

An analogy from clinical practice may be instructive. Several decades of psychotherapy research has concluded the same results: The precise content or type of therapeutic intervention does not predict outcome. It does not matter whether someone is a therapist from this school of thinking or that, or practices this type of intervention or that. A client's improvement is typically related to the quality of the relationship between the therapist and the client, or what is referred to as the "therapeutic alliance." Although not wishing to dilute the importance of sociopolitical reflections on the question of "How can we get along globally?" nurturing moral identity and the question of "How shall I live?" may best be served by reflecting again on the prototype of nurturance, the parent-child relationship.

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## Chapter 5

# Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination

## *The Effect of Group-based Expectations on Moral Functioning*

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American citizens are extremely fortunate to live in a democracy, and more specifically, a society that upholds egalitarian and meritocratic ideals. Americans have fought wars and faced internal struggles in order to establish this system and champion these values. Within the past two centuries, this nation has abolished slavery, given women the right to vote, and desegregated schools. In more recent years, the movement toward equal opportunity has been advanced even further; public and private schools have increased financial support for economically disadvantaged scholars, and affirmative action programs have been developed as yet another means of combating inequities. It would seem that as a society, the United States is moving toward the moral ideal of equality for one and all.

Yet disparities remain. Race continues to be inextricably linked to socioeconomic status and education level, with certain racial and ethnic groups such as White and Asian Americans reaping more societal advantages on average than others, including African Americans and Latinos. Women remain underrepresented in many prestigious and lucrative fields, such as engineering and business, despite seemingly equal

access to opportunity. Additionally, a significant wage gap continues to exist between such historically disadvantaged groups and more privileged groups, even when controlling for differences in education and experience. Although this country is moving in the right direction, it is clear that the nation still has far to go to fulfill its moral ideals.

Perhaps not surprisingly, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination play an important role in maintaining these inequalities. This chapter outlines how stereotypes can impede people's better intentions and lead to inaccurate assumptions, perceptions, and judgments. It examines how and when children develop prejudice and the different forms that prejudice can take later in life. The chapter also touches on discrimination faced by women and minorities in schools and in the workplace and concludes with suggestions for how stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination might be overcome.

The terms *stereotypes*, *prejudice*, and *discrimination* are generally used by social psychologists to refer to cognitive, affective, and behavioral biases, respectively. *Stereotypes* can be defined as an overgeneralized belief about a group of people, such as "African Americans are athletic" or "Asian Americans are smart." Stereotypes can be negative, positive, or fairly neutral statements about members of social category groups such as gender, race, or age.

*Prejudice*, on the other hand, is the expression or experience of a negative attitude or feeling toward another person or group based on a group-based characteristic. For example, statements such as: "I hate Jews" or "Homosexuals disgust me" are expressions of prejudice. Similar to stereotypes, prejudice can develop at a very early age, especially for children who are surrounded by friends and family members who express such negative beliefs.

Finally, *discrimination*, the behavioral component of bias, occurs when a person acts differently toward a person of a given group based on stereotypes or prejudice. Discrimination generally results in the denial of opportunities or resources to members of stigmatized groups. For example, choosing to promote a less qualified man over a woman would be a blatant instance of discrimination. However, discrimination often takes a more subtle form.

Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination can all serve to undermine the moral functioning of our meritocracy when individual efforts are often overshadowed by inaccurate perceptions and unfair expectations. In our effort to stay true to the ideals of our system, it is of paramount importance that we work to overcome the obstacles that group-based biases impose.

## Stereotypes

Stereotypes, or overgeneralized beliefs about the people in our social world, begin to form at a very early age. Many of children's first stereotypes are based on gender because gender is one of the first dimensions along which children are able to categorize the people they encounter. Between about ages 3 to 6 years, children are not only able to identify culturally based gender stereotypes, but they also endorse them quite readily. This is one particularly important aspect of children's early development of stereotypes: Unlike adults, who often view stereotypes as more *descriptive* of society, very young children view stereotypes as socially *prescriptive*. Essentially, preschool-aged children often believe that stereotypes explain not just the way the world *is* but also the way the world *should be*. And children use their stereotype knowledge to help dictate how they should behave. Accordingly, children generally show a preference for stereotypically gender-appropriate toys by 3 years of age and express a preference for stereotypically gender-consistent occupations by 5 years of age (Golombok & Fivush, 1994).

