the people who are potential members of the committee? The four elements of SDS are (1) individual preferences, (2) group preference composition, (3) social decision schemes, and (4) group choices. This entry considers each of these.

### Individual Preferences

Choices are defined on a finite set of mutually exclusive and discrete alternatives. In the previous example, these alternatives are the three health insurance plans: Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C. More generally, the decision set is denoted as  $a = \{a_1, a_2, a_3, \dots, a_n\}$ , where  $n$  is the number of alternatives. Individual preferences are often summarized as the probabilities that a randomly chosen group member will prefer each alternative. These probabilities are summarized in a vector,  $p = \{p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots, p_n\}$ , where  $p_i$  is the probability that an individual will prefer alternative  $a_i$ .

### Group Composition: Distinguishable Distributions

Information about each group's preference composition is summarized in a *distinguishable distribution*,  $r = \{r_1, r_2, r_3, \dots, r_n\}$ , where  $r_i$  is the number of group members who prefer alternative  $a_i$ . In the aforementioned example, the preferences of the four members of the group can be distributed over the three choices in 15 different ways, yielding 15 possible distinguishable distributions. One of these is  $\{2, 1, 1\}$ , in which two prefer Plan A, one prefers Plan B, and one prefers Plan C. Other possibilities include  $\{4, 0, 0\}$ ,  $\{3, 1, 0\}$ ,  $\{3, 0, 1\}$ ,  $\{2, 2, 0\}$ , and so forth. Each of these possibilities represents a unique alignment of support among the possible choices. A core idea in SDS theory is that this initial alignment of support foretells what choices the group is likely ultimately to make. To illustrate, contrast a group with a  $\{3, 1, 0\}$  distinguishable distribution with one having a  $\{1, 2, 1\}$  distribution. There are numerous reasons (adoption of majority rules, consensus pressures, etc.) to expect that the  $\{3, 1, 0\}$  group is more likely to adopt Plan A than is the  $\{1, 2, 1\}$  group.

In short, it matters how groups are composed. In SDS applications, group composition can be directly observed or can be estimated. In direct observation,

the preferences of group members are solicited before or at the onset of group interaction and thereby the distinguishable distribution of each group identified. In estimation, the probabilities of obtaining each of the possible distinguishable distributions are estimated from information about the distribution of opinions in the population of potential group members. A common assumption is that groups are composed by random selection. Under random selection, the probability of obtaining each of the distinguishable distributions can be estimated if the probability distribution of individual preferences in the population of potential group members,  $p$ , is known. In the previous example, suppose that an independent survey revealed that 40% of employees favored Plan A, 30% favored Plan B, and 30% favored Plan C. That is,  $p = \{.4, .3, .3\}$ . Using the multinomial probability function, the probability of selecting randomly four members who all favor Plan A ( $r = \{4, 0, 0\}$ ) is .026,  $r = \{2, 1, 1\}$  will occur with a probability of .173, and so on. In this manner, the probability of obtaining each of the 15 possible distinguishable distributions can be computed. The complete set of observed or estimated relative frequencies of the possible distinguishable distribution is contained in a vector,  $\pi = \{\pi_1, \pi_2, \pi_3, \dots, \pi_m\}$ , where  $m$  is the number of possible distinguishable distributions.

### Social Decision Schemes: The Relationships Among Distinguishable Distributions and Group Choices

The *social decision scheme matrix* ( $D$  matrix) is the mechanism for summarizing propositions about the relationships between group preference compositions and group choices. The rows of the  $D$  matrix are defined by the possible distinguishable distributions, and the columns are defined by the possible group choices. To conserve space, consider a simpler example of the four-person committee deciding between two, rather than three, health care plans. In this case, there are five distinguishable distributions, and the  $D$  matrix would have the form given in Table 1.

The entries in the  $D$  matrix within the rectangle are the probabilities,  $d_{ij}$ , of the group's choosing the  $j$ th option given that opinions are distributed as in the  $i$ th distinguishable distribution. Specifying

**Table 1** The General Form of the *D* Matrix for Two Alternatives and Four Members

<i>r</i> ( <i>r<sub>A</sub></i> , <i>r<sub>B</sub></i> )	Group Choice	
	Plan A	Plan B
(4, 0)	<i>d</i> <sub>11</sub>	<i>d</i> <sub>12</sub>
(3, 1)	<i>d</i> <sub>21</sub>	<i>d</i> <sub>22</sub>
(2, 2)	<i>d</i> <sub>31</sub>	<i>d</i> <sub>32</sub>
(1, 3)	<i>d</i> <sub>41</sub>	<i>d</i> <sub>42</sub>
(0, 4)	<i>d</i> <sub>51</sub>	<i>d</i> <sub>52</sub>

the values of these entries gives expression to theoretical ideas about group process. For example, the idea that majorities win because they can outvote, persuade, and pressure minorities suggests a *majority-wins* scheme, given in Table 2.

**Table 2** A Majority-Wins Decision Scheme

<i>r</i> ( <i>r<sub>A</sub></i> , <i>r<sub>B</sub></i> )	Group Choice	
	Plan A	Plan B
(4, 0)	1.0	0.0
(3, 1)	1.0	0.0
(2, 2)	0.5	0.5
(1, 3)	0.0	1.0
(0, 4)	0.0	1.0

Notice that in this simple example of majority wins, an anomaly arises in the {2, 2} case, which has no majority. Decision schemes often require that theorists address such anomalies by providing a *subscheme* for distinguishable distributions that are not resolved by the major scheme. In this case, we might propose that the faction will win that has the most convincing arguments for its plan. However, having no way of determining a priori which faction this will be, one may simply predict that the {2, 2} case has a 50% chance of going either way.

Consider another conception of a group’s decision-making process: *truth wins*. Suppose that the group engages in an exhaustive exchange of what members know about the two plans, and the group selects the plan that is supported by the preponderance of information aired in discussion.

Further imagine that the prominent features of Plan A are superior to those of Plan B but that the fine print of Plan A negates its apparent superiority. If an individual reads and understands this fine print, the individual favors Plan B, but otherwise, the individual favors Plan A. Further assume that the group will select Plan A unless one or more members have detected this critical fine print that damns Plan A. This process is dubbed *truth wins* because only one member needs to support the correct or best choice for the group to adopt it. Such a truth-wins process generates a distinctly different *D* matrix from the one generated by the majority-wins idea.

**Table 3** A Truth-Wins Decision Scheme

<i>r</i> ( <i>r<sub>A</sub></i> , <i>r<sub>B</sub></i> )	Group Choice	
	Plan A	Plan B
(4, 0)	1.0	0.0
(3, 1)	0.0	1.0
(2, 2)	0.0	1.0
(1, 3)	0.0	1.0
(0, 4)	0.0	1.0

### The Fundamental Equation of SDS Theory: Predicting Group Choices From Individual Preferences

The ultimate goal is to transform ideas about the decision process into predictions of group choices. Given the estimated or observed relative frequencies of distinguishable distributions summarized in  $\pi = \{\pi_1, \pi_2, \pi_3, \dots, \pi_m\}$  and a defined *D* matrix, the distribution of group choices can be predicted. Let  $P = \{P_1, P_2, P_3, \dots, P_n\}$ , where  $n P_i$  is the probability that a group will choose the *i*th alternative. Then *P* is given by

$$P = \pi D.$$

To continue the foregoing example, suppose that a poll of employees revealed that 60% favored Plan A and 40%, Plan B. Then, randomly selecting members for the four-person committee would result in the estimate of  $\pi$  being { .13, .35, .35, .15, .03}.

Using the majority-wins  $D$  matrix from above, Equation 1 expands to

$$P = \{ .13, .35, .35, .15, .03 \}$$

	1.0	0.0	
	1.0	0.0	
	0.5	0.5	
	0.0	1.0	
	0.0	1.0	= { .65, .35 }.

That is, operating under a majority-wins decision scheme, about two thirds of four-person groups would select Plan A. By way of comparison, the same computation using the truth-wins  $D$  matrix from above yields a prediction that only 13% of these groups would select Plan A.

A model-testing approach permits one to evaluate comparatively the validity of competing ideas about decision-making processes by (a) converting competing ideas about process into  $D$  matrices, (b) generating the predicted distributions of group choices, and (c) comparing these predictions to observed outcomes.

### Capturing Decision Processes

SDS theory can be used to explore the effects of various features of the decision environment on group process. For example, one prominent line of research by Patrick Laughlin and his colleagues considers the effect of task character and member capabilities on decision processes. They contend that an important feature of the task environment is the *demonstrability* of the correct or best decision. A task is said to be highly demonstrable if the following conditions are met: (a) the correct choice is identified by a mutually shared system of inference, (b) there is sufficient information to identify the correct choice, (c) members preferring inferior options are able to understand the reasoning that leads to the correct choice, and (d) members preferring the correct choice are able and sufficiently motivated to present the information and arguments that demonstrate the superiority of the best choice. Logic and math problems are prime examples of tasks that are potentially high in demonstrability, whereas judgments of aesthetics are not. However, demonstrability also depends on characteristics of the group members. A math problem

that is highly demonstrable for a group of advanced math majors may be low in demonstrability for remedial math students. In the latter case, a member with the right answer may not be able to articulate the reasoning that produces the correct answer, and the others may not understand the rationale if it is presented. Laughlin showed that the number of supporters needed for a decision alternative to be adopted by the group increases as the demonstrability of the decision decreases. That is, a choice involving a task with low demonstrability (e.g., an aesthetic judgment) may require a majority (majority wins) or a supramajority (two-thirds-majority wins) to determine the group choice, whereas the solution to a demonstrable logic problem may require only a minority of one (truth wins) or two (*truth-supported wins*) to be chosen by the group.

### Prospecting: Going Beyond Existing Data

A useful feature of SDS is that it permits one to explore the effects of group size and changes in individual preferences on group decisions. For example, suppose that majority wins adequately describes the decision process of the four-person committee deciding among health care plans. Then, SDS theory can predict the effects of changing committee size or changing the individual preferences in the population of potential group members.

*Garold Stasser*

*See also* Collective Induction; Conformity; Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Group Task; Minority Influence

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## SOCIAL DEVIANCE

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*Social deviance*, broadly defined, applies to any behavior, belief, or appearance that violates prevailing social norms. Norms are social standards concerning what members of a group expect and believe is acceptable conduct in a given situation. The power of norms to govern individual behavior derives from the perception that others endorse and will enforce the normative standards. When an individual's or a minority group's behavior, belief, or appearance deviates from normative standards, the individual or the group members risk becoming the targets of social disapproval and other forms of punishment. Examples of social deviance range from minor breaches of social etiquette to major violations of the law. This entry examines the development of thinking about social deviance, describes current perspectives on crime and punishment, and then examines the group dynamics of social deviance and its impact on social change.

### Historical Background and Perception of Deviant Behavior

Before the Enlightenment, it was widely accepted that social deviance was compelled or facilitated by demonic or otherwise nefarious supernatural forces. Social Darwinism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries recast this basic idea using a new, "scientific" vocabulary. Instead of supernatural forces, it was thought that inherited biological traits compelled individuals to engage in deviant behavior. Cesare Lombroso (1836–1909) argued that the physical appearance, cultural practices, and criminal behavior of marginal or lower status social groups reflected such "degenerative" biological traits.

Beginning with classical criminologists such as Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) and Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), explanations of deviant behavior have shifted away from such essentialist beliefs. The preponderance of findings from contemporary research on deviant behavior suggests that it is overwhelmingly, and with rare exception, rooted in social processes rather than an individual's fundamental traits. However, the belief that deviant behavior reflects innate deficiencies in the character of individuals or social groups continues to

circulate as conventional wisdom. Near the end of the 20th century, the essentialist argument that inherited genetic differences could account for racial disparities in criminal behavior (and other social inequalities) reemerged despite its dismissal by professional academics and criminologists.

If essentialist arguments are fundamentally flawed, then what explains their public popularity? It is likely that essentialist explanations for deviant behavior remain alluring because they seemingly conform to everyday observation. Social-psychological research has demonstrated that individuals are inclined to attribute the cause of another person's behavior to that person's personal character traits, even when relevant situational or environmental factors clearly account for the behavior. This bias is particularly strong when the behavior is perceived as unexpected, extraordinary, or threatening or has seemingly negative consequences—all common features of social deviance.

### Contemporary Understandings of Social Deviance

Many normative standards are codified into laws, and violations of the law are classified as crimes. Criminologists investigate the causes and consequences of this particular type of social deviance. Criminal deviance differs from other types in that it exposes the deviant to state-mandated punishments. While legal standards may define legally appropriate conduct at any given time, laws change over time and differ from one jurisdiction to the next.

The rise of the labeling perspective in the 1960s challenged the assumption that certain behaviors were invariably deviant. The majority of researchers now recognize that the labeling of particular individuals or social groups as deviant often says as much about the power of the labeler as it does about the behavior of those who are labeled.

The normative standards adopted by an observer will determine whether the observer defines another person as deviant. Because individuals belong to multiple social groups, a given behavior may be subject to evaluation according to different and at times contradictory standards. For example, parents who choose to work long hours instead of seeing their children may be evaluated as deviant when the standard of familial norms is applied, but

they may be evaluated as conforming when the standard of workplace norms is applied. Likewise, premeditated killing can evoke widespread disapproval and a long prison sentence, but it may bring popular acclaim and honors when authorized during times of war. Therefore, what constitutes social deviance is in the eye of the observer rather than a necessary feature of the observed person or the person's behavior. While there may be widespread consensus over definitions of deviance, such definitions are never exempt from challenge or change.

The stigma of deviance can impact members of many social categories (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation). Stigmatization can create social barriers for individuals because others categorize them as belonging to a particular group. For example, recent research has demonstrated that even when actual amounts of deviant behavior and social neglect are taken into account, neighborhoods with a higher concentration of Black residents are perceived as more deviant and disorderly than are comparable White neighborhoods. In addition, research on employment opportunities in New York City found that Black male applicants with no criminal history had the same chance of receiving a job interview as equally qualified White male felons.

### Punishment

Social deviance is closely associated with the punishments it often elicits from observers. Punishing a deviant symbolically reinforces a group's normative standard and sense of collective identity. Although the specific type of punishments available to any given group may vary from mundane (e.g., stern looks, disregard) to dramatic (e.g., public humiliation, physical abuse, death), all groups wield both active and passive forms of punishment. Active punishments directly penalize a deviant (e.g., reprimands, monetary fines, physical pain), whereas passive punishments either curtail or suspend a deviant's access to social interaction and valued resources. Although active punishments are more recognizable, passive punishments can be equally distressful, particularly if the deviant closely identifies with the group or is otherwise highly dependent on the group for important resources.

The standard punishment for serious criminal deviance in most modern societies is imprisonment. For most of human history, imprisonment

was not considered *the* punishment, but rather a means to hold criminals awaiting trial or punishment. Modern imprisonment encapsulates both active and passive forms of punishment in that it imposes deprivations on inmates while also curtailing their access to civil society.

### The Group Dynamics of Social Deviance

Social groups distinguish themselves from one another according to the normative standards of behavior and appearance each attempts to embody. The very existence of a group is premised on its ability to distinguish itself from other, perhaps very similar, social groups. Examples include the characteristic behaviors and appearances associated with various high school cliques or that distinguish college sororities from one another. Social identity theory argues that members of a given group possess a mental image of the qualities that define an ideal group member. These group *prototypes* are mental representations of the values, traits, and behaviors that exemplify the group and distinguish ingroup from outgroup members. Individuals who conform to the group prototype receive evaluations that are more positive and are granted higher status by fellow group members. Those who deviate from the group prototype are viewed negatively and risk marginalization within the group or exclusion from the group altogether.

In groups that are motivated to achieve a goal, such as winning a competition, solving a problem, or accomplishing some other activity, group members often consider deviance a threat to the group's overall performance. In such goal-motivated groups, members typically expect some measure of personal gain if the group achieves its goals. Therefore, members have a stake in maximizing the group's effectiveness by personally conforming to group norms and supporting the punishment of deviant behavior. For example, if a lower ranking member fails to display proper deference to higher ranking members—perhaps by refusing to follow directions or assuming the right to oversee and direct the activity of others—that member risks social disapproval and punishment. Because assertive behavior is normatively inconsistent with lower ranking positions, other members typically view such behavior as an illegitimate use of power

that undermines group efforts. However, group members will treat the same behavior performed by those with higher rank as legitimate and welcome contributions to the group's efforts.

Because their behavior diverges from group norms, deviant individuals or minority groups are vulnerable to social exclusion. However, the negative impact of a deviant label can sometimes be reduced or avoided altogether by demonstrating a general commitment to the group or by explicitly framing one's behavior or ideas as motivated by a desire to promote group success.

### Deviance as Dissent and Impetus for Social Change

By posing a challenge to conventional norms, social deviance can also be a powerful means of affecting social change. Although deviants run the risk of marginalization by undermining either the group's identity or its productive efficacy, every normative standard was at some time a new—perhaps deviant—behavior or idea. Rather than merely serving as a target for group disapproval, social deviance can, by posing a challenge to the status quo, also redefine a group prototype or promote innovative strategies for group achievement.

One consequence of social norms is that they can perpetuate public compliance even when private support for the behavior or ideas they secure is weak or waning. Public compliance has a self-fulfilling effect of maintaining the perceived consensus and strength of normative standards. In situations such as these, acts of social deviance have the potential to unmask the façade of group consensus and stimulate a change in normative expectations. When taken as a potential alternative to normative social practices or beliefs, social deviance is akin to the concept of *social dissent*.

Individuals or minority groups that acquire the deviant label can expect challenges by those vested in the normative status quo and those with competing visions of acceptable behavior or ideas. Initially, fellow group members will attempt to “correct” the deviant's errant behavior or beliefs through gentle persuasion or subtle verbal and nonverbal cues. If the deviant behavior persists, the individual may become the target of more forceful punishments. These punishments are often a very effective means of correcting, or at least

suppressing, social deviance. However, the behavior and ideas of a deviant often become more alluring to others when the deviating individual does not succumb to social pressure but instead endures in the face of it.

Again, social controls on deviance typically prevail in countering immediate challenges to the status quo. However, like the proverbial squeaky wheel getting the oil, because social deviance is unexpected or unfamiliar, it attracts the attention of others. By attracting attention, deviants receive an opportunity to influence other group members in ways that their conforming brethren do not. Although the deviants' influence may not be immediately apparent, research demonstrates that counternormative ideas sometimes alter the subsequent decision-making behavior of people who are exposed to them. Therefore, while social deviance may often fail to influence a group at any given time, it can indirectly alter a group's future trajectory by drawing attention to, and raising questions about, taken-for-granted normative expectations.

Brian Colwell

*See also* Anticonformity; Conformity; Deviance; Essentialism; Legitimation; Normative Influence; Social Identity Theory; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory; Stigma; Subjective Group Dynamics

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## SOCIAL DILEMMAS

*Social dilemmas* are situations in which private interests are at odds with collective interests. Such situations arise because people frequently attach more weight to their short-term selfish interests than to the long-term interests of the group, organization, or society to which they belong. Many of the most challenging issues people face, from the interpersonal to the intergroup, are at their core social dilemmas.

Consider these examples. As individuals, we are each better off when we make use of public services such as schools, hospitals, and recreational grounds without contributing to their maintenance. However, if we each acted according to our narrow self-interest, then these resources would not be provided, and everyone would be worse off. Similarly, in the long run, everyone would benefit from a cleaner environment, yet how many people are prepared to voluntarily reduce their carbon footprint by saving more energy or driving or flying less frequently?

### Definitions and Metaphors

Social dilemmas are formally defined by two properties: (1) each person has an individual rational strategy that yields the best outcome in all circumstances (the noncooperative choice); (2) if all individuals pursue this strategy, it results in a deficient collective outcome—everyone would be better off by cooperating. Researchers frequently use experimental games to study social dilemmas in the laboratory. An experimental game is a situation in which participants choose between cooperative and noncooperative alternatives, yielding consequences for themselves and others in terms of their monetary outcomes.

The literature on social dilemmas has historically revolved around three metaphorical stories,

the prisoner’s dilemma, the public good dilemma, and the commons dilemma, and each of these stories has been modeled as an experimental game. The *prisoner’s dilemma game* was developed by scientists in the 1950s. The cover story for the game involved two prisoners who are separately given the choice between testifying against the other (noncooperation) or keeping silent (cooperation). The outcomes are such that each of them is better off testifying against the other, but if they both pursue this strategy, they are both worse off than if they remain silent.

**Table 1** Payoff Matrix for Prisoner’s Dilemma

		Player 2	
		Cooperate	Not cooperate
Player 1	Cooperate	-1 / -1	0 / -3
	Not cooperate	-3 / 0	-2 / -2

Notes: Payoffs represent number of years in prison associated with a cooperative choice (remaining silent) or a noncooperative choice (testifying against the other); lower diagonals reflect payoffs for Player 1, and upper diagonals reflect payoffs for Player 2. As can be seen, each player is better off testifying against the other, provided that the other remains silent (the first player goes free, whereas the second player goes to prison for 3 years). Yet if both players testify against each other, then both players are worse off (they each serve a prison sentence of 2 years) than if both remained silent (they each serve for only 1 year).

The *public good dilemma* has the same properties as the prisoner’s dilemma game but involves more than two individuals. A public good is a resource from which all may benefit regardless of whether they contributed to the good. For instance, people can enjoy the city parks regardless of whether they contributed to their upkeep through local taxes. Public goods are nonexcludable: Once these goods are provided, nobody can be excluded from using them. As a result, there is a temptation

to enjoy the good without making a contribution. Those who do so are called *free riders*, and although it is rational to free ride, if all do so, then the public good is not provided, and all are worse off. Researchers study primarily two public good dilemma games in the laboratory. Participants get a monetary endowment to play these games and decide how much to invest in a private fund versus a group fund. It is individually rational to invest in the private fund, yet all would be better off investing in the group fund because this yields a bonus. In the continuous game, the more that people invest in the group fund, the larger their share of the bonus. In the step-level game, people get a share of the bonus if the total group investments exceed a critical (step) level.

Finally, the *commons dilemma* was inspired by the metaphor of the Tragedy of the Commons, a story about a group of herders having open access to a common parcel of land on which their cows graze. It is in each herder's interest to put as many cows as possible onto the land, even if the commons is damaged as a result. The herder receives all the benefits from the additional cows, and the damage to the commons is shared by the entire group. Yet if all herders make this individually rational decision, the commons will be destroyed, and all will suffer. Compare this with the use of nonrenewable resources such as water or fish: When water is used at a higher rate than the reservoirs are replenished or when fish consumption exceeds the reproductive capacity of the fish, then we face a tragedy of the commons. The experimental commons game involves a common resource pool (filled with money or points) from which individuals harvest without depleting it. It is individually rational to harvest as much as possible, but the resource collapses if people harvest more than the replenishment rate of the pool.

### Theories of Social Dilemmas

Social dilemmas have attracted a great deal of interest in the social and behavioral sciences. Economists, biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists alike study when people are selfish or cooperative in a social dilemma. The most influential theoretical approach

is *economic game theory* (i.e., *rational choice theory* or *expected utility theory*). Game theory assumes that individuals are rational actors motivated to maximize their utilities. *Utility* is often narrowly defined in terms of people's economic self-interest. Game theory thus predicts a noncooperative outcome in a social dilemma. Although this is a useful starting premise, there are many circumstances in which people may deviate from individual rationality, demonstrating the limitations of economic game theory.

Biological and evolutionary approaches provide useful complementary insights into decision making in social dilemmas. According to *selfish gene theory*, humans (like any other organism) have evolved to maximize their inclusive fitness, the number of copies of their genes passed on to the next generation. Under certain conditions, selfish genes can produce cooperative individuals. For instance, it could be profitable for family members, who share a portion of the same genes, to help each other because doing so facilitates the survival of their genes. *Reciprocity theories* provide a different account of the evolution of cooperation. In repeated social dilemma games between the same individuals, cooperation might emerge because people can punish a partner for failing to cooperate. This encourages reciprocal cooperation. Reciprocity can explain why people cooperate in dyads, but what about larger groups? Evolutionary theories of *indirect reciprocity* and *costly signaling*, which assume that there are indirect benefits derived from a cooperative act, may be useful in explaining large-scale cooperation. When people can selectively choose partners to play games with, it pays to invest in getting a cooperative reputation. Through being cooperative, individuals can signal to others that they are kind and generous people, which might make them attractive partners or group members.

Psychological models offer additional insights into social dilemmas by questioning the game theory assumption that individuals pursue their narrow self-interest. *Interdependence theory* suggests that people transform a given social situation into one that is consistent with their motivational and strategic preferences. Playing a prisoner's dilemma with close family or friends, for example, will change the outcomes so that it becomes rational to cooperate. Whether individuals approach a



social dilemma selfishly or cooperatively might also depend on what attributions they make about other players, such as whether they believe others are greedy or cooperative. Similarly, *goal-expectation theory* assumes that people might cooperate under two conditions: They must (1) have a cooperative goal and (2) expect others to cooperate. Another psychological model, the *appropriateness model*, questions the game theory assumption that individuals rationally calculate their outcomes. Instead, many people base their decisions on what people around them do and use simple heuristics, like an equality rule, to decide whether to cooperate.

### Solutions to Social Dilemmas

Studying the conditions under which people cooperate might lead to recommendations for solving social dilemmas in society. The literature distinguishes between three broad classes of solutions—motivational, strategic, and structural—that vary in whether they assume actors are motivated purely by self-interest and in whether they change the rules of the social dilemma game or leave them intact.

#### *Motivational Solutions*

Motivational solutions assume that people have other-regarding preferences. Considerable literature on social values shows that people have stable preferences for how much they value outcomes for self versus others. Research has concentrated on three social motives: (1) individualism, or maximizing one's own outcomes regardless of others; (2) competition, or maximizing one's own outcomes relative to others; and (3) cooperation, or maximizing joint outcomes. The first two orientations are referred to as *proself orientations* and the third as a *prosocial orientation*. There is much support for the idea that prosocial and proself individuals behave differently when confronted with a social dilemma in the laboratory or the field. People with prosocial orientations weigh the moral implications of their decisions more and see cooperation as the most intelligent choice in a social dilemma. When there are conditions of scarcity, such as a water shortage, prosocials harvest less from a common resource. Similarly, prosocials are more concerned about the environmental consequences of, for example, taking the car or public transport.

Research on the development of social value orientations suggests an influence of factors such as family history (prosocials have more sibling sisters), age (older people are more prosocial), culture (Western cultures have more individualists), sex (more women are prosocial), and even university course (economics students are less prosocial). However, until we know more about the psychological mechanisms underlying these social value orientations, we lack a good basis for interventions.

Many people also have *group-regarding preferences*. People's group association is a powerful predictor of their social dilemma behavior. When people identify highly with a group, they contribute more to public goods and harvest less from common resources. Group identifications have even more striking effects when there is intergroup competition. When social dilemmas involve two or more groups of players, there is much less cooperation than when individuals play. Yet intergroup competition also facilitates intragroup cooperation, especially among men. When a resource is depleting rapidly, people are more willing to compensate for selfish decisions by ingroup members than outgroup members. Furthermore, the free-rider problem is much less pronounced when there is intergroup competition. However, intergroup competition can be a double-edged sword. Encouraging competition between groups might serve the temporary needs of ingroup members, but the social costs of intergroup conflicts can be severe for either group. It is not entirely clear why people cooperate more as part of a group. One possibility is that people become genuinely more altruistic. Other possibilities are that people are more concerned about their ingroup reputation or are more likely to expect returns from ingroup than outgroup members. This question needs further investigation.

Another factor that might affect the weight individuals assign to group outcomes is the possibility of communication. A robust finding in the social dilemma literature is that cooperation increases when people are given a chance to talk to each other. It has been quite a challenge to explain this effect. One motivational reason is that communication reinforces a sense of group identity. Another reason is that communication offers an opportunity for moral suasion so that people are exposed to arguments to do what is morally right. But there may be strategic considerations as well. First, com-

munication gives group members a chance to make promises and explicit commitments about what they will do. Yet it is not clear whether many people stick to their promises to cooperate. Similarly, through communication people are able to gather information about what others do. However, in social dilemmas, this information might produce ambiguous results: If I know that most people cooperate, might I be tempted to act selfishly?

### *Strategic Solutions*

A second category of solutions is strategic. In repeated interactions, cooperation might emerge when people adopt a tit-for-tat (TFT) strategy. TFT is characterized by making a first cooperative move and then mimicking your partner's subsequent moves. Thus, if the partner does not cooperate, you mimic this move until he or she starts to cooperate. Computer tournaments in which different strategies were pitted against each other have shown TFT to be the most successful strategy in social dilemmas. TFT is a common strategy in real-world social dilemmas because it is nice but firm. Think, for instance, about marriage contracts, rental agreements, and international trade policies that all use TFT tactics. However, TFT is quite an unforgiving strategy, and in noisy real-world dilemmas, a more forgiving strategy might be better.

Even when partners might not meet again, it could be strategically wise to cooperate. When people can selectively choose whom to interact with, it might pay to be seen as a cooperator. Research shows that cooperators create better opportunities for themselves than do noncooperators: Cooperators are selectively preferred as collaborative partners, romantic partners, and group leaders. This occurs, however, only when people's social dilemma choices are monitored by others. Public acts of altruism and cooperation, such as charity giving, philanthropy, and bystander intervention, are probably manifestations of reputation-based cooperation.

### *Structural Solutions*

Structural solutions change the rules of the game by either modifying the social dilemma or removing the dilemma altogether. Not surprisingly, many studies have shown that cooperation rates go up as the benefits of cooperation increase. Field research

on conservation behavior has shown that selective incentives in the form of monetary rewards are effective in decreasing domestic water and electricity use. Furthermore, experimental studies show that cooperation is more likely if individuals have the ability to punish defectors. Yet implementation of reward and punishment systems can be problematic for various reasons. First, there are significant costs associated with creating and administering sanction systems. Providing selective rewards and punishments requires support institutions to monitor the activities of both cooperators and noncooperators, and these institutions can be quite expensive to maintain. Second, these systems are themselves public goods because one can enjoy the benefits of a sanctioning system without contributing to its existence. The police, army, and judicial systems will fail to operate unless people are willing to pay taxes to support them. This raises the question whether many people want to contribute to these institutions. Experimental research suggests that particularly low trust individuals are willing to invest money in punishment systems, and a considerable portion of people are willing to punish noncooperators even if they personally do not profit. Some researchers even suggest that altruistic punishment is an evolved mechanism for human cooperation. A third limitation is that punishment and reward systems might undermine people's voluntary cooperative intention. Some people get a "warm glow" from cooperation, and the provision of selective incentives might crowd out their cooperative intention. Similarly, the presence of a negative sanctioning system might undermine voluntary cooperation. Research has found that punishment systems decrease the trust that people have in others. Thus, sanctioning is a delicate strategy.

Boundary structural solutions modify the social dilemma structure, and such strategies are often very effective. An often studied solution is the establishment of a leader or authority to manage a social dilemma. Experimental studies on commons dilemmas show that overharvesting groups are more willing to appoint a leader to look after the common resource. There is a preference for a democratically elected prototypical leader with limited power, especially when people's group ties are strong. When ties are weak, groups prefer a stronger leader with a coercive power base. The question remains whether authorities can be trusted

in governing social dilemmas, and field research shows that legitimacy and fair procedures are extremely important in citizens' willingness to accept authorities.

Another structural solution is reducing group size. Cooperation generally declines as group size increases. In larger groups, people often feel less responsible for the common good and believe, rightly or wrongly, that their contribution does not matter. Reducing the scale—for example through dividing a large-scale dilemma into smaller, more manageable parts—might be an effective tool in raising cooperation.

Another proposed boundary solution is to remove the social from the dilemma by means of *privatization*. People are often better in managing a private resource than a resource shared with many others. However, it is not easy to privatize movable resources such as fish, water, and clean air. Privatization also raises concerns about social justice because not everyone may be able to get an equal share. Finally, privatization might erode people's intrinsic motivation to cooperate.

### Conclusion

As social dilemmas in society become more pressing, there is an increasing need for policies. It is encouraging that much social dilemma research is applied to areas such as organizational welfare, public health, and local and global environmental change. The emphasis is shifting from purely laboratory research to research testing combinations of motivational, strategic, and structural solutions. It is also noteworthy that social dilemmas are an interdisciplinary research field with participation from researchers from various behavioral sciences who are developing unifying theoretical frameworks (such as evolutionary theory) to study social dilemmas. For instance, there is a burgeoning neuroeconomics literature that uses neuroscience methods to study brain correlates of decision making in social dilemmas. Finally, social dilemma researchers are increasingly using more dynamic experimental designs to see, for instance, what happens if people can voluntarily or involuntarily enter or exit a social dilemma or play different social dilemmas at the same time within different groups.

Mark van Vugt

*See also* Commons Dilemma; Cooperation and Competition; Evolutionary Psychology; Free Riding; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Leadership; Negotiation and Bargaining; Prisoner's Dilemma; Social Identity Theory

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## SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

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*Social dominance theory* addresses the question of why all large human societies with economic surplus are structured as group-based hierarchies. Social dominance theory integrates ideas from a broad variety of social science theories, including *authoritarian personality theory*, *social identity*

*theory, realistic group conflict theory, Marxism, feminism, evolutionary psychology, elite theory, social representations, symbolic racism theory,* and others. Social dominance theory is a multi-level theory, explaining how processes within individuals, such as prejudice and stereotyping, interface with practices of groups and institutions. Further, social dominance theory considers how cultural ideologies organize patterns of behavior to structure group-based power in societies. This entry provides an overview.

### Structure of Group-Dominance Societies

Whether their government is theocratic, democratic, monarchical, or communist, societies have a three-part, group-based structure, with adults dominating children, men exercising more power than women, and at least one socially defined group that includes men, women, and children (e.g., a race, religion, class, caste, or sect) exercising more power than at least one other group. Social dominance theory emphasizes how these three kinds of group-based hierarchy—age, gender, and arbitrary set—intersect. Therefore, social dominance theory does not view each kind of hierarchy as a subset of something else.

Across societies, economic systems, and historical time, the definition of the arbitrary groups and their predominance has varied substantially. For example, Muslims no longer dominate around the Mediterranean. There has been less societal variability in gender and age dominance, likely because of the universal presence of families. Thus, although some societies revere older people and some do not, and although some societies have gender parity in their national legislatures and many do not, gender inequality and age inequality are more constant and less lethal than arbitrary-set inequality.

For a society to sustain group-based inequality, it must systematically distribute whatever people value (e.g., wealth, prestige, health care, pleasant living places) and whatever they devalue (e.g., danger, difficult jobs) more in favor of the dominant arbitrary group than subordinate groups. A major vehicle for such unequal distribution is discrimination by institutions. As documented in their 1999 book, Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto found that, the world over, corporate employers, financial institutions, schools, and health facilities provide

better opportunities, resources, and services to members of dominant groups than to members of subordinate groups. Discrimination by individuals also systematically sustains inequality because people tend to discriminate in like fashion.

### Legitimizing Myths

The coordination among different actors in both individual discrimination and institutional discrimination such that certain groups are favored and others disfavored is largely accomplished through shared legitimizing myths. Legitimizing myths are cultural ideologies that prescribe how people with certain social identities should act and be treated by others, what social priorities are important, or who deserves what. The contents of these myths can be quite varied within and between cultures and across historical time.

For example, propositions (and attitudes) that justify Christian discrimination against Muslims have ranged from the theological conception that Muslims were unholy (disgust) to the view that Muslims immigrate to the West to take jobs (resentment) and to the assumption that most Muslims are terrorists (fear). In social discourse and persuasive processes, legitimizing myths make practices or outcomes that sustain inequality seem justified, natural, and necessary, or they may obscure the fact that practices produce inequality by framing it as something else (e.g., equal opportunity, for the greater good, modern, traditional, efficient).

The “truth value” of these myths cannot be determined, but they have the property of making themselves come true by coordinating discrimination. For example, a stereotype that a subordinate group is criminal can contribute to more extensive policing of that group, higher conviction rates, and thus to a disproportionate number of convicted criminals among that group.

Myths that serve to sustain inequality are hierarchy enhancing. Myths that promote greater equality are hierarchy attenuating. Legitimizing myths can change their hierarchical function when people replace the meanings with social practices that have opposite implications for hierarchy. For example, the Protestant work ethic developed as a hierarchy-attenuating myth because it privileged the mercantile class over the nobility that ruled

western Europe. At present in the United States, the type of meritocracy derived from the Protestant work ethic privileges people who already have wealth, education, and the customs that are considered high status, namely, Whites.

### Social Dominance Orientation

When people have freedom of choice over their actions, social dominance theory assumes that whether they discriminate in hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating ways, and whether they choose hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing roles, is influenced by a general value they have for group inequality versus equality. This psychological orientation is called social dominance orientation. People who are relatively high in social dominance orientation (unegalitarian) have been found to endorse sexist beliefs, to support more conservative than liberal political parties, and to endorse prejudice against the local subordinate group more than do people lower in social dominance orientation.

This finding has emerged in the United States, Sweden, Israel, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Spain, France, Belgium, Mexico, Australia, Lebanon, China, Taiwan, Italy, and elsewhere, even though the contents of sexism, the particular political system and political parties, and the subordinate arbitrary group and measures of prejudice differ from society to society. Social dominance orientation also correlates with prejudice based on nationalism and sexual orientation. Social dominance orientation is a robust individual difference measure of group prejudice, and it accounts for variability in prejudice independent of right wing authoritarianism and political-economic conservatism. Social dominance orientation reliably predicts a variety of discriminatory behaviors in experiments and is relatively stable over time, although it can change with educational socialization.

It is not known what causes a person to become relatively high or low in social dominance orientation, but there are consistent correlations between social dominance orientation and other variables across nations. Men are consistently higher in social dominance orientation than women are, and, in most studies, people in the dominant ethnic or sexual-orientation groups are also higher in social dominance orientation than people in the

subordinate ethnic or sexual-orientation groups. People lower in social dominance orientation tend to be higher in empathy, benevolence, openness, agreeableness, and universal values than are people higher in social dominance orientation. People higher in social dominance orientation assume that the world is a zero-sum competition, and their motivation not to lose this competition can lead them to be callous and hostile. However, social dominance orientation is unrelated to being task focused or efficacious. Some have argued that there are developmental antecedents to social dominance orientation. For example, John Duckitt has hypothesized that people who are raised with little affection develop a dog-eat-dog worldview and become higher in social dominance orientation.

### Behavioral Asymmetry

Because social dominance theory is fundamentally about group differences in power, it has explicitly theorized about the social and psychological situations of dominance and subordination. One important principle it has explicated is that of behavioral asymmetry, which states that behaviors that are generally self- or group beneficial will be more likely to be performed by members of dominant than members of subordinate groups. Sidanius and Pratto have reviewed an array of such behaviors. For example, Blacks are less likely to spend time studying and are less likely to follow their doctor's orders than Whites are. The fact that people in subordinate groups do not act in ways that favor themselves as much as do people in dominant groups is, then, another bias that contributes to group inequality.

A special case of behavioral asymmetry is ideological asymmetry. The principle of ideological asymmetry holds that psychological factors that are expected to be associated with social dominance orientation, such as ingroup identification and endorsement of hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, will be more strongly associated among dominant group members than among subordinate group members. For example, ethnic identification is more strongly associated with social dominance orientation among Whites than among Blacks and Latinos in the United States. In fact, even people in nonhegemonic societies, such as Lebanon, have been shown to favor the global hegemony of the United States if they are high in social dominance orientation. Related predictions

concerning group differences in the relations among identity, ingroup bias, and system justification have been derived from social identity theory and system justification theory, but often relying on the concept of social dominance orientation.

### Gender and Group Dominance

Social dominance theory recognizes that men play a special role in maintaining group dominance in that men monopolize the forceful institutional roles that sustain not just order but group dominance, including judiciary, lawyers, militaries, and police. The primary targets of forceful control by such institutions are men in subordinate groups. Moreover, men are overrepresented (compared with women) in unofficial coalitions that use force to exert power, including criminal gangs, substate terrorist groups, and revolutionary and liberation movements that use violence. In some sense, then, considerable intergroup violence is actually conflict between coalitions of men, although of course women and children can also participate in and suffer from such conflicts. This is one fact that shows that gender inequality and arbitrary-set inequality interlock and are not just special cases of each other.

Women are more likely than men to do hierarchy-attenuating work, or work that disproportionately benefits members of low-power groups, such as social work and volunteer work that aid the poor, the sick, and immigrants. Gender differences in obtaining roles that attenuate or enhance hierarchy are not due only to gender differences in social dominance orientation but also to sex discrimination in hiring.

### Power Dynamics

The apparatus of social dominance theory outlines how social inequality could be made more or less severe and also more or less stable. Societies should be relatively more egalitarian to the extent that they are not wealthy, have hierarchy-attenuating ideologies strongly linked to their cultural values and social identities, have more women with political power, have more gender equality in caregiving roles, and have less privileging of punitive and military institutions. Societies that have widely shared legitimizing myths will tend to be more stable in inequality, both because of social consen-

sus and because hierarchy-attenuating myths and actors will tend to curb the excesses of hierarchy-enhancing myths and actors. Elite groups that rely more on violence than on legitimizing myths to maintain dominance are likely to be unstable, because they produce resentment. Moreover, once these groups have been removed from power, a power vacuum occurs that invites multiple parties to engage in conflict until a new dominating order is established.

*Felicia Pratto*

*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Discrimination; Dominance Hierarchies; Ideology; Power; Prejudice; Racism; Social Identity Theory; System Justification Theory

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## SOCIAL ENTRAINMENT

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The *social entrainment model* was introduced by Joseph McGrath and Janice Kelly to provide a general framework for understanding some aspects of social behavior over time. The term *entrainment* is borrowed from the biological sciences, in which an internal rhythmic process is “captured” and modified by another cycle. For instance, we know that there are a number of cyclic processes within the body, such as body temperature, urinary output, and various hormonal cycles, that have become entrained to one another so that they operate in synchrony with respect to their regularly spaced recurrence.

These cycles can also be affected by various outside forces that might affect their onset, offset, or synchronization. For instance, the day–night cycle acts as a powerful entraining signal for synchronizing many of the body’s cyclic processes. In “free-running” conditions, or in conditions in which the outside pacing influence of the day–night cycle is removed, these cycles continue to approximate a 24-hour periodicity. Thus, the circadian fluctuations will persist for a time, even after the pacing event has been removed, until disentrainment from the 24-hour periodicity occurs or until a new entraining signal is imposed. When the outside pacing event is again imposed on these processes, such as when the day–night cycle is reintroduced, the 24-hour periodicity again becomes strongly entrained.

By analogy, the term *social entrainment* describes the many human social rhythms that are influenced by other social rhythms or by external pacing events. Social entrainment can also occur between individuals. For instance, some researchers have found that individuals in conversation will modify their conversation patterns toward that of their partner. At an even more macro level, there is an entrainment of life activity patterns that can become disrupted when a worker changes to

an off-time shift. Social entrainment refers to all those cycles of behavior, at the individual, group, or organizational level, that are captured and modified by one another or by an external pacer that may serve to regulate those behaviors. This entry summarizes the original model and related empirical research.

### Components of the Model

McGrath and Kelly assumed that these notions of rhythm, entrainment, and external pacing events might be useful for thinking about human behavior over time. Their ideas were formalized in 1986 as the *social entrainment model*. The model consists of four components that refer to entrained and unentrained rhythms of behavior and to possible external pacing conditions.

The first component of the model, *rhythm*, refers to the various endogenous rhythmic processes that may be inherent in the organism under study. Many aspects of human behavior seem to have cyclic or rhythmic qualities. For instance, individuals have fairly predictable activity cycles, perhaps influenced by various biological cycles. Individuals also seem to have various base-rate preferences for the amount of talking or for appropriate turn-taking that they might prefer in a group interaction. Rebecca Warner and others have found that patterns of sound and silence in interacting dyads seem to operate in recurring patterns or rhythms. Organizations also often have predictable, seasonal fluctuations. Thus, rhythmic aspects of behavior can occur on individual to organizational levels and can range in periodicities from fractions of seconds to lifetimes.

The second component, *mesh*, refers to some process through which various rhythms become synchronized. In biology, it is sometimes possible to specify the organ or area responsible for the entrainment. In human social behavior, on the other hand, such a mechanism must often be inferred. For example, individuals entering an interaction with various personal tempos for conversational behavior must negotiate or somehow adopt a scheme for synchronizing individual preferences. Others have suggested a similar mechanism at the level of social systems, such that organizations must somehow develop a *negotiated*

*temporal order* in order to achieve smooth organizational coordination.

The third component, *tempo*, refers to the patterns of behavior that result as a consequence of this synchronization. For example, after individual conversational preferences are synchronized, there is a resulting pattern of sound and silence, or other behaviors, within the interaction. Other examples might include a pattern of individual task performance, daily recurrent patterns of activity and rest, or yearly productivity patterns in an organization.

The final component, *pace*, refers to potential outside pacing events that might influence the onset, offset, or periodicity of the specified rhythms. The biological example is the day–night cycle that synchronizes circadian cycles to a 24-hour periodicity. Examples of pacing events for human behavior include changes in work schedule and abrupt changes in time zones. Each of these examples has implications for onset and offset of activity cycles. For example, time limits often act as powerful pacing events that obviously affect the onset and offset of activities but that also affect the periodicities of behavior within those time limits.

The social entrainment model therefore suggests that when looking at human behavior, we might want to examine a number of features. In particular, we might want to examine (a) rhythms of behavior, (b) synchronization between rhythms of behavior, (c) how various external pacing events might affect these rhythms, and (d) how these altered rhythms might persist over time.

### Related Research

Most of the empirical work on social entrainment has focused on the third and fourth of these issues, namely, how external pacing events might alter rhythms and how these altered rhythms might persist over time. For example, Kelly and her colleagues have found that *time limits* can serve as powerful potential pacing events, and these researchers have gathered a body of evidence concerning the initial altering (entraining) effects of time limits and how these entrained patterns persist over time. More specifically, they find that short initial time limits (or time pressure) cause individuals and groups to work at a faster rate of performance, but with lower quality, and that these initial effects persist over multiple trials.

Conversely, long initial time limits cause individuals and groups to work at slower rates of performance, but with higher quality, and these initial effects also persist over multiple trials. Their work also shows similar entrainment effects for interpersonal communication patterns. Short time limits cause groups to focus more specifically on task-oriented communications, as opposed to nontask and personal communications, and these effects also persist over multiple trials.

Deborah Ancona and her colleagues have similarly documented powerful external pacing events in organizations. Organizations can have periods of speeded-up activity and periods of slowed-down activity that can define a rhythm of activity. These rhythms can be influenced by external events, such as seasonal demand or quarterly accounting cycles. Behavior in teams operating within organizations also responds to internal pacing events, such as those that are defined by phases of task completion or by deadlines. Ancona thus has stated that teams must engage in a *dance of entrainment* as they choreograph their activities to mesh with internal and external pacing events over time.

Janice R. Kelly

See also Group Development; Group Performance; Group Task; Norms; Teams

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## SOCIAL EXCHANGE IN NETWORKS AND GROUPS

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Research on social exchange in networks and groups is primarily concerned with the more or less enduring relationships that develop over time. The research has been concerned with interactions, both within and between groups and networks, in which individuals attempt to obtain the resources or benefits they desire. One of the major concerns has been how the connections between individuals influence their likelihood of obtaining the resources they desire, and as a result, how interactions can then reshape the connections between individuals in networks and groups.

### History and Background

The exchange perspective on networks and groups has origins in several disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. There were two major influences from the field of psychology. First is the work by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley, *The Social Psychology of Groups*, which was extremely influential in the early works on exchange in sociology. In addition, the work of B. F. Skinner had a strong influence on the work of George Homans and subsequently of Linda Molm. In cultural anthropology, the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Marcel Mauss were especially influential.

Three of the earliest theorists writing about social exchange in networks and groups were George Homans, Peter Blau, and Richard M. Emerson. They set the groundwork for most of the subsequent research on exchange in networks and groups. Each of these theorists had significant influence on the development of this field of study.

Homans's primary focus was the social behavior that emerged as a result of mutual reinforcement of two parties involved in a dyadic exchange. He was greatly influenced by the work of Skinner and borrowed Skinner's ideas on reinforcement as a mechanism for change within networks. Homans's theoretical consideration of distributive justice, power, status, authority, leadership, and solidarity is based on an analysis of direct exchange between individuals in groups.

Blau focused on the links between microsocial behavior and the groups, organizations, and institutions in which individual relations are embedded. Blau was interested primarily in the reciprocal exchange of benefits and the types of relationships and social structures that emerge from this kind of social interaction.

For Emerson, the relationship between power and social structure was the central theoretical problem in social exchange in groups and networks. Two of Emerson's distinct contributions are his fundamental insight into the relational nature of power and his extension of power-dependence theory to analyze the social networks created by exchange relations. Subsequent work by Karen Cook, Barry Markovsky, David Willer, John Skvoretz, Edward Lawler, Linda Molm, Phillip Bonacich, Noah Friedkin, and others built on these developments.

### Types of Exchange

The principles of social exchange in groups and networks can be applied to most human interactions, but individuals do not interact with all other individuals the same ways, nor is it acceptable to engage in certain types of interaction to procure certain resources (i.e., one is unlikely to negotiate birthday gifts). Several possible types of interaction within groups and networks have been specified. The broadest distinction between types of exchange is between direct and indirect exchanges. *Direct exchange* is a relationship in which each actor's outcome is directly dependent on another actor's behavior. *Indirect exchange* is an exchange relationship in which each actor's outcome is dependent, not on the person he or she gave to, but rather on either a collective entity or another member of the network.

There are three major types of direct exchange: negotiated, reciprocal, and productive exchange. In *negotiated exchange*, actors engage in a joint decision process, such as explicit bargaining, in which they seek agreement on the terms of the transaction. It is easy to identify the benefits received by individuals in any given transaction. All sides of the transaction must agree to the terms of the transaction for it to occur. Most economic exchanges take this form, as do many social exchanges (negotiating over chores or social activities).

In contrast, in *reciprocal exchange*, actors' contributions to the exchange are separately performed and not explicitly negotiated. In reciprocal exchange, an actor initiates exchanges individually, by performing a beneficial act for another actor or a group, without knowing whether, when, or to what extent the other actor will reciprocate this beneficial act. If a relationship forms, it often takes the shape of sequential actions characterized by mutual obligations. Reciprocal exchange often occurs within intimate social relations in which explicit negotiation over resources or benefits would violate norms. But reciprocal exchange also occurs in situations such as the workplace, where individuals may help one another on projects, with implicit expectations for reciprocity in the future.

Studies of negotiated and reciprocal exchange generally focus on the interaction within a network of exchange. Early work on social exchange within groups and networks typically examined dyadic exchange relationships. Now, most research focuses on exchange relations embedded within larger exchange networks or groups. Emerson defined an *exchange network* as a set of two or more connected exchange relations. Two exchange relationships are connected if the frequency or value of exchange in one relationship affects the frequency or value of exchange in another.

The third major form of direct exchange is *productive exchange*. In this form of interaction, all the parties of the exchange contribute and benefit from a single transaction. Groups engage in productive exchange when they act collectively, each member contributing to produce a socially valued outcome that benefits all group members. Productive exchange is similar to what other social psychologists have called cooperation or coordination. Research on productive exchange generally focuses on the group, in which individuals work together to achieve some valued outcome. The structure of the group (i.e., the way each group's members are connected) has not typically been studied. Instead, research on productive exchange, such as that by Lawler and his colleagues, has focused on issues of coordination, solidarity, cohesion, and affect.

In *indirect* or *generalized exchange*, one actor gives resources to another, but resources are reciprocated not by the recipient but rather by a third party. Thus, generalized-exchange systems involve

a minimum of three actors. From the perspective of the recipient, the obligation to reciprocate is not necessarily directed to the benefactor but instead to one or more actors who are implicated in a social exchange situation with the benefactor.

There are two main types of generalized exchange: network-generalized exchange and group-generalized exchange. In *network-generalized exchange*, each individual gives goods or services directly to one other individual and receives goods or services from a different individual in the same network. The *Kula ring* trade in the Trobriand Islands studied by Malinowski is the most famous example. The Kula ring involved the exchange of necklaces of red shells in a clockwise fashion between islands, while bracelets of white shells were exchanged in a counterclockwise direction. In *group-generalized exchange*, individuals contribute to a public or collective good and receive benefits from the same public or collective good. Barn raising, in which a community comes together to build a barn for one of its members, is an example of group-generalized exchange.

The majority of the theorizing on social exchange in groups and networks emphasizes direct exchange. The following sections describe the major trends and findings.

### Power

By embedding the exchange relation within a network of connections, Emerson fostered a new era of exchange studies. The inclusion of networks allowed theorists to consider the effects of having alternatives for valued resources, that is, structural power. Emerson, and later his colleague Cook, developed power-dependence theory, which describes how variation in the number of alternatives for valued resources and the value of the resources one controls determine one's relative power in an exchange network. One of the major findings in this tradition is that an actor's relative position in a network produces differences in the use of power. Unequal power then manifests itself in the unequal distribution of rewards across positions in a social network.

David Willer and Barry Markovsky have also studied power within networks and groups. They assume that power is determined by the number of alternative connections available to an actor within a network. They distinguish between two types of

networks, *strong* and *weak power networks*. The difference between the two types of networks stems from the likelihood of actors being excluded from exchange. In strong power networks, some actors in the network (low-power actors) must be excluded from the exchange, and some actors (high-power actors) must be included in the exchange. High-power actors in strong power networks are likely to obtain almost all, if not all, the resources available in the network. On the other hand, in weak power networks, it is possible to exclude any actor in the network in an exchange. The likelihood of being excluded from the exchange depends on an actor's position in the network. In weak power networks, high-power actors benefit proportionally more than do lower power actors.

### Commitment

In addition to the study of power, the phenomenon of commitment became a central focus of those interested in exchange dynamics within groups and networks. Commitment has generally been conceived of as repeated interaction with one partner to the exclusion of other potential partners in the group or network. Commitment became central to the work on exchange in networks and groups because it presented a serious theoretical problem. Scholars who study exchange in groups and networks generally assume that actors try to maximize outcomes they desire. However, committing to a partner when an individual has alternatives is not a rational decision.

Seminal work by Cook and Emerson and their students has established that, in general, individuals value low uncertainty and often act to minimize uncertainty in interactions. Cook and Emerson found that greater uncertainty led to higher levels of commitment with particular partners. Commitment between partners reduces the uncertainty of finding a partner for trade and ensures a higher frequency of exchange. Peter Kollock examined behavioral commitments in environments that allow actors to cheat one another in their exchanges. In situations in which opportunism is possible, a commitment to a specific trustworthy partner is often the easiest solution to the problem of uncertainty. He found that actors were willing to forgo potentially more profitable exchanges with untested partners in favor of continuing to transact

with known partners who had demonstrated their trustworthiness in previous transactions (i.e., they did not misrepresent the value of their goods).

Toshio Yamagishi and Karen Cook have found that, in conditions of low uncertainty, actors are much more likely to avoid forming commitments to specific partners in order to maximize their access to valued resources. And Yamagishi and Cook have found that, under conditions of high uncertainty, actors form exclusive commitments to a specific partner in the network in an attempt to avoid the possibility of exploitation by unknown actors who enter the exchange network.

### Affect and Affective Commitment

More recently, the concept of commitment has expanded beyond the traditional behavioral measures of repeated exchange to include measures of affective commitment. This effort has been led by Lawler and his colleagues, as well as by Molm and her colleagues. This shift to understand the role of emotions in exchange represents an important return to fundamental issues of social solidarity and cohesion in networks and groups.

Among the more recent efforts to examine the nonstructural elements of social exchange in networks and groups is the work of Lawler on relational cohesion, as well as Molm's research on variations in affective responses to different types of exchange. Lawler and his colleagues developed the *affect theory of social exchange* to explain the effects of emotional responses to exchanges on relationships within networks and groups and exchange outcomes, including the degree of commitment and solidarity within the network or group. The goal of this work has been to develop a more comprehensive theory of exchange in networks and groups that includes emotions as a key element in the formation and continuation of relationships within networks and groups.

Molm and her colleagues have examined the effects of *type* of exchange (reciprocal or negotiated) on affective commitment within networks and groups. Molm and her collaborators have argued that reciprocal exchange is inherently more risky than negotiated exchange. Because exploitation is always possible, actors in reciprocal exchange risk giving benefits unilaterally while receiving little or nothing in return. Moreover, these researchers

have argued that affective commitment is more likely to form in reciprocal exchange than in negotiated exchange. Because of the inherent risk, actors are likely to attribute a partner's positive behaviors to personal traits and intentions, which results in the emergence of stronger positive feelings in reciprocal exchange than in negotiated exchange.

### Trust

In addition to work on affect and affective commitment, understanding the formation of trust relationships has become an important area of research on exchange in networks and groups. The earliest work on trust formation stressed the importance of positive exchange behavior in the network or group. Blau argued that by cooperating with a partner, one indicates that one is less likely to take advantage of one's partner. It is these actions that can help build relationships within and between networks and groups. Blau argued that actors in reciprocal exchange start with small gifts. If those are returned, the actor is perceived as trustworthy, and subsequently, larger gifts may be given. In addition, Kollock has shown how the risk of exploitation can have extreme effects on perceptions of trustworthiness. In his study, when sellers were able to mislead the buyers about the quality of the goods to be purchased (i.e., a potential for opportunism existed), truthful information was associated with high levels of perceived trustworthiness, but dishonest information was associated with high levels of distrust.

Molm and her colleagues have also studied how different types of exchange (which vary in risk) affect perceptions of trust. They have argued that trust should be higher in reciprocal exchange than in negotiated exchange, precisely because the fear of exploitation should be stronger in reciprocal exchange. This effect is magnified by the attribution of behaviors to a partner's personal traits, which allows trust to be attributed to that partner within a network or group.

While the majority of social-psychological studies on exchange have focused on direct exchange, interest in generalized exchange has increased recently. Yamagishi and Cook compared the two types of generalized exchange and found that network-generalized exchange systems promote higher levels of participation than do group-generalized exchange systems (controlling for the size of the

network or group). They also found that mutual trust between members of these groups leads to higher levels of participation in the exchange. This effect is especially pronounced in network-generalized exchange.

In addition, Molm and her colleagues have begun including generalized exchange in their comparisons between types of exchange. They have found that network-generalized exchange produces higher levels of solidarity, perceived trust, and positive affect within groups and networks than do either reciprocal or negotiated exchange. They have argued that indirect reciprocity, typified by network-generalized exchange, produces stronger feelings of group attachment and solidarity. The work by Molm and her colleagues typifies one of the major trends in exchange studies, namely, to compare how different network structures and exchange types impact different social-psychological outcomes.

### Future Directions

The work discussed here focuses on interaction within one type of exchange, but real-world studies of exchange relationships show that exchange relations are multiplex and can evolve through time. One of the challenges of the study of social exchange in networks and groups is to understand the causes and consequences of changes in the type of exchange. Another area for future work on social exchange in networks and groups is to use the theoretical tools developed in the laboratory to explore real-world social networks. The work on social exchange in networks and groups has primarily been limited to highly controlled experimental studies, but the theoretical framework has the potential to help us better understand interaction in naturally forming groups and networks.

*Alexandra Gerbasi*

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Negotiation and Bargaining; Power; Power-Dependence Theory; Social Networks

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## SOCIAL FACILITATION

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In 1956, Roger Bannister used an inventive strategy to achieve the world's first 4-minute mile. He had two friends pace him, each for one lap, just under the needed pace. Bannister's strategy illustrates *social facilitation*. This term refers to cases in which individuals improve their performance when they are in the presence of conspecifics (i.e., members of the same species). These conspecifics can be observers, others performing the same activity, or others who just happen to be present. This facilitation, however, occurs only on simple tasks in which the correct response is well learned. In contrast, on complex tasks in which the correct

response is not well learned, the presence of conspecifics usually detracts from performance, a phenomenon known as *social impairment*. The fact that the presence of others intensifies reactions (either correct or incorrect) has implications for a wide array of behaviors in human groups, including mobs, teams, and work groups. For example, recent research indicates that the presence of others can facilitate intergroup stereotyping. This entry describes research regarding social facilitation, one of the oldest research topics in social psychology.

### History

In 1897 Norman Triplett observed that bicycle racers rode faster against competitors than against a clock. He then conducted experiments verifying that children wound a fishing reel faster when they had competitors. Other researchers found that, when conspecifics were present, ants moved more sand, chicks ate more feed, and dogs ran faster. Knut Larsson reported that rat pairs copulated more if they were in the presence of other copulating rat pairs. In one intriguing study, Robert Zajonc and his associates found that cockroaches ran faster down a straight runway to escape a light if the runway was lined with acrylic cubicles containing other cockroaches. Similarly, humans eat more, purchase more, and jog faster when they are in the presence of other people. In short, responses are intensified in terms of speed, vigor, or probability of occurrence when humans, insects, and animals are observed by an audience or are performing with coactors. Because so many of the early studies reported improvements in performance in others' presence, the term *social facilitation* came to be synonymous with the impact of such social presence and to some degree remains so today.

However, by the 1930s it had become apparent that, occasionally, having people work together on a task could also impair performance. Thus, if people collaborate on a single group task such that their individual contributions are masked, *social loafing* rather than social facilitation occurs. In addition, even on noncollaborative tasks (in which one's individual output is easily assessed), working alongside coactors (or before an audience) impairs performance in some cases. For example, such social conditions impair performance when people work on Greek epigrams or

complex computer problems. Such results initially provoked some confusion. However, in a classic 1965 paper, Zajonc offered an integrative explanation for these outcomes that reinvigorated research on this topic.

### Theoretical Views

#### *Zajonc's Drive View*

Zajonc suggested that both social facilitation and social impairment occur because the presence of others elevates *drive*, also called *arousal* or *excitement*. Drive level is important because it is known to intensify performance on easy tasks, in which correct performance is pretty much automatic. This occurs because drive (e.g., hunger) is known to intensify *dominant responses*—responses that are highly likely as a result of training or inborn tendencies. On easy tasks, the correct response is dominant, and therefore drive should serve to facilitate correct performance. On difficult tasks, however, incorrect responses tend to be dominant, and therefore drive should intensify these responses, thereby impairing correct performance. Thus, according to Zajonc, increased drive can lead to *either* performance facilitation or impairment. Zajonc's cockroach study illustrates his theory. The same cockroach "rooting section" that facilitated performance in a straight runway (where the dominant response of running forward is "correct") inhibited performance on a task that required the insects to emit a nondominant response (slowing down and turning right).

After 20 years, it became clear that there was strong support for Dr. Zajonc's basic predictions. A 1984 meta-analysis "averaged" the findings of 241 studies. As predicted, social conditions did indeed facilitate performance on simple tasks and impair performance on complex tasks. What remained unclear, however, was why.

#### *Evaluation Theory*

Zajonc argued in 1965 that such facilitation or impairment should occur whenever others are *merely present*. Other researchers, however, have maintained that facilitation or impairment—at least among humans—is due to participants' worrying about looking bad to others. Consistent with this viewpoint, there is evidence that nonevaluative

audiences do not provoke social facilitation or impairment. For example, several studies indicate that joggers do not jog faster when potential observers are inattentive. However, in support of the "mere-presence" view, other research indicates that even when people should not feel anxious about evaluation (e.g., during a pretask warm-up period), they show evidence of social facilitation while typing their names in front of a blindfolded observer. In another study, A. W. Rajecki reported that the simple presence of a blindfolded display manikin triggered social facilitation. In short, the question regarding the impact of mere presence remains unsettled.

#### *Distraction–Conflict Theory*

According to distraction–conflict theory, social facilitation or impairment occurs because we have a strong tendency to pay attention to conspecifics. In experiments, this tendency conflicts with our need to pay close attention to the experimental task. The tendency to pay attention to conspecifics should be particularly strong if these others are competing against us or evaluating us or are unusual in some fashion. This tendency produces *attentional conflict*, that is, indecision regarding where and when to direct our attention. Such *approach–approach conflict*, in turn, is known to produce the type of drive or arousal to which Zajonc alluded.

This view explains the effects of evaluation anxiety by assuming that worrying creates *internal distraction* (Will I perform well enough? Do I look silly?). Similarly, the inconsistent effects of mere presence discussed above can be explained by assuming that when the presence of others is unusual, it provokes attentional conflict. However, when it is not unusual, it does not. Thus, the presence of a blindfolded manikin (which few people have encountered before) might well lure participants' attention from an experimental task, thereby provoking attentional conflict.

Supporting this model, mechanical distractions have been found to provoke the same social facilitation effects and physiological reactions as an audience, and social facilitation occurs only when coactors work on comparable tasks (where the urge to socially compare is strong). In one ingenious study, Brad Groff required participants to examine the face of an evaluating observer. Given that this particular task *required* participants to

monitor the observer, there was no attentional conflict between performing the task (watching the observer) and attending to the audience (i.e., the single observer). As predicted, in this condition no social facilitation occurred.

### *Critique*

One serious problem with these versions of drive theory is that evidence for elevated arousal (e.g., blood pressure) in social conditions is mixed. Thus, the meta-analysis described above revealed that arousal was elevated on complex tasks but not on simple ones. In addition, John Cacioppo in 1990 carefully assessed arousal measures and found no evidence of heightened arousal when people were observed.

Research by James Blascovich and his associates suggests that physiological reactions in social conditions may be more specific than Zajonc assumed. This work indicates that when individuals in social conditions feel that they can meet the demands posed by a task, they show increased cardiac output, dilation of their arteries, and improved blood flow to the muscles (i.e., a *challenge reaction*). This reaction is associated with improved task performance. However, when people feel that they probably cannot meet the task demands, they exhibit a *threat reaction*, which is known to impair performance. This reaction is marked by increased vascular constriction and increased blood pressure. These findings suggest that social facilitation or impairment is not due to a simple increase in arousal, as Zajonc suggested, but rather to a more complex set of bodily reactions.

### *Attention Theory*

In contrast to drive theory, some have suggested that attentional processes may explain social facilitation effects. A revision of distraction–conflict theory points out that when people are overloaded with more stimuli than they have time to process, they narrow the range of cues to which they attend. If they are working on a well-learned task, this narrow focus allows them to better “home in” on the few key cues demanding attention. If, however, a complex task requires people to process a wide array of cues, such a narrow focus will hurt performance. This explains how the model accounts for both facilitation and impairment effects.

