

Security

Dialogue across Disciplines

Edited by

PHILIPPE BOURBEAU



Psychological perspectives are critical for understanding the concept of security because they explain and predict processes that may promote violent conflict or peaceful relations between nations and other groups (Bar-Tal 2007; Carroll, Wichman, and Arkin 2006; Huddy, Feldman, and Weber 2007; Leidner, Tropp, and Lickel, 2013). Psychological approaches examine these processes on multiple levels, such as relations between ethnic or religious groups within a nation as well as relations between nations.

The factors that motivate people's behavior and decision making, whether in relations with other groups or in support of national policies, are far more complex than a rational calculation of costs and benefits. Psychology has specified a range of biases that influence human behavior and decision making, in particular with regard to the groups with which people identify and in which they categorize others (Tajfel *et al.* 1971; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner *et al.* 1987).

Psychological contributions to the study of security focus on structural and subjective factors that predict people's perceptions and feelings of insecurity, the consequences those feelings of insecurity have on their attitudes and behavior (Bar-Tal and Jacobson 1998; Huddy *et al.* 2007), as well as the factors that may be necessary to enhance their sense of security. An underlying premise is that insecurity – whether actual or perceived – is an undesirable psychological state. Correspondingly, the need for security motivates people to diminish this state, prompting attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that can promote or hinder positive relations between groups (Huddy *et al.* 2007;

Acknowledgements: This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program awarded to the first author under Grant No. 1451512. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Skitka *et al.* 2006). For the purposes of this chapter, we use the term "groups" to refer to large collections of individuals who categorize themselves, or whom others categorize, on the basis of ethnicity, race, nationality, political orientation, religion, or other categories that society recognizes as constituting meaningful groups (see Roccas and Elster 2012). The psychological need for security may lead people to identify more strongly with certain groups (e.g., Hogg 2010) or to antagonize or avoid members of other groups, as contrasted to building positive relationships across group boundaries (e.g., Leidner *et al.* 2013; Pettigrew 1998).

The current chapter focuses on theory and research from social and political psychology, and in particular the processes that pertain to relations between groups. We organize our review of theory and research around three central questions relevant to the psychological study of security:

- What are security and insecurity from a psychological perspective?
- What psychological factors predict feelings of security and insecurity between groups?
- What strategies could enhance feelings of security and promote positive relations between groups?

In this chapter, we discuss more in depth the methods that social and political psychologists use to address these issues empirically. Next, we discuss each of the questions outlined previously. At the end of our chapter, we describe strengths and limitations in how psychologists study security concerns, as well as the potential for integration of psychology with other disciplines to enhance the study of security.

Research methods in social and political psychology

Social and political psychologists address research questions using multiple methods. The vast majority of social psychological studies are quantitative and use cross-sectional, experimental, or longitudinal research designs (Maruyama and Ryan 2014). Psychologists can use these methods in field or laboratory settings, and each approach has a unique set of benefits and drawbacks. Researchers often combine methods to enhance the validity and generalizability of findings about relationships between variables (e.g., correlation) or evidence demonstrating that one variable causes change in another variable (e.g., causation).

Social and political psychologists use quantitative methods to predict and explain psychological processes so they can generalize to other contexts. They can also use qualitative research to enrich understanding of individuals' experience. In pursuit of a rich understanding of the experience of security and insecurity for particular individuals, contexts, and communities, qualitative methods used widely in fields such as anthropology and sociology may be more appropriate (see Goldstein, this volume; Ragin, Nagel, and White 2004).

The use of laboratory experiments in social psychology is popular because they have strong internal validity – that is, they have the potential to demonstrate causal relationships between variables while controlling for possible confounds that other variables pose (Wilson, Aronson, and Carlsmith 2010). For example, psychologists can use experimental methods to test whether, at its most basic level, group membership would cause bias even if it were seemingly arbitrary, and divorced from long-standing ties with fellow group members or conflicts with other groups. To answer the question, Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel *et al.* 1971; see also Pinter and Greenwald 2011) devised the minimal group paradigm. In this paradigm, experimenters randomly assign participants to laboratory-generated groups, so that their group memberships are free of any preexisting individual or context variables. In one version of the minimal group paradigm, researchers instructed participants to estimate the numbers of dots on a screen. Regardless of participants' actual responses, half of the participants were told that they were overestimators, and the other half that they were underestimators. Researchers then assessed outcomes such as attitudes toward each group or allocations of resources to members of their own group and the other group. Numerous studies conducted in many countries show that participants tend to report more positive attitudes toward – and give greater resources to – members of their own group than the other (Brewer 1999).

