

ESSENTIAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ESSENTIAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

4TH EDITION

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Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

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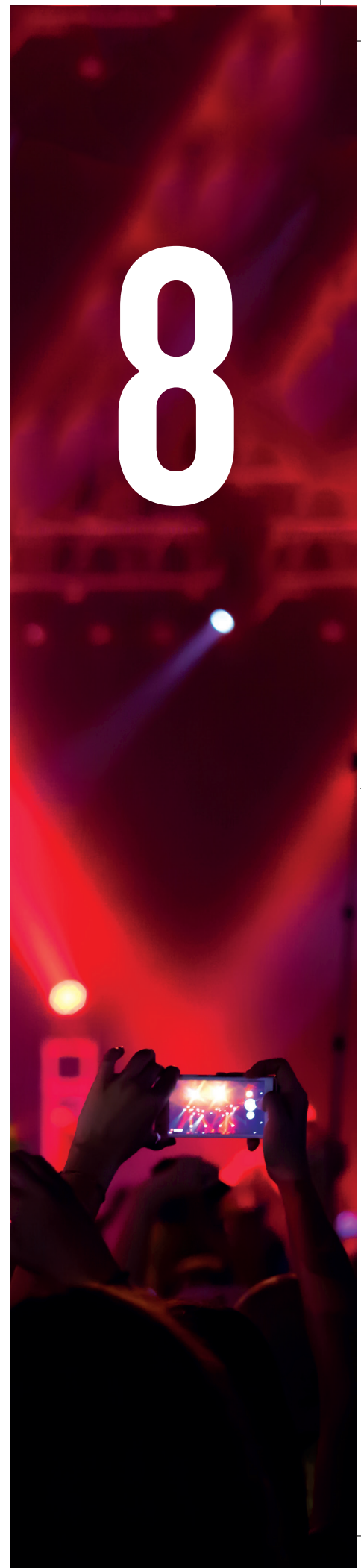
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Prejudice is a significant problem faced by countries across the world. In the USA, for example, black males aged 15–34 were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers in 2016 (Swaine & McCarthy, 2017). Following the high-profile deaths of black teenagers in America, including the shooting of unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, the use of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter on social media developed into a national social movement, *Black Lives Matter*, which highlights and protests against continuing racism in modern society. In the UK, according to the *Racial Prejudice in Britain Today* survey (National Centre for Social Research, 2017), the percentage of people who openly admitted being racially prejudiced was 26 per cent. Prejudice, and how to reduce it, is one of the defining problems of modern society. Social psychologists have therefore been very much concerned with understanding the psychological processes that can explain this pervasive human tendency to disparage, denigrate and discriminate against others. This chapter is about what psychologists have learned about the nature of prejudice, and what we can do to fight against it.

PREJUDICE: OLD AND NEW

Prejudice, Discrimination and Intergroup Bias

This chapter introduces what social psychologists have learned about prejudice, intergroup discrimination and social conflict. We will be talking about *ingroups* and *outgroups*. Ingroups are social categories (see Chapter 3) to which you belong. Other people who share your category membership are ingroup members. Outgroups are social categories to which you do not belong. People who are members of categories that do not include you are outgroup members. While not terms typically used in common language, we refer to ingroups and outgroups all the time. Generically speaking, whenever we refer to ‘us’ or ‘we’, ‘they’ or ‘them’, all of these terms denote shared versus non-shared category membership (and this fundamental role that group referents have in everyday language suggests some of the psychological causes of prejudice that we discuss later on). We are going to be talking about people seeing their ingroup as more positive than their outgroup, something we call **ingroup bias** (sometimes also referred to as *ingroup favouritism* or *intergroup bias*). Ingroup bias is an umbrella term that includes different manifestations of bias in favour of one’s own social category. This brings us to prejudice, which is defined as a negative *attitude* or *feeling* held towards members of an outgroup. Intergroup discrimination is the *behavioural* manifestation of prejudice. That is, people who hold prejudiced attitudes might be those more likely to show discriminatory behaviour. We will refer to experiments that measure prejudice or discrimination, and for the purposes of this chapter we can treat them both as manifestations of the same intergroup bias. However, it is important to remember that attitudes do not *always* predict behaviour (see Chapter 4 and the discussion of the attitude–behaviour relationship).

Given these basic definitions, how can we start trying to understand the nature of prejudice? In Chapter 3 we talked about how people use social categories to make the world

easier to understand. These are heuristics and they help people to make cognitively efficient judgements and better understand the world by providing information in the form of norms and stereotypes. It is this tendency to use categories to define our worlds that underlies the most talked-about forms of prejudice – racism and sexism. Racism is prejudice against someone based on their race; sexism is prejudice against someone on the basis of their sex. We saw in Chapter 3 that people appear to use categories such as race and sex chronically: that is, they spontaneously categorize others along these dimensions without even realizing it. This tendency to use race and sex in defining others is a problem because membership of these categories can come with stigma attached (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). **Stigmatization** is when a person's social category puts them at a lower status than a dominant group and ascribes to them negative characteristics (or *stereotypes*). In this chapter we chart psychologists' understanding of racism and sexism, how the expression of these most common forms of prejudice have developed over time, how the development of societies' egalitarian norms have had a key defining role, and how new technologies have helped identify contemporary and more subtle forms of prejudice.

Racism

There are two types of racism: *old-fashioned* racism and *aversive* racism. Old-fashioned racism is the blatant expression of negative and unfair stereotypes of others based on their category membership. For instance, African Americans have been seen as aggressive (Devine, 1989) and of low intelligence (Steele & Aronson, 1995). While we now have societal norms that to some extent prohibit the blatant expression of prejudiced beliefs, psychologists have also identified a second, more pervasive, manifestation of racism that people do not admit to, and which is therefore much more difficult to detect: *aversive* racism.

Aversive racism describes the type of racism that is defined by having *both* egalitarian attitudes and negative emotions towards members of different groups. Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) argue that modern racism is best described by this conflict between modern egalitarian values (such as equal treatment of all people and sympathy for victims of racial prejudice) and the more explicit forms of prejudice that are perpetuated by images of minority groups as conforming to negative stereotypes. The result of this conflict is the experience of negative emotions, such as uneasiness, fear and discomfort. Because egalitarianism is important to many people, these negative emotions arouse feelings of shame and guilt in those who experience them, leading them to avoid publicly acknowledging these feelings, and to avoid intergroup encounters that might mean having to face up to this conflict. The consequences of aversive racism are clearly demonstrated in a study reported in Insight 8.1, which shows that while people may report holding egalitarian attitudes, their behaviour towards the ingroup and the outgroup can vary dramatically. These implicit prejudiced attitudes can also be understood in terms of the automatic stereotyping processes which we discussed in Chapter 3. We return to consider these processes in more detail later in this chapter.

THE EFFECT OF RACE ON HELPING BEHAVIOUR

The majority of studies on racism and discrimination involve participants directly reporting their outgroup attitudes. However, people may not always be completely honest when reporting such attitudes, because of a fear of violating the egalitarian norms of modern society. Gaertner and Bickman (1971) used a subtle measure of discrimination, investigating whether people are more likely to help ingroup members than outgroup members.

Method

In Brooklyn, New York, 1,109 residents (approximately half of whom were black and half of whom were white) were called by either a black or a white confederate. To ensure that their ethnicity was obvious to the caller, the confederates used an accent that was typically associated with their ethnic group. When a participant answered the phone, each confederate used the following script:

Caller: Hello ... Ralph's Garage? This is George Williams ... listen, I'm stuck out here on the parkway ... and I'm wondering if you'd be able to come out here and take a look at my car?

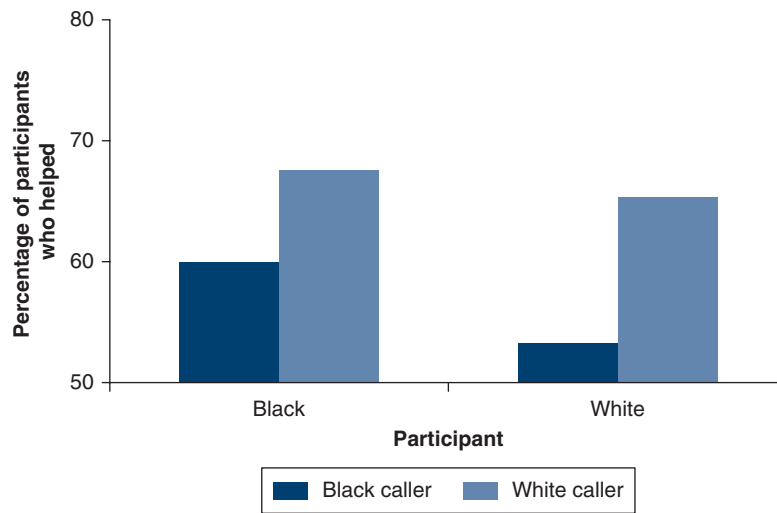
Expected response: This isn't Ralph's Garage ... you have the wrong number.

Caller: This isn't Ralph's Garage! Listen, I'm terribly sorry to have disturbed you, but listen ... I'm stuck out here on the highway ... and that was the last dime I had! I have bills in my pocket but no more change to make another phone call ... Now I'm really stuck out here. What am I going to do now? ... Listen ... do you think you could do me the favour of calling the garage and letting them know where I am? I'll give you the number ... They know me over there.

If the participant agreed to help, the caller gave them the telephone number of the garage. Calls were actually received by a research assistant, posing as a garage attendant, who logged the calls.

