

Chapter Thirteen

Stereotypes in Our Culture

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Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* is not merely a "classic" well worth remembering for its historical significance; the magnitude of its contribution has increased steadily over time, especially with regard to the structure and functions of stereotypes. It was in chapter 12, entitled "Stereotypes in Our Culture," that Allport famously proposed that the "rationalizing and justifying function of a stereotype exceeds its function as a reflector of group attributes" (1954/1979, p. 196). There were two major themes that Allport sought to develop and, to some degree, integrate in this chapter: (a) that categorization is a fundamental process that gives rise to stereotyping and prejudice; and (b) that the contents of stereotypes are, above all, culturally shared forms of justification that often turn out to be false. Putting these two points together, we see that categorization is a necessary but not sufficient cause of prejudicial attitudes. The cultural context is crucial, for stereotypes operate in relation to societal and ideological systems. The overwhelming effect of both categorization and justification processes is that existing forms of inequality tend to be reinforced and perpetuated (e.g., Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Hamilton & Trolie, 1986; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadronek, 1997). In this chapter, we critically examine the validity of Allport's claims concerning societal and cultural factors that shape social categorization and the contents of stereotypes.

Allport's Views on Categorization Processes in Stereotyping and Prejudice

Among the most unique and compelling features of Allport's analysis is his emphasis on the fundamental role of categorization as a basic process

underlying intergroup perception. In this respect he was clearly attuned to developments in other areas of psychology that addressed the ways in which concepts are learned, stored in memory, retrieved, and applied (see Fiske, ch. 3 this volume). In "Stereotypes in Our Culture," Allport advanced his ideas concerning the nature of relations between categorization and stereotyping in pivotal fashion; the significance of these ideas is confirmed in several areas of contemporary research, as we illustrate below.

Although he stressed categorization processes, Allport insisted that "a stereotype is not identical with a category; it is rather a fixed idea that accompanies the category" (1954/1979, p. 191). A stereotype is a belief system in which psychological characteristics are ascribed more or less indiscriminately to the members of a group. According to Allport, it "acts both as a justificatory device for categorical acceptance or rejection of a group, and as a screening or selective device to maintain simplicity in perception and in thinking" (p. 192). In this way, the categorization (or simplification) and justification functions are compatible and mutually reinforcing. "The fault," as Allport pointed out, lies "not in any malicious intent" but in "culture-bound traditions" (p. 202). This is because people use stereotypes both to maximize cognitive efficiency and to explain and justify cultural and institutional forms of prejudice in which members of some groups are accepted while others are rejected (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

In the next section, we review developments in the study of categorization and stereotyping since Allport. This work builds on the notion that people form social categories on the basis of similarity and related cues but also go further to develop intuitive theories and explanations about how and why members of a social category belong together. These explanations often take tautological, essentialistic forms. Anti-Semitism, for example, invariably "finds its rationalization in some presumed aspect of 'Jewish essence'" (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 195). The same perceiver may criticize Jews (or Asians, or whomever) at one convenient moment for being inherently "clannish" and at other times for intrusively forcing themselves upon others. The categorization function explains why stereotypes are undifferentiated and overgeneralized; the justification function explains why they are so often illogical and contrary to fact.

Developments Since Allport's Work

Much of the work on cognitive processes underlying the development of stereotypes and prejudice since the publication of *The Nature of Prejudice*

has focused on the perceptions of people as members of social categories. The central idea is that stereotypes are belief structures that influence the processing of information about stereotyped groups and their members. What this means is that expectations formed on the basis of early experience tend to guide subsequent perceptions. As Allport pointed out, "A stereotype is sustained by selective perception and selective forgetting" (1954, 1979, p. 196). These mechanisms explain how even false stereotypes can be perpetuated over time.