Although laboratory experiments have strong internal validity, one could easily argue that research findings from such studies have weak external validity; they may not generalize to other kinds of groups and settings (Campbell 1957; Paluck and Cialdini 2014; Wilson *et al.* 2010). Thus, social psychologists balance using controlled research designs with strong internal validity for theory building with studies that have greater external validity. Social psychologists can thus generalize findings more effectively to real world settings. They can accomplish this

by using a combination of studies that test effects among both minimal, randomly assigned groups and members of real ethnic, religious, and national groups (e.g., Saguy *et al.* 2009).

Experimental studies in field settings can be more readily interpreted in and applied to the contexts and populations of interest (see Paluck and Cialdini 2014). Like laboratory experiments, field experiments can test causal relationships on psychological processes relevant to the study of security. Field experiments may have less internal validity than laboratory experiments because researchers can control fewer aspects of participants' experience, but this aspect of field experiments may strengthen their external validity (Campbell 1957; Wilson *et al.* 2010). For instance, Paluck (2009) used random assignment to test whether exposure to a media program promoting reconciliation could change Rwandan participants' attitudes, perceived norms about intergroup relations, and cooperative behaviors. The researchers assigned participants in matched regions of Rwanda to listen to one of two radio soap operas, one promoting positive health behaviors (control condition) and one promoting positive intergroup relations through stories about reconciliation (experimental condition). After a year of listening to episodes of the respective program each month, the researchers assessed dependent variables using surveys, focus groups, and behavioral observations. Results suggested that Rwandan participants who listened to the reconciliation program were less likely to oppose intermarriage between their and other religious, regional, and/or ethnic groups; were more likely to express empathy for victims of the Rwandan genocide; and demonstrated more cooperative behavior (Paluck 2009).

Cross-sectional studies are useful when it is impractical or unethical to study the phenomena of interest through experimental means, although the evidence for causation is less strong. For example, with a massive sample of US participants, Huddy and her colleagues showed that feeling insecure about terrorist attacks interacted with the threat participants perceived to predict their support for various domestic and foreign policies. Among those who reported feeling less secure and confident when thinking about terrorist attacks, the threat they perceived from outgroups was particularly predictive of their support for requiring US citizens to hold national I.D. cards, for the US government's conducting special surveillance of Arabs and Muslims, and for US foreign policies in reaction to 9/11 (Huddy *et al.* 2007).

Are psychologists in consensus on methodology?

Psychologists studying issues relevant to security take different methodological approaches, as we have described. A general principle is that the method selected depends upon the nature of the research question, as well as the researcher's interest (Reis and Gosling 2010). Thus, a researcher's inclination to use laboratory methods versus field methods, or experimental versus survey methods, likely reflects differences in interests and in how the researcher frames the research question.

An important methodological critique in behavioral science research concerns the disproportionate focus on "western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic" populations (Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010). Psychologists differ in their attitudes regarding the importance of studying psychological processes outside the laboratory and with diverse populations (see commentaries to Henrich *et al.*'s 2010 target article in issue 33 of *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*). We would expect few psychologists to disagree that more diverse and representative samples would be of great benefit to psychological research, and that most would advocate greater use of rigorous field studies (Paluck and Cialdini 2014). We believe this is of particular importance for psychology's contribution to the study of security, because many of the psychological questions that are most relevant to security concerns involve psychological processes and how those processes may differ among members of different groups in distinct national or international contexts.

In the sections that follow, we summarize research and theory on security from a psychological perspective.

What are security and insecurity from a psychological perspective?