Results

- White participants showed ingroup bias; they were more likely to help a white caller than a black caller.
- Black participants were actually more likely to help a white caller than a black caller, although this difference was not statistically significant.



Interpreting the Findings

People have a general tendency to help those in need, because we hold a 'social responsibility norm'; we feel we should help others even if it is of no personal benefit. For white participants in this study, however, this norm was violated more frequently when the person in need of help was in the outgroup; they were more likely to help ingroup members than outgroup members.

One can conceptualize a society's progression towards **egalitarianism** as moving through stages defined by these different types of racism, from old-fashioned blatant racism, to aversive racism, where both egalitarian and prejudiced attitudes co-exist, to full egalitarianism, where there is no longer any conflict (Kleinpenning & Hagendoorn, 1993). For instance, many commentators believe that Western societies are at stage 2: aversive racism. Western societies acknowledge the importance of egalitarian values, but there are still pervasive biases evident in all strata of social life, from violent racist murders to less obvious, but still destructive, forms of prejudice, such as institutional racism. In the second half of this chapter we talk about how social psychologists are developing interventions to help us move to stage 3, total egalitarianism. Next, however, we discuss another type of prejudice that has proved difficult to eradicate: sexism.

Sexism

Sexism refers to prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination against someone on the basis of their sex. Research has typically focused on sexism against women, and can be exemplified

in the objectification of women, the sexist abuse of women on social media, institutional discrimination, the gender pay gap and ‘The Glass Ceiling’ effect (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; see also ‘The Glass Cliff’ effect discussed in Chapter 6). Arguably, progress has been made, and women are in a more successful position in society than ever before. For example, following the 2017 general election, there were a record number of female Members of Parliament in the UK (208, up from 191 in 2015, representing 32 per cent of the MPs), and the UK has recently had its second female Prime Minister, Theresa May, and female First Ministers in Northern Ireland (Arlene Foster) and Scotland (Nicola Sturgeon). However, sexism remains rife, and never has this been more evident than on social media. In 2013, for example, the Labour MP for Walthamstow, Stella Creasy, and journalist Caroline Criado-Perez, received extensive sexist abuse and rape threats over Twitter for campaigning to ensure women featured on the new sterling banknotes. Even the most powerful women in the country do not escape objectification. *The Daily Mail* was accused of ‘appalling sexism’ in March 2017 after its front page featured a story (‘Never mind Brexit, who won legs-it?’) comparing Theresa May and Nicola Sturgeon in skirts rather than focusing on their meeting about the process that will see the UK leave the European Union (Oppenheim, 2017).

Like racism, sexism can be divided into two components: *hostile sexism* and *benevolent sexism*. Hostile sexism is what we typically think of as sexist attitudes towards women, the view that women are inferior, irrational and weak. However, there is also a less blatant, more benevolent side to sexism. Benevolent sexist attitudes are positive in valence and are characterized by idealizing women in traditional female roles, such as ‘homemaker’ or ‘mother’. Although these are positive stereotypes, they restrict women to specific roles, justifying male social dominance (Sidanius, Pratto, & Brief, 1995). Modern forms of sexism, just like modern racism, can be characterized by the conflict between positive (egalitarian) and negative (prejudiced) attitudes.

Interestingly, it seems possible for sexist men to possess both hostile and benevolent attitudes towards women. Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997) found that men high in ambivalent sexism had polarized views of women that fell into the two types of sexism. Men high in ambivalent sexism who were asked to think about a woman transcending traditional roles (e.g. a career woman) reported negative feelings, such as fear and envy. These

negative feelings were correlated with hostile sexism, but *not* with benevolent sexism. Men high in ambivalent sexism who thought about a woman in a traditional role (e.g. a homemaker) reported positive feelings (warmth, trust, etc.), which were correlated with a measure of benevolent sexism, but *not* hostile sexism. These findings suggest that ambivalent sexist men can hold simultaneously positive and negative attitudes about different subcategories of women, which may help to explain why sexism has been hard to counteract. It is harder to show someone that their negative stereotype is unjustifiable when they can counter with the



Photo 8.1 Ideas of traditional gender roles have changed dramatically in the last century, but implicit gender bias is still apparent in expectancies for certain occupational roles

argument that they do have a positive view of women (albeit along restrictive and inherently biased dimensions).

One very public example of the negative consequences for women who violate traditional gender roles could be seen in reactions to Hillary Clinton during the 2016 US Presidential election. Clinton, an experienced and successful career woman seeking election to one of the most powerful positions in the world, one that to date has been held only by men – and thus in clear violation of the traditional role of women as homemakers – was criticized for her ‘shrill’ voice and her appearance as an ‘ageing women’ (e.g. McDonald, 2016). Other comments questioned whether her success was merely a reflection of her relationship to her powerful husband. Badges produced for a Donald Trump rally included one with a picture of Hillary Clinton and the words ‘Life’s a bitch. Don’t vote for one’ (Peck, 2017). Sexism may also have influenced the outcome of the election. Bock, Byrd-Craven, and Burkley (2017) asked American undergraduate students to complete a survey about their political affiliation, social attitudes and voting behaviour in the months following the 2016 election. Although political party affiliation was by far the strongest predictor of voting behaviour, hostile sexism and having traditional attitudes towards women also strongly predicted voting for Trump rather than Clinton, even when controlling for participant sex and political party identification.

BACK TO THE REAL WORLD...

WEIGHT STIGMA

So far in this chapter we have talked about racism and sexism. But there are many other types of prejudice that people experience. Perhaps one of the most common is *weight stigma*, prejudice towards people who are higher weight. In both the UK and the USA, statistics suggest that around two-thirds of the population are higher weight (Gallup, 2011; NHS, 2013). We are, moreover, constantly bombarded with information about weight: stories in tabloids and celebrity gossip magazines praising celebrity weight loss while castigating those who have put on weight, adverts for ‘miracle diets’ that promise to whittle inches off your waist in a matter of weeks, and images of airbrushed perfection on adverts in glossy fashion magazines. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that we increasingly equate thin with good and fat with bad.

A range of negative stereotypes exist regarding people who are higher weight, including lazy, socially inept, unhappy, ugly and stupid (Puhl & Brownell, 2001). Children who are higher weight are victimized, verbally abused and bullied, whereas higher weight adults are denied employment, given lower wages, refused job promotion or college admission and are deprived of healthcare (Puhl, Andreyeva, & Brownell, 2008; Puhl & Brownell, 2001; Puhl & Latner, 2007). Those who experience weight stigma are also more vulnerable to

(Continued)

depression and anxiety, and decreased self-esteem (Puhl & Latner, 2007), which may actually promote further weight gain, as individuals turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as overeating and engaging in sedentary activities. It is therefore very important that we find ways to reduce weight stigma.

A number of strategies can be applied to improve attitudes towards higher weight people, many of which are covered in this book (e.g. positive intergroup contact, promoting a sense of commonality with higher weight people, reminding people that higher weight individuals can be categorized in multiple ways, having many other characteristics and qualities than just 'being higher weight'). The Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity (2013) also suggests the following tips for use in the classroom:

1. Educate students about the multiple causes of obesity. By encouraging students to appreciate that genetic, biological, environmental and behavioural factors *all* play a role, this will challenge stereotypes that place blame on obese individuals.
2. Include examples of higher weight role models in the curriculum. This will help to challenge weight-based stereotypes by demonstrating that higher weight individuals are successful and accomplish important goals.
3. Get students to take the perspective of an higher weight person and imagine how it feels to experience weight stigma. This should help to evoke empathy.
4. Increase awareness of how the media can perpetuate weight bias through an unrealistic ideal of thinness.
5. Encourage students of all weights to participate in sports teams and extracurricular activities. If students have positive experiences and friendships with higher weight individuals, this will help to reduce stigma.

Implicit Prejudice

Until quite recently, research on prejudice focused on people's explicit attitude towards members of other groups. Explicit attitudes are conscious, deliberative and controllable, and are usually captured by getting participants to report in a questionnaire how positive or negative their attitudes, feelings or stereotypes are towards members of another group. Although these measures have been used widely in investigations of prejudice, they have a notable limitation: they are influenced by *social desirability*. We have a general desire to be perceived positively by others. At the same time, there is a strong contemporary norm for equality and intergroup tolerance. It may therefore be the case that people do not report their true intergroup attitudes because they fear that those attitudes are not socially desirable. To some extent, this problem has been dealt with by getting participants to complete questionnaires anonymously. However, it may be that people do not want to admit the extent of their prejudices, even to themselves.

Recently, however, the development of millisecond reaction time methodology (measuring how long respondents take to answer questions relating to prejudice) has allowed us to

measure implicit attitudes. **Implicit attitudes** are attitudes that are unintentionally activated by the mere presence of an attitude object, whether actual or symbolic. So implicit intergroup attitudes may be triggered by seeing someone from another group, or even simply seeing something that we associate with that group, such as a religious icon or symbol.

One of the most frequently used measures of implicit attitude is the **implicit association test** (IAT: Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). This is a task that identifies the speed with which participants can categorize positive or negative stimuli (e.g. positive or negative words) alongside ingroup or outgroup stimuli (e.g. names or faces). It typically demonstrates that people show an implicit intergroup bias. Specifically, people find it easier to associate their own group (compared with the outgroup) with positive stimuli, and the outgroup (compared with the ingroup) with negative stimuli, indicating implicit bias in favour of one's own group. The IAT has been used to measure a whole range of different types of ingroup-favouring bias, including male–female, black–white, and Christian–Muslim bias, to name just a few. For a demonstration of this test, you can visit the website implicit.harvard.edu and try it out for yourself. Initially, psychologists believed that while explicit attitudes change relatively easily, implicit attitudes were like old habits which are much more difficult to change (e.g. Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). However, recent evidence suggests that current events can have a powerful effect on implicit attitudes (see Insight 8.2).

