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### CHAPTER

## 22 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 of individuals 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.

**Keywords:** [intergroup relations](#), [prejudice](#), [contextual social psychology](#), [prejudice reduction](#), [person x situation](#), [intergroup contact](#), [diversity](#), [ethnicity](#), [race](#)

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On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers—an African American civil rights activist from Mississippi—was arriving home after a meeting with NAACP lawyers. 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, 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 the 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 convicted for the assassination of Medgar Evers but it took three trials and about 30 years. The first two trials, which took place in 1964, were comprised of all white jury members and in each instance the jury deadlocked, thus acquitting De La Beckwith of the Evers murder. In the second trial, the 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. A more contemporary United States would not be as overtly accepting of such behavior from its citizens.

Although American society and its people still suffer from prejudice and social injustice, this sociohistorical example highlights one of the main issues we explore in this chapter—that is, How do individual and contextual factors jointly influence intergroup relations and behavior? Given this charge, the present chapter will not aim to provide a fully comprehensive review of the intergroup relations literature (e.g., see Brewer & Brown, 1998; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010, for such reviews). Instead 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 an emphasis on recent developments in intergroup contact theory and research.

## Defining Intergroup Prejudice

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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, for an extensive review).

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, and at the same time it moves beyond a focus on antipathy toward outgroups and allows for recognition of favorable biases toward one's ingroup.

## Prejudice as Ingroup 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 outgroup; rather, much of contemporary prejudice is based in favoritism toward the ingroup. Biased intergroup perceptions and behavior are often guided by feelings of warmth, positive regard, and preferential treatment toward ingroup members compared to how we react toward outgroup members (see Brewer, 1999; Brewer & Brown, 1998).

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 (Brewer, 1999; Kurzban & Neuberg, 2005). Thus, the expression of outgroup derogation or explicit malevolence toward outgroups is not necessarily our initial impulse in intergroup relations. Rather, outgroup derogation is more likely to emerge to the extent that there are certain situational factors present (e.g., see Brewer, 1999; Mummendey, Otten, Berger, & Kessler, 2000). A range of situational factors may set the stage for intergroup prejudice and outgroup derogation, such as perceiving that other groups pose threats to resources that could serve to benefit one's own group (see Stephan & Stephan, 2005), or societal norms that endorse or legitimize negative treatment of other groups (see Duckitt, 1992).

## Contemporary Forms of Prejudice

We may also 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). While explicit forms of prejudice are no longer as prevalent in contemporary society given recent shifts toward more egalitarian social norms, prejudice is by no means obsolete (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

p. 547 For example, Dovidio and Gaertner (1998) coined the term *aversive racism* to refer to cases where individuals truly believe that they hold egalitarian values yet are not aware of the "automatic" 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 argue 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 by Sears and colleagues on symbolic racism (e.g., Sears & Kinder, 1985; Sears & Henry, 2005) proposes that white individuals have negative attitudes toward racial minorities due to processes of family and societal socialization, at the same time as they generally support egalitarian principles in society. At times, these potential discrepancies intersect and lead to a "principle implementation gap," whereby individuals who endorse egalitarianism often do not support social policy that is consonant with such ideology (Sears & Funk, 1991; Sears & Jessor, 1996). 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.

## Specifying Sources of Prejudice

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In an important and pertinent theoretical article, Duckitt (1992) conducted a historical analysis of prejudice research that reveals how different theoretical perspectives make partial and complementary contributions to our understanding of the development and nature of prejudice. According to Duckitt (1992), numerous processes lead to prejudice including (1) universal psychological processes and motivations that build in a human propensity for prejudice (e.g., social categorization, social identification); (2) individual and ideological bases of prejudice (e.g., authoritarianism, political ideology); and (3) 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 and Self-Categorization

Arguably one of the most influential social psychological theories within intergroup relations is social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; J. C. Turner, 1999). 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 their group compares relative to other relevant groups.

#### Social Identity Theory

As a reaction to other theories that focus on historical and political contexts that define intergroup relations (see Sherif, 1966; Bobo, 1999), SIT researchers were motivated to investigate group relations in a “sterile” environment—void of historical and political factors—to examine psychological, and potentially universal, processes that underlie intergroup prejudice. They observed that the mere categorization of individuals into social groups—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 (see Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A primary explanatory mechanism here is that individuals strive for positive distinctiveness of their social groups, which often results in attitudes or behaviors favoring their own groups over other groups.

Research from the social identity perspective has further revealed that we tend to assume greater similarities between ourselves and other ingroup members, while perceiving greater differences between ourselves and outgroup members (Wilder, 1984). 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 (see Bourhis, Sachdev, & Gagnon, 1994; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). 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).

