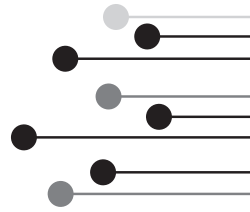# 2

Categorization and Stereotyping

Cognitive Processes That Shape Perceived Diversity

Our study of diversity must begin with how we think about people who are different from ourselves. Two cognitive processes—categorization and stereotyping—frame our study of social thinking. Social categorization and stereotyping help shape the social world we perceive. This chapter will consider social categorization and stereotyping in turn, followed by a discussion of their implications for understanding people who are socially different from ourselves.

Social Categorization

How many people will you interact with, encounter, see, think about, or imagine today? Think about it for a minute—the number is probably several hundred people or higher for a typical day. Each of those individuals has a particular age, body shape, race or ethnicity, appearance, hair style, and language. If you were to take notice, you would likely find that they also differ in their income, political orientation, religion, health status, and many other ways. We obviously cannot possibly remember the distinctive qualities of even a small fraction of the people we encounter. So what happens to all that social information? Making sense of the diversity around us involves a great deal of information processing, often more thinking than we have time for or care to do. To ease this information processing burden, we employ categories because thinking about categories of people (e.g., rich, middle-professional class, middle-working class, and poor people) requires less attention and less memory resources than trying to remember individual characteristics. **Social categorization** involves thinking about people primarily as members of social groups rather than as individuals and refers to the process by which we place people into groups based on characteristics like gender or ethnicity. Social categories organize and economize our thinking about other people, especially those who are different from ourselves.

Topics Covered In This Chapter

- Social categorization and the sources of our social categories

- The effects of categorizing people on perceived diversity

- Stereotypes and their effect on perceived diversity

- How stereotypes confirm themselves in our thinking

21

In the following pages, we must address two fundamental questions about social categorization. First, how do we decide which category (or categories) to use when people can be categorized in many different ways? Second, how does social categorization affect our thinking about other people? We acknowledged above that social categories are beneficial for at least one reason—they help us economize on our everyday thinking about people. In what ways, however, do social categories influence our perceptions of others?

Think of someone you know well, such as a roommate or friend. Make a mental list of the possible social categories to which this person could be assigned. Most people are part of many social groups; some are easily visible; others are not. We have considered why social categorization is fundamental to social information processing, but how do we select the social categories? Or do they select themselves?

The Neuropsychology of Categorization

Age, sex, and race are regarded by psychologists as **primary social categories**. Primary categorizations occur first and fastest when we consider other people. We notice, too quickly to be able to think about it, other peoples' age, sex, and race before noticing other categorizations that might apply to them. Researchers measured subjects' brain-wave activity in the part of the brain devoted to attention as they simultaneously presented pictures of Black and White male and female targets. The race of the targets was noticed in about one tenth of a second, and subjects noticed the targets' sex only slightly slower. Other research suggests that we make age-based categorizations nearly as quickly (Brewer & Lui, 1989). This means that primary categorization is **automatic categorization**—that is, it is spontaneous, unreflective, and uncontrollable. The social categories race, sex, and age are similar in several respects, and this may shed light on why they are primary categories. As David Schneider (2004) points out, each of these categories has physical markers that are visible and easily identified. Skin color and facial features help us identify race. Body shape and stature enable sex categorizations. Finally, hair color and skin type help distinguish older from younger people.

The fact that we categorize people in terms of their race, sex, and age in a fraction of a second indicates that social categorization should be connected to areas of the brain that control automatic processing of stimuli. How is the brain involved in social categorization, and what does neuropsychology teach us about stereotypes and stereotyping? Based on early research with animals and humans that focused on learning, emotional reactions, and threat detection, the amygdala emerged as a possible center of automatic stereotypic judgments. The amygdala is a part of the brain that processes and evaluates inputs with emotional significance, and indeed the amygdala has been linked to the processing of social information (Adolphs, 2009). Researcher Elizabeth Phelps and her colleagues conducted one of the earliest studies of the amygdala's role in social categorization using functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, technology. White participants viewed unfamiliar Black and White faces while the activation of their amygdalae was assessed via fMRI (Phelps et al., 2000). They found greater amygdala activation when participants viewed Black compared with White faces, and this activation was correlated with measures of implicit (or automatic) racial bias based on reaction time and startle eye blink. This basic finding—greater amygdala activation in response to

Black compared to White faces—has been replicated often by other researchers using different categorization tasks (see Amodio & Lieberman, 2009). Whereas early fMRI research focused on White participants' categorization of White and Black faces, amygdala activation in response to Black faces has also been observed in African American participants (Lieberman, Hariri, Jarcho, Eisenberger, & Bookheimer, 2005). How could Black individuals have automatic bias against their own racial group? The best explanation argues that negative race stereotypes are so engrained in American culture that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, passively acquires them through socialization and repeated uncritical exposure.

Other regions of the brain are involved in social categorization and bias, as Jennifer Richeson and her colleagues (2003) found in a fascinating study. White participants took a test of implicit (automatic) racial bias and a Stroop test. In the Stroop test, one has to name the color of a word while the word itself may be a different color name, which is very distracting. Needless to say, the Stroop test requires a high level of executive attention and control to do accurately. Those two tests were strongly negatively correlated, meaning that participants who had high executive control showed low implicit racial bias. Separately, participants did the fMRI face categorization part of the study. Richeson et al. found that participants' right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) and not the amygdala was active when shown pictures of Black males. The DLPFC is associated with executive control, a finding that was corroborated by the large positive correlation of DLPFC activation with the Stroop scores. Finally, the study found that DLPFC activity—which is essentially a measure of the strength of one's executive control—reduced the correlation between implicit racial bias and Stroop scores. What does this mean? The amygdala was not activated in response to unfamiliar Black faces because participants overrode that impulse with higher level executive control, and the fMRI data confirmed it. The study shows that it is possible to inhibit one's automatic racial bias, but it takes cognitive resources, and those resources are often in short supply.