Definitions of security in psychology can be applied to intrapersonal processes involving self-esteem (Marigold, McGregor, and Zanna 2010), feelings in close relationships (Clark and LeMay 2010), or understandings of relations between groups (e.g., Bar-Tal and Jacobson 1998; Huddy *et al.* 2007). In each case, psychological insecurity refers to a state of uncertainty or unease, which can motivate individuals to develop attitudes or engage in behaviors that seek to reestablish a sense of security.

Early models of human motivation identify security as a core psychological need. Maslow (1943) suggested that people are guided by a "safety-seeking mechanism" that leads to a "preference for familiar rather than unfamiliar ... or for the known rather than the unknown" (349). Thus, we tend to regard the unfamiliar and unknown as potentially threatening (Newcomb 1943), and encountering threatening situations provokes our needs for security (Arkin, Carroll, and Oleson 2010).

As we engage with others in our social worlds, we are especially likely to attend to and react to stimuli that could pose a threat to our well-being or that of our group (Fiske and Taylor 2013). These processes are especially problematic for relations between groups, as we develop negative expectations for how we will be treated by other groups (Kramer and Wei 1999), make stereotyped attributions to predict the future behavior of groups (Fiske and Taylor 2013), and blame other groups for actions committed by a mere few of their members (Lickel 2012; Lickel *et al.* 2006). Moreover, our emotional responses to potential threats can complicate relations between groups, as they may compel us to engage in defensive acts that antagonize members of other groups and worsen our relations with them (Stephan *et al.* 2009).

However, emotional processes are not necessarily destructive for reasoning and intergroup behavior. People can regulate their emotion using various strategies. For example, through the emotion regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal, people can regulate how negative emotions affect them by reevaluating the situation in which they feel the negative emotion (Gross 2002). In a correlational study of Jewish Israelis' support for humanitarian aid in the Gaza war, researchers assessed the extent to which participants engaged in cognitive reappraisal of the emotions they felt during the war along with various other variables. Those who regulated their emotions through cognitive reappraisal felt more hope about resolving the conflict in the future and were more supportive of aid to Palestinians (Halperin and Gross 2011). Emotions may also be constructive for promoting more positive intergroup relations; when white Americans feel sympathy for the suffering of African Americans or angry about the relative advantage of white Americans, they are more supportive of reparatory policies to address racial inequality (Iyer, Leach, and Crosby 2006; Leach, Iyer, and Pedersen 2006).

What psychological factors predict feelings of security and insecurity between groups?

We organize our discussion of psychological factors predicting security around a limited number of relevant theoretical frameworks, including threat, social identity, contact between groups, and the reframing of group boundaries. Whereas much of the research we review is categorized into one framework, other research that we review builds onto understanding of the phenomena of interest – such as perceived threat – but is not necessarily part of the theory we discuss.

Difference and lack of familiarity can make people feel insecure, uncertain, and anxious regarding how members of other groups might perceive them (Stephan and Stephan 1985; Trawalter, Richeson, and Shelton 2009; Vorauer 2006). Consequently, people often approach cross-group relations with vigilance, as they are uncertain about, or threatened by, the possibility that members of other groups will regard or treat them negatively (Crocker and Garcia 2009; Kramer and Messick 1998; Kramer and Wei 1999).

Counteracting these tendencies, people often seek to align themselves with their own groups, in order to reduce feelings of uncertainty and threat and establish a greater sense of belonging and security in their social worlds (Hogg 2003, 2010). However, in some cases, enhancing affiliation with one's own groups can increase outgroup derogation (McGregor *et al.* 2008) and even intergroup violence (McGregor, Haji, and Kang 2008). In the sections that follow, we review how intergroup threat and group identification can contribute to security and insecurity in intergroup contexts, and how other psychological processes may offer constructive alternatives for engagement across groups.

Intergroup threat theory

Intergroup threat theory explains how people from different groups perceive and react to threats (Stephan *et al.* 2009). Extensive psychological research reveals that greater appraisals of intergroup threat typically predict more negative intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2006; Stephan and Stephan 2000; Stephan *et al.* 2009). In particular, two primary types of perceived threats posed by other groups have been identified in this literature,

realistic and symbolic threat (Stephan and Renfro 2002). Realistic threat refers to the perception that the presence of an outgroup endangers material resources that could support the welfare of one's own group, such as limiting access to jobs, housing, education, land, or the ingroup's security and existence. Symbolic threat refers to the perception that an outgroup endangers the worldview or way of life of one's own group, such as by introducing new customs, value systems, social standards, and attitudes (Stephan and Stephan 2000).