## Self-Categorization Theory

p. 548

While social identity theory (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. Although the social environment exerts a strong influence on whether people identify themselves as individuals or as group members (see J. C. Turner & Onorato, 1999), people do have the capacity to change their self-categorizations across social contexts depending on the salience and accessibility of different self-attributes and social groups. Those social groups to which we often turn tend to be those that are more cognitively accessible and “on top of the mind” when we interact with others and seek meaning in our social worlds.

J. C. Turner and colleagues (1987) have also argued that there is a functional antagonism between individual and group levels of self-categorization, such that the more a person thinks of herself as a unique individual, the less she will be inclined to think of herself as a group member. However, the rigidity of this distinction between individual and group aspects of self has been challenged by other theoretical approaches highlighting the interplay between these levels, as our understandings of group memberships are influenced by our personal experiences as group members and the personal meanings we attach to them (see Deaux, 1993; Deaux & Perkins, 2001). Nonetheless, 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 (see 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 personality variables, it is important to note that individual differences can develop over time through a person's experiences 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 R. E. Lane, 1991; 2000).

## Authoritarian Personality

As one well-known example, conceptions of the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950; Fromm, 1941) 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.

Almost since its initial development, authoritarian personality theory was met with considerable critique within the social science community. Criticisms varied but generally included concerns such as limitations associated with empirically testing the effects of early childhood socialization retrospectively, and the

biased phrasing of questions that would induce agreement. More recent work by Altemeyer (1981, 1988) has 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 (e.g., Ray & Furnham, 1984). To be sure, political conservatism is often associated with higher prejudice scores, and at times it has been described as a motivated approach to seeing the world akin to other individual difference characteristics (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Nonetheless, debates continue regarding whether political conservatism necessarily entails the endorsement of prejudice toward other groups (see Jost et al. 2009), and 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, 1988; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

p. 549 Ideology is a particularly complex and slippery construct (Jost, 2006; Jost, Federico, Napier, 2009). Within political science, sociology, and social psychology there have been wide-ranging definitions attempting to converge on the essence of ideology (see Adorno et al., 1950; Apter, 1964; Converse, 1964; R. E. Lane, 1962; Rokeach, 1968). Social structures and institutions have “charges” (i.e., particular perspectives and/or suggested ways of being) that imbue their populations—to a greater or lesser degree—with a set of shared social representations (see Moscovici, 1988) that may be called *ideology*. Ideology has the capacity to inform and guide individual attitudes and behavior, and these in turn have the capacity—in aggregate—to influence structures and social institutions (see mutual constitution; e.g., Shweder, 1990). Thus, ideology is not a static construct; it evolves as a function of the interplay between individuals and institutions.

While there is no clear consensus on a definition, Jost et al. (2009) suggest “that ideology is shared, that it helps to interpret the social world, and that it normatively specifies good and proper ways of addressing life’s problems” (p. 309). In this regard, ideologies make explicit the *shared* values and beliefs of specific groups. These shared values and beliefs provide ways of interpreting the world and provide a “moral compass” as to how to navigate the world.

It is inevitably the case, however, that there are competing ideologies and groups that are well entrenched in their own philosophical perspectives. It is these “points of contact” between ideological perspectives where there is potential for tension and conflict—where psychological processes associated with ideology inform intergroup relations. We now turn to exploring key themes and theoretical perspectives that emphasize ideology to understand intergroup relations. In particular, we will discuss social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993) and system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) in the sections that follow as examples of social psychological theories that highlight the importance of ideology in intergroup relations.

### **Social Dominance Theory**

Social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) argues that most, if not all, modern industrialized nations are defined by status- and power-based group hierarchies. That is, a common theme in most societies is a social hierarchy in which certain groups are at the top and others at the bottom. Status and power hierarchies are concretized by the unequal distribution of positive resources (e.g., higher levels of education, greater home ownership, more access to health care) in which the dominant group members obtain more than subordinate group members. These trends are coupled with an unequal distribution of negative resources (e.g., higher imprisonment rates, increased mortality rates) through which subordinate groups are more adversely affected than dominant groups. Overall, SDT seeks to understand prejudice through the synthesis of sociostructural factors and person-level factors (see Hodson, 2009, for a related argument).

Specifically, Sidanius and colleagues (1993) argue that social hierarchies are maintained through “legitimizing myths” that act as ideological scaffolding maintaining the status quo. For example,

hierarchy-enhancing myths work to ensure that social hierarchies are part of the (conscious or unconscious) language that individuals employ while interacting in society (e.g., racism, xenophobia). Conversely, hierarchy-attenuating myths promote egalitarian values and social equality (e.g., meritocracy, affirmative action). 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 inherent in their communities.