Subsequent research by David Amodio and Patricia Devine (2006) helps us see the distinct neuropsychology of prejudice and stereotyping. They measured implicit *evaluation* by having participants respond to Black and White faces that were paired with pleasant and unpleasant stimuli in a reaction-time task. The implicit *stereotyping* task measured the association of a series of descriptive words (e.g., *athletic*) with the categories of Black and White, again via reaction time. Their study found evidence of both prejudice and stereotyping among White participants, but these responses were largely independent of each other. Moreover, the affective or evaluative aspects of categorization appear to involve the amygdala, whereas the cognitive or stereotypic aspects of categorization appear to involve the areas of the brain responsible for executive control, like the DLPFC (Amodio & Lieberman, 2009). We shall study prejudice, the evaluation of social categories, and diversity, more closely in Chapter 4.

Beside the amygdala and the DLPFC, two other areas of the brain are implicated in primary social categorization (Kubota, Banaji, & Phelps, 2012). To categorize people into racial categories, one must first be able to do face detection (recognizing a face as different from an object) and face recognition (associating a face with a racial category). Using fMRI methods, researchers have observed greater fusiform face area (FFA) activation in participants viewing same-race compared with other-race faces (Ronquillo et al., 2007). Furthermore, participants with pro-White racial bias tend to show greater FFA activation—or, in other words, "see" larger differences between Black and White faces.

This reveals the influence of socialized racial bias on perception (Brosch, Bar-David, & Phelps, 2013). Finally, the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) is an area of the brain that helps, along with the DLPFC, control the expression of racial bias. A review of recent fMRI research in this area suggests that the ACC monitors conflict between one's automatic racial biases and more egalitarian and socially approved explicit racial attitudes. The DLPFC, in turn, assists in the suppression of implicit bias, allowing explicit (and presumably less biased) racial attitudes to emerge in behavior.

Beyond Categorization

Although categorizing people by their race, sex, and age occurs automatically in our social thinking, many other dimensions of diversity—some much more important to us than primary differences—are available to further organize and simplify our social worlds. Question: How do we decide what category, from among the many available, to use to think about someone? Answer: Beyond the primary categories, whatever characteristic of that person commands or occupies our attention is likely to inform our social categorization. Psychological researchers have found that categorization is driven by attention. The more we attend to an aspect of a person—such as one's weight, race, or physical disability—the more likely it is that we will categorize that individual with similar people we have noticed in the past (E. Smith & Zarate, 1992). Following this attention principle, social categorization can occur because of a distinctive feature (e.g., wheelchair user), because a situation highlights a category (e.g., at work you may think in terms of employee versus customer), or because a category is associated with a perceived threat to our values (e.g., Muslims, for many American Christians). Let's consider the factors that guide our attention and, in turn, social categorization.

Perceptual Similarity

People who appear to be similar in some respect tend to be grouped together in our minds. The primary categories mentioned above share many similar features, but even beyond those fundamental categories, the principle of perceptual similarity guides our thinking about people. For example, people with a physical disability can be thought of as a group even if those people are otherwise quite different.

Distinctive features activate categories for two reasons. First, people who share a distinctive characteristic tend to be associated in memory, even if they are different in many other ways. When we see, for example, a person walking with the assistance of a cane or walker, we recall other similar people we have encountered. Because of their association in memory, we tend to think of those people as a group. Second, information about salient categories is immediately available to the perceiver compared to other, less salient categories. It is easier for us to notice and remember other information about people with disabilities than, for example, gay men and lesbians because, unlike sexual orientation, physical disabilities themselves are salient and memorable. Some common, distinctive social categories include sex, race, and ethnicity (to the extent that it is perceptually salient, such as through language differences), as well as physical disability, obesity, economic status, and age.

The perceptual salience of a characteristic is partly due to the situation in which it is encountered. Shelley Taylor and her colleagues have found that **solo status**, such as being the only woman on a committee or the only Asian student in a class, commands others' attention (Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978). In one study, participants watched a group of six students discuss a topic; the groups consisted of each possible distribution of men and women (e.g., six men, no women; five men, one woman, etc.). Participants then evaluated the contributions of a given group member. The results showed that the significance attributed to a group member's comments was inversely proportional to the size of their minority group. In other words, as people become more noticeable in a group, acquiring more solo status, their actions stand out and acquire greater importance in perceivers' eyes. This occurs even when the quantity of the member's contribution to the group remains the same across the various group types. Other research shows that evaluations of minority or solo status individuals are more exaggerated (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). We will take up solo status again in Chapter 6 when we learn about how females deal with solo status. In sum, distinctive attributes— whether that distinctiveness is inherent or situationally enhanced—is a basis for social categorization.

> *How do dress codes and uniform policies in schools or workplaces relate to solo status?*
>
> *Do tattoos and piercings, through which people express their individuality, make them (ironically) more likely to be categorized by others?*

Accessibility

Our social thinking is also governed by categories that are accessible. We are more likely to group people by frequently used categories or categories that have just recently been used than categories we rarely use. If we are accustomed to thinking about people in terms of a certain dimension, we will tend to activate these categories to deal with new or unknown social situations, thus adding to their accessibility.

In a demonstration of the influence of accessible social categories on social perception, researchers primed the category *women* or *Chinese* (or no category) by presenting one of these words for very short durations to study participants via computer (Macrae, Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1995). After the priming task, participants viewed a videotape (ostensibly to rate the tape) of a Chinese woman reading. Thus, participants' impressions of the person in the tape could be based on either social category: her sex or her ethnicity. In a final task, participants identified computer-presented trait words manipulated to include some that were typical of the social categories women and Chinese. The results were striking. Those participants who were primed with the category woman were faster in recognizing the women-typical traits but slower in recognizing the Chinese-typical traits than were the participants who had no social category prime. Parallel findings occurred for those who were primed with the Chinese category. They more quickly

responded to Chinese-typical words and more slowly to women-typical words than did people with no category prime.

This study makes two important points. First, when more than one social category can be used to think about someone, *accessible* social categories—ones that we have recently used—take precedence. Second, when an accessible social category is appropriated to process social information, other relevant categories are inhibited—that is, they become less helpful than if we had no social category to work with. Here we see another aspect of the efficiency of social categories: When one is activated for use, others are deactivated until the social information processing is complete.