How people respond to intergroup threat can have profound consequences for intergroup relations and conflict (Stephan *et al.* 2009). Greater perceived threat typically predicts greater ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and prejudice (e.g., Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, and Wood 1995; Levine and Campbell 1972), greater opposition to immigration and related policies (e.g., Pereira, Vala, and Costa-Lopes 2010; Zick, Pettigrew, and Wagner 2008), and greater support for aggressive, violent, and/or retaliatory policies against outgroups (e.g., Gordon and Arian 2001; Spanovic *et al.* 2010). For instance, studies have found that Jewish Israelis' perceptions of threat by Arabs predicted support for governmental violation of Israeli Arabs' civil rights (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006) and that the more Jewish Israelis perceived that Palestinians posed a threat to Israel, the more they supported exclusionist attitudes (Canetti-Nisim *et al.* 2009) and aggressive retaliatory policies (Maoz and McCauley 2008) against Palestinians.

Stephan and his colleagues (Stephan *et al.* 2009) describe intergroup threat as involving both affective and cognitive processes. Such responses may result from strong emotions such as anxiety and fear that people experience in the face of threat; they are not necessarily intentional, conscious, or rational. People often experience anxiety when interacting with members of other groups (Stephan and Stephan 1985). This anxiety can enhance prejudice, reliance on stereotypes, and a motivation to avoid future intergroup encounters (Amodio 2009; Plant and Devine 2003; Wilder 1993). More broadly, when people perceive an outgroup as threatening a valued group membership, people tend to report fear and engage in hostile reactions toward that outgroup (Bar-Tal 2009; Spanovic *et al.* 2010). For example, immediately after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, Americans were especially likely to report strong emotions such as fear

and anger in response to the attacks (Smith, Rasinski, and Toce 2001). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Americans' reports of fear predicted greater intolerance of Muslims and greater support for deportation of immigrants (Skitka *et al.* 2006); at threat predicted greater intolerance of both Arabs and Muslims and aggressive security policies (Huddy, Khariid, and Capelos 2002; Huddy *et al.* 2005). Fear can also predict support for intergroup violence and aggression, particularly when framed in terms of future threats that may arise from the other group in the conflict (e.g., Spanovic *et al.* 2010). Additionally, fear is not simply a result of threat, but may also enhance perceptions of threat (Lerner *et al.* 2003): As group members experience fear in response to an intergroup event or provocation, that fear can strengthen the view that the outgroup threatens one's own group. Taken together, these psychological approaches emphasize the need to interpret attitudes toward intergroup conflict and security policies in light of group members' threat perceptions and emotional responses to conflict.

Intergroup threat and emotions among advantaged and disadvantaged groups

How people perceive and respond to intergroup threat can depend upon the power and status of their own group. Emerging research in social and political psychology highlights the importance of understanding the divergent perspectives of groups based on their different levels of privilege, status, or power (e.g., Dovidio *et al.* 2012). We will use the terms "advantaged" and "disadvantaged" to refer to groups that differ in privilege, status, or power in their societal context, such as white and black Americans in the United States, Jewish Israelis and Palestinian citizens in Israel, and native-born and immigrant groups across many national contexts. By using these terms, we do not intend to imply that all members of one group are necessarily socially and economically advantaged, and that all members of the other group are socially and economically disadvantaged. Rather, we use these terms to represent the unequal and sociohistorical nature of relations between the groups, and the unique perceptions and motivations that typically correspond with their relative positions in the social structure (see Bobo 1999; Nadler and Shnabel 2008).