Slightly later in early childhood, children begin to categorize and form generalized beliefs based on race or ethnicity. Several different studies have shown that by the time they are 5 years old, most White American children attribute more positive characteristics to members of their own racial group and more negative characteristics to African Americans. Unfortunately, research has also shown that children's early awareness of racial stereotypes makes them susceptible to the same memory and inferential biases that adults encounter.

Although stereotypes were initially believed to reflect faulty mental processing, social psychologists have recently argued that stereotypes are actually necessary and quite normal for cognitive functioning. Stereotypes have come to be conceptualized as cognitive schemata that automatically provide us with expectations about new people and situations we encounter. The automatic nature of stereotyping has been revealed by work that has shown that simply reminding people of the category label "Black" can lead to quicker associations with words that describe commonly held stereotypes of Blacks.

Therefore, stereotypes can be seen as readily accessible associations between traits and a category group that have been built up over time through experience and exposure to culture. These associations can serve as "shortcuts" that help people to quickly know what to expect and how to act in a constantly changing world. When meeting an unfamiliar person, generalized beliefs based on the person's appearance, clothing, gender,

ethnicity, and age can help ensure that the interaction runs smoothly. For example, if the person is elderly, it might be appropriate to speak more loudly, or if the person is from a foreign country, it might make sense to speak more slowly. The decision to act differently toward these individuals often occurs automatically and may be based entirely on stereotypes such as "elderly people are hard of hearing" or "foreigners have trouble understanding English".

Yet when applying group-based beliefs in interactions with individuals, we are bound to make mistakes: *All* elderly people do not have trouble hearing, and *all* foreigners do not have difficulty understanding English. Nevertheless, these heuristics often serve to guide our behaviors and sometimes lead us to make errors in judgment that are costly for individuals we encounter. For example, several studies have demonstrated how stereotypes can affect people's perceptions of others, their memories of events, and even their interpretations of ambiguous actions. In an often-cited study from the 1940s, one study participant was shown a picture of a well-dressed Black man on a subway train in conversation with a White man who was holding a razor blade (Allport & Postman, 1947). This participant was asked to describe the picture to another participant, who was then asked to describe it to another, and so on. Only the first participant had actually seen the picture. The researchers were interested in seeing whether the description would get distorted in line with societal stereotypes through this "broken telephone" type of game. By the time the description reached the sixth participant, the story had often changed in such a way that the razor was in the Black man's hand, consistent with the negative stereotype that depicts Black men as aggressive. This is one example of the ways that stereotypes can subtly—but powerfully—affect people's memories in a way that distorts reality and supports false beliefs.

In a more recent study, White American participants saw two men (one Black and one White) engaged in a disagreement that concluded with one person shoving the other (Duncan, 1976). Findings revealed that the shove was later described as more violent when the perpetrator was Black than when he was White. A conceptual replication of this study with children found similar effects (Sagar & Schofield, 1980). White sixth graders were presented with four stories depicting ambiguously violent acts. The picture accompanying each story presented the perpetrator of the ambiguous act as being either an African American or a White child. Consistent with societal stereotypes and with the previous findings with adults, children rated the acts as being more mean and threatening when an African American child performed them than when they were performed by a White child. This is not to say that the distortion of memories or the

misinterpretation of behaviors will always occur; however, an important step in combating the effects of stereotypes is to identify these potential biases.

Even White American children have demonstrated memory biases consistent with stereotypes about African Americans. In one study, 4- to 9-year-old White American children who had little exposure to African Americans were presented with a series of stories that depicted both an African American and a White American child (Bigler & Liben, 1993). In some of the stories, either the White American (counterstereotypic) or the African American (stereotypic) child behaved in a manner consistent with negative stereotypes about African Americans. The goal of this study was to determine whether children's memories would be distorted in such a way that they would remember the counterstereotypic stories in a stereotypic manner.

When children were later questioned about which character behaved poorly, they often distorted their memories, believing that it was the African American who behaved in a negatively stereotypic manner even when it was actually the White American child who had behaved in that way. Thus, these children changed their memories of the story to fit their stereotypes.