Several recent studies support this perspective. Dominique Muller and Fabrizio Butera reported in 2007 that coaction increased participants’ ability to focus on two key stimuli—a slash and a tilted S—while it decreased their tendency to falsely report seeing these items as a dollar sign (a dominant–familiar response). Similarly, Pascal Huguet reported that coaction increased individuals’ ability to focus on the color of letters making up a word and decreased their tendency to read the word (a dominant response). In short, 99 years after Triplett’s original report, researchers still continue to explore the causes and dimensions of social facilitation, one of the fundamental findings in group psychology.

Robert S. Baron

*See also* Group Motivation; Group Performance; Social Compensation; Social Loafing; Sports Teams; Teams

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## **SOCIAL IDENTITY MODEL OF DEINDIVIDUATION EFFECTS**

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The *social identity model of deindividuation effects* (SIDE model) explains how group behavior is affected by *anonymity* and *identifiability*. There

are many social situations in which people interact in relatively anonymous ways. In social interactions on the Internet, for example, people often use pseudonyms or avatars (pictures) to identify themselves, and even e-mail addresses do not typically provide much information about senders. Another example is the anonymity people experience when they are in a crowd. An important question, therefore, is how anonymity affects people's behavior.

SIDE was developed as an alternative to *deindividuation theory*. Deindividuation theory suggests that anonymity leads to a loss of self-awareness, and this loss leads to a rise in antinormative behavior. But deindividuation research shows contradictory results: Anonymity in groups often leads to more normative behavior. SIDE suggests this is because anonymity makes people self-define themselves less as persons but *more* as members of the social group to which they belong. This increased salience of social group membership (or social identity) leads to increased adherence to the norms of the group.

Today, SIDE is used to explain the effects of anonymity and social isolation in various settings, and an extensive body of research has examined its propositions. Taken as a whole, this research demonstrates that anonymity and identifiability have profound consequences for intergroup relations, group processes, and individual self-definition. Research on SIDE has particularly focused on crowds and collective action, online teams, electronic relationships and virtual communities, and, recently, on social effects of surveillance (e.g., by means of cameras or electronic tagging). This entry first reviews the historical and scientific background of the SIDE model and then explains the model in some detail.

### Background

Deindividuation theory was developed to explain the phenomenon that in crowds, people become capable of acts that rational individuals would not normally endorse. In a crowd, people may become disinhibited and behave antinormatively. Soccer hooliganism is one example. Deindividuation theory argues that this behavior occurs because of the anonymity of the crowd. If you are anonymous, you are not paid attention to as an individual, and

this makes you less able and less motivated to regulate your actions. If you do not or cannot regulate your actions, you can no longer adhere to existing social norms, and your behavior may be disinhibited. The psychological state of deindividuation therefore involves a severely reduced ability to exercise self-control.

Research has shown that deindividuation does not tell the whole story, however. For example, questions have been raised about the existence of the psychological state of deindividuation. Even more problematic is that the outcomes predicted by deindividuation theory are actually quite rare. Historical evidence shows that most crowds are peaceful and orderly. And even when they are violent, crowds are typically disciplined and capable of sophisticated patterns of behavior. These characteristics are inconsistent with the deindividuation theory prediction of disinhibition.

SIDE has taken these inconsistencies as the basis for a new model. Its prediction is different from that of deindividuation theory. SIDE predicts that in the crowd (as well as in other "deindividuating" situations), group members are highly sensitive to situational norms that are specific to their psychological ingroup. What happens in the crowd is *not* that individuals become less self-aware. Rather, according to SIDE, the crowd leads individuals to pay attention to a different aspect of the self.

SIDE builds on social identity and self-categorization theory, which propose that one's sense of self is made up of personal identity and multiple social identities, all of which combine to shape one's personality. Social identities are likely to become the basis for self-definition when that social identity is *salient*, such as when making comparisons between "them" and "us." One consequence of salience is *depersonalization*. Depersonalization is not the same as deindividuation or a loss of self. Rather, depersonalization refers to a switch to a group level of self-categorization in which self and others are seen in terms of their group identities.

As a consequence of depersonalization, perceptions of the outgroup become more stereotypical. Self-perceptions also shift: Self and other ingroup members become interchangeable, and the individual self-stereotypes in terms of group attributes. Depersonalization thus transforms individuals into group members who regulate their behavior according to ingroup norms. It is important to



note that, in contrast to deindividuation, the psychological state of depersonalization does not imply a loss of rationality or behavioral disinhibition. Rather, the individual behaves rationally and regulates behavior according to ingroup standards. These ideas from social identity theory and self-categorization theory are the foundations of SIDE.

### Development of the SIDE Model

The SIDE model was named in 1991 by Martin Lea and Russell Spears. The most comprehensive statement of the model was provided in 1995 by Stephen Reicher, Russell Spears, and Tom Postmes. According to SIDE, a social identity approach can account for many of the effects observed in deindividuation research and in the crowd. But in order to understand the effects of anonymity and identifiability on group behavior, one also has to take the social and intergroup context into account. SIDE proposes that these two elements, anonymity and social context, when combined have both cognitive and strategic effects.

#### *Cognitive Effects of the SIDE Model*

As described above, to be immersed in a group to the point that one feels anonymous may make social identity quite salient. Research demonstrates that if people feel anonymous in a group, their group identities become more salient and lead to depersonalized social perceptions of others and the self. According to SIDE, this occurs principally because (visual) anonymity obscures individual features and interpersonal differences. As a result of the decreased visibility of the individual within anonymous groups, the process of depersonalization is accentuated, and group members are more likely to perceive the group as an entity. The net result is that people perceive self and others in terms of stereotypical group features and are influenced accordingly.

Many online groups, for example, are bounded by strong feelings of community and shared social identity. This occurs even when the members of these online communities do not know each other individually or have never met in person. SIDE research shows that the anonymity of individuals within such groups obscures the differences between

“me” and “you,” actually helping these group members to maintain their sense of unity. Differences within the group may otherwise distract attention from the collective (“us” as a *group*).

It is important to note that there are situations in which social identities become salient also when, or precisely because, individuals are identifiable. This is particularly the case when individual features provide information about a person’s group memberships. People’s faces may sometimes reveal things about them as individuals, but faces may also reveal that people are members of particular social groups, which may then become salient (this is likely to be the case for important social identities such as gender and race, to which most people are very sensitive).

SIDE thus describes the cognitive process by which the salience of social identity is affected by the absence or presence of individuating information. It is important to note that this process can operate only to the extent that some sense of groupness exists from the outset. Research shows that if individuals interact anonymously with others with whom they believe they have very little or nothing in common, anonymity can then become a cover for them to do whatever they wish. Thus, anonymity also provides the freedom for individual group members to do whatever they would like to do, independently of the group, because it prevents the group from carefully monitoring them. Juxtaposing the two possibilities, either anonymity in the group has the effect of amplifying a shared social identity that, however rudimentary, is already in place, or anonymity can amplify the individual independence that exists in contexts in which no shared identity is available. The latter process, whereby anonymity provides the opportunities for people to express and develop identities independent of the social influence of the group, is further elaborated in the strategic SIDE.

#### *Strategic Effects of the SIDE Model*

Anonymity also has strategic consequences: It affects the ability to express personal and social identities. Strategic concerns come into play when an outgroup has more power than the ingroup and when the norms of both groups are at odds with each other. This is often the case in organizations,

for example, in which managers have more power than workers and, sometimes, different ideas about what the workers should be doing. In such cases, the identifiability of ingroup members to the outgroup will shift the power balance between groups. Identifiability to a more powerful outgroup limits the degree to which the ingroup's identity can be expressed freely and without sanction on those dimensions on which ingroup norms conflict with outgroup standards and values and that are punishable or otherwise sanctionable. Conversely, anonymity to a more powerful outgroup may be a convenient instrument for the ingroup to express itself on those same dimensions. For example, workers may use the cloak of anonymity to thwart the wishes of management.

The strategic SIDE thus proposes that anonymity may be "used" by less powerful groups to express aspects of their identity. This may appear to be similar to the effects that anonymity has for accountability in classic deindividuation theory. However, unlike deindividuation theory, SIDE takes account of the intergroup context within which identifiability and anonymity occur. Thus, a loss of accountability does not result in the disinhibited or *random* antinormative behavior of *individuals* that deindividuation theory is concerned with. Rather, according to SIDE, anonymity affects the ability of a *group* to express its identity and thus to engage in targeted and ingroup normative behavior, thereby changing power relations between groups.

This idea of strategic SIDE effects is illustrated by the patterned and targeted behavior that can be observed in the crowd. During the Los Angeles riots of 1994, for example, Black rioters and looters were very particular about the shops they targeted, nearly all of which were Asian businesses. This is not an isolated example—historical research shows that crowd violence often has a highly symbolic function.

In addition to anonymity between groups, SIDE considers strategic effects of anonymity within groups. Here, SIDE has particularly explored the consequences of anonymity (as well as isolation) from other ingroup members. On one hand, this anonymity deprives individual group members of social support from their fellows, and this lack of social support may hinder their ability to express their ingroup identity in the face of a powerful and

unsympathetic outgroup. Thus, making workers anonymous to each other may discourage them from resisting management's wishes. On the other hand, the knowledge that other ingroup members are unable to identify the self may allow group members (in particular low identifiers) to feel less committed to ingroup norms.

### Contributions of SIDE

SIDE's main contributions have been with respect to real crowds and virtual groups. SIDE's explanation of crowd behavior provides a new perspective on why crowds become a threat to public order. This perspective has informed practical interventions to change and improve police tactics for crowd control, such as during major European soccer tournaments. With respect to online behavior, SIDE has contributed the understanding that anonymity is not a barrier to the formation of productive and pleasing online relations. This has informed the design of systems for computer-supported collaborative learning and knowledge-sharing technologies. As a result, SIDE has been one of the key perspectives to predict and explain the enormous success of the Internet for communication and the maintenance of social relations.

Tom Postmes

See also Deindividuation; Depersonalization; Norms; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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## SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

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When people interact in groups or think of the way their group relates to other groups, they do not always think of themselves as separate individuals (I am John). Instead, they may think of themselves and act as group members (I am an environmentalist). In psychology, a distinction is therefore made between people's personal identities (referring to their individual self) and their social identities (indicating the group self). *Social identity theory*, which was originally developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, focuses on the interplay between personal and social identities. Its aim is to specify and predict the circumstances under which individuals tend to think of themselves either as individuals or as group members. The theory also considers the consequences of personal and social identities for individual perceptions and group behavior.

Over the years, many researchers and theorists have found this a useful analytical framework. A large body of research has accumulated to specify the basic processes involved, which has led to several refinements and extensions of social identity theory over the years. The theory has also been applied to analyze and understand a range of societal problems (most notably in the area of stereotyping and intergroup conflict) and a variety of topics in organizational behavior (such as leadership, team motivation, and organizational commitment). This entry looks at the background of this concept and then discusses several key elements of the theory and some common misunderstandings about what it says.

### Background and History

Social identity theory developed out of a series of studies conducted by Tajfel and his colleagues in the early 1970s, which are commonly referred to as the *minimal group studies*. These were designed to identify the minimal conditions that would lead

individuals to discriminate in favor of the *ingroup*, to which they belonged, and against an *outgroup*. For this purpose, participants were assigned to groups that were intended to be as empty and meaningless as possible. Nevertheless, when people were asked to assign points to other research participants, they systematically awarded more points to ingroup members than to outgroup members. In doing this, they maximized the relative gain for ingroup compared with outgroup members, even when this implied awarding a lower number of points to the ingroup. The results of these minimal group studies were interpreted by arguing that the mere act of categorizing individuals into groups can be sufficient to make them think of themselves and others in terms of group memberships instead of as separate individuals. This deviated from common views at the time, namely, that an objective conflict of interest is a central factor in the emergence of intergroup conflict.

Thus, social identity theory originated from the conviction that group memberships can help people instill meaning in social situations. Group memberships help people define who they are and how they relate to others. Social identity theory was developed as an *integrative* theory, as it aimed to connect cognitive (thought) processes and (behavioral) motivation. Initially, its main focus was on intergroup conflict and intergroup relations more broadly. For this reason, the original form has been referred to as the *social identity theory of intergroup relations*.

Later elaborations by John Turner and his colleagues on the cognitive aspects relevant to social identification further specified how people interpret their own position in different social contexts and how this affects their perceptions of others (e.g., stereotyping), as well as their own behavior in groups (e.g., social influence). These elaborations represent *self-categorization theory*, or the *social identity theory of the group*. Together, self-categorization theory and social identity theory can be referred to as the *social identity approach*.

### Cognitive Processes

Social identity theory was developed to explain how individuals create and define their place in society. According to the theory, three psychological processes are central in this regard: social

categorization, social comparison, and social identification. *Social categorization* refers to the tendency for people to perceive themselves and others in terms of particular social categories. That is, as relatively interchangeable group members instead of as separate and unique individuals. For example, we can think of someone as Jane, a feminist, instead of as Jane, an ambitious woman.

*Social comparison* indicates the process by which people determine the relative value or social standing of a particular group and its members. For instance, school teachers may be seen as having higher social standing than garbage collectors. Compared with university professors, however, school teachers can be seen as having lower social standing.

*Social identification* reflects the notion that people generally do not perceive social situations as detached observers. Instead, their own sense of who they are and how they relate to others is typically implicated in the way they view other individuals and groups around them. For university professors, the conclusion that school teachers have lower social standing than they do affects how they think of themselves and how they relate to other university professors and to school teachers.

Someone's social identity is then seen as the outcome of these three processes (social categorization, social comparison, and social identification). *Social identity* can be defined as the individual's knowledge of belonging to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance of this group membership. Thus, while one's *personal identity* refers to self-knowledge associated with unique individual attributes, people's social identity indicates who they are in terms of the groups to which they belong.

### Motivation

Social identity theory considers motivated behavior as a direct consequence of the cognitive processes that define people's social identities. According to the theory, social behavior can be represented in terms of a bipolar continuum. At one pole of this continuum, behavior is determined solely by the character and motivations of the person as an individual (interpersonal behavior). This is the case, for instance, when you do not want to talk to someone because he or she does not smile at you. At the

other pole, behavior derives solely from the person's group membership (i.e., intergroup behavior). This happens when you do not want to talk to someone because he or she was raised in a different religion from you. The significance of this distinction is the implication that intergroup and interpersonal behavior are qualitatively distinct from each other: Groups are not just collections of individuals, and group behavior cannot be explained in terms of interpersonal principles.

As a result, much of what we know about psychological processes underlying individual thoughts and behaviors may not apply in group situations. For instance, a robust phenomenon in social psychology is that people are motivated to think positively of themselves. If necessary, they do this by blaming others for their individual failures. In some cases, however, people may care so much about the groups to which they belong that they sacrifice their individual interests or positive self-views to help or benefit the group. This is the case when an individual soccer player takes the blame for a team loss: Upholding the image of the team is more important than maintaining a positive view of his or her own abilities as a soccer player. Social identity theory helps us understand these types of responses, which cannot be explained from standard theories about the cognitions and motivated behaviors of separate individuals.

Social identity theory assumes that a basic motivation guiding people's responses as group members is the desire to establish a positively distinct social identity. That is, people seek to establish a meaningful social identity by specifying how the group they belong to differs from relevant other groups, for instance in terms of characteristic traits (Dutch people are stingy), attitudes (university students care for the environment), or behaviors (workers at this company provide a high service level to customers).

People generally prefer to maintain a positive image of the groups to which they belong. As a result of social identity processes, people are inclined to seek out and emphasize positively valued traits, attitudes, and behaviors that can be seen as characteristic for the ingroups they belong to. This may also cause them to focus on less favorable characteristics of outgroups or to downplay the importance of positive outgroup characteristics. The tendency to favor one's ingroups over

relevant outgroups can emerge in a variety of responses, including the distribution of material resources or outcomes between ingroup and outgroup members, the evaluation of ingroup versus outgroup products, attributions for ingroup versus outgroup performance and achievement, and communications about the behavior of ingroup versus outgroup members.

### Strategies for Status Improvement

When it was first developed, the central goal of social identity theory was to explain the origins of conflictual relations between different social groups, even in the absence of a conflict over scarce resources. The motivation to establish a positive social identity is considered to lie at the root of such intergroup conflict, as members of disadvantaged groups strive for the improvement of their group's position and social standing, whereas members of advantaged groups are motivated to protect and maintain their privileged position. This is why the theory specifies in considerable detail the different ways in which group members may try to cope with group-based disadvantage or with the threat of position loss.

Parallel to the behavioral continuum distinguishing between interpersonal and intergroup behavior, the theory specifies a continuum of different social belief systems. One pole of this continuum locates situations in which individuals hold the conviction that they can move as free agents from one group to another (*individual mobility belief system*). The defining feature of this individual mobility belief system is the notion that group boundaries are permeable. Permeable group boundaries indicate that individuals are not bound or restricted by their group memberships in pursuing position improvement. Permeable group boundaries imply that people's opportunities and outcomes depend on their individual talents, life choices, and achievements rather than on their ethnic origin or the social groups to which they belong.

The other pole is defined by the belief that changes in social relations depend on groups' modifying their positions relative to each other (*social change belief system*). Beliefs about the likelihood that the position of one's group relative to other groups can change indicate status security. This depends on the perceived stability and

legitimacy of existing status differences between groups. According to the theory, status stability and legitimacy tend to mutually influence each other: When positions are subject to change, existing intergroup differences in status appear less legitimate. Conversely, when the legitimacy of existing status differences between groups is questioned, this is likely to undermine the perceived stability of such relations. These different belief systems, in turn, determine what people are most likely to do when they pursue a (more) positive social identity. The theory distinguishes between three types of strategies: individual mobility, social competition, and social creativity.

*Individual mobility* can help individual group members improve their own situation by dissociating the self from a devalued group and seeking association with (or inclusion in) another group that has higher social standing. This is the case when a member of an ethnic minority group pursues a university education to be able to secure a job and advance in a professional career. When group boundaries are seen as permeable, people are more likely to engage in individual mobility attempts. Pursuit of individual position improvement can lead people to denounce or deny their membership of the devalued group, as individual success often requires that they adopt a lifestyle or display behaviors that are characteristic for groups with higher standing.

Female managers who display masculine behavior, immigrants who avoid talking about their family background, or gays or lesbians who bring an opposite-gender friend to an office party all can be seen as displaying this type of response. An important consequence of individual mobility attempts is that it remains an individual-level solution for social devaluation. Because these individuals are unlikely to be seen as representative members of the devalued group, their individual success does not necessarily help improve the image of their group as a whole.

*Social competition* indicates the tendency to confront existing status differences at the group level by collectively outperforming other groups or acquiring more resources or better outcomes. This is what firms do when they compete for a position on the *Fortune* 500 list. People are most likely to engage in social competition when intergroup status differences seem insecure (i.e., illegitimate and/or

unstable). Social competition is a group-level strategy in that it requires group members to draw together and combine forces to help each other improve their joint performance or outcomes.

*Social creativity* is a strategy that can be used when actual improvement of individual or group positions is not feasible or is undesirable (e.g., because group boundaries are impermeable and group status differences are stable and legitimate). Social creativity implies that people adapt their perceptions of the ingroup's standing. This can be achieved in different ways. One possibility is to introduce alternative dimensions of comparison in order to emphasize ways in which the ingroup is positively distinct from relevant outgroups. An example of this strategy would be female workers' focusing on their greater sensitivity to interpersonal relations rather than addressing the notion that they are less competitive or ambitious than male workers. A second possibility is to reevaluate existing group characteristics to enhance ingroup perceptions. For instance, to make people more appreciative of the potential contribution of their group, ethnic minority group members can point at the importance of cultural diversity in organizations. A final possibility is to compare one's group with another reference group in order to make the current standing of the ingroup appear more positive. Migrant workers, for instance, can cope with their less favorable position in the labor market by thinking of the ways they are still better off than workers in their country of origin.

Social creativity strategies are generally characterized as cognitive strategies because they alter people's perceptions of their group's current standing instead of altering objective outcomes. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that these strategies can constitute a first step toward the achievement of social change. Because social creativity strategies help preserve identification with and positive regard for the ingroup, even when it has low status, over time these strategies can empower group members to seek actual position improvement for their group.

### Forms of Identity Threat

Even though original statements of social identity theory focused on low group status as a source of identity threat and a cause for motivated behavior, later additions to the theory have suggested different

forms of identity threat. In addition to *group status threat*, implying that the perceived competence of the group is devalued, group members can experience *social identity threat* when the moral behavior of their group is called into question. This form of threat is sometimes experienced even by group members who can in no way be held personally accountable for their group's behavior, such as people who experience collective guilt and shame about the role their country played in slavery, which happened long before they were born.

Group members can also experience social identity threat when they think their group is not sufficiently acknowledged as a separate entity with unique characteristics. This form of threat is referred to as *group distinctiveness threat*. It is experienced when different groups of people are included in larger, more inclusive groups, nations, or organizations, such as members of linguistic minorities who strive for political autonomy, or workers of a small company that is taken over in an organizational merger. *Categorization threat* occurs when individuals are treated as group members at times they would prefer not to be, as when a woman who is a lawyer is addressed in court on the basis of her gender instead of her profession. *Acceptance threat* occurs when individuals fail to gain acceptance and inclusion in the groups of which they consider themselves a member, such as when a manager of Asian descent is not invited to join the local business club.

To cope with these forms of social identity threat, group members will show different responses depending on the degree to which they identify with the group. Whereas low identifiers will focus on addressing and improving their personal situation, high identifiers tend to respond in ways that relieve the threat for the group as a whole. The degree to which individuals identify with a particular group thus not only is an outcome of social identity threat (when individuals are reluctant to identify with a group that is devalued) but also determines the ways in which they are likely to respond to such threat. In addition to the perceived characteristics of the social structure (and the opportunities and restrictions implied), the psychological significance of a group membership and the loyalty and commitment to the group and its members also determine how people cope with identity threat.

### Common Misunderstandings

Because of the elaborations and specifications that were added over the years, it is not always clear what social identity theory predicts and what it does not. Some misunderstandings have emerged as a result. First, it is important to note that low group status does not always induce ingroup favoritism. Other forms of threat can be more important, such as when the necessity to establish a distinct group identity overrules the desire to achieve a positive social identity. Furthermore, different group-level or individual-level strategies may be used to cope with low group status.

Second, the desire to achieve a positive identity does not imply that people identify with groups only to the extent that doing so serves their personal self-interests or because they are interdependent on other group members. In fact, to the extent that people derive a personal sense of value and meaning from the group, they may sacrifice their personal self-interest to serve the group, sometimes even to an extreme degree (e.g., suicide terrorists).

Third, the awareness that people belong to a group does not imply that they identify with, support, or defend the group. The different aspects and processes involved in social identification do not necessarily go together. The fact that people categorize themselves as members of a particular group does not imply that they value or care for the group. Conversely, people can subjectively identify with a group while acknowledging that they do not fulfill the criteria for membership or while conceding that this subjective identification does not yield them a positive social identity.

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*See also* Collective Self; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Minimal Group Effect; Multiple Identities; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Referent Informational Influence Theory; Relative Deprivation; Self-Categorization Theory; Self-Stereotyping; Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Tajfel, Henri; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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## SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

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Leadership is a core feature of groups and ranges from leaders of small teams through corporate chief executive officers (CEOs) to national and global leaders who stride the world stage. It is difficult to imagine groups that do not have some form of leadership. Leaders coordinate and motivate the actions of group members to achieve group goals, but they also set the goals and provide an overall vision for the group.

Most leadership research is conducted outside social psychology, in the organizational sciences, and focuses principally on organizational leadership and the psychology of the CEO. One feature of leadership that has been underemphasized by this literature is its identity function: Leaders define what a group stands for and thus the identity of the group's members. We look to our leaders to define who we are and thus what we should think, how we should behave, how we should view the world, and how others are likely to view us. The *social identity theory of leadership*, originally published by Michael Hogg in 2001 and further developed by Michael Hogg and Daan van Knippenberg in 2003, draws on social identity theory to provide an identity-focused analysis of leadership.

This entry describes the components of the social identity theory of leadership in the context of its grounding in aspects of *social identity theory* and *self-categorization theory*. When people identify relatively strongly with a group, social identity processes come into play to make leaders more effective if they are perceived by the group to be a good fit with the group's norms and identity. Such leaders are influential and "popular"; are perceived to have relatively high status; are imbued with legitimacy, trust, and charisma; are allowed to be innovative and transformative; are effective entrepreneurs of identity; and are effective at integrating different subgroups and identities.

### Group Membership, Social Identity, and Leadership

Groups vary in their *psychological salience*, that is, how important and central members feel the group is to their sense of who they are and thus how strongly they identify with the group. Psychological salience can be a relatively enduring property of a particular social identity and group membership, but it can also vary from context to context. For example, your national identity might be an important orienting principle for your behaviors, perceptions, and interactions in almost all contexts, or it might come to the fore only when you are visiting a foreign country where you stand out.

For the social identity theory of leadership, the key premise is that where the psychological salience of group membership is elevated, effective leadership rests firmly on the extent to which followers consider the leader to possess *prototypical* properties of the group—those attributes that followers believe define the group and distinguish it from other groups. In this analysis, group members as followers play a significant role in configuring the characteristics of the group's leadership or even creating the leadership to begin with. Members are more likely to follow a leader whom they consider most able to construct a group identity that is acceptable to them.

As people identify more strongly with a group, they pay more attention to the group prototype and to what and who is more prototypical (research shows that under these circumstances, members have good knowledge about the relative prototypicality of group members). This is because the

prototype defines the group's membership attributes and thus members' own self-concept and identity. In these contexts where group membership is psychologically salient, being perceived to be a highly prototypical leader makes one more influential. There are a number of basic social identity and social-psychological reasons for this.

### *Appearing to Have Influence*

First, when people identify strongly with a group, the cognitive process of categorizing themselves as group members transforms their attitudes and behaviors to conform to the prototype of the group, a process described by self-categorization theory as *depersonalization*. Because people in a group generally tend to share the same prototype of their group (i.e., it is a group norm), this self-categorization-based process of depersonalization generates *conformity*.

Group members behave in similar ways that conform to the group norm. Thus members appear to be influenced by the prototype and therefore by those members who are actually more group prototypical. Prototypical members are perceived to have disproportionate influence over the rest of the members of the group. Prototypical leaders appear to be more effective sources of influence than are less prototypical members.

### *Being "Popular" and Having Status*

Second, when members identify strongly with a group, they significantly base their liking for other members on how prototypical they feel those others are, rather than on personal preferences or idiosyncratic attributes. Thus, they like more-prototypical members more than they like less-prototypical members. Because there is usually significant agreement on the prototype, the group as a whole likes prototypical members; they are consensually popular in group terms.

Research shows that identification and group salience produce relatively consensual liking for more-prototypical group members over less-prototypical members. Being liked makes it easier to be influential—research shows we are significantly more likely to comply with requests from and to agree with people we like. Thus, prototypical leaders are popular in the eyes of their followers and



are readily able to gain compliance with their ideas. In other words, they can exercise effective leadership. Furthermore, this popularity creates a status difference between consensually popular leaders and their followers. When, as is often the case, there is a leadership clique rather than a solo leader, this status difference may become a genuine intergroup status difference within the group, in which case the seeds of destructive leader–follower conflict may be sown.

### *Legitimacy, Trust, and Innovation*

Third, prototypical members typically find the group more central and important to self-definition and therefore identify more strongly with it. They have a greater investment in the group and thus are more likely to behave in group-serving ways. They embody group norms more exactly, and they are more likely to favor their group (the ingroup) over other groups (outgroups), to treat ingroup members fairly, and to act in ways that promote their group. Research confirms that enhanced identification is associated with greater conformity to norms and stronger ingroup favoritism and with fairer treatment of fellow ingroup members and more pronounced promotion of the group's goals and welfare.

These behaviors confirm a person's group prototypicality and membership credentials and encourage other members of the group to trust that the person is acting in the best interest of the group even when it may not appear to be so. In other words, prototypical leaders are furnished with legitimacy and group membership–based trustworthiness. Followers invest their trust in prototypical leaders, which paradoxically allows such leaders to diverge from group norms and be less conformist and more innovative and transformational than nonprototypical or less prototypical leaders. Innovation and transformation are key components of effective leadership. Leaders are expected to provide an identity focus and a transformative vision for the group, not merely to manage the day-to-day life of the group.

### *Charisma and Leadership*

Finally, because the prototype is so central to group life, information related to the prototype

stands out in people's minds against the background of other information about the group. Because prototypical leaders are the most direct source of information about the group prototype, they stand out as figural against the background of the group. Members pay close attention to their leaders and, as in other areas of social perception and inference, attribute their leaders' behavior to invariant underlying personality attributes or *essences*. In the context of leadership, this process causes followers to construct a charismatic leadership personality for their leader. After all, the general class of behaviors that is being attributed to personality includes being the source of influence, being able to gain compliance from others, being popular, having higher status, being innovative, and being trusted.

In this way, *charisma*, which plays an important role in transformational leadership, is an emergent property of social identity–based group processes rather than a static personality attribute that is brought by individuals to the group. The perception of charisma further facilitates effective and innovative leadership on the part of a prototypical leader. For example, a new departmental head promoted from the ranks might initially seem just like the rest of us, but if members identified strongly with the department and the new head was highly prototypical, then we might gradually attribute his or her influence over us to charismatic personality rather than prototypicality.

### *Leaders as Entrepreneurs of Identity*

These social identity leadership processes extend leaders' considerable power to maintain their leadership position. Because they are trusted, given latitude to be innovative, and invested with status and charisma, prototypical leaders are very effective prototype managers, or entrepreneurs of identity. By consolidating an existing prototype, modifying it, or entirely reconstructing it, they can define what the group stands for and what the social identity of its members is.

One of the key attributes of effective leadership is precisely this visionary and transformational activity in which leaders are able to change what the group sees itself as being. For example, during the 1980s, the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, constructed an imperially assertive and

proud British identity around an iconic image of herself as Boadicea, a first-century British queen who led a British uprising against the occupying forces of the Roman Empire.

There are many strategies that prototypical leaders can employ to manage their prototypicality and shape their group's identity. There is evidence that they can talk up their own prototypicality and/or talk down aspects of their own behavior that are nonprototypical, identify deviants or marginal members to highlight their own prototypicality or to construct a particular prototype for the group that enhances their own prototypicality, secure their own leadership position by vilifying contenders for leadership and casting the latter as nonprototypical, and identify as relevant comparison outgroups those that are most favorable to their own ingroup prototypicality.

Leaders can also engage in a discourse that elevates or lowers the salience of the group to its members. If you are a highly prototypical leader, elevating the group's salience and strengthening members' identification with the group will provide you with the leadership benefits of high prototypicality, and if you are not very prototypical, then lowering the group's salience and weakening members' identification will protect you from the leadership pitfalls of not being very prototypical. Generally, leaders who feel they are not, or are no longer, prototypical strategically engage in a range of group-oriented behaviors to strengthen their membership credentials.

### Intergroup Leadership

A feature of leadership situations that is underemphasized is that leaders more often than not have to provide integrative leadership to quite distinct subgroups that can sometimes have hostile relations with one another—for example, providing unifying national leadership for Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Kurds in Iraq. In these cases, the identity function of leadership is particularly prominent. The challenge for leaders is to provide an overarching identity that does not subtract from or threaten people's cherished subgroup identities and then to configure themselves, as leaders, as prototypical of this acceptable overarching identity.

Identity entrepreneurship plays a particularly important role here, as does the psychology of

transforming intergroup conflict into intergroup harmony. Research in this area suggests that one set of strategies involves recognizing and respecting the distinctiveness and value of subgroup identities but configuring subgroup relations within the overarching identity as different groups with important shared goals working together on the same team. It is important to prevent one group from feeling that its attributes are relatively underrepresented in the superordinate identity.

### A Concluding Caveat

With respect to this description of the social identity theory of leadership, there is one important caveat to bear in mind. Social identity leadership processes occur, or occur more strongly, only in groups with which members identify strongly. As the group's salience or members' strength of identification with it weakens, social identity leadership processes also weaken. Leadership becomes less strongly based on how prototypical the leader is of the group and more strongly based on other factors, such as how charismatic the leader is or how well the leader matches people's general or more specific schemas of the properties a leader should possess to fulfill a particular group function.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Group Composition; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## SOCIAL IMPACT THEORY

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*Social impact theory* was proposed by Bibb Latané in 1981 to predict how and when sources of social influence will affect a target of influence. It is a very broad theory, seeking to encompass a variety of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and physiological states. When other people are sources of social influence on a target person, impact is predicted to be a multiplicative function of the strength, immediacy, and number of sources. When other people are cotargets of social influence, social impact is predicted to be divided as an inverse power function of the strength, immediacy, and number of the targets. The theory was proposed as a descriptive model, or metatheory, as opposed to an explanatory one. It was influenced by ideas in sociology, astronomy, geography, and psychophysics. Social impact theory accounts for a wide range of research results in social influence domains such as conformity, compliance, and obedience. More recently, a dynamic version of the theory has been used to generate predictions about the emergence of cultural phenomena. This entry describes the principles of the theory, assesses its strengths and limitations, and examines the evolution of dynamic social impact theory.

### Principles of Social Impact Theory

The first principle of the theory, the *principle of social forces*, is expressed mathematically as

follows:  $\hat{i} = f(SIN)$ , where  $\hat{i}$  stands for the magnitude of social impact,  $f$  is a function,  $S$  is strength of the sources,  $I$  is immediacy (e.g., closeness in space or time), and  $N$  is number of sources. Strength includes such things as the salience or importance of a source and may be operationally defined by manipulating such source variables as authority, socioeconomic status, or expertise. Immediacy can be thought of as the ease with which a message may be communicated, and it is often operationally defined as physical proximity. Number is simply how many sources of social influence there are. As strength, immediacy, and number of sources of social influence increase, the magnitude of social impact on a target is expected to increase. The proposed multiplicative relationship implies that if any one of the three parameters (strength, immediacy, or number) is zero, no social impact will occur.

The second principle of the theory, the *psychosocial law*, is expressed as follows:  $\hat{i} = sN^t$ ,  $t < 1$ , where  $\hat{i}$  = the magnitude of social impact,  $s$  is a scaling constant,  $N$  is the number of sources, and  $t$  is an exponent with a value less than 1. Conceptually, the psychosocial law was modeled after S. S. Stevens's psychophysical law, which proposed that the subjective psychological intensity of a stimulus increases as the objective intensity increases, but it follows a law of diminishing returns. That is, each new source adds additional pressure to change a target's thoughts, feelings, or behavior, but the social impact of each new source adds less and less pressure to change. For example, the first source (increasing from 0 to 1) has more impact than the sixth (increasing from 5 to 6).

Research on *conformity* provides mixed support for the psychosocial law. In Solomon Asch's classic studies, the first source of influence resulted in very little conformity. Instead, the largest increase in conformity occurred when the number of sources was increased from two to three. Later conformity research, including Stanley Milgram's research in which confederates stood on a street corner in Manhattan and looked up at the sixth floor of a building, provides support for the psychosocial law, which predicts diminishing returns as the number of sources increases. Other research, including work on stage fright and the perceived importance of news events, also supports the predictions of the psychosocial law. In studies of stage

fright, for example, as perceived audience size increased from 1 through 16, participants rated their subjective tension to increase as a predicted power function of the size of the audience. Increasing the strength of the audience (age given as either early teens or late 30s) similarly increased the subjective tension experienced by participants.

The third principle of the theory relates to *multiplication versus division of social impact*. When there are multiple targets of social impact, the following formula applies:  $\hat{i} = s/N^t$ ,  $t < 1$ , where  $\hat{i}$  is the magnitude of social impact,  $s$  is a scaling constant,  $N$  is the number of targets, and  $t$  is an exponent with a value less than 1. That is, social impact gets divided among multiple targets as a function of their strength, immediacy, and number. The larger a given audience, the smaller the amount of expected social impact a source will have on each audience member.

Support for the third principle is provided by the large body of research on the *bystander effect*, which shows that as the size of a group of observers of an emergency increases, the likelihood that any of them will provide help decreases. Another phenomenon supporting the principle of division of impact is *social loafing*, or the tendency for people to put forth less effort on a task as group size increases.

### Strengths of the Theory

Social impact theory has been quite influential, appearing in most social psychology textbooks' accounts of social influence. One reason for its popularity is that Bibb Latané (like Kurt Lewin in his field theory) drew a powerful analogy between physical forces and social forces. Latané termed it a "lightbulb" theory: Just as the amount of light that shines on a target may be affected by the strength (wattage), immediacy (closeness), and number of lightbulbs, sources of social impact may vary along similar dimensions. The lightbulb analogy provides a vivid image that makes the theory easy to understand.

Social impact theory is also very general. It ties together research results from different domains of social influence, including conformity, compliance, obedience, and persuasion. For example, Milgram conducted experiments in which study participants were asked to play the part of "teachers" and were

told by an "experimenter" to administer electric shocks to "students" who gave wrong answers to questions. In fact, actors played the experimenter and the students, and no shocks were actually administered. In variations of the experiment, the participants' obedience to the experimenter's instruction to administer shocks increased or decreased as a function of the situation. For example, in one variation, obedience dropped off sharply as the victim was moved closer to the teacher—from being in the next room without voice feedback to giving voice feedback, then to being in the same room, and then to the teacher's having to physically force the victim to place a hand on the shock plate. These results illustrate the effects of immediacy of the victim. Immediacy of the experimenter in the Milgram obedience studies had the opposite effect: As the experimenter moved physically farther away from the teacher, obedience dropped dramatically. Levels of obedience in other variations of the experiment can be interpreted in terms of strength and number.

Another strength of the theory is that it ties together seemingly disparate phenomena. For example, models of *persuasion* have posited different processes to explain the effects of influence by majority versus minority influence. Social impact theory has been used to explain how both majority and minority sources are influential as a function of their strength, immediacy, and influence. For example, a small yet high-strength minority source may overcome the numerical advantage of a majority faction.

The theory is also quite useful. Because strength, immediacy, and number can be easily conceptualized and operationally defined, social impact theory can make practical suggestions to those wishing to increase their influence over others or to resist influence attempts. For example, when people are soliciting donations for charity, increasing strength (by dressing more formally), immediacy (by standing closer), and number of the people asking for donations has been shown to increase the amount of money raised.

### Limitations of the Theory

The original version of social impact theory was a static one, in that it assumed that targets of social influence were passive recipients of social impact.

The theory did not take into account the dynamic nature of social influence—that is, the idea that people are by turns both sources and targets of social influence in their everyday interactions. A later version of the theory, described below, incorporated this dynamic aspect of social impact.

One criticism of social impact theory is that there has been much more empirical support for the effects of number of sources and targets than for the effects of strength and immediacy. Operational definitions of strength are also difficult to specify in a quantifiable manner. For example, a physician may be a higher-strength source of influence in medical matters than a physician's assistant might be, but how much higher is difficult to determine a priori. Indeed, definitions of strength often seem to be circular: Higher-strength sources are those that exert more influence on an audience. Strength may also be an idiosyncratic function of pairwise relationships between sources and targets—a source of influence may be very high in strength to one person and very low to another. Support for predictions regarding the effects of immediacy has also been mixed. A meta-analysis showed that immediacy had stronger effects on self-reported measures of social impact than on behavioral measures.

Social impact theory is more of a descriptive than an explanatory theory. It specifies the level of social impact likely to occur as a function of strength, immediacy, and number of sources and targets of social influence, but it does not specify why the impact will occur. However, ideas derived from theories in evolutionary psychology may help transform social impact theory into a more explanatory model. For example, Robert Boyd and Peter Richerson have postulated that it may be adaptive for humans to adopt the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of prestigious (i.e., high-strength) group members as well as the majority of group members (explaining the effects of number). Tatsuya Kameda and Reid Hastie have made a similar evolutionary argument for the validity of majority opinion.

### Dynamic Social Impact Theory

In 1990, Latané published a dynamic version of social impact theory in collaboration with Andrzej Nowak and Jacek Szamrej. In this line of research, inspired by the dynamical systems approach to

science, computer simulation was used to determine what the theory would predict for a population of agents obeying the laws of social impact theory. Results of thousands of computer simulations of social impact, in which a variety of parameters, such as group size and communication networks, were varied, showed that four group-level phenomena consistently emerged over time:

1. *Consolidation*, or a reduction in diversity at the group level, occurs as the majority faction typically gains new members at the expense of the minority.
2. *Clustering*, or the tendency for agents to become more similar to nearby neighbors over time, occurs because of the principle of immediacy.
3. *Correlation* across initially unrelated issues emerges as clusters of different issues overlap.
4. *Continuing diversity* also occurs as the group maintains different factions instead of converging on the majority opinion or an average group-level opinion.

These four phenomena have been observed to emerge in spatially distributed groups of people discussing issues with each other through both computer-mediated and face-to-face communication. They have also been shown to occur in existing groups of spatially distributed people. For example, attitudes toward alcohol use clustered by dormitory floor within a building and within buildings on a college campus.

The dynamic version of social impact theory has been quite useful in explaining cross-cultural differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It provides a psychological mechanism for the formation, emergence, and change of norms within and between groups over time and explains how these cross-cultural differences may derive from day-to-day social influence. For example, the often-demonstrated individualism–collectivism distinction between European and Asian cultures provides an example of clustering.

Social impact theory has thrived as an explanation for social and cultural phenomena because it fulfills the criteria of a good theory: It is parsimonious, logically coherent, general, and testable.

Since its inception, it has guided research using a variety of methods, including descriptive field studies, experimental laboratory studies, and computer simulation. As it becomes a more explanatory theory, it will continue to guide future research aimed at understanding and explaining the social world.

*Martin J. Bourgeois*

*See also* Bystander Effect; Communication Networks; Conformity; Culture; Dynamical Systems Approach; Obedience to Authority; Social Loafing; Social Networks

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## SOCIAL LOAFING

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*Social loafing* is the tendency for people to reduce their efforts and work less hard on a task when working in a group than when working individually. It represents a potential productivity barrier to any group or team in which individual efforts are combined into a group product. Thus, it is important to design groups carefully to avoid the potential for reduced individual motivation. This entry describes the background of work on social

loafing, its key principles, several theories that attempt to explain it, and some related issues.

### History and Background

The motivational effects of groups on individuals have long been of interest to social and organizational psychologists. In perhaps the earliest social-psychological studies, conducted in the 1880s, Max Ringelmann designed a rope-pulling apparatus that allowed him to measure the strain exerted both by individuals and by groups of varying sizes. When he asked male volunteers to pull on a rope, either alone or in groups ranging in size from two to six people, he found that as group size got larger, the total force exerted was progressively lower than would be predicted from the simple addition of individual efforts. This raised the possibility that collective tasks could reduce the motivation of individuals, though the performance reduction in these studies could also have been due to process loss, or poor coordination of the efforts of individual group members.

Nearly a century later, in 1974, Alan Ingham and colleagues designed a paradigm that sought to separate motivation loss from process loss. Individuals were asked to pull on a rope either alone or in groups of varying sizes across a number of trials. However, on some of these trials, when individuals believed they were pulling with others, they were actually pulling alone. The deception was masked with the use of confederates and by having participants wear blindfolds. Ingham and colleagues replicated the performance reductions with increasing group size found by Ringelmann and also showed that reductions occurred both on actual trials (in which participants really pulled with others) and on pseudogroup trials (in which they pulled alone but believed they were pulling with others). The latter finding suggested that working in groups can reduce individual motivation.

To control for mere presence, distraction, and evaluation concerns that can vary with changes in group size, social loafing researchers usually compare individual performance on a collective task (in which members' inputs are combined into a group total) with individual performance on a coactive task (in which individuals work in the presence of others but their inputs are counted individually), while keeping group size the same

across these two conditions. As in the research by Ingham and colleagues, pseudogroups are often employed to allow researchers to study individual performance on tasks in which the individuals simply believe their outputs are being combined into a group product.

A seminal study by Bibb Latané and colleagues in 1979 nicely illustrates these features. Participants were asked to shout as loudly as possible, both alone and with others. Participants were asked to wear blindfolds and headphones that played masking noise that prevented individuals from hearing whether others were shouting. Participants shouted in both actual groups and pseudogroups, in which they were told they were shouting with others but actually shouted alone. Individual efforts were still reduced on these pseudogroup trials, showing that a significant percentage of the reduced performance on group tasks was due to reduced motivation, as distinct from coordination loss. Latané and colleagues were also the first to use the term *social loafing* to describe the tendency of individuals to reduce their efforts on group tasks.

### Key Findings

Thus far, more than 100 studies have been conducted on social loafing. These studies have examined individual motivation within groups in both laboratory and field settings, in a variety of countries, and across a wide array of tasks. The results converge to show that social loafing is a fairly robust phenomenon that generalizes across settings, tasks, and subject populations. A 1993 meta-analysis by Steven Karau and Kipling Williams showed that, across 78 studies run before that date, social loafing was moderate in magnitude, consistently found across studies, and comparable in magnitude to a variety of other social-psychological effects.

Social loafing has been observed across a wide range of tasks that require different types of effort. These tasks have included physical tasks such as swimming or pulling on a rope, work-related tasks such as typing or managing an in-box of information, creative tasks such as listing thoughts or writing songs, cognitive tasks such as identifying signals on a computer screen or navigating mazes, and evaluative tasks such as rating the quality of poems and editorials. Although the average magnitude of social loafing appears to be lower in Eastern

cultures (which are more collectivistic in orientation) than in Western cultures (which are more individualistic), significant social loafing effects have been documented in a number of different countries, including the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Norway, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Jordan. Similarly, although the magnitude of social loafing is often lower among women than among men, significant effort reductions are typically found for both sexes. Finally, although laboratory studies have predominated, social loafing effects have also been documented in groups in a variety of field settings, including sports teams, organizational work groups, sales teams, songwriting teams, and classroom project teams.

Although social loafing appears to be a fairly robust phenomenon, it does not occur in all groups, and a number of moderating variables have been identified that can reduce or eliminate it. Specifically, a number of studies have shown that social loafing can be reduced or eliminated by making individuals more identifiable or accountable for their contributions, making tasks more meaningful or personally relevant to individuals, strengthening group cohesiveness, providing comparison standards for performance, providing performance incentives, punishing poor performance, making individual contributions more unique and less redundant with those of other members, closely matching the personality of individual members to the demands of the group task, and increasing feelings of task efficacy.

Finally, in addition to research that has established moderators of social loafing, there is also a relatively small but growing body of research that has documented specific conditions under which working in groups can actually enhance individual motivation. Examples are research on the *Köhler effect* and *social compensation*.

### Theories of Social Loafing

A number of theories of social loafing have been advanced. Among these, three perspectives have been especially prominent in the literature. First, the *evaluation potential perspective* posits that social loafing occurs because individual inputs can typically be clearly identified on individual or coactive tasks but are often much harder or even impossible to evaluate on group or collective tasks.

A programmatic series of studies by Stephen Harkins, Kate Szymanski, and their colleagues provides support for this viewpoint. Those researchers have shown that social loafing can often be eliminated by making individual inputs on a collective task identifiable to individuals, their teammates, or an outside party, while also providing an objective or social comparison standard with which those inputs can be evaluated.

Second, Bibb Latané's *social impact theory* posits that individuals can be either sources or targets of social influence and that the influence experienced in a social situation depends on the strength (status or legitimacy), immediacy (proximity in a physical or psychological sense), and number of sources and targets present. When working individually, people experience the full influence of the demand from an outside source of influence (such as a boss or an experimenter) to work hard. But when working in a group, that influence is diffused across all the members of the group. This viewpoint is consistent with a number of studies showing that social loafing effects often become larger as group size increases.

Third, several researchers have used *expectancy-value models* to explain social loafing. Those models posit that social loafing occurs because people's perceptions that their efforts will be instrumental in producing valued outcomes are weaker in group than in individual performance contexts. Because efforts are combined into a group total on collective tasks, and because rewards are often distributed across members, there may be less of a link, or contingency, between one's efforts and desired outcomes when one is working with others in a group. This perspective appears to be broadly consistent with many of the established moderators of social loafing.

All three theories contribute to a greater understanding of social loafing, with the expectancy-value approach appearing to offer integrative potential and with the evaluation potential and social impact perspectives providing strong insights into more specific social loafing contexts.

### Relationships With Other Phenomena

Because the impact of groups on individuals is a fundamental problem in social and organizational psychology, it is not surprising that social loafing

is relevant to many other phenomena that have been studied using somewhat different paradigms. One related phenomenon, *social facilitation*, occurs when the presence of other people affects an individual's task-related motivation, leading to better performance on simple or well-learned tasks and worse performance on complex or novel tasks.

At first glance, this would appear inconsistent with social loafing research, in which working with others reduces individual motivation. However, the two phenomena are fully compatible when the nature of the presence of others is considered. In social loafing research, the others present are coworkers with whom one combines efforts into a group product, whereas in social facilitation research, the others present are either coactors or observers who might potentially evaluate one's efforts but who are not contributing to one's work as teammates. Thus, social facilitation research shows that the presence of others as observers or coactors tends to increase motivation (perhaps because of arousal, distraction, or evaluative concerns), whereas social loafing research shows that the presence of others as teammates or coworkers tends to reduce motivation (at least under many conditions of group work).

Related issues arise in *social dilemmas*, situations in which actions that are beneficial to the individual in the short term tend to be detrimental to the group in the long term. Social dilemma research, which often focuses on resources that are shared by groups, communities, or societies, has found that individuals often contribute less than their fair share to public goods such as recycling centers and public television stations and take more than their fair share from pooled resources such as energy grids or agricultural commons. Social loafing can be seen as a type of "defection" within social dilemmas, such that individuals engage in uncooperative behavior by contributing less than their fair share to a group product or outcome. Although social loafing and social dilemmas often have been seen as separate bodies of research, there is the potential for insightful dialogue between them, a potential that has been partially realized by a number of scholars within the past 30 years.

Steven J. Karau



*See also* Free Riding; Group Motivation; Köhler Effect; Ringelmann Effect; Social Compensation; Social Dilemmas; Social Facilitation; Social Impact Theory; Sucker Effect

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## SOCIALLY SHARED COGNITION

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The *cognitive revolution* in psychology moved the field from simply observing the relationship between environmental stimuli and behavior to attempting to understand how people mentally represent both the environment and their behavior within it. At first, these representations were seen as located within individual brains. Consequently, cognition was seen as an individual phenomenon. The cognitive revolution was seen as one reason for the decline of research on group-level phenomena during the 1960s and 1970s. However, more recent conceptualizations of the role of cognitive processes in social behavior have led to a resurgence in group research. One of the most influential concepts underlying this resurgence is the notion of socially shared cognitions.

The idea that cognition is a social phenomenon is not new. Early theorists such as George Herbert Mead and Lev Vygotsky argued that the way people view and interpret the world is influenced by their social environment. Unfortunately, this

idea was slow to be integrated into mainstream cognitive and social psychology. Early cognitive theories of language and person perception focused on how information (e.g., words, perceptions of others) was represented in an individual's mental structure. However, research began to show that the same word or stimulus was represented very differently when presented in different contexts. In addition, research found that the meaning attributed to particular messages differed when they came from different social groups. Finally, research on how speakers interpreted messages they gave (or were about to give) showed that interpretations changed as a function of the group to which the message was given and even just as a function of presenting the message. Thus, both what we think and how we think change as a function of the social and cultural context within which such thinking occurs. In general, the social context leads people within that context to believe similar things and think about the world in similar ways, which is the basic definition of *socially shared cognition*.

### How Shared Cognitions Develop

There are a number of different ways in which cognitions become shared among a particular social or cultural group. First, evolution has played a major role in shaping how cognitions are shared and in what ways. For example, evolved tendencies toward affiliation (e.g., need to belong) ensure healthy amounts of social contact, which is necessary for shared cognitions to develop. The brain structures designed for language interpretation and production are also central to the processes involved in shared cognitions. Common experience is also important for shared cognitions. People who share a particular location experience the same environment and learn to adapt to that environment in similar ways. Recent dynamic models of social influence have shown that simply living in the same geographic location leads to belief convergence among people.

However, most shared cognitions are probably developed through social perception and interaction. Virtually all cultures and societies have in place mechanisms for teaching their young the shared “truths” as defined by the culture or society. Schools, churches, libraries, museums, and so forth all serve as vehicles for socialization, helping

ensure that knowledge and values considered valid or appropriate are shared among the members of a society or culture. In addition to these formal mechanisms, simply observing the behavior of others and interacting with them will lead to shared cognitions. Social comparison is another major influence on people's behavior, particularly in new or uncertain situations. People use social comparison both to detect appropriate behavior and opinions and to validate the correctness of their own behavior and opinions. Norms for appropriate behavior in a particular situation are learned quickly, even if those norms conflict with more accepted or prescribed rules for behavior. For example, even though littering is considered inappropriate behavior (a prescriptive norm), research has shown that people are much more likely to litter after being reminded of the prescriptive norm (do not litter) in settings where others have obviously littered (a descriptive norm).

Beliefs about the world are also shared through social interaction. Many stereotypes that people hold come not from direct experience with the stereotyped group but rather from social interactions in which the stereotypes are mentioned or used without refutation. Such general societal or cultural beliefs have been referred to as *social representations*—common ways in which a group of people represents its world. Social representations are both learned and strengthened through social interaction. When people make statements consistent with social representations, both the speaker's and the recipients' belief in the representation are strengthened. Research has shown that speakers who expect a group of people to believe certain things tend to “tune” their message or statements to fit those beliefs. In addition, after the speaker has tuned the message, his or her own beliefs become more consistent with those of the audience—the “saying-is-believing” effect. Research has shown that social comparison and interaction influence cognitions of all types, even those that are formed through objective experience.

Selection and socialization processes in groups also lead to socially shared cognitions. People often join (or leave) groups because they believe the other members of the group have beliefs and values that are similar (or dissimilar) to their own. Research has shown that people like others who are similar to themselves and seek out similar

others for social interaction. Thus, groups often form because of the cognitions that members share, and groups may dissolve when such sharing declines. And when groups admit new members, they tend to recruit people who will think and act in appropriate (i.e., similar) ways and to exclude or expel people with dissimilar beliefs or behaviors. Thus, groups often start out with shared cognitions and then regulate entry and exit to ensure that sharedness is maintained.

Another main contributor to socially shared cognitions is social identity. People tend, in part, to define themselves by the groups in which they are members. When those group memberships are made salient, people look to the group to organize their beliefs and to guide their behavior. Thus, people who define themselves as members of a group tend to share many beliefs and ideas with other members of that group. Research has demonstrated that when social identities are strong, group members' thoughts and behaviors tend to move toward their idea of a *prototypic* group member, a person who embodies the qualities that make the group distinctive (usually in positive ways). The conceptualization of this prototypic member is shared among the members of the group, and their thoughts and behaviors converge accordingly. Recent research has shown that social identity can be both a cause and an effect of shared cognitions. Members who think similarly tend to see themselves as a group, and this increases their identity with that group. Moreover, members who identify strongly with a group change their beliefs and ideas to match more closely with those of other group members.

### Implications of Shared Cognitions in Groups

One of the main findings in the literature on small groups is that ideas that are shared among group members tend to influence the group consensus process. The most important of these may be shared decision preferences, as exemplified by majority decision processes. Many societies, institutions, and smaller collectives, either explicitly or implicitly, follow some form of majority or plurality rule. A vast number of studies on small-group decision making have found that a simple *majority-wins* or *plurality-wins* model does a very good job

of describing the group decision outcome. Such processes tend to exacerbate individual preference trends at the group level, leading groups to be more polarized, or extreme, in their positions relative to individuals. Moreover, majority and plurality processes also tend to be perceived as fairer than most other decision processes, and, in most cases, majority and plurality processes are quite accurate. Recent computer simulations have shown that majority decision processes maximize relative accuracy for very little cognitive or computational effort. If a group simply chooses to do what most of its members want to do in the first place, then on average that group will do quite well, and the members will be satisfied with its choices.

Another topic that has received major research attention concerns the degree to which information is initially shared among group members. Early research on groups tended to assume that unshared information (information known by only one group member) would be brought up and shared during group discussion, allowing groups to outperform individuals in most information-processing tasks because each member would bring unique information to the discussion. However, research has shown that groups tend mainly to focus on information that is initially shared by most or all group members. The *hidden profile paradigm* was instrumental in demonstrating this effect. In this paradigm, information is distributed among group members in such a way that the information they share favors one decision alternative, but if all information were pooled during discussion (shared as well as unshared information), then a different decision alternative is obviously superior. Under these circumstances, groups often reach consensus on the alternative that is supported by the shared information rather than discovering the best alternative available. The dominance of shared information tends to be strongest when individual members commit to their preferred alternatives before group discussion, the information load on the group is high, and reaching consensus is more important than making an accurate or optimal decision.

The degree to which information is shared among group members also has other consequences for group process and performance. A group member's mention of a piece of information that others also know tends to confirm the validity of the

information, making it more important for defining the group's eventual choice. The person who mentions the information is also perceived as more competent and is liked better by other group members. In addition, members of the group who share a greater amount of information with other members (i.e., are more *cognitively central*) are often seen as group leaders and have a disproportionate influence on the group decision. Thus, there appears to be an individual member benefit for mentioning information that others know. However, even in situations in which a member may not know what information he or she shares with others, shared information has a greater probability of being mentioned simply because a greater number of people know and therefore can mention it.

There is also a growing body of evidence that shared strategies or ways of representing a task can also affect both group process and performance. For example, research on juries has found that the shared instructions associated with the *reasonable doubt criterion* increase the likelihood of acquittals, relative to other jury instructions. Looking at the influence processes, the reasonable doubt criterion gives factions that favor acquittal a greater chance of winning, even if they do not represent a majority. Although groups usually outperform individuals, they tend to perform worse than the average member would have performed alone in situations in which the group members share an inappropriate task strategy. Again, a shared strategy can allow minorities with incorrect responses that are aligned with that strategy to win out over majorities with correct responses. This trend is reversed when group members share an appropriate task strategy. For example, using the hidden profile paradigm, groups are much better at discovering the optimal alternative when they share a task strategy of information sharing. If the members know that they share this strategy, they do even better. Recent research on negotiation shows a similar pattern of results. Parties in a negotiation who frame the negotiation in similar terms and understand how their opponents are thinking tend to have better overall outcomes. Thus, it seems that both sharing cognitions and knowing that the cognitions are shared can influence group performance and process.

Knowing what information is shared or not shared (i.e., shared metacognition) is a crucial

component of *transactive memory*. Transactive memory systems involve distributing responsibility for remembering different types of information across members of the group. By purposely assigning different information to different members, the group's overall memory capacity is increased. However, this is effective for group performance only if all members share the metaknowledge of who knows what. The group can use the information effectively only if each member knows who to go to for the information that is needed. In this case, the cognitions themselves are not shared, but the knowledge of where the cognitions are located is shared.

Transactive memory systems are seen as one key component of *shared mental models* in teams. Two types of shared mental models are important for team performance: (1) mental models of the team and how the members are related to one another and (2) mental models of the task on which the team is working. Research has shown that both types of shared mental models are important and that the metaknowledge associated with knowing that information is shared among team members is also important. Transactive memory systems are part of the *team mental model*. They allow group members to realize who knows what in the group and who needs certain types of information when it becomes available. Other aspects of the team mental model involve the roles and leadership responsibilities of group members and the most important goals for performance.

The *task mental model* depends on the specific demands required by the task on which the team is working. Although individual members must know their roles and the behaviors for successful performance of those roles, it is also important for them to have a clear representation of the overall task, as well as an understanding of the interdependencies among various members. Research has shown that teams whose members share both team and task mental models perform better than teams whose members do not share such mental models. A recent program of team training for airline crews, called cockpit resource management, has been very effective in reducing errors and improving safety. The system is based on clearly defined task mental models, with an emphasis on a particular shared team mental model involving clear channels of communication and information

exchange unhampered by status differences. Recent expansions of the program to other teams (e.g., hospital surgical teams) have produced similar positive results.

Shared social identities have also been found to affect group processes and outcomes. Groups whose members strongly identify with the group show greater levels of cohesiveness and tend to polarize more in group-normative directions relative to groups with less strongly identified members. Stronger shared identities also lead to greater adherence to group norms and greater cooperation within the group. Groups with strong shared identities show greater commitment to group goals and are less tolerant of ingroup members who show antinormative behavior. Unfortunately, a strong shared social identity can also have negative consequences. Strongly identifying group members are more likely to engage in ethically questionable behavior that favors the group, unless part of the group identity involves adherence to high ethical standards. Groups with strong social identities are also more competitive and aggressive relative to groups with less strongly identifying members, particularly in intergroup settings. Much research has recently focused on how to harness the positive aspects of shared social identity while inhibiting the more negative aspects.

Socially shared cognition is still a relatively new area of research. Research on the best way to measure socially shared cognitions of different types is ongoing, and no general consensus has yet been reached. In addition, the interplay among socially shared cognitions, metacognitions, identities, and so forth has only recently begun to be explored. Although young, the area has already produced a number of classic insights and will probably remain vibrant for years to come.

*R. Scott Tindale and Sarah Stawiski*

*See also* Common Knowledge Effect; Group Memory; Group Mind; Group Polarization; Hidden Profile Task; Minority Influence; Social Identity Theory; Social Representations

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## SOCIAL MOBILITY

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Understanding the psychological processes associated with unequal collective power and status is critical to understanding intergroup relations. *Social mobility* is a central construct in the context of group inequality. Defined as the extent to which an individual can, and does, move from one group to another, social mobility focuses attention on members of low-status groups and their potential to move to a group of higher status. For example, within nations, individual members of a low-status group might engage in upward social mobility by directing their efforts toward joining the middle

class. Similarly, individuals from a poor or troubled nation might emigrate to a country that promises economic advancement. This entry summarizes research on how social mobility works, examines what happens when social mobility is perceived as possible or impossible, and reviews some of the challenges for those making such changes.

### Social Mobility and Social Identity

For members of a group to engage in *social mobility*, the hierarchically arranged system of groups must be open. That is, the intergroup configuration must have a clearly defined set of characteristics that permits members of one group to gain entrance into another group. In an open system, then, an equity principle of justice prevails—an individual's inputs, as deemed important by society, govern how far up the intergroup hierarchy that person may climb.

By contrast, in a closed system of hierarchically arranged groups, social mobility is impossible. Formal caste structures and slavery are examples of closed systems in which there are no opportunities for upward social mobility. When confronted with a closed system, the only option available for an individual to improve her or his status is *social change*. That is, only an improvement in the status of the entire group will cause the individual's personal status to change for the better. Social change involves collective action designed to improve the group's status, and this improvement will be at the expense of the high-status group. Clearly, social change strategies in the face of a closed system involve some level of intergroup conflict. Because the conflict involves groups of unequal power and status, the usual diplomatic and military strategies associated with conflict between equal-status groups will not likely yield the desired results for the low-status group. Thus, collective actions such as terrorism and rioting often emerge as groups lacking power and status search for strategies to successfully confront high-status groups.

Social identity theorists have been influential in drawing the conceptual distinction between *social mobility* and *social change*. They articulated these two social strategies for upward mobility by pointing to the importance of group identity for understanding the self. Their proposition is that people strive to attain a group identity that is distinct and

positive. Well-being is reinforced when individuals identify with a group that has high status and is regarded positively.

Presumably, members of a low-status group will be motivated to improve their group-based identity by engaging in upward social mobility. But in real-world intergroup situations, it has proven difficult to predict when, and indeed whether, members of a disadvantaged group will take individual or collective action to improve their group-based identity. Social identity theorists have proposed that if members of a disadvantaged group perceive that mobility is possible and that their disadvantaged status is unfair, then they will engage in behavior designed to improve their status and, by extension, their group identity.

### Perceiving Social Mobility as Possible

It is no easy matter for members of a low-status group to confidently perceive that mobility is possible. They may well be motivated to improve their social identity by perceiving that they are participating in a group hierarchy that is open to mobility. But members of high-status groups have a vested interest in a more closed hierarchical group structure. They are motivated to protect their own positive group identity, and if the system were completely open, they might risk demotion to a low-status group.

Even using objective statistical analyses, it is often difficult for members of a low-status group to decide whether mobility is possible. Consider analyses regarding upward mobility in contemporary society. On one hand, there are statistics that indicate that certain visible minority groups and women are overrepresented in low-status groups. On the other hand, there are indications of increased participation of visible minority groups and women in high-status positions. But there are also statistics pointing to a widening gap between elite members of minority groups and the vast majority of other group members. Statistics about educational achievement are also confusing. There are statistics that describe a narrowing of the educational achievement gap between groups that have historically underperformed and more privileged groups. However, equally compelling analyses indicate that the narrowing is related to lowered educational standards for those who have historically

underperformed and their participation in less demanding programs.

Given these ambiguities, an understanding of the extent to which social mobility is possible falls squarely into the lap of social psychologists. It is people's perceptions, not objective reality, that govern their behavior, and social psychologists focus much of their attention on these perceptions.

### When Social Mobility Is Impossible

The real-world observation that few low-status groups actually engage in collective action despite their disadvantaged position is theoretically interesting. Although attention naturally turns to dramatic instances of rebellion, coups, and terrorism, social psychologists have focused most of their efforts on understanding the less dramatic but more pervasive tendency of members of low-status groups to accept their disadvantaged position.

This acceptance of a disadvantaged position seems to be rooted in a psychological need to believe that one's personal relations and intergroup relations are just and fair. This belief is a profound one because it offers people a framework within which to think, feel, and behave with others. It also provides a measure of predictability and certainty and thereby allows for meaning in life. Hence people are reluctant to believe that the hierarchical arrangement of groups in society is unfair. It is precisely this desire to perceive the world as fair that leads members of low-status groups to believe that they must deserve their disadvantaged status.

Research in social psychology has shown that, indeed, members of low-status groups do endorse the status quo hierarchy of groups as much as members of high-status groups do. Research has also shown that members of low-status groups cling to the belief that they deserve their disadvantaged position even when they are exposed to relatively blatant examples of group-based discrimination.