Perceived Threat

Earlier we learned that the amygdala processes social information that is unfamiliar or threatening. A third factor that guides social categorization is whether a person is perceived as potentially threatening. Research by Saul Miller and his colleagues demonstrates that when we perceive potential threat or harm in another person, we are much more likely to categorize that person as a member of an out-group (Miller, Maner, & Becker, 2010). **In-groups** and **out-groups** refer to social groups or categories of which we are and are not a member, respectively. In one study, these researchers had White participants categorize the race of White and Black faces as quickly and accurately as possible. The faces were selected to have either angry or happy expressions. The researchers hypothesized that, for typical White participants, angry Black males would be the most threatening and therefore should be most quickly categorized as an out-group member. As they predicted, participants correctly categorized the race of the angry Black male faces in just under 500 milliseconds (or one-half second), faster than any other type of face. Happy White female faces were the least threatening, and indeed participants were slowest in categorizing those faces.

> *List three of your in-groups. Now list some out-groups—groups of which you are not a member. Is it harder to identify your out-groups? Why?*

To sum up, our social categorizations are not random. Some categories select themselves by virtue of their visual distinctiveness; others because of their frequent use. Categorization also occurs when we want to define ourselves as different from people who are unfamiliar and threatening. Armed with some basic knowledge about social categorization, let us further examine how social categories influence the diversity we perceive in our social world.

What Do Social Categories Do?

Social Categories Economize Our Social Thinking

What if you kept your e-mails in one large file on your computer or phone? Finding an e-mail from a particular person or on a specific topic would necessarily involve

looking through the whole list—an inefficient filing system to say the least. Obviously a categorization system with folders and subfolders makes storing and locating any individual e-mail much easier. The same principle operates in dealing with social information. Placing people in categories facilitates efficient social information processing, enabling us to combine individuals who have a similar quality or status into a group. As a result, thinking about groups of people requires fewer cognitive resources than thinking about individuals, leaving us better equipped to face the many other demands on our cognitive resources.

Researchers did a series of experiments designed to examine the cognitive efficiency of social categories (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). They had participants form an impression of a hypothetical person while doing a simultaneous cognitive task. The researchers reasoned that if social categories conserve cognitive resources, then people who are allowed or encouraged to use them in an impression-formation task should have more resources available to do other things. In one study, participants were shown a list of 10 traits (presented one by one on a computer) that described a hypothetical person named John. The traits included those typical of, for example, an artist (e.g., creative, temperamental) or a doctor (e.g., responsible, caring). Some of the participants were assigned to see an appropriate social category label (*artist* or *doctor*) appear above the trait words; others did not see the category label. While they were doing this impression-formation task, participants were also listening to a tape-recorded, factual lecture on Indonesian geography. After the tasks were complete, participants were given a 20-item multiple-choice test on the facts in the audiotaped lecture. The results confirmed the researchers' idea: Those who formed their impressions of John with the assistance of an explicit social category scored significantly better on the test of the lecture facts than those who did not have a category made available to them. In short, using a social category made the trait task easier and left those people with more resources for listening to and remembering the lecture.

A follow-up study showed that this influence of social categories on the performance of a simultaneous cognitive task was not merely intentional—an effect that participants thought should occur so they behaved accordingly. In a similar study, Macrae and his colleagues primed the social category word, by flashing it for merely a fraction of a second on the computer and then presented the trait (Macrae, Milne et al., 1994). Still, participants who formed impressions of Jim with the aid of a social category (albeit one that they did not recognize!) performed better on a simultaneous but unrelated cognitive task compared to those who did not receive a social category prime. Together, these studies demonstrate the ability of social categories to economize cognitive resources, such as attention and memory, and make them available for other needs.

Social Categories Guide Social Judgments

It is well established that social categories and the beliefs that we associate with them influence our thinking about people from other groups (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). Social category–based beliefs set up expectations for people from a particular group, and much research shows that these expectations influence our perceptions and judgments of people based on their group membership.

For example, researchers investigated the effects of class-based categorization on judgments of a child's academic performance (Baron, Albright, & Malloy, 1995). They

had participants watch a video tape of a girl playing near her home and in a neighborhood playground. In the low social class condition, the home and playground were urban and run down; in the high social class condition, the home and playground were spacious, well kept, and obviously exclusive. Participants also watched a (bogus) tape of the child taking an intelligence test. The results showed that social class affected the ratings of the child's academic ability but only when they had no information about the child's academic ability. Participants who had categorized the child as from a low socioeconomic background evaluated her test performance more negatively than those who believed she was an upper middle-class student. However, this social categorization effect did not occur when the participants were given information about the child's academic abilities. This study shows how categorization affects the way we think about people but also suggests that the influence of social categories, as a basis for judgments of others, may be overridden by other, more relevant information.

In another study, participants studied some information about a basketball player and then listened to a taped radio broadcast of an actual basketball game involving the player (Stone, Perry, & Darley, 1997). After the broadcast, participants rated the attributes and performance of the player. The information about the player, however, was manipulated in two ways. Participants were led to believe that the player was either Black or White (social information) and that he possessed either low or high athletic ability (individual information). The results revealed that participants' ratings of the player were influenced only by the social information. Those who believed the player was Black rated him as having higher physical and basketball ability than did participants who believed he was White. However, the White player was attributed with more effort than the Black player. This study also demonstrates the power of social categories to influence our perceptions of individuals and suggests that individualistic (and seemingly more accurate) information can be overridden by social categorical information.

The influence of social categories over our thinking about socially different people cannot be separated from the beliefs and knowledge we associate with a particular group of people. In the study described above, a simple social category can determine whether we see an athletic performance as due to athletic ability or effort (Stone et al., 1997). This influence of social categories, however, depends on the association of particular traits and abilities with a social category. In other words, we perceive athletic ability in the performance of a Black athlete not just because we think of him as Black but also because we associate certain traits with the members of his group. This leads us to the second basic cognitive process through which we order and understand our social worlds: the stereotype.