Implicit prejudice measured via the IAT has even been found to have a biological correlate. Phelps et al. (2000) used fMRI to examine the brain processes that contribute to implicit racial bias, measured via the IAT. They presented white American participants with photographs of unfamiliar black and white males in an fMRI scanner. They found that amygdala activation to black (versus white) faces was positively correlated with IAT bias but not explicit attitudes. The effects did not occur with familiar faces. The results suggest that the amygdala – a subcortical structure involved in emotional learning and evaluation – may be involved in how people learn negative associations with outgroups.

THE OBAMA EFFECT: DOES EXPOSURE TO A COUNTER-STEREOTYPICAL POLITICAL FIGURE REDUCE IMPLICIT BIAS?

Research conducted over the last couple of decades has shown that the majority (75–85 per cent) of white people show a bias in favour of white people over black people on the IAT. In 2008, however, Barack Obama ran a high-profile campaign which resulted in his election as the 44th President of the USA on 20 January 2009. During this time, Americans had an unprecedented level of exposure to Obama, whose qualities – well educated, motivated and articulate – contradict the negative stereotypes that typically exist towards African

(Continued)

INSIGHT 8.2



Americans. Plant, Devine, Cox, Columb, and Miller (2009) investigated whether this exposure had changed the implicit attitudes of white Americans towards African Americans, and, if so, what might be causing this change.

Method

Two hundred and twenty-nine predominately white American students completed a black–white version of the IAT during the 2008 election campaign. Participants then listed the first five thoughts that came to mind when they thought of black people. The researchers recorded how many positive examples of black people were mentioned (e.g. Barack Obama, Martin Luther King).

Results

In stark contrast to the previous finding of consistent anti-black implicit bias, there was no evidence of anti-black bias on the IAT. In fact, a considerable proportion of participants actually showed a pro-black bias. These findings were replicated in a follow-up study. Moreover, when asked what thoughts came to mind when thinking about black people, participants who listed a positive exemplar (such as Barack Obama) were less likely to respond with anti-black bias.

Interpreting the Findings

These findings suggest that media coverage of the election of Barack Obama may have led to a general change in white participants' implicit responses to black people by repeatedly exposing them to a counter-stereotypical black exemplar. While Obama's election had positive implications for intergroup relations in the USA, Plant and colleagues acknowledged that it was not clear how long this effect would last. Following the end of Obama's eight-year term, Republican candidate Donald Trump was elected to the US Presidency in 2016. He ran for office with a strong anti-immigration message and, following his election, quickly implemented a policy that placed a ban on citizens from six countries (Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen), most of which have largely non-white populations, from entering the USA. Therefore, further research at this time is crucial to examine whether the change in Presidency has resulted in a resurgence of bias against individuals and groups who are not white. Moreover, in light of the sexist rhetoric during the Trump–Clinton election campaign in 2016, discussed earlier, it may also be pertinent to investigate whether implicit and explicit sexism increased over that period.

So why is it important to measure implicit as well as explicit prejudice? Well, first, implicit measures like the IAT do not require participants to report their attitudes directly, which means they are less likely to be influenced by social desirability than are explicit measures. They are therefore particularly interesting to study in the context of prejudice towards social

groups to whom it is no longer socially acceptable to express negative attitudes. Second, there is evidence that although explicit and implicit prejudices both influence behaviour, they do so in different ways. While explicit prejudice might lead to conscious and deliberative behaviours, for example being blatantly unpleasant to outgroup members, implicit prejudice is more likely to lead to subtle, indirect and spontaneous biased non-verbal behaviours, such as avoiding eye contact, increasing physical distance from outgroup members, and hesitating during speech (e.g. Fazio et al., 1995; McConnell & Leibold, 2001). These subtle behaviours can damage interactions between members of different groups without the participants even realizing it.

Infrachumanization

In Chapter 2 we discussed the attribution process, the way in which people form impressions of others. We also saw that this process can be biased to be self-serving, and even group-serving. This attribution mechanism drives another implicit form of prejudice that is do to with the types of emotion that people attribute to certain outgroups: *infrachumanization*. The emotions that people attribute to others can be divided into two different types: primary and secondary emotions. Primary emotions are those that both humans and animals share: for example, *joy, surprise, fright, sadness*. Secondary emotions are more complex, unique to humans, and are used to distinguish humans from animals: for example, *admiration, hope, indignation, melancholy*. Infrachumanization describes the tendency to attribute the uniquely human secondary emotions to outgroup members to a lesser extent than to ingroup members. Findings of this differential attribution of secondary emotions are important because they can also be used to justify discrimination. This is because, if a group is believed to be ‘less than human’, then it makes it easier for individuals to argue that they should not be afforded the same rights as other people. Growing evidence demonstrates the different ways in which individuals fail to see outgroup members as human beings, and shows how this process can serve to justify the most heinous forms of discrimination.

A prime illustration of the use of secondary emotions to differentiate ingroup and outgroup members was provided by Paladino et al. (2002). In one study they used the IAT to examine associations between French-speaking Belgians (the ingroup) and North African names (the outgroup) with primary and secondary emotions. The authors observed a stronger association of ingroup names with uniquely human secondary emotions and of outgroup names with non-uniquely human primary emotions. Cuddy, Rock, and Norton (2007) extended the application of infrachumanization theory to two real events. The authors approached participants two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, which hit New Orleans in August 2005, flooding 80 per cent of the city, claiming at least 1,800 victims, and leaving around 60,000 residents homeless. White and non-white (black and Latino) Americans were presented with a fictional news story about a mother (who was either black or white) who had lost a child during the hurricane. Participants were subsequently asked to identify which emotions they thought the mother would be feeling, and to indicate whether they intended to volunteer their time to the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Participants believed that the mother experienced more secondary emotions if they were an ingroup member than if they were an outgroup member. Moreover, participants who did *not* infrachumanize outgroup members were more likely to report intentions to volunteer in the relief effort.

BACK TO THE REAL WORLD...

THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

In 1994, in the small Central African country of Rwanda, one of the most catastrophic incidences of genocide ever seen unfolded when members of the Hutu tribe began a campaign of violence against the Tutsi tribe.

ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

Although the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis, the two main ethnic groups in Rwanda, are very similar to one another, living in the same areas and following the same traditions, there has always been simmering ethnic tension between them. In 1916, when the country was colonized by Belgium, this tension was exacerbated. The Belgians believed that the Tutsis were superior to the Hutus and provided them with better jobs and education, generating resentment among the Hutus. When Rwanda was granted independence from Belgium in 1962, the Hutus took over the running of the country, and in the following decades Tutsis were often scapegoats during times of crisis. When the Hutu president was killed in April 1994, reports suggested that a Tutsi leader, Paul Kagame, was responsible, triggering a campaign of violence that spread from the capital to the rest of the country.

THE GENOCIDE

The presidential guard, along with military officials, businessmen and politicians, began a campaign of retribution against the Tutsis. Soon many others joined in, encouraged by radio propaganda, forming an unofficial militant group of up to 30,000 people, known as the 'Interahamwe'. Hutu civilians were also encouraged to join in, and were given incentives of food, money and land to kill their Tutsi neighbours. In the space of 100 days, between April and June, approximately 800,000 Rwandans were killed. Most of those who died were Tutsis, killed by members of the Hutu tribe. Moderate Hutus who did not support the genocide were also targeted.

THE ROLE OF DEHUMANIZATION

It is almost inconceivable that people in such large numbers could murder their fellow citizens, and in some cases even their former friends. However, the negative feelings and resentment held by Hutus were so strong that Tutsis came to be seen as less than human. This viewpoint was spread throughout the country through the use of hate propaganda in print and on the radio. After the Hutu president was killed in April 1994, for example, the privately-owned radio station, Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines,

called for a 'final war' to 'exterminate the cockroaches'. Later, it proclaimed that Tutsis were being 'killed like rats'. By treating the Tutsis as animals rather than as humans, the normal inhibition against committing murder was eliminated; it was considered that they did not deserve to be treated as humans. Thus, their murder was justified and legitimized in the eyes of the perpetrators.

Infrahumanization, in its most pernicious form, can lead to the **dehumanization** of outgroups. By considering someone else to be in some way less than human, a perpetrator is less likely to appreciate the suffering experienced by the target of their aggression. This enables them to legitimize their actions and reduce any feelings of shame or guilt, thereby increasing the likelihood of aggression. Dehumanization often has catastrophic consequences. It is often cited as one of the major causes of genocide (see the Back to the Real World... box, which discusses the role of dehumanization in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994).

Dehumanization might also help to explain the treatment of prisoners by members of the British and American armed forces in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq. In January 2004, it emerged that some of the American soldiers at Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad had been abusing Iraqi detainees. An internal criminal investigation revealed that detainees had, among other things, been beaten and electrocuted, and forced to remain naked for long periods of time. It also emerged that some detainees had been forced to walk on their hands and knees and bark like a dog, while others had sandbags put over their heads. British soldiers were found guilty of similar atrocities in Basra, in the south-east of Iraq. These are powerful examples of dehumanization. By treating prisoners like animals, their human characteristics were ignored. By covering the heads of detainees, they become anonymous. Such treatment undoubtedly made it easier for soldiers to behave aggressively. By not seeing their victims as human, soldiers were likely able to legitimize their actions and ignore the suffering they caused. But what led soldiers to dehumanize their prisoners?