### *Stereotypes as Self-fulfilling Prophecies*

Given the research described, it is perhaps not surprising that stereotypes can also serve as self-fulfilling prophecies. A self-fulfilling prophecy is said to occur when "an initially erroneous social belief leads to its own fulfillment" (Jussim & Fleming, 1996, p. 161). In one classic study, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) demonstrated just how these types of self-fulfilling prophecies could occur. After testing children in a variety of classes at the start of the school year, teachers were informed that a handful of students in their classes were "late bloomers." That is, the academic performance of these students was expected to improve dramatically throughout the year. Sure enough, when these "late bloomers" were tested at the end of the school year, their performance had improved more dramatically than that of other students, just as the researchers had predicted. It seemed as though the researchers had an accurate test to predict "late bloomers"—or did they? In reality, these "late bloomers" had not been identified based on test scores; instead, they had been randomly chosen. By identifying these students as having potential, the researchers induced positive expectations in the teachers; in the end, the students met these expectations. In short, the fact that these students had actually bloomed simply reflected a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Similar effects have been found in more controlled experimental settings (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). In one study, researchers asked White participants to interview one White and one Black high school student who had been trained to act comparably as job applicants. The researchers found that White participants were much more nonverbally negative toward the Black applicant than the White applicant despite the fact that the students had been trained to respond and behave comparably. Specifically, White interviewers sat farther away, had more speech errors, and spent less time with Black interviewees than with White ones. This demonstrated the interviewers' biases, but could this lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy?

This question was addressed in a second study in which interviewers were trained to nonverbally behave toward interviewees either as the White or Black applicant had previously been treated. Only White applicants were interviewed, and they were either treated more positively (as the White applicant had been) or more negatively (as the Black applicant had been). Consistent with self-fulfilling prophecies, participants treated more coldly subsequently interviewed more poorly. This helps to explain how stereotypes can allow White candidates to appear more qualified than Black candidates during job interviews—through the operation of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Researchers have since demonstrated that stereotypes based on gender, race, socioeconomic status, and even physical attractiveness can induce intrapersonal expectations in much the same way. For example, researchers have found that Korean immigrants in Japan, who are negatively stereotyped by the Japanese, score significantly lower on tests of intelligence than Korean immigrants in the United States, who are positively academically stereotyped as Asian Americans (Bruner, 1996). Such a finding could reflect a self-fulfilling prophecy or it could be the result of a process termed *stereotype threat*.

### *Stereotype Threat*

As already discussed, with self-fulfilling prophecies, perceivers treat targets differently based on a group-based expectation, which can lead targets to confirm the stereotype. Stereotype threat, on the other hand, can occur entirely in the mind of the target. Stereotype threat is the "sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype, or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it" (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002).

Studies of stereotype threat have demonstrated how these overgeneralized beliefs can directly affect the academic performance of members of negatively stereotyped groups (Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, in

one study, Black and White American students at a prestigious university took a challenging verbal test that was described as either being diagnostic or nondiagnostic of ability. It was hypothesized that describing the test as diagnostic of ability would make the negative stereotype about African Americans' intellectual abilities salient, which would lead to decreased performance by the African American students. Sure enough, African Americans in the diagnostic condition performed worse than White students (after controlling for differences in SAT scores), but those in the non-diagnostic group did not.

Similar results were found for women taking a challenging math test (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). When the test was described as showing gender differences, women underperformed on the test relative to men. However, when the test was described as showing no gender differences, women no longer feared that their performance would reflect on their gender group, so they performed just as well as men did. Such stereotype threat results have been replicated with a host of other stereotyped group members, including Latinos, individuals with low socioeconomic status, and even elderly individuals.

Positive stereotypes have similarly been shown to enhance performance under certain conditions. In one study, Asian American women were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire before taking a challenging math test (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). Some women filled out a questionnaire that reminded them of their Asian identity, which is positively stereotyped for mathematics, but other women filled out a questionnaire reminding them of their negatively stereotyped gender identity. Consistent with societal stereotypes, women reminded of their Asian identity performed the best on the math test, and women reminded of their female identity performed the worst relative to a control condition. In a follow-up study conducted with children, similar findings emerged (Ambady, Shih, Kim, & Pittinsky, 2001). For the younger Asian American girls aged 5 to 7 years, as well as for the older girls aged 11 to 13 years, performance on age-appropriate math tests was similarly influenced by their condition. Specifically, children reminded of their Asian identity before completing the test performed the best on the math test, and children reminded of their female identity performed the worst relative to a control condition.

Although these findings might seem to suggest that positive stereotypes can be a good thing, the evidence for this is still unclear. Asian Americans have been referred to as the "model minority" because many of the stereotypes they encounter, including being studious, hard working, musically gifted, and scientific, are very positive. Yet some research suggests that Asian Americans may experience undue stress in trying to live up to these stereotypes.

In sum, it is clear that stereotypes can influence the way group members are perceived, remembered, and treated. In addition, stereotypes can lead to depressed academic performance through self-fulfilling prophecies and stereotype threat. Although stereotyping is not an inevitable or necessarily malicious process, it is important to recognize that knowledge of societal stereotypes can lead to a distortion of reality, creating a moral issue that needs to be addressed. Perhaps not surprisingly, through similar yet often more conscious processes, prejudice can also result in negative outcomes for members of stigmatized groups.