Moreover, social dominance theory proposes that, as individuals go from infancy to adulthood to an advanced age, their position corresponds with a certain level of power in society. Similarly, arbitrary group differentiations—such as those based in ethnicity, race, or religion—are typically stratified within the hierarchical system. Sidanius and Pratto (1999; see also Pratto et al., 1994) further contend 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. Thus, social dominance theory accounts for power differentials through ideological mechanisms—such as legitimizing myths—and through individual-level endorsement of those status-based hierarchies (i.e., social dominance orientation).

Social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994) is an individual difference variable assessing endorsement of hierarchical group relations and structural inequality (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Research within the social dominance framework shows there are interactions between person-level factors (i.e., levels of SDO) and situation-level factors (e.g., schools, workplaces). For example, Haley and Sidanius (2005) investigate the person-by-situation congruence as it applies to social organizations (e.g., work environments) and show how an individual's sociopolitical attitudes (e.g., SDO) should be compatible with their institutional environment. Hierarchy-enhancing organizations (e.g., police forces) are usually comprised of individuals with antiegalitarian beliefs, whereas hierarchy-attenuating organizations (e.g., human rights organizations) are usually comprised of individuals with relatively democratic beliefs.

p. 550 The “sorting” of people into particular social environments may be reinforced by the extent to which (1) individuals choose to be in contexts that give them opportunities to act on their orientations (e.g., self-selection), and (2) the social context affords individuals high or low in SDO opportunities to behave in a manner consistent with their orientations (e.g., institutional selection and socialization). Self-selection involves processes by which people opt into certain environments, such as how a college student selects a major or a recent graduate selects her first job (Sidanius, Pratto, Sinclair, & van Laar, 1996). All things being equal, individuals tend to select environments that are compatible with their sociopolitical views. Similarly, institutions recruit and select individuals whose values appear congruent with the institutional culture, and socialization practices within institutions further fuel the compatibility between individuals' sociopolitical attitudes and the environment in which they find themselves (see also Newcomb, 1943).

Moreover, individuals who experience congruence between their sociopolitical values and the institutional culture are especially likely to enjoy a good amount of success. For example, van Laar, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, and Sinclair (1999) demonstrated individuals who have congruence between their college major (e.g., business) and sociopolitical attitudes (e.g., high SDO) tend to benefit from relatively high levels of academic achievement. By contrast, when individuals are a “poor fit” for their institutions (e.g., high SDO individuals in egalitarian environments) there is a greater likelihood of personal dissatisfaction, and disidentification and exit from the institution.

## System Justification Theory

Work by Jost and colleagues (1994, 2004) on system justification focuses specifically on why subordinate group members willingly accept and, arguably, promote the group hierarchies inherent within social institutions. This perspective emphasizes the role that ideologies play in forming a “false consciousness” among subordinate groups such that members of these groups work to support the social hierarchy by accepting and even promoting group disparities. Thus, rather than react against the system that oppresses them, subordinate group members often work to promote and maintain such systems by such acts as outgroup favoritism. System justification theory emphasizes how ideology works to legitimize group-based power and status asymmetries, by promoting the perceptions that both high and low status groups deserve their lots in life. High status group members benefit from such ideologies because they maintain the status quo and ensure their privileged status; however, for low status group members, these ideological perspectives ensure their unprivileged status in society.

Although somewhat related, system justification theory (SJT) and social dominance theory (SDT) are distinct on several key issues. For instance, SDT argues that there are individual differences in support for group-based social hierarchies, whereas SJT does not propose any such individual differences and focuses solely on ideological structures that justify the system. Additionally, SDT distinguishes between hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating beliefs, whereas SJT emphasizes only those beliefs that maintain social hierarchies.

SDT also distinguishes between various forms of discrimination, in the forms of individual, institutional, and behavioral asymmetry, while SJT focuses primarily on behavioral asymmetry whereby low status group members favor the high status outgroup. Nonetheless, what these perspectives share in common is a focus on how ideologies and belief systems provoke behavioral and attitudinal responses toward other groups.

## Social and Structural Dynamics of Prejudice

Moreover, due to the significance of the group-based hierarchies described above, 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 (Sumner, 1906; 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 social resources (e.g., Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Levine & Campbell, 1972; Quillian, 1995; see also Stephan & Stephan, 2000).



