

Capitolo 5

Case Study 1

The influence of encounters with individual group members on stereotypes

Researchers have long assumed that judgments of social groups were based on prototypic representations of the particular groups; that is, on an especially good representative of the group. Alternatively, judgments can also be based on exemplars of particular groups; that is, a specific member of the group. Those exemplars that are momentarily salient or activated, influence our judgments of the group that the exemplar belongs to. Bodenhausen et al. (1995)

[DOI:10.1006/jesp.1995.1003] investigated the impact of atypical group members on the judgments of groups.

In their first study they exposed participants to a well-liked, successful African-American exemplar (for instance, Oprah Winfrey or Michael Jordan), or did not expose participants to any Black exemplars. Afterwards participants received statements and were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with them. One of those statements was about Black people no longer being a problem. Results showed that participants who had recently thought about well-liked Blacks were more likely to indicate discrimination is still a problem, thus their opinions on the position of Black people became more positive.

In experiment 2, these results were replicated. In addition, Bodenhausen et al. (1995) also showed that the effects are limited to well-liked successful exemplars; neutral exemplars who are successful did not produce changes in perceptions of discrimination.

However, as Chapter 5 describes, stereotypes might not change when involving atypical group members, because they are seen as exceptional, and different from the group, which causes a contrast effect. When participants were aware that the exemplar was an atypical group member, effects of successful well-liked exemplars on judgments disappeared.

Reference

- Bodenhausen, G. V., Schwarz, N., Bless, H., & Waenke, M. (1995). [DOI:10.1006/jesp.1995.1003]. Effects of atypical exemplars on racial beliefs: Enlightened racism or generalized appraisals? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 31, 48–63.

Case Study 2

Isn't it ironic? Anti-prejudice messages might make you more prejudiced

In the more tolerant world in which we live today, there is a huge push to increase acceptance and decrease discrimination in our communities, our schools, and our workplaces. But are people sending the right messages and are the interventions currently in use actually leading to the desired effects? Canadian researchers Legault, Gutsell and Inzlicht (2011) [DOI: 10.1177/0956797611427918] set out to determine the effect that anti-prejudice messages actually have in decreasing prejudice in their recipients.

As described in the text, people are motivated to control prejudice for internal reasons (e.g., because being non-prejudiced is personally important) and for external reasons (e.g., because it's important to not look prejudiced in front of others). Other research shows that people who have an internal motivation to control prejudice actually do exhibit less racial bias than those with an external motivation (Devine, Plant, Amodio, Harmon-Jones & Vance, 2002). Along those same lines, Legault et al. (2011) predicted that phrasing anti-prejudice messages in such a way that emphasizes internal reasons for being non-prejudiced would lead to lower prejudice scores than messages that emphasize more external reasons for being non-prejudiced.

In their study, non-Black, Canadian college students read either an *autonomy-support* brochure (that emphasized an internal motivation and highlighted that it was the individual's choice to be nonprejudiced) or a brochure with greater *controlling* themes (that emphasized external motivation by highlighting that prejudice must be decreased and individuals must be less prejudiced).

Participants in the control condition did not read a brochure. Afterwards, each participant completed a survey to measure their level of prejudice.

The results showed that participants who read the *autonomy-support* anti-prejudice message actually displayed less prejudice than the participants in the control condition, who showed less prejudice in turn than the participants who read the *controlling* message. These results show that the motivation to control prejudice can be a reflection of people's personal goals, but it can also come from the anti-prejudice messages. Ironically, if they are not carefully worded, the very messages that are designed to combat prejudice might actually lead to an increase in prejudice. Don't you think it's time for us all to decide to be less prejudiced?

References

- Devine, P. G., Plant, E. A., Amodio, D. M., Harmon-Jones, E., & Vance, S. L. (2002). The regulation of explicit and implicit race bias: The role of motivations to respond without prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 835–848.
- Legault, L., Gutsell, J. N., & Inzlicht, M. (2011). [DOI: 10.1177/0956797611427918]. Ironic effects of anti-prejudice messages: How motivational intervention reduces (but also increases) prejudice. *Psychological Science*, 22, 1472–1477.

Case Study 3

Prejudice toward migrants is difficult to think about

As mentioned in the text, stereotypes and prejudice form for a variety of reasons. One of the less obvious causes of stereotypes and prejudice occurs when people are asked to think about complex information. Researchers in Australia were interested in determining whether bias toward migrants may stem partially from the fact that migrants are more difficult to think about. Unlike more “typical” members of one’s country—who were born there, who speak the same language, who look like everyone else—immigrants to a country often stand out from the rest. When individuals appear to be out of place in a particular environment it becomes a little more challenging to process information about them. Could that processing difficulty lead to prejudice?