### Prejudice

Unlike stereotypes, prejudice tends to be driven by emotion. Prejudice is often described as a negative feeling or attitude toward members of an outgroup. Although stereotypes might inadvertently distort people's memory and perceptions of others, prejudice can lead to the dehumanization of others, to intergroup hostility and violence, and sometimes even to mass murder and group destruction. One need only think of the millions of Jews murdered in the Holocaust; the recent genocide of Tutsis by the Hutus in Rwanda; the continuing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians; or even the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to appreciate the horror that intergroup hatred can cause.

Prejudice within the United States has not taken such epic proportions in recent years, yet stories about homosexuals, Blacks, and Hispanics being beaten or murdered because of their group membership continue to emerge. For example, in 1998, Matthew Shepard, a University of Wyoming student, was brutally beaten and left to die in freezing temperatures simply because he was gay. And how can we forget the image of several White Los Angeles police officers severely beating African American Rodney King in an act that appeared to be racially charged? These are both examples of the acts of violence that are directed toward members of minority groups because of prejudice and hate. When do these attitudes form, and how do they develop over the years?

Children first show signs of prejudice at a very early age (Aboud, 1988). Children's prejudice levels are often quite high around 5 years of age and usually decrease or show greater flexibility as children grow older. Some studies suggest, however, that the prejudice displayed in early childhood returns as children reach the preteen years and beyond, particularly if prejudice is more noticeable in children's immediate social environment. For example, children's ethnic attitudes have been shown to be significantly related to the ethnic attitudes of their mothers, with more prejudiced mothers

having more prejudiced children. Early studies have also found evidence that parents high in authoritarianism—which is characterized by greater rigidity, coldness, and intolerance for difference—had more prejudiced children. Although the exact causes of children's prejudice development are not currently known, recent research with adults suggests that children's expressions of prejudice usually shift to take on a more socially acceptable form as they grow older.

### Current Forms of Prejudice

Some 50 years ago, outward expressions of racial prejudice were much more acceptable than they are today. The expression of prejudice, particularly in urban settings, has changed to fit the times. With the growth of "political correctness" and the spread of egalitarian values, many people have become much more hesitant about expressing negative attitudes about members of different groups. Unfortunately, growing evidence suggests that some people's true attitudes and behaviors toward stereotyped others do not always match the less prejudiced views that they espouse. That is, when given the opportunity, some people are still capable of being prejudiced.

A great deal of this evidence comes from research on what has been called *aversive racism* (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Aversive racism is found among a subset of White Americans who strongly endorse egalitarian values and who see themselves as nonprejudiced. Unlike those truly low in prejudice, aversive racists harbor negative attitudes toward Blacks, sometimes without even being fully aware of these beliefs. This negativity manifests itself as discrimination against Blacks in situations in which it is possible to attribute negative reactions to nonracial factors. For example, when asked to help individuals portrayed as being somewhat undeserving of help, aversive racists were less likely to help Black, compared with White, targets (Frey & Gaertner, 1986). In this case, the appropriateness of helping was unclear, and the failure to help could be attributed to the undeserving nature of the victim and, therefore, not race.

The results of numerous studies have demonstrated how seemingly well-intentioned individuals reveal their prejudices when it is clear that they will be able to avoid being accused of bigotry. Such findings are disturbing for many reasons, not the least of which is the suggestion that strongly endorsing egalitarian views outwardly is not enough to combat discrimination. In many ways, this form of racism is even more difficult to eliminate because it is often hidden to outside observers, as well as to aversive racists themselves. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of this

more subtle form of prejudice to begin to recognize and fight it through education and policy interventions.

A somewhat different kind of prejudice has been demonstrated by research that focuses on *modern racism*. In contrast to "old-fashioned" racists who readily endorse prejudiced beliefs, modern racists, similar to aversive racists, agree that racism is immoral. However, unlike aversive racists, they endorse the belief that discrimination against Blacks no longer exists because they believe that Blacks now have the opportunity to attain any success they are motivated to achieve. Modern racists further believe that African Americans push themselves too much into domains where they are not wanted and get more attention as a group than they deserve. Although these beliefs may sound racist to some, modern racists believe that these statements reflect a reality rather than prejudice. However, individuals who endorse such attitudes display their racism in other ways, such as voting against Black mayoral candidates who are running against White candidates and expressing opposition to busing designed to desegregate schools.