One explanation for the dehumanization of victims, particularly on a group level, is **delegitimization**. In Rwanda, Hutus had come to hold an extreme hatred of Tutsis. Although after the invasion of Iraq, Iraqi citizens were initially viewed with sympathy by the West, attitudes became increasingly hostile as the US death toll in Iraq since the invasion topped 1,500 in March 2005 and the UK death toll reached 100. When a group is seen in a very negative light, it is placed in a negative social category, labelled as a threat to the norms, values and the very way of life of the ingroup (Bar-Tal, 1990). By delegitimizing the outgroup in this way, dehumanization of the group and subsequent aggression towards it can be justified.

Social Exclusion

Prejudice, an umbrella term which refers to being excluded, rejected or marginalized from desired groups, is a major cause of **social exclusion**. Connecting socially with others is a crucial aspect of human life. It has even been argued that after basic survival needs, such as food and shelter, the need to belong is one of the most powerful human motivations, and

one with an evolutionary basis (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). After all, people are more likely to survive (and reproduce) if they have strong social bonds in order to help them through difficult times. Prejudice is fundamentally the rejection (and exclusion) of the target person by the dominant group in society. As such, we may expect the targets of prejudice to suffer a range of negative effects of this social exclusion. The Health Survey for England, for example, shows that compared with the white majority in the UK, members of ethnic minorities are more likely to report ill-health, have higher rates of cardiovascular disease and die of strokes (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 2007). Of course, many factors may contribute to these health differences, including lifestyle, job security, wealth and housing conditions. However, there is evidence that those individuals suffering from the poorest health of all tend to be those who experience little access to employment, education and healthcare: in other words, those who are *excluded* from certain aspects of society (Williams & Jackson, 2005).

Poor health among minority ethnic groups may also in part be a consequence of the pervasive discrimination, whether experienced or perceived, that they experience. Black Americans (Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, 1999), immigrant youths in the USA (Rumbaut, 1994) and Iraqi refugees (Kira et al., 2008) – all groups who experience racial discrimination – report poorer physical and, in some cases, mental health. Perceptions of racial discrimination are also associated with higher levels of alcohol consumption (Taylor & Jackson, 1990) and smoking (Landrine & Klonoff, 2000) among black Americans, which have clear knock-on effects for health.

BACK TO THE REAL WORLD...

PREJUDICE CAN LEAD TO LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

As we have discussed in this chapter, prejudice can result in negative health outcomes. Recent research suggests that it can even exert an influence on birth weight. Lauderdale (2006) examined over 1.5 million birth certificates of children born in California in the six months prior to and the six months after the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001. Across the sample as a whole, no differences emerged in birth weight over time. However, mothers with an Arabic name were 34 per cent more likely to give birth to a child with a low birth weight after 9/11 than they were before the terrorist event occurred. No similar changes over time occurred in any of the other ethnic groups in the sample. A low birth weight has potentially serious consequences: an increased risk of neonatal death and long-term health problems, including problems in cognitive development (Hack, Klein, & Taylor, 1995) as well as chronic diseases in adulthood (Couzin, 2002). Lauderdale suggested that discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11 may have resulted in heightened levels of stress among Arab women (in one poll, 20 per cent of Arabs reported personally experiencing discrimination in the four weeks after 9/11, while nearly half knew of someone Arab who had

experienced discrimination: Zogby International, 2001). Women experiencing psychosocial stress during pregnancy produce higher levels of the neuropeptide corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) in the placenta, which in turn can increase the risk of preterm labour, resulting in a low birth weight.

Other studies have documented the effect of racial discrimination on physical health, with effects observed on blood pressure and early signs of heart disease. So why does this link exist between racism and poorer health? Some have suggested that, as with any stressful situation, experiencing racism can trigger physiological reactions, including high blood pressure, an increase in the stress hormone cortisol and suppressed immunity (Kreiger & Sidney, 1996). Chronic stress is also associated with more unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking and eating too much, which in turn increase the risk of disease (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999).

While these findings are disturbing, if racism is perceived as a public health problem as well as a social problem, government policy makers might be more inclined to take action. By combating prejudice, they will potentially be reducing the national healthcare budget as well as making the world a more harmonious, tolerant place.

SUMMARY

In this section we have seen how, at first glance, racism and sexism appear to be in decline. This may be because we live in societies that encourage egalitarianism as a universal value and where there are now laws against the expression of extreme racist and sexist views. However, when we take a closer look, we can see how such prejudices have adapted and live on in different forms. *Aversive racism* and *ambivalent sexism* show us that prejudice still exists and can have a profound negative impact on people's lives (from experiencing racist taunts in the street to gender discrimination at work). There is, of course, also prejudice apparent against many other groups, including gay men and women, transgender and intersex individuals, transgender and intersex individuals, immigrants and asylum seekers, Muslims, Jews and other religious groups. Social psychologists have sought to understand why these prejudices occur, and why they prove so pervasive. There is also an *implicit*, as well as an *explicit*, component of prejudice. Implicit prejudice is revealed in attitudes that are unintentionally activated by the mere presence of outgroups, and can be measured using millisecond reaction time methods such as the IAT. Finally, another implicit form of prejudice is *infrahumanization*, the tendency to withhold the attribution of uniquely human emotions to outgroups. In its most extreme form, considering outgroups as 'less than human' in this way can lead to *dehumanization*. This can delegitimize outgroups, making it easier for people to justify acts of violence without feelings of shame or guilt. Even if prejudice does not result in explicit forms of aggression and violence, *targets* of prejudice in society can experience *social exclusion*, and with this a range of negative consequences for physical and mental health.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN PREJUDICE

The Authoritarian Personality

So far we have identified the various forms of prejudice that can be observed in society. But is this a ‘social’ problem, or is it simply a small minority of people who act in a prejudiced way? Perhaps understanding prejudice is simply a matter of personality? Adorno et al. (1950) thought just this, and put forward a theory of prejudice as a personality type. They argued that some people were more prejudiced than others because of the way they had been brought up. According to their theory, which was heavily influenced by the writings of Freud, an **authoritarian personality** arises as a defensive reaction against over-strict parenting methods. Having over-strict parents means the child is unable to express any natural hostility towards their parents, and as such transfers this aggression elsewhere (to weaker, easier targets). This displaced aggression is thus targeted towards minority or low-status groups. These tendencies are then said to continue into adulthood, along with other, associated characteristics, like an overly deferential attitude towards authority figures (who represent the parents).

Although intuitively appealing, this explanation of prejudice can be criticized in two major ways. First, it did not receive unequivocal empirical support. The F-scale, the measure devised by Adorno et al. (1950) to measure if someone had an authoritarian personality, did not predict racism in South Africa in the 1950s (Pettigrew, 1958), but this is a social setting where prejudice was self-evident. Second, there was the bigger, conceptual, difficulty. Personality theories, by definition, explain individual variation in attitudes and behaviours. As such, they are problematic as explanations of widespread and uniform prejudice. For example, in the 1990s there was clear prejudice in former Yugoslavia, evident in an extreme and brutal form, namely ethnic cleansing. Is one to conclude that a whole generation of people in this context were raised in the same way by authoritarian parents, and thus ended up all with the same prejudiced tendencies?

We can therefore question the specific Freudian basis for research on the authoritarian personality. But does this mean that people do not vary in the level of prejudice they are likely to express? Common observation would tell us that there is significant variation across different people in terms of how willing they are to express prejudiced views. If this is the case, then how can we explain these individual differences? An idea that has been the subject of much attention by social psychologists is that the extent to which people hold broad ideologies about the nature of society can predict differences in prejudice.

Social Dominance Orientation

Sidanius (1993) argued that people vary according to something called **social dominance orientation**. This is the idea that our societies are defined in part by implicit ideologies that either promote or attenuate intergroup status hierarchies, and that people can vary in the extent to which they either accept or reject these ideas that are ingrained

in society. According to Sidanius, people who are high in social dominance orientation favour intergroup hierarchies – this means that people who are in high- or low-status groups should favour the high-status group (i.e. it can explain both ingroup and outgroup favouritism). There is, for example, evidence that those high in social dominance orientation are more likely to support top dogs rather than the underdog in international sporting competitions such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup (Does & Mentovich, 2016). Empirical evidence is more supportive of social dominance orientation than it was for the authoritarian personality. Social dominance orientation has, for example, been found to predict sexism, nationalism and ethnic prejudice against a range of different minority groups and among samples from a range of countries, including the USA, Canada, Mexico, Israel, Taiwan, China and New Zealand. There is also evidence that people high in social dominance orientation support the suspension of civil liberties and are opposed to immigration and gay rights (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The effect of social dominance orientation on prejudice remains even after controlling for a wide range of other individual difference factors, including self-esteem, need for structure, neuroticism, psychoticism, traditionalism and several demographic factors.

Overall, then, there does seem to be something in the idea that the extent to which people endorse authoritarian beliefs, the extent to which they agree with prevailing status hierarchies, and a general tendency towards accepting the dominance of some groups over others, provide some basis for individual differences in the expression of prejudice. When we discussed aversive racism above, we noted how modern racism is defined by the internal struggle between the desire to conform to positive egalitarian norms and negative prejudiced attitudes. Social dominance orientation explains why we might observe individual differences in tendencies to express prejudiced attitudes, but what about the opposite perspective: do people differ in the extent to which they are motivated to go along with egalitarian social norms? Below we examine the psychological processes that can predict how some people come to question prejudiced attitudes, and modify their own behaviour accordingly.