To reinforce the belief that the intergroup hierarchy is fair, high-status groups may foster group stereotypes. For example, stereotyping a low-status group as lacking in intelligence or lazy allows members of a low-status group to understand why they are not upwardly mobile and why high-status group members deserve their advantaged position.

## Conclusion

Social mobility, or movement between groups of differing status, can have profound effects on people's well-being. Moreover, it is very much a social-psychological issue in that it raises fundamental questions about when and how members of a low-status group engage in upward mobility and, alternatively, when and how they come to accept their disadvantage. These questions are likely to elicit theoretical and empirical attention for many years to come.

Donald M. Taylor

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; System Justification Theory

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while leadership is often thought of as a set of personal abilities and skills, a social network analysis would focus on the leader's relations with others—for example, the relations between the leader and his or her followers or the bridging role the leader provides to outside groups—both of which might enhance or inhibit the leader's effectiveness.

To understand how social network analysis is different from other perspectives on social phenomena, it is useful to understand the distinction between *units* of analysis and *levels* of analysis. The unit of analysis refers to the aggregation of people into units of interest as primary actors in a system. For example, the field of social networks is sufficiently interdisciplinary that one can find studies of networks of all kinds of units, including people, organizations, industries, and even nations. For present purposes, however, this entry focuses on social networks in which people are the unit of analysis.

The *level* of analysis, in contrast, is more complex because it refers to different aggregations of the structural or relational features of interest, and it may be best described by example. Consider a network made up of  $N$  friends. We can identify the levels of analysis of this network on a log scale from 0 to 3 as follows: Level 0 refers to the network structure as a whole, Level 1 refers to properties of the  $N$  actors in the network, Level 2 refers to properties of the individual dyadic relations between all pairs of actors in the network, and Level 3 refers to the perceptions that each of the  $N$  actors has of the dyadic relationships in the network. Each level of analysis sheds light on a different aspect of the social relations that characterize the network. The different insights that can be gained from the levels of analysis are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 (both adapted from real examples of work teams).

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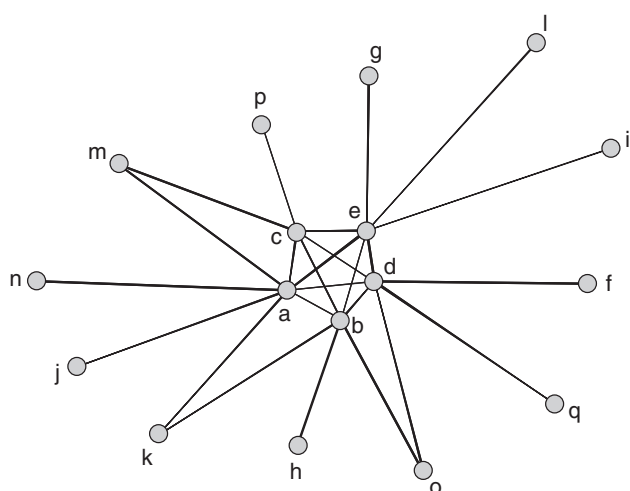
## SOCIAL NETWORKS

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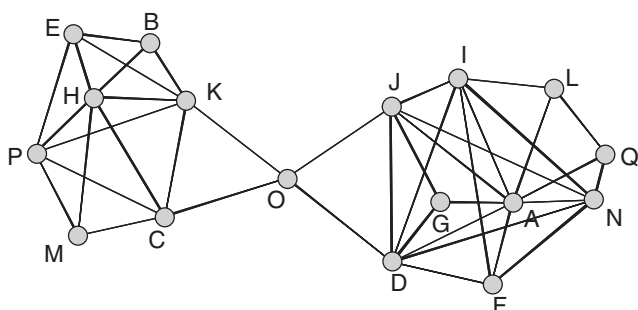
*Social networks* is a field of study that focuses on the pattern, or structure, of relations among a set of actors. For example, while traditional explanations of career success often focus on a person's training or education, a social network perspective would emphasize his or her connections to others within an organization. Similarly,

### Level 0: Structure as a Whole

The first level of analysis, Level 0, yields one observation of interest in a given network of  $N$  actors. It addresses several questions: What is the overall shape of the network, how is this shape characterized, and what effect does this shape have on the performance and behavior of the group as a whole? Different shapes have different implications for



**Figure 1** Core-Periphery Structure



**Figure 2** Bow Tie Structure

what people see, how they think, and how the group or system behaves. In Figures 1 and 2, both networks are about the same size, and they have approximately the same number of overall ties, but their shapes are quite different. Figure 1 is a classic *core-periphery* structure, made up of a small group of people (the *core*) who are well connected to each other and who have ties to those on the periphery. (If there is just one person in the core, the structure is called a *star*.) Those on the periphery have ties to the core but relatively few ties to each other. This structure represents highly centralized work groups, which often have efficient group processes when the task they face is relatively simple and routine. But this structure can also evolve toward a hierarchical power distribution, in which the core coordinates to reinforce its power advantages and the periphery becomes disenchanted with this inequity. This leads to negative group dynamics that can undercut the efficiency of this structure.

The structure in Figure 2 has a very different shape, a classic bow tie, showing two relatively densely connected subgroups connected by one (or sometimes a few) bridging individuals. The integrity of the overall structure is quite fragile because keeping it connected is heavily dependent on one person (O), without whom the subgroups would be totally separated. Not only is this structure fragile, but the coherence within the subgroups and the relative lack of connection between the subgroups tends to devolve into two local subgroup identities (*we-they* attitudes). If the group's purpose is to perform an overall integrated task, then this structure can interfere with necessary subgroup cooperation and coordination.

These two examples only scratch the surface of the range of structural wholes that can be described in a Level-0 analysis. Most groups are not as classic, or prototypical, in their structure as those in Figures 1 and 2. Usually, structures are complex and messy, and the question is not what type of structure they are but rather how close, or similar, they are to particular ideal types. Measures of such closeness abound and carry with them different implications for group processes and outcomes. For example, the *E-I index* measures the extent to which a structure is characterized by a preponderance of external ties (that bridge across group boundaries) versus internal ties (that connect people within the group). Having a high E-I index score, indicating predominantly bridging ties, has been found to facilitate a group's ability to deal with or survive crises.

A secondary question is, What leads to different structural shapes? Since most network structures are emergent (i.e., not preplanned but rather evolving through a set of recurring, sometimes random, interactions), the question becomes, What governs which shape will predominate? Although there is much work to be done to answer this question, it has been argued that the structures illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 occur frequently. For example, Michels's *iron law of oligarchy* argues for the inevitable evolution of social systems toward a core-periphery structure (Figure 1), with a small group of leaders coordinating to dominate the whole structure. On the other hand, Watts's work on "small worlds" suggests that, in large-scale networks, clustering such as that in Figure 2 is rather common.



### Level 1: The Individual Actor

Individuals bring with them to the social situation a set of attributes (e.g., age, education, experience, attitudes, beliefs). The network analyst adds to this list an assessment of the advantages a person has because of his or her position within the network. A Level-1 analysis addresses the following question: What is the consequence to the individual who occupies a certain position in the network?

The most prominent concept used in asking Level-1 questions is *centrality*. There are three basic types of centrality: degree, closeness, and betweenness (although extensions and varieties of each exist). *Degree centrality* is simply the count of the number of ties a person has in the network. In Figure 2, Person A has the highest degree centrality (8 ties), whereas person B has the lowest (3 ties). People with high degree centrality are often identified as the informal leaders of the group.

Efficient communication and information transfer within a group are critical to its proper functioning. The social network provides a road map of how this communication flows within and between groups. The more steps it takes (equivalent to the number of intermediaries who must be traversed) to reach someone in another part of the network, the more remote that target is. A critical issue, then, is how quickly one can reach others through the network. This ability is often assessed by *closeness centrality*, which measures the average number of steps it takes for an individual to reach everyone else in the network. A person with high closeness centrality can reach others in relatively few steps; a person with low closeness centrality has to go through many intermediaries in order to reach everyone in the network. Those high in closeness centrality, therefore, are more likely to be able to disseminate information quickly through the network. Another advantage is that they are more likely to pick up rumors or other bits of information that percolate through the network. When such information transfer is critical to the group, closeness centrality becomes a valuable asset to the individual who holds it.

While both degree and closeness centrality are useful guides to understanding an individual's advantages and contributions to the group processes, it is *betweenness centrality* and related measures that are most important to success in a

social network. Betweenness centrality captures the extent to which an individual is on critical paths between others in the network. Returning to Figure 2 (the bow tie), we see that Person A has the most ties (highest degree centrality). But we also see that most of the people A is tied to are also tied to each other. Thus, none of the people A is tied to are dependent on A to get a message to any of the others; they can easily go around A to reach their targets. Despite A's popularity, he or she has low betweenness centrality in this network.

In contrast, whereas Person O has only 4 ties, these ties are critically situated so that individuals in the left side of the graph are highly dependent on O to reach those on the right side (and vice versa). O is critically located between many other pairs of individuals in the network and thus has high betweenness centrality. Because of the dependency that others have on those with high betweenness centrality, this index is often predictive of the power and influence an individual has in the group or organization.

A close relative of betweenness centrality is Ronald Burt's concept of *structural holes*. Recall that A had low betweenness because most of the people A is tied to are already tied to each other and thus they can easily go around A. The people O is tied to, in contrast, have far fewer options. It is this lack of ties, called *holes*, that gives rise to O's betweenness and power advantages. Measures of structural holes and betweenness are conceptually linked and empirically correlated, but the research on structural holes has focused more on the performance consequences of the group's members. Those individuals surrounded by structural holes have been shown to be more productive, to develop more creative ideas, and to get promoted more quickly in organizations. There are costs, though, in that being the bridge between different groups (as O is in Figure 2) can lead to role conflict and stress.

### Level 2: The Dyad

Since position within the network has such a powerful effect on participants' opportunities and constraints, researchers have explored a deeper question, namely, how do these (almost  $N \times N$ ) dyadic network ties form? Why do we choose particular others to be our friends? Several factors can help us answer these questions.

First, there is the general principle of *homophily*. People prefer to interact with others who are similar to themselves. People of similar demographic characteristics (e.g., race, sex, age, education) tend to associate with each other. People will also tend to associate with others who share similar beliefs and attitudes.

Another prominent factor that influences the formation and retention of network ties is *propinquity*. Whether two people communicate or form a relationship is heavily influenced by the physical distance between them. For example, two people with offices beside each other will tend to communicate more often than will two people with offices on separate floors.

A third factor is *affect*. People have a tendency to interact with others whom they like. This may seem obvious, but the extent to which affect dominates people's choices is sometimes surprising. For example, suppose you need technical help on a task. Suppose further that you have a choice to seek help from either a *competent jerk* (someone you view as technically able to address your question but whom you do not care for personally) or a *lovable fool* (someone you like but who is relatively incompetent). It turns out that most people will choose the lovable fool over the competent jerk in work settings.

### Level 3: Cognitive Social Structures

Beyond actual dyadic interactions, there are also people's perceptions of networks. That is, while the network can have structural effects on individuals, if a participant in the network believes the network is different from what it really is, that perception may influence his or her perceived options and subsequent behavior. For example, the person who is the manager of the workgroup in Figure 2 might want to introduce changes in the role assignments of his or her work crew. A cursory examination of this network is likely to lead the manager to see that he or she should take into consideration the fact that these two distinct subgroups might view any changes with suspicion if the changes favor members of one subgroup over the other. Moreover, in seeking to implement the new assignments, the manager could take advantage of O's unique role as a bridge between the two subgroups. In contrast, if the manager believes

that the network is one large, undifferentiated group with network ties densely distributed across the board, then he or she may not take these group dynamics into account in trying to implement the new role assignments.

Each of the  $N$  participants in the network has his or her own perception of what the network is like. Taken together, these  $N$  perceptions are called the *cognitive social structure* of the network. Since each participant has a view of who is tied to whom, this amounts to approximately  $N^3$  assessments of the structure ( $N$  perceptions of almost  $N \times N$  dyads).

Research in this area has produced several interesting findings. First, participants' perceptions of the network have direct consequences for their behavior, as illustrated by the above example about the group in Figure 2. Moreover, *accuracy* of network perception facilitates a participant's ability to accomplish his or her goals in the group. In particular, an individual's accuracy leads to power, over and above the power emanating from his or her formal position or the power attributable to his or her centrality in the network.

Research has explored predictors of network perceptions and their associated biases. These perceptions are influenced by many factors, some of which lead to substantial misperceptions and inaccuracy. For example, there is a tendency to see more solid groupings and clusters of ties than actually exist. This bias is strongest for those people who are closest to the perceiver (we prefer that our friends be friends with each other). We also have relatively little insight about those parts of the network that are distant from us as perceivers. This results in an accelerated rate of inaccurate perceptions as a function of distance, simply because of lack of information. In combination, these two sources of bias result in the most accurate assessments of dyadic ties for those who are at an intermediate distance from perceivers.

### Conclusion

The field of social networks provides a perspective on social phenomena that focuses on relationships among individual actors as the core building block of group and individual behavior. Different levels of analysis emerge from this perspective, ranging from the micro (Level 3) to the macro (Level 0). Each of

these provides insights into how individuals operate in groups and how groups interact. Moreover, levels of analysis can inform each other: Perceptions can lead to ties, strategic ties can lead to central network positions, and stratification of these positions can lead to systemic behavior. By examining these network relationships, we gain a unique understanding of complex social situations.

*David Krackhardt*

*See also* Cliques; Communication Networks; Dyads; Group Composition; Homophily; Levels of Analysis; Social Relations Model; Status

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## SOCIAL RELATIONS MODEL

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The *social relations model* (SRM), developed by David Kenny and Lawrence LaVoie, offers both a conceptualization scheme and a set of analytical tools for studying interdependent perceptions and behaviors related to group processes and outcomes at multiple levels of analysis. The model assesses the degree of similarity of perceptions or behaviors within groups (e.g., whether everyone in the group thinks that a given member is credible or whether members direct their comments to a

particular person) and whether that similarity holds at the individual, dyadic, and group levels of analysis. The SRM decomposes ratings members make about or behaviors directed to other members into three basic components, each of which is used to answer a set of specific questions regarding group and interpersonal processes.

A typical SRM study of small groups employs a round-robin design, in which each member rates every other member on some measure (although some studies use a block design, in which a subset of members rates another subset), so round-robin designs are assumed in the remainder of this entry. Self-ratings are possible, although not necessary. Excluding them, however, precludes several interesting analyses. Depending on the research questions and purposes of the study, ratings can be obtained before, during, or after interaction, and, in some cases, ratings are obtained at *zero-acquaintance*, before members get to know one another. The result is that in a group of size  $N$ , each member rates and is rated by the  $N - 1$  other members on the variable or measure of interest.

According to the SRM, three main components of perception (as derived from the ratings) are the perceiver, target, and relationship effects. The *perceiver effect* describes the tendency to view or rate a set of targets similarly. For example, a given member might be predisposed to rate all his or her colleagues high on credibility. The perceiver effect indexes *assimilation*, which is the extent to which a person provides similar ratings of the other group members. The *target effect* describes the set of judgments a set of perceivers makes about a target. For example, some members may be perceived uniformly as having high credibility, perhaps because of their behavior or institutional position. The term *consensus* is attached to the target effect. Finally, the *relationship effect* is the unique perceptions a perceiver has of a target relative to other targets. *Uniqueness* is the extent to which one's perception of the target cannot be explained by consensus and assimilation. From these three components, one is able to ask several questions, including those related to *assumed similarity*, which is the correspondence between self-perceptions and one's perceptions of others, and *self-other agreement* (i.e., the correlation of self-perceptions and others' perceptions).

The variation of judgments at different levels of analysis is at the heart of the SRM. The perceiver and target variances are at the individual level. If members of four-person groups rate each other on credibility, there are four mean perceiver scores (each person rates the other three members) and four mean target scores (each person is rated by the three other members). Those means will likely differ or vary from one another. The term *target variance* refers to the variability of the four means for each of the four targets in the group, whereas *perceiver variance* indexes variation in the mean perceiver scores. (The actual computation of the variances is complex and is averaged across groups.) If there is little or no variance in the target effect, for example, then the rating one receives is not different from that received by others. If there is sufficient perceiver or target variance, then one can examine the extent to which the ratings vary with other variables of interest. For example, a researcher might hypothesize that the number of contributions to discussion correlates with credibility ratings received.

The relationship component is a dyad-level effect. It is likely that the ratings made by a given perceiver vary. For example, Person A's ratings of Persons B, C, and D are 3, 4, 5, respectively, on a 7-point credibility scale, with higher numbers indicating greater credibility. The ratings for a given target provided by the other three members of the group also likely vary. If ratings vary within perceivers and targets, then there is some degree of covariance. For example, Person A's rating of B's credibility might mirror B's rating of A on that measure, but those ratings likely differ from the ones A and C give each other, and so on. This indexes the degree to which members perceive or act toward one another above and beyond effects attributed to particular characteristics of perceivers and targets. Finally, there is the group-level effect; group means might differ. For example, some groups might have higher mean credibility scores than do others.

Another important aspect of the SRM is *reciprocity*: Perceptions and behaviors are often correlated within groups. Reciprocity often has ramifications for group processes because one's perceptions and behaviors are related to those of one's colleagues. As with the three main components of the SRM, reciprocity occurs at both the individual and the dyad levels of analysis. *Generalized reciprocity* is at the individual level

because it is the correlation of one's actor and target effects, and it addresses whether the ratings one receives correspond with those one provides. For example, if other group members rate a particular member as credible, does that member rate his or her colleagues as credible? *Dyadic reciprocity* refers to the similarity of ratings of pairs of members—if Person A thinks B is credible, does B think A is credible? Most conceptualizations of reciprocity are implicitly at the dyadic level, but in practice the two levels are confounded. The SRM offers a way to partial one effect from the other.

Kenny, among others, has reviewed the SRM literature and noted some trends in SRM components. Most notably, consensus is small compared with assimilation and uniqueness, but is often evident, at least for some types of measures, at zero-acquaintance (at which some obvious features of the target are linked to the measure in question). Surprisingly, consensus does not increase with acquaintance. Instead, it takes a relatively short time, or just a small number of actions performed by the target, for consensus to stabilize. Assimilation tends to decrease with increased acquaintance because individuation-based processes supplant generalized processing. Uniqueness, as noted, is a fairly stable feature of interpersonal interaction.

The SRM is an important lens for viewing group processes. It is clear that process depends on individual, dyadic, and group-level characteristics, and the SRM is designed to capture them with just one set of ratings. It is also evident that a large part of the process is interdependent such that what one says, thinks, and decides is related to what other members do, say, and decide. The SRM captures interdependence at three distinct levels of analysis. It is important to note that, assuming sufficient variation in the judgments or behaviors of interest, group scholars can examine the correlates or causes of the effects or use them to predict other features of group processes and outcomes. For example, the quality of arguments made during discussion likely is associated with perceptions of credibility, or the distribution of perceptions depends on the type of task (e.g., whether it has a correct answer). The SRM allows researchers to ask a new set of questions regarding a variety of phenomena related to group processes and outcomes.

Joseph A. Bonito

See also Interdependence Theory; Levels of Analysis; Research Methods and Issues

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## SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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*Social representations* are lay conceptions of complex phenomena that are important, relevant, and attention grabbing for society as a whole or for specific groups or communities within society. Examples of these phenomena include addiction, AIDS, climate change, intelligence, gender differences, and role of genes in people's character. Because these are important phenomena, they have sophisticated, technical, scientific explanations. However, we are not all trained biochemists, psychologists, sociologists, climatologists, and so forth, and yet we still have a desperate need to understand and communicate about these phenomena. Social representations fill this need. The study of social representations is the study of how everyday explanations arise and are sustained in society.

### Background

According to the social psychologist Willem Doise, the theory of social representations is a general approach to understanding how collective processes affect the way that people think. The theory has its roots in a distinction made by the sociologist Émile Durkheim, who defined *individual*

representations, in contrast to *collective* representations, as internal states that cannot be shared with others. In order to be communicated, such internal states are transformed into words, images, and symbols that can be collectively shared. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, an anthropologist, further distinguished between two modes of collective thinking: a rational mode, which he considered typical of “civilized” cultures, and a mystic mode, typical of “primitive” cultures. Jean Piaget used this same distinction, arguing that rational thinking gradually replaces mystic thinking as a person develops through childhood into adulthood. However, from a social-psychological perspective, Serge Moscovici demonstrated that the two modes of thinking actually coexist in adult thought. People reason differently in different situations. Notably, mystic thinking is well suited to many situations in social life, such as when people are engaged in convincing or charming others, interpreting new events, or predicting the future.

### *From Mental Representations to Social Representations*

A nice example of how mental representations are socially structured comes from the way people conceive of groups. The psychological literature contains various conceptions of groups. Groups are sometimes conceived of as resulting from a partitioning of the social world into mutually exclusive categories of people. In each category, all the group members share the same basic characteristics, which become the “essence” of the group. Other conceptions stress a limited number of attributes that carry weight in the definition of a prototype of the group. Group membership is based on whether an individual possesses enough of these attributes. Because each group member's characteristics match to a differing degree the group's prototype, heterogeneity arises from comparisons among group members. Still other conceptions posit that a group consists of the accumulation of concrete memories about individuals who have been previously encountered during personal contacts, learned from the media, and so on. Such groups promote even more heterogeneity among the group members.

From the standpoint of social representations theory, these conceptions are not mutually exclusive. Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi has provided evidence

that the way we conceive of groups is influenced by where we are positioned in a social hierarchy. Those with power and status emphasize beliefs in a society of loosely related individuals who are striving for mobility based on individual merit. They thus come to define themselves mainly as individual persons whose group membership does not make a relevant or important contribution to their self-definition. People positioned lower in the social hierarchy tend to describe themselves in terms of attributes that are associated with their group membership, making the self coextensive with all the other members of the group.

This example suggests that conceptions of groups cannot be understood without taking into consideration the broader social context in which conceptions operate. Seemingly universal and antagonistic conceptions of groups are in fact concurrent and compatible, and their form reflects the social position of the conceiver. The social representations perspective shifts the theoretical focus from the formal properties of conceptions of a group to the properties of the perceivers' social context. The study of social representations thus answers the question, Which social regulations engage which reasoning in which contexts? The answer to this question points to two sociocognitive dynamics, called objectification and anchoring.

### Objectification and Anchoring

In his seminal work on the presentation and communication of psychoanalysis in the French press, Moscovici introduced *objectification* and *anchoring* as the two thought processes that provide the impetus for the emergence of social representations.

#### *Objectification*

To objectify means to turn abstract, unfamiliar ideas into concrete, familiar ideas. Thus, objectification “domesticates” reality by fitting reality into preexisting interpretative categories and standards that are provided by our shared culture. People understand abstract information with the help of knowledge (analogies, metaphors, images) that they already possess. Hence, to objectify means to superimpose a concrete image on something abstract, making the latter *recognizable* and ready for communication.

In his study of the social representation of the theory of psychoanalysis, Moscovici showed that the partitioning of the psyche into “organs”—for instance, the conscious and the unconscious as two aspects located in the outer and the inner parts of the brain—made the theory more familiar.

#### Illustration: The Social Representation of the Androgynous Person in Psychology

The transformation of the concept of androgyny in psychology illustrates how scientists promote and legitimize a socially desirable construct out of the prevalent social representations of sexual ambiguity (androgyny) as deviance. The social climate that gave rise to the concept of androgyny was characterized by theories and lay conceptions of sex differences that associated the simultaneous display of masculine and feminine properties with concrete images of psychological maladjustment, such as sexual ambivalence and homosexuality. The concept of psychological androgyny as co-presence of masculine and feminine attributes has been developed to repudiate this concrete imagery of the sexually unhealthy character (the familiar). However, although the *co-presence* concept was a novel idea, it did not break clearly with more traditional prescriptions of appropriate sex-typed behavior. The notion of a person embodying characteristics of both sexes was poorly equipped to bypass the stigma of sexual maladaptation—such a person was socially represented as determined by, yet contrary to, nature.

To circumvent this interpretation, theorists proposed a new perspective that supplanted the problematic masculine-versus-feminine contrast. From the idea of simple co-presence of masculine and feminine attributes, the definition of androgyny mutated toward the idea of a fusion of these attributes. Researchers advocated a hybrid being, an individual who blended the sex-typed characteristics into new ways of being.

The final conception of transcendence aimed at rectifying further deficiencies with the blending notion. Androgyny now referred to a person in whom the masculine and the feminine had disappeared, making obsolete a cognitive schema based on masculine versus feminine. The popular objectification of the androgyne was circumvented for good with a scientific conception that conceptualized the androgyne in terms of what “s/he” was

not or did not do. The androgynous person became colorless, incorporeal, and indemonstrable by commonsense standards, and thus no longer reducible to lay conceptions of homosexuality and hermaphroditism.

### *Anchoring*

Anchoring refers to the act of naming and categorizing. To *anchor* means to reduce new, unfamiliar, and strange ideas to ordinary words and images, that is, to set them in a familiar universe that makes them readily intelligible and interpretable. In his analysis of the images of psychoanalysis in the Catholic, communist, and popular press, Moscovici showed that psychoanalysis was transformed into an interpersonal relationship between psychoanalyst and patient. Thus it was assimilated either to the practice of confession or to a relationship tainted with sexuality.

#### **Illustration: The Faithfulness Gene**

Serge Moscovici and Miles Hewstone distinguish scientific thought from representational common sense in terms of their differing form and content. However, common sense is increasingly based on scientific discoveries relayed through the mainstream media. Information is incorporated into preexisting knowledge and beliefs, thus facilitating its assimilation and transformation.

Consider, for instance, how people interpreted the report in *Nature* of a laboratory experiment concerning the affiliative tendencies of a species of rodent. When this complex information was diffused by newspapers, the discovery of the impact of vasopressin on the sociability of voles was translated into the discovery of a faithfulness gene that explained fidelity in human romantic relations. The transformed information was understood by laypeople in line with their particular belief about the role of genes in human social behaviors. For those rejecting genetic explanations, the discovery contradicted their belief. Hence, it was associated with a potential genetic manipulation of human beings. These people organized their representation of the discovery around the dangerous consequences of the faithfulness gene for the future of romantic relations. For people believing in the genetic explanation of social behavior, the scientific information did not threaten preexisting

beliefs. Consequently, their representation was related to descriptive accounts of the experiment. They restricted the discovery to the genetics of animals and did not evoke their implications for humans. Thus, the same initial message produced very different stories at the end of the communication chain.

Objectification of the scientific message was initially driven by communication concerns. In order to understand the discovery and communicate an understandable version of it, individuals focused on intriguing aspects of the message and associated those aspects to lay vocabulary. Attitudinal concerns, in the anchoring phase, modulate the story in order to assimilate the message into preexisting knowledge and beliefs.

### **Communication Processes**

The transformation of information follows different routes depending on the group within which information is disseminated. Because social representations are elaborated through daily exchanges, conversations, and discussion, a focus on communication processes is central to the study of social representations.

#### *Diffusion, Propagation, Propaganda*

Moscovici distinguished between three modalities of communication, depending on the nature of interindividual and intergroup relations. When a new idea is emerging, the first communication phase is *diffusion* of information. The new information is spread evenly across a group so that a common reference point and body of knowledge are created that facilitate circulation and communication of information within the group. The second phase begins when specific groups intervene to organize the communication network according to knowledge and beliefs. The message is targeted to members of various groups, who in turn develop perspectives on what to think about the developing debate. Some experts within the group may *propagate* a principle for weighting the different elements of the network in order to consolidate the group's particular perspective. Other individuals, most often minorities, develop a strong perspective through the use of *propaganda* hinging on recognition of conflicting social relations within

the group. This form of communication is aimed at selecting true and false knowledge and opinions from common knowledge. Positions resulting in propagation are expressed as flexible attitudes, whereas those stemming from propaganda are inflexible and stereotypical.

#### Illustration: Changing Conceptions of Drug Abuse

The debate over drug abuse shows an interesting evolution. In the 1960s, the consumption of illicit products was linked to antiestablishment rebellion. Drug abuse was emphatically condemned and rejected as an illegal and dangerous contamination of youth. However, difficulties in treating this “social problem” led some experts and practitioners to argue that the classification of drugs in terms of legal language should be replaced with a public health viewpoint. The distinction between legal and illicit drugs was replaced by an addiction measure, based on the deleterious health effect of the product. Thus a legal product such as alcohol became as harmful as an illicit one such as marijuana.

Through its entry into common parlance, this technical debate transformed the social representation of drugs to one in which legal and health perspectives converged. The consequence has been a more flexible and global approach to drugs by the legal system—such as promotion of increasingly strict tobacco smoking bans in many countries around the world. However, the emphasis on addiction has played up the negative aspects of legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol and engaged a polarized public discourse resembling propaganda—which has led in the case of tobacco to potential criminalization of smokers.

The social representations perspective, with its emphasis on multiple levels of analysis—individual, group, and society—is a truly social-psychological approach to the generation of hypotheses about how people explain the world they live in and the ways they cope with social problems. As it stands now, a few process principles (objectification and anchoring, diffusion, propagation, and propaganda) have shown their capacity to help elucidate the form and content of social representation.

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*See also* Conspiracy Theories; Ideology; Levels of Analysis; Moscovici, Serge; Rumor; Socially Shared Cognition

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## SOCIOEMOTIONAL AND TASK BEHAVIOR

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In problem-solving groups, individual members engage in different types of behavior, including *task behavior*, which focuses on the external problem to be addressed, and *socioemotional behavior*, which addresses the feelings that arise as a result of group interaction. This entry describes these two types of behavior and examines the leadership styles of group leaders who focus on each one.

Starting in 1947, social psychologist Robert F. Bales, at Harvard University, began studying roles in problem-solving groups. For the time, his methods were quite innovative. Small groups were observed through one-way mirrors, and all behavior was recorded. The observed groups were composed of five male Harvard undergraduates. They were given a human relations case and were told to discuss it for about 40 minutes and then dictate a recommended solution into a tape recording at the end of their session. After some refinement, Bales devised a set of 12 behavior categories that trained judges could code while observing ongoing interaction. Generally, 15 to 20 acts were coded every minute.



The 12 categories of behavior included some that were directly relevant to solving the problem the group was asked to address. Three of these are *gives suggestion*, *gives information*, and *asks for opinion*. Other categories refer to emotional expression related to interpersonal interaction—for example, *shows tension release*, *shows antagonism*, and *shows solidarity*. Overall, 56% of the coded behaviors were considered problem-solving attempts, and 44% included reactions to those attempts. In general, a task-related initiative would produce both a task-related response and some emotional response. For example, one person might offer a suggestion, a second might give an opinion about that suggestion, and a third might express annoyance, causing the first person to look embarrassed.

One overall conclusion from these and related studies is that when groups work on problems, two kinds of issues come into focus—those related to the challenge of solving the problem confronting the group and those that involve addressing and managing the feelings that the interaction produces. Such emotions are almost always apt to be a feature of group interaction directed toward solving a problem, especially if the problem is ambiguous or difficult. Thus some behavior has to be directed toward the task, and some toward relationships and emotions.

A second conclusion from such studies is that while each person engages in behavior related to both challenges, some people focus more on the task, others focus more on feelings, and some are quite balanced. Whether any individual at any instant, or over time, focuses more on the external task or more on emotions within the group will depend on two things. First, what are the individual's own inclinations? What role or roles is he or she most comfortable performing? Second, how do others in the group behave? That is, any individual's behavior is shaped by his or her own personality and by the behavior of others. As pioneering psychologist Kurt Lewin observed many years ago, behavior is a function of the person and the environment.

Regardless of the cause, some individuals in groups become *task specialists* and others become what Bales called *socioemotional specialists*. This development has implications for leadership. Is the leader likely to be one of these specialists or instead

a person who can deal effectively with both the challenges of the group's task and the dynamics arising from the group's feelings? An initial hypothesis was that there would be a status order in which the person who contributed most to problem solving would also be the best liked. This hypothesis was not supported. Neither the person who was most active nor the person who was rated as having the best ideas was typically the best liked. Instead, it was found that there seemed to be two leaders in many groups, one who was regarded as the *task leader* and one who seemed to be the *socioemotional leader*. This finding suggested the hypothesis of two complementary leaders, one focusing on the task and the other on emotions and relationships. This hypothesis included the idea that the two leaders might get along quite well, their complementary skills combining to promote both group success and group happiness. The idea that leadership involves these two roles is supported by research published by Ralph Stogdill in 1948. Stogdill found that two categories of leader behavior are *initiating structure* and *showing consideration*.

The phenomenon of two complementary leaders, or a bifurcated leadership structure, might emerge for two reasons. First, an individual leader may only rarely be skilled enough to effectively lead toward both task accomplishment and toward group cohesiveness. Second, it may be that there are inherent incompatibilities between task roles and socioemotional roles. On one hand, the task-oriented leader needs to move people and direct and organize them. Behaviors directed toward that end disturb and perhaps antagonize people. On the other hand, the relationship-oriented leader cannot both soothe ruffled feathers and issue orders, so that leader will stay away from directing tasks. Thus, the inherent conflict between moving people and soothing them is a challenge for leadership and opens the door to bifurcated leadership.

### Task-Oriented Versus Relationship-Oriented Leadership Styles

In many organized groups, just one person has the formal authority to lead. Unless that individual is the rare person who can successfully choreograph both task leadership and socioemotional leadership, he or she is likely to prefer one style to the

other. This possibility was the starting point for Fred Fiedler's highly influential *contingency theory of leadership*. According to the social psychologist Martin Chemers, Fiedler's emphasis on task-focused versus socioemotionally focused leadership grew out of his research on psychotherapists who were more distant versus more accepting. This work led Fiedler to ask questions about the relative effectiveness of leaders who were more or less interpersonally oriented. Fiedler's important work on leadership led to a number of conclusions. First, leaders could be reliably distinguished as primarily valuing either interpersonal relations or goal accomplishment. Second, these two different kinds of leaders are effective in different kinds of situations. Third, the differential effectiveness of such leaders depends largely on whether their values and competencies match the demands of the situation. When there is a good match between the leader's personal qualities and the demands of the situation, the leader is more likely to feel confident and become active and directive and therefore effective. In these *in-match* situations, the leader is likely to experience *flow*, which Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has described as a *dynamic state of consciousness* marked by feelings of engagement, confidence, and control.

After years of research, Fiedler devised a simple measure that has proven remarkably effective in identifying relationship versus task-oriented leaders—the Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) Scale. Individual leaders are asked to consider the one coworker “with whom you have had the most difficulty in getting the job done.” The leaders rate the coworkers on dimensions such as pleasant–unpleasant, accepting–rejecting, and trustworthy–untrustworthy. Essentially, they indicate whether they think those difficult coworkers are good people or not. The high-LPC leader is one who values interpersonal relations and grants that the difficult coworker is a decent human being, even though he or she is a detriment to accomplishing goals. The low-LPC leader has no patience for the troublesome colleague and roundly condemns him or her.

Fiedler also identified three variables that determine how much control the leader has or, in somewhat different terms, how favorable the situation is for leadership. These variables are the quality of the leader–follower relationships in the group, the

clarity and difficulty of the task facing the group, and the degree of power or authority the leader has by virtue of his or her formal position or role in the group. A highly favorable situation, in which the leader has lots of control, is one in which there are good relationships between the leader and the followers, the task is easy and clear, and the leader's position provides a good deal of formal authority. An unfavorable situation is one in which the opposites hold: The leader and the followers relate to each other poorly, the group faces a difficult and ambiguous task, and the leader does not have much formal power. Of course, most situations are neither that good nor that bad. Quite often the situation is moderately favorable, giving the leader a moderate degree of control.

Fiedler's major contribution was to show that low-LPC leaders, who value task accomplishment over good interpersonal relations, are more effective than high-LPC leaders when the situation is either very good or very bad. In very good situations, the leader can provide structure and direction without worrying about ruffling any feathers. In very bad situations, the leader does not have time to address hurt feelings or interpersonal conflict and instead must take charge and tell people exactly what to do. Both these situations call for the strengths of the low-LPC leader. In contrast, in moderately favorable situations, followers need some direction, but they also need to be treated with dignity, and their feelings warrant attention. These are the conditions that play to the values and competencies of the relationship-oriented, high-LPC leader.

A great deal of research has focused on Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership. On the whole, the research has supported it. Task-oriented and socioemotionally oriented leaders indeed thrive in different contexts. In those situations that play to their strengths, they are active and confident, and the groups they are leading do well. If there is a mismatch between the particulars of the situation and a leader's values and behavior, the leader's effectiveness is significantly diminished.

*George R. Goethals*

*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal

Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## SOCIOMETER MODEL

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Despite widespread public interest in the topic, many people do not realize that there are numerous definitions of self-esteem. Some psychologists conceptualize self-esteem as a fundamental human need to feel good about oneself, some conceptualize self-esteem as a reasoned tally of one's positive attributes, and still others conceptualize self-esteem as an emotional state. The *sociometer model of self-esteem* proposes that self-esteem is an interpersonal monitor—a *sociometer*—that provides real-time feedback about the quality of one's social bonds and provokes behaviors aimed at maintaining positive social relationships with one's ingroup members. Hence, this theory, proposed by Mark Leary and his colleagues, is a distinctly social-psychological theory of self-esteem because it proposes that the self-esteem system

plays an important role in helping people navigate their social worlds.

How exactly does self-esteem perform this important interpersonal function? Leary suggests that to answer this question, one must first understand the general nature of *regulatory systems*. According to evolutionary psychologists, the human mind is composed of a number of distinct regulatory modules that evolved to solve unique psychological, physical, or social problems that influenced survival or reproduction in the prehistoric past. For example, the pain regulatory system evolved to help people avoid hurt and injury. Like all regulatory modules, the pain system comprises monitoring, signaling, and behavioral components: The pain system monitors the body for signs of injury, then signals a potential injury with feelings of pain; these feelings of pain motivate behaviors aimed at avoiding further physical damage.

Just as avoiding injury was essential for survival and reproduction in humans' evolutionary past, so too was maintaining acceptance by one's group. People depended on their group for protection from predators, for help gathering food and caring for young, and for care and protection during bouts of illness or physical incapacitation. Without such support, an individual would have been at a severe disadvantage in the biological race to produce healthy offspring and raise them to adulthood. Because of the importance of social bonds for survival and reproduction, sociometer theory proposes that people possess a regulatory module that evolved to ensure that people are at least minimally accepted by their group while also avoiding outright rejection. Specifically, the self-esteem system is proposed to be an interpersonal monitor—a sociometer—that performs exactly this function.

First, one's sociometer regularly, effortlessly, and often automatically monitors the environment for cues regarding one's *relational value*, which is the degree to which one is valued by others. Such cues may come from the external environment in the form of social feedback or from interpersonal experiences, but people may also glean information about their relational value from their memories of past social experiences or from their anticipation of future social events. In response to such social cues concerning one's relational value, the sociometer produces a signal that indicates

whether acceptance or rejection is imminent. If social feedback suggests that a person's relational value is high, the person experiences increases in *state self-esteem* (i.e., transitory increases in feelings of self-worth). In contrast, if feedback suggests that a person's relational value is low, then the person experiences decreases in state self-esteem (i.e., transitory decreases in feelings of self-worth).

In turn, such changes in state self-esteem are thought to motivate social behaviors. If relational value is high, the positive affective signal motivates people to approach a desired social situation or target, whereas if relational value is low, the aversive affective signal motivates people either to work to repair the damaged relationship or, if repair is not possible or is too risky, to avoid the relationship and thus avoid the hurt feelings that it prompts. In this latter instance, people would then be motivated to find substitute sources of acceptance through building new relationships in the group, thereby replenishing their depleted sociometer.

The preceding discussion has focused on the role played by state self-esteem in regulating social relationships. However, *global self-esteem* (a person's overall sense of self-worth) plays an equally important regulatory role. Research suggests that people rely on their global self-esteem to predict future interpersonal outcomes: Individuals with higher self-esteem (HSEs) anticipate acceptance from future relational partners, whereas individuals with lower self-esteem (LSEs) anticipate a more chilly interpersonal reception. These differing social expectations seem to have a marked influence on people's behavioral response to social cues concerning their relational value.

For example, HSEs eagerly seek new social opportunities whereas LSEs remain hesitant to enter novel social situations unless acceptance is virtually guaranteed. In addition, LSEs tend to respond to hurt feelings by avoiding the person who caused them pain, whereas HSEs respond with efforts to repair the relationship. For example, in romantic relationships, on the day after a conflict, HSEs attempt to repair their relationship by seeking closeness with their romantic partner, whereas LSEs attempt to limit their risk of rejection by emotionally distancing from their partner.

In summary, sociometer theory proposes that both state and global self-esteem play important roles in helping people regulate their interpersonal

relationships. Transitory increases or decreases in state self-esteem provide real-time feedback about the quality of people's social bonds, whereas people rely on their global self-esteem to predict future social outcomes and choose interpersonal behaviors that will minimize the risk of rejection and optimize the probability of acceptance.

### Implications for Group Processes and Intergroup Relations

An important implication of the sociometer model of self-esteem is that one's feelings of self-worth are ultimately determined by the group to which one belongs. If the group is generally accepting, then an individual will have higher self-esteem; if the group is ambivalent about one's value or is outright rejecting, then an individual will have lower self-esteem. But what factors determine an individual's value as a relational partner?

An individual's social value will be determined in large part by the individual's *social role*. Social roles are positions that one can hold either within a larger social structure or within a particular relationship. Other people will expect and desire occupants of a given social role to possess the traits that allow occupants of that role to successfully fulfill role requirements. Typically, such role requirements constitute behaviors that will benefit the other members of one's ingroup. For example, the female gender role fundamentally involves the adoption of a relational self-construal, wherein one's primary motivation is to maintain harmonious relationships. In reflection of this, girls are encouraged to develop other-oriented, communal traits, and grown women who possess traits such as warmth, kindness, and responsiveness are highly valued as relationship partners.

Because an individual's social value is ultimately determined by the social roles he or she occupies, research suggests that the monitoring component of the self-esteem system is also affected by one's social role. For example, consider the role of an opera singer. The best opera singers possess musicality, emotional expressiveness, and perfect pitch. More important, opera singers who possess those qualities are generally admired by their peer group. This association with actual acceptance leads opera singers' self-esteem system to become particularly sensitive to feedback about such traits,

such that positive feedback leads to increases in state self-esteem, and negative feedback leads to decreases in state self-esteem. In contrast, mathematical abilities are not predictive of acceptance for opera singers, presumably because mathematical abilities will not benefit an opera singer's ingroup, so opera singers' state self-esteem is not sensitive to feedback about mathematical abilities. Conversely, in the social role of a physicist, mathematical skills *do* predict one's relational value and offer potential benefits to ingroup members, whereas singing abilities fade in importance. Hence, a physicist's state self-esteem is sensitive to feedback about his or her math skills but not about his or her singing abilities. It is important to remember that the opera singer and the physicist did not choose to have sociometers that monitor social feedback about singing abilities or mathematical skills. Their ingroup members made this choice for them by accepting or rejecting occupants of those social roles who possessed, or lacked, singing ability and mathematical abilities, respectively.

This suggests that the sociometer is able to attend selectively to certain types of social feedback. This may explain why members of stigmatized social groups do not necessarily have lower self-esteem. Research suggests that members of stigmatized groups have a number of protective strategies that allow them to maintain relatively high self-esteem in the face of negative social feedback. They may attribute negative social feedback to prejudice; they may compare their social outcomes to those of other ingroup members rather than to those of outgroup members; and they may devalue traits or attributes on which their group fares poorly. By using these techniques, members of stigmatized groups may be directing their sociometers to focus on feedback from the people whose opinions matter most for survival and reproduction: one's ingroup members.

*Danu Anthony Stinson and John G. Holmes*

See also Attachment Theory; Evolutionary Psychology; Looking-Glass Self; Roles; Self-Esteem

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## SOCIOMETRIC CHOICE

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*Sociometric choice* is a method of measuring group members' relationships by asking them to identify others with whom they are or wish to be connected in a specific situation. These choices identify relations of attraction and repulsion, or liking and disliking, in the group. Jacob L. Moreno proposed the *sociometric choice test* in 1934 as a key element of sociometry—the study of the pattern of interrelations between members of a group. The sociometric method dominated the field of sociology from the 1930s through the 1950s and has been used in group therapy and developmental work on children's peer groups. Patterns of sociometric choice can predict important outcomes, such as group performance and member influence. For this reason, sociometry promised early on to aid the optimal configuration of groups, such as families, schools, and factories. This entry examines the elements of the theory, its early applications, and future directions for this line of research.

### Measurement

Sociometry introduced rigorous measurement techniques for studying the microrelations within groups and communities. At the heart of sociometry was the sociometric choice test, which asked group members to report the most, and sometimes the least, preferred members for a specific purpose or circumstance. For example, school children would name three classmates with whom they would most like to play, workers would identify the people with whom they would most want to

work on a committee, and military personnel would list the two people in their company whom they would most like to take home on a leave.

Different forms of the choice test vary in how many others the respondent may list as preferred or not preferred in a given circumstance. What is common, however, is that these self-reports are neither explicit evaluations of other group members nor overall liking or disliking reports about others irrespective of a specific context. Some scholars have suggested that other measurement techniques, such as the method of *rank order* (ranking in order of preference all group members) and *paired comparisons* (indicating the preferred person in each possible pairing of group members), are suitable substitutes for the traditional sociometric choice test.

Sociometrists aggregate their choice data in a variety of ways to indicate member roles in the group and features of the group. Members who are highly chosen by others are *popular*, those who are infrequently chosen are *isolates*, those who select many others as friends are *positives*, and those who select few others are *negatives*. *Pairs* are two members with mutually reciprocal bonds, and *cliques* are subgroups of three or more members with reciprocal bonds.

Sociometric choices also can be used to identify group *cohesiveness* (overall level of attraction in the group) and *density* (degree of mutual preference in the group). Member choices may be organized in a *sociogram*, which is a figure in two-dimensional space that maps member interrelations. Each group member is represented as a lettered or numbered circle. Lines between the circles indicate connections between members, and arrows indicate the direction of attraction. Today, computer software aids the creation of sociograms.

### Causes and Consequences

Some have criticized sociometric research for measuring member choices but not the reasons behind them. However, research has identified several situational and personal factors that can influence sociometric choices. For example, physical proximity influences friendship choices such that people prefer those who are close by. When classroom seats or dormitory rooms are assigned randomly, students choose as friends those who were seating

companions or dormitory roommates. People also choose as friends others whom they perceive as similar to themselves in values, beliefs, and interests, although contact with dissimilar people may mitigate this tendency. Members who hold a different opinion from the rest of a group are less preferred as future group mates than are those who conform to the group norm. And status influences sociometric choices in military units—service personnel report liking and choosing high-status members to take home on a leave.

Ultimately, the value of sociometric choice comes from its ability to predict important individual and group outcomes. Research has shown that individuals who are highly chosen in sociometric tests perform better and make fewer errors on certain tasks in organizations. Military groups that have greater sociometric density are characterized by more member satisfaction and better performance. Group members who are highly chosen for leadership positions are more likely to engage in leadership behaviors during group discussion (e.g., high participation and influence). Children who are identified as popular in camp situations are more influential and imitated by others. In school settings, children who are chosen as friends by others engage in more cooperative and obedient classroom behavior. Given the importance of predicting individual and group performance for organizational researchers and managers, the ability of the sociometric choice test to predict performance is a notable benefit.

### Sociometric Choice in Use

Although much sociometric research has focused on the causes and consequences of sociometric choice, this was not the purpose of sociometry as laid out by its founder. Moreno argued that understanding the reasons behind sociometric choices was unnecessary. He believed, instead, that knowing the choices and putting them into action were critical. His point was that sociometric choices should be used. Two examples of such usage are group therapy and social engineering.

One way to put sociometric choice into action is through *group therapy*, a term first used by Moreno. In one form of such therapy, group members discuss their sociometric choices and the reasons behind them (rather than reporting their

choices privately). Members reveal to fellow group members whom they most and least prefer as friends or coworkers and the reasons for their choices. These discussions, as one can imagine, can be threatening and uncomfortable. Therefore, using appropriate discussion procedures and promoting effective communication are of utmost importance. One way to make members more comfortable is to allow them to express their reservations about the interaction or halt it at any time. Moreno believed that such honest discussion of members' liking preferences would promote personal growth and interpersonal insight.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, when Moreno was formulating sociometry, social engineering was a popular idea (e.g., some psychologists were interested in eugenics, controlled breeding to promote the ideal population). Moreno's hope was that sociometry would be used to create utopian groups, communities, and societies. He envisioned that sociometric choice would be used to achieve ideal group compositions, better performance, and improved member relations. For example, urban planners might foster social integration by providing a framework for mapping an entire community. Moreno hoped that, by understanding social interrelations in small groups, sociologists would be able to extrapolate such knowledge to the larger society.

### History and Future Direction

Moreno had grandiose dreams for sociometry, some of which (e.g., social engineering) were not realized. In 1937, Moreno started the journal *Sociometry*, which highlighted sociometric theory and research. This journal had great influence in shaping the field of microsociology. After two decades of managing the journal on his own, Moreno handed it over to the American Sociological Society (now the American Sociological Association). By 1979, sociometric methods had become less focal in the field of sociology, and, for this reason, the journal was renamed *Social Psychology Quarterly*—its name to this day.

Very little sociometric testing is used today relative to its heyday, but its impact in shaping sociology and other fields (e.g., developmental psychology and psychotherapy) is notable. Many ideas originally laid out in sociometry have

contributed to the understanding of *social networks* and the development of network analysis. It is in this direction that the study of group member interrelations is likely to continue in the future.

*Gwen M. Wittenbaum*

*See also* Group Cohesiveness; Inclusion/Exclusion; Opinion Deviance; Social Networks; Therapy Groups

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## SPORTS TEAMS

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Sports teams share the properties of many other groups, in that they are composed of two or more individuals who possess a common identity, have common goals and objectives, share a common fate, exhibit structured patterns of interaction and modes of communication, hold common perceptions about group structural elements such as norms and roles, are personally and instrumentally interdependent, reciprocate interpersonal attraction, and consider themselves to be a group.

An intercollegiate tennis doubles team provides a useful example of this definition. The team contains, of course, two athletes, both of whom would describe themselves as partners on a team (common identity). Also, the two athletes would share numerous goals for both practices and competitions and

experience success and failure as a collective (common fate). The brief, often single-word communications they exchange during a rally, their dynamic adjustments in rushing toward and retreating from the net, and their pre-serve signals to convey intended postserve court positions all reflect structured patterns of interaction and communication. To play doubles tennis clearly requires task interdependence. Also, the considerable time spent traveling to and from competitions and waiting for a match to begin inevitably lead to social interdependence and interpersonal attraction. Finally, and not surprisingly given all the above, the two athletes would consider themselves to be a team.

In considering themselves to be a team, the athletes exhibit one of the fundamental tenets of social identity theory, namely, social *categorization*. Considerable indirect evidence also highlights the presence of two fundamental consequences of this categorization—*identification* with the ingroup and *comparison with/bias against* outgroups. The purpose of this entry is to outline what we know about the role that sports plays in the dynamics of ingroups (teams) and their relationships with outgroups (including opponents, fans, and the media).

### The Sports Team as an Ingroup

In 1995, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary presented an elegant case for the proposition that we have an innate need to belong to groups. In our evolutionary past, creating bonds with others increased our chances of survival. Thus, the desire for interpersonal attachments is thought to be a fundamental human motivation. Membership in sports teams, just like membership in other social groups, satisfies this need to belong. In fact, consistent with *social identity theory*, being a member of a team forms an important part of an individual's self-concept. When we belong to a group, our identity is derived, at least in part, from that group.

In examining the sports team as an ingroup, two important aspects to consider are the team's structure (e.g., norms and roles) and its processes (e.g., decision making). The discussion in this section focuses on how these factors influence team members' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, as well as the team as a whole.

### Group Norms

Team norms represent an unwritten code of conduct for group member behavior. They provide members with guidelines as to what behaviors are expected. In addition to being informational, norms serve an integrative function. Athletes who understand and adhere to team norms are integrated into the group, whereas athletes who consistently violate team norms are sanctioned and may eventually (if the behavior persists) be rejected from the team. Perhaps the most important function of group norms is to ensure that a team performs as a unit as opposed to a collection of individuals.

Research in sports has found that teams develop norms for a variety of contexts, including competition, practice, the off-season, and social events. Regardless of the context, the most dominant norm in sports teams involves work output. A team puts pressure on its members to give maximal effort in competition, work hard in practice, and train hard in the off-season. Research also has found that these performance norms influence both the individual and the team. At the individual level, stronger performance norms exert greater social influence. At the group level, teams with higher performance norms are more successful.

It is also important to note the negative side of group norms. Not all norms enhance team performance. An example of a negative norm that inhibits performance is the expectation that one should be abusive to other team members (e.g., rookies, training personnel). Perhaps the most troubling aspect of negative norms is that they can persist over several seasons—long after the athletes who were instrumental in their development have departed.

### Group Roles

While norms represent general expectations for the behavior of all team members, roles reflect specific expectations concerning how members who occupy a certain position on the team should behave. Every member of a sports team has a role. For example, hockey teams have enforcers—members who are expected to serve (as a National Hockey League coach suggested) as a “nuclear deterrent.” Each role is unique and contributes to a team's success. In fact, a team's effectiveness



relies on each person's carrying out his or her designated role effectively.

*Role clarity* is a cornerstone of effective team performance. Research has shown that *role ambiguity* (the flip side of role clarity) can arise among athletes regarding the *scope* of their responsibilities (is being an enforcer sufficient, or am I also expected to be a productive member of the offense?), the *behaviors* necessary to carry out role responsibilities (in my role as an enforcer, am I expected to fight or simply serve as a deterrent by my presence?), the *consequences* of failing to carry out role responsibilities (if I don't fight, will I be benched, reprimanded, cut from the team?), and how role performance will be *evaluated* (is it sufficient to simply fight, or do I have to win the majority of the encounters?). Role ambiguity has been shown to be moderately (and negatively) related to athlete performance. Other aspects of the roles associated with athlete performance include *role satisfaction*, *role acceptance*, *role efficacy*, and *role conflict*.

### *Shared Beliefs*

Shared beliefs are a pervasive cognitive attribute of groups. Despite individual differences in personalities and histories, members of sports teams develop similar beliefs. Team members are exposed to the same experiences, and each member's interpretation of an event is influenced by how his or her teammates interpret that event. The interdependence and interaction among teammates result in shared beliefs. Research with sports teams has provided empirical support for the presence of strong shared beliefs about *collective efficacy* (i.e., confidence in the team as a collective), *cohesion*, *group norms*, and *performance attributions* (explanations advanced for factors in team success and failure).

### *Attributional Style*

Performance attributions made by team members can evolve into a team attributional style. Individuals are often characterized as having either an *adaptive (optimistic)* or *maladaptive (pessimistic)* style. Attributional style has been linked to an individual's emotions, expectancies, and future behavior. In studies investigating attributional style at the group level, researchers have examined

newspaper quotations from professional athletes. It has been found that team members explain team losses in a similar manner, in that teams tend to be either collectively optimistic (e.g., "we lost only because our opponent outworked us tonight") or collectively pessimistic (e.g., "we lost because we have no talent"). Furthermore, the team's attribution style has been found to correlate with its future performance, such that optimistic teams tend to perform better than pessimistic teams during the next season.

## The Sports Team and Its Relationship With the Outgroup

### *Trash Talking*

Traditionally, sports psychology research has focused on the ingroup—the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors characteristic of the members of a team. Little research attention has been directed toward relationships between teams. Nonetheless, there is substantial anecdotal evidence that the bias, prejudice, and stereotyping displayed by ingroups toward outgroup members in other contexts also are present within sports. Take trash talking, for example, one of the most reviled phenomena in sports. Trash talking involves verbal barbs or abuse directed at opponents, both on and away from a court or field. Trash talking is widespread—almost universal—despite rules in many sports that seek to eliminate it.

Race is the only topic considered off limits for trash talking. Thus, an opponent's family (including "yo mamma"), physical imperfections or unusual characteristics, and mental limitations are all potential targets. Taunts that might produce physical retaliation in any other context are considered "part of the game" in sports. In fact, the target of trash talking often takes pains to show that he or she is not negatively affected by it.

### *Violence*

In sports, especially in football, rugby, water polo, wrestling, and hockey, describing behavior directed at opponents (the outgroup) as violent poses some difficulties. Body contact is an integral part of competition, and athletes enter competition expecting aggressive tactics from opponents. However, all sports have sanctions against what

are considered excessively dangerous acts. It is not physical contact per se that is problematic—it is contact exerted to violate, damage, or abuse an opponent. Although sports such as hockey, basketball, and baseball have a long tradition of inter-team violence, there has been a noticeable increase over the past 15 years in both the frequency and severity of violence in sports—an epidemic of violence, according to some scholars. No one is sure why this increase has occurred.

In sports, a number of constituencies consider themselves part of the ingroup. They include athletes, coaches, parents, fans, and support personnel, such as trainers. Constituents forming the outgroup are numerous as well. They include the other team, its supporters, and often officials and the media. Violence has been perpetrated by virtually every constituent of the ingroup against virtually every constituent of the outgroup. Many examples can be cited. A Massachusetts father of a 10-year-old hockey player beat a coach to death over what was perceived to be intolerably rough play against his child on the ice. Manchester United's Eric Cantona assaulted a fan who allegedly had subjected him to racial slurs. The Miami Hurricanes and Florida International University's Golden Panthers engaged in a bench-clearing brawl sparked by a point-after-touchdown incident. Ten players from the New York Knicks and Denver Nuggets were ejected from a game after a brawl instigated by Carmelo Anthony. After an attack from behind by Todd Bertuzzi of the Vancouver Canucks, Colorado Avalanche's Steve Moore was hospitalized with three broken vertebrae. Ron Artest and Jermaine O'Neal of the Indiana Pacers exchanged punches with Detroit Pistons fans. And the list goes on. Violence is prevalent in sports, despite many efforts to eliminate it.

### *The Home Advantage*

A significant factor in an ingroup's relationship with an outgroup is territoriality. This should not come as a surprise, given the number of popular expressions that highlight the special nature of the home, such as "home sweet home," "home is where the heart is," and "there's no place like home." Countries in international competitions and teams in professional sports profit from competing in a place they call home.

For example, countries win more medals when they host the Olympic Games than they do in immediately preceding or subsequent games. Another interesting example is provided by results from Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup competitions. They have been held 18 times. In that period, host nations have placed first, second, or third a total of 10 times—an overall 55% success rate. Given that in two of the competitions—1994 in the United States and 2002 in Korea and Japan—the host nations were improbable possibilities for a top-three finish, the host nations' record is impressive.

At the team level, the home advantage has been well documented in professional sports. A home advantage has been found in every sport, although the magnitude varies. For example, in baseball, football, ice hockey, basketball, and soccer the home advantage is 53%, 57%, 58%, 61%, and 62%, respectively.

The above notwithstanding, not every team in every league enjoys a home advantage. For example, when Steven Bray analyzed National Hockey League results from 1974 to 1993, he found that slightly more than one third of the teams won fewer than 50% of their home games. Generally, however, if inept teams are going to win, there is a greater probability that they will do so at home than on the road.

The reasons underlying the home advantage have been examined extensively. No single factor has been identified, and the factors that appear important in some contexts are not always so in others. With this caveat, it seems that the major causes are the crowd, the officiating (because of the crowd influence), the visiting team's travel, and familiarity with the home facility.

### **Conclusion**

The term *competition* comes from the Latin word *competere*, which means to seek together, to coincide, and to agree. This utopian notion that members of opposing sports teams are working toward a common goal, when in fact they are participating in a zero-sum contest in which a plus (win) for one team necessarily means a minus (loss) for the other team, is not supported by research or by popular (media) reports. Outgroup members in sports are

subjected to the same bias, prejudice, and stereotyping present in other group situations.

*Albert Carron and Kim Shapcott*

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Group Cohesiveness; Group Structure; Intergroup Violence; Norms; Prejudice; Roles; Social Identity Theory; Socially Shared Cognition; Stereotyping

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## STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

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The Stanford prison experiment (SPE) was an experiment designed to examine the power of an institutional environment—prison, in particular—to shape and control the behavior of persons placed inside it. Using college student participants who were selected for their normality and randomly assigned to be prisoners or guards, the study ended unexpectedly early because of the dramatic and extreme results. It has assumed a prominent place in debates over the causes of extreme behavior in powerful situations or settings, especially in the criminal justice system.

### Study Design and Findings

The SPE was conducted in 1971 by a group of Stanford research psychologists, led by Philip Zimbardo, and his two graduate students, Craig Haney and Curtis Banks. The experiment was designed to control for the individual personality variables (e.g., narcissism, authoritarianism) that are sometimes used to attempt to explain behavior in prison and other institutional settings. That is, the researchers in the SPE neutralized the explanatory argument that pathological traits alone accounted for extreme and abusive behavior in

severe institutional setting such as prisons. They did this by (a) selecting a group of participants who were psychologically healthy and had scored in the normal range of numerous personality variables and (b) assigning participants to the role of either prisoner or guard on a completely random basis. The behavior that resulted when these otherwise healthy, normal participants were placed in the extreme environment of a simulated prison would therefore have to be explained largely if not entirely on the basis of the characteristics of the social setting in which they had been placed.

The setting itself was designed to be as similar as possible to an actual prison, given a number of obvious practical and ethical constraints. Constructed in the basement of the Psychology Department at Stanford University, the “Stanford County Prison” had barred doors on the small rooms that served as cells, cots on which the prisoners slept, a hallway area that was converted to a prison “yard” where group activities were conducted, and a small closet that served as a short-term “solitary confinement” cell for disciplining unruly prisoners. The prisoners wore uniforms that were designed to de-emphasize their individuality and underscore their powerlessness. In contrast, guards donned military-like garb, complete with reflecting sun glasses and nightsticks. Guards generated a set of rules and regulations that in many ways resembled those in operation in actual prisons, and prisoners were expected to comply with the guards’ orders. However, guards were instructed not to resort to physical force to gain prisoner compliance.

Despite the lack of any legal mandate for the “incarceration” of the prisoners, and despite the fact that both groups were told that they had been randomly assigned to their roles (so that, for example, guards knew that prisoners had done nothing to “deserve” their degraded prisoner status, and similarly, prisoners knew that the guards had no special training or actual legal authority over them), the behavior that ensued was remarkably similar to behavior that takes place inside actual prisons. It also was surprisingly extreme in intensity and effect. Thus, initial prisoner resistance and rebellion were met forcibly by guards, who quickly struggled to regain their power and then proceeded to escalate their mistreatment of prisoners throughout the study, at the slightest sign of affront or disobedience.

As the guards' control over the prisoners increased, the tensions between the two groups intensified, and the harassment of the prisoners worsened. For example, the guards conducted a series of "counts"—times when prisoners were removed from their cells in order to be counted but which quickly deteriorated into occasions for verbal and other forms of abuse and humiliation that the guards directed at them. In some instances, the guards conspired to physically mistreat prisoners outside the presence of the experimenters and to leave prisoners in the solitary confinement cell beyond the 1-hour limit that the researchers had set.

Conversely, prisoners resisted the guards' orders at first but then succumbed to their superior power and control. Some prisoners had serious emotional breakdowns in the course of the study and had to be released from participation. Other prisoners became compliant and conforming, rarely if ever challenging the "authority" of the guards. Despite the fact that the researchers could not keep the prisoners in the study against their will (and they had been informed at the outset of the study of their legal right to leave), as the study proceeded prisoners "petitioned" the prison "administrators" for permission to be "paroled" and returned passively to their cells when their requests were denied. By the end of the study, they had disintegrated as a group. The guards, in contrast, solidified and intensified their control as time passed. Although some of the guards were more extreme and inventive in the degradation they inflicted on the prisoners and some were more passive and less involved, none of the guards intervened to restrain the behavior of their more abusive colleagues. Although the study was designed to last for 2 full weeks, the extreme nature of the behavior that occurred led the researchers to terminate it after only 6 days.

A post hoc analysis of the SPE data showed that the careful screening of the participants and their random assignment to the roles of prisoners and guards had effectively controlled for any significant personality-based, or dispositional, explanation of the results. That is, there were no significant personality differences between the SPE participants and the normal population (i.e., the group means for guards and prisoners did not fall outside the 40 to 60 percentile range of the normative male population on any of the dimensions of the personality inventory that was used), no personality

differences between the guards and prisoners could explain their very different behavior in the study, and no personality differences within either group reliably predicted variations in their in-prison behavior.

### The SPE's Larger Implications

Controversial from the outset and widely discussed since it was conducted, the study has come to stand in psychology and related disciplines as a demonstration of the power of situations—especially extreme institutional settings such as prisons—to shape and control the behavior of the persons in them. The results of the study undermine the notion that extreme social behavior can only—or even mostly—be explained in terms of the extreme characteristics of the persons who engage in it. Instead, the SPE warns us to look more carefully at the characteristics of the settings in which extreme behavior occurs.

The SPE also stands as a challenge to what might be termed the *presumption of institutional rationality*—that is, the tendency to assume that institutions operate on the basis of an inherent rationality that should be accepted rather than questioned. Instead, the SPE (itself the most "irrational" of prisons, in the sense that the guards had no legal authority over the prisoners, who had committed no crimes that warranted their punishment) suggests that a kind of "psycho-logic" may operate in these settings that controls role-bound behavior, whether or not that behavior furthers legitimate goals. That is, despite the fact that the guards had no genuine authority over the prisoners and the prisoners had done nothing illegal to legitimize their mistreatment, the guards reacted to violations of rules that they arbitrarily constructed as if they were mandated to do so (and often did so forcefully, in ways that caused apparent pain and distress for the prisoners).

The SPE was conducted in the early 1970s, and its results and implications were widely disseminated in the years that immediately followed. The study was often cited as a prominent example of research that contributed directly to the "situational revolution" in psychology—the insight that context plays a powerful role in shaping people's thoughts and actions, especially in extreme settings (such as ones where social pressures are brought

acutely to bear, where marked imbalances of power exist, and where all aspects of patient, inmate, or prisoner behavior are subject to control). It helped lead to the now more widely accepted proposition that no account of behavior can avoid a careful assessment of the situational influences on what people do, the things they believe, and even how they think.