Typically, such forms of threat 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 where the political and/or economic power of one's group is challenged (see Stephan & Stephan, 2000, for an extended discussion). Early work on realistic conflict has shown how finite material resources 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 (Bobo, 1988; 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; Sears & Kinder, 1971), in that the perception that other groups violate, devalue, 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; Maalouf, 2000). 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 (Branscombe et al., 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In such cases, people may even become motivated to demonstrate their commitment to their group and its values, and in some cases derogate the outgroup, 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, however, social identity research also contends that 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 that 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 by either intergroup differences or similarities in values and beliefs (Branscombe et al., 1999).

## Social Integration Versus Segregation

Additionally, intergroup prejudice can also result when structural conditions enhance either greater proximity or segregation between groups. Consistent with earlier discussions of realistic threat, 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., Forbes, 1997; Lee, McCauley, Moghaddam, & Worchel, 2004). Indeed, 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., Fossett & Kielcolt, 1989; 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 Schlesinger, 1998; Putnam, 2007, for related arguments).

p. 552 Indeed, the U.S. historical landscape is replete with examples of attempts to separate groups as a strategy for managing ethnic and cultural diversity (e.g., Jim Crow laws and 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, other theorists propose that diverse communities in and of themselves are not inherently problematic, but rather the segregation between groups that exists within communities is likely the cause of intergroup tension and prejudice (e.g., Rothwell, 2009; Uslaner, 2011). In line with this reasoning, survey research by Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ (2010) shows that larger outgroup proportions simultaneously increases 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, chap. 11), "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."

## 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 could lead to reduced prejudice if the contact situation embodies four conditions: (1) equal status between the groups, (2) common goals, (3) cooperation between groups, and (4) institutional support for the contact. Each of these conditions will be defined in the paragraphs that follow.

### 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 is critical from Allport’s perspective is that, regardless of inequities that might exist in the broader society, the groups are granted equal status *within* the contact situation (Cohen, 1982; Riordan & Ruggiero, 1980; Robinson & Preston, 1976). For example, 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, and/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., Patchen, 1982; Schofield & Eurich-Fulcer, 2001).

### Cooperation And Common Goals

Effective contact should also involve a shared, cooperative effort to achieve 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; Walker & Crogan, 1998). In their classic summer camp studies, Sherif et al. (1961) demonstrated these principles by first having groups of campers compete against each other, which provoked conflict and feelings of hostility toward the other group. The researchers then created a series of situations in which the groups were required to work cooperatively toward shared goals that would benefit both groups (e.g., fixing their common water supply, helping to start a truck on the way to a joint picnic). 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

Allport further proposed that positive effects of intergroup contact would be maximized 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). A great deal of evidence concerning the effects of institutional support comes from studies of interracial contact in schools. For example, 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). Parallel evidence for the importance of institutional support comes from studies of contact in the military (Landis, Hope, & Day, 1984), organizational settings (e.g., Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006), and religious communities (e.g., Parker, 1968).

Though defined separately, Allport (1954) and others have proposed that these conditions are best conceptualized as functioning together to facilitate positive changes in intergroup attitudes, rather than being regarded as largely separate factors (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Green, Adams, & Turner, 1988). Moreover, decades of research have shown 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 the contact. Increasingly, intergroup research has recognized the need to focus on the concerns and expectations group members bring to cross-group interactions (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Vorauer, 2006; Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006; Tropp, 2006). Much of this work notes that people's concerns about being rejected by outgroup members contributes to their avoidance of contact and undermines their interest in future contact (e.g., Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006), 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 Cohen, 1982; Robinson & Preston, 1976).

Molina and Wittig (2006; see also Molina, Wittig, & Giang, 2004) provide a notable research example that links individuals' subjective responses to contact with Allport's situational conditions for contact. These authors examined the extent to which both the perceptions of contact conditions (e.g., equal status, interdependence, institutional support) and the perceived openness to cross-race interactions among fellow students (e.g., acquaintance potential; see Cook, 1984; Cook & Selltitz, 1955) jointly predicted their own prejudice toward and interest in contact with other racial groups. Across four studies with diverse samples of middle school and high school students, Molina and Wittig found that perceived openness predicted significant reductions in students' own prejudiced attitudes and their greater willingness to engage in future contact. Thus, rather than reducing prejudice simply through objective conditions of the contact situation, prejudice may be reduced to the extent that we can alleviate group members' concerns and enhance their subjective feelings of acceptance within the contact situation.