Prejudice and Self-regulation

We discussed how people can be more or less sexist or racist in the earlier sections of this chapter, and it is evident from this research that people do vary from one another in terms of how racist or sexist they are. But since the end of the Second World War, there has been increasing opposition to the expression of such prejudiced attitudes (Condor, Figgou, Gibson, & Stevenson, 2006). Accordingly, there is evidence that people can develop a motivation to control prejudice (e.g. Fazio, 1990). When someone becomes aware that they may have acted in a prejudiced way, they may feel guilty about this because it violates other beliefs based on shared egalitarian values (see the discussion of aversive racism above). We know this kind of discrepancy between attitudes and behaviours can motivate people to change their attitudes (this is *cognitive dissonance*: see the discussion in Chapter 4). Devine and Monteith (1999) have suggested that a similar desire to deal with this dissonance in terms of prejudiced attitudes and behaviours can result in attitude change, and individuals ultimately becoming less prejudiced. They argue that people who detect such discrepancies

(and who are motivated to control their prejudices) then engage in a deliberate *self-regulation* process, to monitor and consistently inhibit prejudice-related thoughts (Devine & Monteith, 1999), replacing them with a low prejudiced response (Plant & Devine, 1998) until ultimately they no longer think prejudiced thoughts or behave in prejudiced ways. On an individual level, this idea that people can choose to self-regulate to avoid prejudiced thoughts shows us how people can become less prejudiced (Monteith, 1993). This theory describes how individuals, once they decide to become less biased, can achieve that goal.

Regulation of Prejudice through Socially Interactive Dialogue

Condor and colleagues (2006) have argued that societal regulation of prejudice does not just happen at an individual level, but is a dialogic process that involves two or more people. By carefully analysing dialogues taken from a number of data sources, including academic interviews and TV debates, Condor and colleagues found that people do not regulate prejudice in isolation. Instead, there are at least two types of *interactive* prejudice suppression. First, it emerged that in addition to denying their own prejudice, people often defend absent others who are being accused of prejudice. In one example, a woman argued that her mother was subject to prejudice because of her nationality, but her interaction partner argued that the woman might be being oversensitive, and that the supposed protagonist might not have even realized that the alleged victim belonged to a different national group. Second, the researchers found that we have a tendency to act on the behalf of other individuals present in order to ensure that they do not come across as prejudiced. For example, when an older man stated in an interview that ‘we already have enough low-life here without importing other peoples’, his wife quickly interrupted to say ‘He’s not xenophobic’ (Condor et al., 2006, p. 452). In another interview, an older woman was talking about her hip replacement operation and said of her doctor that he was ‘a big black man’, and her daughter exclaimed, ‘Oh Mum, you can’t say that!’ (p. 454). Condor and colleagues argue that while research typically focuses on strategies adopted by individual actors, these findings suggest that prejudice suppression may occur in a collaborative, interactive manner.

SUMMARY

In this section we asked whether prejudice on a societal level can be attributable to a small minority of prejudiced people in society. This was the idea that lay behind Adorno et al.’s idea of the *authoritarian personality*. Research suggests, however, that while some people are clearly more prejudiced than others, this cannot explain widespread societal prejudice. On the other hand, understanding individual differences in ideologies such as *social dominance orientation* can help us to understand when and why people support unfair and biased social hierarchies. Furthermore, differences in individuals’ ability and motivation to *self-regulate* prejudiced thoughts and feelings can help us to understand when and why some people are likely to display egalitarian behaviours.

REDUCING PREJUDICE

The Contact Hypothesis

According to the **contact hypothesis**, contact between members of different social groups, under appropriate conditions, can lead to reductions in intergroup bias. Allport (1954) argued that a number of conditions were necessary for contact to be successful at reducing intergroup bias. First, social norms favouring equality must be in place. In other words, the social conditions (government policy, schools and laws) should all promote integration. We can make a link here with cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) which we discussed in Chapter 4 on attitudes. When attitudes are not in line with behaviour, this causes an unpleasant internal state. People are motivated to avoid this dissonance, so they change their attitudes to be in line with behaviour. It follows that laws which prevent discriminatory behaviour can therefore eventually lead to changes in attitudes. Second, contact must occur under conditions of equal social status. If the minority group has contact with the majority group as a subordinate, then this is likely to perpetuate negative stereotypes of inferiority. Third, contact must involve cooperation to achieve a common goal. Sherif (1966) showed that cooperation and common goals were necessary for reductions in bias. However, Blanchard, Adelman, and Cook (1975) found that cooperation worked best when the outcome of the superordinate goal is successful.

Intergroup contact is now one of the most widely used psychological interventions for the reduction of prejudice and the improvement of intergroup relations (Oskamp & Jones, 2000). But despite its successes, the contact hypothesis has often been subject to two major criticisms, although both of these have now been addressed in contemporary research. The first criticism was that the contact hypothesis failed to specify how the effects of contact would generalize beyond the immediate situation to other situations and from the individuals involved in the contact to the entire outgroup. For instance, if a white person and a black person have a friendly, positive interaction with one another, although they will likely develop a positive opinion of one another, how can we be sure that (1) they would be nice to members of the other ethnic group in other situations, and (2) they would have a more positive attitude towards the other ethnic group *in general*? Contact may also lead to the *subtyping* of individuals involved in the contact away from the group representation. The white person in the previous example may, for example, decide that although they like the black person they met, this person is unusual, an ‘exception to the rule’, and therefore cannot be considered representative of black people in general. As a consequence, category-based prejudice would remain.

Hewstone and Brown (1986) have argued, however, that contact can generalize to the outgroup as a whole when the ingroup and outgroup members taking part in the contact encounter are regarded as sufficiently typical or representative of their groups, and so cannot be subtyped away from the group so easily (Wilder, 1984). They argued that, for this to happen, group memberships must be psychologically salient during contact (Johnston & Hewstone, 1992). In other words, group members must be aware of their respective group memberships during the interaction. This fits in with the ‘multicultural perspective’: the idea that ‘colour-blind’ policies (ignoring group membership) are not effective and that group differences need to be embraced and seen in a positive light.



Photo 8.2 Cross-group friendships predict lower levels of prejudice

The second criticism of the contact hypothesis was that it became overly complex, as a result of researchers specifying many conditions that need to be met for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice. It was, for example, suggested that for contact to be effective at reducing prejudice, initial intergroup attitudes should be favourable, there should be a common language, a prosperous economy, and the contact should be voluntary rather than forced (Wagner & Machleit, 1986), to name but a few such conditions. The theory became essentially unfalsifiable, as few contact situations would meet all the conditions specified (Hewstone, 1996). However, a number of theorists now

argue that none of the proposed conditions are *essential*; instead, they *facilitate* the effect of intergroup contact in reducing prejudice (e.g. Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Supporting this argument, in a meta-analysis of 515 contact studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that although contact which met Allport's original conditions led to the greatest reductions in prejudice, prejudice reduction still occurred in their absence.

Contemporary research on intergroup contact has moved on to consider whether certain types of contact, such as *cross-group friendship*, are particularly effective at reducing prejudice. This is the idea that people who have friends in an outgroup are likely to hold more positive attitudes towards that outgroup in general, and it has received considerable support. In a survey of 3,800 participants from all over Europe, Pettigrew (1997) found that the more friends from minority groups participants had, the less prejudice they showed and the more sympathy and admiration they had for those groups. The relationships between both neighbourhood and co-worker contact and lower prejudice were considerably weaker. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis also supported the idea that friendship is a particularly effective form of contact. They found that studies where intergroup friendship was used as the measure of contact had a markedly stronger effect on prejudice than those that did not.

So how exactly does cross-group friendship lead to more positive intergroup attitudes? Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, and Voci (2004) asked Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland to fill out a questionnaire about their experiences with, and attitudes towards, the other community (i.e. Catholics answered questions about Protestants, and Protestants answered questions about Catholics). The researchers found a positive relationship between cross-group friendship and two outcomes, outgroup attitude and perceived outgroup variability (the latter being the extent to which the outgroup is seen as including many different types of people, rather than being seen as all the same as one another – see Chapter 3). But these relationships operated via an underlying mediating mechanism, *intergroup anxiety*, which is the negative arousal experienced at the prospect of contact by individuals who have little experience with the outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). It emerged that the more friends participants had in the other community, the less anxious they were about interacting with

members of that community. In turn, participants with lower levels of anxiety tended to have more positive outgroup attitudes and were more likely to perceive variability among the outgroup (see Figure 8.1).

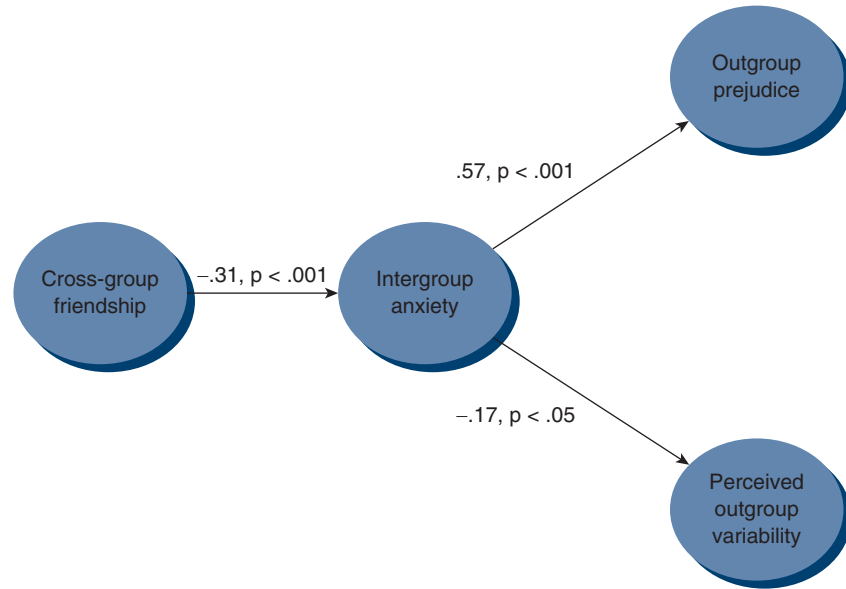


Figure 8.1 Path model of the relationship between cross-group friendship, outgroup attitude and outgroup variability among Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, showing mediation via reduced intergroup anxiety. Data from Paolini et al. (2004)

Other research has shown that *self-disclosure*, the sharing of personal information between two people, can explain why people who have cross-group friends are less prejudiced. Turner et al. (2007b) investigated cross-group friendship between the South Asian and white communities in the UK and found that the more outgroup friends participants had, the more they engaged in self-disclosure with outgroup members. Moreover, the more participants engaged in this self-disclosure, the more likely they were to have a positive attitude towards the outgroup in general. Self-disclosure seems to be associated with more positive outgroup attitudes for two reasons. First, it leads to empathy towards outgroup members, and, second, it helps to generate mutual trust.