The impact of stereotypes on social cognition is probably even more profound than Allport knew. The last two decades of research have demonstrated that stereotypes: (a) direct attention to certain aspects of the available information, (b) color the interpretation of that information, (c) influence the way in which the information is retained in memory, (d) shape judgments and subsequent actions, (e) serve as hypotheses that are tested and disproportionately favored in the interpretation of new information, and (f) play an important role in eliciting from target persons the very same behavior that confirms the perceiver's biased expectations (for reviews, see Fiske, 1998; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). The overwhelming effect of stereotypes, therefore, is to perpetuate prior beliefs and prejudices; the *status quo* is bolstered through information processors' reliance upon stereotypes as a convenient way of organizing information about the social world.

Whereas other chapters in this book focus on the consequences of stereotypes, we explore the origins and contents of stereotypes in the remainder of this chapter. In particular, we demonstrate that stereotyping has its origins in social categorization, but the specific contents of stereotypes and their prejudicial flavor are best accounted for in terms of social and cultural functions that these attitudes serve. In this section and the next, we first consider social categorization processes and then examine societal forces – including demands for system justification – that partially determine stereotype contents.

The Perception of Group Entitativity

Recent developments in understanding social categorization processes have focused on how individuals become recognized as a group or entity in the first place, how the process of categorization (as an entity or as a group) affects perceptions, how people infer the essential characteristics of group membership, and how they use these characteristics as intuitive explanations.

A few years after *The Nature of Prejudice* was published, Donald Campbell (1958) grappled with the issue of how people perceive groups as coherent entities. He suggested that perceptions of entitativity could be based on cues such as proximity and similarity as well as conceptual cues such as cohesiveness and interdependence. The fundamental issue of how the "groupness" of a group is perceived – after lying dormant for an extended period – has become the focus of a great deal of research in the last decade (for reviews, see Hamilton, Sherman, & Castelli, 2002; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001).

This recent work has established evidence for several important points: (a) groups vary considerably in the extent to which they are perceived as possessing entitativity (Lickel et al., 2000); (b) a variety of cues – for example, extent of interaction among group members, member similarity, importance of the group to members, shared goals – can and do serve as the basis for perceiving the "groupness" of groups (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2003; Lickel et al., 2000); (c) perceivers spontaneously recognize qualitatively different types of groups (e.g., groups based on friendship, task groups, social categories), and these group types differ in the extent to which they possess entitativity (Sherman, Castelli, & Hamilton, 2002); (d) the extent to which a group is perceived as being entitative has important implications for the generalization of qualities across individual group members and the perceived interchangeability of group members (Crawford, Sherman, & Hamilton, 2002); and (e) perceived group entitativity plays a central and mediating role in the stereotyping of groups (Hamilton, Sherman, & Rodgers, 2004).

From Perception to Explanation

Following Lippmann's (1922) influential analysis, Allport observed that the members of a group, once categorized, are assumed to be similar to one another. The accentuation of within-category similarity ("They're all alike") and between-category differences ("They're different from other folks") is now a well-documented effect (e.g., Judd & Park, ch. 8 this volume).

Theories of categorization differ in how "grouping" is cognitively achieved. Some accounts posit that categories, both social and nonsocial, are mentally represented by a single prototype, that is, a generalized mental representation of the ideal member of a category. Each individual is then compared to the prototype, and if the "family resemblance" is adequate, the individual is categorized as a member of that group (Rosch, 1978). Other perspectives downplay the necessity of forming an abstract, generalized

prototype and instead emphasize the role of exemplars in categorization. On this view, perceptions of individual cases are compared to other instances retrieved from memory, and the individual is categorized into a group on the basis of whether it fits the retrieved exemplars (e.g., Smith & Zárate, 1992). In both types of theories, similarity is the driving principle on which social categorizations are based.

Although similarity is without question an important feature on which the categorization process relies, more recent work has shown that similarity alone is not sufficient for fully understanding the categorization process. In other words, a category consists of more than a simple listing of the features that are shared by category members. The category must also provide some intuitive theory, some rationale, some *explanation* as to why these category members belong to the same category, that is, some causal means for understanding how and why these features are related to each other (Murphy & Medin, 1985).