Stereotyping

Categories help economize our cognitive resources, but they also help organize knowledge and experience with people from other social groups. When we categorize people based on a group membership, we risk discarding a great deal of individual information. We recover some of this information by developing a general description, called a *stereotype*, of the people in a social category and associating it in memory with that

category. A **stereotype** is a set of beliefs about the members of a social group and usually consists of personality traits, behaviors, and motives (Allport, 1954). Stereotypes are also assumed to be beliefs about people from social groups. That is, when we stereotype people, we also apply a set of beliefs that represent the qualities of a group to *individuals* from that social group.

To learn how social categories and stereotypes are linked in memory, try this: What traits and behaviors come to mind when I say professor? Intelligent? Nerdy? You likely have little trouble accessing a general description of a typical professor because that stereotypical information is closely associated with the category *professor* in your mind. In addition to personal traits, that stereotype probably carries information about professors' education, income, and perhaps their social and political attitudes. In terms of our e-mail folder metaphor, stereotypes are essentially brief summaries of the contents of a folder. They provide a general idea of what is in the folder and save us the work of sifting through every individual element for that information.

As with social categorization, some stereotyping occurs automatically (Devine & Sharp, 2009). That is, the association between some social categories and the traits and beliefs we associate with those categories is so well learned that stereotyping occurs unintentionally. Mahzarin Banaji and Curtis Hardin (1996) had participants view words that were either related to females (e.g., *mother, nurse*), males (e.g., *father, doctor*), or unrelated to gender, followed by a gender pronoun (e.g., *him, her*). The words were displayed on a computer screen for about two tenths of a second, too quickly for participants to actually read the words. Following these words, a gendered pronoun appeared (e.g., *him, her*) and participants had to decide whether the pronoun was male or female by pressing a computer key. Participants made faster associations between male words and pronouns and female words and pronouns than between gender-inconsistent words and pronouns. Thus, even though the participants were unaware of the connections they were making, their responses showed that gendered descriptors (stereotypic traits) and the appropriate gender pronouns (social category) were connected in their memory. Moreover, automatic stereotyping occurred even when participants declared, via questionnaire, that they did not hold gender stereotypes.

Is automatic stereotyping inevitable? No, a variety of conditions can get in the way of the automatic activation of a stereotype when we are exposed to someone from a stereotyped group (Devine & Sharp, 2009). First, even though it occurs outside of our control, automatic stereotyping still takes cognitive resources like attention. Numerous experiments show that perceivers who are made cognitively busy by having mental tasks to do engage in less stereotyping than perceivers with a full complement of attention (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). In other words, a member of a stereotyped group must have our attention for stereotypes about his or her group to be activated in us. Second, the context in which we perceive or interact with a person from a stereotyped group affects how much we stereotype that person. For example, participants were more biased against an Asian target when the target was seen in a classroom context compared to a basketball court; the opposite pattern of bias occurred when the target was Black (Barden, Maddux, Petty, & Brewer, 2004). In that study, seeing an outgroup member in a stereotype-inconsistent situation prevented the stereotyping that occurred when the Asian target was seen in a classroom context.

Other research shows that the goal of an interracial interaction also changes the stereotyping that occurs in that situation. In one study, White participants interacted with

a Black partner under one of three conditions: They were instructed to evaluate their partner (and thus have superior status relative to their partner), get along with him or her (and have equal status), or be evaluated by their partner (and have inferior status) (Richeson & Ambady, 2001). Race stereotyping in the White participants occurred less in the equal and inferior status than in the superior status interactions. Here we see how interaction goals can undercut stereotyping, a topic we will consider at greater length in Chapter 12. Third, automatic stereotypes can be inhibited if we are motivated to avoid them. Motivation to avoid stereotyping another person may occur because the individual values fair-mindedness (Moskovitz, Salomon, & Taylor, 2000), has been instructed by an authority to not stereotype (Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001), or wants to make a good impression on the person (Sinclair & Kunda, 1999). In summary, stereotyping can occur spontaneously when confronted with someone from an out-group, but automatic stereotyping can also be brought under our conscious control with the proper motivation and practice. Our ability to overcome well-learned and unconscious biases and the techniques that help us think in less stereotypic ways will be considered again in Chapter 12.

Where Do Stereotypes Come From?

Thus far we have learned about the *processes* of stereotyping—how and why we stereotype other people. Let's shift our focus now to stereotype *content*—the characteristics that we associate with people from other social groups. Below we will consider some general rules that apply to the content of stereotypes, regardless of the specific group, followed by a discussion of where stereotype content comes from. In later chapters, we will confront the content of our stereotypes of specific groups based on race (Chapter 5), gender (Chapter 6), sexual orientation (Chapter 7), weight (Chapter 8), and age (Chapter 9).

Generally, the content of stereotypes is marked by two qualities. First, stereotypic beliefs tend to be dispositional; that is, they inform us about the inner qualities of individuals based merely on their group membership. Given that we cannot readily see an individual's personality or abilities, stereotyping is potentially valuable and advantageous in social interactions. The problem is that behavior is caused by *both* inner, dispositional, and outer, situational, factors. Thus, stereotypes are over informed by dispositional information and inherently inaccurate.

Second, the evaluative content of stereotypes tends to be negative. Research demonstrates that our stereotypes of many social groups—including Blacks, women, poor and unemployed people, gays and lesbians, people with physical and mental disabilities, and overweight people—are predominantly composed of negatively valued qualities (Allon, 1982; Brigham, 1974; Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Farina, Sherman, & Allen, 1968; Furnham, 1982a; Gibbons, Sawin, & Gibbons, 1979; Herek, 1984). There are exceptions to this *stereotypes are negative* rule, but even people we positively stereotype (e.g., Asian Americans are intelligent) are limited by the narrowness and uniformity of those positive beliefs (see Diversity Issue 2.2 to think more about positive stereotypes). In sum, the dispositional assumptions inherent in stereotyping are negative, inaccurate, and are applied uniformly to each individual in that social category. Moreover, the negative traits and emotions associated with stereotyping form the basis for prejudice, a topic to be addressed in Chapter 4.