Research on the consequences of intergroup contact continues to flourish, demonstrating a broad range of benefits. There is, for example, evidence that cross-group friendships promote academic performance and psychological well-being among children (e.g. Bagci, Kumashiro, Rutland, Smith, & Blumberg, 2017). In Insight 8.3, you can also read about research which shows how intergroup contact influenced voting behaviour in Britain's 2016 referendum to leave the European Union. Researchers are also now beginning to focus on what factors increase the likelihood of positive intergroup contact occurring in the first place (see Turner & Cameron, 2016, for a review).

DID VOTERS' ANTI-IMMIGRANT PREJUDICE AND EXPERIENCE OF INTERGROUP CONTACT WITH IMMIGRANTS PLAY A ROLE IN BREXIT?

On 23 June 2016, the UK government held a national referendum in which British citizens had the opportunity to decide whether the country should remain in or leave the European Union (EU). Prior to the vote, extensive national campaigns were undertaken by politicians wanting to remain in the EU, and those keen to leave, in an attempt to persuade the electorate. Although a range of arguments were used by the two camps, one of the main arguments made by the Leave Campaign was that the EU policy of free movement, allowing EU citizens to live, work and study within any other member state, had resulted in unsustainably high levels of immigration, which leaving the EU would help to resolve. As a result, the Leave Campaign was accused of being divisive and xenophobic, stirring up negative feelings towards immigrants (Cowburn, 2016). Following the campaign, in what was seen as a shock result, the majority (51.9 per cent) voted for 'Brexit' – for Britain to leave the EU. Given the anti-immigration focus of the Leave Campaign, Meleady, Seger, and Vermue (2017) undertook a survey a week before the referendum to examine whether intergroup contact with immigrants and anti-immigrant prejudice would influence voter behaviour.

Method

Four hundred and seventeen British adult participants, who had indicated that they were registered to vote and were planning to vote in the forthcoming referendum, completed an online survey on 14 or 15 June 2016. Participants answered questions about how frequently they had positive and negative contact with EU immigrants on a seven-point scale (1 = never, 7 = extremely frequently), their level of prejudice towards EU immigrants (measured on a 0–100 scale, with 100 indicating high levels of prejudice), and their voting intentions, on a five-point scale (1 = definitely Remain, 2 = leaning towards Remain, 3 = undecided, 4 = leaning towards Leave, and 5 = definitely Leave). Participants also provided demographic information, including their age, education, political orientation and gender.

Results

Participants reported engaging more frequently in positive contact with EU immigrants than in negative contact. Analyses were then undertaken to examine the extent to which prejudice and intergroup contact predicted voting intentions over and above demographic variables of age, education, gender and political orientation. Individuals reporting greater

prejudice towards EU immigrants were more inclined to vote Leave. Moreover, while positive contact with EU immigrants predicted a stronger intention to vote Remain, negative contact was associated with a stronger intention to vote Leave. Finally, analyses revealed that the effect of positive and negative contact on voting intentions was mediated by prejudice. That is, positive contact predicted intention to Remain via lower levels of anti-immigrant prejudice, whereas negative contact predicted intention to Leave via high levels of anti-immigrant prejudice.

Interpreting the Findings

These findings highlight the powerful impact that intergroup contact can have, not only influencing levels of prejudice, but also voting behaviours that have the potential to change the direction of an entire nation. It is important to acknowledge two limitations of this research. First, the dependent measure used here was *intended* voting behaviour, and so we cannot be certain how participants in this study actually went on to vote. Second, because the data is *cross-sectional*, with all measures taken at a single time point, we cannot draw any further conclusions about causality. For example, an alternative interpretation of the data is that anti-EU immigrant prejudice may have resulted in people avoiding positive contact or choosing to behave negatively during negative contact. Despite these limitations, the findings from this research provide an interesting insight into the role of intergroup contact and prejudice in explaining how people vote.



Indirect Contact

Despite the benefits of cross-group friendship as a means of reducing prejudice, it has one inevitable limitation: it can only be used as an intervention to reduce prejudice when group members have the *opportunity* for contact in the first place. That is, unless an individual lives in the same community, attends the same school or works in the same place as outgroup members, they will not be able to form friendships with them. As a result, cross-group friendship may not be useful in segregated settings. Fortunately, recent research on *indirect contact* may provide a solution to this dilemma. Two types of indirect contact which have been investigated are: *extended contact* and *imagined contact*.



Photo 8.3 Encouraging intergroup contact in education may be an effective way to reduce prejudice in society

Wright et al. (1997) showed that *just the knowledge* that other people in your group have friends in the outgroup can reduce intergroup bias, a phenomenon referred to as **extended contact**. In the first phase of an experiment designed to illustrate this effect, participants were divided into two small groups (formed ostensibly on a random basis). Ingroup solidarity was created by having group members work together on a series of cooperative tasks designed to create ingroup familiarity and liking. In the second phase of the experiment, intergroup rivalry was generated by having the two groups compete against one another on a series of tasks. To enhance intergroup conflict, each team was given a negative evaluation from the opposing group following each task. In the third phase of the experiment, one participant from each group was randomly chosen to take part in what they were led to believe was a different study. The chosen participants together completed a closeness-building task (Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997) that had previously been shown to create high levels of interpersonal closeness among pairs of strangers in a short period of time. Finally, these two participants returned to their previous groups and were asked to discuss the experience with the rest of the group, in order to ‘bring everyone up to date’.

At each stage of the experiment, participants were asked to divide \$500 between the two teams. The findings revealed that participants showed intergroup bias (allocating more money to the ingroup than the outgroup) after phase 1; that is, following categorization but before the introduction of intergroup competition. Intergroup bias was even greater following the introduction of competition in phase 2. However, after learning about the positive intergroup contact experience of one group member in the final phase of the experiment, even participants not directly involved in the closeness-building task showed a reduction in intergroup bias (see Insight 7.2 in Chapter 7 for more details about Wright and colleagues’ research).

Extended contact has been successfully applied with children in educational contexts. Cameron and Rutland (2006) asked non-disabled children aged between 5 and 10 years to take part in a six-week intervention study which involved their being read weekly stories featuring disabled and non-disabled children in friendship contexts. Participants were assigned to one of three conditions: an extended intergroup condition, in which the stories emphasized the group memberships of the characters and highlighted their typicality as group members; a depersonalized condition in which stories emphasized individual characteristics of the protagonists; and a neutral condition in which neither group membership nor personal characteristics were highlighted. Attitudes towards the disabled became more positive after the intervention, but only in the intergroup extended contact condition (see Figure 8.2). This finding is important because it illustrates that the group membership of those involved in extended contact should remain salient if the interventions are to lead to more positive attitudes towards the outgroup in general (consistent with Hewstone & Brown’s (1986) *mutual intergroup differentiation model*). In Insight 8.4, we talk about another innovative way in which extended contact has been used to reduce prejudice among children – using the Harry Potter book series.

Extended contact, like cross-group friendship, improves outgroup attitudes by reducing intergroup anxiety (Paolini et al., 2004; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). The more ingroup members that participants know have outgroup friends, the less anxious they are at the prospect of interacting with outgroup members themselves, and, in turn, the more positive their outgroup attitudes become. This is because observing a positive relationship between members of the ingroup and outgroup is likely to reduce negative expectations about

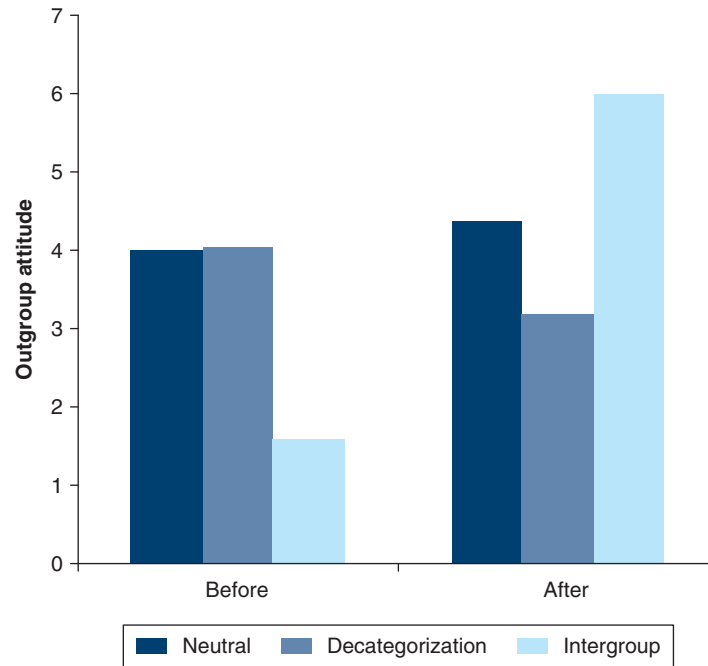


Figure 8.2 The effect of extended contact stories involving disabled and non-disabled children on attitudes toward the disabled among primary school children. Data from Cameron and Rutland (2006)