For example, social stereotypes often ascribe a wide array of attributes to the members of some target group, even when these specific attributes would not normally be classified together on the basis of semantic meaning, frequency of co-occurrence, or even shared valence. Historically, African Americans were said to be lazy, religious, unintelligent, and musical (e.g., Katz & Braly, 1933). These attributes do not normally "go together," either in people's actual behavioral patterns or in their implicit personality theories. As a cluster of beliefs, they would have no meaning for the stereotype holder if it were not for an intuitive theory that ties them together (e.g., Kunda, Miller, & Claire, 1990).

How people respond to the members of a particular group is determined in part by the intuitive theory that the person holds. For instance, people who subscribe to the intuitive theory that Blacks lack the ability and/or motivation to achieve (a view often associated with political conservatism) and those who believe that discrimination limits Blacks' economic progress (a view associated with liberalism) process and interpret information about Blacks in fundamentally different ways (Wittenbrink, Gist, & Hilton, 1997). Thus, some stereotypes go beyond the mere description of groups in terms of commonly associated traits to explain the origins of those traits in such a way that the group's social position is seen as justified or unjustified.

From Explanation to Essentialism

Another development in categorization theory has been to identify different types of categories and to distinguish among various consequences of these different types. Researchers have, for example, *differentiated natural kinds*

from artifactual categories. Natural kinds are categories of objects whose existence is somehow defined by nature; the members all share some category-defining feature(s). Robins are robins because of their natural make-up, their genetic structure, their physical being. In contrast, artifactual categories consist of objects created by humans, typically to perform some function or meet some need. Cars, for example, were invented to enable people to move about, to meet their transportation needs. As a result, people do not tend to have the same kinds of theories about automobiles that they do about biological and racial groups.

If people believe that a category is a natural kind, then two important principles follow. First, a natural category affords inductive potential; that is, one can infer a lot about members of the category because such things are true of all members. When people see a robin sitting on a branch, they can assume certain things about it (e.g., it can fly, eats worms, chirps, etc.). Such inductive potential is greater for natural kinds than for artifactual categories. Second, membership in a natural kind is unalterable. A robin is a robin, and no amount of blue spray-paint will transform it into a bluebird. In contrast, the fundamental "nature" of an artifactual category object can be changed, for the simple reason that it has no underlying essence (apart from its function).

Although most social groups (including racial groups) are, in reality, artifactual categories rather than natural kinds, people often perceive groups as natural kinds and therefore endow their members with some kind of essence (Rothbart & Taylor, 1992). Thus, historically, people have talked about the "Jewishness" of Jews and have applied the "single drop of blood" criterion for race; in these cases, ethnic group differences "are regarded as innate, indelible, and unchangeable" (Frederickson, 2002, p. 5). Once a group is perceived as a natural kind – as having some unalterable inner essence – then it affords greater confidence in drawing inferences (inductive potential) about its members. As a result, perceivers make sweeping generalizations (of the kind Allport stressed) about all group members, who are seen as being very similar to one another, especially on attributes related to the "essential" basis for category membership (see also Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2002; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997). Perceptions of social groups as natural categories significantly shape the operation and content of stereotypes through the development of "intuitive theories."