The study also promised to have an impact on prison policy, at least in the years that immediately followed. This was a time in the history of the criminal justice system in the United States when the nation appeared open to fundamental reform of its crime control policies and penal practices. The message of the SPE—that context very much mattered in general and that, specifically, prison and prison-like environments had the inherent capacity to set powerful social-psychological forces in motion that could negatively affect the behavior of staff members and have adverse consequences for inmates—resonated perfectly with the spirit of these times.

However, for reasons that appeared more political than scientific, the nation's prison and crime control policies soon began to move in a fundamentally different direction. In the waning years of the 1970s and in the several decades that followed, the situational message of the SPE had little impact in correctional circles. Although evidence continued to mount in psychology and related disciplines that past and present circumstances and situations played a powerful role in influencing behavior, not only in penal institutions but in the origins of the criminal behavior those institutions were intended to address, sentencing laws and prison policies were implemented that seemed to ignore the most important lessons of the *situational revolution*. That is, crime control practices during these years focused even more narrowly on individual-level wrongdoing to the exclusion of situational models of crime prevention, and the potential role of context and circumstance in crime causation was increasingly discounted, even in sentencing guidelines (where “social factors” were explicitly deemed irrelevant).

In more recent years, however, the implications of the SPE became part of the national dialogue that occurred in response to the widely publicized abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Iraq, by members of the U.S. military. There appeared to be direct parallels between some of the mistreatment perpetrated by the guards in the SPE and the abuse

that was inflicted on the prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Here, too, the explanation that situational forces had overcome the dispositions of the otherwise normal, healthy soldiers who perpetrated the abuse seemed cogent. The analysis of the behavior of the guards in the SPE *and* at Abu Ghraib pointed away from a “few bad apples” assessment of blame and focused instead on the abuse-engendering circumstances in which the guards functioned—a “faulty barrel” assessment, if you will—as well as the responsibility of the persons who created and maintained such a flawed environment for monitoring prisoners and guards alike.

*Craig Haney and Philip G. Zimbardo*

*See also* Intergroup Violence; Obedience to Authority; Power

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## STATUS

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The *status* of individuals and groups refers to their social rank defined in terms of prestige or esteem.

Because status brings respect and deference, it is also closely associated with power. It is surely one of the most fundamental parameters governing the lives of humans and other social animals. It is also something that can be negotiated, constructed, challenged, and perpetuated in the process of social interaction. It is therefore of interest to social psychologists as both an independent variable (i.e., a cause) and a dependent variable (i.e., an effect). Indeed many research studies have examined status from both these perspectives, revealing much about the sources, the consequences, and the unfolding dynamics of status within and between groups.

### The Intragroup Dynamics of Status

One of the early findings to emerge from the empirical scrutiny of group processes is that groups tend to form unequal status hierarchies. Seldom are groups arranged along entirely egalitarian lines. The Harvard sociologist Robert F. Bales convened small decision-making groups of undergraduate students and found that typically within the first hour-long meeting, a hierarchy of status had developed. Bales documented four specific, interdependent dimensions of status. High-status members (1) initiated and (2) were granted more opportunities to participate in decision making. Further, their ideas were (3) rated more favorably by and (4) had more influence over their peers. Usually, these status hierarchies formed quickly and smoothly. Where power struggles did occur, they postponed but did not cancel the development of a stable, unequal status hierarchy.

Status within these hierarchies can be earned or *achieved* on the basis of one's actions, or it can be assigned or *ascribed* on the basis of inherited characteristics, such as the status of one's family, race, or gender. This distinction is reflected in *expectation states theory*, by Joseph Berger. According to this theory, the status that group members grant to an individual depends on how much they expect he or she will help to contribute to realizing the group's goals. Individuals with characteristics that are *task relevant*, such as expertise and talent, will tend to be granted high status. But also, *diffuse* status characteristics, such as family, race, and gender, influence group members' perception that an individual may assist the group. Therefore, they influence the status

awarded to an individual. Indeed these traits are often more apparent than task-relevant characteristics in the early stages of group formation. They may therefore have an unduly powerful influence on the initial assignment of status.

This process, sometimes referred to as *status generalization*, illustrates how individuals' status outside the group affects their status within the group. It means that similar people tend to occupy high- and low-status positions within groups, even when the formation of each group is entirely independent. For example, when groups are composed of both men and women, men tend to occupy the high-status positions, be those groups political, cultural, religious, or economic. Thus, status hierarchies within local groups tend to enact and replicate global status hierarchies.

Once status hierarchies are formed, they tend to be reinforced and legitimized by group processes. A person's status characteristics influence the size of the contribution to the group's goals that the person will make. When a large contribution is expected of an individual, he or she tends to be given every opportunity to make one. Such individuals are given opportunities to contribute earlier than other members. Identical contributions are evaluated more favorably if made by a high-rather than a low-status individual. They are also rewarded more richly: Rewards within groups are assigned as a legitimizing marker of status independent of the value of a person's contribution to a group. Nowhere does this point seem to be illustrated more clearly than cases in which large salaries, bonuses, and pensions are paid to high-status executives even after the spectacular failure of the companies for which they are responsible.

The importance of family, race, and gender to status can be attributed to longstanding discriminatory systems of class, racism, and sexism, by which members of some social categories are advantaged relative to others. This is not the case, however, for the effect of height on status. The power of height to confer status seems to be reliable in both experiments and field studies, which show, for example, that CEOs are taller than average and that tall job applicants are more likely than others to be successful. The link between status and height is implicit in the etiquette of many cultures, in which low-status individuals bow, curtsy, or even sit or kneel to confirm the higher

status of high-status individuals. It is also implicit in the pervasive cultural metaphors identified by the psycholinguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. According to their analysis, metaphors such as “social climber,” “upper class,” and “ideas above one’s station” reflect an underlying cultural equation of social status with physical height.

The role that status plays in regulating social interaction affects much more than the tendency to engage in “bowing and scraping.” The social psychologist Roger Brown has suggested that across all known human cultures, status plays a key role in a universal norm that governs communication and intimacy. In societies that are stratified according to status, people reserve a respectful mode of communication for those who are either higher in status than themselves or socially distant. For example, in Medieval English, *thou* was used to address inferiors and familiar people, while *you* was reserved for superiors and strangers. This is an example of the so-called *T–V distinction* present in many languages (named after the French language, in which *tu* is familiar and *vous*, respectful). Similarly, the use of titles and surnames in address is associated with communication directed to someone who is either unfamiliar or who is higher in status, whereas use of first names signifies communication that is directed to an equal, an inferior, or someone with whom the speaker is close. Furthermore, any relaxation in formality is usually suggested by the communicator with higher status. Thus it is more typical for professors to suggest that a student address them by their first names than vice versa. Being high in status confers the privilege of control over intimacy.

Status has other powerful effects on the way that social interactions unfold from moment to moment. Studies of nonverbal language have shown that compared with persons of lower status, those high in status gaze more into the eyes of their conversation partners while talking, touch others more, stand in a more erect posture, and criticize more frequently. Conversation analyses have shown that people of higher status interrupt others more and are more likely to direct who takes turns in the conversation. Conversely, judicious use of these high-status types of body language and conversational style can sometimes be an effective way to win status.

In addition to affecting the body language of communicators and how they take turns in communication, status has effects on how communicators express themselves verbally. For example, in some settings, low-status speakers tend to use more polite and tentative language. Consistent with expectation states theory, this phenomenon is most likely to manifest itself when people of lower status talk to those higher in status and when the basis of status (e.g., gender, race, occupation, or class) is perceived to be relevant to the goals of the conversation.

### Consequences of Intragroup Status

Once achieved, it is clear that social status has many social-psychological effects. High-status people are also likely to receive more flattery and more measured and mitigated forms of critical feedback, and they are likely to benefit from others’ attempts to ingratiate themselves. However, discrepancies in status can raise suspicion about the motives of those who engage in ingratiation, as has been shown in research by the social psychologist Roos Vonk. Vonk found that attempts by low-status individuals to win the hearts and minds of high-status individuals with flattery and similar tactics of ingratiation may be seen for what they are and may subsequently backfire, producing less, rather than more, liking. Pithily, Vonk labeled this finding the *slime effect*. It is perhaps not surprising that independent observers, more than those who are personally being flattered and ingratiated, are more prone to the slime effect. Independent observers are less likely to suspect that the flattery may be strategic rather than heartfelt.

Status can also be seen as a form of social capital, allowing individuals to achieve their goals by exerting power or influence over others. A number of studies show that compliance is more likely to requests made by individuals with higher status and by representatives of organizations with higher status. One of the most famous demonstrations of the effect of status on compliance was provided by Stanley Milgram’s studies of obedience. In these studies, participants complied with requests from an experimenter to deliver ostensibly strong doses of electricity to an innocent stranger. The effect generalizes to much more mundane and arguably less distressing requests, such as the calls for small

donations made by charity workers. A parallel literature on so-called *source credibility* shows that a similar effect applies to persuasion. Attitudes are more likely to shift toward persuasive messages from high-status sources than from low-status sources. For example, identical editorials are more persuasive when attributed to prestigious newspapers than to less-prestigious tabloids.

Furthermore, a person's status may make him or her attractive to both individuals and groups. For example, high social status tends to confer sexual attractiveness on men, in particular. Evolutionary psychologists explain this effect in terms of the biological and social imperative for women to invest in their children and therefore to select mates who are likely to be willing and able to support them materially and socially. Alternatively, it is possible to explain this effect in terms of economic necessity and culturally determined sex roles.

In addition, groups are often keen to recruit individuals with high social status because the groups perceive these individuals to be able to assist in the realization of group aims. For example, the recruitment of high-status individuals allows groups to bathe in the associative glow of their prestige. High-status individuals may be able to employ their enhanced capacity for social influence to enhance ingroup cohesion and to successfully negotiate with external parties in the interests of the group.

Given all the social benefits that status confers, it is not surprising that it is also beneficial to physical well-being. A number of studies link status to health and longevity, even when related factors such as wealth are controlled for. One of the most striking and well-publicized examples was uncovered by University of Warwick economists Andrew Oswald and Matthew Rablen in 2005. They analyzed the life span data available for a sample of 524 nominees for the Nobel Prizes in physics and chemistry in the first half of the 20th century. The average life span of these nominees was 76 years, but the 135 winners among this group were found to have lived approximately 2 years longer when other factors, such as country of origin, were controlled for. The number of nominations received by scientists was not predictive of their life span, and neither was the size of the monetary award given to each laureate. As Oswald noted in an interview subsequent to the

publication of this research, winning the Nobel Prize per se seemed to confer "a kind of health-giving magic."

Further research is required to establish precisely how social status translates to physical health and longevity. The prestige, power, and other forms of social capital conferred by status may play a role. But also, the health benefits of status may operate rather more directly. Researchers have observed immediate physiological responses to social status in human and nonhuman animals alike. For example, animals who are experimentally locked into a low-status or *subdominant* position display endocrinological changes involving elevated levels of harmful, stress-related chemicals in the blood. These changes are associated with heightened vigilance, agitation, and motivational disorientation. Low status therefore appears to be an aversive and unhealthy state for many social animals. In some animals, however, these effects disappear once status hierarchies have been established and each animal settles into its place in the regime. In these cases, animal behavior is reminiscent of some of the patterns predicted by Theodor Adorno's *authoritarian theory of personality* and its descendants, such as Robert Altemeyer's theory of *right wing authoritarianism*.

### Social-Psychological Theories of Responses to Intra- and Intergroup Status

Social-psychological theories offer differing perspectives on how people respond to their position within their group and to their group's status within an intergroup hierarchy. According to both *social dominance theory* and authoritarian theories, many people prefer contexts in which there is a clear status hierarchy of groups to situations in which groups have equal status. Social dominance theory also suggests that people actively seek a dominant position for their group and support measures that might further this aim. In contrast, right wing authoritarianism is thought to lead to acquiescent or "yielding" responses to high status. Each theory derives support from a range of sources, including studies in which individual differences in social dominance orientation and right wing authoritarianism are measured. Individuals who are high in right wing authoritarianism and, depending on the social context, social dominance



orientation prefer marked status hierarchies at both the interpersonal and the intergroup levels of society.

In contrast, *just world* and *system justification* theories are premised on the idea that people generally prefer to see the intra- and intergroup hierarchies that they occupy as fair. This means that if individuals occupy low-status positions within their group, they are apt to perceive themselves as deserving of that status. Reductions in self-esteem and especially perceptions that one is lacking in status-relevant attributes such as competence tend to follow. Similarly, members of low-status groups may be prone to *outgroup favoritism* in an unconscious attempt to justify their collective position, endorsing negative stereotypes of their own group and seeing higher-status groups as superior to their own on key traits such as competence.

According to these theories, how people feel about their personal status is more or less the same as how they feel about their group status. In contrast, *social identity theory* postulates a subtle interplay between people's perception of the status of themselves and their group. For example, members of low-status groups are less likely to take action to improve their collective lot if they perceive that group boundaries are permeable and that their personal status may therefore improve. They are also less likely to take action if they perceive the low status of their group to be legitimate and if they are unaware of alternative social contexts in which their group may have higher status. If status relations between groups are seen as illegitimate and alterable, then social identity is said to be insecure. When social identity is insecure, individuals are likely to take action to address the low status of their group.

The specific strategy that group members may use to enhance their status depends on contextual factors such as what is practical in the circumstances and how other groups react. For example, group members may, when possible, engage in social competition, in which they strive to better rival groups on the dimensions on which they are currently perceived as inferior. Or they may engage in strategies classed as *social creativity*. These strategies include attaching positive value to attributes that were hitherto seen as negative, choosing other attributes as the basis of compari-

son with the outgroup, and choosing to compare themselves against other outgroups.

Of course, the status of one's own group in relation to others is not merely of symbolic importance, relevant only to collective self-esteem. Often, as recognized by social identity theory, it determines the resources that groups can gain for themselves. It also determines what groups can do to each other. According to Susan Fiske's *stereotype content model*, group members are motivated to know what other groups can do and want to do to their group. This means that they are particularly interested in two types of traits, namely, *competence* (is the group capable or not?) and *warmth* (does it mean well or ill?). High-status groups tend to be seen as competent but cold, whereas low-status groups are often seen as warm but incompetent. These stereotypes are likely to help observers justify inequality and to cope with conflicting information (e.g., prevailing negative representations of an outgroup on one hand, but a normative ban on prejudice on the other). Also, the stereotypes tend to offer an explanation for how the high- and low-status groups got where they are.

In general, it is probably fair to say that research and theorizing thus far permits more definite conclusions about the status of individuals than about the status of groups. For example, there is much research on how individuals come to achieve a certain level of social status but rather less on how groups do this. Typically, research and theory focus on how groups respond to a given level of status, a question that is hotly contested by a number of theories. Consensus has yet to be reached on key problems such as whether, and in what circumstances, high-status groups exhibit more prejudice and ingroup favoritism than low-status groups do. Nonetheless, it is clear that status is a crucial variable at the intra- and intergroup levels of human behavior.

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*See also* Authoritarian Personality; Discrimination; Dominance Hierarchies; Group Structure; Power; Right Wing Authoritarianism; Social Class; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory; Status Construction Theory; Stereotypes; System Justification Theory

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## STATUS CHARACTERISTICS/ EXPECTATION STATES THEORY

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When members of juries, project teams, or study groups differ by gender, race or ethnicity, or even physical attractiveness, how do these differences affect members' conduct? More generally, how does social status, the prestige one possesses based on one's differentially valued social distinctions, affect people's behavior during group encounters? *Status characteristics theory* (SCT), which is a part of the theoretical research program called *expectation states theory*, explains this group-level phenomenon. SCT describes the social-psychological process that produces a *status hierarchy*—a rank order of people that is based on social prestige—within certain kinds of groups. Knowing the particulars of SCT has allowed researchers to craft powerful intervention strategies designed to inhibit the deleterious effects of status inequalities. This

entry describes how this line of research developed, what SCT says about group relations, and how the ideas have been applied in interventions.

### What Is Expectation States Theory?

During the 1960s, three researchers at Stanford University developed expectation states theory: Joseph Berger, Bernard Cohen, and Morris Zelditch Jr. The type of formal theory they used, along with the subject matter they studied, became known as the *Stanford tradition* of sociological social psychology.

Expectation states theory is not a unitary theory but rather a theoretical research program comprising a set of interrelated, middle-range theories. SCT is one of this set of middle-range theories, as is *reward expectation states theory*, *status legitimation theory*, *source theory*, *status construction theory*, and many others. Several similarities exist among these theories, but the two most central and important concepts that unite them are expectation state and status situation.

### Expectation State

An expectation state is an out-of-awareness anticipation or hunch about one's capacity to engender the behaviors, attitudes, and competence necessary to elicit more (or less) deference from other group members. Expectation states have four important properties.

1. They are activated nonconsciously. People are not aware of the instantaneous mental process that occurs when expectation states begin to affect their actions. Psychological social psychologists refer to this kind of mental activity as implicit processing, as opposed to explicit processing, which entails conscious thinking.
2. An expectation state is a relative notion: People cannot have a higher level of expectation for their actions if they do not compare their capacities with those of others within a group.
3. An expectation state is distinctive to the specific social situation. Just because an expectation state is triggered in one situation does not mean that it will be triggered in other situations.

4. An expectation state is unobservable, in that we cannot directly measure when an expectation state is activated. However, we can presume that an expectation state has been activated by observing the behavioral inequalities displayed by group members. These differences in behavior are indicators of the presence of an activated expectation state.

The type of expectation state central to SCT is the performance expectation: an out-of-awareness anticipation of one's capacity and abilities relative to those of other group members to complete a group task successfully.

### *Status Situation*

The other important concept central to expectation states theory is the status situation. This is a micro-encounter in which two or more people work on a task given to a group to complete successfully. Roles for each group member are not formally assigned before the beginning of the group's work. Rather, group members organize their roles and behaviors informally, on their own, as they carry out the task.

In formal theoretical terms, a group's circumstance is considered to be a status situation if the group meets two criteria, or scope conditions: The group must be both task oriented and collectively oriented. Scope conditions are situations in which researchers are able to guarantee that the propositions of expectation states theory will apply. If a group is both task oriented and collectively oriented, then the group falls within the boundaries specified by theories involving expectation states. If a group does not meet these scope conditions, theorists are not assured that the propositions for the theory being applied will be confirmed, nor are they certain that an expectation state will be activated.

Task-oriented groups are those whose members are committed to completing a task that they perceive as having either a successful or unsuccessful outcome. Collectively oriented groups are those whose members believe that it is necessary, and in fact right and proper, for them to take each other's behaviors and opinions into account when completing the task. Examples of task-oriented and collectively oriented groups include juries during deliberations, special project teams assembled

within businesses, and study groups of students who are assigned a project for which they will all receive the same grade.

With the notions of expectation states and status situations, researchers have proposed several theories to describe how status hierarchies affect groups. This entry focuses on SCT. To introduce this theory, some important concepts must first be defined.

### **What Is a Status Characteristic?**

A status characteristic is any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction. Those possessing one category, the positive state, are more valued socially than those possessing the complementary category, the negative state. Different states of a status characteristic confer social advantages and disadvantages on actors who have the traits and attributes associated with the respective state.

Status characteristics convey assessments of individuals' capacities to other actors. SCT posits that the different states of the status characteristic will be attached to differential evaluations of ability. For example, gender is a status characteristic with the positive state typically being male and the negative state being female. In general, there are widely held cultural beliefs suggesting that men possess higher ability than do women on a large range of tasks.

Two types of status characteristics exist. A *specific status characteristic* is one that is applicable to one type of task and is associated with a distinct performance expectation. For instance, ability to do calculus is a specific status characteristic: Those who possess the positive state are expected to be able to solve calculus problems; those who possess the negative state are considered much less likely to have the ability to solve this type of math problem. A *diffuse status characteristic* is one that is both applicable to more than one type of task and is associated with a general performance expectation. Gender is a diffuse status characteristic: Males are believed to have more ability on many tasks, such as solving math problems and mechanical difficulties in cars, than do females. And males are often viewed as more competent in general than are females.

It is essential to note that ability evaluations surrounding the different states of diffuse status characteristics are based on perceptions and cultural belief systems, and not necessarily on reality. For example, the gender gap in the math SAT scores has narrowed to the point that it is no longer statistically significant. However, the perception that males are better in math than females are still persists in our society.

It is also crucial to note that, not always but often, diffuse status characteristics mirror the macrolevel social inequalities of a society. For example, in the United States, experimental tests have demonstrated that race, ethnicity, physical attractiveness, military rank, sexual orientation, and occupational ranks and positions are diffuse status characteristics. One could demonstrate that these status characteristics are also the general axes of inequality in the United States, representing systems of unequal income distributions, educational attainment, and the like.

Finally, the nature of the task may determine which state of a diffuse status characteristic is positive and which is negative. For instance, in 1988 John Dovidio and his colleagues demonstrated that male was the negative state and female was the positive state on a sewing task, even though many tailors are male. Because sewing is widely believed to be a female-centric task, the states of the status characteristic gender were reversed, compared with general attitudes about the relationship between competence and gender.

### The Status-Organizing Process

How do status characteristics organize behavior in groups? Which ones matter? What if I possess a positive state on one status characteristic but a negative state on another—do they somehow cancel each other out? These questions are answered by SCT. Its assumptions explicate a status-organizing process, often referred to as *status generalization*. The status-organizing process described by SCT is one in which status characteristics and their concomitant ability evaluations, based on widely shared beliefs and perceptions, result in observable behavioral inequalities during microencounters.

At this point, it is important to note that expectation states theorists do not believe that the status generalization process describes how group

members *should* behave. These researchers do not support the notion that women should be evaluated lower than men, for example. In fact, the primary motivation for most expectation states theorists is first to recognize that social inequalities exist and affect behavior and then to study how these adverse circumstances can be changed. Without understanding the processes that create inequalities, even the best-intentioned programs designed to eradicate them may not make a difference. Understanding the deleterious consequences of status generalization is the first step in eliminating those consequences.

Status generalization occurs within groups that fit within the scope conditions of expectation states theory. In lay terms, that means the group members are working together to achieve a shared goal. Five assumptions depict status generalization.

The first is called the *salience assumption*. It describes the conditions under which status characteristics activate status generalization. We possess states of myriad status characteristics, so which ones matter for the process? The salience assumption states that those status characteristics that discriminate between actors, the ones in which at least one group member possesses one state and another member the complementary state, will activate status generalization. Also, if a status characteristic is perceived as culturally linked to the task at the start of a group encounter, even if it does not differentiate members, then it will still be salient. An example of this situation would be a group of three men working on a sewing task. Gender does not distinguish group members but is salient because it is related to the task.

The second assumption is called the *burden of proof assumption*. It refers to whether a status characteristic that becomes salient remains salient. For a status characteristic to stay germane to the situation, group members need do nothing. Unless group members know that the status characteristic has nothing to do with the task, they perceive it as if it is pertinent to the situation. However, to “deactivate” the salient characteristic, group members must actively dissociate the status advantages and disadvantages conferred on group members by that salient status characteristic. In other words, the burden of proof for whether a status characteristic is relevant to a task at hand lies with someone

who might persuasively demonstrate its irrelevance. For example, suppose a group of individuals is gathered to fix a broken-down car. Unless these people know for sure that gender is not relevant to fixing a car, then gender will remain salient during the period that the group works together. If, however, a mechanic joins the group and firmly states that neither men nor women are better at fixing cars, then the status characteristic may no longer be salient.

The third assumption is called *sequencing*. If new information about status characteristics is made known to a group, or if new people join the group, then the new information is added to the original group members' status ordering. However, a trace of the initial ordering would remain and affect group behavior as long as the original members stay within the group. The restructuring done with the new information would follow the rules proposed by the salience and burden of proof assumptions.

The fourth assumption states that group members combine all the information conveyed by salient status characteristics. All status information from positive states is combined into one grouping and assigned a positive score; all negative information is combined into another grouping and assigned a negative score. This *combining process* includes a weighting scheme such that for each grouping, any additional, similarly signed information has less incremental effect on the overall positive or negative grouping score (this is known as the *attenuation effect*). Combining also includes a second weighting scheme such that those status elements more relevant to the task have a higher impact on the positive or negative grouping scores. Finally, after taking the weighting schemes into consideration, the positive and negative grouping scores are added together. This computation, known as the *principle of organized subsets*, creates a performance expectation profile that is compared with others' profiles. A group member's expectation advantage or disadvantage can be calculated by subtracting another member's performance expectation profile from his or her own. A group's rank order of these expectation profiles represents the *theoretical power and prestige order* of the group—the status hierarchy. It is important to remember that this mathematical procedure is a heuristic for how people process status information,

not necessarily an actual cognitive model. A complete graph-theoretic rendering of this model is presented in the book titled *Status Characteristics and Social Interaction: An Expectation States Approach*, published in 1977 by Joseph Berger and his colleagues.

The fifth and final assumption, the *basic expectation assumption*, posits that the theoretical power and prestige order will translate into the behavior of the group members who will display behavioral inequalities. The unequal distribution of behaviors is referred to as the *observable power and prestige order*. If person A has a higher performance expectation profile than person B (i.e., person A has more status than person B), then A will receive more action opportunities to participate in the task, make more performance outputs to solve problems related to the task, obtain higher performance evaluations, and exert more influence than B will. Other behaviors that would likely indicate A's performance expectation advantage over B are differential rates of gesturing, disparate rates of maintaining eye gaze, and unequal ratios of fluent to nonfluent speech.

Two final comments are warranted. First, the processes associated with the five assumptions occur among group members simultaneously. Because of widely shared cultural understandings about the information provided by status characteristics, the processes will be the same and will happen concurrently for all group members. Second, cultural understandings about status characteristics, and not necessarily individual meanings, are what trigger status generalization. So, for example, a woman may personally believe that she is as competent as, or even more competent than, any man working on a task with her. However, she may also believe that men get paid more than women and are generally perceived as being more competent than women. She will expect that the other group members will respond to male workmates in a fashion consistent with these shared beliefs. These beliefs will activate status generalization (if gender is a salient status characteristic) despite her personal beliefs about her own abilities.

### Interventions

Researchers have created intervention strategies to prevent status-organizing processes from happening

or to impede these processes once they have occurred. A good example is the work of Elizabeth Cohen, a former professor at Stanford University. Cohen recognized that student groups assigned to work on classroom projects often experience status generalization. She devised two interventions to reduce this tendency—the *multiple abilities* and the *assigned competence* treatments. In the former intervention, teachers develop group tasks that require many roles with associated abilities for completion. Teachers then tell students that their task requires the contributions of all group members, because people are not good at every role. In the latter intervention, teachers observe students' behaviors in groups to determine students' typical status positions. During subsequent group tasks, teachers tell students to pay attention to the abilities of low-status group members, because these students can make useful contributions to task completion. There is some evidence that these interventions can reduce status generalization in classrooms.

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*See also* Dominance Hierarchies; Group Structure; Implicit Prejudice; Power; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Status; Status Construction Theory

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## STATUS CONSTRUCTION THEORY

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*Status construction theory* describes social processes that transform nominal differences among people—such as ethnicity, sex, occupation, or religion—into status distinctions in a society or population. A social difference becomes a status distinction when people develop beliefs that those in one category of the social difference (e.g., Whites, men) are more socially respected and are presumed to be more competent at socially valued tasks than are those in another category of that difference (e.g., people of color, women). These status beliefs, when widely shared in the population, have consequences for inequality among both individuals and social groups. Thus, to explain how a social difference becomes a status distinction, status construction theory describes (a) how status beliefs can be created and spread in interpersonal encounters among socially different actors and (b) the social conditions under which these beliefs are likely to become widespread in the population.

A distinctive aspect of status beliefs is that both those in the social category favored by a belief and those in the category less favored by the belief hold similar beliefs that “most people” view the favored group as better than the other group. As beliefs about what “most people” think, status beliefs are a type of social reputation. Status construction theory proposes one set of processes by which such status beliefs could form, although there are likely to be other ways as well. This entry examines how the theory developed, summarizes its contents, and briefly reviews supporting evidence.

### Historical Overview

Status construction theory developed in the context of a well-established body of theory and research on status hierarchies among individuals in groups. Beginning in the 1950s, a long tradition of empirical research, particularly that associated with status characteristics and expectation states theories, showed that the influence and deference individuals attain in groups is powerfully shaped by differences among them in social characteristics that carry status value in the larger society. Differences in occupation and sex, for instance, affect people's influence on juries.

It was unknown, however, how status beliefs developed about such social differences. Drawing on this body of research, status construction theory argues that if existing status beliefs are powerfully at play in encounters among people who differ in socially recognized ways, then such encounters are also likely to be arenas in which new status beliefs are created, spread, and maintained.

The theory takes as a starting point the existence of a social difference that is widely recognized in a population but about which no shared evaluation has yet developed. It also assumes that people from different categories of this social difference are interdependent in that they must regularly cooperate in order to achieve what they want or need. Under these conditions, the theory argues, the local contexts in which people from different social categories encounter one another have the potential to induce the participants to form shared status beliefs about their difference.

### Basics of Status Construction Theory

The theory's arguments about how local encounters create status beliefs can be summarized as follows. In cooperative, goal-oriented encounters between categorically different people, interpersonal hierarchies of influence and status are likely to develop among the participants just as they do in virtually all goal-oriented encounters. Such interpersonal influence hierarchies develop implicitly, through multiple small behaviors. One person speaks up, for instance, while another holds back or responds hesitantly. Because participants rarely notice these behaviors, the actual origins of their influence hierarchy are usually obscure to them at the same time

that the categorical difference between them is salient. As a consequence, there is a probability that the participants will associate their apparent difference in esteem and competence in the situation with their corresponding categorical difference.

To the extent that this association between the categorical difference and influence appears to be consensually accepted in the situation, rather than resisted or challenged, it seems socially valid to the participants. The backing of legitimate authority will also make the correspondence between difference and influence seem socially valid to participants. If the same association with influence is repeated for these participants in subsequent encounters with people from the other category, its apparent validity will be further strengthened.

Eventually, the apparent validity of the association between the categorical distinction and influence in encounters induces actors to believe that, whether they like it or not, "most people" outside the encounters also would accept that people who differ on the categorical distinction also differ in esteem and competence. In this way, actors form generalized status beliefs about the categorical distinction even when these beliefs disadvantage their own categorical group.

Once people form status beliefs about the distinction, they carry these beliefs to their next encounters with those from the other group who may not be aware of the belief. Yet, by treating categorically different others according to the new status belief, belief holders induce at least some of the others to take on the belief as well. In effect, they "teach" the others the belief by acting on it. This in turn creates a diffusion process that spreads the new status belief in the population.

The theory's second set of arguments focuses on the structural conditions under which beliefs formed in encounters can disseminate widely. The most important condition is whether there is an unequal distribution between the groups of some factor, such as material resources or technology, that is helpful in gaining influence in intercategory encounters. If so, it becomes likely that people from the categorical group with more of the factor (e.g., the richer group) will more often than not emerge as the most influential actors in encounters with people from the group with less of the factor (the poorer group). This causes the intercategory encounters taking place all across the population

to continually foster more status beliefs favoring the structurally advantaged group than favoring the other categorical group. As these beliefs spread through future encounters, beliefs favoring the structurally advantaged group will eventually overwhelm counterbeliefs and become nearly consensual in the population. Thus, the theory argues that if a factor that creates an influence advantage in encounters is unequally distributed between categorical groups, status beliefs favoring the structurally advantaged group will develop and spread to become widely shared in the population.

Although the theory frames its arguments in terms of the creation of new status beliefs, it also explains the maintenance of existing beliefs. If structural conditions described by the theory are currently present, such as an inequality in resources between categorical groups, then status construction processes will act to maintain status beliefs about the categorical difference, whether or not these processes played a role in the actual historical origins of these status beliefs. Thus, status construction processes can cause status beliefs based on race, gender, or other social differences to persist in contemporary societies even after the original historical causes of those status beliefs have disappeared.

### Supportive Evidence

Two types of evidence support these theoretical arguments. Computer simulations have shown that if encounters between socially different actors actually do create and spread status beliefs as the theory argues, then the development of nearly consensual status beliefs about the difference would indeed be a logical result of the structural conditions the theory posits. In addition to this logical support, experiments have examined whether people do form and spread status beliefs in encounters with different others.

These experiments have shown that people form clearly defined status beliefs about a previously unevaluated categorical difference from only two repeated encounters with members of the other category in which influence hierarchies developed that corresponded to actors' categorical difference. Participants formed beliefs favoring the categorical group that was consistently more influential in the encounters even when these beliefs

cast the participant's own group as lower status. Research has also demonstrated that the formation of status beliefs in these encounters turns on social validity, as the theory argues. When the apparent consensual acceptance of the influence hierarchies in these encounters was challenged by a participant, status beliefs did not form.

Additional experiments have shown that when the influence hierarchies in these intercategory encounters are biased by a structural factor, such as material resources, the beliefs that people form favor the resource-advantaged category, as predicted. Moreover, once people form status beliefs in encounters, they spontaneously treat the next person they encounter from the other category according to their new belief (although men do this more quickly than women do). Finally, there is evidence that, by treating someone in the situation according to the belief, people can spread their beliefs to others, creating a diffusion process that allows beliefs to spread widely.

*Cecilia L. Ridgeway*

*See also* Dominance Hierarchies; Group Structure; Power; Status; Status Characteristics/Expectation States Theory

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## STEPLADDER TECHNIQUE

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The *stepladder technique* is a structured procedure designed to facilitate effective group decision making. The goal is to ensure that the thoughts and ideas of all members are made available to the group so that they can be considered while the group is reaching a decision. The importance of this goal is underscored by research by Gary



Stasser, James Larson, and others indicating that groups frequently fail to consider relevant information and that this can seriously impair the quality of group decisions. This entry describes the technique and looks at research outcomes.

The stepladder technique was developed by Steven Rogelberg, Janet Barnes-Farrell, and Charles Lowe. It involves the sequential entry of members into a discussion group. The order in which members enter the group is randomly determined. At the first step, two of the group members (the core group) discuss the issue and reach a tentative understanding. Next, a third person joins the group and shares his or her thoughts with the members of the core group. This is followed by a discussion among the three members. Next, a fourth person joins the group, shares his or her thoughts, and additional group discussion ensues. This procedure continues until all group members have presented and discussed their ideas. At that point, the group reaches a final decision.

In addition to the sequential entry of members into the discussion, the technique involves other procedures. Group members are provided with the decision task and given time to think about it before group discussion. The discussion is structured so that each person added to the core group is required to state his or her thoughts before learning the ideas and preferences of the other members. As each member is added, the group is given adequate time for discussion. The final decision is not made until all members have provided their thoughts and the entire group has discussed the problem and potential solutions.

The stepladder technique was designed to overcome some of the more common sources of process losses in groups. Process losses are ineffective group processes that limit the effectiveness of groups. Process losses frequently occur in group discussions and often keep groups from performing as effectively as they potentially could. In decision-making groups, a few members may dominate the discussion while other members participate little or not at all. As demonstrated by Michael Diehl, Wolfgang Stroebe, and others, members may fail to participate because they can easily slack off on group projects, they feel their contributions are not needed, or they are shy or inhibited by other members. Often only a very few suggestions are considered before a group reaches

a decision. Once one suggestion begins to get support, this tends to inhibit other members from adding new suggestions. Group members may be reluctant to openly disagree with positions of high-status members. Thus, members may remain silent rather than offer alternative perspectives. Members frequently conform to the ideas of other members because they do not want to disagree openly or because they devalue their own ideas when they find that these ideas differ from the group consensus. The stepladder technique is an attempt to limit these problems.

The initial two-person discussion and the sequential addition of members who must share their thoughts and potential solutions with the other group members serve to ensure that all members participate in the group discussion. Members' expressing their ideas before hearing the opinions of others should lessen conformity pressures and result in a wider range of ideas and potential solutions. This feature not only increases the chances that a high-quality solution is proposed, but it also exposes any conflicting views that may exist. The consideration of opposing viewpoints within a cooperative framework can lead to more careful deliberation and a more refined solution. Thus, the stepladder technique offers an approach that can lead to a more complete use of member expertise and promises to improve the quality of group decision making.

### Research Evidence

Only a limited number of empirical studies have been conducted to evaluate the stepladder technique, but they indicate that the technique can lead to meaningful improvements in group decision performance. Groups using the stepladder technique reach decisions of higher quality than do groups using unstructured methods (in which all members work collectively to reach a decision). Moreover, the decision made by a stepladder group is likely to exceed the quality of the individual decision made by the best member of the group.

Some potential reasons the stepladder technique facilitates effective group decisions have been investigated. Compared with group members using unstructured methods, members of groups using the stepladder technique report positive climate effects

(e.g., less pressure to conform, better teamwork) and greater levels of effort. Although these factors may lead to decisions of higher quality, their impact on performance of stepladder groups has not been assessed. Evidence also suggests that the stepladder technique leads to more effective use of group members' expertise. In stepladder groups, but not in conventional groups, the most expert member is more likely than other members to report having ample opportunity to express his or her ideas. There is also evidence that the most expert member exerts the most influence on the group decision in stepladder groups, but not in conventional groups. Finally, in stepladder groups, but not in conventional groups, the performance of the best member is highly related to group decision quality. Although these factors may account for some of the improvements in decision effectiveness in stepladder groups, additional work is needed to understand when and why such groups are effective.

Despite the fact that, in stepladder groups, members of the core group participate in all discussions and other members enter later, these latter people do not experience the group less favorably or have less impact on group decisions. That is, members added later do not differ from those in the initial core in terms of influence, feelings of involvement, or cohesion. Finally, it is worth noting that, while the stepladder technique leads to more effective group decisions, there is some cost in terms of time. This time cost may be inconsequential in some cases, but the technique may not be appropriate when time demands are extreme.

Some efforts have been made to study the boundary conditions of the effectiveness of stepladder groups. For example, when the technique was first developed, the timing of entry of members into the group was controlled by the researcher. Later studies have indicated that the technique is also effective when group members themselves determine the timing of entry of new members. In addition, although the stepladder technique was initially used with face-to-face groups, recent studies have examined its utility with virtual groups (in which members are not located together but instead interact via electronic communication). Results indicate that the technique leads to more effective decisions for groups that communicate via a telephone conference call, but not for those in which members interact by sending computer-based text messages.

The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear, but they may be related to factors such as the quantity or distribution of communication, availability of paralinguistic cues, or members' feelings about the group—factors that may differ across the two types of virtual groups.

### Directions for Future Research

Additional research is needed on the boundary conditions for the effectiveness of stepladder groups. For example, all the studies to date have used a single type of task, the survival exercise. In this task, participants rank order items in terms of their utility for survival in an inhospitable environment, such as a remote area during severe winter conditions. Studies that examine the effectiveness of the technique across a variety of other tasks would therefore be useful. Another area in which additional work is needed involves group size. At present, all studies have used four-person groups. It is possible that the technique may prove too cumbersome and time-consuming for use with larger groups.

Studies to date have used laboratory groups in which members typically are unacquainted and there is no existing group structure. Because such groups are in some ways similar to project teams and virtual teams used in organizations, findings from laboratory studies may well generalize to these types of groups. It is less clear, however, how well the technique will work in intact teams in which members work together for long periods of time. One question concerns the willingness of members of intact teams to continue using the technique. Because of the persistence of norms and resistance to change in such groups, their members may revert to more traditional modes of group discussion once the intervention is over. An evaluation of the long-term use of the stepladder technique in intact work groups would therefore be worthwhile.

In summary, the stepladder technique is a very promising approach to group decision making. It seems to minimize a number of process problems that limit the effectiveness of conventional decision-making groups. However, additional work is needed to specify the conditions under which the technique is effective.

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*See also* Conformity; Delphi Technique; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Hidden Profile Task; Social Loafing

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## STEREOTYPE THREAT

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*Stereotype threat* occurs when people confront the possibility that their own behavior could confirm a negative stereotype about a group to which they belong. The fear associated with confirming an unwanted stereotype can prevent a person from performing up to his or her true potential, and when this occurs for many members of a stigmatized group, the average performance of the group is decreased, creating the appearance that the group lacks ability in that domain.

Stereotype threat research helps to explain long-observed gender and racial differences in performance, particularly in standardized testing. These persistent gaps in performance have fueled an ongoing controversy over whether race differences in IQ scores or sex differences in math performance are due to environmental factors, such as socioeconomic disadvantages or a history of biased socialization, or to biological factors, such as genetic, hormonal, or neurological differences that correlate with race or sex.

Stereotype threat enters this debate as a theory that takes a different approach. It argues that even if one could perfectly match students for their biological or environmental history, the mere knowledge of gender or racial stereotypes would create group differences in performance that give the appearance of group differences in ability. By pointing to situational factors that help produce these performance differences, stereotype threat offers a more optimistic account that lends itself to solutions. This entry will summarize when stereotype threat occurs, who is most susceptible, the psychological mechanisms by which performance is impaired, and how stereotype threat can be reduced.

### How and When Is Stereotype Threat Elicited?

Stereotype threat was first documented empirically by Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson in 1995. In one seminal study, Black college students performed worse than their White peers on a task that was described to them as a diagnostic measure of verbal ability, an effect that paralleled the race gap typically found on standardized tests. However, when the same task was described to a second half of the sample as a simple laboratory exercise and unrelated to intelligence, Black students performed significantly better on the task, and their performance was not significantly different from that of their White counterparts after their prior SAT scores were taken into account. This effect demonstrates that subtle situational cues can impair performance and exacerbate the appearance of group differences in ability.

Since the phenomenon was first identified, stereotype threat has been firmly established as an effect that can be created for any group in the right situation. Stereotype threat has been examined as a cause of women's underperformance in math, Latinos' underperformance on intellectual tests, and older adults' poorer memory performance. White men, a group that is not typically stigmatized, show lower performance on a math test when told that their ability will be compared with that of Asian men, a group stereotyped to be mathematically superior. Studies also show that Asian American women perform better on a math test when reminded of their Asian background but

perform worse when reminded of their gender. Again, this result shows that simple features of the situation, such as reminders of one's race or gender, can affect how one performs.

Stereotype threat has also been shown outside the classroom, in athletic performance. For example, White athletes do worse at a golf putting task when told that the task measures natural athletic ability (a trait White athletes are stereotyped to lack), whereas Black athletes do worse when told that the task measures sports intelligence (a trait Black athletes are stereotyped to lack).

In general, stereotype threat occurs when aspects of individuals' environment subtly remind them that their behavior in that context is relevant to negative stereotypes targeted against their group. These reminders of group stereotypes can be as simple as merely knowing that the task is diagnostic of an ability that one's group is stereotyped to lack. But stereotype threat can also be experienced after only a very simple reminder that one belongs to a stigmatized group. For example, being the only woman taking a math test, being asked to indicate one's race, or even watching stereotypical television commercials before a test have all been shown to impair performance. Finally, it is important to note the performance decrements are exhibited only on tasks that are complex or require the active manipulation of large amounts of information. If a task is relatively easy, one's motivation to disconfirm the stereotype leads to better overall performance, or *stereotype reactance*.

Recent theory suggests that stereotype threat is not a unitary phenomenon but instead can take multiple forms. For some, threat is created by a fear that they could confirm a stereotype in their own eyes, whereas others might be more concerned about confirming the stereotype held by other people, either those who are similarly stereotyped or those who are part of the non-stigmatized majority. In addition, the target of the threat can be either oneself or one's personal identity (I don't want to be seen stereotypically) or one's social identity (I don't want my group to be seen stereotypically). This conceptual analysis results in several distinct forms of stereotype threat, each with some unique properties, but all of which lead to underperformance compared with one's true ability.

### Who Is Most Susceptible to Stereotype Threat?

Several individual difference variables make some individuals more susceptible to stereotype threat effects on their performance. For example, although individuals need not endorse the stereotype to experience stereotype threat, research has shown that women who buy into gender stereotypes about men's superior math skills are more susceptible than other women to stereotype threat effects on their math performance. In addition, individuals who are most invested in doing well in a given domain are the ones who will be most susceptible to the threat that their performance could confirm a negative stereotype. Likewise, individuals who are strongly identified with their group, and perhaps have the most invested in maintaining a positive image of that social identity, also experience stereotype threat more strongly. It is not surprising that individuals high in stigma consciousness, those who are chronically aware of being viewed through the lens of stereotypes, are more susceptible than others to the effects of stereotype threat on their performance.

In addition to these factors that increase susceptibility to stereotype threat, several other individual difference variables related to more general coping abilities have been shown to moderate stereotype threat effects on performance. For example, situations of stereotype threat are thought to force individuals to consciously monitor their behavior with respect to the context. Thus, those who are already highly practiced at such self-monitoring processes are better able than others to cope with the effects of stereotype threat. In addition, having a sense of humor is generally associated with more successful coping, and research suggests that it also buffers individuals from the experience of stereotype threat. However, individuals with an internal locus of control, who are used to feeling that they have the ability to control their outcomes, do not fare as well in situations of stereotype threat.

### What Processes Underlie the Effects of Stereotype Threat on Performance?

Considerable progress has been made in identifying the physiological, affective, and cognitive processes that combine to explain why stereotype threat impairs performance. Situations of stereotype threat

elicit a physiological stress response. This heightened state of stress arousal is paired with greater vigilance to the situation in an effort to consciously monitor one's behavior for signs that one is confirming the stereotype. Because of this focus on detecting failure, individuals are more likely to interpret aspects of their experience, such as errors they make or even their own level of arousal, as indicating poor performance, leading to more negative thoughts and heightened feelings of anxiety. However, because they are especially threatened by feeling anxious when performing under the burden of negative stereotypes, individuals try to suppress or avoid these anxious thoughts and feelings.

Three of these elements—increased physiological stress, conscious monitoring of behavior, and active suppression of thoughts and feelings—are likely to cause impairments in working memory efficiency. Working memory refers to our ability to mentally manipulate information. It involves focusing attention on a central task while inhibiting irrelevant information or distractions, a skill that is central to performance on tasks such as reading comprehension, memorization, spatial rotation, and math calculations. Thus, situations of stereotype threat affect the same working memory resources often needed for successful performance on a range of mental tasks. Research also shows that stereotype threat impairs performance on well-learned motor tasks by increasing conscious attention to performing a sequence of physical behaviors, when relying on well-learned and automated muscle movements would lead to better performance.

### How Can Stereotype Threat Be Reduced?

Research into the basic parameters of stereotype threat has led to important discoveries of ways in which stereotype threat effects can be reduced. First, it is already clear that situations that minimize reminders of negative stereotypes diminish group differences in performance. For example, the race and gender gap in test performance decreases when a set of verbal or math problems is described as a laboratory exercise that is not diagnostic of any ability. However, in many testing contexts, it is hard to deny that one's performance will be interpreted as an indicator of inherent skill. If this alone can elicit stereotype threat, what other interventions can be employed?

Reducing reminders of group membership is another way to minimize stereotype threat effects on performance. In a recent reanalysis of a field experiment of students taking an advanced placement calculus exam, researchers found that having students indicate their gender after instead of just before the test led to a 33% reduction in the gender gap in test scores (although the same manipulation did not have a significant effect for minority test takers). An alternative to downplaying one's group membership is to highlight the existence of positive role models or group members who disconfirm the stereotype. Similarly, highlighting other positive characteristics of the group or one's own self-concept can also minimize the sting of the negative stereotype and lead to improved performance.

Whereas the above strategies reduce stereotype threat by counteracting negative features of the environment with the presence of more positive features, other interventions work to combat stereotype threat by changing how people think about the negative features that are present in the situation. For example, if stereotype threat occurs, in part, because people interpret their behavior in a more negative way, then manipulations designed to change those interpretations should reduce stereotype threat. Indeed, instructing individuals to interpret their anxiety in a more benign manner or as a normal part of the academic experience can circumvent some of the processes of emotion regulation that absorb cognitive resources and impair performance. In fact, research suggests that when individuals are taught about stereotype threat and the effects it can have in creating anxiety and impairing performance, they are more likely to report that their anxiety was caused by factors that are external to them and perform better as a result. Thus, educating people about the phenomenon could be a simple way of helping to combat its effects.

*Toni Schmader*

*See also* Collective Self; Gender and Behavior; Looking-Glass Self; Minority Coping Strategies; Minority Groups in Society; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Self-Stereotyping; Stereotyping; Stigma

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## STEREOTYPING

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*Stereotypes* are the characteristics that are believed to be true of a particular social group and its members. They are generally traits (Blacks are athletic; women are emotional) but can potentially include other attributes (\_\_\_ are likely to be lawyers; \_\_\_ are likely to be on welfare). Stereotypes may be positive in valence (Italians are romantic; Asians are good in math), but most are negative. Stereotypes represent the cognitive component of intergroup beliefs and are related to the affective component (prejudice) and the behavioral component (discrimination) of intergroup relations. Stereotypes often predict, and serve as a rationalization for, both prejudice and discrimination. As trait dimensions, stereotype beliefs fall into the basic dimensions used to judge people more generally. For instance, a large part of the variance in stereotype beliefs is captured by the important underlying dimensions of warmth and competence, and the beliefs about many social groups are captured by these two factors.

Stereotypes have been studied extensively by social psychologists, in part because they represent a form of person perception more generally, in part because they can be used to understand how social information is mentally encoded, represented, and activated, and in part because they have significant societal outcomes.

Stereotypes are held by individuals, but because there is general consensus on beliefs

across individuals in a culture or society, they can also be conceptualized as a cultural- or societal-level phenomenon. Stereotypes are part of the culture itself and are represented and expressed in the media, in everyday conversation, and in humor. Stereotypes are in large part social norms—they represent our underlying theories about the world of social groups and group relations—our cultural beliefs about the fundamental essence of social groups.

Stereotypes develop from the process of social categorization, which is the assignment of individuals to groups based on culturally important or otherwise salient characteristics. The most common categorizations, and thus the most common basis for stereotypes, arise from the categories of sex, race, age, and sexual orientation. When we categorize another person, we move away from individual person-based judgments to group-based judgments.

The application of a stereotype to a target person is known as *stereotyping*; it frequently occurs in an unconscious, automatic way, often without the knowledge of the person doing the stereotyping. Once developed, stereotypes become available in memory and highly cognitively accessible. They pop into mind easily and quickly when we encounter a member of the stereotyped group, and they are difficult to suppress. In fact, attempting to suppress stereotypes can make them even more highly accessible, leading to more stereotyping. The mere presence of a member of the particular social group is enough to activate the stereotype beliefs, and applying the activated beliefs—stereotyping—can inform social judgments and influence interactions between individuals in a pervasive way, on a daily basis.

### Outcomes of Stereotypes

Holding stereotypes and applying them to social judgments may in some cases be informative, functional, and mentally efficient, particularly if there is some truth to stereotypes. If stereotypes are in part accurate, then stereotyping increases one's ability to predict the behavior of others. Stereotyping may also be self-protective because in dangerous situations, one can make quick judgments about possible outgroup members who may pose a threat. These quick judgments are also mentally

efficient because they free up cognitive resources for other things. Instead of our evaluating each new individual as a unique person, stereotyping allows us to quickly retrieve and apply information about the new individual's group, thereby allowing a likely summary judgment of the individual himself or herself.

Stereotyping is more likely to occur when one has little motivation or capacity to individuate others or when one is tired, distracted, or cognitively busy. When we do not have much interest in the other or when we have power over the other, thinking about the other person as an individual (individuation) is not necessary, and instead we will rely on stereotypes. Alternatively, when we know the other well or when we are dependent on the other for outcomes, individuation is likely to occur without the use of stereotypes.

Stereotypes have important societal implications because they create a variety of social difficulties and problems for those who are stereotyped. For one, because stereotype beliefs are frequently overgeneralized, they have the potential to be unfair to those who are judged. Stereotypes may lead individuals to act as if characteristics believed to be true of a social group are true of every member of the group, when this cannot be the case. Not all members of the category possess the stereotyped characteristics, and assuming that they do—and particularly acting as if they do—is unfair to those who are categorized and stereotyped. Furthermore, stereotypes create anxiety and produce cognitive load during interactions. As a result, substantial effort on the part of those in interaction is required, which inhibits and reduces the quality of the social interaction.

Stereotypes also influence task performance. For instance, because Asian students are aware of the stereotype that Asians are good at math, reminding them of this fact before they take a difficult math test can improve their performance on the test. On the other hand, sometimes these beliefs are negative, and they create negative *self-fulfilling prophecies* (*stereotype threat*) such that one may perform more poorly due to knowledge about the stereotypes. Thinking about negative stereotypes that are relevant to a task that one is performing creates stereotype threat—performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes.

## Stereotypes as Mental Representations

Information that is encountered on a daily basis must be categorized and stored so that it is easily retrievable and can be used in future situations. At the individual level, social information about groups is stored in memory as cognitive representations of the groups, or stereotypes. In this sense, stereotypes allow one to make inferences about social targets, to “fill in the blanks” regarding information that is ambiguous or unknown about the social target, to interpret events that are uncertain, and to help encode new information about a social group. Several models have been used to understand the cognitive structure of stereotypes, how the social information contained stereotypes becomes activated, and how stereotypes are applied during social judgment.

Most broadly, stereotypes can be considered as schemas that contain a general set of information about a group. Individuals acquire this information through direct personal experience or through indirect cultural experiences. For instance, an individual may learn that Blacks have dark skin, or that immigrants speak English as a second language. These general characteristics will be stored in schemas about the groups and will subsequently inform the stereotypes of the groups.

Stereotypes have also been considered as *prototypes*, which are more specific group representations. They are developed through the integration of all attributes that are observed and learned about over time in many different contexts and social group members. Thus prototypes represent the average of group attributes and contain the most “typical” characteristics of the group. After multiple experiences with lawyers, one may consider the typical lawyer to be extroverted, hard-working, and argumentative. During encounters, lawyers will be judged on their “goodness-of-fit” with the prototypical lawyer, such that lawyers whose characteristics seem to be similar to those of the typical lawyer will be assimilated into the cognitive category *lawyer*, whereas lawyers whose characteristics appear to be less similar to those of the typical lawyer will be thought of as an exception and will not be assimilated into the cognitive category *lawyer*.

Within each group representation, there may be several specific exemplars that come to mind as

good examples of a social group. These exemplars are most likely memories of specific group members the individual has encountered. Exemplars allow the individual to store more detailed information about the social group that may not necessarily be represented by the averaging of group characteristics. For instance, when thinking of the group *politicians*, an individual may think of George Bush or Bill Clinton. Both exemplars are good category fits, but they are quite different from one another. In certain contexts, the individual characteristics of George Bush or Bill Clinton may provide useful additional information that would not be provided by simply thinking of the most typical characteristics of politicians.

These different models of the cognitive representation of stereotypes allow researchers to understand the various ways in which stereotypes develop, function, and change. Each of these conceptual approaches allows slightly different predictions to be made about the activation and application of stereotypes. It is important to remember, however, that although stereotypes are stored as cognitive representations, they are not entirely rigid. The particular categories that are activated, as well as the particular stereotypes that are applied, vary across social context and often depend on the individual's processing goals.

### Measuring Stereotypes and Stereotyping

Stereotypes are assessed through a variety of techniques. The most common approaches are self-report methods, which include thought listings, Likert-type scales (e.g., How true is this trait of the group?), and probability or percentage estimate measures (e.g., What proportion of the group possesses the trait?). However, because self-report methods are likely to be influenced by self-promotion demand characteristics, a variety of nonreactive, indirect, or unobtrusive measures have also been used. Methods that measure the specific words or characteristics that become activated after exposure to members of different categories have been used to assess group attitudes with more validity. A variety of reaction-time measures, including the Implicit Association Test (IAT), have also been used to assess associations between category labels and stereotypes of the category. Research using the IAT has shown that, based on

very large samples, most people associate stereotypes with many social groups. However, implicit measures of stereotyping such as the IAT are generally uncorrelated or only slightly correlated with responses on more explicit measures.

Recent developments in the field of social cognitive neuroscience have generated several techniques to measure neural activity in response to various social stimuli. *Functional magnetic resonance imaging* (fMRI) has become an increasingly valuable tool because it quickly produces precise images of specific brain structures. Other methods include using electrodes to measure *evoked potentials*, which are the changes in electrical activity immediately after exposure to particular stimuli. Research using neuroimaging methods has found that the medial prefrontal cortex responds to social stimuli in general. More specifically, the amygdala is an area of the brain that is involved with social categorization. In addition to becoming activated during emotional experiences, it becomes activated in response to outgroup members and social targets that are stereotyped as threatening. The anterior cingulate, a region of the brain that detects conflict, is activated when stereotypes are used, signaling the awareness of bias, and the lateral prefrontal cortex becomes activated when stereotypes are inhibited.

### Accuracy

It is generally assumed that stereotypes contain some kernel of truth, and most research suggests that this is the case, although some stereotypes are more accurate than others. There are observed correlations between stereotypes ascribed to outgroups and the traits that members of those groups ascribe to themselves, as well as correlations between perceptions of stereotypes and actual observed group behavior. However, it is difficult to determine whether group traits inform the stereotype or whether the stereotype informs group traits.

In some cases, stereotypes may reflect the average roles of different groups. For instance, the stereotypes that women are nurturant and that men are dominant may occur in part because, on average and across many cultures, men are more likely to have high-status occupations, such as doctor or lawyer, whereas women are more likely to



have low-status occupations, such as homemakers and child care workers. In this sense, the stereotypes are at least partly “true” for many of the members of the social categories, in terms of their actual behaviors in these roles. Consistent with this idea is the fact that stereotypes can change as a result of changes in social contexts. When individuals from a social group perform behaviors that are inconsistent with existing stereotypes, or are in different contexts, beliefs about the social group may change as well.

In many cases, however, behaviors of group members are also determined by the stereotypes of their group because stereotypes can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Expectations that outgroup members possess certain traits often lead to the perception and even the expression of the trait in the outgroup. For example, during a hiring process, if an interviewer expects a Black interviewee to be aggressive because of a stereotype about Black people, the interviewer may unintentionally phrase questions in a way that elicits aggressive responses, thus confirming the interviewer’s initial belief about the social group’s aggressiveness. Stereotype-based self-fulfilling prophecies are ubiquitous—even teachers’ expectations about their students can influence the students’ school performance

### Stereotype Development

At a basic level, individuals like similar others, perhaps because, over the long course of evolution, those who were similar were more likely to be helpful and benign, whereas those who were different were more likely to be threatening. Stereotypes are formed through a variety of cognitive and affective processes. As discussed earlier, stereotypes develop through the organization of social stimuli into various categories that contain both general and specific information about the social groups. In some cases, these categories develop out of relatively accurate perceptions of everyday behaviors, but in other cases, they develop from misperceptions of behaviors. These misperceptions can be driven by preexisting expectations or by processing errors. For instance, *distinctiveness-based illusory correlations* occur when a perceiver assumes a relationship between minorities and negative behaviors after exposure to one or

some minorities behaving negatively. Because of set size effects, infrequently performed and negative behaviors tend to be particularly salient. As both minorities and negative behaviors are infrequent and therefore salient, an individual may incorrectly perceive a relationship between them when they occur together. The result is that negative stereotypes easily develop about minority groups.

Individuals also learn useful social categories and stereotypes through social processes such as everyday discourse and exposure to the media, just as they learn any other social norm. Indeed, individually held stereotypes are generally very similar to the stereotypes held by others in the same social contexts. Individuals use stereotypes when they perceive, on the basis of social norms, that it is appropriate to do so, and they refrain from using stereotypes when it is perceived as inappropriate. Stereotyping is so normal and natural that children learn stereotypes as early as 3 or 4 years of age, and their stereotypes remain quite rigid until around the age of 10. There is only a small relationship between the stereotypes of children and those of their parents, however, possibly because children’s unique experiences with various social groups are more likely to inform the way they categorize social stimuli than are their parents’ attitudes.

### Stereotype Maintenance and Change

Because stereotyping and social categorization are basic human processes that provide some benefits for those who hold them, stereotypes are easy to develop but difficult to change. New, potentially contradictory information is discarded without influencing the existing category, whereas ambiguous information regarding the stereotype is frequently distorted to fit the existing beliefs. Furthermore, confirmation biases lead people to seek out information and ask questions about others in ways that confirm and thus reinforce their existing beliefs. Individuals pay less attention to, and are less likely to remember, information that disconfirms their existing stereotypes.

Although it is difficult, stereotype change is possible. One approach is to attempt to change the beliefs themselves. This is perhaps the most common approach, but perhaps also the most difficult,

because expectancies tend to support themselves in virtually every possible way. An alternative but related approach is to attempt to change the perceived variability of stereotyped groups such that the perceiver believes that the stereotypes, although perhaps true of some group members, are far from true for every group member and thus not very diagnostic for use in social judgment.

Changing beliefs occurs in part through education, as those with more education express fewer stereotypes, and in part through increased social interactions with outgroup members. Indeed, positive intergroup contact has been found to change stereotypes in many settings, including schools, work environments, the military, and businesses. However, this approach is not a panacea. Negative intergroup contact makes beliefs more resistant to change, whereas positive intergroup opportunities are limited, and the conditions required for positive contact situations are difficult to achieve.

Furthermore, contact with individual outgroup members, even if successful at the individual level, does not always change attitudes about the group as a whole. Beliefs about individual outgroup members change much more quickly than beliefs about outgroups as a whole because the individual outgroup members are *subtyped* into lower levels of group membership if they do not match expectations about the outgroup as a whole. Thus it is possible to know many individual outgroup members to whom stereotypes are not applied and yet nevertheless apply stereotypes to the outgroup as a whole. Generalization of stereotype-discrepant information to the whole outgroup is more likely when individual outgroup members behave in ways that confirm some existing stereotypes and yet disconfirm others such that, because the individual does seem representative of the group on some dimensions, the stereotype-discrepant information is more difficult to ignore.

There are several different approaches to changing beliefs that avoid the issue of generalization. One successful approach that has created long-term changes is to convince individuals that their prejudiced beliefs are nonnormative and that others do not hold stereotypes. Another approach is to allow the beliefs to remain intact but help people avoid applying them to individuals, thus preventing the stereotyping process. This approach is also difficult because stereotyping is very well

practiced and because it often occurs out of awareness and is difficult to stop. However, some social situations, including repeated practice in denying one's beliefs, awareness of one's moral hypocrisy when one stereotypes, and the presence of positive, stereotype-disconfirming exemplars, reduce the extent to which individuals apply stereotypes to outgroup members.

Stereotyping may also be reduced by changing social categorization processes such that outgroup members are recategorized as part of the ingroup. This recategorization process allows the members of different groups to be able to perceive themselves as members of a common group, to see each other as more similar, and to make friends with each other. Through fostering perceptions of shared identities, encouraging meaningful contact that defies group boundaries, and highlighting similarities on dimensions unrelated to group distinctions, the ingroup and an outgroup can begin to reduce negative beliefs and promote positive ones.

Finally, on a macro level, legal remedies can be successful in decreasing the use of stereotypes. When individuals are forced to individuate rather than categorize, learning about others as individuals may completely overwhelm the influence that their group membership would previously have had. Over long periods of time, legal remedies can also help change social climates so that stereotyping becomes less socially acceptable and so that increased opportunities for some social groups change social roles so that some stereotypes inevitably become obsolete.

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*See also* Categorization; Children: Stereotypes and Prejudice; Common Ingroup Identity Model; Illusory Correlation; Implicit Association Test (IAT); Intergroup Contact Theory; Perceived Group Variability; Prejudice; Self-Fulfilling Prophecy; Stereotype Threat; Subtyping

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## STIGMA

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Stigma refers to a characteristic or attribute that is associated with negative generalized inferences about the bearer. Psychological research on stigma often has focused on race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, obesity, and disability. However, there is no definitive list of what does or does not constitute a stigma, only the idea that stigma involves a characteristic that is devalued across most social contexts. In addition, the characteristics that mark individuals' identities as undesirable vary across time and place.

The term *stigma* can be traced back to the Greeks, who cut or burned individuals' bodies to "brand" them as traitors, criminals, or other social misfits. In the classic Greek sense, stigmas referred to actual physical marks inscribed on the bodies of devalued members of society as visible indicators that they should be avoided or treated unfavorably. Sociologist Erving Goffman's classic 1963 monograph, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of*

*Spoiled Identity*, is widely credited with introducing the concept of stigma to the social sciences. Goffman extended the notion of stigma to other, less obvious signs that might still designate the bearer as spoiled, flawed, and less than fully human in the eyes of other society members. He distinguished three types of stigma: "abominations of the body" (e.g., physical deformities), "blemishes of individual character" (e.g., mental disorders, addictions), and "tribal identities" (e.g., race, religion).

Much of the research on stigma in psychology focuses on the perspective of the stigmatizer. In contrast, research in sociology often focuses on the target's experience. This entry first describes the ways in which stigma has been conceptualized and classified. It then summarizes key research findings with regard to (a) the perspective of the stigmatizer (why individuals stigmatize others), (b) the perspective of the target (the consequences of being stigmatized), and (c) characteristics of social interactions between stigmatizer and target.

### Conceptualizations and Classifications of Stigma

Recent psychological definitions of stigma have emphasized three fundamental components: (1) recognition of a person's difference from others based on some distinguishing characteristic or mark, (2) consequent devaluation of the person, and (3) subsequent (de)valuation of the person across most contexts. Typically, a stigmatized identity activates negative stereotypes and interpersonal rejection and ultimately produces social discrimination and economic disadvantage. As such, stigma is a more encompassing construct than deviance, prejudice, or discrimination, involving perceptions of societal-level deviance (a negative status) and elements of prejudice (negative attitudes and impressions of worth) and discrimination.

One aspect of most definitions of stigma is an acknowledgment of its dynamic nature, or the fact that it is embedded and evolving within social interactions and contexts. Hence what is deemed a stigma by one stigmatizer and target may not be viewed as such by others at a different time or in another place. For instance, White women, particularly those holding a strong ideology of blame, stigmatize obesity, whereas Black women do not. In addition, a stigma (e.g., homosexuality) may be

activated in one setting (e.g., a Southern Baptist church) but not in another (a San Francisco bookstore), and some environments (e.g., buildings without elevators) may increase the salience of a stigma (e.g., certain physical disabilities) in ways that other environments do not. Thus, researchers often argue that societal-level stigmas involve those characteristics that are devalued across most contexts.