## Monitoring the Salience of Group Membership in Intergroup Contact

Another approach to intergroup contact has focused on the degree to which group membership is salient during contact, and how this impacts the ability of contact to reduce prejudice toward the individuals with whom people interact, and whether such change in prejudice generalizes to the outgroup as a whole. Intergroup 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; see also Miller, 2002) note 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 recommend that the salience of group membership be reduced through processes of *decategorization*. Decategorization strategies seek to induce greater perceptions of variability in the outgroup (Miller & Harrington, 1995), and to personalize outgroup 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 outgroup members simply on the basis of group membership. In turn, this change should minimize tension and conflict during intergroup contact (Bettencourt, Brewer, Rogers-Croak, & Miller, 1992; Miller, Brewer, & Edwards, 1985).

On the other hand, Hewstone and Brown (1986; see also Brown & Hewstone, 2005) contend that broader shifts in intergroup attitudes will only result when positive contact experiences with an outgroup member are recognized as *intergroup* in nature. Thus, they support 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 outgroup members will therefore be more likely to generalize to the outgroup 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 is heightened during contact (e.g., Brown, Vivian, & Hewstone, 1999; Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007; Van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, & Hewstone, 1996; Voci & Hewstone, 2003).

Recognizing merits associated with both of these approaches, Pettigrew (1998) proposes 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. Then, 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 resulting from the contact can 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 in a variety of ways. For example, experimental studies have induced group membership salience 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; van Oudenhoven et al., 1996). Other studies have assessed salience using more subjective approaches, such as by asking about people's awareness of group membership in intergroup contexts (e.g., Mendoza-Denton, Page-Gould, & Pietrzak, 2006; Pinel, 2002), how much they perceive the outgroup 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 outgroup members (e.g., Brown, Maras, Masser, Vivian & Hewstone, 2001; Brown et al., 1999, Study 2).

It is conceivable 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, we may not want to be perceived on the basis of our group membership if we expect to be rejected or treated differently (Frey & Tropp, 2006). But we may wish to have our group membership acknowledged if our group's experiences tend to be disregarded or overlooked (e.g., Eggins, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2002; Tropp & Bianchi, 2007). Thus, this body of work suggests that group membership salience is important for generalizing positive outcomes from intergroup contact, yet close attention must be paid to how it is established and subjectively experienced by group members in the intergroup context.

### p. 555 **Recategorization And Superordinate Group Identities**

Alternatively, a process 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 & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994; Gaertner, Dovidio, & Bachman, 1996). When recategorization occurs, attitudes toward former outgroup members become more positive due to the same categorization processes that govern other forms of ingroup 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 (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Dovidio, Gaertner & Saguy, 2009). For example, 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), such that members of lower status groups may feel as if they are being subsumed within the broader social category (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

Additional empirical work supporting this perspective is well grounded in social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This perspective contends that the distribution of material and symbolic resources are largely guided by group-based status and power asymmetries, such that those who have greater status and power are motivated to maintain the status quo. In contexts of ethnic relations in diverse nations, one of the ways in which this group power asymmetry is concretized is through the domains of national identity in which the dominant group feels more "ownership" over the nation than subordinate groups. This tendency is revealed in trends such as higher levels of national identity for dominant group members (e.g., European Americans) compared to subordinate group members (e.g., African Americans) and a stronger positive association between ethnic identity and national identity for dominant group members compared to members of subordinate groups (see Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001; Staerkle, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2005; Staerkle, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010).

As nations become increasingly diverse, one of the growing concerns is how to manage cultural diversity (Deaux, 2006; Fredrickson, 1999; Hollinger, 1995; Plaut, 2002; Prentice & Miller, 1999) and ensure that the positive effects of diversity are preserved (Page, 2007) while potential negative repercussions are diminished (e.g., Maalouf, 2003; Putnam, 2007). A central question, then, is how to create a sense of common, shared identity among people of diverse backgrounds that differ in power and status. Does a

formation of “one-ness” require attenuation of subgroup loyalties (Schlesinger, 1998), recognition of valued subgroup identities (Huo & Molina, 2006), and/or salience of both national and ethnic identities (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000)?

Assimilation perspectives typically argue that an immigrant’s ethnic ties decrease over time (e.g., generations) while ties to nation are simultaneously forming and growing (for reviews see Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Such perspectives are not without debate (see Rumbaut, 1999) and may be presented in one of several ways (see Suarez-Orozco, 2002). For example, in “classic” assimilationist approaches, ethnic loyalties are supplanted by national loyalties that typically have little, if any, resemblance to one’s own customs, traditions, and beliefs. This version of assimilation 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, traditions, and norms associated with ethnicities “melt” into the national identity and redefine the content of the nation (Alba & Nee, 2003; see also LaFromboise et al., 1993). In this revised version, national identity is organic and evolves as a synthesis of many cultures and ideas such that identification with the nation serves to simultaneously reinforce ethnic ties.