> *When does a stereotype go from being a useful cognitive strategy to being prejudicial and unfair? Can you draw a clear separation between the two?*

Operating together, social categorization and stereotyping influence our understanding of the social differences that surround us, but where do our stereotypes come from? Stereotypic beliefs are derived from personal exposure to people from other social groups, our attention to the covariation of unusual events and people, and are learned from family and other cultural conduits.

Personal Exposure

When we know little about the members of another group, we rely on personal contact with or observations of them to inform our beliefs about the whole group (Rothbart, Dawes, & Park, 1984). Our observations of and experiences with socially different people contribute to stereotypes in two ways.

First, our stereotypic beliefs are informed by the social roles that we observe group members occupy. For example, we might observe that many more women than men are elementary school teachers and nurses. As a result, we may assume that women as a group are nurturant and helpful, erroneously believing that women's association with these roles reflects a correspondent inner quality (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). In fact, social roles are more likely assigned by society rather than chosen by the individual, so the behaviors we observe of the members of a social group in a given role do not necessarily reflect their personalities or personal preferences.

Second, our stereotypes are likely to include beliefs that help us explain others' disadvantage or misfortune. Psychologists have demonstrated that belief in a just world—where people generally get what they deserve—is a common way of thinking about others (Lerner, 1980). In light of **just world belief**, when other people experience misfortune or tragedy, it is easier to hold them responsible for their plight than to admit that bad things can happen to undeserving people. Accordingly, when we observe a group of people who face disadvantage, we tend to suppose that they have an attribute or inner flaw that somehow caused their regrettable situation. For example, rather than being seen as victims of broader economic forces such as unemployment, poor people are stereotyped as lazy and unmotivated, dispositions that cause their disadvantage (Furnham & Gunter, 1984).

Distinctive Individuals and Behaviors

Our stereotypes would be more accurate if they represented the attributes of the most typical group members. The problem is that typical group members are neither noticeable nor memorable. In fact, it is the unusual individual that grabs our attention. Atypical group members stand out; their behavior and appearance are vivid and memorable. Hence, their attributes and actions exert disproportionate influence on our thinking about all the members of that social category (Rothbart, Fulero, Jensen, Howard, & Birrel, 1978). This influence is compounded when the social group itself is relatively

small or unusual. Research on the **illusory correlation** demonstrates that the co-occurrence of an unusual behavior *and* a distinctive social category is particularly influential, leading us to erroneously believe that the two things are related (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976). Illusory correlations contribute to our stereotypes, causing them to reflect more unusual behavior or attributes than is warranted. As an example of illusory correlation, consider the drag queens who often march in gay rights parades and demonstrations. Cross-dressing is an unusual behavior that coincidentally occurs with the social category *gay*. The rarity of that combination of occurrences sparks an assumption that they are related, contributing to the stereotypical (and erroneous) notion that gay men are transvestites or, more generally, sexual perverts.

In one study, participants read a series of sentences that described positive and negative behaviors exhibited by hypothetical members of a majority (Group A) or a minority (Group B) (Johnson & Mullen, 1994). In a following task administered by a computer, participants read the sentences again, but this time the group information was omitted. After deciding whether the behavior was one that was described earlier as being committed by a majority or minority group member, they pressed a key to communicate their decision. The results revealed that participants over attributed negative actions to minority group actors, and they were faster in making these decisions compared to the other pairs of information (positive act by a minority actor, any act by a majority actor). Thus, stereotypes can arise when we erroneously connect unusual (and often negative) behaviors with unusual groups.

Socialization

Finally, cultures and societies invest in collective views of social groups, called **cultural stereotypes**. For example, beliefs about overweight people are much different (and more negative) in the United States compared to Mexico (Crandall & Martinez, 1996). Our stereotypic beliefs, in turn, are socialized by the steady influence of family members and television, two important conduits of cultural influence. Because children admire and imitate their parents, they accept parents' social attitudes rather uncritically. Parents' stereotypes are communicated to their children in many subtle ways, as in the kind of playmates that meet with their approval, warnings about neighborhoods to avoid, or casual use of racial or ethnic epithets in the home.

Cultural stereotypes tend to be learned early in life and rehearsed often. This is particularly true for people whose cultural education is limited to what is on TV or who otherwise have few opportunities to socialize with people from different ethnic, cultural, or economic backgrounds. When stereotypes are instilled early in life and go essentially unchallenged into adolescence and adulthood, they become what psychologists call dominant responses. That is, recalling well-learned, stereotypic beliefs tend to be the first response to encountering socially different people. Researcher Alan Lambert and his colleagues (2003) suggest that, as dominant responses, stereotypes are more likely to influence our thinking and behavior in public than in private situations. Public situations (e.g., shopping malls) require more cognitive resources from us; there are more things going on and more to notice, remember, and decide. In an effort to do more economical social thinking then, we tend to fall back on well- learned, stereotypic responses toward others. Indeed, much other research shows that when our cognitive resources

are limited, we are more likely to stereotype other people (see Bodenhausen, 1990, for a clever illustration).

> *What roles do older people typically occupy? What traits do we assume fit those roles? Notice how your beliefs about older people as a group develop as you see them in situations.*

Stereotypes Persist, but Why?

Psychologists have long regarded stereotyping to be part of a significant social problem (Allport, 1954). This is not only because stereotypic beliefs tend to be negative and dispositional. Once established, stereotypes are also difficult to change. Therefore, the influence of stereotypes on our thinking about and behavior toward other people can subtly contribute to prejudice and discrimination of people who are socially different than ourselves. Let us consider a few of the reasons for the persistence of stereotypes.

Stereotypes Are Generally Accurate

Until recently, stereotypes were assumed by the social scientific community to be inaccurate. Part of the reason for this, according to Lee Jussim and his colleagues, is that because stereotypes are associated with *social* wrongs (i.e., prejudice and discrimination), they were assumed to also be *factually* wrong (Jussim, Cain, Crawford, Harber, & Cohen, 2009). However, when stereotype accuracy is rigorously tested, most stereotypes are generally accurate. The accuracy of a stereotype can be assessed in two ways (Judd & Park, 1993; Jussim et al., 2016). First, we can examine discrepancy scores between our perception of a group with the group's actual level on some characteristic. For example, we tend to stereotype Asian Americans as good at math, a perception that can be assessed for accuracy against Asian Americans actual math ability or achievement. Lower discrepancy scores indicate greater stereotype accuracy. Second, we can examine the correspondence of our beliefs about the difference between two groups with their actual difference. For example, we tend to stereotype women as more emotional than men. If our beliefs about the direction and size of that gender difference correspond with the actual difference, the stereotype is accurate on that criterion.

