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Intergroup Processes: From Prejudice to Positive Relations Between Groups

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Abstract

This chapter reviews individual and contextual processes that explain why prejudice exists in diverse societies and what processes and strategies can contribute to its reduction. The first half of the chapter discusses origins and definitions of intergroup prejudice, along with ideological and structural factors that support the endurance of intergroup prejudice, such as authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and patterns of social segregation. The second half discusses strategies and processes involved in prejudice reduction, with a particular emphasis on those derived from intergroup contact theory, including situational conditions, social categorization, cross-group friendships, and motivational processes such as anxiety reduction and empathy. Taken together, this chapter highlights that prejudice and its diminution are best understood when individual and contextual factors, and their interaction, are jointly employed to illuminate negative and positive intergroup relations between groups.

Key Words: intergroup relations, prejudice, contextual social psychology, prejudice reduction, intergroup contact, diversity, ethnicity, race

Introduction

On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers—an African American civil rights activist from Mississippi—was arriving home after a meeting with lawyers from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He got out of his car and was walking on his driveway when a bullet struck him in the back. He staggered a bit and then fell to the ground. Evers was pronounced dead about an hour later at a local hospital in Jackson, Mississippi. The man who was ultimately convicted of killing Medgar Evers was Byron De La Beckwith. De La Beckwith was an American white supremacist and Klansman living in the South during a particularly turbulent period in American history. The United States in the 1960s, which provided a backdrop for this event, was in turmoil as the national climate and culture were gradually moving from Jim Crow racism to movements promoting racial integration and civil rights.

Byron De La Beckwith was ultimately convicted for the assassination of Medgar Evers, but it took

three trials and about 30 years. The first two trials in 1964 had all-white jury members, and in each instance the jury deadlocked, thus acquitting De La Beckwith of the Evers murder. In the second trial, former Governor Ross Barnett—a white southerner himself and government official at the time—interrupted the proceedings to shake hands with Beckwith. In 1994, a third trial took place with a racially diverse jury with new evidence that De La Beckwith had boasted of the murder to others in public and in private during this 30-year period. He was finally convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Regardless of whether De La Beckwith's attitudes toward African Americans and other ethnic minority groups changed during this time, the society around him had changed. Gone were the days of Jim Crow and explicit, institutionalized racial oppression. Social norms in the United States have evolved to the point where expression of blatantly prejudiced attitudes and behavior are no longer

deemed acceptable. Nonetheless, we still witness recurring news stories depicting the senseless deaths of black men and women and corresponding tensions between racial and ethnic groups in our neighborhoods and schools.

The death of Trayvon Martin occurred in 2012, arguably a time defined by egalitarian social norms and the celebration of cultural diversity in the United States. Trayvon Martin—a 17-year-old African American high school student—was returning home after he went to a convenience store to buy some candy and an iced tea. He was walking through a Sanford, Florida, neighborhood in the evening when George Zimmerman, a resident of the neighborhood, saw Trayvon and thought he looked suspicious. He called the police to report the suspicious activity and despite being instructed by the dispatcher not to follow Trayvon, he continued to do so with a gun on his person. At some point, the two got in an altercation, and Zimmerman fired one fatal shot into Trayvon's chest.

The killing of Trayvon Martin and other examples marking the deaths of black Americans under suspicious circumstances—including Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Eric Garner in Staten Island; Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland, among others—has sparked and crystallized the Black Lives Matter movement, which challenges the oppression of black people and fights racial injustice in the criminal justice system. Protests have erupted around US colleges and universities; racial minority students, and their allies, have openly criticized the inhospitable and racially charged climates they encounter—on campuses that ostensibly seek to establish norms of tolerance and embrace multiculturalism.

These examples raise important questions regarding the nature of contemporary prejudice and the ways in which biases introduce themselves in the minds of people and the social spaces they inhabit. A central goal of this chapter is to explore how individual and contextual factors jointly influence intergroup relations and behavior. In so doing, we adopt a contextual social psychological approach (see Pettigrew, 1991) to examine intergroup processes through both individual and situational influences and what these mean for people's psychological experiences and motivations in intergroup contexts. In the first half of the chapter, we discuss origins and definitions of intergroup prejudice, along with ideological and structural factors that support its persistence. We then shift our focus

in the second half to concentrate on strategies and processes involved in prejudice reduction, with a particular emphasis on recent developments in intergroup contact theory and research.

Defining Intergroup Prejudice

A long-standing topic of interest in the field of intergroup relations has been the nature of prejudice (see Allport, 1954; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005). A great deal of research has sought to identify factors that engender and maintain prejudice and, increasingly, to understand both the individual and contextual factors that contribute to prejudice (see Duckitt, 1992).

Varying definitions of prejudice exist within social psychology, and like other complex constructs in the social sciences, there has been an evolution in conceptualizations of prejudice. Allport (1954), for example, proposed that prejudice is antipathy toward a group of people based on a faulty and inflexible generalization (p. 9). A more recent and widely accepted definition by Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, and Gaertner (1996) simply proposes that prejudice is an attitude where the object being evaluated is a social group and its respective members. Unlike that of Allport (1954), this broad definition recognizes that we may form either positive or negative attitudes toward a social group; at the same time, the definition moves beyond a focus on antipathy toward out-groups and allows for recognition of favorable biases toward one's in-group.

Prejudice as In-group Love Versus Outgroup Hate

This distinction is important because research on intergroup relations has revealed that prejudice is not solely (or even primarily) about derogation of the out-group; rather, much of contemporary prejudice is based in favoritism toward the in-group. Biased intergroup perceptions and behavior are often guided by feelings of warmth, positive regard, and preferential treatment toward in-group members compared to how we react toward out-group members (see Brewer, 2001). Indeed, studies of Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, and of political groups in the United States, showed that each party tends to attribute their own group's aggressive responses to love for the in-group, while attributing the other party's aggressive responses to hate toward the out-group (Waytz, Young, & Ginges, 2014).

Although there are many prominent historical examples of intergroup relations defined by

intergroup negativity and derogation (see Horowitz, 2000), motivational perspectives suggest that we are driven principally to protect our own groups (see Sidanius & Kurzban, 2003). Thus, the expression of out-group derogation or explicit malevolence toward out-groups is not necessarily our initial impulse in intergroup relations. Rather, out-group derogation should become more likely to emerge to the extent that there are certain situational factors present (e.g., see Brewer, 2001; Mummendey, Otten, Berger, & Kessler, 2000). A range of situational factors may set the stage for intergroup prejudice and out-group derogation, such as perceiving that other groups pose threats to resources that could serve to benefit one's own group (Stephan & Stephan, 2005) or societal norms that endorse or legitimize negative treatment of other groups (Duckitt, 1992).