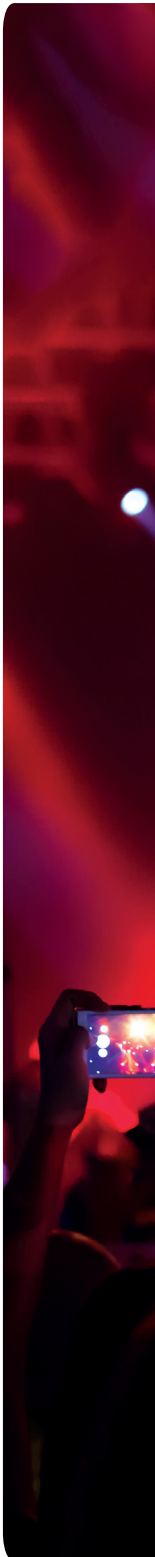
future interactions with the outgroup. Extended cross-group friendship may be especially useful in situations where there is less opportunity for contact, as an individual does not need *personally to know* an outgroup member in order to benefit from it (Turner et al., 2008).

REDUCING PREJUDICE WITH THE MAGIC OF HARRY POTTER

The Harry Potter series of novels for children, by J. K. Rowling, is the best-selling book series of all time. It has been translated into 79 languages and sold approximately 450 million copies worldwide (JKRowling.com, 2017). The books follow the school days of a child wizard, and while many themes, topics and storylines are covered, intergroup relations play a significant role. In particular, people without magical powers ('muggles'), people with only one parent with magical powers ('half-bloods'), and elves (slaves of wizards), among others, are stigmatized by those with magical powers. Harry Potter, however, has close friendships

(Continued)

INSIGHT 8.4



with individuals from these stigmatized groups. Given the themes and relationships in the Harry Potter series, and given that children identify with Harry Potter, despite his being a fictional character, Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, and Trifiletti (2015) decided to test the idea that this might form an effective means of providing *extended contact*. Specifically, they argued that learning about fictional friendships between stigmatized group members and an individual with whom children might feel an affiliation (Harry Potter) might result in more positive perceptions of stigmatized groups in society.

Method

Thirty-four Italian elementary school children undertook a questionnaire assessing their attitude towards immigrants. They were then divided into small groups of five to six children, and were read passages from the novels of Harry Potter for six consecutive weeks. Half of the children (intervention condition) were read passages related to the theme of prejudice (e.g. a negative character, Draco Malfoy, insulting one of Harry's best friends, Hermione Granger, for being a half-blood, and Harry's angry reaction to this) while the other half (control condition) read passages unrelated to prejudice (e.g. Harry buying his first wand). After these passages were read, the researcher had a discussion with the children about the topics discussed. Finally, one week after the final reading session, children indicated their attitudes towards immigrants (e.g. agreement with the statement 'It would be great if there were more children from other countries in my school') and their identification with Harry Potter (e.g. agreement with the statement 'I'd like to be more like Harry').

Results

Controlling for prior attitudes towards immigrants, gender and previous experience with Harry Potter books and films, children in the intervention condition, who had read Harry Potter passages related to prejudice, held more positive attitudes towards immigrants than children in the control condition. However, this effect only emerged for children who identified with the character of Harry Potter.

Interpreting the Findings

These findings support the idea that aspects of the Harry Potter books related to intergroup contact and prejudice can be used to promote more positive perceptions of immigrants. This is important because children read these books in such huge numbers. If children can be encouraged to reflect on the issues raised around forming intergroup relationships, around fighting against stigmatization and injustice, this has the potential to improve intergroup relations – even when the intergroup relations involve fictional groupings. However, the findings also highlight that this will *only* work when the reader identifies with the character in the book; that is, this individual is perceived as likeable, and someone whom the reader would like to be like themselves.

But what about *very* highly segregated settings, where people may not know *anyone* who has outgroup friends? In this situation, even extended contact may run into problems. A second type of indirect contact, however, does not suffer from this limitation. **Imagined contact** is the mental simulation of a social interaction with a member or members of an outgroup (Crisp & Turner, 2009). The basic idea is that mentally simulating a positive contact experience activates concepts normally associated with successful interactions with members of other groups. These can include feeling more comfortable and less apprehensive about the prospect of future contact with the group, and this reduced anxiety should reduce negative outgroup attitudes. Imagery works because it increases the accessibility of thoughts and feelings that are typically associated with the social situation at hand. Imagining being in a crowd, for example, has been shown to activate feelings of being ‘lost in a crowd’ and ‘unaccountable’, feelings which are associated with less helping behaviour in real situations (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, & Darley, 2002). Similarly, when people imagine intergroup contact, they should engage in conscious processes that parallel the processes involved in actual intergroup contact. They may, for example, actively think about what they would learn about the outgroup member, how they would feel during the interaction, and how this would influence their perceptions of that outgroup member and the outgroup more generally. In turn, this should lead to more positive evaluations of the outgroup, similar to the effects of face-to-face contact. To test this idea, Turner et al. (2007a) asked young participants to spend a minute imagining a positive interaction with an older stranger. Participants in a control condition were asked to imagine an outdoor scene instead. After writing down what they had imagined, participants were told about a future study in which they would be asked to interact with either an older person or a young person, and were asked to indicate how keen they would be to take part in these two interactions. While participants in the control condition were biased in favour of young people, preferring to interact with a young person rather than an older person, those who had previously imagined interacting with an older person were equally happy to interact with an older person or a young person. Imagining intergroup contact was therefore effective at reducing intergroup bias (see Figure 8.3). Imagined contact has subsequently been shown to improve attitudes towards a variety of target groups, including gay men (Turner et al., 2007a), Muslims (Turner & Crisp, 2009), indigenous people in Mexico (an ethnic minority compared with the majority Mestizo group: Stathi & Crisp, 2008), and people with schizophrenia (West, Turner, & Levita, 2015). It has even been shown to influence subsequent intergroup contact. In this last study, when anticipating a face-to-face encounter with an individual with schizophrenia, participants who had previously imagined contact were less anxious – they showed less of an increase in heart rate and they sweated less – and they went on to have a more positive interaction with a confederate whom they believed to have schizophrenia.

So how do direct and indirect forms of contact compare with one another? On the one hand, indirect forms of contact are more versatile because they are not reliant on opportunity for contact, which means they can be used to improve attitudes even in segregated settings (e.g. Turner et al., 2007b, 2008). On the other hand, attitudes based on direct experience are thought to be longer lasting and more powerful than attitudes based on indirect experiences (Fazio, Powell, & Herr, 1983; Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991). Research comparing actual and extended contact, for example, typically shows actual contact to have the stronger impact on prejudice (Paolini et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2007b).

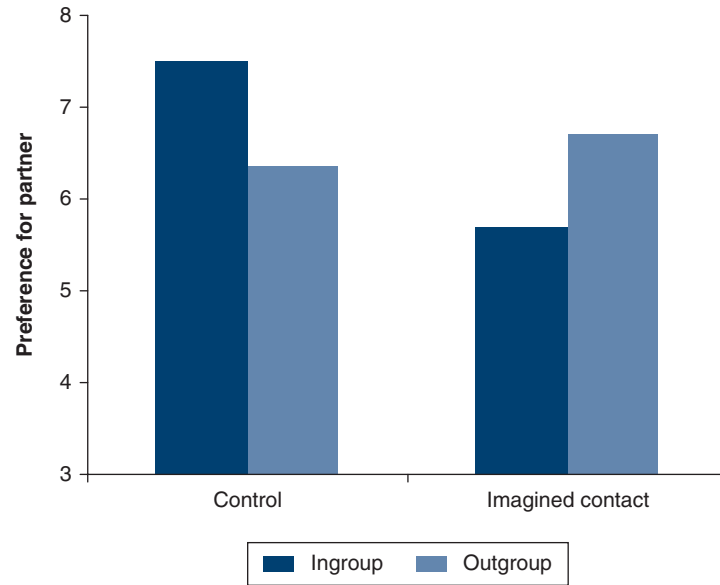


Figure 8.3 The effect of imagined contact on intergroup bias against older people. Data from Turner et al. (2007a)

Crisp and Turner (2009) have proposed an integrative model that incorporates these different types of contact, arguing that imagined, extended and actual contact form a *continuum of contact* interventions, with each recommended depending on how much opportunity for contact there is in a particular context (see Figure 8.4). In situations where there is high segregation and little opportunity for contact, imagined contact may be the only viable intervention to help encourage attitude change and intentions to engage in preliminary contact, or to ensure that when that contact does occur, it does so with open minds and an increased chance of success. When boundaries have begun to permeate, and there are some positive interactions initiated between members of different groups, extended contact will work well to reinforce the impact of isolated contact encounters. Increasing extended contact may lead to the development of friendship networks which include people from different social groups. This may then lead to a cascade of positive direct interactions, with further benefits for intergroup relations.