Our review of the categorization process has highlighted the ways in which stereotypes function as categories that provide intuitive theories that, while aiding in understanding and navigating the complexities of intergroup life, bias the interpretation and use of information. In some cases, the stereotyped group is ascribed an inner essence that conveys something about group members' basic nature. The group's essence is seen

as relatively immutable and as providing an explanation for why groups differ in terms of resources and opportunities. This observation moves us closer to more fully appreciating Allport's remark that, "the rationalizing and justifying function of a stereotype exceeds its function as a reflector of group attributes" (1954/1979, p. 196). This is because, as Yzerbyt et al. (1997) note, "rationalization is best served by an essentialistic approach to social categories" (p. 39). More specifically, essentialism has a strong capacity to contribute to "system-justification" processes, which in turn mold the specific contents of stereotypes (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

A New Framework: System Justification Processes and Stereotype Content

To understand where the specific *contents* of stereotypes come from, a social, cultural analysis is needed to supplement our cognitive analysis of categorization. Hamilton and Gifford (1976) confirmed Allport's claim that "It is possible for a stereotype to grow in defiance of all evidence" (1954/1979, p. 189). They demonstrated that people could develop false stereotypes through a process of "illusory correlation" (by mistakenly forming a mental association between two or more relatively infrequent events) without there being even a "kernel" of truth. These cognitive biases are shaped and exacerbated by actual inequalities of opportunity in society (which prevent group memberships and achieved outcomes from varying freely) as well as by selective reporting in the mass media (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Members of US society, for example, are disproportionately exposed to associations between "Black" and "criminal" and between "White man" and "politician" or "celebrity" (Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000). As Allport observed, stereotypes are "socially supported, continually revived and hammered in, by our media of mass communication" (p. 200). In addition, there is a tendency for people, both media representatives and their audiences, to spontaneously explain and justify social and economic inequality in such a way that the legitimacy of the existing social system is seldom – if ever – called into question (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004).

Three Types of Justification

Theoretical and empirical advances in social psychology sustain Allport's contention that a stereotype acts as a "justificatory device" (1954/1979,

p. 192), probably in many more ways than Allport himself could have anticipated. He focused almost exclusively on perceivers' use of stereotypes to justify liking or disliking of outgroup members, that is, the justification of "love-prejudice" or "hate-prejudice" (p. 189). In seeking to understand the origins of these intense evaluative responses, Allport's analysis drew heavily on the psychoanalytic assumptions of the day, including Bettelheim and Janowitz's (1950, p. 42) speculation that "ethnic hostility is a projection of unacceptable inner strivings onto a minority group" (quoted with evident approval by Allport, p. 199).

Jost and Banaji (1994) proposed that there are three major ways in which stereotypes serve as "justificatory devices," namely as forms of ego-justification, group-justification, and system-justification. Only the first of these functions (ego-justification) had received any real attention from psychologists of Allport's generation, and insights concerning the second function (group-justification) coalesced later (e.g., Tajfel, 1981). Skeletal versions of the third function (system-justification) are discernible in Allport's (1954/1979) discussions of the "exploitation theory of prejudice" on pp. 209-11 and of "structural views" on pp. 504-6, but it seems that he could not quite integrate a sociological perspective on the American class system with his psychological analysis of rationalization.

Work on the ego-justification function suggests that people engage in stereotyping and prejudice at least in part because it allows them to feel better about themselves by derogating others. This view originated in psychoanalytic theories of the kind Allport favored, including the notion that stereotypes "serve as projection screens for our personal conflict" (1954/1979, p. 200). The more general idea that stereotypes rationalize the individual's own interests, actions, and psychological needs is also consistent with more recent theories of self-esteem maintenance. Experimental studies demonstrate, for example, that threats to one's self-esteem stimulate enhanced levels of stereotyping and discrimination (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Oakes & Turner, 1980).

Tajfel (1981) elaborated a group-based version of Allport's (1954/1979) argument that a stereotype's "function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category" (p. 191). Specifically, Tajfel proposed that stereotypes justify "actions, committed or planned, against outgroups" (p. 156). Stereotypes, on this view, serve group-justifying ends. They are used to rationalize discrimination against outgroup members, enhance positive group distinctiveness, and allow people to feel good about themselves and their fellow group members through intergroup social comparison processes.