In part, members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups may differ in the forms of threat they perceive. For example, while

members of advantaged groups tend to focus on realistic and symbolic threats as described previously, members of disadvantaged groups tend to be concerned about the ways in which their disadvantage affects their daily lives and how they may be subjected to discrimination and unjust treatment. Members of disadvantaged groups regularly experience threats associated with confirming negative stereotypes about their groups (Steele and Aronson 1995) and threats to their psychological sense of security and belonging in contexts where they are underrepresented (Brewer, Von Hippel, and Gooden 1999; Purdie Vaughns *et al.* 2008). Members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups also tend to have different emotional responses to intergroup encounters: Members of advantaged groups tend to feel anxious about being perceived as prejudiced, whereas members of disadvantaged groups tend to feel anxious about becoming the targets of prejudice (e.g., Devine and Vasquez 1998). Correspondingly, the intergroup attitudes of members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups are often predicted by different factors. For instance, white Americans' racial attitudes are predicted by antiegalitarian sentiments, whereas black Americans' racial attitudes are predicted by perceived racism and discrimination of whites (Monteith and Spicer 2000). Such trends parallel the divergent motivations of advantaged and disadvantaged group members in intergroup contexts; members of advantaged groups typically seek to preserve their moral integrity, whereas members of disadvantaged groups typically seek acknowledgment and discussion of the existing structural inequalities (Shnabel *et al.* 2009).

Group identity and social identity theory

One's identity as a member of social groups is a critical part of psychological security. Indeed, as Allport (1960) stated, "Security is found only within the ingroups – within the family, the church, the tribe, the nation. All else appears hazardous and unknown" (p. 344). Striving for a sense of belonging constitutes a core social motive (Fiske 2004).

Social identity theory explains the processes through which people identify with social groups, the functions that social identity serves, and the consequences for their attitudes and behavior. People's identities as group members may serve as important sources of esteem (Brown 2000; Tajfel and Turner 1986) and information about how to

think and behave in their social worlds (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Smith and Louis 2008). Generally, when people identify with social groups, they take on the norms, behaviors, and attitudes of their groups and become increasingly motivated to promote their groups' welfare and serve as good representatives of their groups (see Hogg 2003). They tend to exaggerate differences between their own group and other groups, assuming that they are more similar to members of their own group and are more different from members of other groups (Wilder 1984). People also tend to evaluate their own groups more positively, and allocate more resources to their own groups compared to the way they evaluate and treat members of other groups (Bourhis, Sachdev, and Gagnon 1994; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament 1971).

Potential consequences of uncertainty for group identity and security

Experiencing uncertainty motivates people to identify more with groups (Hogg 2003, 2007). In particular, uncertainty motivates people to identify with groups that have high entitativity, which means that the group has a clear structure, a coherent set of goals that its members agree upon, with clear lines demarcating ingroup from outgroup (Campbell 1957; Hamilton and Sherman 1996; Hogg and Adelman 2013).

Feelings of uncertainty can also make people more sensitive to perceptions of injustice, including not having a voice in procedures and not feeling as if they are given a fair chance (Van den Bos 2001; Van den Bos and Lind 2010). Perceiving that procedures authorities use are fair is important for a secure society; when people perceive that authorities use unfair procedures, they are less likely to cooperate with and help them (Tyler and Blader 2003).

People who identify more strongly with their groups are more likely to interpret intergroup situations as threatening and are more sensitive to intergroup threats they perceive. Once they interpret situations as threatening their ingroup they react more strongly to the threat (e.g., Riek *et al.* 2006). They also become more likely to justify violence and negative actions against outgroup members, and to view the acts of violence they commit against them merely as responses to threat and provocation posed by them (Bilali, Tropp, and Dasgupta 2012).

Different modes of identification

The concept of social identity has developed to explain how distinct modes of identification can have distinct consequences for attitudes and behavior. Certain aspects of group identification are especially likely to exacerbate threat responses and enhance ingroup-protective responses in the face of threat. Theoretical distinctions between patriotism and nationalism (e.g., Kosterman and Feshbach 1989) and constructive and blind patriotism (e.g., Staub 1997) suggest that there are at least two key dimensions of group identification: one that focuses on attachment to the ingroup, and one that refers to beliefs in the ingroup's superiority over other groups and deference to group norms and authorities (Roccas *et al.* 2008).