Lee Jussim and his colleagues reviewed studies that explicitly tested the accuracy of stereotypes or provided data that allowed stereotype accuracy to be tested (Jussim et al., 2009). Their review found that most people accurately judged differences between racial- or ethnic-based in-groups and out-groups based on their racial stereotypes. Similar accuracy was found in people's use of their gender stereotypes to make judgments about the differences between males and females. Furthermore, when inaccuracies occurred, they took the form of exaggerations of true group differences no more or less than underestimations of group differences. In an update, Jussim and his researcher colleagues (2016) reviewed stereotype accuracy research published between 2009 and the present. Reviewing ten studies on gender stereotypes, they found that stereotypes

were accurate in five, nearly accurate in one, and inaccurate in four. However, in those four studies, participants' gender stereotypes underestimated the true gender difference. After reviewing studies on many different kinds of stereotypes (e.g., age, personality, political), Jussim et al. (2016) concluded that, with the exception of national stereotypes, there is a high level of accuracy in stereotypes held about other groups. Other work suggests that stereotype accuracy may be more prevalent among minority, compared to majority, group individuals perhaps because people from minority groups have more to lose if they misjudge the actions of majority group people (C. Ryan, 1996). In that study, Black and White college students' perceptions of their own and the others' group were measured in the two ways described above. On the first measure of accuracy, the results showed that Blacks were more accurate in their beliefs about Whites compared to the accuracy of Whites' beliefs about Blacks. On the second measure, Blacks judgments about the proportion of Whites who possessed a stereotypic trait were more accurate than Whites' judgments about the proportion of Blacks who possessed stereotypic traits.

Stereotypes Confirm Themselves

A second explanation for the resistance of stereotypes to change is due to our tendency to confirm rather than disconfirm stereotypical expectations about other groups (Rothbart, Evans, & Fulero, 1979). Because much stereotypic thinking is automatic and conserves cognitive resources, we selectively attend to evidence that supports our stereotypes. By contrast, attending to evidence that our stereotypes are inaccurate or misapplied requires thoughtful and deliberate action, which few of us are motivated to do.

In a demonstration of the tendency for stereotypes to confirm themselves, researchers presented study participants with a photograph of a woman who was known (through pretesting) to be a typical-looking member of the category *older woman* (Brewer, Dull, & Lui, 1981). After viewing the photograph, participants were presented with statements about the woman that were either stereotype-consistent (e.g., "she likes to knit"), stereotype-inconsistent (e.g., "she is politically active"), or of mixed content (e.g., "she walks with a cane and runs her own business"). Using a computer to present the statements, the researchers measured how long it took participants to process each statement. After the computer portion of the study, participants' memory for the statements was also tested. The results showed statements that were consistent with participants' stereotype of older women were processed in less time than stereotype-inconsistent statements and were easily recalled. Stereotype- inconsistent statements were processed slowly, but were also remembered well by participants. Participants' ability to remember stereotype-inconsistent statements, however, may have been due to the extra time they spent studying the statements. Statements with mixed content (e.g., an old woman trait and a young woman trait) were processed slowly and not well remembered.

This research demonstrates that recognition and memory is better for information that is consistent with our stereotypes compared to information that is contradictory or only partly relevant to our stereotypes. Could this occur because people are aware of and therefore act out what *should* happen when their stereotypes are activated? Not according to recent research on implicit stereotyping (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993). That is, when our stereotypes are activated without our knowledge—such as through the use of

a subliminal prime—we still tend to recognize and recall stereo-type-consistent rather than inconsistent information.

Stereotypes also resist disconfirmation because of the way we explain the behavior of people from other groups. John Seta and his colleagues (2003) had participants read about one of two targets: a minister who displayed stereotype-inconsistent (e.g., molested a teenager) or consistent behavior (e.g., volunteered to help a humanitarian organization). Then they read about and rated the behavior of the other target. When participants encountered the stereotype-inconsistent person first, they saw the normal minister's behavior as more due to his personality (e.g., he is a giving person by nature) than when they were not exposed to the deviant minister. This research and the other studies that supported it show that when we encounter a person who does not fit our stereotype of that group—say, a gay male athlete—we reinforce our stereotype by seeing more stereotype-consistent behavior in more typical group members. To sum up, our memory for and reasoning about other people's behavior is biased toward reaffirming stereotypical beliefs.

Stereotypes Diversify Through Subtypes

As we just learned, people who don't fit our stereotype can be disregarded as *exceptions to the rule* by focusing more on the behavior of typical, stereotype-confirming group members. But what do we do when we are chronically confronted with individuals who do not fit our stereotype for that group? As encounters with stereotype-inconsistent people increase, we realize that social categories may be too broad and inclusive, and hence are error prone. In those situations, **subtyping** helps preserve the stereotype of the general category while incorporating new social information by grouping stereotype-inconsistent individuals together into a new subcategory of the original category. For example, as we become more aware of women in business management roles, we will think of them as a subgroup of the general group *women* and modify our general stereotype to accommodate the differentness of the subgroup.

Patricia Devine and her colleague had White students list abilities and characteristics they associated with the group Blacks, as well as for several common subgroupings of Black individuals, including streetwise, ghetto, welfare, athlete, and businessman Blacks (Devine & Baker, 1991). Their interest was not only in the traits associated with each of these subtypes but also with how distinctive (or non-overlapping) the subtypes were. Subtypes are likely to be most useful for accommodating atypical examples of a category if they are distinct from each other and the larger category. Their results indicated that the athlete and businessman subtypes of Blacks were the most clear and distinctive. That is, the traits associated with the athlete (physical qualities and athleticism) and businessman (well-dressed, ambitious, intelligent) subtypes differed from each other and, further, were not reflected in the overall stereotype of Blacks.