In addition to serving ego-justifying and group-justifying functions, Jost and Banaji (1994) noted that stereotypes fulfill the *system-justifying* function

of rationalizing the status quo. According to this view, stereotypes arise not merely in order to justify "love-prejudice" or "hate-prejudice" but also to provide legitimacy for institutional forms such as slavery, segregation, apartheid, the caste system, capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexual marriage, etc. The system-justification view is consistent with historical evidence indicating that full-fledged prejudicial ideologies tend to come *after*, not before, institutionalized forms of tyranny and exploitation. For example, anti-Semitism as a racial ideology first arose in the eleventh century to justify the Medieval Crusades, and virulent forms of anti-Black prejudice were not developed until the fifteenth century to justify the European enslavement of Africans (Frederickson, 2002). System-justifying forms of stereotyping and prejudice render cultural practices and institutions legitimate, rational, and sometimes even necessary and noble.

Several consequences follow from taking system-justification seriously as a social-psychological phenomenon. First, to the extent that members of disadvantaged as well as advantaged groups possess at least some needs for system justification, they should internalize a sense of inferiority and experience considerable ambivalence concerning their own group membership. Second, specific stereotype contents should emerge to rationalize particular divisions of labor and unequal distributions of social roles. Third, complementary stereotypes – stereotypes of both disadvantaged and advantaged groups that have both favorable and unfavorable content – should be fairly common, insofar as these lend legitimacy to the system as a whole. Fourth, essentialist forms of stereotyping should be especially effective at satisfying system-justification needs, insofar as they render intergroup differences not only substantial and real but also natural and necessary.

Internalization of Inequality and Attitudinal Ambivalence

The most provocative aspect of Jost and Banaji's (1994) theory was that members of disadvantaged groups would themselves engage in system justification (at least under some circumstances), even at the expense of personal or collective interests and esteem. Members of disadvantaged groups should therefore internalize attitudes about themselves and each other that are more similar than dissimilar to the attitudes held by members of advantaged groups. As Allport put it, "so heavy is the prevailing cultural pressure that members of minority groups sometimes look at themselves through the same lens as other groups" (1954/1979, p. 198). Indeed, this does seem to be the case; stereotypical attitudes evince a remarkable degree of consensus across perceiver groups. It is extremely common for members

of disadvantaged groups to hold favorable attitudes toward more advantaged outgroup members and unfavorable attitudes toward ingroup members, especially (but not solely) on dimensions that explain and justify the success of the former and the relative failure of the latter.

Allport's insight concerning the role of societal and cultural pressures helps to explain the prevalence of "self-hatred" and outgroup favoritism among members of low-status groups (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Lewin, 1948; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Experimental and field studies have demonstrated that members of disadvantaged groups often hold ambivalent, conflicted attitudes about their own group memberships and surprisingly favorable attitudes toward members of more advantaged groups (e.g., Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002). For instance, Sniderman and Piazza (1993) found in a large, nationally representative sample that African American respondents generally accepted unfavorable stereotypes of their own group as lazy, irresponsible, and violent. In fact, they endorsed these stereotypes even more strongly than European American respondents did. Jost et al. (2004) found that 37.5 percent of gay and lesbian respondents held implicit attitudes that were more favorable toward heterosexuals than homosexuals, and 39.3 percent of African Americans held implicit attitudes that were more favorable toward the European American outgroup than the African American ingroup.

Allport observed that Blacks (and other groups) "have heard so frequently that they are lazy, ignorant, dirty, and superstitious that they may half believe the accusations, and since the traits are commonly despised in our western culture – which, of course, Negroes share – some degree of in-group hate seems almost inevitable" (1954/1979, p. 148). To the extent that members of disadvantaged groups face a conflict between opposing needs for group and system justification, Jost and Burgess (2000) hypothesized that members of disadvantaged groups would exhibit stronger ingroup ambivalence than would members of advantaged groups. They also predicted that for members of disadvantaged groups ambivalence toward the ingroup would increase as system-justification tendencies increased (measured in terms of perceived legitimacy of the *status quo* and scores on the Belief in a Just World and Social Dominance Orientation scales; see also Duckitt, ch. 24 this volume). For members of advantaged groups, it was expected that ingroup ambivalence would decrease as system-justification tendencies increased. These hypotheses were supported in two studies. Work on the internalization of inequality and attitudinal ambivalence supports Allport's observation that in at least some cases, "the victim instead of pretending to agree with his 'betters' actually *does* agree with them, and sees his own group through their eyes" (p. 150).