The answer, according to Rubin, Paolini, and Crisp (2010) [DOI: 10.1016/j.jesp.2009.09.006] is *yes*. Participants in their study were asked to imagine that they were part of either Group A or Group B. There were 20 people in both groups and everyone had been randomly assigned to their group. Next, they were asked to imagine that some of the individuals from both groups had been randomly selected to switch and go to the other group (so some members who started out in Group A migrated to Group B and vice versa). After this task, the participants were asked to allocate points to individuals who were original members of their groups and individuals who had migrated into their group. The participants then rated the different group members on various traits and finally rated how easy or difficult it was to think about the members who stayed in the same group versus the members who had switched groups.

The results showed that participants tended to allocate fewer points to the migrant group members, they rated these individuals less positively and they found these individuals to be more difficult to think about. Intriguingly, these difficulty ratings helped to explain the bias these participants had against the group members who had migrated into their groups. So, over and above the traditional bias we feel against people who are not part of our groups and against those in the minority, these results show an increase in negative feelings toward individuals who are out of place and therefore difficult to think about.

Reference

- Rubin, M., Paolini, S., & Crisp, R. J. (2010). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jesp.2009.09.006]. A processing fluency explanation of bias against migrants. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 21–28.

Case Study 4

Trying to overcome stereotype effects

SP Chapter 5 describes stereotyping as largely automatic. This has been demonstrated for categories such as race, sex, and age (Kawakami et al., 2000) [DOI:10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.871]. It is important to distinguish between stereotype activation and stereotype application. As described in SP Chapter 5, activation is influenced by salient cues, use of group labels, and the presence of a group member. Application refers to using these stereotypes to make judgments or guide actions towards a group. Research demonstrated that it may be possible to avoid using these stereotypes, for instance when people are motivated to be nonprejudiced (Kawakami et al., 2000). Thus the activated stereotypes are not applied.

Kawakami et al. argued that it is possible that low-prejudiced people have learned through practice to control stereotyping. Therefore they investigated whether training in negating stereotypic associations reduces the likelihood of automatic stereotype activation.

Specifically, participants were presented with two types of tasks, a training task, and an assessment of stereotypic activation task. In the training task, participants practiced responding “NO” to stereotypic traits and “YES” to nonstereotypic traits after the presentation of a category. After this intense training, participants showed a reduction in stereotype activation.

Other studies by Kawakami et al. (2000) replicated those effects, showing that participants who received cursory training or no prior training in negating stereotypic associations automatically activated stereotypes, while participants who received extensive training showed a reduction in stereotype activation.

Reference

- Kawakami, K., Dovidio, J. F., Moll, J., Hermsen, S., & Russin, A. (2000). [DOI:10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.871]. Just say no (to stereotyping): Effects of training in the negation of stereotypic associations on stereotype activation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 871–888.

Case Study 5

The power of contact: Seeing is believing

The latter part of Chapter 5 talks a lot about the conditions under which contact with members of other groups will lead to a decrease in stereotyping and prejudice. Some research shows that contact is helpful in changing stereotypes for the better and some research shows that contact does not influence one’s stereotypes. So, which is it?

In a recent set of studies on this topic, researchers from across, England, Europe, South Africa, Canada, and the United States analysed survey data and found that across these diverse countries,

individuals who live in social contexts in which there is more positive intergroup contact and where this type of contact is the norm are less prejudiced (Christ, et al., 2014) [DOI: [10.1073/pnas.1320901111](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320901111)]. One of the more striking findings was that individuals didn't need to engage in the intergroup contact themselves—simply seeing others engaging in positive intergroup contact was related to less prejudice toward other groups. In addition, the researchers found that individuals who lived in more diverse environments became less prejudiced over time (which goes against one explanation for the contact hypothesis, which is that the results are entirely explained by people who are less prejudiced choosing to live in more diverse environments).

Overall, these exciting results show that, in environments that support diversity and positive intergroup contact, prejudice is reduced because seeing is believing!

Reference

- Christ, O., Schmid, K., Lolliot, S., Swart, H., Stolle, D., Tausch, N., Al Ramiah, A., Wagner, U., Vertovec, S., & Hewstone, M. (2014). [DOI: [10.1073/pnas.1320901111](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320901111)]. Contextual effect of positive intergroup contact on outgroup prejudice. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*, 3996–4000.