Contemporary Forms of Prejudice

We may be motivated to minimize the extent to which we explicitly derogate or express negative attitudes toward other groups depending on the prevailing norms in our society (see Crandall, Eshelman, & O'Brien, 2002). The justification suppression model suggests that genuine prejudice is not directly expressed but is restrained by norms (e.g., egalitarianism) that suppress it; prejudice is expressed when justifications such as attributions (e.g., certain groups do not have a good work ethic) or stereotypes afford people the capacity to release suppressed prejudice (Crandall & Eshelman, 2003). People are also more likely to express prejudiced attitudes when they have established credentials that they are nonprejudiced (Monin & Miller, 2001). Thus, while explicit forms of prejudice are no longer as prevalent given recent shifts toward more egalitarian social norms, prejudice is by no means obsolete (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Another form of contemporary prejudice involves aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998), where individuals hold egalitarian values yet are not aware of the negative attitudes they harbor toward racial minorities as a function of the negative stereotypes and associations that abound in their society. Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) further argued that individuals will sometimes be inclined to offer seemingly nonracial justifications for their negative attitudes (e.g., stating support for minority advancement while indicating that minorities are inexperienced or not qualified), thereby perpetuating a tendency to see themselves as nonprejudiced. Relatedly, work on symbolic racism proposes that,

while they generally support egalitarian principles, white individuals often have negative attitudes toward racial minorities due to processes of socialization (Sears & Henry, 2005). At times, these potential discrepancies can lead to a "principle-implementation gap" whereby individuals who endorse egalitarianism, for example, often do not support social policy that is consonant with such ideology (Sears & Funk, 1991). Although there are important distinctions among these models, one commonality is that they focus principally on how dominant group members respond to racial minorities, rather than exploring more generally how and why groups develop prejudices toward each other.

Implicit Forms of Prejudice

Increasingly, social psychological research has emphasized implicit forms of prejudice—that is, the automatic associations individuals have about groups that manifest in behaviors that are largely uncontrollable or occur without intention (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Relationships between implicit and explicit forms of prejudice are typically unrelated or only weakly related, suggesting that people may be unaware of these biases (Kinder, 2013). Moreover, people may exhibit automatic biases despite thinking of themselves as egalitarian or nonprejudiced (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997). Measures such as the implicit association test (IAT) typically find that white, Asian, and Latino participants more quickly associate the racial category of whites with pleasant words and the racial category of blacks with unpleasant words; however, patterns of results are more mixed among African Americans (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007).

In related work, Correll, Park, Judd, and Wittenbrink (2002) developed a scenario to test associations between racial categories and stereotypes of violence and criminality. In this paradigm, participants have to make quick decisions to shoot (or not shoot) racial targets that are armed (or unarmed). In general, findings demonstrate that participants are quicker to shoot armed black targets than armed white targets, as well as to mistakenly shoot unarmed black targets compared to unarmed white targets. Although implicit measures locate the assessment of prejudice at the individual level, both implicit researchers and broader social theorists recognize that implicit prejudices reflect the particular sociocultural contexts in which individuals are raised (Dunham, Chen, & Banaji,

2013), which promote certain associations and social representations via education, media, and other cultural processes (see Moscovici, 1988).

Specifying Sources of Prejudice

In a historical analysis of prejudice research, Duckitt (1992) revealed how different theoretical perspectives make partial and complementary contributions to our understanding of the development and nature of prejudice. He contended that numerous processes lead to prejudice, including (a) universal psychological processes and motivations that build in a human propensity for prejudice (e.g., social categorization, social identification); (b) individual and ideological bases of prejudice (e.g., authoritarianism, political ideology); and (c) processes focusing on social and structural dynamics of prejudice (e.g., resource conflict, group-based disparities in power and status). We briefly review processes relevant to each category in the sections that follow.

Human Propensities for Prejudice: Social Identities

Arguably one of the most influential social psychological theories within intergroup relations is social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The theoretical engine of SIT is that people value social identities because they can potentially derive a positive sense of self from their group memberships, and that realizing this potential is a function of how favorably his or her group compares relative to other relevant groups.

As a reaction to other theories that focus on historical and political contexts that define intergroup relations (see Bobo, 1999), SIT researchers were motivated to investigate group relations in a "sterile" environment—void of historical, political, and immediate contextual factors—to examine psychological, and potentially universal, processes that underlie intergroup prejudice. They observed that the mere categorization of individuals into social groups, whether artificial or natural categories, motivates a need for positive distinctiveness, whereby individuals seek to identify and highlight the favorable and unique attributes of their group in comparison with other groups (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In turn, individuals' striving for positive distinctiveness of their social group often results in attitudes or behaviors favoring their own groups over other groups. Indeed, even in the absence of long-standing conflicts between groups, we tend to evaluate our own groups more positively

and allocate more resources to our own groups compared to how we evaluate and treat other groups (Bourhis, Sachdev, & Gagnon, 1994). Moreover, we tend to take on the norms, behaviors, and attitudes of our groups as we become increasingly motivated to promote the group's welfare and serve as good representatives for the group (see Hogg, 2003).

While SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) focuses on intergroup relations and the biases that can result from group memberships, it does not elucidate the cognitive processes by which people come to identify themselves as members of social groups. As an extension of SIT, self-categorization theory (SCT; J. C. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) argues that people categorize information about themselves from the individual level (e.g., I like apple pie) to the group level (e.g., I am an American) as a function of the interactive forces of the environment and the individual's predispositions. Here, the social environment exerts a strong influence on whether people identify themselves as individuals or as group members (see J. C. Turner & Onorato, 1999), and those groups with which we often identify tend to be more cognitively accessible and salient as we interact with others and seek meaning in our social worlds. What is central for the present discussion is that when people categorize themselves as group members, they begin to think and act as group members and become especially motivated to promote the interests and norms of their groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

Individual and Ideological Bases of Prejudice

While the cognitive and motivational processes outlined by social identity research may be common factors underlying intergroup prejudice, there are also many predictors of prejudice that are likely to vary across individuals. Although these tend to be conceptualized as individual difference variables, it is important to note that they may develop over time through individuals' experiences as embedded within social structures and institutions, such as familial, political, and economic systems. That is, social structures and institutions—be they large or small—have the capacity to impact and transform the psychology of individuals (e.g., see Lane, 2000).

AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

As one well-known example, conceptions of the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) propose that individuals' early socialization experiences can

predispose them to adopt a hierarchical orientation such that they hold authority figures in high regard and tend to denigrate those individuals or groups that are perceived to be weaker or lower in status. More specifically, individuals who grow up in strict, rule-abiding, and disciplinary households are believed to be susceptible to adherence to strong authority figures and more likely to tolerate or even support the mistreatment of “weaker” and “nontraditional” groups. Thus, early childhood experiences (e.g., submission to strict parental authority) sow the seeds for a particular type of personality (i.e., authoritarian), which makes one prone to belligerence toward weak or deviant groups.

Perspectives on the authoritarian personality have been met with considerable critique in the social science community. Criticisms have varied but generally include concerns associated with testing the effects of early childhood socialization retrospectively and the biased phrasing of questions that would induce agreement. More recent work by Altemeyer (1988) sought to deal with these measurement issues, creating a reliable and well-validated scale to assess right-wing authoritarianism rooted in submission to authority and punitiveness toward deviants. However, ideological biases persist in the measurement of authoritarianism, such that the construct is often paired with political conservatism (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Perhaps for this reason, greater research attention has focused on ideological variables based in psychological processes that are likely to motivate prejudice (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Ideology is a particularly complex and slippery construct (Feldman, 2013; Jost, 2006), with wide-ranging definitions across the social sciences (see Adorno et al., 1950; Apter, 1964; Lane, 1962). Social structures and institutions endorse particular perspectives or ways of being that imbue their populations—to a greater or lesser degree—with a set of shared social representations and values that may be called *ideology*. Ideology has the capacity to inform and guide individual attitudes, behavior, and interpretations of the social world (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009), and these in turn have the capacity (in aggregate) to influence structures and social institutions. Thus, ideology is not a static construct; it evolves as a function of the interplay of individuals and institutions.