Recognizing that self-report measures of prejudice do not always reflect actual attitudes, researchers have taken to using more subtle measures of prejudice, such as nonverbal behavior and social distance. For example, research has shown that among Whites who verbally endorsed friendly attitudes towards Blacks, the less positive attitudes of some were revealed through more subtle cues, such as an unfriendly tone of voice. Along similar lines, measurements of social distance have revealed that prejudiced White study participants choose to sit farther away from Black individuals than White individuals.

Research examining aggressive behavior has also revealed a tendency for some White participants to deliver more intense and longer shocks to Black (compared with White) targets in learning experiments. Interestingly, the possibility for retaliation by the Black victim, censure for discriminatory behavior, and lack of anonymity affected the degree to which White participants aggressed against Black victims. Specifically, these types of conditions decreased direct aggression but increased more indirect forms of aggression. Another study found that whereas White participants angered by an insult gave more intense shocks to Black than White victims, those who were not insulted aggressed less against Blacks than Whites (Rogers & Prentice-Dunn, 1981).

These types of studies reveal the diverse ways that prejudice can manifest itself and the ways that researchers have studied these forms of bias. Although some people endorse nonprejudicial views both publicly and privately, there is a subset of the population for whom prejudiced beliefs appear only when measured indirectly. It is clear that the largely hidden

nature of modern prejudice, as reflected by aversive and modern racism, has led to a focus on these indirect measures of negative attitudes and bias. However, old-fashioned forms of prejudice do still exist. The next section presents examples of how blatant prejudice takes its form in overt discriminatory behavior.

## Discrimination

Despite the advances that have been made in overcoming bias, examples of discrimination are all too commonplace, as a casual examination of the website for the American Civil Liberties Union reveals. For example, just a few years ago, the systematic mistreatment of African Americans by a national restaurant chain was exposed. And the recent furor over racial profiling reflects people's outrage toward practices that make Black Americans more likely to be targeted for investigation by police because of their skin color. Women are also subject to such discriminatory behavior. For example, women are more likely to receive different negotiation strategies by car sales personnel compared with male customers, with the result often being higher car costs for women. Girls are also targets of discrimination in the classroom, where boys often receive more attention and critical feedback from teachers.

Some sobering statistics describing recent conditions in the workplace and in educational settings for both women and minorities reveal the role played by discrimination. In 1992, one study found that equally qualified female managers lagged significantly behind their male counterparts in salary progression, even after controlling for factors such as self-selection, years in the workforce, and company tenure (Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1992). After ruling out other possible explanations for this discrepancy, the authors concluded that discrimination did, in fact, contribute disproportionately to this difference. Furthermore, gender-based complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reveal that women have a difficult time in the workplace. It is disheartening to note that complaints have changed little from 1975 to 1989 and, in some cases, the number of complaints has increased sharply. Finally, in terms of wages, women currently earn 72% of men's income, a difference that has been attributed to low access to upper-level positions.

Similar disparities have been found among members of minority groups. In terms of education, more Black students are graduating from high school, but the relative number of those attending college is 25% less than Whites. Recognizing this disparity, affirmative action programs, or programs that preferentially select individuals based on minority status

or gender, have worked to increase the numbers of Black college students. However, the debate surrounding the consequences of affirmative action for both beneficiaries and nonbeneficiaries has led some educational institutions to stop their affirmative action programs. A recent example of this can be seen with the University of California at Berkeley, which found a 43% reduction in the Black student population after the end of affirmative action.

In the workplace, Black job candidates are often the targets of systematic discrimination at all stages of the employment process. At the interview stage, employers have been found to interview minority candidates less frequently than nonminority candidates, despite equal qualifications. Beyond the interview, Black job applicants were also more likely to be given less information about positions and fewer referrals, sometimes being told that the jobs no longer existed. Even after a Black candidate gets a job, evidence suggests that discrimination persists. For example, the effect of discrimination has been found in wages, with Black men with professional degrees earning 79% of the salary of White men and Black women earning only 60% of the salary of White men. Black workers not only have lower salaries and fewer promotions, but they are also provided with less access to tools for advancement, such as training and development activities, regular performance evaluations, and opportunities for integration into the organization. The prevalence of high-profile suits against large corporations such as Home Depot, Microsoft, and Texaco reveals the widespread nature of such treatment.