Researchers have classified how stigmas differ from each other. In one influential typology, E. E. Jones and his colleagues identified six such dimensions on which stigmas may vary: (1) concealability (whether a stigmatizing condition can be hidden from others), (2) course (the extent to which the condition changes over time), (3) disruptiveness (the extent to which the condition interferes with social interactions), (4) aesthetic qualities (the extent to which the condition makes the individual ugly to others), (5) origin (the extent to which the individual is responsible for the stigmatizing condition), and (6) peril (the extent to which the condition poses a danger to others). In subsequent empirical investigations, concealability, origin (controllability), and peril have emerged as most important in determining attitudes toward stigmas. The reason that peril has this effect is perhaps obvious, but concealability and origin deserve discussion.

The visibility (concealability) of a stigma has been argued to be one of the most important dimensions of stigma because if the stigma is visible, perceivers are more likely to view the individual primarily in terms of the stigma rather than as a whole person who may have some undesirable characteristics. Visible stigmas include race, gender, obesity, and many physical disabilities. Concealable stigmas include sexual orientation, religion, physical disabilities that are early in their course (e.g., cancer, AIDS), and histories of psychiatric disorders, drug abuse, or criminal background. Visible stigmas are often more damaging because individuals with such stigmas cannot hide their stigmatized identity to avoid the prejudice and harassment that their stigma may engender. However, individuals with concealable stigmas may become consumed by efforts to keep the stigma hidden and may lose the ability to make social comparisons with and receive social support from similar others.

The origin (controllability) of a stigma has been shown to influence outcomes significantly. For example, those who perceive homosexuality or obesity as an individual choice are more likely to stigmatize than are those who attribute such conditions to biological causes beyond an individual's control. Furthermore, physical disabilities caused by an accident are stigmatized more when the target was the cause of the accident (e.g., was driving drunk) than when another party was the cause (e.g., the target was hit by a drunk driver). When there is ambiguity as to the cause, evidence suggests that stigmatized individuals can reduce negative treatment by using environmental cues that signal an external cause for their stigma (i.e., an obese woman will be treated more positively if she carries a diet soda and discusses her exercise regimen than if she carries a fattening beverage and discusses her lack of desire to exercise).

### Why Stigmatize?

While the particular conditions that are stigmatized will vary dramatically between societies, social stigma of some form is universal. The universality of stigma would seem to suggest that stigmatizing others serves some functional value to the individuals who stigmatize. Two broad reasons that stigmatization occurs involve (1) justification processes and (2) protective functions.

Justification processes focus on legitimizing the unequal societal and economic statuses of different groups (system justification theory) or of different individuals (belief in a just world). Under *system justification theory*, individuals from groups of higher status stigmatize groups of lower status in order to make their advantaged, privileged status seem fair. Research in the United States has shown that individuals who strongly endorse the belief that individuals who work hard will succeed in society are more likely to stigmatize economically disadvantaged groups.

Negative attitudes toward different disadvantaged groups tend to be related. For instance, those who believe being overweight results from a lack of willpower also tend to believe that the poor are responsible for their own poverty. In a similar way, belief in a just world, or the view that people get what they deserve, may serve to legitimate stigmatization of individuals in poverty or low-status positions.

Protective functions of rejecting stigmatized people are postulated by both sociobiological theory and the more culturally driven *terror management theory*. According to the former theory, evolutionary evidence suggests that interdependent group (societal) living was adaptive for human survival and gene transmission. Therefore, humans stigmatize others who are seen as unable (e.g., individuals with disabilities) or unwilling (e.g., individuals of outgroup ethnicities or religions) to contribute to the ingroup. Terror management theory posits that humans experience existential anxiety over their own inevitable mortality and their inability to prevent a premature and unexpected death. To buffer against this anxiety, individuals subscribe to a cultural worldview that imposes order and meaning on an otherwise random and senseless world. According to this framework, individuals with physical disabilities or deformities are stigmatized because they remind us that we might possibly experience suffering and will inevitably experience death. Terror management theory also suggests that individuals who deviate from societal norms for reasons unrelated to physical impairment (e.g., religion, cultural background) are stigmatized because their difference makes salient the lack of a social consensus regarding one's worldview. That is, the existence of discrepant worldviews makes the dominant worldview seem arbitrary and calls into question one's standards for judging what is true and valuable. Research has shown that reminding individuals of their own death makes them more rejecting of several groups that violate dominant cultural norms, including prostitutes, those who express views against their country, and outgroup members generally.

### Consequences of Stigma

In general, stigmatized individuals are aware that their identity is seen negatively in society, with this awareness well established by adolescence. This consciousness has been shown across groups as disparate as ethnic minorities; women; people who are mentally, developmentally, or visually impaired; overweight individuals; and gay men and lesbians. One might assume that, because groups are aware of their stigmatized status, the self-esteem of stigmatized group members would be lower than that

of nonstigmatized group members. Yet for many stigmatized groups this is untrue. For example, Blacks do not have lower self-esteem than Whites. However, overweight individuals and gay men and lesbians do tend to have lower self-esteem than their respective counterparts.

One possible reason for this discrepancy concerns the relationship between group identification and self-esteem, which is typically positive. Because ethnic and religious minorities often identify strongly with their groups, their self-esteem would be expected to be relatively high. However, individuals with physical or mental disabilities may not identify with their groups, because they do not wish to identify with others on the basis of what society considers a "limiting" condition. Moreover, some gay men and lesbians may not identify with their groups (at least across contexts) because they wish to remain "closeted."

### Marred Interactions

Essential to understanding stigma is clarifying what happens in interactions between stigmatized and nonstigmatized people. Although there is relatively little research on this question, some interesting findings have emerged. For example, in interacting with stigmatized targets, nonstigmatized individuals often show a mismatch between their verbal and nonverbal behavior. A classic study showed that when participants interviewed a physically disabled applicant, they took more time deciding what questions to ask, terminated the interview sooner, and stayed farther away from the applicant than when they interviewed a nondisabled applicant. At the same time, however, participants were more likely to distort their personal opinions in a direction consistent with those thought to be held by the disabled applicant and were more likely to report positive impressions of the disabled applicant, compared with the nondisabled applicant.

As another example, White individuals have been shown to make verbal attempts to appear nondiscriminatory and helpful to Black interactants, even though their nonverbal behaviors are often discriminatory and unhelpful. One explanation for this mismatch is that the White individuals focused the majority of their attention on their verbal behaviors, which are easier to monitor and

control than are nonverbal behaviors. However, and perhaps because of this difference in controllability, stigmatized targets are more likely to attend to nonverbal than to verbal behaviors of their nonstigmatized partners.

Certainly, nonstigmatized people are responsible for many of the behaviors they emit in the presence of stigmatized targets. This has been clearly shown in studies in which targets are unaware of their stigma (e.g., when they are unknowingly labeled as “gay” by words printed on their baseball cap) and hence could not have elicited the behaviors they receive. However, in some cases targets’ awareness of their stigmatized status (and their resulting behaviors) can influence others’ behavior toward them. For example, there is evidence that being aware that one will be stigmatized leads targets to alter their behavior in ways that worsen discrimination against them. A series of experimental studies has shown that targets led to believe that perceivers viewed them as mentally ill (even though perceivers were actually unaware of their mental health status) received more rejection than did targets who were not led to hold that belief. Beliefs about potentially being stigmatized may also lead targets to exhibit performance deficits, a phenomenon known as *stereotype threat*.

In some cases, stigmatized individuals behave in ways designed to elicit favorable treatment from nonstigmatized others. For instance, research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s showed that women’s behavior became more consistent with traditional gender roles in interactions with sexist men. Women who expected to interact with a male job interviewer with sexist attitudes (compared with expecting to interact with a nonsexist man) expressed more traditional gender role attitudes and arrived wearing more makeup and accessories. Furthermore, studies have shown that when overweight women were led to believe that their interaction partner was aware of their stigma (i.e., because he could see them), they behaved in a more friendly fashion than when they did not think he was aware.

### Remediation

Additional research has documented strategies that stigmatized targets may adopt if they wish to decrease discrimination. Chief among these is to

verbally acknowledge the stigma (“As you can see, I use a wheelchair”). Studies have shown that such acknowledgment can increase the favorability of nonstigmatized people’s attitudes and behaviors toward those with stigmas such as physical disability, obesity, and stuttering—provided that the stigma is visible. Acknowledgment may work because it causes potential stigmatizers to assume that someone who acknowledges his or her stigma will attribute any negative behavior on their part to discrimination.

A good deal of work on remediation of stigmatization has been based on the *contact hypothesis*, which assumes that reducing prejudice between groups is best achieved by bringing them together in structured situations. In a recent meta-analysis of more than 500 studies on the contact hypothesis, it was found that increased contact between stigmatized and nonstigmatized people was associated with decreased prejudice on the part of nonstigmatized people.

Bringing nonstigmatized and stigmatized people into interaction can be difficult, because nonstigmatized people often avoid interaction with stigmatized people and vice versa. However, the two groups tend to make different attributions for this state of affairs, typically blaming the other group. For instance, research on race relations shows that both Black and White individuals believe that their ingroup wants to have more contact with the outgroup than the outgroup wants to have with them. Yet in some situations, contact is inevitable (e.g., random assignment of first-year college roommates), and in such cases there is evidence that one person’s positive interaction with members of another group can cause others to follow suit. For instance, when Black and White students were shown a dining hall scenario in which members of the two groups sat separately, their reported fear of race-based rejection was reduced when they imagined that their best friend enjoyed socializing with the outgroup members. Thus, there is evidence that, in some cases, intergroup relations can be improved by the behavior of individuals.

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*See also* Ageism; Anti-Semitism; Deviance; Discrimination; Homophobia; Prejudice; Racism; Sexism; Weightism

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## SUBJECTIVE GROUP DYNAMICS

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*Subjective group dynamics* arise when people respond to deviant individuals within groups in a context involving comparisons between their ingroup and an outgroup. People spend a lot of time in small groups such as teams, committees, work groups, and social groups of friends. Social psychology shows that the opinions held by other people within such groups can easily affect the way members make judgments and decisions, how well they perform tasks, and how they form attitudes and opinions. The dynamics within these groups can have powerful effects on the way people share resources, who they vote for or against, and what choices they make. But these dynamics change when the groups are being compared with other groups.

### Background

Research on subjective group dynamics has its roots in several areas of sociology and social

psychology. In sociology, Emile Durkheim theorized that *deviance* is an important part of the way society defines its norms and rules. If people did not break rules, and if others did not enforce rules, it would be difficult to know exactly where the boundaries and guidelines for behavior were. Social psychologists such as Muzafer Sherif, Solomon Asch, and Leon Festinger showed that people make judgments, even about physical stimuli, using the opinions of others as reference points. Reaching agreement about the physical and social world allows people to feel confident about the validity of their judgments. Research on small groups has consistently shown that people who dissent within a group are liable to be marginalized, criticized, and ultimately ignored.

Much of the emphasis in research until the 1980s was on how individuals influenced one another or how people within a specific small group could influence one another. An alternative general perspective was offered by Henri Tajfel's *social identity* approach, which made the important point that people are motivated to ensure that their groups are distinctive from other groups and that they are evaluated positively relative to other groups. This desire to have a positive social identity means that people may face a problem when they discover deviant members of their groups because those members potentially reduce the extent to which all members fit in the same social category. Criticism or derogation of an ingroup member might imply criticism of the whole group, and this would damage social identity.

### The Black Sheep Effect

José Marques, Vincent Yzerbyt, and Jacques-Philippe Leyens examined this question by asking Belgian students to evaluate either Belgian or North African students who showed either likable or unlikable behavior. The students were more negative to the unlikable ingroup (Belgian) students than to unlikable outgroup (North African) students, but more positive to the likable ingroup than to likable outgroup students. The more extreme derogation of an ingroup deviant (compared with ingroup normative members) than of an outgroup deviant (relative to outgroup normative members) is known as the *black sheep effect*.

Experiments investigating how people evaluate group members in intergroup situations (i.e., when their own and another group are being compared, are competing, or are in conflict) have repeatedly shown a black sheep effect. These experiments typically ask people to evaluate members of their own group or members of another group. Most of these members conform to the norm of their respective group, whereas one or a small minority deviates from the norm. The groups in these experiments are sometimes real groups, such as same-gender groups, psychology students, or people from a particular country or region. In other experiments the groups are *minimal groups* that the participants learn they belong to after taking a test.

The black sheep effect is important because it shows that people do not simply evaluate ingroup members more positively than outgroup members. Instead, people pay close attention to differences among individuals within their own and other groups. Their evaluations of these individuals are a vehicle for establishing the extent to which the norms of each group are valued more highly.

### Subjective Group Dynamics

Marques, Dario Páez, and Dominic Abrams proposed a model of subjective group dynamics. A key aspect of the model is that if people are motivated to differentiate between groups (intergroup differentiation), this differentiation may be accompanied by careful differentiation among people within those groups. In fact, when people detect a deviant, people who care more about the differences between groups are more likely to differentiate among people within groups too. So the black sheep effect is a way in which people sustain the subjective validity of positive intergroup differentiation. This principle of subjective group dynamics contrasts strongly with traditional theories about social categorization, which hold that the more that people perceive differences between groups, the less they perceive differences within those groups.

Marques and colleagues theorized that there should be several factors that would affect how much people differentiate deviants from other members and how strong the black sheep effect is. First, the effect is likely only when particular types

of norms are violated. Robert Cialdini distinguished between descriptive and prescriptive norms. Descriptively, men are taller than women and speak with deeper voices, but some men are shorter or have higher voices than most women. Prescriptively, hotels have washrooms that are designated for use by men and women. Only men should use those designated for men. The subjective group dynamics model argues that some norms are prescriptively relevant for social identity, and it is when these prescriptive norms are transgressed that members react strongly to the deviant. When intergroup differences are salient, deviant group members elicit a prescriptive focus that is psychologically equivalent to pressures to uniformity that arise in face-to-face groups. People are motivated to establish validity for ingroup norms, and they do this psychologically by disapproving of ingroup deviants.

It follows that subjective group dynamics should be affected by the relevance or salience of that norm. One experiment reduced the black sheep effect by having participants focus only on the individual people without emphasizing the groups to which they belonged. Another experiment increased the effect by making it clear to participants that the norm was important for the group. When adults and children believe their evaluations will be seen by other ingroup members, they respond more extremely to deviant group members, presumably because they want to be seen to have upheld the norm.

A number of studies with adults and with children show that subjective group dynamics are also affected by how strongly people identify with their group. People who identify more with their group also derogate ingroup deviants more strongly, and derogating deviants can also reinforce a positive image of their group as a whole and strengthen their ingroup identity.

Subjective group dynamics are thought to occur because people care about the validity of their positive evaluation of the ingroup compared with outgroups. One consequence is that people may be much more concerned about a deviant opinion if the ingroup's consensus is not very clear. Experiments have shown that people are more tolerant of a deviant member who strongly disagrees with others when the others hold an identical opinion than when some hold



the opinion more strongly than others do. Similarly, the black sheep effect is weaker when the status of an ingroup is clearly better than an outgroup's than when there is uncertainty about the status differences.

Derogation of deviant members does not necessarily mean that people want to expel those members. For example, they may try to persuade deviants to shift position (conform) or try to resocialize them to be more committed group members. In addition, some deviant members may be tolerated because they contribute to the groups in other ways. For example, Dominic Abrams, Georgina Randsley de Moura, and colleagues showed that deviant members who are about to take on a leadership role are derogated less than deviants who are nonleaders, ex-leaders, or current leaders.

The developmental bases of subjective group dynamics have recently been investigated. A series of studies by Dominic Abrams, Adam Rutland, and colleagues asked children to evaluate ingroup and outgroup members (from teams, schools, or national categories). The members either showed complete loyalty to their group or showed positive but divided loyalty to both the ingroup and outgroup. Younger children (below the age of about 7 years) generally preferred ingroup members over outgroup members, whereas older children paid closer attention to whether the members showed loyalty to the ingroup. Older children were more likely to evaluate disloyal outgroup members positively and disloyal ingroup members negatively. Older children's evaluations of the group members were associated with how they expected peers to evaluate those members. Children who were better at taking different social perspectives and children who had belonged to a larger number of different social groups were more likely to anticipate that ingroup and outgroups would react differently to deviant members of each group. These findings suggest that subjective group dynamics have a basis in both cognitive ability, such as *perspective taking* and *categorization*, and in social experience, such as being in face-to-face groups.

*Dominic Abrams*

*See also* Black Sheep Effect; Deviance; Norms; Opinion Deviance; Ostracism; Social Identity Theory

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## SUBTYPING

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The term *subtyping* refers to creating narrower, more specific mental categories, such as businesswoman or homemaker, within a broader social category, such as women. For example, common elderly subtypes include kind grandmothers, frequent travelers, and curmudgeons. Forming subtypes within a broad category provides more differentiated expectations and evaluations about group members but can also protect an existing general stereotype from exceptions that disconfirm it.

The term *subtyping* has been used in slightly different ways in two research streams. The first shows that as people become familiar with a group, they perceive distinctions and create multiple subtypes of members who are similar to each

other in ways that differentiate them from other members, thus capturing the variability within a group. In this entry, *subtyping* refers to this form of subcategory formation. The second stream of research shows that people protect an existing general stereotype by relegating counterstereotypic members to an exceptions-to-the-rule subtype seen as unrepresentative of a group. The term *exception subtyping* refers to this type of subcategory formation. For example, a White manager might preserve his stereotype that Black males are unsuccessful by relegating highly admired Black males, such as Barack Obama, Colin Powell, or Tiger Woods, to an “exceptional Black professionals” subtype that he views as atypical, keeping his general stereotype intact.

Research on subtyping is important for understanding (a) the nature of social categorization; (b) how people differentiate social categories into subtypes as they become more familiar with varied group members; (c) how people form exception subtypes to accommodate group members who disconfirm their stereotypes, making stereotypes hard to change; and (d) how to develop strategies for reducing stereotype bias and improving intergroup relations. These topics are discussed in this entry.

### The Nature of Subtypes in Social Categorization

Building on basic categorization research, Marilyn Brewer, Shelley Taylor, and colleagues showed that people categorize others in terms of subtypes rather than exclusively in terms of broad social categories. Gender, age, and ethnicity are major bases for social categorization, providing visually prominent and socially important cues. Research has identified common subtypes within each of these broad categories. For example, people perceive female subtypes such as businesswomen, homemakers, and feminists; younger people perceive elderly subtypes such as grandmothers, elder statesmen, and inactive seniors; and Whites perceive Black subtypes such as activists, athletes, and streetwise Blacks. Some subtypes cut across ingroup–outgroup boundaries, which can reduce intergroup bias by narrowing the perceived gap between ingroups and outgroups. For example, for a White executive, a Black executives subtype is a racial outgroup but an occupational ingroup.

The features associated with a subtype may overlap or differ from those of the broader category. *Warmth* and *competence* are two primary dimensions that often differentiate subtypes. For example, like the broader category of women, the homemaker subtype is seen as high in warmth but low in competence, whereas the businesswoman subtype is seen as high in competence but low in warmth. Some subtypes are more strongly associated with the broader category than others (e.g., businesswomen and homemakers are both strongly associated with the category of women). Emotions toward a category (such as poor people) may differ by subtype (poor-but-honest elicits pity, but poor-and-exploiting elicits contempt). Subtypes and their features can be inaccurate, can be based on socially prescribed roles, and can be formed by and influence behavior toward individual members without our conscious intent or awareness.

### Greater Familiarity Leads to More Differentiated Subtypes

One stream of subtyping research asks, What leads people to perceive more differentiated subtypes within a category? First, forming subtypes can be socially useful because subtypes provide richer descriptive information about potential group members, enabling people to make distinctions that reflect the variability within broad categories. Suppose you are meeting a female president of a corporation. Having a female-executives subtype provides a more differentiated and potentially useful basis for anticipating her behavior than would relying on a general stereotype for women.

Two other factors also influence subtype formation: familiarity and ingroup-versus-outgroup status. Patricia Linville, Gregory Fischer, and colleagues showed that those with greater familiarity and experience with a group develop more subtypes reflecting greater differentiation and variability among group members. For example, among both college students and the elderly, those with more contact with the other age group perceived more subtypes, more variability, and more complex subtypes involving a mix of positive and negative characteristics (e.g., older frequent travelers are active but complaining, jocks are athletic but not intellectual, nerds are smart but unsociable). Similarly, White students with Black friends

perceived more as well as more complex Black student subtypes than did White students without Black friends, and people with more years of business experience perceived more complex business subtypes (e.g., fast-trackers, visionary leaders, number-crunchers). People are usually more familiar with their ingroups. As this suggests, both young and older people perceived more as well as more complex subtypes for their age ingroup. Charles Judd, Bernadette Park, and colleagues also found that students perceived more ingroup subtypes (e.g., in their own fraternities and college majors), resulting in greater perceived ingroup variability.

### Exception Subtyping: A Barrier to Stereotype Change

A second stream of subtyping research demonstrates that people use subtyping to protect their stereotypes against disconfirming information. By relegating counterstereotypic individuals to exceptions-to-the-rule subtypes, we can discount them as unrepresentative of the group and avoid revising our general stereotype. For example, subtyping 75-year-old Boston Marathon runners as exceptional older athletes preserves one's general stereotype that the elderly are fragile and inactive.

A classic experiment by Renee Weber and Jennifer Crocker compared three models of how people respond to counterstereotypic information: Do people change their stereotype dramatically after a few powerful disconfirming instances (*conversion*), change gradually with accumulating evidence (*bookkeeping*), or avoid change by isolating discrepant instances as atypical exceptions (subtyping)? People read behavioral descriptions of group members that were either consistent or inconsistent with an overall group stereotype. Stereotype change was greater when stereotype-inconsistent behaviors were dispersed over many group members than when the same number of inconsistent behaviors was concentrated in a few members. This favors exception subtyping because concentrating counterstereotypic information in a few highly atypical members allows one to relegate them to an exceptions subtype and discount them as unrepresentative of the larger group.

Bernadette Park, Charles Judd, Myron Rothbart, and colleagues showed that information-processing goals influence how subtypes are formed. After

reading a general description of a group and behavioral descriptions of individual members, people received instructions to encourage either subgrouping (sorting individuals into groups of members who are similar in some way and different from other members), or exception subtyping (sorting individuals into those who fit with the group and those who do not). People receiving exception-subtyping instructions perceived less variability and made more stereotypic judgments about the group as a whole.

Because exception subtyping is an obstacle to stereotype change, it is important to know what conditions promote it. Research shows that exception subtyping is more likely when counterstereotypic information is concentrated in a few members rather than dispersed over many; when counterstereotypic individuals are perceived as highly atypical of the group; when the perceiver's goal is to judge members as fitting or not fitting the group; and when counterstereotypic members share some common characteristic that helps explain their departure from the general stereotype. Suppose John meets several accountants who go rock climbing, violating his stereotype that accountants are risk averse. It is easier for John to relegate these rock-climbing accountants to an exception subtype if they are few in number, atypical of his accountant stereotype in other respects (e.g., disorganized), and all come from Colorado, a commonality that helps explain why they rock climb.

### Implications for Counteracting Stereotype Bias and Improving Intergroup Relations

Differentiating multiple subtypes within a group leads people to perceive greater variability among group members, which counteracts stereotypic thinking. On the other hand, exception subtyping discounts counterstereotypic group members, which preserves existing stereotypes. Fortunately, our growing understanding of exception subtyping suggests strategies for preventing it and thus promoting stereotype change. To be effective, intergroup contact should (a) provide exposure to a variety of group members in a variety of contexts, (b) provide exposure to stereotype-inconsistent information that is associated with otherwise typical members and is widely distributed across many

members rather than concentrated in a few, and (c) create opportunities for forming subtypes that cut across ingroups and outgroups, thus narrowing the gap between them. Such situations may allow the cognitive and social benefits of subtype categorization while overcoming the costs of stereotyping.

*Patricia W. Linville and Gregory W. Fischer*

*See also* Categorization; Cross-Categorization; Ethnicity; Outgroup Homogeneity Effect; Perceived Group Variability; Prejudice; Racism; Stereotyping

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## SUCKER EFFECT

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The *sucker effect* is a type of group motivation loss or social loafing effect—an instance in which a person works less hard as a member of group than as a comparable individual performer. The sucker effect occurs when people perceive that they are doing more than their fair share of the group's work; one way to reduce the injustice of such a situation is to reduce their own level of effort.

For example, suppose you are working on a three-person lab project in your chemistry course. Suppose that you see that you are doing much more of the work on the project than your two lab partners. If everyone in the group receives the same grade based on the quality of the final lab report, your extra work will not result in your receiving a higher grade than your partners do. Under such conditions, you may well feel exploited by your partners, or, in more colloquial terms, that you are “playing the sucker.” You may well reason, “If my partners are not willing to do their fair share of the group's work, then neither will I,” and therefore you will lower your own level of effort to match theirs.

### Conceptual and Empirical Origins of the Sucker Effect

The sucker effect was first demonstrated experimentally in a study by Norbert Kerr in 1983. Experimental participants were first asked to do their best at a fatiguing physical task—pumping as much air as they could in 30 seconds with a small rubber bulb. They received feedback indicating that they had done well, succeeding on every one of four practice trials. Participants in an individual-control condition then did nine more trials. They received 25 cents for every trial on which they succeeded; the criterion for success was their lowest practice trial score.

Other participants also performed the task for nine more trials, but they were told that they would work in a two-person team. The air-pumping task would have disjunctive demands—that is, the group would succeed on a trial as long as either member of the dyad succeeded. When the group succeeded on a trial, each member of the dyad would receive 25 cents. In the experimental condition that interests us most, participants were told that their partner was nearly as capable as they were (the partner had succeeded on three of the four practice trials). During the following nine trials, the participants in this condition received accurate feedback on their own performance, but they received bogus feedback on their partner's performance. Specifically, after an initial success on Trial 1, their partner failed on every subsequent trial. When confronted with a capable partner who appeared to be slacking off and letting them do the group's work—yet who was getting the same cash

reward—the participants reduced their efforts (relative to the individual controls). Even when such reductions in effort meant they would not earn as much money, participants appeared to prefer such failure to the inequity of “playing the sucker” and carrying a lazy partner.

Subsequent research has shown that there are reliable individual differences in the magnitude of this effect (e.g., males show a larger effect than females; those who believe that people ought to be rewarded equitably for their work or that hard work is a virtue show a larger effect than those who do not).

There is often a close parallel between the dilemma facing group members when deciding how hard to work and when confronting *social dilemmas*. The latter are situations in which an uncooperative choice appears more desirable from the individual member’s perspective, yet everyone in the group would be better off making a different, cooperative choice. Many real-world situations pose such social dilemmas (e.g., choosing between using a lot or a little water during a drought).

A simple experimental game, the *prisoner’s dilemma game*, is often used to study behavior in such situations. The sucker effect derives its name from the name of one of the outcomes of the prisoner’s dilemma game—one receives the smallest, sucker’s payoff when one makes a cooperative choice at the same time one’s partner makes an uncooperative choice (and receives a large payoff). Unsurprisingly, much research on social dilemmas shows that group members will not long accept receiving the sucker’s payoff—if their partner will not cooperate, neither will they. Similarly, the sucker effect shows that group members will not long accept acting cooperatively (working hard on the group’s behalf) so that their uncooperative (and lazy) fellow group members can reap the rewards of group success without doing their fair share of the group’s work.

Of course, it can sometimes be hard to define just what a fair share is. Does fairness require that every group member do the same work, regardless of their capabilities? We usually would not expect someone who was not as capable to perform at the same level as someone who was very capable; rather, we would make allowances for differences in group member ability. This was demonstrated in the 1983 experiment discussed earlier.

In another condition of that study, participants were told that their dyad partner was not very capable (namely, that their partner had succeeded on only one of the four initial practice trials). These participants then received the same performance feedback as those in the sucker condition—that is, their partner succeeded on Trial 1, and then failed on every trial thereafter. However, participants did not reduce their effort significantly in this condition. People appear willing to carry the load for a group member who cannot do so (i.e., who is doing the best he or she can), but not for a group member who can but will not do so (i.e., who is just lazy).

It is also important to remember that reducing one’s own effort is not the only possible way to deal with an unfair group work load. For example, one might reduce the quality of one’s work (rather than the quantity), one might subjectively exaggerate one’s rewards (I work harder, but I enjoy the work more), or one might simply leave the group.

### The Sucker Effect and Other Group Motivation Phenomena

The sucker effect may be contrasted with two closely related group motivation loss effects. The first is *free riding*. Free riding occurs when you believe that you can enjoy the rewards of group success without working hard. For example, in another condition of the 1983 study, participants were led to believe that their capable partner was succeeding on every trial. Because they could apparently get the cash payoff without working hard, they too reduced their efforts, free riding on their hard-working partners. The tables were turned, though, in the sucker condition—the participants were led to suspect that their partners were free riding on their efforts, and the unfairness of the situation led them to match the low effort of their partners.

Sometimes, however, one will do more than one’s share, even if doing so is seen as unfair. Research on the social compensation effect has shown that if the payoff for group success is sufficiently high, and there is no other way of ensuring the group’s success except to work exceptionally hard, group members will (reluctantly) do so. So, to return to our earlier example of the three-person lab group, suppose that you are a premedical

student and that your grade in your chemistry course will be very important in your application to medical school. Further, suppose your two lab partners are taking the course as an elective and their only concern is getting a passing grade. Under such conditions, the only way you may be able to ensure the high grade you desire in the course is to compensate for the low effort of your partners—that is, to do not only your share of the lab assignments, but your partners' shares, too.

The sucker effect shows that, unless there are compelling reasons to do so, people are reluctant to contribute more than what seems to be their fair share of the group's work. This illustrates that choosing how hard to work in a group is more than a simple calculation of personal costs and benefits. It also involves considerations of social fairness and justice.

*Norbert L. Kerr*

*See also* Free Riding; Group Motivation; Prisoner's Dilemma; Justice; Social Compensation; Social Dilemmas; Social Loafing

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## SUPPORT GROUPS

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When people experience traumas, crises, or catastrophes, when they encounter medical or interpersonal difficulties that they cannot cope with by themselves, or if they simply need to find a sympathetic audience who will listen to their problems, they often turn to support groups: groups of

people who meet to exchange social support about a problem or situation that they all have experienced. Support groups, which are also known as *self-help groups*, exist for nearly every major medical, psychological, or stress-related problem. Each one is likely to be unique in some respects, but most such groups are practical in focus and interpersonal in method, for they usually strive to provide members with both emotional support and useful information. Support groups are usually organized and regulated by the members themselves, yet members often report benefits from participation that rival the gains of members of more formal and traditional treatment methods.

### Features of Support Groups

In times of trouble, such as illness, divorce, loss, or crisis, people tend to join with others rather than cope alone. During their first semester in college, students may seek out social networks of peers and friends as they deal with new and stressful experiences. When people first learn they are suffering from some serious illness, they often turn to friends and family members for information, advice, and a sympathetic audience. When people feel stressed and burned out by work-related pressures, they often cope by joining gripe sessions with coworkers.

Families, friends, and professional caregivers such as physicians and therapists are excellent sources of help and information in stressful, difficult circumstances, but some individuals' social networks may be too worn, too fragile, or too inexperienced to provide them with the solace they require. Sometimes, too, individuals may not wish to reveal their problems and their needs to their intimates and would prefer to unburden themselves with others who are knowledgeable but more objective and therefore less likely to judge them harshly.

Support groups are based on this natural tendency to seek reassurance and help through membership in a group. The most fundamental feature of such groups is reflected in their name: They support group members as they cope with their specific problem or illness, as well as other difficulties that can be traced back to their basic problem. Given the pragmatic orientation of self-help groups, much of this support takes the form of direct

advice about the problem. More experienced members of the group may provide information, directions, advice, and suggestions regarding treatment or palliatives, demonstrate how to carry out the procedures recommended by medical authorities, or give general interpretations about symptoms that are often misunderstood or clear up uncertainties about remedies. But support groups also provide emotional support to members. They may encourage members to persevere and praise them for each achievement related to their problem. They allow members to express their fears and misgivings and so provide a receptive audience that responds positively rather than judgmentally. They respond to members in an emotionally positive and motivating way, rather than dispassionately or negatively. Support groups include the individual within the boundaries of the group, and this basic inclusion process minimizes new members' worries, tensions, and loneliness while increasing their sense of self-worth and efficacy.

How do support groups help their members, given that they usually have no formally designated leaders, no professionally trained staff, and no facility or budget? Although no two groups adopt identical procedures and structures, the hallmarks of a support group approach include focusing on a specific problem, encouraging members to form personal relations with one another, and stressing mutuality in helping. Support groups are also likely to remain independent of other sources of support that the members might be receiving, and they usually adopt an overarching perspective or worldview that provides a context for understanding the problem the group is designed to redress. These typical features of support groups are examined in more detail in the rest of this entry.

### *Support for a Specific Problem*

Support group members may differ from one another in terms of age, sex, race, and wealth, but they share one important similarity: They are all coping with the same kind of problem. Unlike general therapeutic groups or social groups, support groups usually deal with one specific type of medical, psychological, stress-related, or social problem. So long as the population of an area is sufficiently large, support groups form for people diagnosed with physical illnesses such as heart

disease and AIDS; individuals who care for those suffering chronic disease, illness, and disability; those who are addicted to alcohol or other substances; people who are grieving for someone lost to death; individuals struggling to cope with a major life change, such as unemployment, divorce, or retirement; and individuals advocating for social and political change.

Support groups are, therefore, usually communities of similar sufferers. Members are all alike in terms of their experiences and needs, and so they are peers who are all "in the same boat." This common qualification not only increases the credibility of others in group but also reduces each member's sense of uniqueness and victimization. Lone individuals may blame themselves for their problem or feel that they have been unfairly singled out to suffer, but once surrounded by others who are similarly afflicted, they realize that their feelings and experiences are relatively common ones.

### *Relationships*

Support groups tend to be personally and interpersonally involving. Even though individuals' identities are often masked within such groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous), members nonetheless establish personal relationships with one another. Members are expected to engage in relatively high levels of self-disclosure, so that each person's unique experiences, background, and personal qualities are known by others in the group. Because this exchange of personal information is mutual, members learn to trust and rely on one another. Members are also expected to be respectful of one another and their needs and to treat people fairly. Yet because support groups take a very personal interest in their members, members are singled out for praise and commendation when they succeed in some way, but also criticized and urged to change if they fail.

### *Communalism*

Most support groups develop a strong sense of community and sharing within the group. Each member of the group is valued as a member of the community and is cared for by the group in a personal way. Like most groups, support groups develop a degree of structure in which some members tend to be more influential than others. In

support groups, however, status is based on experience with the problem rather than other socially valued individual qualities such as educational background, wealth, or ethnicity. Most support groups include veteran individuals who have knowledge and experience with both the problem and the means of dealing with the problem, and these individuals serve as role models for others. It is expected, however, that the exchange of help among members will be mutual. Members of the group draw support and encouragement from the group, and they are expected to provide support and encouragement to others within the group. Each person, then, is both a provider and a recipient of help and support.

### *Autonomy*

Most support groups are self-governing, with members rather than experts or mental health professionals determining activities. A physician in consultation with a patient suffering from a chronic illness, a psychologist seeing a client suffering from substance abuse and addiction, or a social worker helping a grieving family cope with the loss of a child may direct individuals to join a support group that is maintained by a hospital or community social service agency. But in most cases, support groups are autonomous groups that set their own standards and practices. Some local groups may be aligned with national organizations that mandate specific procedures for all their chapters, but even this standardization does not eliminate the emphasis on the local group's control of its methods.

Because support groups are autonomous, they often operate outside of, and even in opposition to, traditional health care delivery systems. People have long turned to groups for support in times of trouble, but the number of such groups and their diversity increased during the late 1960s and 1970s. The political and social changes of that era prompted people to question more openly the wisdom of traditional methods of treatment and to seek alternatives. Support groups provide this alternative, for members are qualified as experts not by training but by common experience, and because they receive no compensation for the success of their intervention, they can be trusted to share information openly. Support groups, then,

are sometimes viewed as a radical alternative to health care systems that are considered to be bureaucratic, impersonal, and ineffective.

### *Perspective*

Support groups' independence from more traditional approaches is also manifested in their adoption of a novel perspective with regards to their problem domain. A grief group may adopt fervently a particular model of the stages of grieving and base its interventions and recommendations on that perspective. A support group for alcoholics may maintain that recovery is never permanent, and so one must abstain from all forms of alcohol to overcome the addiction. A group for parents of children with severe immune-system deficiencies may recommend using novel methods of treatment that are rarely recognized as therapeutic by professionals. These perspectives may not be complex, nor are they always explicitly recognized by members, but in many cases the group's perspective on its affliction may become the centerpiece of the group's discussions, with new members urged to adopt the group's worldview as a means of coping effectively with the problem.

### **Varieties of Support Groups**

Because support groups tend to operate alongside traditional health care organizations and are coordinated by volunteers rather than professionals, statistics on their number and popularity are incomplete. Even conservative estimates, however, indicate that the number of support groups is increasing rapidly, with as many as 10 million currently operating in the United States alone. A representative sample would include groups that focus on mental and physical health (including weight loss and rehabilitation), family and life-transition support, advocacy, and addiction and recovery.

### *Mental and Physical Health Groups*

Individuals dealing with mental and physical health issues, including psychological disorders, physical illness, and recovery from injury, generally require the services of professionals to diagnose the source of their problems and carry out treatment. Support groups, however, can supplement the



traditional services rendered by the health care community. In the supportive environment of a group of peers, members can learn about the procedures they must endure from people who have themselves experienced the procedures. Because members can remain in the group as long as they find it to be of value, such groups are well suited for problems that involve long-term recovery and adjustment, such as cancer, amputations, and stroke. Examples of such groups include the Cancer Aftercare and Rehabilitation Society, the National Peer Network of the Amputee Coalition of America, and Recovery, Inc. (a self-help mental health group).

One relatively common type of support group focuses on helping members achieve a change in their health-related behaviors such as food intake. Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), for example, is a worldwide organization that facilitates the formation of local clubs whose members are seeking ways to control their weight. TOPS meetings involve a private weigh-in, presentations designed to provide information about weight control, and supportive interaction that serves to motivate members to follow recommended dietary restrictions.

#### *Family and Life Transition Support*

Many of the difficulties people face in their lives are traumatic and stressful, yet they are not typically considered to be the kinds of problems that require the intervention of a health care professional. An individual who is divorcing, for example, may experience a range of negative psychological reactions to the experience, and by seeking out others who are going through this life transition, the individual may cope more effectively. Similarly, bereavement and grief groups help people adjust to the death of a family member or friend and adjust to life after the loss. Support groups can also help a family deal with a particular type of chronic problem, as when a family member is diagnosed with AIDS; an older family member begins to display symptoms of Alzheimer's; or a parent must learn to help a child with a learning disability, physical limitation, or psychological disorder. Examples include In Touch, for parents of children with mental handicaps; Parents Without Partners; and the Alzheimer's Disease Support and Information Group.

#### *Advocacy*

A number of support groups mix commitment to a specific social issue with support provided to individuals who are pursuing social change. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals may, for example, meet regularly to share information or discuss experiences of unfair treatment and ways to secure the privileges they are due as citizens (e.g., the Gay Activists' Alliance). Mothers Against Drunk Driving is a political movement, but it also provides support for members who have lost family members in automobile accidents involving alcohol.

#### *Addictions*

A number of support groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous, and Gamblers Anonymous, help members gain control over intemperate behaviors and maladaptive dependencies. Many of these groups help members work through various aspects of their addiction by following the 12-step program developed initially by Bill Wilson, the founder of AA. Wilson, a confirmed alcoholic, relapsed many times before he had a profound, mystical experience that forced him to recognize his own powerlessness over his alcoholism but also his oneness with the universe. After his experience, he worked closely with members of the Oxford Group, a group that was oriented toward spiritual growth and that stressed the importance of self-understanding, recognition of one's character flaws, acceptance of responsibility for one's wrongdoings, and restoration of harmony in one's relationships with others. Integrating his own experiences with the practices of that group, Wilson developed a group-based procedure aimed at alcoholics.

AA is a support group in which members give one another advice, encouragement, help, and guidance as they struggle with abstinence. AA makes use of peer influence, mediated through face-to-face interactions, structured group sessions, and testimonials by group members to help new members learn and assimilate the group's approach to controlling their drinking. AA recommends a series of stages, or steps, to take in dealing with addiction, and that general approach has been adopted by a number of other anti-addiction groups. These steps recommend

admitting one's powerlessness over alcohol; surrendering one's fate to a greater power; taking an inventory of personal strengths, weaknesses, and moral failings; and helping others fight their addiction. The AA philosophy considers alcoholism to be an illness that can never be cured, so the only solution is complete abstinence from alcohol consumption. Members are known to one another only by their first names in order to emphasize that they are all equals in the quest to remain sober. Even though AA is now an international organization and is more elaborately structured than most support groups, change is still achieved through local chapters of alcoholics who meet regularly to review their success in maintaining their sobriety.

### *Online Support Groups*

Support groups, by tradition, meet face to face at designated locations, usually following a regular schedule and agenda. Increasingly, however, individuals have begun using the Internet as a means of meeting their needs for social and informational support. Some support groups use the Internet primarily to post information about the particular problem they address, as well as to refer interested individuals to local meetings. Others, however, create virtual support groups with members communicating with each other via e-mail, message boards, forums, and real-time chat protocols. No matter what problem an individual faces, an online group that can provide self-care information, support, and referral services likely exists somewhere on the Internet.

### **Advantages and Limitations**

Many practicing professionals are uncertain of the value of support groups because they are unregulated and unsupervised. Because their membership changes over time, their procedures and results tend to be variable—very advantageous when the group includes individuals who are committed, experienced, and helpful but less effective when the attendance fluctuates and the preconditions for social support are not met. In some cases, too, groups may actually add to members' level of stress by stirring up conflicts, increasing responsibilities, and exposing members to criticism. Because

the groups may rely on personal experiences and assumptions rather than on research to guide their recommendations, they may provide members with misinformation.

Overall, however, support groups are more frequently therapeutic than harmful. Support groups are quite cost-effective because they do not require salaried personnel and members usually pay very little for the services they provide. Groups may charge dues or small fees to cover basic operating costs, but these charges are minimal compared with other treatment procedures. In addition, research suggests that while the consequences of participation are difficult to document, individuals who take part in such groups generally report that they gain substantially from the experience. AA, for example, is generally rated by members as the most effective treatment they have experienced for dealing with a drinking problem, even in comparison with more medically sophisticated interventions. Although the benefits of participation in a support group do not emerge in all studies, many find that people who become committed members of a cohesive, well-organized group of peers experience fewer of the physical and psychological effects of stress and report overall gains in life-satisfaction and mental health.

*Donelson R. Forsyth*

*See also* Common-Identity/Common-Bond Groups; Computer-Mediated Communication; Families; Group Cohesiveness; Identification and Commitment; Sensitivity Training Groups; Social Networks; Therapy Groups

### **Further Readings**

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## SURVEY METHODS

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Survey research is a type of field research that involves the use of a questionnaire to collect information from a sample of respondents. When the sample of survey respondents has been carefully selected, information collected from the sample can be used to draw inferences about the larger population from which the sample was drawn. The power of survey research, therefore, lies in the precision and efficiency with which the characteristics and attributes of a large population can be estimated via a set of measures collected from a small, scientifically selected subset of the population. The set of techniques that survey researchers use to gather data is known as survey methods. This entry examines some key elements underlying the validity and usefulness of surveys: survey design, sampling, response rate, questionnaire design, survey modes, and evaluation issues.

### Survey Design

Surveys may take a variety of forms, depending on the aims of the research. Most surveys can be categorized as cross-sectional, repeated cross-sectional, or panel surveys. And across these basic designs, some surveys incorporate experimental manipulations into their design.

The most common design is a *cross-sectional survey*, in which data are collected from a sample of respondents at one point in time. Cross-sectional surveys offer a “snapshot” of the population, revealing the currently prevailing opinions, preferences, or other characteristics.

Instead of a static glimpse of a population, researchers may be interested in capturing over-time dynamics. In such cases, researchers sometimes turn to a *repeated cross-sectional survey* design. In repeated cross-sectional surveys, the same questionnaire is administered at two or more points in time to independent samples drawn from the same population. Such surveys provide information about aggregate-level shifts over time. For example, survey researchers periodically ask representative samples of U.S. adults about their approval of the way the nation’s president is handling his job. By comparing responses to this question across time, survey researchers can track

systematic trends in overall presidential approval and identify associations between historical or social events and approval ratings.

Of course, repeated cross-sectional surveys can detect changes only at the aggregate level. In the case of presidential approval, for example, cross-sectional surveys will detect change only if, on average, individuals’ approval ratings changed in the same direction. If subsets of the population changed in opposite directions (e.g., Democrats became more disapproving while Republicans became more approving to equal degrees), these changes would cancel out at the aggregate.

To more precisely capture the dynamics within a population, survey researchers sometimes turn to *panel survey* designs. Panel surveys (also referred to as *longitudinal surveys*) involve the collection of data from the same participants at several points in time. Panel surveys provide information about individual-level change, enabling researchers to go beyond overall levels of change to explore rates of change among subsets of respondents, among other things.

Cross-sectional, repeated cross-sectional, and panel surveys can all provide important information about the attributes of a population and associations among these attributes. And with the use of sophisticated statistical procedures, researchers can use survey data to test hypotheses about the causal relations among variables. For stronger causal inferences, however, survey researchers have increasingly begun to embed experimental manipulations into surveys. By randomly assigning survey respondents to different versions of a questionnaire, researchers can more directly test causal hypotheses.

For example, scholars interested in the impact of race on social policy judgments have sometimes presented survey respondents with a hypothetical scenario involving a potential recipient of public assistance, and they have experimentally manipulated the race of the recipient (and in some cases other characteristics as well). By comparing respondents’ support for public assistance for the target individual across experimental conditions, scholars can draw inferences about the impact of race or other factors on policy judgments. And they can examine the magnitude of these effects across various subgroups within their sample, exploring the possibility that race or other characteristics of

a target have a larger impact on support for public assistance for some respondents than for others. This approach enables researchers to combine the unique strengths of survey research with the well-established advantages of laboratory experimentation, yielding powerful tests of causal processes.

### Sampling

We have suggested that the strength of survey research lies in the ability to draw inferences about a large population based on information collected from a small subset of the population. The validity of these inferences, however, depends critically on the process by which the subset of survey respondents is selected. Sampling refers to this process.

At the most general level, there are two types of sampling procedures: *probability sampling* and *nonprobability sampling*. Probability sampling involves selecting respondents from the population at random such that every member of the population has an opportunity to potentially be included in the sample. In the simplest case, every member of the population would have an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample. When a sample has been selected from the population through the use of probability sampling techniques, survey researchers can be confident that their sample is representative of the larger population from which the sample was drawn. Further, they can use statistical procedures to estimate just how precisely their sample represents the larger population (sometimes referred to as a *margin of error*).

Nonprobability sampling procedures are those in which members of a survey sample are not drawn randomly from the population. For example, some surveys are conducted on an *opt-in* basis whereby individuals choose to take part in a survey by calling a toll-free number to voice their opinion on an issue or by following a link on a Web page to complete a questionnaire on a particular topic. Other surveys are conducted with *samples of convenience*. Shoppers at a particular store might be approached and asked to complete a brief questionnaire, for example, or people may be stopped on the street and asked for their opinion on a particular topic. When samples have been selected in these ways, they cannot be assumed to be representative of any particular population. As a result, it is extremely unwise to generalize the

results of such surveys beyond the particular individuals who took part in the survey.

### Response Rate

Probability sampling procedures are necessary to ensure representative samples, but they are not sufficient for doing so. Even when probability sampling procedures have been carefully implemented, not all the individuals selected for inclusion in the sample will agree to participate in a survey. The proportion of selected members of a sample who actually take part in the survey is referred to as the *response rate*.

If a survey has used a probability sampling technique and has a high response rate, we can be confident that the sample of survey participants is representative of the larger population from which it was drawn. But as the response rate drops, there is an increasing chance that the subset of people who participated in the survey were different in meaningful ways from those who refused to do so. For example, those who participated in the survey may have been especially interested in the topic, or they may have had especially extreme attitudes that they wished to express. To the extent that people who refuse to participate in a survey differ systematically from those who agree to participate, *sample representativeness* is compromised. For this reason, a high response rate is desirable.

### Questionnaire Design

The results of a survey can vary dramatically with changes in question format, question wording, and question order. When one is conducting or interpreting a survey, therefore, one must pay careful attention to these design elements.

Survey questions fall into two broad categories: *open-ended* and *closed-ended* questions. An open-ended question allows respondents to answer in their own words, and as a result, questions of this sort can capture the richness and complexity of people's views. Because the responses are idiosyncratic, however, it can be difficult to compare open-ended responses across individuals or groups. Quantifying responses for analysis requires researchers to develop and implement a *content coding scheme*, a process that can be time-consuming and labor intensive. Open-ended questions also take

more time and effort for respondents to answer, potentially contributing to respondent fatigue.

Much more common in survey research are closed-ended questions, which require participants to select their response from a set of predetermined answers. For example, survey respondents are routinely asked to identify the most important issue facing the country and are provided with a list of response options from which to choose (e.g., the economy, health care, education, crime, the environment).

Although they offer many advantages, closed-ended questions have their drawbacks as well. Most obviously, responses will be powerfully influenced by the response options that are presented, which can yield a distorted portrait of public opinion. For example, closed-ended questions about the most important problem facing the country can obscure the importance of issues that are not explicitly offered as response options. In addition, participants may be influenced by the order in which responses are provided (with the first and the last options being more likely than middle options to be selected).

Regardless of whether they are posed in an open- or a closed-ended format, all survey questions must be worded clearly so that the precise meaning of each question is understood in the same way by all respondents. Vague or ambiguous question wording can result in poor data quality, which makes it difficult to tell whether different responses reflect substantive differences across participants or are instead due to differences in participants' interpretation of the question. To maximize clarity, questions should use simple language and avoid technical terms whenever possible.

Researchers and consumers of survey research should also be wary of *double-barreled questions*—questions that ask two or more questions at the same time. Consider the question, Do you think that parents and teachers should teach middle school students about birth control options? Although it is framed as a single yes-or-no question, it in fact comprises two questions (should parents teach middle school students about birth control options, and should teachers do so). Because respondents are required to answer two questions with a single response, double-barreled questions are inherently ambiguous.

Finally, the particular words that are used in a survey question can sometimes affect responses. For example, substituting the phrase *assistance for the poor* for the more politically charged term *welfare* dramatically increases public support for assistance programs. And individuals are much more likely to say that a controversial behavior should *not be allowed* than to say that this same behavior should be *forbidden*. Thus, seemingly equivalent question wordings can sometime elicit quite different responses. It is not always possible to anticipate the impact of particular wording choices, but careful attention should be paid to the precise language of survey questions and response options.

The order in which participants encounter the questions in a survey can also influence their answers. Questions that come early in a survey may bias the way respondents answer later questions. For example, if respondents are asked to report their gender before they are asked to report their attitudes toward feminism, they may answer the feminism questions differently than they would if asked to report gender later in the survey. When interpreting survey data, therefore, it is important to consider the answers to each question in the context of the entire survey.

### Survey Modes

Survey mode refers to the means by which data are collected from respondents. Some surveys are conducted via *face-to-face interviews*, during which a trained interviewer records an individual's answers on a paper questionnaire or a laptop computer. Other surveys are conducted over the *telephone*. This typically involves questionnaires that are administered by trained interviewers with the help of computer-assisted telephone interviewing software, which guides the interviewer through the correct series of questions and allows him or her to enter participants' responses into the computer. Still other surveys are conducted via *self-administered questionnaires*, which respondents complete on their own using a paper-and-pencil format, on laptops, or over the Internet.

A good survey will use a mode that is appropriate to respondents' literacy and computer skills. For example, self-administered surveys are best suited to populations that are comfortable reading

and following written instructions. The optimal mode of data collection also depends on the content of the survey. When a survey asks about sensitive topics, self-administered questionnaires are often preferable because they provide respondents with a greater sense of privacy, which may make them more comfortable about providing candid responses.

### Evaluating Survey Data

Surveys are very common, and their quality varies markedly. When one is evaluating survey data, it is wise to consider the who, what, and how of the research methodology. Answers to *who* questions will be related to sampling: Who participated in the study? Who are the researchers trying to draw inferences about? The validity of these inferences rests on the degree to which the sample is representative of the larger population from which it was drawn, so it is important to consider the potential threats to representativeness.

Answers to *what* questions will center on the content of the survey, including the types of questions asked, the precise ways in which the questions were worded, and the order in which questions were posed to respondents. As we have seen, these design features can powerfully shape the results of a survey.

Answers to *how* questions will concern various procedural details. Were the survey design and mode of data collection appropriate, given the aims of the research, the population being studied, and the topic of the survey? What conclusions are being drawn about causal relationships, and are they justified by the survey's design? Careful attention to these basic methodological elements will help ensure that appropriate inferences are drawn from the survey data that we encounter every day.

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*See also* Experimentation; Research Methods and Issues

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## SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

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*Symbolic interactionism* is a sociological perspective that views human conduct as a meaningful product of situated social interaction among self-conscious individuals. The perspective is rooted in the philosophy of *pragmatism*, especially as it was developed by George Herbert Mead, who taught at the University of Chicago in the early 20th century, and whose student, Herbert Blumer, named the perspective *symbolic interactionism*. This research seeks to portray social behavior from the perspective of participants by closely studying the concrete situations in which they form what is labeled "conduct." Symbolic interactionists examine how people define situations and act on the basis of those definitions, as well as how the self is shaped by group membership and by the real and imagined boundaries between groups. Symbolic interactionists have investigated such topics as race and ethnic group relations, the formation of subcultures, life in communities and urban neighborhoods, and collective behavior. To understand this perspective, we must examine the nature of meaning, the situated formation of conduct, the self, and the method of participant observation.

### The Nature of Meaning

Symbolic interactionists believe that human beings are symbolic creatures for whom linguistic symbols are the principal basis for constructing, experiencing, and acting meaningfully in their worlds. A *symbol* is anything—a word, an image, a gesture—that stands for something else. National flags

symbolize patriotic attitudes and feelings; certain hand gestures or facial expressions signify the user's contempt or disdain for another; derogatory words for outgroup members serve to demarcate and attach emotional significance to boundaries between "them" and "us." Symbols shared by the members of a society, a community, or a group have a critical characteristic: They arouse shared responses in members. The person who invokes a symbol responds to it with thoughts, feelings, and actions that resemble those of others who see or hear it. Symbols thus prepare people to take action: An announcement in a public place that a fire has broken out arouses in all who are present the motivation to escape; derogatory words lay a shared basis for thoughts and feelings and ultimately actions toward others.

Meaning is a social and not merely an individual phenomenon. It is the individual, of course, who learns and uses the meanings provided by the language of his or her community. Yet to use a word is to bring into public view a part of the individual's state of mind at a particular time. To speak of *fire*, for example, is to indicate to others that one believes there is danger and is prepared to act on it, that the others should define the situation and act in a similar way, and that collectively they are seeking escape or rescue from a dangerous situation. To invoke a racial or ethnic stereotype in a conversation is to invite the other to view the member of a racial or ethnic outgroup in the same way as the speaker, and implicitly (though not necessarily immediately) to act toward the outgroup member on the basis of that attitude. Meanings thus shape both the individual's conduct and that of others. Each culture embraces a variety of meanings and thus influences conduct in a variety of directions—altruism as well as selfishness, cooperation as well as conflict, tolerance of outsiders as well as hatred for them.

### Situated Conduct

Human conduct is situated. People form their conduct as they interact with others, use and hear symbols, define the situation in which they find themselves, and construct lines of conduct for themselves and influence the conduct of others. Conduct cannot be explained merely by pointing to a set of "variables" with which particular forms

of behavior are statistically associated. Such variables—whether they are demographic characteristics such as age, education, place of residence, group membership, or personal attitudes and beliefs as expressed in interviews or questionnaires—provide only an imperfect glimpse of the genesis of conduct. To explain why some members of an outgroup engage in a riot and others do not, or why some ingroup members seem to expect and to provoke such behavior, we must examine the situation as it unfolds.

We gain some understanding of the events by learning whether riot participants are more likely to be young or old or economically advantaged or disadvantaged, but the conduct of individuals arises in a situation and not simply and reflexively out of circumstances and characteristics they share with others. What events occurred to spark a riot? How were those events defined? Who did the defining? How did battles with the police or looting of stores become seen as legitimate responses to previous discrimination, and who saw them that way?

Likewise, to grasp how the attitudes and actions of one group toward another become more positive over time, we must examine the concrete situations in which the members of one social group interact with those of another. What are the situations that bring ingroup and outgroup members together, and what happens in their interaction that transforms attitudes and behavior?

### The Self

Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the self-conscious nature of human conduct. The symbolic nature of the human species is the chief basis for the human experience of self. Humans live in a world of named objects and are capable of acting toward themselves as objects, much as they act toward any object. Individuals have names, just as other objects—houses, chairs, cars—have names. To name something—whether it is a new Lexus or a newborn infant that is called by such relational names as *son* or *daughter*, as well as by an individual name, *Jacob*—is to assign it a place in the social world and to invoke shared ways of acting toward it. A new luxury car invokes shared ideas about social standing or wealth; a new infant invokes shared ideas about how girls and boys

should be treated or about an ancestral Jacob, whose qualities it is hoped will be shared by his namesake. Cars do not hear or use their names, but people do. Jacob learns his name, and along with it, as socialization proceeds, he learns his “meaning” in the eyes of others. He learns the attitudes they hold, the expectations they have of him, the ways they are prepared to act toward him. In thus becoming an object he can himself name, think about, develop feelings about, and act toward, he acquires a self.

The self is an important object in every human encounter or action. This is not to say that humans are motivated by any single goal such as a quest for self-esteem. *Self-esteem*, which we may define as a person’s emotional responses to self, is an important facet of human existence, but it is a part of a complex of thoughts, feelings, and actions toward the self rather than the most important motivation for conduct. Rather, to make the self central to human conduct and social interaction is to say that in forming their conduct, people take themselves into account as a part of the situation in which they find themselves. They imagine how they appear to others and how their impending actions will affect how others see them. About to utter an ethnic slur, an individual may reflect on whether it will lead others to view him or her less favorably, and perhaps as a defensive strategy, the individual may disclaim any prejudiced intent even while making a prejudiced remark. Plans of action are constrained by the individual’s view of his or her capabilities and limitations: Why work hard in school if it is likely I won’t be rewarded for the effort or if I am unlikely to succeed? And when individuals find themselves defined in ways they do not like as a result of their actions, they seek to repair damage to the conceptions others have of them by excusing or justifying their conduct.

### Identity

The concept of identity is central to the symbolic interactionist analysis of the self and is particularly important for the study of intergroup relations. *Identity* refers to the individual’s location in social life, and it is established by the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others as well as those of the individual. A person has an identity—as a parent or a child, as a Black or a White, as a Roman Catholic

or a Lutheran, as a friend or an enemy, as brilliant or intellectually slow—when the individual’s announcements of identity correspond with the placements made by others.

Every act announces an identity of one kind or another. Approaching a sales clerk in a store with a confident sense that one expects his or her attention is an announcement of one’s identity as a customer. The executive who disdainfully ignores a janitor or other service worker announces an identity of “superior” and assigns the other the place of “subordinate.” When the clerk attends to the customer, he or she places the other in the customer identity. When the service worker avoids eye contact and attends only to the work at hand rather than to the executive, he or she places the other in the claimed position.

The individual’s construction of an identity is therefore inherently a social process. Over time, people announce and are placed in a variety of identities: familial, occupational, educational, age related, political, ethnic, religious, and the like. Some of these identities acquire a more central place in the self than others—the individual may be chiefly identified by others and identify himself or herself as a professor, for example, or a Black, or a woman. People also construct personal identities for themselves that reflect their particular life histories or accomplishments and not only their group memberships and social roles. Some people—for example, Apple Computer CEO Steve Jobs—develop such distinctive personal identities that their names alone establish their place in the social world. Their personal identities nonetheless depend as much on their placement by others as on their own actions.

Identity is important because it provides a key basis for motivation and action. We see the world from the vantage points of our various identities. As Catholics or Jews, Blacks, Whites, or Hispanics, or as Steve Jobs, we define our circumstances and opportunities for action on the basis of our identities. Our actions within the groups to which we belong and our relationship to the members of other groups are shaped by how we see ourselves as members and nonmembers.

Announcements and placements do not always agree. Fellow members of one’s ethnic group may be more interested in placing one among them and eliciting identification with the group than one is



in announcing a group affiliation and identifying with it. An individual's identification with a group may be met with indifference or rejection by group members. In such circumstances we cannot really say that the individual "has" the group identity. Nonetheless, identity is a motivating element in his or her conduct, whether it promotes an effort to resist the group's pressures or to overcome its resistance.

### Participant Observation

To study any social activity using the symbolic interactionist perspective requires the researcher to grasp the meanings that are central to it, and doing so requires a close, hands-on relationship with the social world under investigation. Participant observation is therefore a central interactionist method. Participation for a time within while also observing a social world, such as that of the neighborhood gang or of the ethnically homogeneous retirement community, is a means of learning what issues are important to members, how they define themselves and others, and what motivates their conduct. In addition to participant observation, symbolic interactionists use interviews, direct observations, historical records, and other written materials to round out their picture of a given social world.

*John P. Hewitt*

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Looking-Glass Self; Multiple Identities; Reference Groups; Roles; Self-Esteem; Social Identity Theory

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## SYMBOLIC RACISM

Racial conflicts have plagued the United States from its very beginnings, driven in particular by racial prejudice against Blacks. In the period since the civil rights era of the 1960s, old forms of racial prejudice have nearly vanished, to be replaced by newer forms. The most politically powerful is *symbolic racism*. It is defined as a blend of anti-Black affect with traditional values, accompanied by the acceptance of formal racial equality. It applies a more general *symbolic politics theory* to the racial context, emphasizing the early acquisition of major sociopolitical attitudes and the symbolic meaning of political rhetoric, rather than interest-based politics. This entry briefly describes the theory of symbolic racism, the empirical evidence that sustains it, and competing points of view.

### Background

At the end of World War II, Blacks were still second-class citizens, denied the pursuit of the American dream in all spheres of life—socially, economically, and politically. Since then, the Southern system of institutionalized *Jim Crow segregation* has been eliminated, as has most formal racial discrimination elsewhere. *Old-fashioned racism*, embodying beliefs in the biological inferiority of Blacks and support for formal discrimination and segregation, has greatly diminished and indeed has nearly disappeared from public discourse. However, Blacks continue to experience substantial disadvantages in most domains of life. Proponents of Blacks' interests have therefore continued to push for greater racial equality.

These efforts have often met with substantial White reaction, including the Republican *Southern strategy* of the 1960s, opposition to court-ordered busing in the 1970s and more recently to affirmative action, support for the use of Confederate symbols in state flags, opposition to Black political candidates, and, more indirectly, appeals for harsher crime and welfare policies.

Symbolic racism (also known as *racial resentment*) has been proposed as one explanation for Whites' political reactions, taking over the role once played by old-fashioned, or Jim Crow, racism. Symbolic racism centers around the belief that

Blacks violate traditional U.S. values, especially individualism. Perceptions that Blacks violate other values (including, for example, morality, self-restraint, and family traditionalism) have been less studied but may be important for understanding the range of values invoked in symbolic racism.

### The Current Theory

Symbolic racism is usually described as a coherent belief system expressed in terms of four specific themes: that Blacks no longer face much prejudice or discrimination, that Blacks' failure to progress results from their unwillingness to work hard enough, that Blacks make excessive demands, and that Blacks have gotten more than they deserve. It is typically measured in telephone or face-to-face surveys or with computer-based or paper-and-pencil questionnaires.

The theory of symbolic racism poses five central propositions:

1. Symbolic racism has largely replaced old-fashioned racism; only a tiny minority of Whites still accept the latter whereas they are about evenly divided about the beliefs contained in symbolic racism.
2. Symbolic racism now influences Whites' political attitudes much more strongly than does old-fashioned racism.
3. The origins of symbolic racism lie in a blend of early-acquired negative feelings about Blacks and traditional values.
4. Whites' opposition to racially targeted policies and Black candidates is more influenced by symbolic racism than by realistic threats posed by Blacks to Whites.
5. Symbolic racism has political effects independent of those of ostensibly racially neutral predispositions such as ideological conservatism.

The term *racism* therefore reflects the centrality of antipathy toward Blacks. The term *symbolic* highlights both that symbolic racism is rooted in abstract moral values rather than in concrete self-interest or personal experiences and that it targets Blacks as an abstract collectivity rather than as specific individuals.

Much research shows that symbolic racism powerfully influences attitudes of White people in the United States toward racially relevant policies such as busing for school integration or affirmative action, as well as less explicitly race-targeted policies that disproportionately affect Blacks, such as welfare and crime policies. It has also been shown to promote opposition to Black candidates such as Jesse Jackson or Barack Obama, as well as support for ethnocentric White candidates such as Pat Buchanan or former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke. The use of subtle racial appeals in political campaigns, such as the attention to Black murderer and rapist Willie Horton during the 1988 presidential campaign and the militant Black minister Jeremiah Wright in 2008, also enhances its political force. Symbolic racism also has played a pivotal role in the realignment to the Republican party of the once solidly Democratic vote of White Southerners—it is more common, and more strongly influences voting choices, among White Southerners than among other people in the United States.

There are two distinctively different ways to think about the origins of any belief system. One is its grounding in more fundamental psychological constructs, such as values, personality predispositions, or social identities. In this sense the origins of symbolic racism are described as lying in a blend of anti-Black affect and traditional values. But its origins can also be described in terms of a developmental or life-history process. Most childhood attitudes toward social groups are primitive and cognitively rudimentary. But they may develop more fully in adolescence with increasing exposure to prepackaged belief systems such as symbolic racism. Research shows that symbolic racism usually develops in adolescence, earlier than many other sociopolitical beliefs.

### Distinctions, Challenges, and Future Directions

Other forms of contemporary racism are defined somewhat differently. *Modern racism* and *aversive racism* are conceptualized as reflecting an ambivalence between egalitarian cognition and anti-Black affect. *Racial ambivalence* reflects an ambivalence between egalitarianism and individualism.