It is inevitably the case, however, that there are competing ideologies that can enhance the potential for tension and conflict between groups.

We therefore turn to exploring how theoretical perspectives and psychological processes associated with ideology can inform our understanding of intergroup relations.

SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

Social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) argues that most, if not all, modern industrialized nations are defined by status- and power-based social hierarchies, in which certain groups are at the top and others at the bottom. Status and power hierarchies are concretized by the unequal distribution of desirable resources (e.g., higher levels of education, greater home ownership, more access to health care) in which dominant group members obtain more than subordinate group members. These trends are coupled with an unequal distribution of undesirable resources (e.g., higher imprisonment rates, increased mortality rates) through which subordinate groups are more adversely affected than dominant groups. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) further argued that social hierarchies are maintained through “legitimizing myths,” which act as ideological scaffolding to maintain the status quo. Hierarchy-enhancing myths work to ensure that social hierarchies are part of the language that individuals employ while interacting in society (e.g., racism, xenophobia), whereas hierarchy-attenuating myths promote social equality (e.g., egalitarianism). As societies vary in the proportion of hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating myths they espouse, they correspondingly vary in the relative stability of social hierarchies in their communities.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) contended that individuals from high-status groups are more likely to endorse group-based hierarchies than individuals from low-status groups. However, this does not mean that individuals from low-status groups will never support group-based hierarchies; indeed, individuals from low-status groups may do so, even when it would appear to work against their own and their group’s self-interest (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Thus, through a synthesis of sociocultural factors and individual differences (see Hodson, 2009), SDT accounts for power differences by highlighting both ideological mechanisms embedded in social structures and endorsement of ideologies at the individual level. For example, hierarchy-enhancing organizations (e.g., police forces) usually consist of individuals with antiegalitarian beliefs, whereas hierarchy-attenuating organizations (e.g., human rights organizations) usually are composed of individuals with relatively egalitarian beliefs.

The "sorting" of people into particular social environments may be reinforced by the extent to which (a) individuals self-select into social contexts that are compatible with their sociopolitical views and (b) social contexts select and recruit individuals whose values are congruent with the institutional culture and which in turn afford individuals with opportunities to behave in a manner consistent with their sociopolitical views (Newcomb, 1943). Individuals who experience congruence between their sociopolitical values and the institutional culture are especially likely to enjoy success (see van Laar, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Sinclair, 1999).

Social and Structural Dynamics of Prejudice

Moreover, due to the significance of the group-based hierarchies described, there are likely to be a range of social and structural dimensions that instigate and perpetuate prejudice between groups. In particular, decades of work have shown that people are likely to develop prejudice and hostility toward other groups to the extent that they are perceived as posing a threat to one's own group (Levine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966). Threats to one's group may be perceived and defined in a number of ways, such as against oneself as a group member in cross-group interaction (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 1985) or when one becomes aware of negative stereotypes surrounding one's group membership (e.g., Steele, 1997). Yet, perhaps the most commonly studied forms of threat in studies of prejudice involve structural relations between groups, such as those that involve (perceived or actual) conflicts in group interests and competition over material and symbolic resources (e.g., Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Quillian, 1995).

REALISTIC VERSUS SYMBOLIC THREAT

Typically, such concerns about resources are described in terms of a distinction between realistic and symbolic threat. Realistic threat emerges in response to perceived or actual danger to the very existence of one's group, which would put the physical or material well-being of one's group or its members at risk. Thus, examples of realistic threats could include cases of warfare and genocide or instances when the political or economic power of one's group is challenged (see Stephan & Stephan, 2000, for an extended discussion). Early work on realistic conflict showed how such threats can exacerbate tension and conflict between groups: When material resources (e.g., food, jobs, land) are perceived to be

finite, a competitive, zero-sum relationship emerges whereby gains of another group are interpreted as losses to one's own group, which in turn provokes intergroup hostility and prejudice (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Levine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966). Moreover, construals of zero-sum relationships and resultant feelings of realistic threat are especially likely when conflicts are conceived of as between groups, as compared to perceived conflicts over resources that may emerge between individuals (Wildschut & Insko, 2007).

Whereas realistic threats concentrate on conflicts over resources, symbolic threats are typically conceptualized in terms of perceived or actual differences in values and belief systems between groups. This type of threat is closely linked to perspectives on symbolic racism (see Sears & Funk, 1991; Sears & Henry, 2005), in that the perception that other groups violate or disregard the cherished values and beliefs of one's own group predicts diminished support for the perceived interests of the other group. Thus, rather than being entirely distinct, there may be some degree of correspondence between realistic and symbolic threat, where one may contribute to and enhance perception of the other (Verkuyten, 2009).

Moreover, symbolic threats often set the stage for intergroup hostility and prejudice because they appear to threaten what one's group stands for and the values and beliefs that one's group represents (see Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). As such, work on symbolic threat meshes well with research from the social identity perspective, which contends that people will strive to protect the value of their important group memberships when they perceive it to be threatened by another group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In such cases, people may even become motivated to demonstrate their commitment to their group and its values, and in some cases derogate the out-group, in an effort to stand up for their group and verify that they are "good" representatives of the group (see Hogg & Abrams, 1988). At the same time, people may feel threatened when perceptions of the values, norms, and standards of their group are not considered sufficiently distinct from those of other groups (J. C. Turner et al., 1987), and we ultimately strive for an optimal balance between similarity to and distinctiveness from other groups (Brewer, 1991). Still, there is general consensus that, whether provoked by perceived distinctiveness or similarity with other groups, prejudiced responses growing

from intergroup threats should be especially likely to occur among people who identify strongly with their group, while those with weaker identification should feel less threatened (Branscombe et al., 1999).

SOCIAL INTEGRATION VERSUS SEGREGATION

Additionally, intergroup prejudice can result when structural conditions enhance either greater proximity or segregation between groups. Consistent with earlier discussions of group conflict, a number of theorists have proposed that greater proximity between groups induces competition over resources, which provokes threat and greater intergroup hostility and prejudice (e.g., Lee, McCauley, Moghaddam, & Worchel, 2004). Greater proportions of minorities have often been associated with greater threat and prejudice responses among majority groups (e.g., Blalock, 1967; Fossett & Kielcolt, 1989). Some work has also demonstrated curvilinear trends, such that majorities' prejudices start to decrease with smaller proportions of minorities, yet when a certain minority proportion is exceeded, their prejudices begin to rise again (e.g., M. Taylor, 1998).

Given such findings, one might be tempted to propose that efforts to promote diversity be reconsidered to avoid the potential friction, tension, or dissolution of community that could result from having different groups living in close proximity to each other (see Putnam, 2007, and Schlesinger, 1998, for related arguments). Indeed, the US historical landscape is replete with examples of attempts to separate groups as a strategy for managing ethnic and cultural diversity (e.g., white nationalist ideology, as well as black nationalist ideology, arguing for the separation of whites and blacks; see Fredrickson, 1999; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997).