Stereotyping and the Rationalization of Social Roles

That consensual stereotypes not only describe but also justify and rationalize existing hierarchical structures in society has been established experimentally over the past two decades. Eagly and Steffen (1984), for example, demonstrated that observers inferred "communal" characteristics from feminine roles (e.g., homemaker) and "agentic" characteristics from masculine roles (e.g., employee; see also Eagly & Diekmann, ch. 2 this volume). Hoffman and Hurst (1990) used an experimental paradigm in which participants made trait ratings of fictional groups described as "child raisers" and "city workers." They found that perceivers spontaneously stereotyped the group of child raisers as more patient, kind, and understanding than the city workers, and they stereotyped the group of city workers as more self-confident and forceful than the child raisers – especially when perceivers were first asked to explain *why* the groups occupied different roles.

Conway, Pizzamiglio, and Mount (1996) demonstrated in a variety of occupational and non-occupational settings that members of low-status groups in general were consistently stereotyped in more communal, socio-emotional terms, whereas members of high-status groups were stereotyped in agentic, achievement-oriented terms. Jost and Kay (2005) found that exposure to communal stereotypes of women and agentic stereotypes of men leads people to show increased levels of support for the current state of gender relations as well as for the American political and economic system in general. These studies are among the first to demonstrate that a cause-and-effect relationship exists between exposure to specific stereotypical beliefs and support for the societal status quo (see also Kay & Jost, 2003). This work also suggests that the link between stereotypes and the status quo can be largely implicit, nonconscious, and unexamined (see also Jost et al., 2004).

Complementary Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are not unique in ascribing different but complementary characteristics to members of high-status and low-status groups (e.g., agentic and communal traits, respectively). This leads us to yet another important observation made by Allport, who wrote that: "Stereotypes are by no means always negative. They may exist together with a favorable attitude" (1954/1979, p. 191). We know from recent work that attitudes toward members of lower-status groups (like women) can be highly

favorable and at the same time contribute to ideological support for the system (see Glick & Fiske, 2001; also chapters by Eagly & Diekmann, Jackman, and Rudman, chs. 2, 6, and 7 this volume).

The system justification function may explain other seemingly anomalous stereotypes identified by Allport, including the belief that African Americans are "more cheerful and more humorous" than members of other groups (1954/1979, p. 198). Kay and Jost (2003) suggested that "poor but happy" and "poor but honest" stereotypes would serve to increase support for the status quo, insofar as such stereotypes maintain the belief that every group in society has some rewards, and no group has a monopoly on valued characteristics. The authors demonstrated in four experiments that exposure to "poor but happy," "poor but honest," "rich but miserable," and "rich but dishonest" stereotype exemplars led people to score higher on a general, diffuse measure of system justification, compared to control conditions.

The System-Justifying Function of Essentialism

Allport (1954/1979) pointed out that stereotypes concerning the "essence" of racial, ethnic, and religious groups are particularly nefarious and that it is difficult to disabuse people of them (pp. 169, 191; see also Frederickson, 2002). Drawing on the research of cognitive and social psychologists, we have noted that essentialism often follows from acts of categorization and explanation (e.g., Murphy & Medin, 1985; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992) and that it contributes to system justification processes (e.g., Yzerbyt et al., 1997). Once an explanation exists for why certain groups occupy various social positions, the explanation becomes a justification for keeping people "in their place." If members of certain groups are *inherently* agentic, communal, etc., then their current position is not only well-explained but also natural and unlikely ever to change. The *status quo* begins to acquire a strong sense of legitimacy and even inevitability.