As briefly described here, discrimination has many real-life consequences that are extremely detrimental to the lives and well-being of its targets. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us as researchers and practitioners to search for ways to reduce, if not eliminate, these biases and their negative effects. We describe below some of the ways that researchers have approached the problem of intergroup bias and try to provide some viable solutions.

### Overcoming Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Based on the research presented here, it is clear that stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination can impede our ability to function in a moral fashion. Inequalities can be sustained and justified if we fail to acknowledge how our minds operate and if we choose not to take action. With this knowledge in mind, it is crucial to consider how each of us can help to combat the negative effects of assessing individuals based on their group membership. How can we as educators and policymakers work to

reduce the biases we hold and strive to enhance moral development in those around us?

### *Individual Awareness and Responsibility*

Before making specific suggestions for individual approaches to bias reduction, we would like to offer two caveats. First, as mentioned earlier, stereotypes have been shown to arise automatically and to be rooted in normal, fundamental psychological processes. This is an important point to recognize when attempting to properly direct efforts toward stereotype, attitude, or behavioral change. The aim of this section is to suggest possible interventions that seek to reshape these fundamental processes rather than eliminate them entirely.

A second point that should be emphasized is that "automatic" does not necessarily mean "inevitable." We firmly believe that people are fully capable of exercising agency and personal responsibility over their responses to stereotyped others. For example, recent research has shown that the degree to which individuals think and act in a prejudiced manner is largely influenced by their personal beliefs and goals. In this spirit, we focus on ways to promote responsibility through individual thought and action.

### *Making the Choice Not To Be Prejudiced*

Although it may seem obvious, one of the best ways to avoid being prejudiced is to make a concerted effort not to be. However, as easy as this sounds, research has demonstrated that some approaches to this goal are more effective than others. For example, if a person decides that he or she no longer wants to be prejudiced or hold negative stereotypes, one strategy that might be adopted is to simply try to suppress the negative thought, essentially pushing it out of one's mind. Interestingly, research has demonstrated that this is not always a useful strategy. Trying not to think about a given stereotype can often lead to a rebound effect, in which the stereotype is actually thought about more often as soon as the individual stops making the effort to ignore it (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994).

Fortunately, several other strategies seem to be far more effective in reducing one's reliance on stereotypes. *Perspective taking*, or trying to mentally put oneself in another person's shoes, has been found to be one of the more effective ways to elicit empathy for stereotyped others and to decrease prejudice (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Perspective taking is a means by which another individual can be drawn closer to one's own self-concept through the realization of basic shared similarities. Studies that

have focused on this technique have asked individuals to imagine a day in the life of another person, as if they were that person. The results of such perspective taking have been decreased use of stereotypes in making judgments of others, as well as a decrease in the degree to which people discriminate against stereotyped individuals. This type of thinking has been found to be especially effective in reducing prejudice when coupled with an effort during interactions to think of people less as members of a stereotyped group and more as unique individuals.

Researchers have also found that certain goals can help to combat stereotypes and prejudice. Specifically, when people have a strong commitment to egalitarian values, they work hard to prevent stereotypes from affecting their thoughts and behavior. Research on so-called *chronic egalitarians* has found that such individuals consider egalitarian goals to be central to their identities and feel a sense of incompleteness whenever they have violated these goals. These individuals stand in stark contrast to aversive racists because of the degree to which they have truly internalized their ideals. The key to becoming a chronic egalitarian is to focus on the practiced, goal-oriented nature of chronic egalitarianism. That is, consistently keeping in mind the goal of treating others fairly while repeatedly striving to fulfill that goal leads to a "blocking" of prejudiced responses that becomes automatic over time.

Being aware of our biases, whether they are based on stereotype knowledge or long-term prejudices, and making a concerted individual effort to overcome them are important first steps toward society's moral ideal. But as important as it is to identify our own potential biases, it is just as essential that we help others, especially children, to recognize these tendencies within themselves.

### *Educational and Policy Interventions for Bias Reduction*

It is easiest for intergroup hostilities and hatred to grow when we do not personally know the targets of our prejudice, when they are people passing at a distance on the street or living in far-off communities. When the potential targets of prejudice are our friends, however, it is much more difficult for the seeds of hatred to grow. With this in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that research has demonstrated the importance of childhood interracial friendships in buffering the development of prejudice. Such relationships should be fostered in the classroom and beyond.