However, diverse communities themselves are not inherently problematic; rather, the segregation between groups that exists within communities is likely the cause of much tension and prejudice between groups (Uslaner, 2011). In line with this reasoning, survey research by Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ (2010) showed that larger out-group proportions simultaneously increased both perceptions of intergroup threat and opportunities for intergroup contact, the former predicting greater levels of prejudice, and the latter predicting lower levels of prejudice. Thus, as summarized by Pettigrew and Tropp (2011), "Diversity can involve both intergroup threat *and*

greater contact; the problem lies in understanding how they both function within the same model rather than selecting only one or the other as the key process" (p. 167).

Moreover, we must also recognize that societies are in transition, as new groups enter and transform local contexts and introduce new cleavages beyond race and ethnicity. For example, the recent historic levels of refugee migration from Syria to European countries (and Western countries like the United States and Canada) have sparked an international debate regarding how to "handle" the refugee crisis. In part, tensions stem from host country concerns that link migration of Arabs and Muslims to thoughts of terrorism, which provoke feelings of threat and fuel anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment (Fischer, Greitmeyer, & Kastenmuller, 2007; Oswald, 2005). At the same time, Muslims who perceive that their group is rejected by the host nation can become more inclined to identify with Islam and their heritage culture and less inclined to identify with the host nation as a whole (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Such dynamic processes involving identity and threat have considerable potential to disrupt social integration and perpetuate tensions between groups in society.

Intergroup Relations and Prejudice Reduction in Diverse Societies

Given the multitude of factors that propel prejudice and the rigidity and strength of social categories and structures that maintain and reinforce distinctions between groups, we may wonder whether there are strategies we can use effectively to reduce intergroup prejudice. One of the most widely studied approaches to prejudice reduction involves intergroup contact, including a range of strategies by which members of different groups might be encouraged to interact with each other (see Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). But, rather than assume that any form of contact would reduce prejudice, social psychologists have recognized that some forms of contact hold the potential to heighten intergroup hostility and prejudice (see Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Thus, each strategy highlights certain features of the contact that are likely to promote prejudice reduction.

Situational Conditions for Intergroup Contact

An especially well-established approach has emphasized the particular situational conditions

under which the groups come into contact. Growing from earlier statements by Williams (1947), Allport (1954) offered the most influential formulation of intergroup contact theory that guided decades of research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Specifically, Allport proposed that contact between groups can contribute to reducing prejudice if the contact situation promotes (a) equal status between the groups, (b) common goals, (c) cooperation between groups, and (d) institutional support for the contact.

EQUAL STATUS IN THE SITUATION

"Equal status" can often be difficult to define, and researchers have used the term in varied ways (Riordan, 1978). What matters is that, regardless of inequities that might exist in the broader society, the groups are granted equal status *within* the contact situation (Robinson & Preston, 1976). Equal status might be established in the contact situation through giving members of each group equal opportunities to participate in activities, offer opinions, make decisions, or receive access to available resources. Under conditions of equal status, therefore, both groups have the opportunity, ability, and power to shape the rules and flow of the interaction. Some theorists have argued that groups should be of equal status *coming into* the contact situation (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Foster & Finchilescu, 1986), yet many studies have shown that, even when groups initially differ in status, establishing equal status within the contact situation can help to reduce prejudice (e.g., Schofield & Eurich-Fulcer, 2001).

COOPERATION AND COMMON GOALS

Effective contact should also involve a shared, cooperative effort toward achieving the goals that the groups share. When members of different groups work together toward common goals, they tend to act in more friendly ways and support each other (Johnson, Johnson, & Maruyama, 1984) and to develop more positive attitudes across group boundaries (Aronson & Gonzalez, 1988). Sherif et al. (1961) demonstrated these principles by first having groups of campers compete against each other, which provoked intergroup conflict and hostility. The researchers then created a series of situations in which the groups were required to work cooperatively toward goals that would benefit both groups (e.g., fixing their common water supply). Such interdependent, cooperative activities led to reduced hostility and prejudice between the groups, which in turn allowed friendships to develop across group boundaries.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Such positive effects of intergroup contact are enhanced when the equal status, cooperative nature of the contact takes place with support from institutional authorities. Institutional authorities establish norms of acceptance and guidelines for how members of different groups should interact with each other (Yarrow, Campbell, & Yarrow, 1958). For example, studies of interracial contact in schools have shown that children from different racial groups tend to get along better and seek out more interactions with each other when school principals and administrators appear to value positive intergroup relations (e.g., Longshore & Wellisch, 1981; see also Schofield & Sagar, 1979). Similarly, when they perceive teachers to be in favor of interracial contact, white children develop more positive interracial attitudes and may become less likely to avoid contact with their black classmates (Patchen, 1982). Students can also emerge as peer leaders to promote inclusive norms in schools; by confronting prejudice, peer leaders may produce more tolerant behavior within their friendship networks (Paluck, 2011).

Though defined separately, Allport (1954) and others have proposed that these conditions are best conceptualized as functioning together to facilitate positive shifts in intergroup attitudes, rather than being regarded as separate factors (see Green, Adams, & Turner, 1988; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Decades of research now show that greater contact between groups typically reduces intergroup prejudice, particularly when situational conditions such as those outlined by Allport (1954) are implemented within the contact situation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Nonetheless, the overwhelming focus on situational conditions of the contact situation has typically translated into a lack of focus on individuals' subjective responses to contact. Increasingly, intergroup research has recognized the need to focus on the concerns and expectations group members bring to cross-group interactions (Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006; Tropp, 2006). Much of this work notes that people's concerns about being rejected by out-group members contributes to their avoidance of contact and undermines their interest in future contact (e.g., Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton & Richeson, 2005), along with provoking more hostile responses when contact occurs (Butz & Plant, 2006). However, little of this work has examined the degree to which these concerns predict intergroup outcomes relative to Allport's conditions for optimal contact. Such research is crucial because

even when attempts are made to create optimal conditions within the contact situation, subjective perceptions of contact conditions can still vary widely among members of different groups and be guided by their preexisting views of the wider intergroup relationship (see Robinson & Preston, 1976; Tropp, 2006).

Molina and Wittig (2006) provided a notable research example that linked individuals' subjective responses to contact with Allport's situational conditions. Across four studies with diverse samples of middle and high school students, Molina and Wittig found that both perceptions of the contact situation and perceived openness to cross-race interactions among fellow students predicted significant reductions in students' own prejudiced attitudes. Thus, rather than reducing prejudice simply through objective conditions of the contact situation, prejudice may be reduced to the extent that we can alleviate concerns and enhance subjective feelings of acceptance within the contact situation.

Monitoring the Salience of Group Membership in Intergroup Contact

Another approach has focused on the degree to which group membership is salient during intergroup contact and how this affects the ability of contact to reduce prejudice toward the individuals with whom people interact and toward the out-group as a whole. Researchers have long debated the role of group membership salience in promoting positive outcomes of intergroup contact (see Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). On the one hand, Brewer and Miller (1984) noted that an emphasis on group differences, particularly at the early stages of intergroup contact, can lead to greater tension and perceptions of conflict between groups. They therefore recommended that the salience of group membership be reduced through processes of *decategorization*. Decategorization strategies seek to differentiate among out-group members to induce greater perceptions of variability in the out-group (Miller & Harrington, 1995) and to personalize out-group members through directing attention to their individual characteristics (Fiske & Neuberg, 1999) and the sharing of personally relevant information (Miller, 2002). By reducing group membership salience through processes of decategorization, people can begin to move beyond perceiving out-group members simply on the basis of group membership, which should minimize tension and conflict

during intergroup contact (Bettencourt, Brewer, Croak, & Miller, 1992).