Much research has been devoted to distinguishing the political influence of symbolic racism from

that of personal interests. Symbolic racism is partially rooted in abstract beliefs about Blacks' violations of traditional values, beliefs acquired early in life from parents, peers, and the media. Interest-based preferences, in contrast, presumably arise from adults' calculations of their own interests, such as Whites' opposition to affirmative action because they believe it will prevent their getting desirable jobs. Considerable research shows that symbolic racism influences racially relevant political attitudes regardless of a person's own interests, just as self-interest usually plays a secondary role in public opinion more generally.

Group-based interests are another matter. Perhaps White people in the United States often oppose race-based policies such as affirmative action to protect the threatened interests of Whites as a whole, regardless of their own narrow self-interest. However, research has shown that symbolic racism strongly predicts Whites' racial policy preferences above and beyond the effects of variables relevant to group interest, such as White group identification, perceived common fate with other Whites, perceived collective threat to Whites, or competition from Blacks about valued resources, all of which themselves tend to have weak effects. The political effects of symbolic racism seem to be quite separate from Whites' desires to protect their self- or group-based interests.

Symbolic racism can also be distinguished from *conservative ideology*. The two are related, but they independently contribute opposition to racially targeted policies and Black candidates. Put another way, symbolic racism strongly promotes such opposition among both ideological liberals and conservatives. Of course some ideological conservatives may oppose race-based policies without subscribing to symbolic racism, but that seems to be the exception rather than the rule. This remains an important controversy, however, and political conservatives do not regard it as settled.

The symbolic racism claim is an important one. It asserts that the politics of race are not merely "politics as usual" but instead are significantly influenced by the underlying racial prejudice held by many racial conservatives and that ostensibly race-neutral conservative rhetoric often disguises underlying racial animosity. These controversies are of more than mere academic relevance. They go to the substantive core of longest-running and

most difficult social problem facing the United States. If the symbolic racism claim is right, much remedial work of a variety of kinds needs to be done on the White side of the racial divide. If it is wrong, and racial conservatives' views about the optimal relative balance of governments and markets in modern societies are largely free of underlying racial prejudice, much obligation would be placed on Blacks to adapt to a society in which they no longer are being treated much less fairly than their fellow citizens.

The theory of symbolic racism was developed in the particular U.S. context of continuing White resistance to full racial equality in the post-civil rights era. It has since been applied to other cases of group prejudice, including attitudes toward women, the obese, or (in Europe) immigrants.

David O. Sears

*See also* Aversive Racism; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Modern Racism; Modern Sexism; Prejudice; Racial Ambivalence Theory

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## SYMLOG

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The acronym SYMLOG stands for a SYstem for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups. The SYMLOG system was developed by Robert F. Bales and his colleagues and was first published in book form in 1979. At its most basic level,

SYMLOG is a method for quantitatively and graphically describing the behavior or personality of groups or group members across a three-dimensional conceptual space defined by the factors of *dominance*, *friendliness*, and *acceptance of authority*. The resulting descriptions can be used for a variety of purposes, including to provide feedback on group functioning, to assess the effects of an intervention, or to describe organizational values. This entry describes both the scoring and presentation of results in the SYMLOG system.

The SYMLOG system grew out of earlier work by Bales that used his *interaction process analysis* system, which was a systematic framework for making observations important to Bales's theoretical ideas concerning group problem solving. In that earlier work, Bales proposed that a group moves through a particular sequence of phases as it moves from the beginning to the completion of a task: (a) orientation (gathering information and clarifying the task), (b) evaluation (assessing that information), and (c) control (deciding what to do).

In SYMLOG, those phases reemerge as dimensions that capture important distinctions in interpersonal and group dynamics: dominance versus submissiveness, friendliness versus unfriendliness, and acceptance versus nonacceptance of authority. In the SYMLOG system, these three dimensions form a cube that constitutes the SYMLOG space. The dimensions of the cube have directional labels that correspond to each pole of these bipolar dimensions. *Upward* and *downward* correspond to dominance and submissiveness, respectively. *Positive* and *negative* correspond to friendliness and unfriendliness, respectively. *Forward* and *backward* correspond to acceptance and nonacceptance of authority, respectively. Each dimension also has a neutral middle position, resulting in a  $3 \times 3 \times 3$  cube, with each cell in the cube described by singly (e.g., U, P, F), doubly (e.g., NB, UP, DP), or triply (e.g., DNB, UPB, UNF) designated coordinates. The interior cell of the cube is left undesignated.

The SYMLOG rating form consists of 26 items that correspond to each of the 26 labeled cells of the cube. Each entity being assessed (e.g., a person or an organization) is rated on a 3-point scale on each of the 26 items. The 3-point scale represents a frequency rating of the behavior, and the scale values are typically labeled as *rarely* = 0, *sometimes* = 1,

and *often* = 2. The 26 items are each briefly defined with specific behaviors or adjectives. Ratings can then be made by untrained coders or by members of an interacting group who rate each other's behavior retrospectively on each of the 26 descriptive items.

The scores are then tallied and arranged to produce a location for each coder's perception of each group member in the three-dimensional space, thereby producing a graphical representation of interpersonal relations and group dynamics. The results of those ratings can then be graphically displayed by means of one of a number of representations described later in this entry.

A summary location for each of the three dimensions can also be calculated by adding together all the items that contain one end of the dimension and subtracting from it the sum of all the items that contain the opposite end of the dimension. For example, a location on the friendliness-versus-unfriendliness dimension can be determined by summing together the nine items that contain an F descriptor (e.g., F, PF, DNF) and subtracting from that sum the sum of the nine items that contain a B descriptor (e.g., B, UB, DNB). SYMLOG can also be used for act-by-act coding of verbal content (as with the *interaction process analysis*), although this application is rare.

The specific content of the SYMLOG rating forms varies, such that different behaviors or adjectives may be used to describe each of the 26 cells. For instance, the SYMLOG General Behavior Rating Form assesses each of the 26 cells using specific corresponding behaviors. For example, U is assessed by means of the behaviors *active*, *dominant*, and *talks a lot*, whereas PF is assessed by means of the behavior *works cooperatively with others*. On the other hand, the Value Rating Form assesses each of the 26 cells by means of general values that might underlie each description. For example, on this form U is assessed by means of the underlying value of *material success and power*, whereas PF is assessed using the underlying value of *altruism, idealism, cooperation*.

Other possible rating forms include the Specific Behavior Rating Form, in which the 26 cells are described with more specific behaviors than on the General Rating Form (e.g., active, entertaining, depressed), and the Individual and Organizational Values Rating Form, in which the 26 cells are

described by means of underlying values that are central (e.g., efficiency, protecting less able members, conservative). The level at which the dimensions are assessed can also vary and can range from ratings of the self to ratings of other group members to ratings of the group as a whole and to ratings of the organization as a whole.

### Presenting the Results

The results of the SYMLOG rating form are generally presented by means of a graphical representation—most commonly in the form of a horizontal bar graph across the 26 items or in terms of a field diagram. The horizontal bar graph is perhaps the most intuitive form of representation. Each of the 26 items to be assessed is listed down one side of the graph. Frequency ratings or averaged frequency ratings for each of those items are then presented as histograms to the side. These bar graphs can be used quite flexibly. For example, the ratings of each of two group members can be compared by comparing the bar graphs displaying the group's averaged assessments of each member's behavior.

Similarly, one could compare the dominant organizational values of two organizations by comparing bar graphs displaying average ratings of these values for each organization. Researchers can also include on the bar graph indications of a norm or an *optimum location* for effective behavior or effective teamwork on each of the 26 cells derived from survey research conducted by Bales and others to aid in the interpretation of individual scores.

The more common way of graphically presenting SYMLOG ratings is the *SYMLOG field diagram*. Essentially, the field diagram is a strategy for displaying ratings of the three dimensions of the SYMLOG space on a two-dimensional surface. Two of the dimensions—forward versus backward and positive versus negative—define a two-dimensional grid. The third dimension—upward versus downward—is indicated by the size of the circle that represents the group member or other entity represented on the grid.

For example, a researcher might want to represent ratings for each member of a group on a single field diagram. The researcher must first determine each group member's location on each of the three dimensions, using the subtraction method described above. The researcher then represents each group

member on the grid by first locating the group member's coordinates on the forward–backward and positive–negative grid and then adjusting the size of the image used to mark those coordinates according to the member's location rating on the upward–downward dimension, with a larger circle indicating more dominance.

Note that by using difference scores to represent values on each dimension, researchers lose information concerning the magnitude of ratings on each pole of the dimension. Bar graphs retain this more specific information and can be used if necessary to aid in the interpretation of the field diagram. In addition, it is common to expand the pattern of the field diagram so that it fills up the available diagram space. It is therefore important to be aware of the expansion multiplier used when one is trying to compare the overall patterns of two or more diagrams.

Bales also recommends that the field diagram be used to help define the main forces of tension and balance within a group and between group members. In examining a field diagram, one can see various clusters of group members and separations between group members. A number of strategies exist for determining the polarizing and unifying aspects of group dynamics that create such clusters, including both statistical calculations and the use of a more subjective transparent overlay that is placed over the field diagram in order to identify subgroups within the larger group. The overlay consists of two large circles tangent to one another.

The *line of polarization* is drawn through the centers of those circles and identifies differences among clusters of group members. The *line of balance* is drawn at right angles to the line of polarization and marks the dividing line between the two polarized clusters. By examining the position of group members relative to the lines of polarization and balance, researchers can identify reference groups, opposition groups, and more specific group member roles, such as *scapegoat* and *mediator*.

Thus, the field diagram provides a graphical representation of the underlying structure of the group or organization. Feedback in the form of the bar graphs or field diagrams can be given to individuals to help them understand how their behavior is viewed by others in the group. The group as a whole can also be given group-level feedback in order to help its members understand

the underlying dynamics that are affecting group behavior and contributing to effective or ineffective group performance.

Janice R. Kelly

See also Group Structure; Interaction Process Analysis; Social Networks

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## SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION THEORY

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*System justification theory* was initially proposed by John T. Jost and Mahzarin R. Banaji in 1994 to explain how and why people tolerate unjust and exploitative social arrangements rather than doing everything they can to change the status quo and thereby create a better, more just system. The need for such an explanation arises from historical observations revealing numerous instances of people not merely passively accepting—but sometimes even actively justifying and rationalizing—social systems that are seen as extremely unjust by outsiders, often in retrospect.

For example, the caste system in India has survived largely intact for 3,000 years, and the institution of slavery lasted for more than 400 years in Europe and the Americas. Colonialism was also practiced for centuries and still is in some places (as is slavery), and the apartheid system in South Africa lasted for almost 50 years. According to system justification theory, social systems such as these are supported and maintained at least in part because of processes of motivated social cognition

that lead people to consciously and unconsciously defend, bolster, and rationalize aspects of the societal status quo. System justification is accomplished by individuals and groups through the use of stereotypes, social judgments and evaluations, legitimizing beliefs, and more formal ideologies such as political conservatism and religious fundamentalism.

System justification theory may be distinguished from other sociological and psychological perspectives that emphasize self-interest, identity politics, and the thirst for justice as primary or ubiquitous motives. These other perspectives assume that people are quick to anger in the face of injustice and exploitation, and they suggest that protest, rebellion, and moral outrage on the part of the disadvantaged should be commonplace. However, rebellion in social, economic, and political domains occurs more rarely than one would expect, and the sense of injustice is surprisingly difficult to awaken. Moral outrage is frequently directed at those who dare to challenge the system rather than those who are responsible for its failings. What needs to be explained, then, is the surprising extent to which people, including members of disadvantaged groups, acquiesce in the face of an unjust status quo.

### Ego, Group, and System Justification Motives

A unique prediction of system justification theory is that people are motivated to defend, bolster, and rationalize their own self-interest and the basis of their self-esteem (*ego justification*), the interests and esteem of their own group (*group justification*), and also the social systems that affect them (*system justification*). The result of this last motive is a general inclination to see the status quo as good, fair, legitimate, and desirable. System justification theory does not suggest that people always perceive the status quo as completely fair and just; as with other motives (including ego and group justification motives), the strength of the system justification motive is expected to vary considerably across individuals, groups, and situations.

The theory suggests merely that people are prone to exaggerate their system's virtues, to downplay its vices, and to see existing social arrangements as more favorable and just than they actually are. Social systems to which people

become psychologically attached can range in size and scope from relationship dyads and families to formal and informal status hierarchies to social, economic, or political institutions and organizations, or even to entire societies.

According to system justification theory, the three motives of ego, group, and system justification are generally consonant, complementary, and mutually reinforcing for those who occupy a relatively advantaged position in the social system. For those who are disadvantaged, however, these three motives are often in conflict or contradiction with one another, and different individuals may make different “choices” about how to resolve these conflicts. Accordingly, several studies show that the more members of disadvantaged groups (e.g., Blacks) subscribe to system-justifying beliefs, such as the belief that inequality in society is fair and necessary, the more they suffer in terms of self-esteem and neuroticism and the more ambivalent they feel toward fellow ingroup members.

Furthermore, these negative consequences are more likely to arise for those members of disadvantaged groups who are relatively highly identified with their own group, presumably because the conflict between group and system justification motives is more acute for such individuals. Distancing from (or dis-identifying with) one’s own group is another way of resolving the conflict between group and system justification motives.

### **System Justification on the Part of the Disadvantaged**

Because ego, group, and system justification motives are in opposition for those who are disadvantaged by the status quo, such individuals are on average less likely than those who are advantaged to see the existing system as fair and legitimate. However, under some circumstances—such as when the salience of individual or collective self-interest is very low—members of disadvantaged groups can be the most ardent supporters of the status quo. For example, survey studies in the United States reveal that extremely low-income respondents are more likely, rather than less likely, to believe that income inequality is legitimate and necessary than are medium- or high-income respondents.

Similarly, a study of the social and political attitudes of severely disadvantaged indigenous

children in Bolivia revealed that they were significantly more likely to approve of the Hispanic-run government, more likely to endorse the suppression of speeches against the government, and less likely to be cynical or distrusting of the government than were children from other ethnic groups that were more advantaged. These results, which are difficult to explain from the standpoint of other prominent theories in sociology and psychology, suggest that nearly everyone holds at least some system-justifying attitudes and that, paradoxically, it is sometimes those who are the worst off who are the strongest defenders of the system.

It is possible, of course, that members of disadvantaged groups feel strong social pressure to exaggerate their support for the status quo in public and that they privately hold attitudes that are far more critical of the existing social system. However, a large number of studies using implicit measures that reduce opportunities for impression management, such as the Implicit Association Test, suggest that it is extremely common for members of disadvantaged groups to internalize relatively favorable attitudes toward members of more advantaged outgroups and the social system as a whole.

For example, substantial proportions of members of disadvantaged groups—including dark-skinned Morenos in Chile, poor people and the obese, university students randomly assigned to low-status rather than high-status residential colleges, gays and lesbians, Latinos and Asians, and even Blacks, who reject the legitimacy of racial inequality at an explicit level—exhibit implicit biases in favor of more advantaged outgroup members. Furthermore, the extent to which members of disadvantaged groups exhibit implicit outgroup favoritism is predicted by their scores on measures of system justification and political conservatism.

### **The Palliative Function of System Justification**

It has been theorized that system justification serves a set of relatively proximal epistemic, existential, and relational functions that help people manage uncertainty and threat and smooth out social relationships. System-justifying belief systems are reassuring because they enable people to cope with and feel better about the societal status

quo and their place in it. Along these lines, John T. Jost and Orsolya Hunyady suggested that system justification serves the palliative function of reducing negative affect and increasing positive affect. This idea bears some resemblance to Karl Marx's notion that religion is the "opiate of the masses," or the "illusory happiness of the people."

Several studies reveal that giving people the opportunity to justify the system does indeed lead them to feel better and more satisfied and to report feeling more positive and fewer negative emotions. Furthermore, chronically high system justifiers, such as political conservatives, are happier (as measured in terms of subjective well-being) than are chronically low system-justifiers, such as liberals, leftists, and others who are more troubled by the degree of social and economic inequality in our society.

The hedonic benefits of system justification, however, come at a cost in terms of decreased potential for social change and the remediation of inequality. Research shows that system-justifying ideologies, whether measured or manipulated through a mindset-priming technique, do indeed serve to reduce emotional distress—including negative affect in general and guilt in particular—but they also reduce moral outrage. This last consequence is particularly important because moral outrage motivates people to engage in helping behavior and to support social change. Thus, the reduction in moral outrage makes people less inclined to help those who are disadvantaged, measured in terms of research participants' degree of support for and willingness to volunteer for or donate to a soup kitchen, a crisis hotline, and tutoring or job training programs for the underprivileged.

### How Do We Know It Is Motivated?

Some scholars recognize that attitudes and behaviors are commonly system justifying in their consequences but question the notion that people are motivated to see the societal status quo as fair, legitimate, and desirable. There are at least five lines of empirical evidence suggesting that system justification is a motivated, goal-directed process.

First, studies show that the endorsement of system-justifying attitudes is correlated with

individual differences in self-deception and ideological motivation. Second, laboratory experiments in which exposure to system threat is manipulated reveal that most people respond defensively on behalf of the system, using stereotypes and evaluative judgments to rationalize inequalities between social groups. Third, research demonstrates that system justification leads people to engage in selective, biased information processing in favor of system-serving conclusions, such as the conclusion that the U.S. economic system is highly meritocratic. Fourth, system justification exhibits several other properties of goal pursuit, including *equifinality* (the fact that there are multiple, functionally interchangeable means of reaching the system justification goal) and *multifinality* (the fact that the system justification goal satisfies multiple needs, including epistemic, existential, and relational needs). Fifth, studies indicate that the desire to make the system look good and fair inspires behavioral efforts in terms of task persistence and performance. For all these reasons, it seems as if the guiding theoretical assumption of system justification theory, namely that people are motivated to defend, bolster, and justify the status quo, is on relatively solid empirical ground.

A motivational approach to system justification may ultimately help explain when people will (and will not) engage in social change. Because a goal systems framework allows for the operation of competing goals—such as ego justification or group justification, goals for novelty or accuracy, or the desire for retribution and other justice-related motives—it can help clarify the circumstances under which people will challenge or criticize the system. Such an approach will enable us to better understand the processes that give rise to widespread defection from the motivational clutches of system justification.

When justifying the system no longer satisfies epistemic, existential, or relational needs—either because the status quo itself offers no stability or certainty or because it is regarded as a source of threat rather than reassurance, or because it has become counternormative to stick with the old regime when a new one is gaining in popularity—then the system justification goal will finally be abandoned. Once a new system or regime acquires an aura of inevitability, system justification motives



should lead people to engage in rationalization processes that will bolster the new system at the expense of the old one.

*John T. Jost*

*See also* Collective Movements and Protest; Ideology; Protestant Work Ethic; Social Dominance Theory; Social Identity Theory; Uncertainty-Identity Theory

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## SYSTEM THEORY

*System theories* are concerned with the relationships among *elements* (such as individuals) within *systems* (e.g., a group). *General systems theory* was popularized by Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy as an interdisciplinary framework, or metatheory, aimed at describing the fundamental principles of systems of all kinds, from cells and organisms to societies and from biological and ecological to social systems. Several other metatheories, such as cybernetics and information theory, the theory of complex adaptive systems, and dynamical systems theory, are also system theories. The most important concepts from these theories for group psychology are briefly presented below.

One main assumption of system theories is that the system itself (e.g., a group) has, or develops, properties that cannot be fully described, explained, or predicted by observing the behavior of elements of the system (e.g., the group members). Recall Aristotle's claim that the whole is something besides (or more than) its parts. Moreover, the properties of the elements within a system (e.g., group members' behavior) can be understood only when one knows something about the system as a whole. Given that groups are complex, composed of individuals, and embedded in contexts, a system theory perspective seems especially appropriate for the study of groups.

### Core Assumptions of System Theories

Biological and social systems are open systems that interact (exchange information, material, or energy) with their environment and thus are influenced by and influence their context. They are hierarchically organized: A system is composed of subsystems and is embedded into suprasystems. A subsystem in a group might be a single group member or a clique of members, and the group's suprasystem might be an organization in which the group is embedded. System theorists assume that all the concepts they have identified can be observed at different system levels.

Systems, such as groups, have a tendency toward self-organization, which means that they develop structures or functions "by themselves,"

without pressure or influence from an outside agent. Examples of self-organization include growth and development processes. The local dynamics in a system, that is, the interactions among system components (e.g., group members), produce what are called *order parameters* at the system level. These parameters influence the behavior of system elements and thus become what are called the *global dynamics* of the system. For instance, group members establish rules during their interactions (*local dynamics*). These rules then become a given for the group as a whole (global dynamics) and thereby influence the behavior of group members.

Systems change over time. System theorists assume that open systems tend to move toward higher organization and more differentiation and specialization, but they also move toward higher *centralization*, because they can import energy and thus resist *entropy* (a state of disorder) for a time. Centralization means that some components have greater influence on the system than do others. An example is the development of leadership structures in groups. *Complexity theory* investigates patterns of changes over time in systems and describes whether and under what conditions a system evolves to one or several stable states. These stable states are called *attractors*. Often, the trajectories of different system states over time toward attractors are estimated on the basis of mathematical formulae and plotted in a so-called *phase space* (a graphical representation of predicted behavior).

Temporal changes in systems are seldom linear but occur instead in an abrupt and nonlinear way. The system may be stable for a time, even under considerable pressure to change, but eventually a small event, which would not normally influence the system, can have a dramatic effect. Given the complex interplay of different influences in most systems, it is difficult to predict when such a dramatic change occurs. Rapid, large changes in systems are described by *catas-trophe theories*, which depict changes as surfaces or curves and describe abrupt changes from one state to another as bifurcation or phase transitions. Below the bifurcation point, the system is stable, but above that point, there is a short phase of instability, and, after a massive change, the system again attains stability.

A system is self-regulating and thus adapts to changes as it pursues goals. Feedback loops are a central element of this regulation: The output of a system's actions serves as an input into the system, and the system readjusts its behavior when it seems to be deviating from the chosen, or prescribed, course. In following this course, many systems move toward an end state, and so their movement seems purposeful. Goal orientations are especially important for human and social systems. There are usually many possible ways to achieve a goal; this is described as *equifinality*.

### System Theories in Group Research

System theories have influenced group research in different ways. In a few studies, researchers have applied mathematical concepts from system theories to their data. The next section presents an example of such an application. Some researchers have formulated theories about groups on the basis of system thinking. Two such theories are summarized briefly. Furthermore, system theories have influenced many different aspects of group research, and some examples of that influence are also described.

#### *Formal Analyses of Group Processes*

Although the propositions in most system theories have been formulated as mathematical concepts, only a few researchers have analyzed group processes using the resulting mathematical models. Some have even questioned whether doing so is useful, because the high precision and the large number of data points required for such analyses are difficult to achieve. In addition, the results of such analyses are often difficult to interpret. However, an interesting example of group process analyses based on dynamic system theory is the work of Losada and his colleagues. They analyzed trajectories in phase space for teams that showed different temporal patterns (e.g., positive and negative emotional exchanges among group members). The researchers found that high-performing groups occupied a clearly larger phase space before entering a stable state, whereas low-performing groups rapidly moved toward an attractor. This indicates that high-performing groups display a greater variety of behaviors, which may

help them adapt better to changing demands. One can expect more analyses like these in the future as new technology allows researchers to collect more fine-grained data on group processes.

### *Theoretical Frameworks Based on System Theories*

Probably the most extensive and integrative theoretical framework that incorporates dynamical systems and complexity theory is that published by Arrow, McGrath, and Berdahl in 2000. They see groups as open systems that are complex, dynamic, and adaptive. Besides local dynamics and global dynamics, Arrow and her colleagues have emphasized the importance of contextual dynamics. *Contextual dynamics* require the adaptation of a group to changes in its environment. An interesting and novel aspect of this theory is the assumption that some elements of a group (e.g., group structure) go beyond its members. Rather, a group's elements also include its *tasks* (or *intentions* or *projects*) and the resources and technologies (called *tools*) that are available to it. The interplay among members, tasks, and tools (the local dynamics) forms the overall coordination network. Group behavior must respond to the three main functions of groups, namely fulfilling member's needs, maintaining the structure and integrity of the group as a system, and achieving group projects. The main activities of a group are communication (information processing and the generation of meaning), conflict management, and the coordination of member behavior.

Another important aspect of this theory is its emphasis on different temporal changes in groups. The theory does not assume predictable, consecutive stages of development in groups. Instead, it uses complexity theory and the concept of attractors to explain different possible change trajectories in group behavior. For example, groups can (rapidly) move toward a stable state, but they sometimes oscillate between different attractors and thus show multiple stable states. Arrow, McGrath, and Berdahl assume that group-level patterns can emerge independently from the particularities of individual members' behavior. Identifying regularities, or patterns, in a group thus requires studying the group as a whole, rather

than trying to predict group-level variables on the basis of individual behavior. Furthermore, such studies should be carried out over time.

Contextual variables (e.g., the organization in which a group is embedded) also influence group behavior because the group must adapt to changing conditions. The influence of contextual factors is often nonlinear. This means that large changes may not always have big effects, whereas small changes at specific times may alter the group in dramatic ways. This makes the identification of critical times for external influence as important as the identification and evaluation of the influence itself. A discussion of critical times for external influences can be found in Hackman and Wageman's *team coaching model*. Their model claims that motivational coaching should be provided at the beginning, strategic coaching at the midpoint, and educational coaching at the end of a group's task.

Another system-based group theory is DeSanctis and Poole's *adaptive structuration theory*. It is based on structuration theory, which was proposed by the sociologist Giddens. Adaptive structuration theory attempts to explain how groups and their members structure each other, and it helps explain why one often observes very different outcomes and interaction processes in groups with very similar features.

Generally stated, a group's structures (rules, regulations, and resources) guide its members' interactions, but member behavior also reproduces, constitutes, adapts to, and changes those structures and thus alters the group. On one hand, individuals in groups act according to social structures, for example the rules and regulations that govern their behavior. Often, these social structures are adopted from general rules (e.g., the majority rule for decision). Sometimes, new structures are created or adapted (e.g., to the group's task or technology) and influenced by available resources. On the other hand, when members respond to group structures, they also create and reproduce them. This is called the *duality of structures*: The behavior of group members is governed by the rules and regulations in the group (the structures), but these structures also emerge and are influenced by the interactions. Thus, group members influence the group's structures.

*Topics in Group Research Influenced by, or Compatible With, System Theories*

The ideas of many group theorists, such as Kurt Lewin, are compatible with a system theories approach. But most group researchers have studied either the influence of groups on individual behavior or the influence of individual behavior on group outcomes. More recently, new research questions have been inspired by the systems perspective, which may help overcome what Lewin (1947) once called a taboo on studying group-level phenomena. Such a taboo is evident in Allport's claim that all group-level phenomena can and should be explained by individual factors. Allport denied that groups exist apart from their members.

Examples of recent concepts from the groups literature that seem compatible with a system theories perspective include *shared mental models*, *socially shared cognitions*, *group reflexivity*, and *transactive memory systems*. These concepts refer to group-level phenomena and describe the processes involved as functionally analogous to similar processes within the individual. In other words, they suggest that groups can be viewed as (larger and more complex) information processing systems. Other examples involve temporal changes in groups: For example, the *group socialization theory* proposed in 1982 by Moreland and Levine describes role transitions, which mark qualitative shifts in the relationship between the group and the individual. Between role transitions, that relationship usually changes in a more continuous, incremental fashion. Group development theories, such as that proposed by Worchel, Coutant-Sassic, and Grossman, describe group development as a cyclical activity that is influenced by the relationships among group members, the group as a whole, and its context. And Gersick's *punctuated equilibrium model* of project group development suggests that group development involves long periods of relative inertia, separated by sudden transitions associated with special events, such as the midpoint of the group's work. These transitions are likely to involve large, nonlinear changes in the group. During its midpoint transition, for example, a group will often radically change its work strategies and direction. Afterward, another period of relative stability begins. Gersick's

approach is compatible with a system dynamics perspective and helps identify the critical points at which it may be easiest to change a group.

### Conclusion

The serious use of system theories implies an extension of traditional paradigms of experimental and analytical research on groups because these paradigms often cannot adequately assess the complex social dynamics the system theories have proposed. Instead of studying single, cause-effect relationships, system theories are interested in the complex interplay of elements, features of the whole system and its contexts, and changes over time. System theories assume that precise predictions of system states are difficult or even impossible to make, but the assumptions of system theories can still serve as valuable heuristics to draw attention toward important phenomena that would be otherwise overlooked. Empirical investigations based on system theories are difficult. Arrow and her colleagues have suggested three research strategies compatible with a system perspective:

1. Comparative case studies that investigate groups over time may help scholars understand the interplay of and the recursive influence between multiple levels of a system.
2. More naturalistic studies, including simulations based on realistic situations, allow researchers to analyze at least part of the complexity associated with real groups.
3. Computer simulation studies allow researchers to apply mathematical functions to data on groups or to translate verbal theories into computational models and then run computational simulation studies. The results of those studies can then be compared with real-life observations.

Ultimately, system theories are metatheories. Their application to group research requires the translation of general concepts to more specific phenomena and new or adapted research strategies, whose development is still under way.

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*See also* Dynamical Systems Approach; Group Composition; Group Development; Group Socialization; Lewin, Kurt; Shared Mental Models; Socially Shared Cognition; Social Networks; Teams; Transactive Memory Systems

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## TAJFEL, HENRI (1919–1982)

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Henri Tajfel is best known for developing the concept of *social identity*, a central construct in what later became known as *social identity theory*. His earliest work in psychology was largely experimental and dealt with social perception and stereotyping. Later, he turned his attention to the study of intergroup relations, and it was in this context that social identity theory was formulated. He is also remembered in Europe for the time and energy that he gave to establishing a European style of social psychology, one that recognized the social, political, and historical context within which social behavior takes place.

### Tajfel's Personal and Intellectual History

Born into a Jewish family in Poland, Henri Tajfel was a student at the Sorbonne in France when Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. A fluent French speaker, he served in the French army, was captured by the invading German forces in 1940, and spent the rest of the conflict as a prisoner of war. His survival depended on his assuming a French identity and concealing his Polish–Jewish heritage. Years later, he had difficulty understanding the Polish language on a return visit to his native country, a reminder that he had come to think and speak as a Frenchman.

The war's end revealed that all his family and most of his friends had been killed. While still in

France, he spent his time for several years helping European refugees to rehabilitate and be repatriated or else resettled in other countries. These events left profound psychological marks on Tajfel and provided him with important intellectual signposts for his later research and writing dealing with discrimination against minorities and how identity is shaped by ethnic and national group membership. In his own wartime experience, he observed that had his Polish–Jewish identity been revealed, his fate would have been determined by his social category—a certain death, no matter what other personal qualities his might have had.

He married and with his wife, Anne, moved to England in 1951. As an undergraduate student at Birkbeck College, London, he won a scholarship for an essay on a topic close to his heart, prejudice. He graduated in 1954, worked as a research assistant at the University of Durham, and later became a lecturer in social psychology at Oxford. In 1967, he was appointed to a chair in social psychology at Bristol University, a post that he held until his death.

### Tajfel's Research Contributions

Tajfel's earliest published research was on *social perception*, based on what was termed the *New Look* in perception and stimulated by Jerome Bruner at Harvard University. What was new was an emphasis on perception as an active rather than a reactive process. People's mental processes often organize everyday stimuli according to

those values or need states that are current or salient at that moment. For example, a meat eater who was very hungry might mistake a blurred photographic image of a red flower for a juicy steak.

### *Perceptual Accentuation*

Tajfel absorbed such ideas into his work on perceptual *accentuation*. In one study, the stimuli were eight lines that differed in length by a constant percentage increment. He showed that a simple manipulation in an experimental condition caused the eight lines to be categorized into two groups of four, and their estimated lengths were different from those judged in a control condition. In the experimental condition, the four shorter lines were labeled A and the four longer lines are labeled B, whereas in the control condition, the A and B labels were random. In the experimental condition, therefore, length was correlated with the labels, and the lines were perceived to be in two categories or groups, a shorter one and a longer one. Further, there was an accentuation effect: The A lines were judged a little shorter and the B lines a little longer than they really were. The concept of accentuation fit with Tajfel's thinking about social stereotypes. Members of ethnic groups are (mis)perceived to fit more closely to stereotypes commonly held about them.

An important development in his thinking was revealed in a 1970 paper in which he explored the concept of *social categorization* as a basis for intergroup discrimination. Unlike Muzafer Sherif's *realistic group conflict theory*, which argued that intergroup conflict derives from mutually incompatible goals, Tajfel proposed that the simple act of becoming a group member was sufficient to precipitate discrimination against members of an available comparison outgroup. Intergroup conflict was now seen as an outcome of people being socially categorized rather than the result of competition for tangible rewards. It is an irony of Sherif's work that in his famous studies of intergroup discrimination carried out in boys' summer camps, there was evidence that the mere separation of children into groups led quickly to outgroup negative stereotyping. In Tajfel's view, *social categorization* rather than intergroup competition was the key to incipient prejudice.

### *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*

His most famous work was theoretical and followed next. His concept of social identity became the central ingredient in a new theory of intergroup behavior. The main ideas were first published in French in 1972, followed by an English version in 1974 and later amplified as social identity theory with John Turner in 1979. The concepts invoked were the following:

*Social categorization:* Social categorization is a cognitive tool. It is the social classification of people as members of social groups. It is a more powerful determinant of intergroup discrimination than are individual-level variables, such as personality characteristics, which might be shared by group members. The key to understanding outgroup prejudice is that individuals know that they are members of discrete categories, that is, groups.

*Social comparison:* Intergroup comparison is a group-level concept that is analogous to Leon Festinger's individual-level concept, also called social comparison. Both concepts serve to define the self, but in Festinger's case, the inferences arise from interpersonal comparisons. For example, Jim concludes he is fast because he usually wins footraces against other individuals. In Tajfel's case, social comparison is an intergroup concept, and the inferences are based on group membership. For example, Jane decides she is advantaged by her ethnicity because it confers higher status when she makes comparisons with other salient ethnic groups.

*Social identity:* This is a crucial aspect of identity. It is part of the self-concept that derives from people knowing that they members of one or more social groups, such as political or religious groups. An individual strives to achieve positive self-definition, an outcome based on comparisons that advantage the ingroup over salient outgroups.

*Social change:* This concept is thought by some commentators to be the most innovative of Tajfel's contributions to social identity theory. Social change is a significant perceived alteration in the relationship between large social groups, such as national, religious, and ethnic groups. Whereas



*social mobility* is a change in self-definition when an individual moves into a new group, social change applies to a transformation of social identity for an entire social group. Social change is the process by which people actively seek positive social identities in response to being defined negatively in a world of social inequality.

Tajfel drew widely on theory and examples from history, literature, sociology, politics, and economics in elaborating these ideas and went to considerable lengths to link social identity theory to large-scale social structures and to ideology. Unlike many theorists in social psychology, Tajfel made a deliberate connection with collective movements and political action.

Although Tajfel conducted and encouraged others to undertake experimental research, his goal was more ambitious and was explicitly pitted against *reductionism* in theory. He was mindful of the scope and magnitude of North American social psychology and what it had achieved in defining the discipline in the 20th century. However, he was convinced that a European perspective could offer something different and valuable. He argued that North American social psychologists were mostly reductionist, even myopic, in their pursuit of psychological laws that reside in the individual. In contrast, Europe's political history of disputes and wars, and the stunning, horrific experience of the Holocaust, pointed to the need for theoretical constructs that were embedded in the social group.

Tajfel demonstrated his beliefs and values in his professional as well as research activities. According to many, Tajfel did more than any other person in helping to develop a distinctively European form of social psychology, one that stressed that people should be studied as members of groups. Tajfel's efforts, and those of his colleagues, are recognized today in the European Association of Experimental Social Psychologists and the *European Journal of Social Psychology*. In the decades following his death, his main ideas won wide acceptance in social psychology. They currently permeate research and teaching in many countries around the world, including the United States.

Graham M. Vaughan

*See also* Ethnocentrism; Ingroup Allocation Bias; Minimal Group Effect; Norms; Realistic Group Conflict Theory; Reference Groups; Social Identity Theory

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## TEAM BUILDING

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The term *team building* is used to refer both to team formation and efforts to advance group development within existing teams. Team building is important because the use of team-based structures is ubiquitous in today's organizations, making practices related to the formation, design, and development of work teams vital to both group and organizational success.

### Team Formation

Despite its importance, research on building teams has lagged behind other work on teamwork in organizations. This is in part because most research on teamwork starts with the assumption that the team already exists. (Some exceptions to this view exist, such as work on group development and engineering models of team building.) At the most basic level, building a work team involves specification of the work to be done, selection of members based on the skills and knowledge required to complete that work, and use of effective techniques for recruiting members who will contribute to team effectiveness.

One important dimension of work with implications for building teams is *interdependence*,

which concerns the extent to which a task can be completed by people working separately versus together. Work with low interdependence can be completed either by an individual without any assistance from others or by a number of individuals working independently and then coming together for a final product. Work with high interdependence requires members of a team to work closely together, share and integrate their knowledge and skills, and generate a collective product or output in which the input of particular members may be difficult to discern.

Once the team's task is understood, the next key challenge is identifying the "right" people for the team. A critical goal is to align individuals' knowledge and skills with the requirements of the team's work. Building a team with the necessary skills and knowledge seems straightforward, but this is not always the case. For example, in some organizations, chemical engineering skills may correlate with gender or organizational department. As a result, assigning an individual on the basis of such skills may introduce conflict into a team (e.g., because other team members do not appreciate the value of his or her skills) that has negative consequences for group processes and outcomes. Moreover, certain skills and knowledge may exist in only a small number of individuals, and these people may not have the time or the motivation for a particular team assignment.

In addition to alignment between members' knowledge and skills, on one hand, and task requirements of the team, on the other hand, it is important to consider the dispersion of knowledge and skills across members of the team. This form of alignment concerns the extent to which the team members have similar or different knowledge and skills and, in the latter case, complementary or noncomplementary knowledge and skills. When team members have different and noncomplementary knowledge and skills, they are highly specialized. Such specialization may make recognition of expertise easier but coordination of effort more difficult. Alternatively, similar knowledge and skills or different but complementary knowledge and skills can result in easier coordination but may come at the cost of insufficient expertise in particular areas. In addition, certain kinds of knowledge and skill diversity may reduce internal cohesion but at the same time provide more external ties for

a team. Research suggests the need for caution in drawing simple conclusions about knowledge and skill alignment as uniformly harmful or helpful. Therefore, managers must be aware of the potential advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of alignment among team members.

Finally, the selection of members for a team involves a choice about how to recruit the people with the right knowledge and skills. Team members can be recruited from the social network of the manager forming the team or identified through more impersonal channels, such as organizational databases. Of course, the choice of recruiting channel may be constrained by the need for specific knowledge or skills available through only one channel. The means used to recruit members when forming the team have implications for team performance. Members with social ties to each other may speed the development of internal cohesion and superior knowledge utilization, but they can also produce flawed decisions if close ties produce a team whose members favor harmony over critical judgment. Furthermore, if a premium is placed on selecting team members from an existing social network, knowledge and skill alignment may be compromised in favor of personal relationships among the team members. This could disadvantage a team's ability to effectively complete its task. Alternatively, the manager in charge of forming the team may use organizational databases, human resources recruiting techniques, or other "impersonal" means of identifying team members. Although this approach may be useful in some ways, it may miss opportunities to leverage existing knowledge structures among individuals who have prior experience with one another.

### Team-Building Programs

Once teams are formed, managers may engage team members in *team-building* programs focused on group development. Team building involves some type of planned intervention, ranging from short-term to long-duration activities, designed to enhance process effectiveness and reduce problems through setting group goals and supporting interpersonal relations, problem solving, and role clarification. Although the concept of team building was introduced some 30 years ago, research on formal team building is rather limited, and the

work that has been done indicates that team-building programs have a mixed impact on team performance. For example, in a meta-analysis of 11 empirical studies of team building, Eduardo Salas and his colleagues found that team-building programs have a positive, but weak, effect on subjective measures of performance (e.g., team members' self-reports of their effectiveness) and no effect on objective measures of performance (e.g., productivity).

Providing contradictory evidence, a meta-analysis by Daniel Svyantek and colleagues revealed that team-building interventions have positive effects on both subjective and objective measures of team performance. Moreover, they noted that this relationship is affected by several characteristics of the team-building effort and the organizational context. In particular, interventions initiated by people outside the work group (e.g., higher level management) have a greater (positive) impact than those initiated internally; supervisor support increases the effectiveness of the team building; and team building focused on corrective action has a stronger effect on performance than team building designed as a preventive measure. Furthermore, team-building efforts led by external consultants are more effective than efforts led by internal consultants, with team building producing the most positive outcomes when led by a combination of internal and external consultants. Finally, team building focused on group change (e.g., improving group problem-solving processes) is more effective than team building focused on individual changes (e.g., role definition for individuals in the group).

It is worthwhile to note that a very popular form of team-building intervention involves outdoor challenges or experiential training, such as ropes courses and wilderness trips. To date, no research evidence supports a performance benefit or specific return on investment in the form of improved productivity for teams that participate in outdoor team-building interventions.

### Conclusion

In sum, managers engaged in team formation must pay careful attention to defining the team's task, identifying potential members with the right knowledge and skills, and using effective means

for recruiting these people. Although there is fervent support for team-building interventions in some quarters and anecdotal evidence that such interventions improve team productivity, solid research has yet to unequivocally support these views. The research record suggests that if managers wish to implement formal team-building interventions, these interventions ought to focus on role clarification and be of short to moderate duration. It has been suggested that the lack of positive effects of team building on productivity is due to problems in transferring learning from the team-building experience to the actual work environment. Therefore, special attention must be paid to how the experiences in the program relate to the work completed by the team and what specific efforts will be made to reinforce the learning in the program when the team is back on the job.

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*See also* Diversity; Group Composition; Group Development; Group Formation; Group Task; Interdependence Theory; Social Networks; Team Performance Assessment; Teams

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## TEAM NEGOTIATION

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In many negotiations, one individual sits down at the table to represent his or her own interests. This is also true in multiparty negotiations in which three, four, or even more individuals are negotiating to resolve their own interests. *Team negotiations* are different, however, because more than one individual represents each side. Team negotiations can become exceptionally complex because individuals must negotiate and resolve their interests and positions *within* each team, as well as *between* each team.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams

Is a team negotiation, that is, two groups negotiating against each other, likely to produce a better outcome than two individuals coming to the table? The *discontinuity effect* proposes that intergroup interaction will be more competitive than interindividual interaction, primarily because groups generate both more fear and more greed than individuals do. However, the vast majority of the evidence for this effect comes from contexts that are relatively information poor (e.g., prisoner dilemma games) when compared with most negotiation contexts.

By contrast, researchers studying richer bargaining contexts have consistently found that having even one team at the bargaining table increases the cooperativeness, and hence the integrativeness, of joint agreements—in other words, all parties are better off when one of them is a team. This so-called *team effect* seems to occur because teams stimulate the discussion of more information than do individuals. This information exchange leads to greater accuracy about both parties' interests and priorities, enabling trade-offs on issues that increase overall profitability.

Thus, we know that teams increase *integrative* (or *win-win*) outcomes, but are teams always at an advantage compared with their solo counterparts? In other words, do teams do better on the *distributive* (*win-lose*) dimension? Not necessarily. Although one of the advantages to teams is the ability to split roles within the team, such as the famous *good cop-bad cop* technique, research has shown that this ability does not always lead to better performance for the team. This is because one of the major issues

teams must contend with is how to manage the division of labor within the team itself.

Consider this example: One member of a negotiation team has strong analytic skills, another has vast technical and industry knowledge, and a third has strong relationship-building skills. These ingredients should add up to a formidable team. But if members disagree about the key issues—such as what the bottom line is or when to make concessions—then they are unlikely to take advantage of their differing skills. Clearly, teams can be an effective presence at the negotiating table but only if they are able to uncover, leverage, and efficiently coordinate their diverse abilities.

### Managing a Team Negotiation

Thus, the greatest challenge for a team is to manage its internal negotiation before, as well as during, negotiation with an opponent team. A negotiating team's preparation phase should include three components: (1) a substantive discussion of the negotiation, (2) a skills assessment of team members and the assignment of team roles, and (3) a plan for the negotiation process.

### Discuss the Negotiation's Substance

Before entering into the negotiation, team members must agree about the basics of the negotiation's substance, striving for as much agreement as possible. Basic negotiation principles come into play here—it is basically a prenegotiation or even a negotiation that is embedded within the larger negotiation. Before meeting their opponents, the team members must agree on their *best alternative to a negotiated agreement* (BATNA). The BATNA is basically what the team will do if it does not reach an agreement with the other team. The team members must also decide on their *reservation point*, or the worst outcome that they will agree to before walking away, and their *aspiration level*, or the best outcome that they can imagine. The team members can use these critical limits to think through their priorities, the issues on which they might be willing to consider trade-offs, and their underlying assumptions. Research has shown that negotiators who set specific limits and focus on their aspirations outperform those that set “do your best” limits and focus on reservation points.

The team must also consider what it knows about the other team(s). The team should do its best to estimate its opponent's priorities, BATNA, reservation point, and aspiration level. A team can be superior to a solo negotiator here because each team member may have different expertise, knowledge, and experience, which can be integrated to arrive at accurate estimates. The team might also need to engage in research before the actual negotiation begins, and a division of labor is often easier with more people to do the work.

### *Assess Skills and Roles*

In addition to assessing the negotiation's substance, a team must determine how to take advantage of the diverse skills among its members. In some cases, the team's composition is determined by an outside manager or superordinate authority, but in other cases, there is an opportunity for members to make sure that there is a match between the needs of the team and their composition. In either case, the first step should be an assessment of what skills, knowledge, and abilities are required. The next step is to match skills with essential roles.

Most teams elect one person as the team's *chief negotiator*. The chief negotiator must be articulate, not easily rattled, and able to follow the team's predetermined negotiation plan. Other important roles include a team member who can record and analyze data, keeping track of offers and counteroffers. This individual should also be able to interpret the data and their implications for the team. Finally, the team might want someone who can attend to and interpret the other side's private reactions to offers. Research has shown that only a small amount of information is conveyed through actual words. Much more is communicated through tone of voice, posture, stance, and body language.

### *Plan the Negotiation Process*

The substance of the negotiation and the diversity of roles come together in the third step as the team makes decisions about the central process features of the negotiation. What opening offer should it make? When should it make the first concession? For example, a substantial amount of

research now shows that making the first offer allows negotiators to set an anchor for the negotiation, and when they do so with a focus on their aspiration levels, they do better than negotiators who concede the first offer to the other party.

One process feature is unique to the team: the *recess*, or *caucus*. Teams should take advantage of opportunities to break away from the other side, whether to raise new issues, do a reality check, or resolve internal disputes. The team leader may ask one member of the team to focus on the emotions of the other team or report on that team's reaction to a recent offer or ask the team member keeping track of the numbers to analyze and assess new data. Any differences within the team should always be handled in a recess, outside of the other side's earshot. The team leader should ultimately resolve any arguments about concessions or trade-offs.

The team can also call a caucus for strategic reasons, such as signaling a willingness to abandon the negotiation. Caucuses can also slow down talks that are moving too fast, giving both sides time to consider options and make offers. Teams can communicate with each other electronically via laptops or handheld computers, or they can simply pass notes on slips of paper.

### **When to Use a Team**

As noted above, teams have assets as well as liabilities, and therefore the key task is to maximize the assets and minimize the liabilities. One way to do that is to use a team when it will be most beneficial. Research has shown that teams are particularly beneficial in situations in which the task is complex, requiring a diverse set of knowledge, abilities, or expertise, or the problem has great potential for creative, integrative solutions. Teams are also beneficial in situations in which one party wants to display its strength to the other, teams are expected to be used (e.g., in certain international settings), diverse constituencies must be represented (such as in union negotiations), or either party wishes to signal that the negotiation is extremely important (as in a merger or acquisition). Another factor to consider is whether there is time to organize and coordinate a team effort.

*Elizabeth Mannix*

*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Negotiation and Bargaining; Socially Shared Cognition; Teams; Transactive Memory Systems

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## TEAM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

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Teams are a hallmark of modern societies. They are most evident in organizations, especially work organizations. The effective performance of teams is closely linked to the accomplishment of goals for both the members involved and the organizations in which they operate. Thus, the nature of team performance and the issues involved in the assessment of team performance are central to an organization's success.

Approaches to *team performance assessment* are quite varied, and they should be. Both the appropriate definition of team performance and the best way to measure (assess) it will depend on a variety of factors. Thus, those interested in assessing a team should become fairly knowledgeable about the context involved. This entry examines team performance assessment from a context-dependent, or contingent, perspective.

### Is It a Team?

Although all social collectives share certain properties, a team is generally considered to be distinct from other groups in that a team has a history and a future and exists to perform a function for some larger entity (e.g., a company, military unit, or school). In addition, most teams involve members who are recruited for specific positions and have specific duties or roles that they must fulfill. In most teams, individual responsibilities can be executed only in concert with other team members. That is, there is task or workflow interdependence. While the issues associated with the assessment of *group* performance and *team* performance are similar in many ways, this entry focuses on the latter.

### Purposes of Team Performance Assessment

There are many purposes for conducting a team performance assessment, including establishing training needs; guiding the redesign of training programs, equipment, or work processes; improving performance levels; and shaping compensation awards. Moreover, the kind of setting in which assessment is to take place will affect the appropriateness of particular assessment measures and methods.

### Parameters of Team Assessment

#### *What to Measure*

A team usually operates in some larger organizational context. Just as team members have personal assignments within the team, so the team as a whole has a function within this larger system. Accordingly, many writers make use of the *Input-Process-Output* rubric to organize thinking about the features of a team that will influence performance and therefore affect the ways that one goes about defining and assessing performance.

Inputs include such things as the type of people involved (number and skills of members), team resources available (money and equipment), the nature of the “raw” materials to be used, team structure (communication channels, distribution of authority), team history (levels of past performance, past relationships among members), and team mission (time urgency, novelty, and difficulty). Processes

involve patterns and sequences of individual-level thinking and feelings, on one hand, and team-related activities associated with such things as managing relationships, coordinating work flow and communications, and using influence tactics, on the other. Outcomes usually refer to levels of individual performance within the team, degree of mission accomplishment by the team, positive or negative changes in capacity (over time) to function well as a team, and levels of stakeholder satisfaction. Degree of satisfaction with outcomes is usually related to the needs, goals, and expectations of the stakeholder. Stakeholders interested in team performance can include the team members themselves, the team leader, clients, customers, and (in the case of a sports team) an audience.

Current thinking is that a complete team assessment should also provide information regarding the contribution of the various factors that are thought to drive team performance. Typically this requires an examination of the activities of individual team members, the team leader, key team-member dyads (e.g., pilot and copilot), and the team as a whole. For example, the team may perform poorly because of one unprepared member, poor team leadership, or team-level problems with communication. Although the preferred approach to assessment will depend on its purpose, most experts on team assessment emphasize the need to examine both processes (individual or team) and outcomes (individual or team) in order to gain an adequate perspective on the nature and causes of high or low performance.

The mission or type of the team will strongly affect the key inputs, processes, and outcomes to assess. Most typologies of teams include variants of the following: production, project, service, command and control, action, advisory, or management. This list conveys some notion of the kinds of people (with attendant skills) required as input for effective team performance.

### *Where to Measure*

Team performance can be exhibited in a number of venues, such as a training situation, the actual workplace, or a setting created for assessment purposes (e.g., a simulation). The choice of setting should relate to the purpose of assessment. That is, the purpose may be to improve team

member skills, to measure the “typical” performance of the team, or to discover the team’s capacity for maximum performance or performance under stress. The choice of setting should also relate to the function that the assessment information will play (e.g., remediation, compensation, or certification).

### *How to Measure*

Many methods are useful to the assessment of team performance, but the feasible set will depend on the purpose, the foci, and the setting. Typically, obtaining valid assessments of processes represents the greatest challenge. Processes by their very nature are emergent, in that they unfold over time. They are also ephemeral in that they usually do not leave any signs or artifacts. Individual processes of interest include the way someone attends to, selects, stores, and retrieves information.

Under some circumstances, getting a good measure of the pattern of decisions or choices made by each of the team members or the way that members handle emotions (e.g., relative to success or failure) may also represent important process information. At the team level, processes are reflected in interactions and activities by and among team members. In this case, measures need to be crafted and used to assess the number and patterns of communications among members, interpersonal influence, decisions made, work flow, and so on.

### *Measuring Processes*

When team performance is defined as effective individual or team processes, the assessment is traditionally done by using techniques such as ratings by skilled observers, postperformance reports of team members, content analysis of video recordings of individual and team-level activities, or the pattern of choices or decisions captured by computer work stations. Each of these approaches has both advantages and liabilities.

Current thinking is that team-level processes (e.g., patterns of member activities) result in what are called *proximal* outcomes. These are transitory or recurrent states of a team that are produced by team dynamics. Once these states are created, they become a characteristic of a team. It is important to note that, as a team property, they will have an

impact on future team processes and often on the eventual performance level of the team (called *distal outcomes* or *outputs*). Concepts such as *team cohesion*, *team shared cognition*, *team potency*, *team trust*, and *team climate* have been used to describe such emergent states. As a generalization, teams that can be described (rated) as highly cohesive, possessing a supportive climate, or having members with shared goals and high levels of trust are thought to be effective. To put it another way, such teams are poised to demonstrate high performance, subject to resources and authority.

### *Measuring Outcomes*

When team performance is defined as desired individual or team outcomes, valid assessment can be equally challenging. In operational settings, performance may be estimated by examining outcomes such as level, speed, or efficiency of work goal attainment for either the members or the team as a whole. Such outcome information is often found in operational records. However, before one selects such metrics, it is important to control for or rule out factors that could contaminate the measure and thus reduce its validity. For example, high mortality rates of a hospital team may be an artifact of the way cases get assigned to teams, such that truly effective teams get the worst cases. Blindly accepting mortality rate as a metric without adjustments would be inappropriate. Ratings by supervisors, analysts, or customers are commonly used to obtain assessments of outcome quality. An outcome of importance in some contexts is a measurable improvement in team member skills or a more positive attitude by members relative to such things as their desire to stay in the team or their feelings of individual or collective efficacy. These too are frequently assessed via ratings based on member behaviors or activities during or after a team performance episode. Such ratings can also be obtained from members directly.

Stakeholder satisfaction is increasingly being used as an indicator of team performance because many teams exist to provide service to others. Levels of satisfaction can be estimated by customer surveys, unsolicited customer comments, or levels of repeat business garnered by the team. Because each of these indicators may be imperfect or incomplete, many organizations make use of more

than one measurement tool to assess stakeholder satisfaction.

The level of team performance may take time to become manifest. For example, the objective may be to assess the performance of a top management team of a large work organization after a change of CEO. The nature of work at the level of the CEO and the interplay among members of the *top management team* are complex and poorly understood. However, it is believed that it takes time for a new CEO to staff a strong top management team. Once team members are in place, the CEO must build a well-functioning team and create and then implement strategy.

Even if all this is done expeditiously, it still may take months to see the impact of strategy on such outcomes as market share, return on investment, or stock price. Yet these are the kind of measures to which the typical CEO and top management team will be held accountable. Clearly the scores obtained from an assessment of the performance of a top management team depend greatly on when that assessment takes place.

### **Interteam Relationships**

In many contexts, the quality of interteam relationships is important to the assessment of team performance. Examples include project teams that must function within a larger program, production teams that combine outputs from other teams, teams that are part of a supply chain, or military units that must function effectively with units in a battle situation. In such cases, teams are interdependent relative to inputs or outcomes. Moreover, in business today, there are team member clusters and whole teams that are separated geographically but connected via technology (virtual global teams). These present a special challenge for team performance assessment.

In summary, the assessment of team performance must be guided by a deep knowledge of team dynamics, the team mission, and the context in which the team functions. The appropriate approach will also be contingent on the goal or purpose of assessment.

*Richard Klimoski*

*See also* Group Cohesiveness; Group Development; Group Performance; Group Potency; Shared Mental Models; Team Building; Team Reflexivity; Teams



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## TEAM REFLEXIVITY

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With the increasing relevance of teamwork in organizations, the quest for the factors that enhance team effectiveness has grown exponentially. *Team reflexivity* is one of the factors that has been identified as a possible key variable in explaining the effectiveness of work teams. Team reflexivity can be defined as the extent to which team members collectively reflect on the team's objectives, strategies, and processes, as well as their wider organizations and environments, and adapt accordingly.

### Conceptualization

The concept of team reflexivity was initially developed by Michael West, but other scholars, such as Michaela Schippers and Carsten de Dreu, have

also contributed significantly to its understanding. It is conceptualized as a process involving three stages or components: *reflection*, *planning*, and *action* or *adaptation*. The three stages are of equal importance.

The first stage, *team reflection*, refers to a team's joint exploration of work-related issues and includes behaviors such as questioning, planning, exploratory learning, analysis, reviewing past events with self-awareness, and coming to terms over time with the new awareness. Reflection levels are assumed to vary in depth. Shallow reflection consists of thinking about issues closely related to the task at hand. An illustrative question at this level is, Do people think we communicate information about patients well within this team? Moderate reflection is characterized by a more critical approach toward tasks. An illustrative question at this level is, Let's think about some alternatives in terms of how we could best improve our product design processes. Finally, deep reflection involves rethinking the norms and values of the team or organization, as illustrated in a statement such as, "So we agree that our communication about patients is hampered by professional divisions within the team."

The second stage, *planning*, refers to the activities that enable reflections to change into action or adaptation. Planning involves four dimensions: *detail* (the extent to which a plan is worked out in detail before action as opposed to being worked out only during action), *inclusiveness of potential problems* (the extent to which a team develops alternative plans in case of inadvertent circumstance), *a priori hierarchical ordering of plans* (the extent to which plans are broken up into subplans before actions are commenced), and *time scale* (the extent to which both short- and long-term plans are drawn). Planning is important because it creates a perceptual readiness for, and guides team members' attention toward, relevant opportunities for action and means to accomplish the team's goal.

The third stage, *action* or *adaptation*, concerns the goal-directed behaviors relevant for achieving the desired changes in team objectives, strategies, processes, organizations, or environments previously identified by the team during the stage of reflection. The action component of reflexivity can be assessed in four dimensions: *magnitude* (the

scale of an action or change initiated by the team), *novelty* (how new the action or change is for the team, organization, or other stakeholders), *radicalness* (the amount of change in the status quo that the action or change represents), and *effectiveness* (the extent to which the action or change achieves the intended team goals).

Typically, reflexive teams show more detailed planning, pay more attention to long-term consequences, and have a larger inventory of environmental cues to which they respond. In contrast, a nonreflexive team shows little awareness of the team's objectives, its strategies, and the environment in which it operates. Nonreflexive teams tend to rely on the use of habitual routines. In other words, they tend to repeatedly exhibit a similar pattern of behavior in a given situation without explicitly discussing it or by selecting it over other possible courses of action. This lack of exploration of alternative hypotheses ultimately leads to stagnation, lack of innovation, and inability to adapt to a changing environment.

### Factors That Trigger Team Reflexivity

Team reflexivity is unlikely to arise naturally. Reflection often involves recognizing a discrepancy between actual and desired circumstances, which can generate anxiety and uncertainty. Moreover, reflection might demand change in action, and individuals and organizations are naturally resistant to change. In the face of these factors, teams tend not to engage in reflexivity in a voluntary fashion.

In contrast with other, more stable team characteristics that are difficult to modify (such as membership), managers can actively promote team reflexivity and consequently increase the level of team effectiveness. Indeed, several factors have been suggested to trigger team reflexivity.

*Leadership style* is one such factor. In order to foster reflexivity, leaders should adopt a style that creates the conditions for experimentation and risk taking and that develops shared commitment to reflecting on and questioning routine practices. Leaders can concentrate their efforts on longer-term goals, emphasize a vision, inspire team members to pursue the vision, coach followers to take responsibility for their development, and encourage team members to reflect on errors. *Team member changes* also provide an opportunity for

reflection as they imply a rearrangement of work processes and enable an exchange of perspectives between the newcomer and the team. *Errors and failures* can be used as a tool for learning because they offer valuable feedback and have the potential to stimulate teams to reflect on the processes or assumptions that led to them. *Successes* constitute an equally important trigger for reflection. Although teams tend not to look back on their work when they are successful, analyzing what they did well and how they did it offers important learning. Other factors that can trigger team reflexivity are cooperative conflict management; difficulties over time allocations; difficulties in synchronizing the work of the different team members; and interruptions, such as crises, obstacles, and organizational changes.

Interventions conducted by West and his colleagues to promote team reflexivity suggest that these concepts are readily grasped by teams and that levels of reflexivity rapidly increase, with sustained reflexivity up to 12 months after interventions begin. Moreover, reflexivity has also been successfully manipulated in experimental studies, suggesting that in applied settings managers should be able to induce reflexivity.

Studying reflexivity demands methodologies that can gauge the depth and richness of the process. Most research on team reflexivity has been conducted by means of questionnaires. Other methodological approaches that have potential for advancing understanding of reflexivity are critical incident techniques, observation of team meetings, focus groups, and longitudinal interventions.

### Impact on Team Effectiveness

Recent research in both experimental and field settings has found evidence for the positive effects of team reflexivity. These effects were observed in samples comprising management, production, and service teams from a variety of sectors, including banking, government, health care, the chemical industry, and research and development. In these studies, the impact of team reflexivity was particularly powerful when the environment was uncertain and teams had complex tasks that required nonroutine activities.

Overall, team reflexivity has been found to be positively related to desirable outcomes such as

systematic information processing, creativity, innovation, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, reflexivity has been found to moderate the impact of other team characteristics on team performance. For instance, diversity in terms of goal orientation is positively associated with team performance only when teams are highly reflexive. In addition, cooperative outcome interdependence is related to more intensive information sharing, increased learning, and higher team effectiveness only when team reflexivity is high.

Although the mechanisms by which reflexivity affects performance have been specified theoretically, there is little empirical research examining them. One of the few relevant studies reported that reflexivity increased team effectiveness by enhancing communication and implementation of strategies, as well as similarity of mental models.

### Conclusion

Team reflexivity is a useful concept for both understanding and promoting team effectiveness. This is partly because many teams are not naturally reflexive. The capacity to reflect on behavior is unique to humans and is useful in many contexts. In the complex setting of interdependent teamwork, reflexivity offers a powerful means of improving the effectiveness of the team.

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*See also* Group Learning; Group Motivation; Group Performance; Group Problem Solving and Decision Making; Shared Mental Models; Teams

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## TEAMS

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Teams are social entities that come together to perform complex, dynamic, and critical tasks that are beyond the capabilities of an individual. Teams are now part of every aspect of organizational life. They are prevalent in government, the military, health care, aviation and space, the corporate world, the oil industry, and manufacturing, to name just a few settings. Teams are deployed to solve organizational effectiveness problems, to deal with life-or-death situations, to create new products, to resolve world conflicts as peace keepers, to put out wildfires, and to rescue people during natural disasters.

Indeed, teams are an integral part of our society. Nonetheless, questions remain about teams: What are teams? How are they different from groups? What is teamwork? What do we know about team dynamics? What do effective teams do? These questions are answered in this entry.

### Some Definitions

Some important definitions are needed to understand team dynamics in organizations. First, a *team* can be defined as a set of two or more individuals who adaptively, episodically, and dynamically interact interdependently through specified roles and responsibilities as they work toward shared and valued goals. Team member interdependency (i.e., task interdependency) is a critical feature of a team and distinguishes a group of individuals from a team. Although this distinction might seem academic, it highlights that teams and groups are not the same. Teams and groups have different organizational and leadership structure, goals, communication requirements, life spans, and task intensity. Team members usually have a

past and a future together. In contrast, group members (e.g., people who participate on juries, councils, task forces, brainstorming groups) usually have limited time together and nothing to tie them together other than a particular task at one particular time.

In addition, because they contain specific roles, teams can often be characterized as having distributed expertise. That is, team members often have different specializations in which teammates hold different information about the task and possess different knowledge and skills. In fact, it is this diversity of expertise that creates the synergy for teams to complete work outside the scope of any one individual's capabilities. And the dynamics of effective teamwork are necessary to realize this synergy.

What is teamwork? *Teamwork* is the dynamic, simultaneous, and recursive enactment of behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive mechanisms (in the form of team processes) that affect moment-to-moment actions and performance outcomes. Teamwork, then, is a set of interrelated, adaptable, and flexible cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes needed to achieve desired team goals. One can argue that teams "think," "do," and "feel" as they perform and execute their interdependent tasks. These cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes represent the team-level competencies (i.e., the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, or KSAs) that members need in order to execute effective team functions and achieve performance greater than that predicted by the combined efforts of the individual team members.

To be clear, it is useful to think of competencies within a team as belonging to one of two types: teamwork and *task work*. Task work competencies are KSAs used to accomplish individual task performance—the application of these skills does not require interdependent interaction within the team. Teamwork competencies, in contrast, are the KSAs necessary for members to function within an interdependent team. They occur only at the team level. Therefore, team members must possess not only individual-level expertise relevant to their own individual tasks but also expertise in the social-cognitive dynamics of teamwork. Teamwork is the *process* of enacting these teamwork competencies.

What is team performance? *Team performance* is a multilevel process that arises as team members

enact their individual behaviors *and* individual- and team-level teamwork processes. Team performance can be contrasted with the definition of teamwork provided above, which focused on the enactment of teamwork processes alone. Therefore, teamwork is nested within team performance. Team performance is the combination of both individual performance and teamwork processes.

What is team effectiveness? *Team effectiveness* is an evaluation of the outcomes of team performance relative to some criteria. It is a judgment of how well the results of performance meet some set of relatively objective measures (e.g., metrics of productivity) or subjective standards (e.g., supervisor or observer ratings). These standards, to be meaningful, should be aligned with the goals of the team and organization.