**INTERGROUP CONTACT.** As with adults, one of the precursors to cross-race friendship development in children is, quite simply, contact with members of other racial groups. For decades, social psychologists have argued

that intergroup contact is critical in the battle against the development of prejudice and the formation of stereotypes (Allport, 1954). However, years of research have also demonstrated that there are caveats to this suggestion. For example, it has been shown that intergroup contact is most beneficial when members of different groups have equal status in the setting, cooperation is involved, opportunities are available for stereotype disconfirmation, and the potential exists for friendships to develop (Hewstone, 1996). The essential goal of intergroup contact, then, is to allow members of different racial or ethnic groups to realize that they share similar values and beliefs. It also allows people to reduce the amount of anxiety they might otherwise feel during interactions with members of unfamiliar or negatively stereotyped groups.

Intergroup contact can help to foster interracial friendships, and such relationships have been shown to be pivotal in the development of a more positive orientation toward others. In one retrospective study conducted by Wood and Sonleitner (1996), White students at the University of Oklahoma were asked about their interracial contact as children and their current attitudes toward Blacks. It was found that childhood interracial contact significantly decreased negative stereotyping and prejudice toward Blacks, suggesting that appropriate school desegregation is an effective force for fostering positive attitudes. Similar findings have been obtained with children and other adults. Even the formation of interracial friendships in adulthood can help to promote more positive attitudes toward racial minorities.

School programs designed to promote intergroup contact have been developed by psychologists and have met with mixed success. One early program made use of what is called the jigsaw technique (Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979). Jigsaw classrooms are designed to create interdependent learning environments that are conducive to positive cross-race interactions. Teachers must provide lessons that can be learned in small groups. Each group member is provided with information that must be shared with other group members in order for everyone in the group to learn all of the material. If students want to be successful, they are dependent on all of the members of their group because each member has a certain expertise to share. If this program is successfully implemented, it can lead to increased participation by minority students; increased empathy for other students; and when success is attained by the group, an increased feeling that all members of the diverse group are successful.

Another program that has received support for its promotion of interdependent cooperation is Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT; DeVries, Edwards, & Slavin, 1978). Similar to the jigsaw classroom technique, diverse teams are created in TGT to increase opportunities for cross-race



interactions. Team members are taught to cooperate and help one another in the service of a common goal: performing well in a tournament played against other teams. In preparation for the tournament, which is composed of a set of skill games, team members tutor each other and work toward improving their skills. During the tournament, each individual team member then competes against a student from another team who is at a similar skill level. The winning team is determined by the total points accrued by all the members together over the course of the tournament. Several studies designed to evaluate the effectiveness of TGT have found that it is particularly effective in increasing the number and percentage of cross-racial friendships.

Teachers who seek to promote greater integration within the classroom need not follow these exact procedures. But both programs make use of several important principles, including interdependence, cooperation, and the pursuit of a common goal, in order to promote greater intergroup harmony in the classroom. Programs that make use of these principles while being tailored to meet the specific needs of a classroom will no doubt be the most effective for both students and educators.

**CONTACT THROUGH ROLE MODELS.** In some racially homogeneous communities, providing the opportunity for interracial contact can be challenging at best. However, even in communities where intergroup contact is difficult because of a lack of diversity, a host of media are available that can provide positive interracial contact. One way for elementary school teachers to encourage some initial contact is through school pairing programs. Pairing with the same grade at more diverse schools can provide opportunities to initiate and foster cross-race friendships from afar. Children can be assigned pen pals or E-mail buddies, providing children from both communities with the opportunity to share their interests and beliefs. This, in turn, can allow the teachers to model positive interracial connections.

Even in the absence of direct intergroup contact, many opportunities exist to provide children with positive role models from all racial and ethnic groups. Posters, class projects, and relevant classroom activities can provide children with information about the accomplishments of people from all walks of life. *Sesame Street* is one educational television program for children that has taken this approach to heart. This program provides an incredibly diverse cast and often tackles issues of difference head on, with characters explaining their differences (i.e., why they are speaking a different language on the phone, why they are in a wheelchair) to another character, who emerges from the interaction with greater understanding. Cross-race friendships across multiple settings are frequently modeled and supported by friends and adults. One study demonstrated

that White American children who had watched 2 years of *Sesame Street* expressed more positive attitudes toward African Americans and Latinos (Graves, 1999). Thus, it seems as though even television role models can have an effect.

In summary, although intergroup contact and role models may help in the reduction of prejudice, such approaches may not always be viable or effective. For this reason, specific educational programs have been developed in an attempt to challenge children's developing prejudices. In addition, because stereotypes have been shown to influence the academic performance of negatively stereotyped group members, programs have also been developed to help students overcome the limitations imposed by societally held beliefs.