Figure 8.4 A continuum of contact interventions (Crisp & Turner, 2009)

Finally, contact theory, including the imagined contact approach, has been employed as a way of reducing *stereotype threat* (see Chapter 3). Based on the idea that contact should reduce the salience and perceived importance of differences between the groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), it follows that it could also reduce the salience of stereotypes associated with those category differences, and which form the basis of the performance impairments observed in stereotype threat. To test this idea, Abrams et al. (2008) assigned older adults to complete a maths test under either a stereotype threat or no-threat condition. In the threat condition, participants were informed beforehand that the purpose of the test was to see whether, as expected, older adults perform worse on intellectual tasks than younger adults. In the no-threat condition, participants were simply told that the task was to see how different people perform on intellectual tasks. After completing the test, participants indicated the amount and quality of contact they had with their grandchildren. Participants experienced higher levels of anxiety and poorer task performance in the maths test but *only* if they had lower levels of positive contact with their grandchildren. For those who had higher levels of positive contact with their grandchildren, no stereotype threat effect emerged. In a further study, Abrams and colleagues found that even simply imagining contact with a young person (e.g. Crisp & Turner, 2012) reduced stereotype threat among older adults.

SUMMARY

In this section, we talked about intergroup contact as a means of prejudice reduction. According to *the contact hypothesis*, contact between members of different social groups can lead to reductions in intergroup bias, but only if there are *social norms* favouring equality, if the groups are of *equal social status*, and if group members *cooperate* to achieve common goals. Although the contact hypothesis has been criticized for failing to specify how the positive effects of contact *generalize* from individual outgroup members to the entire outgroup, and for being overly complex, recent reformulations of the theory have helped deal with these criticisms. More recently, research has suggested that friendship contact is most likely to reduce prejudice towards other groups, but only in settings where there is the opportunity for contact. On the other hand, indirect forms of contact, such as *extended contact* and *imagined contact*, can be useful even in segregated settings. Actual and imagined forms of contact have even been found to be useful in reducing the negative impacts of *stereotype threat*.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter we have discussed the psychological processes that can help us to explain prejudice, discrimination and social conflict. First, we saw how pervasive kinds of prejudice in the form of racism and sexism have evolved to take account of the development of egalitarian social norms. *Aversive racism* and *ambivalent sexism* are characterized by

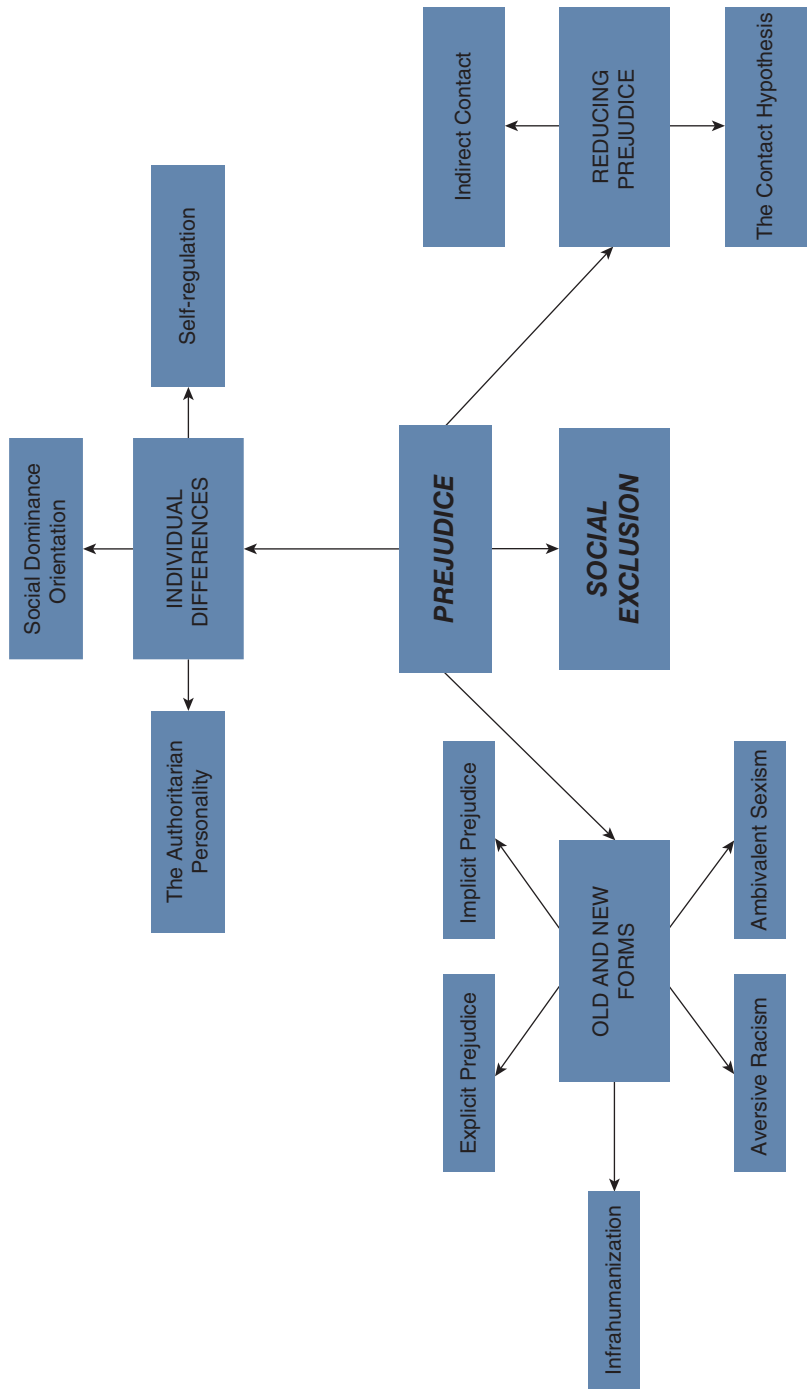


Figure 8.5 Memory map

people holding conflicting positive and negative views about groups at the same time. Prejudice can also be explicit or implicit in nature. Although there is not much evidence that individual differences in authoritarianism can explain prejudice, differences in the degree to which individuals have a *social dominance orientation* appear to have a role in explaining why some people are more biased than others. Modern forms of prejudice are characterized by a desire to be egalitarian but with implicit negative attitudes, and individuals can become more egalitarian via a process of *self-regulation*, both through internal regulation and via interactive dialogue with others. On the basis of this knowledge about the nature of prejudice, psychologists have sought to develop ways of reducing intergroup bias and encouraging more egalitarianism. *Intergroup contact* works by getting members of ingroups and outgroups together under conditions that favour positive outcomes (e.g. cooperative goals). *Cross-group friendship* is a particularly effective form of contact, although it is only useful in settings where there is the opportunity for contact, for example in multicultural communities. Indirect forms of contact, such as *extended contact* and *imagined contact*, can be utilized in settings where there are higher levels of segregation in order to reduce prejudice.

TAKING IT FURTHER

TRY THIS

Several different interventions have been devised by social psychologists to reduce prejudice. In this chapter, we discussed contact-based interventions, which have been developed on the premise that people are prejudiced in part because of lack of experience with other groups. However, research findings suggest that personality also plays a role in explaining prejudice. Try devising an intervention strategy to reduce prejudice in an educational setting, based on what you have learnt about the psychological bases of prejudice in this chapter. Use a form or forms of contact in your intervention, but make sure your intervention takes personality factors into account (for instance, will your form of contact work as well for people with high as with low social dominance orientation, and, if not, what could you do to compensate?).

DEBATE THIS

Although the expression of prejudice has become less socially acceptable over time, there is nonetheless evidence that different forms of prejudice, including sexism, racism and homophobia, still exist. Will society ever be completely rid of prejudice? Or is prejudice a 'normal' aspect of society that we can try to reduce, but that we will never be able to eliminate? Based on what we know about prejudice and prejudice reduction, what are our best hopes of eliminating prejudice?

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

We have been focused in much of this chapter on reducing prejudice via contact, but in essence what we are talking about is attitude change. Contact is therefore a distinct way of persuading someone to change their negative attitude towards a certain group into a positive one. But if you think back, every single chapter so far has something to contribute to our understanding of attitude change. Come up with a mental map that links prejudice to one concept, phenomenon or theory from each chapter that we have covered so far, and say why the link is there. This could be to do with majority influence (societal changes in explicit prejudice), cognitive dissonance (if anti-racist laws make egalitarian behaviour more likely, this will lead to internal attitude change) or even leadership (e.g., former US President Barack Obama represented an inherently non-racist choice by American society). Compare your mental map with others in your class – you'll be surprised at how many different links you can make between all of the topics and issues we've covered so far in the book (and we're only halfway through!).

FURTHER READING

THE ESSENTIALS

Hewstone, M., Rubin, M., & Willis, H. (2002). Intergroup bias. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *53*, 575–604.

This classic review article will give you an inclusive overview of the different forms of intergroup bias, their causes and their consequences.

NEXT STEPS

Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions? Reducing prejudice through simulated social contact. *American Psychologist*, *64*, 231–240.

Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., Voci, A., Paolini, S., & Christ, O. (2007). Reducing prejudice via direct and extended cross-group friendship. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *18*, 212–255.

These two articles focus on the different types of intergroup contact discussed in this chapter (direct, extended and imagined contact), explaining how they reduce prejudice and when they are most effective at doing so.

DELVING DEEPER

Brown, R. J. (2010). *Prejudice: Its social psychology* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

This comprehensive book is written by one of the leaders in the field. It will give you an exhaustive account of the key areas of research on prejudice.

Still want more? For links to online resources relevant to this chapter and a quiz to test your understanding, visit the companion website at <https://study.sagepub.com/crispandturner4e>