These findings suggest that subtypes not only help organize social information that is too diverse for one category to handle, they do so in a way that doesn't require alteration of the stereotype associated with that category. Because Black businessmen are organized independently of Blacks in general, the positive traits associated with Black businessmen are not incorporated into the (largely negative) stereotype of Blacks. With respect to perceiving the social world, then, subtyping is a mixed blessing. Although

subtyping does extend and diversify a social category, essentially allowing more difference to exist within a social group, it also protects our general (superordinate) stereotypic beliefs from change by creating new and separate cognitive groups for individuals who do not fit the stereotype.

Review a bit: How do stereotypes perpetuate themselves?

Consequences of Social Categorization and Stereotyping for Perceiving Diversity

Although they are valuable information processing tools, social categories and stereotypes shape the diversity we perceive in our social surroundings. The very process of sorting people into categories constrains the possible ways that people can differ to group characteristics. Thus, the diversity we perceive in our surroundings is partially dependent on the complexity of our categorization systems. Simplistic, reductionistic categorizations contribute to a less diverse world than categorizations featuring an array of general and subordinate social groupings. They require fewer cognitive resources but may also lead to difficulties in our interactions with members of other groups. The process of categorization, therefore, must balance the need to distill an overwhelming amount of social information with the need to have an accurate picture of our social world and the people in it.

Still, diversity also exists *within* social categories. Even if we believed the world was composed of two categories of people (us and them), we could still find diversity in the members of the other group. As is explained below, we fail to recognize and appreciate this kind of social difference. Moreover, the true diversity within other social groups is dulled by stereotypical thinking. Operating in concert, social categorization and stereotyping have several specific implications for the social difference we perceive around us.

We Believe Groups Are More Different Than They Are

A natural consequence of categorizing objects into groups is to emphasize the distinctiveness of those groups. You will agree that a categorization system must maintain clear distinctions between categories to function efficiently. This cognitive tendency leads to a bias in our social thinking—we overestimate the difference between social groups. This bias has been documented in many studies that involve judgments of physical and social objects. In one study, children viewed pictures of three boys and three girls and assigned trait words to describe each picture (Doise, Deschamps, & Meyer, 1978). Half of the children (determined randomly) were told in advance that they would be rating pictures of boys and girls, thereby increasing the salience of that social category for those participants. Compared to the children who were *not* thinking about a boy/girl categorization, the participants who *were* described boys and girls as being more different. That is, fewer common traits were used to describe boys and girls in the children who were encouraged to categorize the photos by gender. This study shows that our perception of members of other social groups

is influenced by the mere act of categorization. Applied to our own social contexts, this research suggests that some of the difference we perceive between ourselves and individuals from other social groups is spurious or manufactured, yet (as we will see in a later chapter) we behave toward those people as if those differences were genuine.

We Believe Individuals Within Groups Are More Similar Than They Are

A second consequence of thinking about people in terms of their group identification is that we tend to gloss over how different members of a social group actually are. Just as papers and notes placed into a file folder become more indistinguishable, social categorization causes us to overestimate the similarity of people in a social group. This bias is most evident when thinking about *out*-groups, groups of which we are not a member. Termed the **out-group homogeneity effect**, it means we tend to think that they (members of an out-group) are all alike, but we (members of our own group, or *in*-group) are a collective of relatively unique individuals.

There are good explanations for why we attribute more similarity to members of out-groups than is warranted. First, we categorize individuals based on a distinctive or salient characteristic. If people share a distinctive feature, we assume that they also share other qualities (Taylor et al., 1978). Secondly, we interact more with in-group, compared to out-group, members, providing us with more frequent reminders about the differences among individuals in our own group. As a result of the out-group homogeneity effect combined with our stereotype of that group, we tend to view the members of an out-group as all alike and in negative terms. These perceptions are fertile ground for prejudicial reactions such as resentment, fear, and avoidance.

In an examination of the out-group homogeneity effect, Bernadette Park and her colleagues recruited business and engineering majors to list as many types or kinds of business and engineering majors as they could (Park, Ryan, & Judd, 1992). In other words, they looked at how diverse (or homogenous) people saw their own group and a relevant out-group by measuring the subtypes that they generated for each. As they expected, people generated more subgroups for their in-group than the out-group. When this difference was held constant, the out-group homogeneity effect disappeared. In other words, the tendency to see out-group individuals as more homogenous than we see our own group members is driven by the number of subcategories we have at our disposal to know them. In another study, Park et al. (1992) manipulated the use of subgroups by having some participants sort out-group members into subgroups before measuring their perceptions of out-group individuals. The participants who were forced to sort out-group members into a variety of subcategories rated them as more variable than participants who did not do the sorting exercise.

This research discussed above shows that we have more complex cognitive structures (involving more subgroupings or types) for in-groups than we do for out-groups. One implication of this relative ignorance about who *they* are is that we might be highly influenced by evaluative information about out-group individuals. Researchers tested this idea by having participants evaluate a (bogus) application to law school under the pretext that researchers were interested in which information was most diagnostic of law school performance (Linville & Jones, 1980). The application, however, was

manipulated to be from a Black or White applicant and to have either weak or strong credentials. The participants (who were White) who reviewed the strong application rated the Black applicant as more intelligent, motivated, and likable than the White applicant. Those who reviewed the weak application had the opposite reaction: They rated the Black applicant as *less* intelligent, motivated, and likable than the White applicant. In other words, White participants' perceptions of a Black job applicant were more influenced by a single piece of evaluative information than their views of a White applicant were, and this effect can be attributed to the less developed knowledge we possess about out-group, compared with in-group, individuals.