On the other hand, Hewstone and Brown (1986; see also Brown & Hewstone, 2005) have argued that broader shifts in intergroup attitudes will only result when positive contact with an out-group member is recognized as *intergroup* in nature. These authors supported a model of *categorization*, whereby group membership salience is enhanced and maintained during intergroup contact. Due to the enhanced salience of group membership, positive effects of contact with individual out-group members will therefore be more likely to generalize to the out-group as a whole. Providing considerable support for this perspective, these and other authors have shown greater generalization of positive intergroup attitudes when group membership salience was heightened during contact (Brown, Vivian, & Hewstone, 1999; Voci & Hewstone, 2003).

Recognizing merits associated with both of these approaches, Pettigrew (1998) proposed that they be viewed from a sequential perspective. During the initial stages of contact, diminished salience of group membership might help to reduce intergroup tension and facilitate group members' efforts to get to know one another. Once contact is established and relationships have begun to develop across group lines, salience of group membership should be reintroduced so that positive shifts in attitudes can then generalize to the intergroup level. Importantly, the sequential perspective benefits from its integration of theoretical principles associated with social categorization (e.g., Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Miller, 2002) and its attention to group members' subjective experiences as intergroup relationships continue to evolve (e.g., Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Tropp, 2006).

Group membership salience may also be introduced into the contact situation by manipulating the perceived typicality of group members (Brown et al., 1999, Study 1; Ensari & Miller, 2002, Study 1; Wilder, 1984) or simply by reminding people about group membership prior to an interaction (Ensari & Miller, 2002, Study 2; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Alternatively, salience may be assessed using more subjective approaches, such as by asking about people's awareness of group membership in intergroup contexts (Pinel, 2002), how much they perceive the out-group members with whom they interact to be typical of their groups (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993), or about how often references to group membership are made

when interacting with out-group members (Brown et al., 1999, Study 2).

It is possible that varying conceptions of group membership salience would evoke different responses depending on the stage and nature of the intergroup contact in which it is introduced. Referring back to the sequential model, emphasizing group differences early in the intergroup relationship may be especially threatening (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993), whereas discussing group differences once some degree of rapport and trust have been established might help to build cross-group intimacy and understanding (see Nagda, 2006; Tropp, 2008).

Moreover, larger contextual variables may also influence how we interpret and respond to group membership salience in intergroup settings. For example, people may not want to be perceived on the basis of group membership if they expect to be rejected (Frey & Tropp, 2006), while people may wish to have group membership acknowledged if their group's experiences tend to be disregarded or overlooked (e.g., Eggins, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2002; Tropp & Bianchi, 2007). Thus, though group membership salience is important for generalizing positive outcomes from intergroup contact, close attention must be paid to how it is established and subjectively experienced by group members in the intergroup context.

Recategorization and Superordinate Group Identities

Processes of *recategorization* may also emerge, whereby members of initially distinct groups come to recognize their shared membership in a *superordinate* category that includes both groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Gaertner, Dovidio, and their colleagues have conducted numerous studies in laboratory and field settings showing the benefits of recategorization for improving intergroup attitudes (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994). When recategorization occurs, attitudes toward former out-group members become more positive due to the same categorization processes that govern other forms of in-group bias.

Depending on the relative salience of subgroup and superordinate categories, however, categorization at the superordinate level can be difficult to maintain or may not always be successfully achieved when groups come into contact (Dovidio, Gaertner & Saguy, 2009; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Groups may not always agree on the characteristics that

define the superordinate category (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999). Moreover, due to asymmetries in status, characteristics of all groups may not be adequately represented at the superordinate level (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Devos & Mohamed, 2014), such that members of lower status groups may feel as if they are being subsumed within the broader social category (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

Additional work supporting this perspective contended that the distribution of material and symbolic resources were largely guided by group-based status and power asymmetries, such that those who had greater status and power were motivated to maintain that status quo (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In contexts of ethnic relations in diverse nations, this group power asymmetry often becomes concretized through national identity in which the dominant group feels more "ownership" over the nation than subordinate groups. This tendency is revealed in higher levels of national identification among dominant group members (e.g., European Americans) than among subordinate group members (e.g., African Americans), as well as a stronger positive association between ethnic and national identities among dominant group members than among members of subordinate groups (see Molina, Phillips, & Sidanius, 2015; Staerke, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010).

Attention to cultural diversity becomes all the more important as nations become increasingly diverse (Deaux, 2006; Fredrickson, 1999; Plaut, 2002) in order to ensure that the positive effects of diversity are preserved (Page, 2005) while potential negative repercussions are diminished (Putnam, 2007). Key questions concern how to create a sense of common, shared identity among people of diverse backgrounds that differ in power and status. For example, does a formation of "one-ness" require attenuation of subgroup loyalties (Schlesinger, 1998), recognition of valued subgroup identities (Huo & Molina, 2006), or salience of both national and ethnic identities (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000)?

Assimilationist perspectives typically argue that an immigrant's ethnic ties decrease over generations, while ties to nation are simultaneously forming and growing (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964). Such perspectives are not without debate (see Rumbaut, 1999) and are sometimes described as either "classic" or "revised" assimilationist approaches (see Suarez-Orozco, 2002). In classic assimilationist approaches, ethnic loyalties are supplanted by national loyalties, which typically have little, if any, resemblance to one's own customs, traditions,

and beliefs. This approach argues that (old) ethnic loyalties are "melted away"—or in harsher terms, "obliterated"—and replaced by (new) national ties (Fredrickson, 1999; Gordon, 1964). In revised assimilationist approaches, ethnic loyalties and the beliefs and traditions associated with them melt into the national identity and redefine the content of the nation (Alba & Nee, 2003). Here, national identity evolves as a synthesis of many cultures such that identification with the nation also serves to reinforce ethnic ties.

Research has suggested that people's strategies for balancing ethnic and national identities may follow a range of trajectories not fully captured by assimilation approaches (Berry, 2001). In particular, racial and ethnic group identities may be highly valued and may distinctly contribute to enhancing an individual's self-concept (Huo & Molina, 2006; C. Taylor, 1994); as such, any attempts to diminish loyalty to these groups-based identities would likely be interpreted as a threat (Branscombe et al., 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). These trends are supported by both theoretical and empirical work in the SIT tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; J. C. Turner et al., 1987) as well as work in political philosophy, arguing that recognition of valued (sub) group identities is one of the cornerstones of multiculturalism (C. Taylor, 1994).