Other variations propose that assimilation is a likely process for only a subset of groups. One variation is the *black exceptionalism hypothesis* (Sears & Savalei, 2006), which suggests that new immigrant groups such as Asians and Latinos will assimilate much as old European immigrants (e.g., Irish, Italian) did, while blacks p. 556 have and will continue to remain relatively unincorporated into the American tapestry. The rationale here is that the black experience in America has been rather unique and severe in historical terms (e.g., slavery, Jim Crow), which has resulted in greater group consciousness and lower national attachment among blacks compared to other ethnic minority groups.

Another variation is referred to as *segmented assimilation* (Zhou, 1999) and focuses on the second generation and its economic incorporation into American society. The author argues that children of first-generation immigrants may follow three lines: (1) individuals integrate into the middle class and their ethnicities wane over time; (2) individuals may become part of the poorer social classes; or (3) individuals may have economic success and deliberately retain their ethnic identities. This variant allows for new immigrant groups to follow an “old European” immigrant account of full assimilation, a black nonintegration account, or an integration into American society while simultaneous maintenance of ethnic group identity.

While there are varied models of assimilation, as discussed above, psychological research in this area suggests that people’s strategies for balancing ethnic and national identities may follow a range of trajectories not fully captured by assimilation approaches (Berry, 2001). That is, assimilation may not be sufficient to account for the range of psychological experiences and perspectives of diverse groups in a shared society (Sears & Savalei, 2006). In particular, racial and ethnic group identities may be highly valued and enhancing parts of an individual’s self-concept (Huo & Molina, 2006; C. Taylor, 1994), such that any attempts to diminish loyalty to these groups would likely be interpreted as a threat (Branscombe et al., 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Such trends are supported both by theoretical and empirical work in the social identity theory 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 (e.g., Kymlicka, 1996; C. Taylor, 1994).

Hornsey and Hogg (2000) have therefore proposed that both superordinate (e.g., national) and subgroup (e.g., racial or ethnic) identities be maintained as dual identities (see also Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Specifically, these authors show 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 show that among members of racial and ethnic minority groups, perceptions of subgroup respect—namely, 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 (Zagefka & 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**

Recent work on intergroup contact has also pointed to the special role that cross-group friendships may play in prejudice reduction. In a pioneering paper, Pettigrew (1997) showed how the close affective ties generated by cross-group friendships could lead to greater intergroup liking and identification with outgroup members, which in turn fed into more positive feelings toward the outgroup as a whole. He analyzed cross-sectional survey responses from participants in seven different European nations, in which they were asked to state whether they had any friends of a different culture, nationality, race, ethnicity, or social class, and to complete several measures of intergroup prejudice. Pettigrew (1997) observed that having cross-group friendships was consistently and significantly associated with lower intergroup prejudice among participants across national contexts—and particularly for such affective prejudice measures as feelings of sympathy and admiration for the outgroup. By contrast, less intimate contact with outgroup members, such as coworkers or neighbors, yielded far smaller effects (see also Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997).

p. 557 Wright, Aron, and their colleagues (Wright, Aron & Tropp, 2002; Wright, Brody, & Aron, 2005; ↵ Wright & van der Zande, 1999) similarly propose that greater closeness to individual outgroup members corresponds with lower prejudice toward the whole outgroup through the mechanism of including the outgroup in the self. According to the authors’ broader self-expansion model (see Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Brody, Wright, Aron, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2008), people have an appetitive interest in outgroups, and especially in relations with outgroup 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 concern about being rejected, these authors further propose that we should be especially drawn to outgroup members who are quite different from ourselves, as they offer the greatest opportunities for self-expansion (Brody et al., 2008).

By virtue of including outgroup members in the self through the formation of cross-group friendships, we become inclined to give our outgroup 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. Cross-group friendships can lead us to make more positive attributions for outgroup members’ intentions and behaviors (Joseph, Weatherall, & Stringer, 1997; Wright et al., 2002), and to become more concerned about the outgroup’s welfare (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001). In an early test of these ideas, McLaughlin-Volpe and her coauthors (2002) asked participants to report how many interactions they had had with outgroup members (quantity of contact), and how close they felt to the outgroup member with whom they had the closest relationship (quality of contact), along with reporting their feelings toward outgroup members in general. Greater numbers of cross-group interactions were associated with more positive feelings toward outgroup members, but only among those who reported having close cross-group relationships.