A growing body of research suggests that this latter aspect of group identification – or, *glorification* of the ingroup (Roccas *et al.* 2006, 2008) – is particularly likely to make group members prone to act aggressively in response to intergroup threat and to justify that aggression (Bandura 1999). For instance, among American respondents, a sense of ingroup superiority has been shown to predict greater support for military action against Iraq (Federico, Golec, and Dial 2005) and fewer demands for justice in response to torture committed by American and British forces against Iraqis (Leidner *et al.* 2010). Dutch Muslim youths who experienced greater uncertainty also viewed Muslims as superior to other groups, an attitude that predicted greater disconnection from Dutch society, and in turn, greater support for intergroup violence enacted by Muslims (Doosje, Loseman, and Van den Bos 2013). As evidenced by these examples, glorification of the ingroup reduces guilt about negative ingroup actions by increasing “exonerating cognitions” about the acts (Roccas, Klar, and Leviatan 2006). By justifying the transgressions of their own group, glorification helps group members to maintain a positive image of their own group, even after committing violence against other groups (Leidner and Castano 2012).

How responses to insecurity affect intergroup relations

Ironically, engaging in behaviors to protect the ingroup not only could enhance and justify aggression toward other groups, but may also inadvertently provoke vengeful and defensive responses among

members of those other groups. Indeed, aggressive acts committed by ingroup members and justification of their aggression toward an outgroup can often provoke retaliatory efforts among members of that outgroup (Lickel *et al.* 2006; Lickel 2012). Perceiving that another group is apathetic to the mistreatment or injustice encountered by one's own disadvantaged group can also lead members of disadvantaged groups to endorse stronger retaliatory responses and greater efforts toward social change (Hawi *et al.* 2012; Saguy, Tropp, and Hawi 2013). As such, experiencing threat and a sense of insecurity can motivate intergroup attitudes and behaviors that have the potential to exacerbate intergroup conflict and enhance instability and uncertainty in relations between groups.

Yet, once our psychological needs for security are met, other psychological needs motivate us to grow (Molden, Lee, and Higgins 2008) and explore other interests and experiences (e.g., Maslow 1962; Wright, Aron, and Tropp 2002). Uncertainty could also be construed as a source of excitement as people seek out new experiences and if they see uncertainty as a challenge (Hogg 2010). People may also personally vary in the extent to which they feel comfortable with uncertainty and wish to learn new things about themselves and their abilities and to seek out new experiences (Szeto and Sorrentino 2010).

Taken together, these trends suggest that if we perceive or anticipate threat, or feel uncertain about whether we will be threatened by an outgroup, we are likely to desire safety and security and to become defensive and protective in intergroup encounters. However, to the extent that we are able to alleviate potential threats presented by other groups, we may feel more secure and more open to expressing interest, curiosity, and empathy in our relations with other groups.

Strategies to enhance security and improve relations between groups

In the sections that follow, we review a number of constructive strategies that may be considered to enhance feelings of security and positive relations between groups. These strategies have typically been regarded as approaches to prejudice reduction among members of advantaged groups. Relatively little attention has been granted to the perspectives and experiences of the disadvantaged (see Dixon *et al.* 2010; Hornsey and Hogg 2000). More work is needed to understand

how these strategies may function differently for groups that vary in status, and how they may be used to promote fair and just relations between groups in addition to promoting intergroup harmony (Saguy *et al.* 2013).

Intergroup contact theory

Intergroup contact theory states that as members of different groups experience close, positive interactions with one another, their prejudice toward one another will decrease (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Decades of research reveal that contact between members of different groups can reduce prejudice and promote a range of positive intergroup outcomes, including more positive intergroup attitudes, behavioral intentions, trust, and support for policies that would benefit members of other groups (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Indeed, many studies have shown positive effects of intergroup contact even among groups with legacies of violent or protracted intergroup conflict (see Wagner and Hewstone 2012, for a review). Although positive contact outcomes can occur across a broad range of settings and contexts, they are especially likely when the contact occurs under optimal conditions, such as when the interacting groups have equal status and cooperate in working together toward common goals, and when institutional norms and authorities support the positive nature of their contact (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998).