Mahalingam (2003) examined essentialism in the context of the caste system in India and found that Brahmins endorsed a selective form of essentialism that justified their group's position of privilege in the system. Research by Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2002) indicated that American participants endorsed (to varying degrees) two general classes of essentialist beliefs, namely *natural kind* beliefs (naturalness, discreteness, immutability, historical stability, and necessary features) and *entitativity* beliefs (uniformity, informativeness, and inherence), and that at least some of these beliefs were correlated with anti-Black and antigay prejudice. Keller (2004) obtained

stronger and more consistent support in Germany for the hypotheses that endorsement of essentialist beliefs (operationalized in terms of belief in genetic determinism) would be associated with (a) increased stereotyping and prejudice, especially with regard to gender and race, and (b) increased endorsement of system-justifying ideologies, such as the Protestant Work Ethic, Social Dominance Orientation, patriotism, and nationalism. Taken as a whole, these recent findings suggest that while essentialism varies according to specific cultural contexts in the US, Germany, and India, it does seem to contribute to system justification processes in general.

Have Allport's Views Been Supported?

A careful rereading of Allport's chapter on "Stereotypes in Our Culture" leads one to admire not only his intellectual prescience in anticipating the trajectories of empirical research programs for several decades but also his uncanny ability to meaningfully link societal and cultural levels of analysis to a psychological investigation of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals and groups. This is perhaps the most important achievement of *The Nature of Prejudice*, although it is underappreciated. At the same time, Allport did not integrate his ideas concerning rationalization, the internalization of inferiority, prejudice as an ideology, and the deleterious consequences of inequality in society into a comprehensive theoretical framework. In short, he did not recognize that system justification (in addition to ego justification and group justification) is an important motive for individuals. In retrospect, we can say that Allport's analysis of the justification function of stereotyping was incomplete at best and naive – from a political, institutional perspective – at worst (see also Jackman, ch. 6 this volume). Stereotypes are used – implicitly and explicitly – to justify much more than "love-prejudice" and "hate-prejudice." They imbue existing forms of social arrangements with meaning and legitimacy; they preserve and bolster the status quo. It took several decades of experimental and field research to elucidate the connection between social structure and stereotype contents, and there is still more to be done.

Future Directions

Because today's researchers possess a fuller appreciation of the ways in which stereotyping and prejudice emanate from individual and collective

needs to rationalize social and cultural institutions, the opportunities to cross levels of analysis are greater than ever before. From basic cognitive and perceptual processes that underlie social categorization to broad-based ideologies that grip entire nations of people, we need to better understand the interplay of evolutionary, cultural, and historical mechanisms and constraints. Social psychology is well-poised to play a broker role in integrating and reconciling different disciplinary perspectives on the causes and consequences of group-based discrimination. To do so effectively, it will have to go well beyond the two major dimensions of intergroup attitudes (agency vs. communion or, what is nearly the same, competence vs. warmth) that have been investigated almost exclusively in systematic research on the contents of stereotype. The insight that prejudice and other ideological forms operate nonconsciously will be a hallmark of a new approach that recognizes the centrality of system justification in social and political life (e.g., Jost et al., 2004).

It follows from a cultural, systemic approach to the study of stereotyping that substantive change in the contents of intergroup attitudes – if it is to come at all – requires qualitative social change. Prejudice may be, among other things, a problem of the individual, but it is also a problem that is “stitched into the fabric of social living” (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 506). Any effective attempt to ameliorate prejudice must take into account its unmistakably societal origins and lead ultimately to an unraveling of the familiar justifications, both petty and grand, that provide cover for any cultural system that relies, either directly or indirectly, on inequality and exploitation.

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