Similar findings have been observed in an experimental study by Wright and his colleagues (Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002; Wright, Brody, & Aron, 2005; Wright & van der Zande, 1999), which provided initial evidence for the causal effects of cross-group friendship on prejudice reduction. White female participants were randomly paired with either a same-ethnic partner (white) or a cross-ethnic 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. White participants paired with a same-race and cross-race partner both developed strong feelings of closeness to their partners over the testing sessions. However, compared to those paired with a same-race partner, those paired with a cross-race partner showed less prejudiced responses, being less likely to cut university funding for ethnic minority organizations supporting the partner's ethnic group.

Recent meta-analytic investigations have yielded similar patterns of results (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, in press), such that cross-group friendships—and particularly those assessed with behavioral indicators of intimacy—typically show greater reductions in prejudice than other contact studies. Taken together with other recent findings (e.g., Aberson, Shoemaker, & Tomolillo, 2004; Binder et al., 2009; Eller & Abrams, 2004; 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 *friendship potential* is an important factor for realizing the potential of intergroup contact to reduce prejudice, as it is typified by extensive and repeated equal status contact across a range of social contexts, which over time encourages greater degrees of shared experience, self-disclosure, and other kinds of friendship-building processes. There is also other evidence to suggest that situational features such as institutional support, cooperation, common goals, and equal status can 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; Patchen, 1982). Additionally, 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 (e.g., Stearns et al., 2009).

p. 558

We now have ample evidence to support the important role that friendship contact can play in prejudice reduction. Yet we still know relatively little about how cross-group friendships are experienced or navigated by the individuals involved. Some recent 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 et al., 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 likely to seek out contact opportunities (Jackson & Poulsen, 2005), as part of a broader orientation toward trying out new cultural experiences (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Compared to those low in openness to experience, people high in openness to experience also tend to score lower 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 shows that positive contact is often most effective in shifting intergroup attitudes among people who are least inclined toward relationships with outgroup members, such as those high in social dominance orientation and authoritarianism (Dhont & van Hiel, 2009; Hodson, 2008; Hodson, Harry, & Mitchell, 2009), and low in support for diversity (Adesokan, van Dick, Ullrich, & Tropp, in press). Thus, although

some may be initially less drawn toward intergroup contact or less inclined to develop friendships with outgroup 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, 2007), 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 (Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Joyner & Kao, 2000; Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999).

There is also other evidence to suggest that cross-group friendships can be more difficult to sustain over time than same-race 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 (Aboud, 2005; Aboud & Sankar, 2007; 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; Tatum, 1997).

## 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; Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999), 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 (see Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006). Moreover, individuals may 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 et al., 2002), which could further contribute to anxieties about cross-group interactions.

Researchers have therefore begun to examine the roles that anxiety and other psychological processes play in intergroup encounters, and how these processes may be transformed through intergroup contact. Reviewing much of the recent work in this area, Trawalter, Richeson, and Shelton (2009) suggest that anxious responses to cross-group interactions can be interpreted through the lens of a stress and coping framework. Specifically, they propose 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 is provided by Plant and Devine (2008), who interpret expectations for intergroup contact through an approach and avoidance motivation framework. According to these authors, 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 their anxiety also predicts the tendency to avoid future cross-group interactions (Plant & Devine, 2003). Alternatively, Vorauer (2006) offers an informational search model to account for people's evaluative concerns as people prepare for cross-group interactions. In large part, she

proposes that group members' evaluative concerns are conceptualized as growing from uncertainty about how they will be perceived by outgroup members. Thus, to the extent that they experience uncertainty about outgroup 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 outgroup members, and this anxiety could lead to avoidance of or awkwardness during cross-group interactions.