### Research Theories and Results

What contributes to teamwork? Interest in teams has led to a plethora of theoretical models of teamwork and team performance. Eduardo Salas and colleagues recently reviewed almost 140 studies from various disciplines that model aspects of teamwork or team performance. This proliferation of models is indicative of the widespread fascination with teams and teamwork. But what do all these models tell us about teamwork and team performance?

Most models include *inputs* (e.g., task structure, member characteristics), *processes* (e.g., coordination, communication), and *outputs* (e.g., member satisfaction, team performance), which together are known as IPOs. Although the IPO perspective has become the preferred way to model teams, some theorists add system theory constructs. For example, Joseph McGrath adds the notion of *dynamic change* in his model of time, interaction, and performance. And Daniel Ilgen and colleagues extend the IPO framework to include emergent states and feedback loops. Such perspectives propose a less linear framework that takes into account the dynamic nature of team functioning.

What contributes to teamwork, however, are five factors supported or "glued" by three others. Salas and colleagues have proposed that there is a "Big Five" in teamwork. They argue that, across domains, team goals, tasks, and structures, there are five core components of teamwork (as long as

team members have high task interdependence). The *core teamwork components* are team leadership, adaptability, mutual performance monitoring, backup or supportive behavior, and team orientation. The importance of each component may vary across contexts or domains, but each of the Big Five in some form is essential for any type of teamwork. In addition, Salas and colleagues have identified three *collaborating mechanisms*: shared mental models, closed-loop communication, and mutual trust. These collaborating mechanisms are necessary because they facilitate the enactment of the Big Five.

### Key Components

*Team leadership* has substantial implications for the effectiveness of teams and organizations at large. The functional approach to leadership characterizes it as promoting coordinated, adaptive team performance by facilitating goal clarification and attainment. Leaders solve collective problems through four general types of actions. They search for and structure information, they use information in problem solving and sense-making, they manage human capital resources, and they manage material resources. Kimberly Smith-Jentsch and colleagues have identified two specific team leadership behaviors that contribute to expert team performance. First, team leaders provide guidance and suggestions on improvements. This facilitates team learning and development, which lead to higher levels of future performance. Second, team leaders identify team- and individual-level priorities to ensure that the aspects of the team and individual tasks that are most critical for team outcomes are given the most attention.

*Adaptability* underlies many team functions and behaviors and can be defined as the team's ability to change (shift) team-based processes in response to demands from the environment in a manner that results in effective team functioning. Adaptability is an essential component of teamwork, especially for teams operating under dynamic, stressful, and time-critical conditions. Until recently, only a small amount of research dealt with temporal aspects of team adaptation and performance. This neglect is beginning to be addressed.

For example, C. Shawn Burke and colleagues have proposed a model of team adaptation. At the

core of this model is *adaptive team performance*, which is characterized as an emergent phenomenon based on the unfolding of a recursive cycle of performance. It occurs when one or more team members functionally redirect (change) current cognitive or behavioral actions or structures to meet expected or emerging demands. Burke argues that adaptive team performance is achieved as the team passes through four phases. The first phase consists of *situation assessment*, during which team members scan the environment, recognize cue patterns, and build a coherent understanding of their present situation. The second phase is *plan formulation*, during which team members collectively generate and decide on a course of action. The third phase is *plan execution*, which is achieved via the team coordination mechanisms (behavioral actions) that are in place. The fourth and final phase is *team learning*, during which the team evaluates the effectiveness of its performance and makes appropriate corrections. The results of this team learning feed into future team performance episodes (i.e., pass through the adaptive cycle).

*Mutual performance monitoring* is how team members keep track of their teammates' work while carrying out their own. They do this to ensure that everything is going as expected and that they are following procedures correctly. It involves team members being aware of their surroundings, an essential component of teamwork. A team must develop a strong habit of mutual performance monitoring, as well as attitudes that define it as critical to high performance. For mutual performance monitoring to be successful, team members must develop a shared understanding of their task, mission, and equipment. Such an understanding is essential in order to detect deviations from normal or expected conditions. Knowing *what should be* happening is a necessary condition for obtaining useful information from observations of *what is* happening at any one time.

*Backup behavior* (or supporting behavior) happens when team members step in to help one another. It is defined as a discretionary behavior enacted when there is recognition by potential backup providers that there is a workload demand distribution problem in their team. As noted above, mutual performance monitoring is a necessary condition for backup behavior, and backup behavior is necessary to transform mutual

performance monitoring into performance gains. Backup behavior can involve either physical or verbal (or other communicative) assistance.

Backup behavior supports effective team functioning in three key ways. First, it allows team members to receive timely and precise feedback so that team performance processes can be adjusted. Second, it allows team members to provide assistance during task performance. Third, as already noted, it allows teams to dynamically adjust their performance strategies and processes when an imbalance in the workload distribution is detected. This creates an adaptive capacity to correct errors and shift performance strategies.

*Team orientation* is more than an individual's disposition to work in a team rather than alone. It is the propensity to value and use task inputs from teammates. These preferences and patterns of behavior are essential for effective teamwork. For example, when teams experience increasing levels of stress (e.g., time pressure), team members can succumb to intentional narrowing, in which they shift their focus away from the team and toward their individual tasks. This causes them to become less likely to accept input or feedback from others on their team. A strong team orientation can mitigate this tendency.

### *Collaborating Mechanisms*

The five core components of teamwork discussed above are facilitated by three core collaborating mechanisms: shared mental models, closed-loop communication, and mutual trust. They do this by ensuring that information is exchanged, distributed, and processed in an appropriate and timely manner.

*Shared mental models* are organized knowledge structures that facilitate execution of interdependent team processes. An individual-level mental model is a knowledge structure that helps to integrate information and comprehend some phenomenon of interest. Expanded to the team level, a shared mental model is a knowledge structure that is shared across the members of the team. This "sharedness" allows team members to interpret information in a similar manner and thereby facilitates effective team function. Team members who hold shared mental representations are better able to develop similar causal explanations of a

situation and similar inferences about possible states of the situation in the near future. Also, holding shared mental models enables implicit coordination (e.g., passing information without its having been requested), that is, communicating without overtly doing so.

*Closed-loop communication* is a specific pattern of communication that enables effective teamwork. In general, communication is information exchange between a sender and a receiver, with both knowing that the information was received. Communication is the means by which team members translate individual-level understanding into the team-level dynamic representations that guide coordinated actions. Effective teams are able to shift between implicit and explicit coordination when environmental demands change. When effective teams engage in explicit coordination, they use closed-loop communication. Three features define closed-loop communication: (1) a message that is initiated by the sender; (2) the receipt, interpretation, and acknowledgment of that message by the intended receiver; and (3) a follow-up by the sender, ensuring that the message was received and appropriately interpreted. This pattern of communication helps ensure that all team members are operating under the same goals and understanding of the situation.

Smith-Jentsch and colleagues have identified four specific teamwork behaviors contributing to good team communication. First, team members should use the proper phraseology. Teams that speak with a specialized communication terminology (e.g., military or health care teams) are able to pass large amounts of information quickly. Second, team members should provide complete and timely reports of the information they hold. Third, team members should minimize unneeded communications (e.g., chatter) by focusing only on the essentials of interaction necessary for team functioning. Fourth, to minimize the chance of misinterpretation, team members should make sure that their communications are clear and audible.

*Mutual trust* in the context of teams is members' shared perception that the team is motivated and able to protect the interests of its members. Mutual trust concerns the team's motivation and ability to resolve conflicts so that members feel accountability and ownership for team results. Without mutual trust, resources of the team (e.g.,

attention and communication) may be squandered on unnecessary surveillance of members to ensure that they are performing adequately. Mutual trust also underlies team processes and outcomes, such as members' willingness to disseminate information, members' contributions, members' participation, and the quality of the team's performance.

### *What Do Effective Teams Do?*

Research has identified a number of behaviors and cognitions that distinguish high-performing from lower performing teams. High-performance teams hold shared mental models; they self-correct and adapt as they perform; they have clear roles and responsibilities; they have shared vision; they engage in a cycle of prebriefing, performing, and debriefing; their members trust one another; they have a sense of teamwork; and they optimize resources. In sum, high-performing teams are not just a collection of the "best players"—having the best person in each position does not guarantee team success. To succeed, teams need teamwork.

*Eduardo Salas*

*See also* Group Composition; Group Development; Group Learning; Group Performance; Group Structure; Shared Mental Models; Team Building; Team Performance Assessment; Team Reflexivity; Trust; Work Teams

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## TERRITORIALITY

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*Territoriality*, or territorial behavior, is related to occupation or ownership and control of a geographical area. A *territory* is a spatial unit that is defended from encroachment. In contrast to *personal space*, conceived by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall as an area or "bubble" that moves with a person, a territory is a region that is fixed. Topics of interest to social psychologists are how different kinds of territories affect social behavior and the consequences of territorial invasion. This entry examines the background of the idea of territoriality and some relevant research.

### Background

Within the social sciences, the concept of territory has long been of interest to geographers and to sociologists who studied how street gangs mark out their home turf. The significance of territoriality for social psychologists, however, arose predominantly from theory developed in *ethology*—the study of animals in their natural environments. The ornithologist Henry Howard noted in 1920 that birds defined and used small spaces, which he called *territories*. How animals come to occupy and then defend a territory attracted the attention of the ethologists Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen. They found that territoriality occurs mostly *within* an animal species. It is instinctive and is associated with mating, rearing of the young, and protecting access to food sources. In both social and environmental psychology, territoriality is not confined to individuals but also occurs for groups.

In territorial species, territorial behavior is linked to aggression in the defense of space. Members of a species spread out and divide the available living space, establish a territory, and defend it against intruders of their own species. Attacks against an invading conspecific can occur, but these are often minimized by the use of *boundary marking*—Bears mark trees with their claws,

dogs urinate, cats spray and also leave their scent by rubbing against objects, and birds sing. If an intruder persists, an aggression display signals what could follow and may head off an actual attack. Within some species, such as primates, a territory underpins the social structure of the group and provides a context for dominance hierarchies that control access to resources by group members.

The combined thrust of arguments in the ethological and psychological literature is that territoriality serves two functions: It regulates social interaction, and it defines identity. Both functions have been explored in social-psychological research. With respect to social interaction, defining a territory eases contact between people by reducing conflict and miscommunication. It involves individualizing a place with a marking device that serves as a boundary and communicates ownership. Claiming a territory can also communicate identity, either for oneself or for one's group.

The environmental psychologist Irwin Altman viewed territorial behavior as a mechanism that controls social interaction. He argued that human territoriality has several components:

- It regulates interaction by defining self–other boundaries. (This notion overlaps with the concept of *privacy*, that is, how we control access to the self or to our group.)
- It involves personalization, or marking, of a geographical area.
- It communicates real or implied ownership by its users or inhabitants.

### Kinds of Territories

Altman distinguished between primary, secondary, and public territories, noting that these vary in terms of how central they are to the lives of individuals or to the activities of groups to which they belong. Different kinds of territories also vary in terms of their duration of possession or ownership, ranging from transient to long-term occupancy.

#### *Primary Territories*

A primary territory is owned and most often used exclusively. Ownership is invested in an individual or a group, and this is clearly identifiable to

others. A home is an example of a primary territory and is used often permanently by a primary group, such as a family. This kind of territory is the most central to the concept of *privacy*, as defined above. As a primary territory, someone's house is therefore the most clearly marked. It is likely to have fences or hedges as its boundaries. It may have a gate and almost certainly a lockable front door and a bell for visitors. Of all territories, it is the one that is most actively defended when invaded. Generally, the use of defensive force is accepted in the face of home invasion.

Within a primary territory, members of a primary group usually differentiate between areas in terms of how they may be used. The kitchen is likely to be communal, whereas the bathroom is declared off limits to most other group members for short periods of time. In the family home, growing children stake their claim to their bedrooms by mounting photos of friends, posters of pop stars, and trophies on the walls. In time, children may also expect their parents to knock before entering. Likewise, in shared spaces such as an open-plan office or a student dormitory, the use of decorations stamps one's personal identity on a specific zone and enhances the perception of personal control.

According to Altman, primary territories are powerful privacy-regulation mechanisms. In Western culture at least, they are usually treated in a sacrosanct way and can be entered only with the owner's permission. The degree to which an individual personalizes a primary territory indicates how attached that person is to that space. For example, university students who decorate their rooms in residence halls are more likely to identify with the hall and the university and to extend their studies there beyond their freshman year. Violation of a primary territory is a threat to a person's identity, and a failure to regulate one's privacy can lead to a loss of self-esteem. Examples of people who have little or no primary territory are prisoners, psychiatric hospital patients, and the homeless.

#### *Secondary Territories*

A secondary territory is less psychologically central and less exclusive than a primary territory. Secondary territories may have a limited degree of ownership, such as clubrooms by club



members or the foyer of an apartment building by its inhabitants. Such territories may even function as “homes” in certain cases. For example, regular frequenters of a neighborhood bar may regard the bar as their shared domain and feel that they can control who may use the space, even to the point of trying to deny entry to strangers. Intruders can be subjected to hostile looks and insulting or mocking statements. Regulars at a bar can also treat it as an office, taking phone calls, storing funds with the bartender, and receiving mail.

Some researchers have included temporary interactional areas as a special kind of secondary territory. An example is the way a small cluster of people occupies a circle of floor space at a party. Altman, however, has argued that such a shared area is better classified as a *group personal space*, an enlarged and shared version of Hall’s personal bubble—a “transparent membrane” that can shift with the people who are inside it. Because secondary territories are usually semipublic, conflict is possible over their location, their boundaries, and even their existence. The less clear the rules governing the use of a secondary territory, the more likely it will be encroached.

### **Public Territories**

A public territory is one that everybody can enter and occupy from time to time. Occupancy, therefore, is temporary and usually not exclusive. For example, just because an individual has arrived first at the beach does not mean that other people can be prevented from swimming. Public territories can be exclusive for the time of occupancy, such as a seat in a restaurant or a telephone booth, but people have no rights over them once they leave. Occupancy of a public territory does not imply complete freedom of action. Behavior is typically constrained by community norms, sometimes defined in posted rules, such as the ban on alcoholic beverages in certain parks.

### **Territorial Invasion**

A territorial encroachment involves an unacceptable breach of a personal or group boundary. Violation of a boundary means that the level of achieved privacy is less than the level of desired

privacy. Like animals, people use territorial markers to deter encroachment on their territories. For example, a home owner might use fences, hedges, or signs (e.g., “Beware of dog”). And a worker in a shared office might use personal items, such as calendars, desk ornaments, or photos. At the group level, people living in a particular residential area might indicate that their neighborhood is off limits to burglars by forming citizen patrols or creating a gated community that only residents can enter. In such cases, the creation of a defensible space contributes to the stability of the social system.

The reaction to a territorial invasion varies with the type of territory. Primary territories, such as homes, usually involve legal ownership, so an emergency call to the police might serve to deal with a home invasion. Intrusions into secondary territories, where ownership is not always obvious, are more difficult to address. Marking one’s space in a public territory can deter encroachment, although the success of the strategy depends on the number of occupants seeking space. In a study by Robert Sommer, when few people were using a library and density was therefore low, almost any marker, such as a paperback book or even an old newspaper (although not litter), was an effective way of protecting reading space when a person left the room. However, when many people were using the library and density was high, a personal marker such as a coat was much more effective.

### **Conclusion**

Both individuals and groups are embedded in social environments. Although these environments provide benefits, they also generate costs. Territoriality is a means of reducing these costs by buffering individuals and groups from unwanted interactions. Given the striking similarities in how various species of animals create and defend territories, it is not surprising that territoriality has elicited a good deal of theoretical and empirical attention from researchers from various disciplines.

*Graham M. Vaughan*

*See also* Crowding; Group Boundaries; Norms

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## TERRORISM

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There are more than 100 different definitions of terrorism. One possible reason for this lack of consensus is that the pejorative connotation of the terrorism label motivates individuals to set it apart from forms of aggression they wish to condone. That is, because terrorism is considered heinous and illegitimate, those considered terrorists by others often reject such a label because they see their cause as righteous and justified. This is embodied in the often-heard assertion that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. One common element in the different definitions of terrorism represents its core: Terrorism is the strategic use of fear to advance one's political objectives. This definition, however, creates a situation wherein the use of fear by organized states in order to break the morale of a targeted population will fall under the label of (*state terrorism*). For that reason, perhaps, most definitions used by terrorism researchers restrict terrorism to nonstate actors.

### Terrorism Throughout History

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. Documented incidents of terrorism, loosely defined, date back to the ancient world. During the 1st century CE, Jews rebelling against Roman occupation wandered through crowded streets, using daggers to indiscriminately kill not only Romans but their

Jewish brethren as well. In 1605, Guy Fawkes infamously attempted to blow up King James, the King's council, and the English Parliament as part of the ultimately foiled Gunpowder Plot. During the 20th century, terrorism was successfully employed in Russia, China, Cuba, and Iran by revolutionaries looking to overthrow their governments. Although these examples offer only a small sampling of the countless numbers of terrorist acts that litter the pages of human history, their diverse nature illustrates that terrorists need not share any common goals but merely an ideological conviction legitimizing fear and violence as a means to their desired end.

During the past 40 years, the number of countries reporting terrorist incidents has steadily grown, with the countries of Israel, Iraq, Pakistan, and Colombia reporting the greatest number of incidents. During this same period, terrorists have also increasingly targeted persons, in addition to structures and other forms of property.

Terrorists show considerable creativity in the tactics they use in their attacks. Seven tactics—bombings (including suicide bombings), assassinations, armed assaults, kidnappings, arson, hijackings, and hostage incidents—account for the overwhelming majority of all terrorist incidents in recent history. Nonetheless, the way these and other tactics have been used (e.g., the conversion of commercial aircraft into missiles, the use of sophisticated improvised explosive device technology, the use of poisonous gas in public places) attests to considerable ingenuity and adaptability of terrorist activities to situational conditions.

### The Psychology of Terrorism

Though terrorism has manifold aspects, fundamental questions about terrorism are sociopsychological in nature. These questions concern individuals' motivations for joining a terrorist organization, recruitment modes and means of persuasion, the inculcation of belief systems that justify terrorism and portray it as efficient and honorable, and organizational decision making regarding its use.

More generally, each of these questions belongs to one of three levels of psychological analysis. The individual level pertains to psychological factors that operate on the terrorist as a person, the group

level pertains to interpersonal psychological phenomena that arise in group settings, and the organizational level pertains to factors regarding the structure and functioning of terrorist organizations.

### *The Individual Level*

Because the atrocities that terrorists perpetrate violate fundamental norms of human conduct, terrorism was thought to represent a form of psychopathology. However, the systematic quest for a terrorist psychopathology or for a unique terrorist personality has yielded little empirical support. The majority of research has pointed to the “normality” of individuals involved in terrorist acts.

The search for situational “root causes” of terrorism, such as socioeconomic status, age, education, relative deprivation, religion, foreign occupation, or poverty, has also proven disappointing. The primary hindrance is the conceptual problem of specificity: Although many people share the same oppressive environments, only a small number consider joining a terrorist organization. Thus, none of these environmental factors can be considered the necessary and sufficient condition for, or *the* cause of, terrorism. This does not imply that personality traits or environmental conditions are irrelevant to terrorism. Rather, they are best regarded as contributing factors to terrorism in that they may enhance an individual’s support for, or involvement in, a terrorist act or organization, under specific circumstances.

In recent years, a number of different theories on terrorists’ motivations have been proffered. Some have emphasized a singular motivation, such as the quest for emotional and social support, resistance to foreign occupation, or religion. In contrast to this emphasis on a single crucial motivation, other theories have listed a potpourri, or cocktail, of motives (e.g., honor, dedication to the leader, humiliation, modernization, pain and personal loss, group pressure, vengeance) that might propel individuals toward terrorism.

A reasonable step in dealing with such heterogeneity is to reduce it by aggregating the diverse motives for becoming a terrorist into more general, motivational categories. Several authors have hinted at such a taxonomy, based on a partition between ideological reasons and personal causes for engaging in terrorism. For instance, alienated individuals’

quest for social and emotional support stems from their personal experience, as do pain, trauma, and redemption of lost honor, often listed as motives. In contrast, liberation of one’s land or carrying out of God’s will pertains to ideological factors that transcend individual actors’ life circumstances. A terrorism-justifying ideology identifies a culprit (e.g., the West, Israel, infidels) presumed responsible for the discrepancy between the extant and desired state (defining the grievance) and portrays violence against that culprit (e.g., jihad, terrorism) as an effective means for redressing the grievance and moving toward the desired state.

Beyond personal causes and ideological reasons, a third motivational category pertinent to suicidal attacks involves a sense of social duty and obligation, whether internalized or induced by social pressure. This is exemplified in the case of World War II Japanese kamikaze pilots, but it is also highly relevant to present-day terrorism.

Suicide terrorism is an extreme form of terrorism in which terrorists claim their own life along with those of their victims, thus becoming “martyrs” for an ideological cause. Although a wide variety of specific factors have been suggested as possible motives of suicide bombers, it is possible that a quest for personal significance serves as an overarching motivational category responsible for suicidal terrorism. This explanation posits that suicide missions are seen by those who undertake them as means of gaining or restoring significance or as preventing the loss of significance.

### *The Group Level*

Violence, in general, and the killing of innocents, more specifically, fall outside the norms of most civilized societies. Because it is difficult to sustain deviance on one’s own, terrorism is typically carried out in the context of groups whose ideologies or shared realities lend terrorism an aura of legitimacy. Several sociopsychological aspects of terrorism require analysis at the group level. These include recruitment to the group, construction and maintenance of the group’s shared beliefs, and the mechanism of public commitment.

Recruitment to terrorist groups can occur through networking (introduction to the group through a family member, friend, romantic partner, or other acquaintance), institutions (e.g.,

churches and mosques, religious schools) whose climates and/or explicit objectives concern ideological indoctrination, or self-recruitment (e.g., through the Internet). These bottom-up (e.g., networking, the Internet) and top-down (e.g., religious institution) recruitment processes are intertwined. The personal relations provide the motivational impetus for adopting the ideology and its social validation, whereas the Internet messages furnish the ideological arguments themselves and inflame the motivation to accept those arguments.

Another important group-level process inherent in terrorist activity is the creation of an *ensconced culture*. Typically, a terrorist group exists within a larger society with which it may have varying degrees of worldview overlap. In some cases, the perspectives, values, and objectives held by the terrorist group have little in common with those of the larger society. In other cases, the overlap is substantial, and the terrorist group is seen as acting on behalf of the larger society. Because of the nearly inevitable exposure of the embedded terrorist group to views emanating from the larger society, the latter may impact the terrorists' opinions. Thus, terrorist groups whose ideologies are divergent from the societal worldviews often feel the need to protect their ideological premises from contrary external influences. This is often accomplished via reduction of members' contact with outside sources and the creation of a unique culture wherein the terrorism-justifying ideology is repeatedly highlighted.

Because defection from a terrorist group may be demoralizing as well as dangerous (potentially involving the provision of important intelligence to the enemies), terrorist organizations often use tactics of *public commitment* and *social pressure* to ensure members' loyalty. For instance, an important element of the group process brought to bear on the suicidal bomber in training is the creation of a psychological point of no return, which few individuals can overcome. Often, the candidate is made to prepare his or her will and write last letters to family and friends and is then videotaped bidding everybody farewell and encouraging others to follow his or her example. This places an extraordinary amount of pressure on the individual to carry out the deed as planned, thus helping ensure the group's success.

### *The Organizational Level*

The organizational level of analysis is of considerable importance for understanding terrorism. Terrorist groups vary immensely in degree and type of organization that characterize them. Some organizations revolve around a single leader. Others are less autocratic and leader centered.

Based on considerable intuitive appreciation of various psychological principles (of recruitment, indoctrination, training, etc.), terrorist organizations have been able to create a veritable assembly line for the production of devoted foot soldiers prepared to go so far as to sacrifice their own lives for the cause. It is the organizations that then decide when and where to deploy these operatives in ways that best serve the organizations' political agendas.

Because beyond a certain minimal size, terrorist organizations require infrastructure, space for training, and funding, the organizational level of analysis may reveal major vulnerabilities of terrorist organizations, hence affording an opening for launching significant counterterrorism efforts exploiting those vulnerabilities.

### Conclusion

Violent and deadly acts of terrorism perpetrated by both large, multinational organizations (e.g., al-Qaeda) and single individuals acting on their own (e.g., Ted Kaczynski) are capable of undermining the sense of security in the international system as a whole. Hence, a solid understanding of terrorism at macro, micro, and middling levels of analysis is of critical importance. This entry has discussed psychological phenomena proposed to underlie, and thus help explain, various facets of terrorism at the individual, group, and organization levels, with the aim of offering insight into the general psychology of terrorism across its manifold manifestations.

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*See also* Ideology; Intergroup Violence

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## TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY

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All humans view life through a culturally based worldview. According to *terror management theory*, a central function of these worldviews is to imbue existence with meaning and our lives with enduring significance to obscure the terrifying possibility that existence is a brief episode punctuated with oblivion upon death. Groups serve a central role in perpetuating these worldviews, and conflict is often fueled by the threat that other groups' worldviews pose to sustaining faith in the validity of one's own worldview.

Building on Ernest Becker's existential psychoanalytic writings, Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski formulated terror management theory and initiated research to assess the theory. A large body of published experiments from many countries has supported the theory. One central finding is that reminding people of their own mortality generally increases identification with their cultural group and derogation of

others who criticize or violate the group's norms. This research demonstrates that concerns about mortality contribute to many aspects of human behavior, including conformity, obedience, self-esteem striving, nationalism, dogmatism, intergroup conflict, stereotyping, political decision making, and terrorism. This entry summarizes the theory's basic propositions, describes supporting evidence, and discusses the implications for intergroup relations.

### Basic Propositions

Like other animals, humans have a host of biological systems that serve to perpetuate their survival. For humans, survival is enhanced by the evolved human brain, which has the capacity to experience symbolic thought, to think about the past and the future, and to be aware of oneself. However, these same capabilities also make humans aware that eventually these systems will fail, and they will die. This knowledge of mortality in a creature designed for survival creates an ever-present potential for anxiety, or terror.

To manage this potential for terror, humans must view themselves as more than animals fated to obliteration. Cultural worldviews facilitate this denial by portraying life as meaningful and humans as beings of enduring significance who will live on literally or symbolically beyond death. Literal immortality is provided by the concept of a soul that transcends death through an afterlife. Symbolic immortality is provided by viewing the self as continuing on through offspring, legacies, group identifications, and valued achievements: “I will die, but my group, achievements, influence, memory will live on.”

Each culture provides a meaning-imbuing story of where life came from, what its purposes are, and how, through one's valued deeds and roles, one will endure beyond one's physical death. Various religious, educational, political, and entertainment institutions, symbols, and rituals promote faith in this meaningful and security-providing cultural worldview. By sustaining faith in one's cultural worldview and living up to the standards of value prescribed by that worldview (i.e., maintaining self-esteem), individuals can believe they are more than just material animals fated to obliteration and thereby manage their potential terror.

Along with explaining the function of cultural worldviews and self-esteem, the theory explains how meaning and self-worth become the individual's psychological security base. Newborns are completely helpless and dependent on their parents for survival. Thus, parental love and protection constitute the initial basis of security. The many fears of the child, the dark, strangers, big dogs, monsters, and so forth are quelled by the protection of the seemingly omnipotent parents.

From the beginning, parents instill the culture's values and beliefs into their children, including what it means to be good and what it means to be bad. As children develop, parents put demands on them to be good: to behave in certain ways and not in others. When children follow these standards of value, they are comforted and rewarded. When they do not, love is withdrawn, or they are punished. Thus, children come to associate being good with feeling secure and being bad with feeling anxious. Children internalize these standards so they can regulate their own behavior to try to sustain the parental love and protection.

Thus self-esteem, the sense that they are good, buffers children from anxiety. When children feel good, they bask in the omnipotent love and protection of their parents, and everything is right in their world. However, with cognitive development, they become increasingly aware of more powerful threats, especially the ultimate threat to existence, death, and realize the limits of the parents. Children's basis of psychological security, therefore, must be transferred to something greater than the parents, namely, the cultural constructs the parents have instilled in them throughout childhood, including deities (e.g., Jesus), authorities (e.g., the president), and groups (e.g., the United States). From then on, being valued in the eyes of the larger culture rather than the parents is the basis of psychological security. Through this developmental process, the individual's worldview and sense of self-worth provide security in the face of the threats posed by reality that culminate in the knowledge of mortality.

### Empirical Evidence

Terror management theory fits what we know about cultural worldviews, social influence, and the need for self-esteem. Beliefs and rituals

concerning death transcendence have been an important component of virtually all known cultures, from the ancient Sumerians, Egyptians, and Chinese to tribes throughout the globe and to modern Christian, Hindu, and Islamic cultures. History has been greatly influenced by the spread of and clashes among groups with different after-life beliefs. Psychological research documents the human proneness to conformity and obedience to cultural dictates, the relationship between self-esteem and good mental health, and the many ways people pursue and defend their self-esteem.

Terror management research has focused primarily on two broad hypotheses. First, faith in one's worldview and self-esteem should buffer anxiety and protect one from death-related concerns. Research has supported this hypothesis in a number of ways. For example, giving people a boost to their self-esteem reduces their anxiety in response to the prospect of receiving electric shocks, and threats to an individual's worldview or self-esteem arouse anxiety and bring thoughts of death closer to consciousness.

The second broad hypothesis is that when people are reminded of their mortality (known as *mortality salience*), they will intensify their efforts to sustain faith in their worldview and strive harder to demonstrate their self-worth. Mortality salience has been induced in a variety of ways, including asking people to write briefly about their own death, filling out a death anxiety questionnaire, interviewing them near a cemetery, or exposing them to the word *dead* on a computer screen flashed so quickly that the participants are not aware they are seeing the word. Most of the studies compare the effects of mortality salience with the effects of making salient other aversive potential future events, such as being in intense pain, taking an upcoming exam, giving a speech in public, being socially excluded, or feeling uncertain.

These studies show that mortality salience leads to negative reactions to those who violate the morals of or criticize one's worldview and positive reactions to those who uphold the morals of or praise one's worldview. For example, mortality salience led municipal court judges to increase recommended bond for a fictional prostitute from \$50 to \$455. On the other hand, mortality salience also increased people's recommendations for how much reward should be given to a hero.

Mortality salience also leads people to distance themselves from reminders of their similarities to other animals and their material, and therefore mortal, nature. In addition, mortality salience leads people to strive harder to display attributes on which they base their self-esteem. For example, people reminded of mortality drive more boldly if they base their self-esteem partly on driving ability and display more physical strength if they base their self-worth partly on physical strength. Mortality salience also generally increases people's identification with their nation and other valued groups but reduces such identification when these groups are depicted in a negative light.

### Implications for Intergroup Relations

The theory's fundamental implication for understanding intergroup relations is that groups who espouse a worldview different from one's own call the validity of one's own worldview into question and thereby threaten one's psychological security. From the terror management perspective, this psychological threat is a fundamental cause of prejudice and intergroup conflict. To cope with this threat, people react to other cultural groups in one of three primary ways. First, they often derogate such groups, such as by dismissing them as "ignorant savages." Second, they often try to assimilate such different others into their own worldview, for example through missionary activity. Third, threatening groups are often aggressed against. What better way to assert the superiority of one's own way of life than by derogating, converting, dominating, or annihilating those with an alternative worldview?

In support of these ideas, mortality salience increases preference for aspects of one's own culture and those who validate it and decreases liking for aspects of other cultures and people who criticize one's own culture. For example, mortality salience increased Christians' liking of a fellow Christian and dislike of a Jew, and it increased Germans' preferences for German over foreign products. Mortality salience also increased individuals' aggression against someone who criticized their political party.

Terror management theory posits two additional mechanisms that contribute to prejudice and conflict. First, because worldviews prescribe

specific stereotypes of minority group members, when the need for worldview validation is strong, people will prefer individuals who conform to rather than violate cultural stereotypes of the minority group. For example, in a control condition, White people in the United States preferred a counterstereotypic studious, conservatively dressed Black male over a stereotypic Black male in hip-hop garb who expressed a strong interest in basketball and had violent tendencies. However, after mortality salience, U.S. Whites preferred the stereotypic U.S. Black over the counterstereotypic one.

Finally, worldviews that provide the most satisfying sense of significance are those that portray one's group as representing all that is good in a heroic battle to triumph over evil. Therefore, when the need for terror management is strong, people will be drawn to leaders and ideologies that promote such a "we are great and we must defeat those who are evil" worldview.

When judging hypothetical gubernatorial candidates, reminders of mortality increased preference for a charismatic leader who emphasized the greatness of one's own state and nation. Similarly, before the 2004 U.S. presidential election, mortality salience increased preference for Republican president George W. Bush, who emphasized a need for a heroic triumph over evildoers, over Democratic candidate John Kerry. Mortality salience also directly increases support for eradication of the evil other. Mortality salience increased Iranians' support for suicide bombings against the United States and U.S. conservatives' support for extremely lethal military actions in the Middle East.

Terror management theory and research suggest two ways to reduce the inclination toward intergroup hostility. First, if individuals could develop more individualized ways to ameliorate their fear of death, they would be less reliant on defending their particular worldview. Second, if people invested in worldviews that were more flexible and that highly valued tolerance of different others, they would be less threatened and less prone to negativity toward them.

*Jeff Greenberg*

*See also* Collective Self; Culture; Intergroup Anxiety; Intergroup Violence; Nationalism and Patriotism; Prejudice; Self-Esteem; Stereotyping; Terrorism

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## THERAPY GROUPS

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*Therapy groups* are designed to promote the health and adjustment of their members. Initially used when the demand for services outstripped available health care providers, therapists discovered that group approaches offered unique benefits over more individualistic therapies. Some of these benefits include a reduced sense of isolation and uniqueness, mutual support, exposure to positive models, and the opportunity to develop coping skills by interacting with others. Therapists now use groups to address a variety of psychological and physical maladies, and their methods are as varied as those used in individual approaches. Even though the idea of having people suffering

from problems gather together seemed radical at first, researchers have confirmed the value of group methods for helping people reach their therapeutic goals.

### History

People have long recognized the curative potential of groups. Down through the ages, palliative and curative practices, including religious rites intended to purify and heal members of the community and treatments for those suffering from both physical and psychological problems, have been conducted in groups rather than in solitude. The restorative power of groups was rediscovered by practitioners in the early years of the 20th century when they brought together, for treatment and instruction, patients who suffered the same malady. At first, such grouping was done to save time and money. Working with a group of people was more efficient than treating each one individually. In time, however, practitioners realized that their patients were benefiting from the groups themselves, in that they supported each other, shared nontechnical information about their illnesses and treatment, and seemed to appreciate the opportunity to express themselves to attentive and sympathetic listeners. Whereas group therapy was once used only as a last resort when the number of patients outstripped the available therapists, group approaches became the treatment of choice for a variety of psychological problems, particularly those that originate from difficulties in making and maintaining strong interpersonal relationships with other people or limitations in self-regulation. Their effectiveness led practitioners to recognize that, in many cases, it is easier to change individuals when they are gathered into a group than to change individuals one at a time.

Group psychotherapy is currently used to treat many types of psychiatric problems, including addictions, thought disorders, depression, eating disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, personality disorders, and some forms of psychosis. Group therapy is, however, a treatment for individuals rather than intact groups that are behaving in a dysfunctional way. Group therapists are mindful of the interpersonal processes that operate within the group and often deal with the group as a whole, but they do not treat groups per se. They make use of the group milieu and its interpersonal



dynamics to promote the adjustment of the individuals in it.

### Types of Therapy

Many groups have therapeutic purposes. In support groups, members who are suffering from some illness or share in common a troubling experience provide one another encouragement and hope. Some groups guide members who are recovering from an addiction. When individuals wish to strengthen and broaden their personal or social skills, they often join educational and training groups. Even groups of friends, relatives, or colleagues from work, by sharing an experience and offering one another support, can be considered therapeutic for their members. Traditionally, however, therapy groups are ones that are organized and led by a mental health professional and whose members are individuals suffering from a diagnosed psychological or medical problem.

Group therapists are similar in that they treat their patients in groups, but they differ in their general approach to treatment and conception of groups themselves. When the group is led by a therapist who uses psychoanalytic methods, then the focus of treatment is on each individual's anxieties and his or her reliance on defense mechanisms to cope with these anxieties. As in individual psychoanalysis, the therapist encourages members to speak freely with each other about troubling issues, and by interpreting these associations and interactions, patients gain insight into their difficulties.

Not all therapies, however, involve the search for hidden motives, conflicts, and repressed tensions. Cognitive behavioral therapy groups, for example, focus on the specific behaviors or thoughts that are considered troubling and use principles derived from learning theory to deal with these problems. These therapies were initially developed as one-on-one therapies, but they have been used with great success in groups. They assume that individuals who wish to change must learn a new set of thoughts and behaviors and unlearn those that are dysfunctional and disturbing. Cognitive behavior therapy groups therefore stress modeling desired behavior, learning sessions in which members practice the behaviors they wish to learn, and feedback to group members about their progress toward their goals.

In the more humanistic, interpersonally focused group therapies, leaders take advantage of the group's dynamics to help members learn about themselves, their personal and existential concerns, and how they are perceived by other people. Some group therapists rely on relatively structured activities and role-playing methods to give members the opportunity to reexperience previous life events and explore the interpersonal roots of their emotional reactions. The therapists may also make use of *psychodrama*, in which group members are asked to take on roles that are defined in advance for the session or to develop their parts spontaneously as the activity progresses. Interpersonal group therapy, more than other approaches, explicitly focuses on the processes that occur within the therapy group itself. Members are encouraged to develop meaningful relations with one another, and then their reactions to one another are explored so that members can better understand how they respond to others interpersonally, and also how others perceive them.

### Treatment Factors

Traditional, one-on-one therapies are thought to be based on a set of common, curative factors. Research suggests that most therapies, despite using various techniques, help patients by providing an alliance between the patient and the therapist, by giving the patient the opportunity to review previous problems, and by working through any emotions the patient may have about prior experiences. Similarly, despite their varying focuses and methods, all group therapies are thought to take advantage of common group-level processes to facilitate the attainment of treatment goals.

These group-level treatment factors that yield therapeutically positive gains for members include social and personal comparison, interpersonal learning, and mutual support among members. Groups prompt people to engage in social comparison—they can compare their own experiences with those of others in the group—and these comparisons can be both inspiring and reassuring. When group members discuss their problems openly in the group, these disclosures increase trust and reduce members' feelings that they are "odd" or "unusual." Groups, because they include multiple individuals rather than just a single therapist, also provide

members with more extensive opportunities to learn from others. The members can also learn by observing the other members of the group, so they need not be directly involved in the discussion to gain a benefit. Groups, when cohesive, also provide members with the social support they need to overcome the negative effects of stress, and they even satisfy members' needs for interpersonal intimacy. In some cases, members find they can disclose more private, and sometimes troubling, information about themselves to other people rather than to therapists, and in doing so they learn to experience a sense of trust and commitment. When group members vent strong emotions, the resulting catharsis may reduce their stress. Group members also benefit from increased self-confidence produced by helping others and by gaining insight about their personal qualities from other group members.

### Effectiveness

Joining a group and remaining active in it often improve a person's adjustment and well-being, and therapy groups are no exception. Group therapy has been shown to be an effective method for helping individuals change their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Individuals are sometimes more reluctant to take part in group psychotherapy than in individual therapy, and this bias may prevent them from profiting from a highly effective mode of treatment. Reviews of clinical trials that have compared the effectiveness of various types of psychological treatments conclude that group therapy is as effective as individual methods, at least for certain types of disorders. Specifically, individuals experiencing mood disorders (anxiety, depression) respond better to group therapy than individuals experiencing other types of disorders (e.g., thought and dissociative disorders). Group therapy has been shown to work well with children, adolescents, and adults and with both inpatient and outpatient populations.

Researchers continue to study ways to improve the effectiveness of therapy groups. Some factors, including pretraining members so they know what to expect in treatment and including two therapists rather than just one in each group, are associated with enhanced outcomes. Moreover, as in individual therapy, members of groups sometimes terminate their participation before reaching their

therapeutic goals. Those who drop out of treatment tend to be skeptical about group approaches and are more likely to also report having problems with substance abuse issues. In some rare cases, individuals are significantly harmed by the group treatment, particularly when the group becomes too critical of its members. Such responses are rare, however, for most individuals respond positively when presented the opportunity to work in a group to achieve mental health goals.

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*See also* Sensitivity Training Groups; Social Comparison Theory; Support Groups

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## TOKENISM

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*Tokenism* occurs when only a small percentage of a disadvantaged group is permitted membership in a specific setting, with those individuals referred to as *tokens* (e.g., a token female firefighter in an otherwise all-male department). Tokenism implies that there are external restrictions that prevent the entry of greater numbers of group members who would otherwise be qualified. Tokenism is also characterized by a specific constellation of negative psychological and emotional consequences for the tokens. Thus, although there may be situations in which a high-status group has an insignificant presence (e.g., White students at a historically Black college), the term *tokenism* is usually reserved for situations in which the tokens are from a lower-status group.

From a systems perspective, tokenism is contrasted with a social system that is completely open to all qualified individuals (a *meritocracy*), and tokenism is also contrasted with a system that is

completely closed to members of a particular group (e.g., a caste system). Because a token system is neither fully open nor fully closed, there is ambiguity about the circumstances under which members are permitted entry. This ambiguity is problematic for disadvantaged groups because it can undermine efforts to change the system.

### History and Background

Rosabeth Moss Kanter introduced the concept of tokenism into the sociological and psychological lexicon in 1977 with the argument that the relative proportions of group members in a situation have a critical effect on group dynamics. Kanter was especially interested in groups in which men greatly outnumbered women because large numbers of women were finding themselves in such a situation as they joined traditionally male organizations during the feminist revolution. Kanter described specific consequences of tokenism that she believed were due to the visibility or salience of the tokens, including social isolation and increased stereotyping. Although much research has provided support for Kanter's analysis, the effects of tokenism appear to depend greatly on the wider social context and the social status of the tokens. For example, female engineers are much more likely to suffer negative consequences as tokens than male nurses are.

Research on tokenism has also expanded to provide a better understanding of the psychological impact on tokens. A classic series of studies by Charles Lord and Delia Saenz showed that tokens may suffer cognitive and behavioral deficits due to preoccupation with self-presentation, even when they are not treated differently from others. This idea has been further developed in research on *stereotype threat*. Finally, as described later in this entry, research on tokenism has expanded to include system-level analysis, such as how tokenism undermines social change.

### Consequences of Tokenism

Research on tokenism has traditionally focused on the tokens. However, there are others who are affected, both directly (e.g., the majority group members in the token setting) and indirectly (e.g., the minority group members who have been left

behind). Tokenism also has consequences for broader social change.

### Majority Group (Dominants)

Most research on tokenism focuses on the negative consequences of the situation for the individual tokens, yet the "action" is often located in the majority group. By definition, tokens differ from dominants, but dominants also tend to exaggerate these differences and engage in greater stereotyping and negative evaluations of the tokens, due to the tokens' visibility and appearance as "representatives" of their group. For example, dominants tend to confuse who said what among token members of their group and to view token members' behavior as consistent with stereotypes. Such stereotyping may be even more exaggerated if it allows dominants to preserve their status through familiar forms of interaction (e.g., a male manager treating an equal-status female colleague as he would a secretary). These behaviors create artificial boundaries between the groups, further isolating the tokens and preventing them from full membership and equal status in the organization.

### Tokens

Tokens must contend with multiple handicaps. They are usually assigned to lower-status roles—with lower pay and benefits—and they have to cope with being stereotyped and negatively evaluated on the basis of their group membership. Tokens can fight these stereotypic role assignments, but if they do, they may then be labeled as disagreeable or militant. In contrast, if tokens accept the stereotypic roles assigned to them, this passivity can limit their ability to demonstrate competencies. Tokens must also manage the heightened self-focus and accompanying anxiety that come with being the focus of attention. They are likely to feel self-conscious about their actions, worry about *impression management*, and feel pressured to work harder in order to stand out for their achievements rather than just their group status. A token's performance may thus suffer because such pressure and anxiety consume cognitive resources that could otherwise be devoted to relevant tasks (cf. *stereotype threat*). The studies by Lord and Saenz, for example, showed that individuals randomly assigned to a token position in a

group displayed significantly worse memory for what was said during group interaction than did individuals assigned to nontoken positions.

Finally, tokens have to manage potentially competing social identities. Tokens who are able to overcome obstacles and avoid social rejection—perhaps by assimilating to dominant norms—risk being isolated from their original group. At the same time, they may never be fully accepted by the dominant group and thus risk being left without real support from either group.

### *Social System*

One of the most effective strategies for making a token system more open and egalitarian is *collective action*. Stephen C. Wright argues that tokenism may maintain and even enhance social hierarchy more than if the system were completely closed, because tokenism undermines perceptions of injustice and group identity and suggests that individual-level action is effective. Wright points out that everyone in the system—the tokens, the remaining disadvantaged group members, and the dominant majority—can be invested in viewing the system as just fine.

For the individual tokens, the system *has* permitted them some measure of success, and thus they may be motivated to preserve it. The lone female state senator, for example, is unlikely to charge that the system that placed her there is unfair. Moreover, her need to adhere to the norms and values of the organization may further undermine her identity with women who do not share her advantage.

The dominant majority is similarly invested in maintaining the system. Its members have material advantages to preserve, but, unlike a fully closed system, the presence of tokens serves to assuage any guilt the dominants may have about the fairness of the current system and the degree to which they deserve their advantaged positions. If disadvantaged group members *can* advance, the lack of advancement by others can be attributed to their own failings.

Perhaps most surprising is the finding that disadvantaged group members who are not themselves tokens also go along with tokenism. These individuals have the most to gain through social change, and they ought to be motivated to see the system as unfair. However, research shows that this is often not the case. Whereas disadvantaged

group members do attempt to change a *fully closed system*, in which no one from their group is permitted to advance, they rarely do so in a token system. Instead, the accomplishments of the tokens are taken as proof that the system is fair and that individual-level achievement is possible. Because a token system is not actually open to all who are qualified, however, many disadvantaged group members will fail to advance despite their best efforts. Such failure leads to resentment (often against those who have achieved, further eroding the group cohesion that is necessary for social change), anger, stress, and depression. Moreover, by accepting the system as fair, disadvantaged group members are likely to attribute their low status to personal failings rather than to system-level barriers, further reducing the chances of their engaging in social change.

### Remediating the Negative Effects of Tokenism

Tokenism provides advantages for at least some disadvantaged group members, but there are considerable drawbacks, including psychological stress and worsened performance among tokens and the material exclusion of many other disadvantaged group members. Solutions to the problems created by tokenism range from organizational change to individual coping strategies.

Organizational change is perhaps the most obvious solution. The problems of tokenism would presumably disappear if organizations simply increased the number of disadvantaged group members in their ranks. As discussed above, however, tokenism is not easy to dismantle. Even if a significant increase were allowed in the number of disadvantaged group members permitted entry, the outcome may not be all positive. There may simply not be enough disadvantaged group members available to eliminate the effects of tokenism, and a large increase in the number of disadvantaged group members in a particular setting could result in perceptions of threat on the part of the dominant group, greater and more active hostility, and the loss of important mentors and allies for the new members.

Research conducted by Janice Yoder suggests a different organizational approach for avoiding some of the negative effects of tokenism: Enhance the status and legitimacy of the tokens. Yoder

found that token women in a simulated organizational setting perceived less performance pressure and anxiety if they had higher status (e.g., were older or more educated) than the male members of the group. Similarly, token women who received advanced training and were explicitly labeled as “experts” were able to successfully influence the male-dominated groups, whereas token women without such legitimacy were not.

Individual tokens may also be able to avoid some of the negative psychological effects of tokenism by using certain cognitive strategies. For example, Saenz and Lord showed that tokens who thought of themselves as “judges” (i.e., focused on evaluating the majority group members) showed better cognitive performance than did tokens who either believed they were the targets of evaluation or were told nothing (controls). This benefit was observed even when the majority members were unaware that they were being judged, suggesting that the strategy might be effective in the absence of social validation by others. Individual-level strategies that have been shown to be effective in overcoming stereotype threat, such as a brief self-affirmation, may also be effective in combating the negative effects of tokenism.

### Conclusion

Although research on tokenism initially focused on the issues facing women in male-dominated careers, its principles have allowed insight into broader facets of intergroup interaction and the extension of research on tokenism into a variety of domains, including race, religion, and sexual orientation. Tokenism research has further informed the study of social systems by providing an explanation for how attitudes develop to favor system stability rather than change. In this respect, knowledge of tokenism highlights the importance of remaining vigilant even after low-status individuals appear to have achieved membership in high-status groups. As research progresses on tokenism, it is likely that its focus will shift from identifying its negative impacts to finding ways to reduce them. It may be impossible to balance group ratios completely, but there are ways to ensure that token members suffer fewer consequences of being in the minority.

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*See also* Categorization; Collective Movements and Protest; Minority Groups in Society; Stereotype Threat; Stigma; System Justification Theory

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## TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

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The hallmark of the transactional leadership theories is the idea of *equitable exchange*. Every day, individuals engage in an exchange process whereby one valued benefit, resource, or commodity is exchanged for another. A mechanic fixes a car for monetary compensation, a student completes a thesis to receive a degree, or a supervisor praises an employee for securing a lucrative contract. The transactional approach characterizes effective leadership as a reciprocal and mutually beneficial process of give and take between leaders and followers. Leaders manage valued resources (e.g., information, support, consideration) and provide

rewards or punishments to assist followers to achieve goals. In return, followers reciprocate with loyalty and compliance to the leader's requests while bestowing status on the leader.

### Historical Background

Early studies of leadership did not consider the role of exchange in leader–follower relationships. Instead, attempts were made to unearth a successful profile of a leader in terms of personality traits. In 1948, Ralph Stogdill conducted an influential review of traits research and concluded that traits alone could not fully explain the leadership phenomenon. Thereafter, the traits approach lost momentum and other approaches to leadership soon emerged. By the 1950s, social scientists began to explore new territories to explain the important role of leadership in groups.

Using what is called the behavioral approach, researchers at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan studied effective leader behaviors. Their studies helped initiate the development of the *contingency approach*, which jointly considers leadership behaviors and *situational factors* to explain effective leadership. Around the same period, the *transactional approach* was developed to explain leadership in terms of the transactions between leaders and followers as a means of bidirectional influence. The transactional approach is evident in a variety of leadership theories developed before the 1980s. It also later became a theory of leadership in its own right.

### Early Transactional Approaches: Idiosyncrasy Credit

One of the first transactional theories of leadership, the concept of *idiosyncrasy credit*, was put forth by the social psychologist Edwin Hollander in 1958. Drawing on *social exchange theory*, Hollander held that group members are bonded in a relationship in which they give and receive credit from one another. Each group member accrues credits to the extent that his or her behavior conforms to group norms and positively contributes to the group. As a result of earned credits, group members gain trust, status, and influence potential in the group. Leaders are assumed to possess a relatively large account of accrued credits. In

return, their credits give them leeway to diverge from group norms. This leeway is referred to as idiosyncrasy credit. Leaders are expected to spend some of their idiosyncrasy credit to bring about change and innovation in the group that may be contrary to the status quo. The leadership position, however, still requires successful fulfillment of role obligations and conformity to group expectations. As such, leaders should ideally use their idiosyncrasy credit wisely, that is, to bring about change while still demonstrating successful performance. Otherwise, they may bankrupt their accrued credit and jeopardize their leadership position.

A number of studies support the idea that initial conformity can increase the influence potential of group members. In an experiment by Hollander in 1960, five engineering students and a confederate were brought together to work on a problem-solving task. The confederate's conformity to group norms and demonstration of competence early in the experiment were translated into greater group acceptance of his recommended solutions in later stages of the experiment. Having amassed idiosyncrasy credit at the beginning of the experiment, the confederate was able to exert influence when he displayed nonconforming behavior (e.g., interrupting people) later on. Subsequent research has generally supported the concept of idiosyncrasy credit.

### Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Another important transactional approach to leadership effectiveness, the *vertical dyad linkage model*, was proposed by George Graen and colleagues in 1973. In 1982, it was renamed and expanded into leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. LMX theory emphasizes the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers as a central predictor of leadership effectiveness in organizations. The quality of this relationship depends on the nature of social (e.g., esteem) and material (e.g., compensation) exchanges and the level of compatibility (e.g., personal traits, background, skills) between leaders and followers.

In low-quality exchange relationships, exchanges between the leader and the subordinate follow the terms set forth in the employment contract. That is, they are materially based. For example, the leader provides only the necessary resources and

guidance for the follower to get the job done. The follower, in turn, exerts sufficient effort to do the job in order to maintain employment and receive compensation. High-quality exchange relationships involve close relationships and performance beyond the call of duty. The leader and the follower engage in reciprocal interpersonal exchanges that surpass the terms of the employment contract. The relationship is built on mutual positive regard, trust, loyalty, and dependability. For instance, followers may take on additional duties or provide extra assistance to the leader that are not called for in their job description. In return, leaders may provide additional support, information, mentoring, esteem, or resources to the subordinate.

LMX theory has received substantial empirical support in predicting leadership effectiveness. High-exchange relationships between leaders and followers are associated with a number of important positive organizational outcomes, including better performance, increased job satisfaction, lower turnover, increased innovation, follower empowerment, and more organizational citizenship behavior.

Several scholars, however, have noted limitations of LMX theory and research. Some limitations involve the potentially questionable content validity of the LMX scale and the need for more extensive theory building that includes consideration of the self-concept and the wider social context (e.g., group processes) in which leader-member relations are embedded. For example, the *social identity* perspective suggests that leadership effectiveness is tied to the extent that the group (team or organization) is salient in the mind of followers. When the group is highly salient, research shows that leadership effectiveness is more strongly related to a depersonalized leadership style than to an interpersonal (dyadic) one. This suggests that high LMX relationships between leaders and followers may be more important when personal identities are salient.

### Transactional and Transformational Leadership

In 1978, political scientist James MacGregor Burns wrote a book, *Leadership*, in which he presented an in-depth analysis of several political leaders, ranging from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Gandhi.

This classic work stimulated renewed interest in leadership and is often credited with helping spur the *new leadership paradigm*, which aims to demystify transformational and other “extraordinary” forms of leadership.

Burns argued that true leadership is commensurate with *moral leadership*, which is built on a foundation of moral values. Moral leadership comes in two forms, *transactional* and *transforming*, which are at opposite ends of a continuum. Both transactional and transforming leadership involve exchanges between the leader and the follower, but they differ regarding what is being exchanged and what values guide the leader. Burns also held that transactional leaders are more commonplace than are transformational leaders. Transactional leaders engage followers in instrumental exchanges that satisfy the self-interests of both the leader and the followers. Furthermore, such leaders are guided by modal values such as honesty, responsibility, and fairness. In contrast, being grounded in transcendent values such as equality, liberty, and justice, transforming leaders motivate followers to transcend their self-interests and to pursue higher-order morality. The leader-follower relationship in this case involves mutual motivation to work together to achieve some collective good. Therefore, an instrumental exchange does not take place between a transformational leader and followers. Instead, a mutual consciousness-raising process emerges from this relationship.

In 1985, Bernard Bass extended Burns’s ideas into a theory of transformational leadership. Contrary to Burns, Bass did not address the moral concerns in the earlier versions of the theory but instead placed emphasis on the behaviors that characterize transformational versus transactional leaders. In the most recent version of the theory, transformational leadership behaviors include (a) motivating followers by articulating enticing visions that evoke follower emotion (inspirational motivation); (b) challenging followers to be innovative and to view issues from new vantage points (intellectual stimulation); (c) encouraging follower identification with the leader, role modeling, and evoking perceptions of charisma (idealized influence); and (d) paying attention to followers, being in tune with their needs, and providing them with support and mentoring (individualized consideration).

Drawing from earlier research on contingent reinforcement, Bass specified that transactional behaviors include *contingent rewards* and *management by exception*. Contingent rewards include leader behaviors that clarify the rewards that followers receive when designated objectives and tasks are successfully completed. For example, the manager of a car dealership may attempt to motivate salespeople by creating an incentive such that any employee who sells at least six cars per week will receive double commissions for that week. Research shows that contingent rewards (both material and social) help reduce role ambiguity, clarify the task or goal at hand, increase follower satisfaction, and contribute to better performance.

Management by exception involves leadership behaviors that actively or passively seek to correct or punish poor performance or problematic follower behavior. In active management by exception, the leader actively attends to followers' performance to ensure that it meets the necessary rules and standards. If errors, oversights, or violations are evident, the leader engages in corrective behavior or negative reinforcement to rapidly remedy the situation. Research suggests that active management by exception is related to higher ratings of the leader than is passive management by exception, which involves less direct monitoring of followers. In passive management by exception, leaders intervene to provide correction or punishment only when there is an obvious mistake or problem that requires attention.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed to measure both transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. Because of criticisms regarding its validity, the MLQ has undergone a number of revisions, but concerns are still voiced about its utility. One concern is that various transformational behaviors tend to be correlated with transactional behaviors. This is problematic because transformational and transactional leadership styles are theorized to represent two distinct types of leadership.

Considerable empirical research has been conducted on transformational versus transactional leaders in a variety of settings and countries. Various meta-analyses suggest that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership in increasing followers' performance and satisfaction. However, research also suggests that leaders

who interchangeably adopt a transformational and an active transactional style (e.g., contingent rewards) tend to receive the highest effectiveness ratings. This suggests that leadership aiming to realize a vision of a new and improved reality for the collective is vital, but some active transactional behaviors are necessary to accomplish this feat.

Even during radical transformation, not all parts of the status quo require transformation. Transactional leadership behaviors may help sustain some sense of stability during change while clarifying followers' role expectancies, signaling appropriate behaviors, and providing rewards to reinforce positive behavior and performance. As Bass and colleagues implied in 2003, the next step may be helping leaders develop a wider repertoire of behaviors that include both transformational and transactional styles to optimize successful navigation in the often turbulent waters of change.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Idiosyncrasy Credit; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transformational Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## TRANSACTIONAL MEMORY SYSTEMS

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A *transactive memory system* is a group-level memory system that often develops in close relationships and work teams. It involves the division of responsibility among group members with respect to the encoding, storage, retrieval, and communication of information from different knowledge areas and a shared awareness among group members about each member's knowledge responsibilities (or "who knows what"). For example, in a family, one parent may be responsible for knowing when the bills are due and what is needed at the grocery store, and the other may be responsible for knowing the children's schedules and how to fix things around the house. Or in a new product development team, one member may be responsible for all information related to prototype development while another member may be responsible for all information related to marketing and advertising.

Transactive memory systems enable people in relationships and groups to share information more efficiently and effectively. They can reduce the memory load for each individual in the system while providing each individual with access to a larger pool of information collectively. When individuals need information in another's area of expertise, they can simply ask the person responsible rather than taking the time and energy for locating and learning the information themselves. As a result of their developed transactive memory system, members of experienced groups often perform their tasks more effectively and make better decisions than newly formed groups do. Evidence

of transactive memory systems has been documented in a wide variety of relationships and groups, including married couples, dating couples, families, friends, coworkers, and project teams in both organizational and laboratory settings. This entry describes transactive memory systems, discusses how they develop and what makes them work, and summarizes their outcomes

### Characteristics of Transactive Memory Systems

The term *transactive memory systems* was coined by Daniel Wegner in a paper published in 1985. Since that initial paper, researchers in psychology, management, communication, and other fields have worked on identifying the antecedents, processes, and consequences of transactive memory systems. Research on transactive memory systems borrows heavily from what is known about the memory processes of individuals and applies it to groups. At a minimum, a transactive memory system can be defined in terms of two components: the organized store of knowledge in the memory systems of the individual members and the knowledge exchanges that occur between members.

A directory-sharing computer network has been used as a metaphor for illustrating the three key processes of transactive memory systems. The first process is *directory updating*, whereby individuals develop a working directory or map of who knows what and update it as they obtain new information about the knowledge and expertise of group members. The second process is *information allocation*, in which new information that enters the group is communicated to the person whose expertise will facilitate its storage. The third process is *retrieval coordination*, which involves devising an efficient and effective strategy for retrieving needed information, based on the person expected to have it.

In terms of content, transactive memory systems contain both differentiated and integrated knowledge. *Differentiated knowledge* represents the specialized and unique knowledge held by each individual in the system, whereas *integrated knowledge* represents the knowledge that individuals hold in common. Integrated knowledge, such as shared directories, routines, and procedures, is especially useful for coordination.

### Development of Transactive Memory Systems

Unlike the literal way that computer networks update directories and locate, store, and retrieve information, transactive memory systems among humans are often flawed. Transactive memory systems vary in terms of their *accuracy* (the degree to which individuals' perceptions about other members' expertise are accurate), *sharedness* (the degree to which individuals have a shared representation of who knows what in the group), and *validation* (the degree to which individuals accept responsibility for different knowledge areas and participate in the system). Transactive memory systems will be most effective when knowledge assignments are based on group members' actual abilities, when all group members have similar representations of the group's transactive memory system, and when members actively participate in the system.

One necessary requirement for the development of a transactive memory system is *cognitive interdependence*. That is, individuals must perceive that their outcomes are dependent on the knowledge of other people in their relationships or groups and that others' outcomes are dependent on their knowledge. Cognitive interdependence is what motivates the development of the transactive memory system and often develops in close interpersonal relationships, in which people share responsibilities, engage in conversations about many different topics, and make joint decisions. It can also arise as a result of a reward system or the structure of a group task, as is the case in work teams.

Transactive memory systems develop as individuals learn about the knowledge of other group members and begin to delegate and assume responsibility for different knowledge areas. Individuals can become linked to knowledge areas based on relative expertise (the best cook is likely to become the person in charge of knowing what is in the refrigerator), by negotiated agreements (one person agrees to keep track of car maintenance if the other will keep track of bill payment due dates), or through circumstance (the person who answered the phone when a new client calls becomes the "new client" expert). In newly formed groups, individuals often rely on stereotypes based on personal characteristics (such as gender, ethnicity, organizational role) to infer what others know. In

some cases, such as in diverse work teams, these initial assumptions can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Individuals can be assigned knowledge areas that are consistent with social stereotypes even though those areas do not reflect their actual expertise, and they eventually become experts as a result of those assignments.

Researchers have created and validated a scale with three key indicators for measuring the degree of development of a transactive memory system in work teams. The first indicator is *memory specialization*, the tendency for groups to delegate responsibility and to specialize in different aspects of the task. The second is *credibility*, beliefs about the reliability of members' expertise. The third is *task coordination*: the ability of team members to coordinate their work efficiently based on their knowledge of who knows what in the group. The greater the presence of each indicator, the more developed the transactive memory system and the more valuable the transactive memory system for efficiently coordinating the actions of group members.

Transactive memory systems usually develop informally and implicitly through interpersonal interaction rather than by formal design. Members can learn informally about one another's expertise through interactions and shared experiences working together, thus identifying likely experts in different areas. Informal interactions and shared experiences working together provide opportunities for team members to hear about members' background and credentials, to observe members' skills in action, to indicate their interests and preferences, to coordinate who does what, and to evaluate the willingness of team members to participate in the transactive memory system. Team training can also facilitate the development of a transactive memory system. Those systems set up by formal design (such as a listing of staff members' responsibilities in an office procedures handbook) are either validated or modified over time as group members learn more about one another, so the informal transactive memory system may not correspond directly to the formal system.

New technologies are being developed to help people locate and retrieve information from experts, facilitating the development of new and expanding existing transactive memory systems. *Social networking sites* such as LinkedIn.com can help people identify experts both inside and outside their social

networks. *Intranets* (Web sites designed for internal use in organizations) can help employees learn about the expertise and knowledge of others in their organization. Some features that intranets might include are expert directories, postings of formal job descriptions and/or responsibilities, search engines for information and expertise, expertise inference systems (capture and analysis of activities such as who attended meetings on a particular topic, who participated in which forum, etc.), and *communityware*, tools that generate visual representations of knowledge and communication networks based on information voluntarily shared by individuals. There is some debate among scholars about whether social networking technologies and other formally based systems can facilitate the development of transactive memory independently of group structures and incentives that promote cognitive interdependence among individuals.

### Outcomes of Transactive Memory Systems

For many reasons, groups that have a developed transactive memory system perform better than groups that do not. Groups with transactive memory systems are more likely to assign tasks to individuals who can perform those tasks best and are better equipped to anticipate rather than to simply respond to group members' actions. When individuals have responsibility for only a portion of the group's knowledge, they may be able to accumulate a more extensive and deeper understanding in their area of specialization. Individuals who know about one another's knowledge may be able to obtain better and more accurate information because they know the right person to ask. When group members have experience communicating with one another, they may know how to ask for information so that the request is understood and how to cue members having difficulty retrieving information in ways that facilitate its accessibility. They may also be less likely to fall prey to an overly confident and persuasive but inaccurate group member.

Transactive memory systems can lead to improved group performance in situations in which groups must process a large amount of information quickly or on group tasks that require expertise from many different knowledge domains.

However, there may be situations in which too much specialization may impede group performance, such as when assigned experts are unavailable, unable, or unwilling to contribute their knowledge. Even when specialization leads to better outcomes, some redundancy may be useful. It helps members to communicate more effectively, it can encourage group members to be more accountable to one another, and it can provide a cushion for transitions in relationships when, for example, the designated expert leaves the group.

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*See also* Group Learning; Group Mind; Group Performance; Shared Mental Models; Socially Shared Cognition; Social Representations; Teams

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## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

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*Transformational leadership theory* suggests that leaders transform their followers' values, priorities,

and goals and inspire followers to perform beyond expectations and to transcend their narrow self-interests for the good of the larger group, organization, and mission. Transformational leaders articulate compelling visions that stress the meaning, importance, and value of goals, as well as of the strategies designed to achieve them. Transformational leaders thus build followers' confidence and broaden their needs to assist them in achieving higher potential, ultimately developing followers into leaders. Research suggests that transformational leadership is positively associated with trust, job attitudes, and a broad range of individual performance outcomes.

Although 20 years of research suggests that transformational leadership is strongly related to followers' attitudes and performance, this research also indicates that such leadership plays an important role in shaping, inspiring, and directing group goals and processes. Transformational leaders enhance group members' confidence, motivation, and performance by asserting the importance of the group's mission and its capabilities to achieve synergistic outcomes, while supporting followers in aligning their individual goals with collective goals. Research has also shown that transformational leadership builds group cohesiveness, identification, efficacy, and climates that positively influence group outcomes. This entry reviews the history of this research, describes key dimensions of transformational leaders, and discusses evidence related to their impact.