**INTERVENTION PROGRAMS.** Several educational programs have been developed in order to foster positive intergroup attitudes and decrease children's interracial prejudice. Unlike the programs mentioned earlier, which are designed to foster positive intergroup contact, educators have also attempted to create positive dialogues about race through antiracist education. Many of these programs are founded on the belief that socialization contributes significantly to the development of prejudice (Aboud & Levy, 2000). The effectiveness of these programs has not always been clear, although it seems that the outcomes are, overall, moderately positive. More research is needed to determine the conditions under which antiracist programs are most successful. However, it seems that such programs have some real potential for positive impact, especially when they are age appropriate and have strong teacher support.

Programs have also been developed to help promote academic success among racial minority group members, such as African Americans and Latinos, who are negatively stereotyped in this domain. As noted earlier, research on stereotype threat has demonstrated that becoming aware of a self-relevant negative stereotype can harm academic performance. In response to this, several "wise" schooling practices, designed for teachers, have been suggested (Steele, 1997). Teachers who provide an optimistic perspective on the students' potential, provide challenging work (instead of remedial work), and support the view that intelligence is malleable (as opposed to fixed) are more likely to be successful as mentors and champions for students striving to overcome the additional barriers that negative stereotypes can impose.

As much as these programs can have a positive impact, even the most effective education programs cannot always combat the effects of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Therefore, it is imperative that policies be created that reflect current social realities.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.** Affirmative action has been used in educational settings and workplaces as a means to compensate for past or present discrimination based on gender, race, or ethnicity. Institutions with affirmative action programs try to give special consideration to women and minorities through additional recruiting efforts and preferential selection. In practice, this means that to fulfill diversity goals, college admissions officers may choose a minority candidate over a White candidate when the candidates are similarly qualified.

Recent efforts aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of affirmative action have focused on its impact on leveling disparities in wages, employment, and college admissions (Murrell & Jones, 1996). On the positive side, affirmative action programs have led to a significant increase in workforce participation among minorities, especially Blacks. In education, affirmative action has provided funding for postsecondary education for minorities, which has helped to increase the number of minority students attending college. When the potentially lifelong effects of stereotypes and subtle discrimination on minority group members are considered, as well as the fact that many economically disadvantaged minority children are not provided with appropriate educational resources, there is little question that affirmative action programs make at least a concerted attempt to redress past wrongs. In addition, such programs may promote future equality by providing opportunities for intergroup contact and by increasing the visibility of minorities in workplaces and in classrooms.

Despite positive outcomes such as these, affirmative action does have some problems, as indicated by recent changes in policy by institutions such as the University of California at Berkeley and the ongoing court case involving the University of Michigan. The continued existence of disparities as outlined in this chapter casts into doubt the degree to which affirmative action has truly been successful in achieving its aims. Nonbeneficiaries of affirmative action have also objected loudly to what they see as "reverse discrimination," which seems to deny opportunities to majority group members in favor of potentially less qualified minority or female applicants.

Even those who benefit from affirmative action are subject to the negative consequences of preferential treatment. Research has shown that being the recipient of affirmative action can lead to academic underperformance, negative self-views, and an increased fear that any success achieved will be seen as undeserved or unearned (Brown, Charnsangavej, Keough, Newman, & Rentfrow, 2000; Heilman & Alcott, 2001). Recipients of affirmative action face a great deal of ambiguity in tracing the true cause of their success (e.g., "Was it my ability or preferential treatment that got me

here?"), which may lead them to question their competence. It is clear that policymakers have a great deal to consider when weighing the costs and benefits of affirmative action programs because there is evidence for both sides of the debate. Nevertheless, it is clear from the research reviewed in this chapter that the implementation of policy may need to play a critical role in remedying current inequalities.

## Conclusions

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing the promotion of morality among today's youth is the question of how best to handle intergroup relations in an increasingly diverse society. Differences in ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and political orientation—to name just a few—serve as the basis for group distinctions. Although such diversity can offer rich opportunities for learning and growth, differences between groups can also serve as fertile ground for stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. This chapter sought to provide an overview of current research in social psychology that may shed some light into ways of promoting moral approaches to group differences. With continued research and the application of findings, we hope to steadily approach a society in which differences do not lead to prejudice and discrimination but are instead valued and nurtured.

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ISBN: 0-306-48499-4

© 2004 by Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York  
233 Spring Street, New York, New York 10013

<http://www.kluweronline.com>

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Printed in the United States of America

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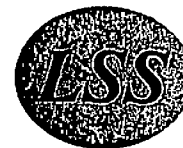
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