Consistent with this view, Hornsey and Hogg (2000) have proposed that both superordinate (e.g., national) and subgroup (e.g., racial or ethnic) identities be maintained as dual identities (see also Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Specifically, these authors showed that when superordinate identities are emphasized without recognition of subgroup identities, members of subgroups may experience this as an identity threat and in turn react with increased prejudice toward the dominant group; by contrast, when the valued subgroup identity is recognized in tandem with the superordinate identity, members of subgroups are likely to experience this as validation and report lower prejudice toward the dominant group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Similar findings have been observed by Huo and Molina (2006), who showed that among members of racial and ethnic minority groups, perceptions of subgroup respect (i.e., recognition of one's valued subgroup by other members of the superordinate group) are related to more positive affect toward the superordinate group (e.g., Americans) and more trust in the justice system.

While dominant and subordinate groups may both value integration (Zagefska & Brown,

2002), dominant group members tend to prefer representations that focus principally on the superordinate category, whereas subordinates tend to prefer dual-identity representations (see Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kafati, 2000). Nonetheless, current perspectives emphasize the importance of recognizing both superordinate and subgroup identities in recategorization in the hopes of maximizing the potential for prejudice reduction and positive relations between these groups.

The Role of Cross-Group Friendship in Intergroup Contact

Additional work on intergroup contact has pointed to the role of cross-group friendships in prejudice reduction. In a pioneering article with analysis of survey responses from seven European countries, Pettigrew (1997) showed how the close affective ties generated by cross-group friendships could lead to greater liking of out-group members, which in turn fed into more positive feelings toward the out-group as a whole. By contrast, less intimate contact with out-group members, such as with coworkers or neighbors, yielded far smaller effects (see also Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997).

Wright, Aron, and their colleagues (Wright, Aron & Tropp, 2002; Wright, Brody, & Aron, 2005) similarly proposed that greater closeness to individual out-group members corresponded with lower prejudice toward the whole out-group, through the mechanism of including the out-group in the self. According to the self-expansion model (see Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Brody, Wright, Aron, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2008), people have an appetitive interest in out-groups, especially in relations with out-group members that would allow them to expand the self by incorporating a broader range of resources, perspectives, and identities that will help them to navigate the world. While noting that we may at times experience concerns about being rejected, these authors further proposed that we should be especially drawn to out-group members who are quite different from ourselves, as they offer the greatest opportunities for self-expansion (Brody et al., 2008).

Through the formation of cross-group friendships, we become inclined to give our out-group friends (and other members of that friend's group) the same kinds of psychological benefits we normally reserve for ourselves and members of our own group. As such, cross-group friendships can lead us to make more positive attributions for out-group members' intentions and behaviors (Joseph,

Weatherall, & Stringer, 1997; Wright et al., 2002) and to become more concerned about the out-group's welfare (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001).

An experimental study by Wright and his colleagues (Wright et al., 2002, 2005) provided initial evidence for the causal effects of cross-group friendship on prejudice reduction. White female participants were randomly paired with either a same-ethnicity partner (white) or a cross-ethnicity partner (Latina or Asian) for four sessions over a period of 8 weeks, during which they engaged in a range of friendship-building activities. Participants reported feelings of closeness to the partner following each testing session, and after the final session, participants completed measures of intergroup outcomes, ostensibly as part of a separate study. Regardless of whether they were paired with a same-ethnicity or cross-ethnicity partner, white participants developed strong feelings of closeness to their partners over the testing sessions. However, compared to those paired with a same-ethnicity partner, those paired with a cross-ethnicity partner showed less prejudiced responses, being less likely to cut university funding for ethnic minority organizations supporting the partner's ethnic group.

Meta-analytic investigations have yielded similar results (see Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), showing that cross-group friendships—particularly those assessed with behavioral indicators of intimacy—typically revealed greater reductions in prejudice than other contact studies. Taken together with findings from other studies (e.g., Binder et al., 2009; Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004), there is now a growing consensus that intergroup contact typically reduces prejudice, yet it is perhaps most effective for reducing prejudice when it involves close cross-group friendships.

This work largely supports Pettigrew's (1998) contention that extensive and repeated contact over time encourages greater degrees of shared experience, self-disclosure, and other kinds of friendship-building processes that can help to realize the potential of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice. Situational features such as institutional support, cooperation, common goals, and equal status can further facilitate positive contact experiences and, in turn, promote the development of cross-group friendships. For example, when students from different racial backgrounds participate cooperatively in shared school activities, they become more likely to choose each other as best friends

(Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). When children from different ethnolinguistic groups are educated in classes where their languages have equal status sanctioned by the school, they can become more likely to choose children from the other group as friends (Aboud & Sankar, 2007; Wright & Tropp, 2005). Such positive effects of cross-group friendships may also be cumulative over time, such that students with more cross-race friends during their high school years have a greater tendency to form cross-group friendships in college (Stearns, Buchman, & Bonneau, 2009).

We now have ample evidence to suggest that friendship contact can promote prejudice reduction, yet we know relatively little about how cross-group friendships are experienced or navigated by the individuals involved. Some work suggests that self-disclosure and perceived partner responsiveness can promote greater intimacy in cross-group friendships (see Shelton, Trail, West, & Bergsieker, 2010; R. N. Turner, Hewstone, and Voci, 2007). In addition, individuals can vary in the extent to which they are willing to engage with members of other groups. For example, people who score highly on "openness to experience" may be more inclined to seek contact (Jackson & Poulsen, 2005) as part of a broader orientation toward trying out new cultural experiences (McCrae & Costa, 1997). People high in openness to experience also tend to have lower scores on authoritarianism (Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009), such that their positive contact may be more likely to translate into lowered prejudice and the formation of cross-group friendships. At the same time, other work indicated that positive contact is especially effective in reducing prejudice among people who are least inclined toward cross-group relationships, such as those high in social dominance orientation and authoritarianism (Dhont & van Hiel, 2009; Hodson, Harry, & Mitchell, 2009) and low in support for diversity (Adesokan, van Dick, Ullrich, & Tropp, 2011). Thus, although some may be initially less drawn toward intergroup contact or less inclined to develop friendships with out-group members, positive outcomes of contact can still be achieved even among those most resistant to cross-group relationships.

Nonetheless, an enduring structural barrier to the formation of cross-group friendships involves societal patterns of segregation (Orfield & Lee, 2007). Segregation can inhibit people's opportunities to develop friendships across group boundaries both through lack of opportunity (see Pettigrew, 1998; Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, &

Wolf, 2006) and through disrupting communication between potential friends when contact does occur (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006). Studies with children and adolescents suggest that they are generally more likely to choose same-race than cross-race friends (Dubois & Hirsch, 1990; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987), although they become more likely to report cross-race friendships when there is a greater representation of students from other races in their schools (Joyner & Kao, 2000; Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999).

There is also other evidence to suggest that cross-group friendships can be more difficult to sustain than same-group friendships. Cross-group friendships typically decrease during the transition from childhood to adolescence (Asher, Singleton, & Taylor, 1982; Dubois & Hirsch, 1990), such that children become even more likely to have greater numbers of same-race than cross-race friends as they grow older (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003). This may be because parents and peers are important sources of information that can either encourage or discourage interactions across group boundaries (Edmonds & Killen, 2009; Fishbein, 1996). It may well be for these reasons that cross-group ties are more vulnerable and harder to maintain than same-group ties (Reagans, 1998) and why people may resegregate voluntarily even when there are opportunities for intergroup contact (Clack, Dixon, & Tredoux, 2005; Rogers, Hennigan, Bowman, & Miller, 1984; Schofield, 1978).