### Background and History

For much of the 20th century, leadership scholars studied exchange-based, or transactional, leadership behavior, which involves reinforcing followers' behaviors and providing direction and support. In 1978, James Burns introduced the notion of transforming leadership. In the mid-1980s, partly inspired by Bernard Bass, researchers began to shift their attention to leadership models that emphasize visionary messages, inspirational appeals, ideological and moral values, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Burns initially posited that transactional and transformational leadership represent opposite ends of a continuum and differ in terms of what leaders and followers offer one another.

Transactional leadership focuses on the proper exchange of resources between a leader and his or her followers. Transformational leadership, in contrast, emphasizes meaning and purpose to develop and fulfill deeper existential needs that go beyond a simple relationship of quid pro quo. Although Burns suggested that leaders engage in either transactional or transformational leadership, Bass posited that effective leaders engage in both types of leadership behavior.

Transformational leadership augments, or supplements, the effect of transactional leadership. Stated differently, transactional leadership can be effective, but transformational leadership will improve leadership effectiveness, achieving performance beyond expectations. Transformational leaders establish goals and objectives with the developmental objective of changing followers into individual leaders or into a collective leadership group, such as self-directed teams.

The focus on follower development distinguishes transformational leadership from transactional leadership. Transforming followers into leaders not only empowers associates but also enhances their capability to deal effectively with ambiguity, develops their competence to handle more intellectually stimulating tasks, and gives them the opportunity to assume some of the leader's responsibilities. Although transactional leadership may yield short-term extrinsic benefits, transformational leadership produces longer-term intrinsic rewards. In other words, transformational leadership significantly adds to transactional leadership effectiveness, thus building higher individual, group, and organizational potential. Subsequent empirical research supported these hypotheses, suggesting that more effective leaders engage in exchange-related, as well as inspirational, motivational, and developmental, behaviors.

### Transformational Leadership Dimensions

Transformational leaders exhibit four types of behaviors: *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*. A leader who exhibits idealized influence increases followers' respect, pride, trust, and admiration for the leader's high ethical standards and conduct. Such leaders enhance followers' trust through their commitment to overcome

challenges, their willingness to sacrifice their personal self-interest, and their prior successes.

Inspirational motivation refers to leaders' articulation of shared goals and communication of a compelling vision of what is possible and how it can be achieved. Transformational leaders inspire followers by setting high standards, expressing optimism about attaining them, and infusing meaning into the daily tasks.

Intellectually stimulating leaders challenge followers to think critically; solve problems creatively; and challenge their own values, beliefs, and assumptions, as well as those of their leaders, when appropriate. Such leaders motivate followers to more fully engage in their job, which causes the followers to achieve higher levels of performance and experience greater job satisfaction and commitment.

Finally, leaders who exhibit individualized consideration recognize and satisfy followers' unique needs. They encourage followers, through coaching and mentoring, to reach their maximum potential, and they enhance followers' ability to respond to individual, group, and organizational challenges.

The accumulated research indicates that leaders who are rated higher on the four transformational leadership components generate higher levels of group confidence, effort, and work performance.

### Group Cohesiveness

*Social identity theory* suggests that group characteristics can become self-defining over time. One aspect of group cohesiveness is the tendency for individual members to incorporate the group's vision, mission, and goals as self-referential. Research suggests that transformational leadership is positively related to this component of group cohesiveness. Transformational leaders can influence group cohesiveness through several behaviors.

First, transformational leaders influence and facilitate group cohesiveness by emphasizing the importance of sacrificing for the benefit of the group and demonstrating high ethical standards. Appealing to these higher-order needs enables followers to transcend self-interest and pursue collective group interests. Furthermore, transformational leaders are able to link followers' individual identities to their group's collective identity by appealing emotionally to socially desirable behaviors, such as

making personal sacrifices in the short term for the common good in the long term.

Second, transformational leaders build group cohesiveness through encouraging and enabling followers to take greater responsibility for their own development as well as their group's development. Empowering followers in this way helps them share information with each other and therefore improves group information processing.

Finally, transformational leaders increase group cohesiveness by stressing the followers' involvement and membership in the group and by distinguishing the ingroup from outgroups. Social identity theory suggests that when ingroups and outgroups are prominent, people identify with their ingroup and perceive more positive attributes of the ingroup and more negative attributes of outgroups.

### Group Identification

As suggested above, group identification refers to a feeling of psychological belongingness to a particular group. It conveys a sense of being a part of something, because one's self-definition is tied to membership in particular groups. There is considerable evidence that work group identification can impact work behavior, because identification promotes positive responses toward ingroup members. A strong group identity also spurs group members to obtain greater expertise in their jobs. Consequently, group members engage in more active job-relevant learning to the extent that they possess strong relationships with others in their group.

Research shows that transformational leadership is related to group identification in at least two ways. First, because transformational leaders are proactive, change oriented, and inspiring, they create identification among group members and therefore extract extra effort from the members toward the mission of the group. Second, transformational leaders increase group members' sense of self-worth by emphasizing the importance of each individual's contribution to the group, encouraging each member to internalize a "collective" frame of mind. This also increases members' efforts for the group as a whole.

### Group Efficacy

In 1986, Albert Bandura, in the process of developing *social cognitive theory*, developed the notion

of group efficacy. Group efficacy is a construct that refers to an individual's evaluation of his or her group's capability to effectively perform job-related tasks. A group with high efficacy believes that it can perform well on a task, whereas a group with low efficacy thinks that it will fail. Numerous studies indicate that group (as well as individual) efficacy is positively related to a number of positive outcomes (e.g., effort, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction).

Research suggests that transformational leadership is an important antecedent of group efficacy. Transformational leaders provide followers with opportunities to appreciate the group's accomplishments and members' contributions when they make the group mission salient, stress shared values, and connect followers' individual interests to the group's interests. As individuals become more aware of and confident in the group's capabilities, group efficacy increases. Thus, transformational leaders can directly influence collective efficacy and, as a result, indirectly influence important group-level outcomes.

### Service Climate

*Climate* refers to the environment and atmosphere in which employees work. In a recent study, Hui Liao and Aichia Chuang drew a distinction between individual- and work unit-level transformational leadership. The former refers to leadership behavior as perceived by an individual. The latter refers to leadership behavior as perceived by an entire group. Hence, work unit-level transformational leadership is perceived similarly by different group members. Work unit-level transformational leadership aspires to achieve group- and organizational-level outcomes by transforming the climate into one that is more positive and promotion oriented.

*Service climate* represents employees' shared perception of the organizational context's practices, policies, and procedures as they relate to customer service. Research suggests that service climates are malleable, and work unit-level transformational leadership has a major role in shaping perceptions of the climate. Transformational leaders who provide a compelling customer service vision arouse excitement and hope about securing and deepening customer loyalty. They also serve as role models for employees and challenge followers to create new ways to serve customers. Recent

research indicates that transformational leaders who influence the service climate motivate followers to deliver high-quality service.

In sum, a considerable body of evidence demonstrates the positive impact of transformational leadership on outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Moreover, across cultures, when people describe their ideal leader, they typically describe a transformational leader.

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*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Vertical Dyad Linkage Model

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## TRUST

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Researchers have long recognized the central and beneficial role that trust plays in effective intragroup processes and in facilitating constructive intergroup relations. Trust has been shown, for example, to facilitate the sharing of information within groups and to contribute to more cooperative interaction between groups.

### Conceptualizing Trust

Although recognizing the benefits of trust, social scientists have also noted that trust is a psychologically

and socially complex construct. Reflecting this psychological and social complexity, a concise and universally accepted definition of trust remains elusive even to this day. As a consequence, the term *trust* is used in a variety of distinct, and not always compatible, ways by different researchers. At one end of the definitional spectrum are formulations that highlight the ethical and moral facets of trust. For example, one scholar characterized trust in terms of people's expectations regarding ethically justifiable behaviors, on the assumption their decisions were based on ethical principles. Conceptions at the other end of the spectrum, in contrast, emphasize the purely expectation-based and calculative dimensions of trust. For example, some researchers have defined trust simply as "anticipated cooperation," arguing that the issue is not moral at all.

Despite such divergence, most trust theorists do agree that—whatever else its essential features—trust is fundamentally a cognitive state. When conceptualized as a cognitive state, trust has been defined in terms of several interrelated properties. Most important, trust entails a state of perceived vulnerability or risk that is derived from individuals' uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions, and prospective actions of others on whom they depend. For example, researchers have often characterized trust in terms of risky actions predicated on confident expectations that others involved in a relationship will act competently and with benign motives.

From this definition, the question logically arises: What are the bases for such confident expectation?

### Bases of Trust

Considerable research has focused on identifying the bases or antecedents of trust within and between groups. Early work in this area focused on identifying individual differences with respect to the propensity to trust. To explain the origins of such differences, researchers proposed that people extrapolate from their early trust-related experiences to build up generalized beliefs and expectations about other people and, in particular, their trustworthiness in particular social situations. As these trust-related expectancies are generalized from one social agent to another, according to this view people acquire a sort of diffuse expectancy

about the trustworthiness of others. Over time, this diffuse expectancy can even come to assume the form of a relatively stable personality characteristic or disposition.

Other research on the development of trust has shown that one's perceptions of others' trustworthiness and one's willingness to engage in trusting behavior when interacting with them are largely history-dependent processes. According to such models, trust between two or more interdependent actors increases or decreases as a function of their cumulative interactions. These interaction histories presumably give individuals information that is useful in assessing others' trust-related dispositions, intentions, and motives. This information, in turn, provides a basis for drawing inferences regarding others' trustworthiness and reliability—information that will be useful when making predictions about their future behavior.

Appreciating both the importance of information regarding others' trustworthiness and the difficulty in obtaining such information, scholars have noted that third parties can sometimes function as important conduits of trust because of their ability to diffuse trust-relevant information to other parties. In effect, they become trust brokers. One recent study of exchange relations among firms in the New York apparel industry provides evidence of this constructive third-party role in the development and diffusion of trust. This study found that third parties acted as important go-betweens in new relationships, enabling individuals to essentially roll over their expectations from well-established relationships to others in which adequate knowledge or history was not yet available. In explaining how this worked, the researchers who conducted this study argued that such go-betweens help transfer positive expectations and opportunities from existing embedded relationships to newly formed ones, thereby furnishing a foundation for trust.

With respect to trust within and between groups, trust based on social category—defined as trust predicated on information regarding a trustee's membership in a particular social category—may be an important form of both intragroup and intergroup trust. For at least two reasons, membership in a salient social category can provide a basis for such presumptive trust. First, shared membership in a given category can serve as a basis for defining

the boundaries of a low-risk form of interpersonal trust. By so doing, such information eliminates the need for more personalized, individuating knowledge. Second, because of the cognitive consequences of categorization, individuals tend to attribute positive characteristics such as honesty, cooperativeness, reliability, and trustworthiness to other ingroup members.

### Benefits of Trust

In addition to exploring the bases of trust, researchers have been keen to document more fully its benefits within and between groups. Indeed, the ascension of trust as a major focus of recent research during the past two decades has reflected in no small measure accumulating evidence of the substantial and varied benefits, both individual and collective, that accrue when trust is in place. These myriad benefits of trust have been discussed primarily on three levels: (1) trust as a mechanism for reducing transaction costs within and between groups; (2) trust as a means for increasing spontaneous sociability, cooperation, and coordination within and between groups; and (3) trust as a mechanism for facilitating appropriate (i.e., adaptive) forms of deference to group authorities or leaders.

In the absence of personalized knowledge about others, or adequate grounds for conferring trust on them presumptively, either trust within and between groups must be individually negotiated or substitutes for trust must be located. Even when effective, such remedies are often inefficient and costly. Recognition of this problem has led a number of theorists to focus on the role of trust in reducing the costs of both intra- and interorganizational transactions. For example, as noted above, trusted third parties can serve as useful conduits for establishing trustworthiness of social actors about which one knows relatively little.

One of the most important manifestations of trust as a form of social capital is the spontaneous sociability such trust engenders. When operationalized in behavioral terms, spontaneous sociability refers to the myriad forms of cooperative, altruistic, and extrarole behavior that members of a social community engage in that enhance collective well-being and further the attainment of collective goals. Within group contexts, spontaneous sociability

assumes many forms. Group members are expected, for example, to contribute their time and attention toward the achievement of collective goals, they are expected to share useful information with other organizational members, and they are expected to exercise responsible restraint when using valuable but limited organizational resources.

Another important stream of research has examined the relationship between trust and various forms of voluntary deference within and between groups, especially those embedded in hierarchical relationships. From the standpoint of those in positions of authority, trust is crucial for a variety of reasons. First, if group leaders or authorities had to continually explain and justify their actions, their ability to effectively manage would be greatly diminished. Second, because of the costs and impracticality of monitoring performance, authorities cannot detect and punish every failure to cooperate, nor can they recognize and reward every cooperative act. As a result, efficient group performance depends on individuals' feelings of obligation toward the group, their willingness to comply with its directives and regulations, and their willingness to voluntarily defer to group leaders. In addition, when conflict arises, trust is important because it influences acceptance of dispute resolution procedures and outcomes. Research has shown that individuals are more likely to accept outcomes, even if unfavorable, when individuals trust an authority's motives and intentions.

Other researchers have investigated the influence of procedural variables on attributions regarding group leaders' trustworthiness. Procedures are important because they communicate information, not only about authorities' motivations and intentions to behave in a trustworthy fashion, but also about their ability to do so, a factor characterized as *procedural competence*. In support of this general argument, evidence indicates that procedures that are structurally and procedurally fair tend to increase trust, whereas the absence of such procedures tends to elicit low levels of trust.

In the context of group processes and intergroup relations, the future of trust research seems bright indeed. Trust theorists have been interested in elaborating on the institutional bases of trust and the role culture plays in the development and maintenance of trust. Another recent and important



extension includes examination of cross-cultural variations in the bases and consequences of trust. For example, studies have compared the construal of trust and its antecedents in the United States and Japan.

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*See also* Cooperation and Competition; Distributive Justice; Justice; Leadership; Negotiation and Bargaining; Organizations; Procedural Justice

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## ULTIMATE ATTRIBUTION ERROR

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The *ultimate attribution error* refers to a psychological phenomenon in which individuals explain the behaviors of people in groups by attributing those behaviors to the influence of dispositional or situational forces. The dispositional or situational nature of the attribution depends on the positive or negative valence of the behavior and on whether the individuals so observed are members of the observer's ingroup or another group. Individuals making the ultimate attribution error tend to overemphasize broad *dispositional* explanations, or explanations based on innate group characteristics (e.g., ethnicity or gender) when explaining the negative (antisocial, undesirable) behaviors of members of groups they do not belong to. Conversely, positive (prosocial, desirable) behaviors of out-group members are often attributed to exceptionality, luck, effort, special advantage, or other mutable *situational* forces.

### Background and History

#### *The Fundamental Attribution Error*

One way in which we can make sense of the world around us is to determine why other people act the way they do. Is a behavior we observe merely a function of the observed individual's personality traits (dispositional factors)? Or is he or she being influenced to act by something in the

environment (situational factors)? Or both? For example, if the barista at the coffee shop fails to smile at us, should we conclude that she is antisocial by nature, or will we notice that she also looks tired and infer that she might have stayed out too late the night before?

Attribution researchers have determined that when we attempt to explain someone else's behavior, we typically tend to underestimate the impact of the situation and overestimate the impact of personal characteristics such as traits and attitudes. This phenomenon has been dubbed the *fundamental attribution error* (also called the *correspondence bias* or the *overattribution effect*). In one classic experiment investigating the fundamental attribution error, Edward Jones and Victor Harris had university students read opinion essays supporting or criticizing Cuba's then leader, Fidel Castro. When students were told that the position taken had been chosen by the author, they quite reasonably assumed that the essay content reflected the author's true opinion. However, when they were told that the position taken had been assigned by a third party, students still inferred that the author of the essay had either pro- or anti-Castro leanings, in accordance with the position taken in the essay. In other words, when explaining the reason the author of the essay wrote what he or she did, individuals participating in this experiment overemphasized the influence of the author's personal attitudes about Castro and discounted the situational influence of being told what to write by a third party. A large body of work following the Jones and Harris study supports this

general finding, making it one of the most robust phenomena studied by behavioral researchers.

*Extrapolating From the Individual to the Group: The Ultimate Attribution Error*

In the fundamental attribution error, we tend to ascribe the behavior of other individuals to innate personal characteristics such as traits or attitudes and overlook the impact of situational factors. In some cases, the attributions made by others will be negative for an observed individual (e.g., “he’s poor because he’s lazy”). In other cases, an individual may benefit from a positive dispositional attribution (e.g., “the quiz show contestant knew all the answers because she is intelligent”). But what happens when people’s behavior can be potentially attributed to a dispositional characteristic of a *group* they are a member of, and the attribution may reflect on dispositional characteristics of a group the observer is a member of?

In the ultimate attribution error, we tend to primarily ascribe dispositional explanations to *negative* behaviors (e.g., antisocial or undesirable) of outgroup members, and situational explanations to *positive* behaviors (e.g., prosocial or desirable). In other words, outgroup members are viewed as wholly responsible for negative behaviors and simultaneously not responsible for positive ones. Thomas Pettigrew has suggested that the reason for this view lies in the desire to protect currently held stereotypes about members of other groups and maintain the perception that one’s ingroup is inherently superior to outgroups.

An outgroup member performing a negative act supports a negative stereotype about that group that we may already hold and confirms our tendency to ascribe dispositional attributions to the behaviors of others. So for instance in the case of race, ethnicity, or gender, this dispositional attribution may take the form of assumptions about genetic characteristics of members of that group. Attributing behaviors of members of that group to genetic characteristics may in turn support a currently held stereotypical perception of the group as a whole and allow an individual to favorably compare his or her ingroup to members of an outgroup (e.g., “Unlike Whites, Blacks are violent by nature, which is why that Black man mugged me”).

However, when an outgroup member behaves in a positive way that is inconsistent with an overall negative view of the outgroup, it violates preconceived, stereotypical notions about innate differences between ingroup and outgroup members (e.g., “Everyone knows women aren’t as good as men at sports, so how could I have been beaten at tennis by that girl?”). An ingroup member exposed to this dilemma must find a way to reconcile his or her natural tendency to make dispositional attributions about the behavior of others with the desire to maintain positive differentiation between his or her own ingroup and members of an outgroup.

One way to resolve this discrepancy is to change one’s view about an entire outgroup. Research indicates that this does happen, but only under specified situational conditions, such as repeated positive contact with multiple members of an outgroup. In many instances, a typical observer does not have information about the behavior of outgroup members over time. In this case, individuals will likely assume that an isolated positive act by a member of an outgroup can be explained by forces such as luck, special advantage, being an “exceptional member” of a group (including having particularly high motivation or putting in extra effort), being influenced by members of the ingroup, and so forth, which do not indicate anything dispositional about the outgroup as a whole. Positive acts may also be *reframed* by observers so as to indicate the presence of a negative disposition (e.g., behaviors indicating intelligence are described as *cunning*, ambition becomes *being pushy*, high ability in women is framed as *unfeminine*).

Although research on the ultimate attribution error is relatively scarce when compared with the large body of work investigating its cousin, the fundamental attribution error, several studies support Pettigrew’s assertions. Birt Duncan, for example, found that White participants were more likely to interpret a shove as both more violent and indicative of personal attributes (e.g., aggression, dishonesty, immorality) when it came from a Black person than when it came from a White person. Another study, by Donald Taylor and Vaishna Jaggi, found that Hindu participants tended to make dispositional attributions for negative behavior when an observed individual was Muslim (outgroup member) and displayed the opposite pattern when an observed individual was Hindu (ingroup

member). Similarly, a meta-analysis by Janet Swim and Lawrence Sanna found that in experiments involving traditionally masculine tasks, participants were more likely to attribute male than female successes to ability, and male failures were more likely than female failures to be attributed to bad luck or lack of effort.

### Conclusion

The ultimate attribution error can in some ways be said to be at the heart of the continuation of prejudice against racial, ethnic, or other groups in a particular culture. The practice of explaining away individuals' successes and simultaneously holding their shortcomings against them and their identity as a group member sets up an attributional double standard from which it can be very difficult for members of stigmatized or stereotyped groups to break free. Thus, it is important for behavioral researchers studying stereotyping and prejudice and individuals who attempt to mitigate the effects of stereotyping and prejudice via public policy to take into account the influence of misattribution of behavior at the intergroup level.

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*See also* Attribution Biases; Discrimination; Essentialism; Intergroup Contact Theory; Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB); Prejudice; Racism; Sexism; Stereotyping

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## UNCERTAINTY-IDENTITY THEORY

*Uncertainty-identity theory*, developed by Michael Hogg in 2000 and elaborated more extensively in 2007, argues that people are motivated to reduce feelings of uncertainty, particularly about themselves and about their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that reflect most directly on self. One way to satisfy this motivation is to identify with a group (a team, an organization, a religion, an ethnicity, a nation, etc.)—a process that not only defines and locates oneself in the social world but also prescribes how one should behave and how one should interact with others.

Uncertainty-identity theory is grounded in *social identity theory* and invokes social cognitive and social interactive processes associated with social identity to explain how uncertainty motivates group identification and how identification reduces uncertainty. Uncertainty-identity theory can be considered a motivational elaboration of social identity theory. This entry describes the main features of uncertainty-identity theory and discusses the properties of groups, and thus the types of groups, that may best satisfy the uncertainty reduction motive. One implication of this analysis is an understanding of the way in which acute and chronic uncertainty may lead to group extremism: zealotry, fanaticism, ideological orthodoxy, xenophobia, dehumanization, collective violence, and so forth.

### Uncertainty and the Need to Reduce Uncertainty

Feeling uncertain about our perceptions, attitudes, values, or feelings motivates us to address the uncertainty. Uncertainty can be an exhilarating challenge to be confronted and resolved, making us feel edgy and alive, but it can also be anxiety provoking and stressful, making us feel impotent and unable to predict or control our world and what will happen to us in it. Although we strive to resolve, manage, or avoid feeling uncertain, we do not do this all the time; some uncertainties we simply do not care much about, and therefore we do not bother to dedicate our stretched cognitive resources to them. We expend cognitive energy resolving only those uncertainties that are important or matter to us in a particular context.

One factor that imparts motivational impetus to feeling uncertain is self-relevance. We are particularly motivated to reduce uncertainty if we feel uncertain about things that reflect on or are relevant to self or if we are uncertain about self per se—about our identity, who we are, how we relate to others, and how we are socially located. Ultimately, we like to know who we are, how to behave, and what to think, as well as who others are, how they might behave, and what they might think.

Although we are, therefore, in the business of reducing self-uncertainty, there will always be some degree of uncertainty (we cannot ever attain absolute certainty); uncertainty-identity theory is about reducing uncertainty rather than achieving certainty. It is also important to bear in mind that individuals and groups may sometimes embark on courses of action that in the short term increase uncertainty, such as when the individual or group is confident that the experience of short-term uncertainty is necessary in order to resolve more enduring contradictions and uncertainties that have arisen.

### Social Identity and Uncertainty Reduction

Feelings of uncertainty can be resolved in many different ways. However, self-uncertainty and self-relevant uncertainty are particularly efficiently reduced by the process of psychologically identifying with a group: *group identification*.

According to social identity theory, and more specifically *self-categorization theory*, people cognitively represent social groups as *prototypes*. A prototype is a fuzzy set of attributes that defines the group and distinguishes it from other groups in a specific context. In describing members' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, values, feelings, and behaviors, a prototype accentuates similarities among members within the same group and accentuates differences between groups (a phenomenon called *metacontrast*). The prototype of a group we belong to, the ingroup, tends to be *prescriptive* in designating how we *ought* to behave as a group member.

When we categorize someone as a group member, we assign the specific group's attributes to that person. We view that person through the lens of the prototype of that group, seeing him or her not as a unique individual but as a more or less prototypical group member—a process called *depersonalization*.

When we categorize others, ingroup or outgroup members, we stereotype them and have expectations of what they think and feel and how they will behave. When we categorize ourselves, self-categorization, the same process occurs: We assign prescriptive ingroup attributes to ourselves; we autostereotype, conform to group norms, and transform our self-conception.

In this way, group identification very effectively reduces self-related uncertainty. It provides us with a sense of who we are that prescribes what we should think, feel, and do. Because self-categorization is inextricably linked to categorization of others, it also reduces uncertainty about how others will behave and what course social interaction will take. Group identification also provides consensual validation of our worldview and sense of self, which further reduces uncertainty. This is because people in a group tend to have a shared prototype of “us” and a shared prototype of “them,” and therefore our expectations about the prototype-based behavior of others tend to be confirmed, and our fellow group members agree with our perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values and approve of how we behave.

Identification can effectively reduce and protect us from uncertainty, and so uncertainty can motivate group identification. We identify with groups in order to reduce or protect ourselves from uncertainty. We may “join” existing groups as new members, create and identify with entirely new groups, or identify more strongly with existing groups to which we already belong. Empirical studies have provided solid support for this motivational analysis of the relationship between uncertainty and group identification.

### Group Attributes Best Suited to Reduce Self-Uncertainty

Not all groups are equally well equipped to reduce self-uncertainty. One property of a group that improves its ability to reduce uncertainty is *entitativity*. A high-entitativity group is clearly structured with clear boundaries, it is internally relatively homogeneous, and its members have a sense of common goals and shared fate. Such groups may also be subject to *essentialism*—a tendency for people to see the group's attributes as fixed and unchanging because they reflect, for example,

invariant personality or genetically grounded attributes of the group's members.

An unclearly structured, low-entitativity group, which has indistinct boundaries, ambiguous membership criteria, limited shared goals, and little agreement on group attributes, will do a poor job of reducing or fending off self-uncertainty. In contrast, a clearly structured, high-entitativity group with sharp boundaries, unambiguous membership criteria, highly shared goals, and consensus on group attributes will do an excellent job.

Identification reduces uncertainty because it provides a clear sense of self that makes social interaction predictable and because self is governed by a prototype that prescribes cognition, affect, and behavior. Prototypes that are simple, clear, unambiguous, prescriptive, focused, and consensual are more effective than those that are vague, ambiguous, unfocused, and *dissensual*. Clear prototypes are more likely to be grounded in high- than low-entitativity groups. A number of studies have shown that under uncertainty, people prefer to identify with high- rather than low-entitativity groups.

### Uncertainty, Social Identity, and the Psychology of Extremism

When self-uncertainty is acute and enduring (e.g., in times of economic collapse, cultural disintegration, civil war, terrorism, or large-scale natural disasters or in the face of unemployment, bereavement, divorce, relocation, or adolescence), the motivation to reduce uncertainty effectively is strengthened. Under these circumstances, people will identify strongly. They will have a strong sense of belonging and a strong feeling of attachment to the group, and their sense of self will be comprehensively defined by the group; they could be described as zealots, fanatics, or true believers.

Furthermore, people will seek to identify with groups that are not merely entitative but extreme. Relatively, these are groups that have some combination of the following attributes: They are homogeneous in their attitudes, values, and membership; they have inflexible customs and carefully policed boundaries; they have orthodox and ideological

belief systems; they are intolerant and suspicious of outsiders and of internal dissent and criticism; they are rigidly and hierarchically structured, often with strong autocratic leadership; and they are ethnocentric and narcissistic. These *extremist* attributes are particularly effective at providing a clearly directive and unambiguous sense of who you are and how you should behave.

There is a well-documented association between societal uncertainty and various forms of extremism, such as genocide, cults, ultranationalism, blind patriotism, religious fundamentalism, terrorism, ideological thinking, fanaticism, and being a "true believer." Uncertainty-identity theory specifies a psychological mechanism that converts uncertainty into extremism or *totalism*. Under certain circumstances, uncertainty-induced identification underpins zealotry, fanaticism, ideological orthodoxy, xenophobia, dehumanization, collective violence, and so forth.

There is now some evidence that even liberal-minded Westerners can be more inclined toward being a part of and identifying with these kinds of groups when they feel self-uncertain.

Michael A. Hogg

See also Entitativity; Ideology; Self-Categorization Theory; Social Identity Theory

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# V

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## VERTICAL DYAD LINKAGE MODEL

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The *vertical dyad linkage* (VDL) *model* is a framework for understanding workplace leadership that focuses on the interactions between the leader (manager) and his or her subordinates. The name of the model reflects its focus on two people (a *dyad*) and the facts that the position of the leader is above that of the subordinate in terms of authority in the organization (*vertical*) and that there is interrelated behavior between them (*linkage*). The basic premise of VDL is that leaders develop separate exchange relationships with each subordinate. This premise challenges the dominant perspective in many behavioral and situational leadership models that leaders should adopt the same leadership style for all group members (sometimes referred to as *average leadership style*). This entry looks at the basic features of the VDL model, the different kinds of possible relationships, and the most recent evolution of the idea.

### Development of VDL Relationships

VDL proposes that leaders develop differentiated relationships with their subordinates based on the types of exchanges that develop between them. The model does not focus on leadership style but on the way relationships develop between the leader and subordinates and how this affects the exchanges that occur between them.

According to the VDL model, the relationship between the leader and the subordinate develops

over time through a number of stages based on a role-making process. The positions of leader and subordinate are associated with specific role-assigned behavior (e.g., leaders are expected to make major decisions, and subordinates are expected to implement them). Leaders generally take a significant role in the development of the relationship with their subordinates because leaders typically have the legitimate authority, invested in them by their organization, to negotiate exchanges. In addition, leaders who are admired and liked by their subordinates can have informal power over them, and this can determine the types of exchanges that occur.

It is proposed that the relationship between the leader and the subordinate develops through three stages. The first stage (*stranger*) is an initial testing phase, in which the leader and the subordinate evaluate each other's motives and beliefs and the potential value of resources each has to offer. For the leader, these resources might include the ability to increase remuneration or grant promotion or the allocation of interesting and rewarding work. For the subordinate, these resources might include being a loyal and trusted worker, supporting the leader, and being a good team member. During this stage, the role expectation between the leader and the subordinate is established. Some leader-subordinate relationships do not develop beyond this first stage.

If the relationship proceeds to the second stage (*acquaintance*), then mutual trust and loyalty develop between the leader and the subordinate. The leader takes into consideration the subordinate's needs and ambitions and tries to satisfy them

within the workplace. Finally, the two may enter a third stage (*mature partnership*), in which the exchanges become based on mutual commitment to the goals and objectives of the work group. The leader and the subordinate work closely together, and the level of mutual influence between the two is very high.

### High- and Low-Quality Relationships

VDL theory proposes that leaders do not develop the same type of exchange relationships with all their subordinates. In many cases, leaders develop two main types of relationships, high- and low-quality exchange relationships, sometimes referred to as ingroup and outgroup relationships, respectively.

Leaders develop high-quality exchange relationships with those subordinates whom they trust and who in return show them loyalty, and these subordinates can function as lieutenants and advisers to the leader. These high-quality exchange relationships can be extremely beneficial to both the subordinate (in terms of receiving valued rewards) and the leader (in terms of support, commitment, and help). In order to sustain these types of relationships, the leader needs to maintain an interest in the needs and goals of the subordinate to ensure that the subordinate receives the benefits expected.

On the other hand, low-quality exchange relationships are not characterized by these positive features. In low-quality situations, the relationship between the leader and the subordinate is based on the formal working contract in that the subordinate is expected to fulfill set duties and work requirements. If subordinates meet these expectations, then they will receive the benefits (such as salary), but the relationship is not designed to motivate the subordinate beyond this level, nor is it concerned with the subordinate's personal needs for development.

Research has shown that people in high-quality exchange relationships with their leader report much higher rates of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization and lower levels of job stress than those who report having a low-quality relationship with their leader. In addition, those with a high-quality exchange relationship with their leader tend to display better work performance than do people with a low-quality exchange relationship.

Research has identified many reasons that a leader might develop exchange relationships of different quality with his or her subordinates. One reason might be managing a very large group of people (many leaders are responsible for very large groups of subordinates). Because leaders do not have enough time to develop good-quality exchanges with all their subordinates, there is a tendency to subgroup the subordinates into good- or poor-quality exchange relationships. Such a strategy might be cost-effective for the leader time-wise, but this advantage has to be weighed against having poor-quality exchange relationships with other members of the work group, who may underperform.

Another reason might be personal compatibility between the leader and the subordinate. The more similar the subordinate is to the leader, on a range of work and nonwork factors, the greater is the likelihood that a high-quality exchange relationship will develop. Research in the relationships area shows that similarity leads to attraction, and this also applies to the relationship between a leader and his or her subordinate. In this situation, the similarity between the leader and the subordinate may lead to their liking each other, which can result in the development of high-quality exchanges between them.

### Recent Developments

Recent versions of VDL emphasize that leaders should not form high-quality exchange relationships with just a few of their subordinates but should try to develop positive relationships with all their subordinates. This advice recognizes that conflict can occur among subordinates if they feel that the leader treats some members of the work group more favorably than others—especially if such favorability is based on the leader's personal preference rather than on work performance criteria.

Research into VDL has developed to take a broader view of leadership in order to examine how leaders manage groups of subordinates, and this research has been the forerunner for the establishment of the *leader-member exchange theory* of leadership.

*Robin Martin*

*See also* Charismatic Leadership; Contingency Theories of Leadership; Great Person Theory of Leadership; Interactionist Theories of Leadership; Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory; Leadership; Path-Goal Theory of Leadership; Personality Theories of Leadership; Social Identity Theory of Leadership; Transactional Leadership Theories; Transformational Leadership Theories

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## VIRTUAL/INTERNET GROUPS

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The development and adoption of network-based collaboration tools and services have allowed the formation of virtual groups, or groups that exist primarily via technology-mediated interaction. The evolution of virtual groups has followed the evolution of the Internet, from groups defined by electronic mailing lists in the 1980s to the contemporary use of social networking sites, such as Facebook. Virtual groups differ in important ways from traditional groups, and these differences are the focus of practical and theoretical interest. From a practical perspective, virtual groups allow organizations to build work teams that are geographically dispersed, which can make it easier to combine far-flung expertise. In theoretical terms, virtual groups challenge many assumptions about group process, such as the importance of physical proximity and face-to-face communication for group formation and maintenance.

The emergence of virtual groups is tied closely to the emergence of key enabling technologies, in which succeeding stages of technology development have supported more elaborate forms of virtual groups. This progression can be thought of in terms of the increasing "richness" of virtual group

communication, or the expanded capacity for communication and connection. Using the richness metaphor, the time line of virtual groups can be roughly bracketed into an early phase, oriented around text-based communication (1960s to 1980s); a middle phase, oriented around *groupware* (1980s to 1990s); and the current phase, oriented around social computing (1990s to 2000s).

### Text-Based Virtual Groups

The creation of the first computer networks (e.g., ARPAnet) in the 1960s led to the introduction of network-based tools, of which the most significant was electronic mail (e-mail). E-mail allows text-based communication that can be stored and forwarded by computers, meaning that messages are delivered just as easily to a single recipient as to a list of recipients (e.g., an electronic mailing list). Similarly, messages can be delivered to local or distributed addresses with equal effort. Mailing lists were quickly adopted as mechanisms for both formal and informal communication. For example, the computer language Common Lisp was an initial successful instance of work accomplished almost completely via mailing list discussions. During a span of 30 months in the early 1980s, the Common Lisp team exchanged thousands of messages among dozens of contributors all over the world and demonstrated that complex tasks could be coordinated and executed via electronic interaction.

At the same time as work groups discovered the advantages of mailing lists for coordinating and accomplishing activity, non-work groups also adopted mailing lists. For instance, in a 1990 paper, Tom Finholt and Lee Sproull documented the first purely social uses of mailing lists in the context of groups devoted to particular interests (e.g., cooking or movies), as well as groups that existed as virtual extensions or counterparts to traditional groups (e.g., coworkers who go to bars together or members of a sports team). In the case of interest groups, mailing lists allowed those with rare interests (e.g., playing the Japanese strategy game *go*) to identify similarly oriented others, unconstrained by time or place. In the case of extensions to traditional groups, mailing lists allowed members to expand socializing beyond occasions for face-to-face gatherings.

## Groupware

Instances of group activity supported via electronic communication created demand for tools to enable a broader spectrum of group interaction. For instance, rather than sharing text through e-mail, users wanted to edit the text in real time. Starting in the mid-1980s, researchers in academia and corporate labs began to develop prototype applications to support synchronous and asynchronous activity at a distance, called *groupware*. Research on groupware formed the core of a new research area, called *computer-supported cooperative work*.

Some early instances of groupware focused on shared writing tools and shared whiteboards. By the 1990s, commercial applications of these technologies, such as Microsoft NetMeeting, were available, as well as open-source versions, such as Virtual Network Computer. Typically, these applications allowed remote users to share a common desktop, enabling joint viewing and manipulation of documents, images, and other application interfaces. Communication occurred via text-based chat windows. Successful interaction via these tools required a number of technology and interface innovations, such as mechanisms to avoid simultaneous work on the same section of a text and the use of user-specific telepointers to represent focus of attention (because remote users cannot see gaze direction). For example, in a 1999 paper, Gloria Mark and colleagues showed how design teams at Boeing were able to use NetMeeting to increase common ground in long-distance collaboration by creating a shared visual reference when talking about design changes. Contemporary versions of synchronous groupware, called *data conferencing tools* (e.g., WebEx), have become ubiquitous in corporate environments and have added capabilities, such as video and audio.

Another important early line of research on groupware focused on asynchronous applications, such as systems that combined shared secure file spaces, threaded discussion lists, and e-mail repositories. By the 1990s, commercial applications of these technologies, such as Lotus Notes, were in wide use. A primary advantage of asynchronous groupware was the controlled group access to the system, such that distributed group members could upload work in progress with the expectation that only other group members would see

these materials. The use of shared file spaces also allowed groups to see what members were working on, with corresponding benefits in terms of reduced coordination overhead. Systems like Notes did introduce certain difficulties. For example, Wanda Orlikowski found that use of Notes in one professional organization was very sensitive to incentive structures. For example, a goal of installation was to encourage employees to share more of their individual work-related information, with the expectation that doing so would accelerate the conversion of personal knowledge into community knowledge (so that employees could better benefit from the wisdom and experience of their coworkers). However, in practice, employees withheld contributions, both because contributions were not classified as billable activity and because employees thought managers were using Notes contributions to monitor performance. Similarly, in a 1994 study of an asynchronous groupware system for biologists, called the Worm Community System (WCS), Susan Leigh Star and Karen Ruhleder found that junior scientists, particularly postdocs, were reluctant to deposit data in the WCS. Part of their concern reflected fears that availability of their data within the WCS could lead a more senior researcher to analyze the data and hence anticipate, or scoop, the postdocs' discoveries.

## Social Computing

The arrival of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s dramatically expanded use of computer networks for social activity. Initially, much of this expansion involved the introduction of conventional applications and services, such as e-mail, to new populations of users or the appropriation of synchronous groupware technologies for entertainment, such as online games (e.g., *Everquest* and more recently *World of Warcraft*). Recently, a host of new uses of the Web have emerged, collectively termed *social computing*. These emerging services take advantage of the Web's capacity to link and store information, particularly with respect to social relationships. The best known instances of social computing include social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), recommender systems (e.g., Digg), and user-contributed content sites (e.g., Wikipedia).

*Social networking sites*, begun as tools for users to catalog their friendships, have become infrastructures for supporting a diverse array of social processes. Facebook, for example, is a means for maintaining a running commentary, with one's friends, about events, opinions, and affiliations. This commentary is enriched by combining features of the social networking site with other services, such as photo sharing (e.g., via Flickr), video sharing (e.g., via YouTube), or game playing (e.g., Scrabble). LinkedIn, a networking site oriented toward career development and business opportunities, has become a way for prospective employers to identify and assess job candidates, effectively replacing such traditional features of job search as the distribution of cover letters and resumes.

*Recommender systems*, originally developed as tools for users to express their opinions about favorite movies and books, have become sophisticated mechanisms for mining and extracting aggregate opinions. For instance, in the news site Digg, stories are elevated to the top of the queue based on how many times users have "diggged" a story, effectively transferring traditional editorial functions of story selection to consumers as opposed to a select group of editors. Aggregate recommendations can also be used to tailor selections of movies or books based on preferences of viewers or readers with similar tastes. An active area of research concerns efforts to make recommender systems resistant to manipulation, such as reducing the influence of software agents that might cast votes for a book or movie to boost its popularity artificially.

A final notable form of social computing is the emergence of user-contributed content sites, such as Wikipedia. These sites coordinate and collect the efforts of thousands of users to produce resources (an encyclopedia in the case of Wikipedia) that can be more comprehensive and up-to-date than some traditional counterparts. For example, in the case of Wikipedia, contributors concerned with a particular topic will monitor that topic and then immediately update or correct entries. Active areas of research on user-contributed content include efforts to understand motivation and incentive structures for contributors. Specifically, much of the effort to create Wikipedia and similar sites comes from the voluntary efforts of contributors, whose reasons for

this effort reflect the contributors' altruistic impulses as well as more instrumental goals (e.g., contributors to open-source software projects increase their visibility to prospective employers).

### The Coming Era of Virtual Organizations

The experience with virtual groups during the past two decades has produced calls, for example from Jonathon Cummings and colleagues in 2008, for the creation and study of *virtual organizations*. Initially considered largely in the context of global scientific collaborations, such as the community of researchers who use the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, virtual organizations are envisioned as ways to transparently share resources across institutional and geographic boundaries. For example, a typical application involves identification and allocation of computational and data resources for large-scale computations. Traditionally, sharing these resources might involve explicit negotiations among resource owners, such as contracts and other agreements. By contrast, within a virtual organization, these complex social arrangements are delegated to software called *middleware*, which automatically negotiates resource access and use according to authentication and authorization schemes. In some sense, virtual organization schemes take the work of trust formation and maintenance and move it from the realm of managers and decision makers to the realm of software and system developers. There may be significant advantages to the virtual organization approach. For instance, middleware may reduce bias in resource allocation and create new opportunities for groups and organizations that might otherwise have no access. However, embedding important social processes within software also carries risk. Notably, decisions made under software control may be invisible or unintelligible to those affected, much as recent operation of the financial sector (e.g., software-controlled hedge funds) has been obscured, with important consequences in terms of reduced accountability and monitoring.

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*See also* Collaboration Technology; Communication Networks; Teams

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# W

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## WEIGHTISM

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*Weightism* involves negative attitudes and discriminatory behavior toward people on the basis of their weight. Although in the developing world there is some bias against thin people, the most common form of weightism is bias against people who are heavier than average. When this bias is an attitude, it is sometimes called *antifat prejudice*. This entry looks at the origins of weightism, compares it with other kinds of prejudice and discrimination, and discusses its consequences and potential remedies.

### Origins of Weight-Based Bias

Social norms regarding weight suggest that there is an ideal body type that individuals should strive to attain. Although there is variability in the ideal body type across cultures, most cultures endorse a lean, thin ideal. Because heavyweight individuals do not fit this ideal, they are often viewed and treated negatively.

Heavyweight people are often seen as less reproductively fit than average-weight people. From an evolutionary perspective, heavyweight people are seen as unhealthy and less likely to produce healthy offspring. There is no evidence, however, that any but the most morbidly obese are less capable of successful reproduction.

Heavyweight people are often seen as responsible for their condition. In Western countries, people believe that becoming heavy is a result of

overeating and a lack of exercise, and thus fatness is avoidable. In addition, because weight is perceived to be connected to self-control, being heavy is perceived to be reversible. Heavyweight individuals are thus considered responsible for their fate—they have brought this condition on themselves, and if they only worked hard enough, they could return to “normality.”

This perception of control over weight is not consistent with the vast array of data showing that dieting rarely works (and when it does, the effects are usually temporary), that exercise programs are hard to stick with and do not directly contribute large amounts to weight loss, and that by far the greatest contributors to weight are genetic and physiological factors rather than self-control.

### Comparing Weightism With Other Prejudices

Antifat prejudice is like other prejudices in that it involves negative feelings toward people in a group (based on category status rather than individual characteristics) and stereotypes about the group, and it affects the major life areas of friendships, romance, employment, education, and health. As with other prejudices, people who hold antifat prejudice find justifications for their attitude by endorsing negative stereotypes and holding people responsible for their condition. For example, people with negative feelings toward fat people emphasize the role of personal responsibility, the potential success of diet and exercise programs, and the value of self-denial.

Heavyweight people are underrepresented in television programs, movies, and advertising. Rather than being presented as protagonists, heavyweight individuals are more likely to be portrayed as secondary characters. When they appear in the media, heavyweight people are often in the role of clowns, fools, villains, or people who are damaged in some way.

Heavyweight people have more difficulty than others in navigating important social institutions. They are less likely to go to college, particularly elite colleges, and they receive less support from their parents when they do, despite equal interest, grades, and test scores.

Heavyweight people are less likely to seek medical care for their problems, whether weight related or not, perhaps because they fear humiliating or depersonalizing treatment when they go to the doctor. The evidence suggests that they are right: Physicians, medical residents, nurses, and other health care workers hold antifat attitudes and stereotypes. Physicians express more negative emotions, recommend fewer procedures, show less personal desire to help, and spend less time with heavyweight patients. Some health programs explicitly do not cover obesity or other weight-related issues.

Heavyweight people can have trouble negotiating the physical environment. Public accommodations are often not built with them in mind—seating, transportation, bathrooms, automobile seat belts, and doorways are often developed with leaner users in mind (although more recent laws, notably the Americans with Disabilities Act, have increased accessibility in many public accommodations). The range of clothing available for heavyweight people can be quite limited, and the higher ends of the fashion industry aim primarily at a very lean silhouette; the latest fashions are rarely designed with heavyweight people in mind.

Although weightism is similar to other prejudices, there are some important differences. Unlike other discriminated-against groups, heavyweight people do not identify strongly with their group. Perhaps because weight is seen as an issue of personal responsibility, and perhaps because overweight is a category that people believe they can escape, heavyweight people do not see their weight as part of a group membership. They do not seek fellowship with other heavyweight people, and,

surprisingly, they do not show ingroup bias—fat people are every bit as antifat, on average, as thin and average-weight people. Perhaps as a result, heavyweight people do not tend to engage in advocacy or join groups promoting social change. Although activism is relatively rare for many stigmatized groups, the rate of activism for heavyweight people, particularly given their prevalence in modern society, is surprisingly low.

### Consequences of Weight-Based Discrimination

The negative consequences of excess weight appear early in life. Although most children experience some teasing, heavyweight children experience significantly more than average. Individuals who are discriminated against on the basis of their weight show an increased likelihood of depression as well as suicidal thoughts and attempts. Heavyweight people may also suffer decrements in self-esteem and feelings of self-efficacy, particularly if they feel responsible for their weight.

Women are more likely than men to be victims of antifat bias. Women are more likely than men to develop friendships with people of similar weight (and height). Women are more likely to be judged by their physiques in general and by their weight in particular. A woman's attractiveness is more affected by her weight than is a man's, and women's self-approval and self-esteem are more strongly linked to their weight and body image. Many of the biases demonstrated against heavyweight people in the literature seem to be more serious for women than for men (e.g., discrimination in hiring, education, and dating preference).

The bias against heavyweight people, and particularly women, is also found in marriage. Heavyweight people, and particularly heavyweight women, begin dating later in life and marry later than their leaner counterparts. On average, they also date and marry less desirable partners. Fortunately, once heavyweight people are in stable dating relationships or marriages, they report the same levels of commitment and satisfaction as lean couples do.

Heavyweight people are more likely than leaner individuals to avoid public exposure and social situations. Heavyweight people seem to have slightly fewer friends than lean people have. They are also more likely to live alone and to



report being lonely, and they are less likely to be well integrated into the groups and informal friendship networks that can offer social rewards and life opportunities. Heavyweight people often work hard to compensate for some of these social disadvantages, developing social skills and nurturing friendships.

There has been a long history of investigation of the mental health of heavyweight people. When body image and body esteem are set aside (the heavyweight are more negative in both), there are few if any differences in the psychological functioning or health of heavyweight people compared with the rest of the population. When differences are occasionally found in research, they seem to be connected to the negative treatment to which heavyweight people are exposed.

### Reducing Weight-Based Prejudice and Discrimination

Antifat bias has been reduced through education about the causes of obesity. These efforts are only occasionally successful in shifting explanations for fatness from internal causes and personal responsibility to causes outside the individual's control (e.g., genetics, physiology, *in utero* nutritional environment). When successful, however, change in attribution for weight leads to a change in the overt expression of antipathy for heavyweight people. As with other discriminated-against groups, increased positive interpersonal contact between heavyweight and nonheavyweight individuals should also lead to a decrease in bias. Finally, increasing empathy for heavyweight individuals, perhaps through perspective taking, may also reduce negative attitudes.

In summary, antifat bias is pervasive and often seen as justified by those who endorse it. It is widespread and affects all the major arenas of life. Unlike other forms of prejudice, antifat bias is equally endorsed by members of the group, and thus group membership and identity offer little comfort or buffer against discrimination. Heavyweight people often do not identify with their group and hence do not work for social change or improvement in heavyweight people's lives. In practice, movement out of the group is relatively rare and often temporary.

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*See also* Ageism; Ambivalent Sexism; Discrimination; Modern Forms of Prejudice; Ostracism; Prejudice; Self-Esteem; Stigma

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## WORK TEAMS

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*Work teams* are composed of two or more individuals who (a) perform organizationally relevant tasks, (b) share one or more common goals, (c) interact socially, (d) exhibit interdependencies in task workflows, (e) manage and maintain group boundaries, and (f) are embedded in a broader organizational context that constrains the team and influences exchanges with other units in the organization. During the past two decades, strategic, technological, and economic forces have driven a shift from work organized around individual jobs to team-based structures. Teams serve as the basic building blocks of modern organizations and represent a critical means by which work is accomplished in today's world. Therefore, significant research during the past few decades has been focused on understanding work team effectiveness. This entry looks at the history of this research and what it says about team types, team composition, team development, team processes, and team effectiveness.

### History and Background

The idea of people working together in teams is certainly not new. Yet for much of the 20th century, the concept of work in large organizations was primarily centered on individual jobs. During

the past two decades, however, there has been an evolution in the design of work, shifting from individual jobs in functionalized structures to teams embedded in more complex workflow arrangements. This shift is the result of numerous forces, including increased globalization, consolidation, and technological innovation. To compete in this environment, organizations need access to diverse skills and experiences, they need to remain flexible and adaptive, and they must be able to operate effectively across geographical and cultural boundaries. Teams enable these characteristics. For example, an organization can use cross-functional teams to bring together individuals with diverse talents to solve a problem or create a new product and can use virtual teams to connect individuals who may be distributed around the globe. Unfortunately, the transition to team-based work structures has not always been a smooth one. Teams are frequently unsuccessful, as evidenced by the fact that failures in team functioning are commonly cited as a primary cause of air crashes, medical errors, military catastrophes, and industrial disasters.

The combined promise and peril of work teams has captured the attention of researchers and has led to a growing number of theories, empirical studies, and literature reviews on the topic of work team effectiveness. For many years, team research focused on the study of small interpersonal groups in social psychology, but during the past two decades, it has become increasingly centered in the fields of organizational psychology and organizational behavior, representing the growing interest in work teams. Most theoretical frameworks for understanding team effectiveness follow the input → process → output (IPO) logic proposed by Joseph McGrath in 1964. Inputs represent the resources (e.g., characteristics of individual members, organizational resources) that can contribute to team effectiveness and constraints (e.g., task requirements, workflow interdependencies) that have to be managed or resolved for a team to be effective. Processes represent the psychological mechanisms that allow team members to combine their talents and resources to resolve the constraints and achieve success. Outputs represent internal and external aspects of team performance and the impact of the experience on team members (e.g., team member satisfaction).

In a 2005 review, Daniel Ilgen, John Hollenbeck, Michael Johnson, and Dustin Jundt proposed an alternative to the traditional IPO framework, a

model they term input–mediator–output–input (IMOI). The IMOI model reflects the fact that there are a broad range of factors, beyond just processes, that mediate the effects of team inputs on outcomes, and it acknowledges the potential for a cyclical feedback loop in which outputs, such as team performance, serve as inputs to future team processes. The following sections review several of the inputs, processes and other mediators, and outputs that have been studied frequently in the research on work team effectiveness.

### Work Team Types

Work teams come in a variety of different forms, and new forms are regularly invented to deal with emerging organizational needs (e.g., virtual teams). The diversity of team forms presents a challenge for understanding team effectiveness, as many factors that influence team functioning vary across different types of teams. General typologies distinguish a broad range of teams, often based on functional differences. For example, general team types include production teams, service teams, and management teams. Some researchers have identified more specific types of teams, including crews, top management teams, transnational teams, and virtual teams. The value of such typologies stems from the underlying dimensions that distinguish team types, because these dimensions highlight the varying contingencies that determine the effectiveness of different types of teams.

In a 2003 review, Steve Kozlowski and Bradford Bell suggested that the following dimensions can be used to characterize the constraints faced by different team forms: (a) the external environment or organizational context with respect to its dynamics and degree of required coupling; (b) team boundary permeability and spanning; (c) team member diversity and collocation, or spatial distribution; (d) internal coupling requirements; (e) workflow interdependencies, with their implications for goal, role, process, and performance demands; and (f) temporal characteristics that determine the nature of performance episodes, or cycles, and the team life cycle.

### Team Composition

As noted earlier, one of the resources that work teams use to manage these constraints and achieve

success is the characteristics of their individual members. Although research on team composition has examined many different characteristics of teams and their members, a general conclusion that cuts across this literature is that the effects of team composition depend on the nature of a team's task. For example, studies examining the effect of team size on effectiveness have failed to reach consensus on an "optimal" size for different types of teams. Rather, it appears that the appropriate team size depends on the task and the environment in which a team operates. Larger teams may be able to leverage their resources to facilitate performance on more complex tasks, but smaller teams may find it easier to coordinate the activities necessary to tackle less complex tasks.

There also exist very few consistent findings regarding the effects of diversity on team performance. Whereas some studies have found that greater levels of heterogeneity or diversity can improve performance, other studies have reported negative results for diversity or have shown diversity to have no significant effects. In a 2005 review of this literature, Elizabeth Mannix and Margaret Neale noted that the effects of diversity depend largely on whether teams are able to capitalize on the benefits of increased information and perspectives while mitigating the disruptive effects of their differences on team processes, such as cohesion. Further, the information-processing and problem-solving benefits of diverse teams are most likely to translate into enhanced effectiveness when the team's task is cognitively complex or requires multiple perspectives. Although these findings suggest that the effects of team composition are complex, a better understanding of these contingencies can help organizations select and construct effective teams.

### Team Development

Team development applies not only to the formation of new teams but also to the process of socializing newcomers to existing teams that naturally experience outflows and inflows of new members during their life span. Much of the research in this area assumes the formation of a brand-new team with no prior history. The classic stage model proposed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965, for example, describes a sequential series of developmental stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing. This model was based on clinical and therapy

groups, which had no prior history, no broader context, and an unstructured task. As a result, the model emphasizes the interpersonal processes that teams must manage to achieve their goals.

In contrast, existing teams possess a relatively stable set of shared norms and role expectations and a distinct group climate that have emerged during the course of the team's life span. The inflow of a new member presents a potential challenge to this stability, and thus teams seek to assimilate newcomers, and newcomers, for their part, endeavor to adapt while seeking accommodation by the group. Unfortunately, much of the research in this area has focused on the socialization of individuals into the organization and has paid very little attention to the role of the work group or team in the socialization process. However, there is some evidence that work group members are helpful socialization agents, much more so than formal socialization practices, and play an important role in newcomers' learning, understanding, and adjusting.

### Team Processes and Performance

At the core of all models of team effectiveness are the process mechanisms through which team inputs are translated into team performance and other outcomes. The literature on team processes is voluminous, and there exists little convergence on a core set of processes or broader mediators. In their 2003 review, Kozlowski and Bell classified team processes into cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioral mechanisms in an attempt to organize this research. Cognitive mechanisms, such as *team mental models*, *transactive memory*, and *team learning*, capture the collective task-relevant perceptions, knowledge, and information of team members.

A common theme of much of the work in this area is that team performance is enhanced when members share a common understanding of the task environment, its goal–role–strategy requirements, and perceptions of the broader organizational climate. However, other research suggests that success depends on a team's ability to access the unique informational resources held by members. Transactive memory systems, for example, allow different members of a team to process and store information related to their expertise. The result is that team members can rely on their

teammates' expertise, enabling the team to access a larger pool of task-relevant information and avoid wasting cognitive effort.

Affective and motivational processes are also important to team effectiveness. For example, *group cohesion*, or team members' shared commitment or attraction to the group, the task, and one another, has been shown to positively predict team performance. *Team efficacy*, or the shared belief in a group's collective capacity to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of goal attainment, has also been shown to relate positively to team performance. In contrast, both interpersonal and task conflict within a team have been shown to undermine team effectiveness. It is important to note that the positive or negative effect of each of these affective-motivational processes has been shown to be stronger when a team's tasks entail higher levels of interdependence.

Behavioral team processes, such as coordination, communication, and cooperation, focus on what team members do to combine individual effort and action to accomplish team objectives. These three processes are related in that communication serves as a means to enable coordination and cooperation. Coordination and cooperation are related concepts, but coordination involves a temporal component that is not an essential part of cooperation. For example, complex tasks typically require high levels of interdependence, temporal pacing, and synchronicity. Under these conditions, effective performance requires coordinated action, not simply discretionary cooperation.

### Enhancing the Effectiveness of Work Teams

Given the growing importance of work teams in today's organizations, there exists considerable interest in designing, selecting, training, and leading teams to be effective. However, this is also an area in which practice has significantly outpaced research, leading to interventions being developed in the absence of a solid scientific foundation. In a recent 2006 article, Kozlowski and Ilgen identified those areas of the team effectiveness literature that have well-developed theoretical and empirical foundations and used the findings from these areas to identify interventions that can improve

team effectiveness. For example, the evidence has consistently supported the use of several training techniques, such as cross-training, simulation-based training, and crew resource management, for enhancing team processes and performance.

*Leadership* is also a potentially critical lever for enhancing team effectiveness. A variety of leader approaches, such as *transformational* and *transactional leadership*, have received consistent research support, although there is a need to extend theory and research in this area to the team context. Research on other topics, such as group composition and team development, holds considerable promise for helping organizations select and develop effective teams, but continued work is needed to develop scientifically grounded tools and applications.

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*See also* Diversity; Group Composition; Group Development; Group Learning; Group Performance; Team Building; Team Performance Assessment; Team Reflexivity; Transactive Memory Systems

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## XENOPHOBIA

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The term *xenophobia* derives from the Greek *xenos* (foreigner or stranger) and *phobos* (fear or aversion) and is generally used to describe fear of, contempt for, or aversion to foreigners and, more broadly, people, values, customs, beliefs, and even artifacts differing from those of one's own culture.

Xenophobia is related to several social science concepts describing different kinds of antipathy to others. These include *prejudice* (dislike of others, who may differ in almost any way, but which mostly refers to intergroup differences), *racism* (dislike of others seen as racially different; racism is usually associated with an ideology of superiority over those others), *stigmatization* (devaluation or dislike of others seen as deviating from socially desirable standards or norms), and *ethnocentrism* (dislike of ethnically or culturally different others; ethnocentrism is associated with a strong sense of ingroup preference and superiority). Of these, xenophobia is most similar to ethnocentrism, if the term *ethnic* is broadly interpreted, but it may not necessarily involve the implication of strong ingroup preference. If the concept of prejudice, which is the broadest noted here, is interpreted widely, xenophobia can be viewed as a kind of prejudice directed against persons seen as strangers or foreigners. This entry begins by examining the impact of xenophobia on immigrants and relates that topic to ethnocentrism, then looks at the bases of xenophobia at intergroup, individual, and cultural or societal levels.

### Xenophobic Reactions to Immigrants

In contrast to the vast research literatures on prejudice and racism, there has been little research on xenophobia. The term is most frequently used in reference to negative reactions to immigrants. One area of recent research has been the upsurge in anti-immigrant xenophobia in western Europe during the past half century. Thomas Pettigrew reviewed this research for the *Annual Review of Sociology* in 1998 and described four major reactions to "new minorities" in western Europe.

One reaction was pervasively hostile attitudes or prejudice expressed either blatantly and overtly or in more subtle and covert forms. A second was discrimination, which could also be either direct, creating inequality through differential treatment and access to employment and housing, or indirect, as when inability to gain citizenship restricts opportunities, thereby perpetuating inequality. A third was political opposition, with the formation of far-right anti-immigrant political parties openly propagating racist and xenophobic policies and shifting the entire political spectrum on the issue to the right. Finally, there was increased anti-immigrant and antiforeigner violence, sometimes associated with far-right political activity but also seen in sporting contexts and individual *hate crimes*.

It is interesting to note that recent ecological studies of xenophobic violence and hate crimes have not supported early findings on lynching in the United States, which had suggested a link with economic hardship or unemployment. Instead, these studies, notably by Donald Green and his

colleagues, have indicated that xenophobic violence is particularly likely when social groups feel that they are confronted by growing numbers of outsiders with different social practices in a way that seems to challenge the groups' more favorable, established position in the social hierarchy.

### Extent of Xenophobia and Ethnocentrism

The idea that anti-immigrant hostility may be a direct response to the arrival of new migrants, as appears to have happened in western Europe, seems overly simplistic. Host people living in the areas most affected by new immigrants and who have most contact with them tend to be most favorable to them, whereas those living in areas least affected by new immigrants and having least contact with them are most unfavorable to them.

This observation also contradicts the idea proposed by some evolutionary theories that hostility to outsiders had survival value for early human groups and therefore became an evolved adaptive response that was universal and genetically transmitted, underlying most forms of prejudice. These theories have cited many examples of strangers or outsiders being killed, attacked, avoided, or rejected by tribes or communities they encountered. The historical record, however, provides equally numerous examples of cultural outsiders or strangers being welcomed and greeted with interest, curiosity, and sometimes even veneration.

Ethnographic and cross-cultural studies of ethnocentrism, such as a classic series of studies conducted among East African tribes by Donald Campbell and Marilynn Brewer in the mid-20th century, have also shown that attitudes to outgroups and outsiders were not universally negative but varied widely, sometimes being negative, sometimes positive, and sometimes varying markedly by situation or context. Surveys of attitudes toward foreigners among East German youth during the 1990s, when antforeigner attacks in East Germany were causing concern, also showed that these attitudes were organized along two independent dimensions, with one comprising "good," or liked, foreigners (English, Swedes, North Americans, French) and the other "bad," or disliked, foreigners (Turks, Poles, Jews, Gypsies).

These considerations raise the question of why foreigners or strangers are sometimes viewed with

hostility and dislike and sometimes not. Social scientific theory and research suggest answers to this question at three different levels: intergroup processes, individual differences, and societal or cultural group.

### Intergroup Bases of Xenophobia

The observation that dislike of certain outsiders and foreigners, but not others, may be widely shared or consensual in a society suggests that some kind of real or anticipated intergroup processes may be causing the antipathy for those particular outgroups but not for others. Three kinds of intergroup processes seem to be particularly conducive to intergroup dislike.

First, there is *intergroup threat*, whereby members of a group who perceive outsiders or foreigners as posing a threat to their resources (*real threat*) or values or identity (*symbolic threat*) will dislike them. Second, there is *intergroup competition*, whereby outsiders or outgroups seen as competing either over real resources, such as territory, or over relative prestige and superiority will be disliked. And third, there is *intergroup inequality*, whereby outsiders or foreigners seen as lower in status, prestige, or power will tend to be devalued and derogated.

### Individual Bases of Xenophobia

Dislike and rejection of outgroups and foreigners can also be an individual phenomenon, and it is well documented that reactions to foreigners may vary widely within societies or cultures, with some people responding with hostility and others not. Research has also shown that individuals' prejudiced attitudes tend to be generalized over outgroups, with some people being generally prejudiced and others generally tolerant. This suggests that some stable characteristics of individuals cause them to be either generally prejudiced or tolerant.

Research findings show that two social attitude dimensions are strongly related to generalized prejudice in individuals. One is labeled *right wing authoritarianism* (RWA) and is broadly equivalent to *social conservatism*, as opposed to *liberalism*. The other is labeled *social dominance orientation* (SDO) and comprises attitudes supporting social inequality, or *hierarchy*, as opposed to *egalitarianism*.

RWA and SDO seem to be social attitudinal expressions of basic social values, with RWA expressing values of collective security (valuing social order, cohesion, stability, conformity, and tradition) and SDO expressing values of power, dominance, and superiority over others. In any particular society, therefore, persons high in RWA and SDO would be the most ethnocentric and xenophobic, and persons low in RWA and SDO the least.

### Cultural or Societal Bases of Xenophobia

Finally, cross-cultural research has shown that dislike and rejection of outgroups and foreigners can also be a societal or cultural phenomenon, with certain cultures or societies responding collectively with greater xenophobia to outsiders than others do. For example, Michael Bond investigated cultural values across 22 cultures and found that they were clearly differentiated along a cultural value dimension with one pole characterized by generalized tolerance for others and openness to outside influences and the other pole characterized by cultural inwardness, traditionalism, ethnocentric superiority, and generalized dislike of outsiders.

However, there has been little research on what causes societies or cultures to be ethnocentric or xenophobic. An anthropologist, Marc Ross, found that more ethnocentric and xenophobic preindustrial cultures were characterized by relatively harsh, punitive, and unaffectionate childhood socialization practices, which he speculated may have created a psychological disposition for people in those cultures to view outsiders with suspicion and hostility.

Another approach extends the individual difference perspective noted above by suggesting that certain social environmental influences on societies (high levels of threat and danger or of inequality and competition) may cause social attitudes such

as RWA and SDO to become dominant ideologies and culturally normative in these societies. Such societies would then tend to be collectively ethnocentric and xenophobic in their normative attitudes and reactions to outsiders.

*John Duckitt*

*See also* Assimilation and Acculturation; Discrimination; Ethnocentrism; Hate Crimes; Islamophobia; Prejudice; Racism; Right Wing Authoritarianism; Social Dominance Theory

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