By "contact" we and other psychologists are referring to face-to-face interactions between members of different groups, rather than assessing contact in terms of proportional indices, such as percentages of different groups within a neighborhood or school setting. Proportional indices may provide opportunities for members of different groups to interact, yet are distinct from actual interactions between members of different groups (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Proportional indices and face-to-face interactions may also predict intergroup attitudes in different ways; for example, in the absence of close contact experiences, greater proportions of immigrants in one's community may provoke greater perceptions of threat, whereas close contact with immigrants in one's community may lessen perceptions of threat (see Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2010).

One of the primary ways contact reduces prejudice is by reducing the anxiety people feel and the threat they perceive when interacting with

outgroup members (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). Uncertainty and anxiety about cross-group interactions can increase feelings of insecurity, opening the door to hostile interactions and relations between groups (Stephan and Stephan 1985). Apprehensions about contact and expectations that one will be rejected can motivate people to avoid contact (Barlow, Louis, and Hewstone 2009; Plant and Devine 2003; Plant 2004). Perceiving that other groups pose threats to the livelihood of one's own group can further propel negative intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew *et al.* 2010).

Yet when members of different groups have positive contact experiences – particularly under optimal conditions – they experience less anxiety from intergroup encounters and have less bias favoring their ingroup over other groups (Levin, van Laar, and Sidanius 2003). Positive contact can also enhance the extent to which people trust members of other groups (Hewstone *et al.* 2006) and make favorable interpretations when outgroup members behave in ambiguous ways (Vollhardt 2010). Importantly, positive contact effects have been shown among groups with histories of conflict (see Wagner and Hewstone 2012), such as predicting trust among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Hewstone *et al.* 2006), predicting the extent to which non-Jews helped Jews escape during World War II (Oliner and Oliner 1988), and predicting white South Africans' support of race-based policies that would benefit black South Africans (Dixon *et al.* 2010). Moreover, over time, upon reducing anxiety through intergroup contact, group members often become more inclined to adopt the perspectives of the other group and empathize with their concerns (Swart *et al.* 2011). Thus, encouraging positive contact between members of different groups is one strategy for promoting a psychological sense of security, through alleviating intergroup anxiety and threat, while enhancing the extent to which people are willing to engage and empathize with members of other groups.

Positive contact effects tend to be less pronounced among members of disadvantaged groups than among members of advantaged groups (e.g., Binder *et al.* 2009; Tropp and Pettigrew 2005). Moreover, focusing on positive experiences and commonalities when having contact can lead members of disadvantaged groups to become less inclined to perceive their group as disadvantaged (Dixon *et al.* 2010) or to challenge status inequalities (Tropp, Hawi, Van Laar, and Levin 2012) and

more likely to have unrealistic expectations of fair treatment from the advantaged group (Saguy *et al.* 2009).

We believe it is generally useful for members of disadvantaged and advantaged groups to engage in contact with each other to increase intergroup trust and social harmony. Yet any effort to improve relations between groups must also take into account the different expectations and needs that groups of unequal power are likely to have in the contact situation (Bruneau and Saxe 2012; Dovidio *et al.* 2012). Intergroup harmony between groups of unequal status might be achieved in the short term, but persisting inequality and disparate treatment can threaten the prospects for intergroup harmony in the long term, as inequality leaves social conditions ripe for conflict between groups. Thus, contact approaches must ensure that the dual goals of intergroup harmony and social equality are addressed when members of disadvantaged and advantaged groups interact (Becker *et al.* 2013).

Reframing group boundaries and the common ingroup identity model

Growing from intergroup contact theory, the common ingroup identity model specifies that when members of two groups can think of themselves as one superordinate group with common goals, relations between the groups will improve (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000). For instance, beyond thinking of themselves solely as members of different racial and ethnic groups, black, white, Asian, and Latino Americans may identify as part of an inclusive American identity. When groups conceive of themselves and others as part of the same superordinate group, their attitudes toward former outgroup members become more positive and they begin to respond to former outgroup members in ways that they would typically reserve for ingroup members. These positive changes encourage more favorable evaluations and greater sharing of resources (Gaertner *et al.* 1989; Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman 1996).