Anxiety Reduction Through Intergroup Contact

Such trends suggest that, whether due to societal segregation or social messages, people often experience a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety about navigating relationships across group lines (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), and these tendencies can curb their willingness to forge cross-group friendships. Indeed, people often anticipate being rejected in intergroup encounters, which can curb their interest or willingness to participate in intergroup contact (Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006). People also vary in the extent to which they are chronically aware of their group membership (Pinel, 1999) and expect to be rejected by others on the basis of group membership (Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002), which could further contribute to anxieties about cross-group interactions.

Researchers have therefore begun to examine how anxiety and other psychological processes affect

intergroup encounters and how these processes may be transformed through intergroup contact (see Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014). Trawalter, Richeson, and Shelton (2009) suggested that people often appraise cross-group interactions in a threatening way, which in turn leads them to experience stress; to cope with the stress, they may engage in any of a number of strategies, ranging from avoidance of contact to possible engagement across group boundaries. A complementary view was provided by Plant and Devine (2008), who proposed that some people may focus on achieving a positive interaction, whereas others may anxiously work to prevent a negative interaction. They have shown that white people who expect interracial interactions to go poorly not only experience more anxiety, but also their anxiety predicts the tendency to avoid future cross-group interactions (Plant & Devine, 2003). Alternatively, Vorauer (2006) suggested that group members' evaluative concerns are conceptualized as growing from uncertainty about how they will be perceived by out-group members. Thus, to the extent that they experience uncertainty about out-group members' views, they are likely to be sensitive to negative cues and experience concerns and anxieties about being evaluated negatively as they approach contact with members of other groups. Although each describes a different theoretical model to draw links to the intergroup literature, what these perspectives share in common is the notion that, particularly during initial stages of contact, people are likely to experience anxiety regarding how they might be perceived or received by out-group members, and this anxiety could lead to avoidance of or awkwardness during cross-group interactions.

Concurrently, research has also shown that positive contact with members of other groups can diminish intergroup anxiety and promote both prejudice reduction and a greater willingness for further contact. Using structural equation models to analyze surveys of cross-community relations in Northern Ireland, Paolini et al. (2004) showed that having greater numbers of cross-group friendships corresponded with lower anticipated feelings of anxiety about future intergroup encounters, which in turn predicted lower levels of intergroup prejudice. In their longitudinal study of students' contact experiences, Levin et al. (2003) similarly found that greater numbers of cross-group friendships during the college years predicted both significant reductions in intergroup anxiety and intergroup prejudice by the end of college.

Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, and Kowai-Bell (2001) have also shown that whites with prior interracial contact revealed significantly lower levels of physiological stress and self-reported anxiety when interacting with an African American than whites without such prior contact experiences. Meta-analytic research further corroborated these findings (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), showing that anxiety reduction mediated the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice reduction, accounting for almost a third of contact's effects on prejudice. Put simply, greater intergroup contact typically reduced people's feelings of anxiety about engaging with the out-group, and this reduced anxiety typically predicted lower levels of intergroup prejudice.

Building on this work and the experimental friendship studies by Wright and colleagues, Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, and Tropp (2008) experimentally tested the effects of cross-group friendship on anxiety and intergroup orientations. Ethnic minority and majority participants (Latina and white) were paired with either a same-group or cross-group partner for three friendship meetings. Prior to the meetings, the researchers measured participants' initial intergroup prejudice using the IAT and their sensitivity to being rejected on the basis of ethnic group membership (see Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002). A physiological indicator of stress (cortisol reactivity) was also included to assess participants' anxious responses both before (baseline) and during the friendship meetings. These authors found that, among participants highly sensitive to group-based rejection, those paired with a cross-group partner peaked in cortisol reactivity following the first friendship meeting, indicating greater anxious responding at the initial stages of contact. But, their stress responses attenuated by the third friendship meeting, such that they showed comparable levels of anxiety to participants less sensitive to group-based rejection and to participants paired with a same-group partner.

Using diary procedures following the friendship meetings, Page-Gould et al. (2008) also asked participants to report their anxious mood in this diverse college environment and how often they initiated cross-group interactions in their daily lives. Those who made a cross-group friend generally reported lower levels of anxiety in subsequent daily diaries than those who made a same-group friend. Additionally, and especially among those initially high in prejudice, participants were more likely to initiate cross-group interactions after making a cross-group friend than after making a same-group

friend. Thus, even among those who may initially be the most anxious about cross-group interactions, developing a cross-group friendship can lower intergroup anxiety and encourage a greater willingness to engage in future intergroup contact.

Promoting Empathy Through Intergroup Contact

Further work suggests that contact may be effective not only due to anxiety reduction, but also because it promotes empathy and perspective taking between members of different groups. Inducing white people to engage in perspective taking can promote more favorable interracial attitudes (Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003), and perspective taking increases people's willingness to join in collective action against hate crimes directed at both homosexuals and blacks (Mallett, Huntsinger, Sinclair, & Swim, 2008). Relatedly, encouraging people to take the perspectives of out-group members (e.g., the elderly) makes them less likely to stereotype the out-group and more likely to perceive overlap between themselves and out-group members (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

Growing from this work, researchers have begun to examine empathy as a possible mediator of the relationship between contact and prejudice, given that intergroup contact—particularly that which involves close relationships between groups—may enhance people's ability to take the perspective of out-group members and empathize with their concerns. Consistent with this view, R. N. Turner et al. (2007) showed that greater self-disclosure during contact with Asians predicted lower anti-Asian prejudice among white British students, and this effect was largely due to increases in empathy that the students felt toward Asians. Still, at early stages of contact, negative expectations for how one's group is viewed by the out-group can undermine the potentially positive effects of empathy on prejudice reduction (Vorauer & Sasaki, 2009). Nonetheless, meta-analytic research revealed that empathy is typically an important mediator in the relationship between contact and prejudice, accounting for approximately 30% of this association; empathy also mediates the contact-prejudice relationship largely independently of the role of anxiety reduction (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

Although research on these psychological mediators has only begun, it may well be that the mediational roles of anxiety reduction and empathy tend to function sequentially, in line with Pettigrew's (1998) discussion of sequential processes

regarding the role of salience in intergroup contact. Anxiety reduction may well be most crucial during the initial stages of intergroup contact (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 2008), thereby making decategorization a particularly useful strategy when groups first come together (Brewer & Miller, 1984). By contrast, enhancing empathy may become more important with continued contact and lowered anxiety, as group members begin to develop closer relationships, through which they disclose more to each other and share greater experiences and perspectives (R. N. Turner et al., 2007). At this point, reintroducing the group categorization may be especially critical for ensuring that positive outcomes of these individual contacts translate into broader reductions in intergroup prejudice and more positive orientations toward out-group members.