Concurrently, however, recent research also indicates that positive contact experiences with members of other groups can diminish feelings of 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) show that having greater numbers of cross-group friendships reduces participants' 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, van Laar, and Sidanius (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 and colleagues (2001) have also shown that whites with prior interracial contact reveal 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 corroborates these findings (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), showing that anxiety reduction mediates 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 reduces people's feelings of anxiety about engaging with the outgroup, and this reduced anxiety typically predicts 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 Implicit Associations Test (IAT; see K. A. Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007) 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 for a 10-day period. Those who made a cross-group friend generally reported lower levels of anxiety in subsequent daily diaries than those who were 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 not only be effective due to anxiety reduction, but also because it promotes empathy and perspective-taking between members of different groups. Over the past ten years, social psychology has witnessed a renewed interest in empathy and greater attention to its relevance to intergroup relationships (see also Castano, chapter 17, this volume). As an earlier example, Batson et al. (1997) encouraged participants to empathize with targets from stigmatized groups (e.g., a young woman with AIDS, a homeless man) and found that this empathy induction improved participants' attitudes toward people with AIDS and the homeless in general. Vescio, Sechrist, and Paolucci (2003) have also shown that inducing white people to engage in perspective-taking can promote more favorable interracial attitudes. Another study revealed that perspective-taking increased the willingness of majority group members 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 outgroup members (e.g., the elderly) can make them less likely to stereotype the outgroup and more likely to perceive overlap between themselves and outgroup 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. It has been suggested that intergroup contact—and particularly that which involves close relationships between groups—may enhance people's ability to take the perspective of outgroup members and empathize with their concerns. Consistent with this view, R. N. Turner, Hewstone, and Voci (2007) show that greater self-disclosure during contact with Asians predicts lower anti-Asian prejudice among white British high school students, and this effect is largely due to increases in empathy that the students felt toward Asians. Still, some research has revealed ironic effects of empathy at early stages of contact, such that negative expectations for how one's group is viewed by the outgroup can undermine the potentially positive effects of empathy on prejudice reduction (Vorauer & Sasaki, 2009). Nonetheless, meta-analytic research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) reveals that empathy is typically an important mediator in the relationship between contact and prejudice, accounting for approximately 30% of this association. These authors also observe that empathy mediates the contact-prejudice relationship largely independently of the role of anxiety reduction: in the small subset of studies in which both mediators were tested, anxiety and empathy were negatively correlated, and each independently and significantly contributed to mediating the contact-prejudice association.

Although research on these psychological mediators has only begun, it may well be that the mediational roles of anxiety and empathy tend to function sequentially, in line with Pettigrew's (1998) discussion of sequential processes regarding the role of salience in intergroup contact. Reducing anxiety may well be most crucial during the initial stages of intergroup contact (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 1998), 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 outgroup 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 is supported by other work showing that anxiety in intergroup settings can induce greater reliance on stereotypes and contribute to less favorable impressions of outgroup members (e.g., Wilder, 1993; Wilder & Shapiro, 1989), and that 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., in press). Thus, it may be that anxiety reduction plays a critical role in prejudice reduction at the early stages of contact, whereas over time and through 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.

## Maximizing the Potential for Positive Contact Outcomes

Through these varied approaches, we can observe many possible benefits of intergroup contact. However, as discussed previously, there are a range of psychological concerns and obstacles that may keep contact from taking place, or curbing the potential for contact to yield positive outcomes when it does take place (see Frey & Tropp, 2006; Shelton, Richeson & Vorauer, 2006). As such, we must consider whether there are strategies we can employ to address these concerns 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. In an emerging line of research, 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 outgroup 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 outgroup 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 outgroup member (Page-Gould et al., 2010).

Another prime research example is provided by Mallett and Wilson (2010). These authors had white participants watch either a videotaped interaction of two white students, or 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 either about a time 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 they 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 likely to realize the positive potential of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and promoting more positive orientations toward cross-group relationships. Migacheva, Tropp, & Crocker (2011) have recently proposed that people typically approach cross-group interactions with motivations and goals that are largely oriented toward evaluations, desires, and needs of the self. However, by encouraging greater focus on one's connection to and ability to learn from others, we may not only reduce people's discomfort and avoidance of cross-group interactions, but may help them to feel better equipped to create positive relationships across group boundaries. In line with this view, these authors report findings from a survey of European American and African American middle school students from two different New York schools in racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Regardless of their own race, children who reported greater curiosity about and interest in people of a different race were both more willing to form cross-group friendships and anticipated feeling more comfortable around people from other racial groups (see also Migacheva & Tropp, 2010).

Taken together with the literature reviewed previously, this emerging 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 outgroup, 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; Carroll, Arkin, Seidel, & Morris, 2009), 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 contend 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 describe 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; Wright et al., 2005). These authors propose that people have an appetitive interest in other groups, as they seek to expand the self and increase their access to resources, perspectives, and identities that would enhance their efficacy in navigating the world. Moreover, according to this model, people should be particularly drawn to those groups that represent different viewpoints and perspectives, as these would provide greater opportunities for self-expansion (Brody et al., 2008). However, as discussed above, other work suggests that difference and lack of prior familiarity can breed uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety regarding how one might be perceived or received by members of other groups (see Kramer & Messick,

1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Trawalter et al., 2009; Vorauer, 2006), which understandably could curb tendencies toward self-expansion.

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

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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 (see Hodson, 2009), 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 would not only enable us to develop a more nuanced understanding of intergroup encounters, but would also serve to inform the strategies we use to reduce prejudice, diminish intergroup threat and anxiety, and build the capacity for empathy and positive relations between groups.

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