However, reframing group categories at the superordinate level can be difficult to maintain or may not always be successfully achieved, particularly when there are group differences in status within the social structure (Hornsey and Hogg 2000; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2009). In part, the groups may not always agree on how the

superordinate category is or should be defined (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999). Advantaged groups may feel more "ownership" of the superordinate category than disadvantaged groups (see Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, and Pratto 1997; Staerkle *et al.* 2010), while members of disadvantaged groups may also feel as if they are being subsumed within the broader social category (Hornsey and Hogg 2000). To the extent that they value their subgroup identities, they could interpret any attempt to diminish their loyalty to these subgroups as threatening (Branscombe *et al.* 1999; Hornsey and Hogg 2000). As such, encouraging members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups to identify only with the superordinate category may ultimately limit the extent to which all group members feel a sense of inclusion within the superordinate category.

A number of researchers have therefore proposed that both superordinate (e.g., national) and subgroup (e.g., racial or ethnic) identities be maintained as dual identities (see Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis 2002; Hornsey and Hogg 2000). When valued subgroup identities are recognized in tandem with the superordinate identity, members of disadvantaged subgroups tend to experience this as validation and become less inclined to feel hostile toward the advantaged group (Hornsey and Hogg 2000). Furthermore, preserving valued dual identities may prevent the adverse effect that positive contact experiences can have on advocating just treatment in society (Glasford and Dovidio 2011).

Strengths and weaknesses of psychology's contribution to the study of security

The strength of psychology's contribution to the study of security is the potential to explain and predict how subjective perceptions of insecurity can create actual insecurity, by motivating people to respond to perceived threats in ways that create or exacerbate group conflict. Use of the scientific method, whether via laboratory or field studies, longitudinal or correlational survey designs, is essential to this contribution.

Psychology also has particular areas in which the discipline must grow to contribute to the study of security. Our views are in line with those of others who advocate broadening the scope of research participants and diversity of perspectives and using more field research

(Heinrich *et al.* 2010; Paluck and Claidini 2014). As we have described throughout this chapter, psychologists must also continue to study relations between groups within communities, nations, and between nations, and to examine these processes at multiple levels to contribute more fully to a multidisciplinary understanding of security, threat, and identity in intergroup relations.

How can psychology connect to other disciplines in the study of security?

We see great potential in connecting with scholars in other disciplines to examine the origins and nature of human security, such as through links to studies of policy support in political science and the integration of qualitative and quantitative research approaches in sociology and anthropology. Both political scientists and social psychologists studying political psychology relevant to security use empirical approaches and develop theory. Some political scientists studying political psychology focus on applying psychological theory to explain political outcomes without collecting new data. For example, Jonathan Mercer has applied psychological research on emotion and cognition to study them in political contexts (Mercer 2005, 2010). Psychologists who have taught in political science or interdisciplinary departments led many of the empirical projects we refer to in this chapter, including the study by Huddy and her colleagues (Huddy *et al.* 2007) of US participants' feelings of security, threat, and support for policies, and the study by Halperin and Gross of Jewish Israelis' emotion regulation and support for aid to Palestinians (Halperin and Gross 2011).

We believe that greater integration of these disciplines would enable each to make a stronger contribution to the study of security. An integrative approach would combine the strength of the scientific methods used in different disciplines with an understanding of how psychological processes relevant to security manifest within particular social and political contexts.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have reviewed theory and research concerning psychological motivations for security and the ways in which these

motivations can affect relations between groups. People often reflexively turn to their groups to enhance feelings of security, yet such tendencies can lead to biases that provoke avoidance and rejection of other groups, which in turn may incite conflict and societal instability. Although seemingly counterintuitive, constructive long-term approaches to address insecurity may involve engagement with others and, at least initially, the experience of vulnerability (see Andersen, Saribay, and Thorpe 2008, for a related argument). Through forging ties and reframing relations between groups, people can become more inclined to express concern for the welfare of groups beyond their own and question ingroup aggression against those groups, thus curbing intergroup conflict and enhancing the prospect for greater security and stability within societies.