There may even be a more rigid causal sequence in operation whereby initial anxiety must first be reduced through intergroup contact before increased empathy can effectively develop and contribute to prejudice reduction. This possibility was supported by other work showing that anxiety can induce greater reliance on stereotypes and contribute to less favorable impressions of out-group members (Wilder, 1993), and the expectation or experience of rejection can diminish willingness to engage in cross-group interactions (Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Tropp, 2003). By contrast, behaviors that create intimacy, such as shared activities and self-disclosure, are especially likely to reduce prejudice in the context of cross-group friendship (Davies et al., 2011). Thus, anxiety reduction may play a critical role in prejudice reduction at the early stages of contact, whereas through over time and joint activities, self-disclosure and the perspective taking and empathy that grow from it may play greater roles as more intimate cross-group relationships begin to form.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that not all contact experiences are positive and amenable to prejudice reduction. Indeed, the more members of different groups interact with each other, the more likely they are to experience negative intergroup encounters along with the positive ones (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). An emerging body of research shows that negative contact tends to be more predictive of negative intergroup attitudes than positive contact is of positive intergroup attitudes (Barlow et al., 2012). This likely occurs because negative contact heightens the salience of social categories and the corresponding negative

expectations people have for intergroup relations (Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010). Yet, while any single negative intergroup experience may exert a stronger influence on intergroup attitudes than a single positive experience, positive contact tends to occur more frequently and may therefore outweigh the influence of negative contact on intergroup attitudes (Graf, Paolini, & Rubin, 2014).

Maximizing the Potential for Positive Contact Outcomes

As such, we must consider whether strategies can be employed to offset the effects of negative intergroup experiences and enhance the potential for contact to produce reductions in intergroup prejudice and other positive intergroup outcomes. One key approach would be to explore strategies by which we can minimize negative expectations for and associations with intergroup contact before group members enter into contact situations. Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, Alegre, and Siy (2010) recruited white participants with cross-group and same-group friends of comparable closeness to describe their friendships and provide the names of their same-group and cross-group friends. Participants were randomly assigned to describe either their cross-race or same-race friend before reading a vignette in which they imagined themselves interacting with an unknown out-group member and rating how much they would enjoy this interaction. Participants who described a cross-race friend reported more positive expectations for interacting with the unknown out-group member than those who described a same-race friend. These researchers have also observed similar effects in the context of an actual interaction with an unknown out-group member (Page-Gould et al., 2010).

Another prime research example was provided by Mallett and Wilson (2010). These authors had white participants watch either a videotaped interaction of two white students or of one white student and one black student. In both cases, students depicted in the video reported that they became friends even though they initially had low expectations about the friendship. In addition, some participants were asked to relate the interaction to their own experiences by writing about a time either when an interaction went better than expected or when it went just as expected. Following these procedures, participants interacted with an unknown black partner, then they were contacted a week later to discern whether they had formed any new friendships. The authors found that participants

who wrote about a prior experience that exceeded their expectations not only had a more positive interaction with their black partner, but also reported forming significantly more cross-race friendships during the week following the study.

Overall, findings from these studies suggest that if we are able to target and alleviate people's anxious expectations and concerns, we become more able to realize the positive potential of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and promoting more positive orientations toward cross-group relationships. In line with this view, white and black middle school students who reported greater curiosity about people from other races reported being more willing to form cross-group friendships and anticipate feeling more comfortable around people from other racial groups (Migacheva & Tropp, 2013).

Taken together with the literature reviewed previously, this work suggests a reframing in how we conceptualize strategies and goals in our efforts to improve relations between groups. Rather than simply rely on intergroup contact as a vehicle for prejudice reduction, greater attention should be granted to group members' motivations and goals at different stages of the intergroup relationship. Indeed, we might attempt to focus on reducing anxious concerns at the early stages of contact, and promoting empathy as members of different groups engage with each other, so that we can eventually achieve the broader goals of prejudice reduction and positive intergroup orientations.

Examining Psychological Motivation and Needs in Intergroup Relations

In some senses, such an approach harkens back to early models of human motivation and core psychological needs, as applied to the context of intergroup relationships. For instance, Maslow (1943) stated 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" (p. 349), as we are likely to find the unfamiliar and unknown to be overwhelming and threatening. Maslow also argued that people's psychological needs are organized in a hierarchical fashion, such that we first seek to satisfy our needs for safety and security. Once our safety needs are gratified, they no longer serve to motivate us, and we instead seek to satisfy other higher order needs associated with *growth* (see also Molden, Lee, & Higgins, 2008), such as feeling connected to others, realizing our potential, and exploring interests

in the world beyond ourselves (Maslow, 1962; Murphy, 1958).

Maslow discussed these needs in terms of individuals' life experiences and trajectories, but we can consider how similar processes might be at play in intergroup relationships. At a basic, fundamental level, we all have needs for safety and security both as individuals and as members of our social groups. If we perceive threat, anticipate threat, or feel uncertain about whether we will be threatened by an out-group, we are likely to desire safety and security and to become defensive and self-protective in intergroup encounters. However, to the extent that we are able to alleviate potential threats, fears, and anxieties, we may feel more secure and become more inclined to open ourselves up to expressing enthusiasm, interest, empathy, and amity in our relationships with other groups.

At a general level, this analysis meshes with other emerging psychological perspectives on motivation in social relations. Theorists have recently argued that needs for security are provoked when we encounter threatening conditions (Arkin, Carroll, & Oleson, 2010), and our motivation to affiliate with others may be undermined by the perception of threat (Gable & Strachman, 2008). This line of reasoning parallels the intergroup stress and coping framework put forth by Trawalter et al. (2009), who contended that the threat and anxiety group members experience can curb their willingness to engage at initial stages of the intergroup relationship. This analysis is also consistent with the work of Kramer and colleagues (Kramer & Messick, 1998; Kramer & Wei, 1999), who described how people often approach cross-group relations with vigilance, as they are uncertain about, or threatened by, the possibility that they will be perceived or treated negatively by members of other groups.

At the same time, this approach may also be considered as an extension of Wright and Aron's self-expansion model in the context of intergroup relationships (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Wright et al., 2002, 2005). These authors have proposed that people should be particularly drawn to those groups that represent different viewpoints and perspectives (Brody et al., 2008), though other work suggests that difference and lack of prior familiarity can breed uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety regarding how one might be perceived by members of other groups (see Kramer & Messick, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Trawalter et al., 2009), which understandably could curb tendencies to reach out across group boundaries.

Related theorizing by Hogg (2003, 2010) suggests that uncertainty is an important motivating factor underlying our affiliation with groups, as we seek to establish a greater sense of belonging, security, and control in our social worlds (see also Wright et al., 2002). Yet, even with this underlying motive for security, Hogg (2010) adds that uncertainty may at times be “exciting” as “people often seek new situations, new experiences . . . in which they can learn and grow” (p. 408). It may well be that anxieties and uncertainties would need to be reduced early on in cross-group relations to allow for exploration, interest in other groups, and other self-expansion motives to flourish. That is, we may be driven by a motivation for self-expansion, but perhaps only once our needs for safety and security are met.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed a range of perspectives concerning individual and contextual factors that contribute to creating and reducing intergroup prejudice. Prior work has typically favored a focus either on the individual or on the social context in predicting prejudice and its reduction, yet emerging theory and research offers great potential for the convergence of these approaches. Future intergroup research should therefore pursue the joint exploration of psychological motivations and experiences of individuals and features of the broader social context that may fuel or influence individuals’ motivations and experiences. Such a multifaceted, contextual approach not only would enable us to develop a more nuanced understanding of intergroup encounters, but also would serve to inform the strategies we use to reduce prejudice, diminish intergroup threat and anxiety, promote collective action as a response to injustice, and build the capacity for empathy and positive relations between groups.

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