We Explain "Their" Behavior Differently Than "Ours"

The categorization of others and ourselves into different social groups and the application of stereotypes to out-group individuals causes us to offer very different explanations for each others' actions. The results of many studies show our tendency to commit the **ultimate attribution error** (Pettigrew, 1979). That is, when explaining the behavior of out-group individuals, we tend to cite inner, dispositional causes, but when we explain our own actions or those of a fellow in-group member, we cite situational, circumstantial factors. In one such study, participants who were employed attributed others' unemployment to laziness, whereas the unemployed individuals *themselves* externalized their plight by citing the belief that immigrants were taking all the jobs (Furnham, 1982b). This research indicates that we judge the behavior of out-group individuals more harshly than we do our own group's actions. Interestingly, our judgment of out-group members' behavior is lessened when we are socially similar in some way. For example, an employed person would be less likely to blame an unemployed individual for his own plight if he recognized that they attended the same church.

The ultimate attribution error has implications for our perceptions of diversity. Attributing the actions of socially different others to their personalities rather than to situational factors buttresses our stereotypic beliefs. Further, if their behavior is believed to be due to inner attributes, there is no reason to expect that they will change. This assumption affords our stereotypes predictability and additional resistance to disconfirmation.

> *What is the price to our social perceptions of using stereotypes? What errors or biases are we likely to make when we use stereotypes? Are these biases serious or trivial?*

Summary

The social diversity around us is sharply distilled by our perceptions about groups and their members. Although social categorization and stereotyping simplify and lend order to one's social world, they exaggerate and maintain differences between groups of people.

They also promote thinking about others in more negative than positive terms and attribute their behavior to unchanging inner qualities. Although few of us willingly adopt and use social categories and stereotypes, the extent to which they are acquired through socialization and cognitive necessity have real consequences for the social world we perceive. Inevitably, these beliefs are acted out in our behavior, causing us to *actively* construct diversity in ways that extend beyond the cognitive processes covered in this chapter. This idea will be examined in Chapter 3.

Diversity Issue 2.1: Profiling

Racial **profiling** is a well-documented practice in law enforcement. In a recent study, researchers analyzed 4.5 million traffic stops in North Carolina and found that the search rate among Black (5.4%) and Hispanic/Latino (4.1%) drivers was substantially higher than White drivers (3.1%). The "hit rate" of those searches—the percentage of drivers that were found with contraband (e.g., drugs, alcohol or weapons)—was lower for Black (29%) and Hispanic/Latino (19%) than for White (32%) drivers. These figures, which are typical of the findings in the research area, show racial discrimination in both the decision to stop a driver and in evidence retrieval (Simiou, Corbett-Davies, & Goel, 2017). Why would police officers stop drivers of color *more* if they are *less* likely to be carrying incriminating evidence?

Camelia Simiou and her colleagues investigated these stops with a threshold test—a method for estimating how much suspicion police had to have (0% to 100% certainty) before conducting a search. They found much lower suspicion thresholds were applied to Black (7%) and Hispanic/Latino (6%) drivers than to White (15%) drivers. In other words, White drivers needed to arouse a 15% certainty of hiding something illegal to be searched, whereas drivers of color needed to arouse a much lower level of certainty.

This research shows how a race profile is used to guide traffic stops and searches. In this context, profiling is indistinguishable from stereotyping—where a social category organizes a group of beliefs about individuals in that category, and that stereotype, or profile, is used to guide behaviors toward that group. It is important to remember that *beliefs* about members of a social group can be negative or positive and can incorporate a range of beliefs, from generalizations that have some degree of accuracy to highly prejudiced suspicions.

Gender profiling is a less-researched area but is similar in structure and process to racial profiling. Jennifer Merluzzi and Stanaslav Dobrev (2015) analyzed career history data from male and female graduates of an elite MBA program. They surveyed 601 graduates who received their degrees in the period from 1994 to 2000, asking questions about the positions each had held since their graduation and the firms they worked for. Since their male and female participants graduated from the same school with the same degree, their early career earnings and promotion arcs were able to be tracked in a controlled manner. Gender profiling of women in business operates on the belief that, compared with men, women are less committed to their career path. Consistent with that profile, Merluzzi and Dobrev's research found that the salary gap between men and women increased through their early career years and was driven by two mechanisms. First, women were rewarded less than men for firm loyalty—for staying with

(*Continued*)

(Continued)

and advancing within the same firm. Second, women were rewarded less than men for career opportunism—moving to a different firm for a better paying or more prestigious job.

Profiling is also widely used in retail business and medicine (Arora, 2016; Chen & Asch, 2017). Companies such as Amazon, Google, and Netflix invest heavily in methods to predict customer interests. An estimated 35% of Amazon's sales comes from recommended items, so making recommendations that customers will eventually buy is a large part of their business (Arora, 2016). For Amazon, a customer profile is based on four streams of data: their buying history, items currently in their shopping cart, items that the person has liked and/or rated, and what similar customers have viewed and purchased. Similarly, medical profiles are routine in medical practice and combine patient health history, lifestyle and behavioral data, and other streams of data to anticipate health risks and inform preventative care. These profiles are continuously updated as new data become available.

For thought or discussion: How is customer and patient profiling different from racial and gender profiling?

As we've seen in the examples above, a profile is simply a model for making a prediction on some outcome of interest, such as the following:

- Does this driver have drugs in their car?

- Will this employee be with the company for the long haul?

- Will this customer buy a particular product or service?

- Will this patient develop a disease?

Three qualities of profiles help us distinguish between profiling that is stereotypic with profiling that is more value neutral or even beneficial. First, social categories are poor predictors of behavior because variation on any given behavior is wider within the social category than between categories. So a profile based solely on a person's race or gender is inherently inaccurate and demeaning. Second, even if a social category is one element of a profile, profiles become less stereotypical as they incorporate more data streams and more behavioral data. For example, a profile for predicting whether Introduction to Psychology students will become psychology majors will be more accurate and less stereotypical if it draws on class participation and other individual behaviors rather than social categories. Third, profiles that are updated and revised with outcome data will become better at predicting outcomes and, assuming the outcome is unrelated to one's race or gender, less stereotypical.

Diversity Issue 2.2: Positive Stereotypes

Most stereotypes are negative—that is, they contain more negative than positive beliefs and assumptions. Asian Americans are among the few groups that are positively stereotyped. Lin, Kwan, Cheung, and Fiske (2005) developed a measure of anti–Asian American attitudes, consisting of subscales that measure positive and negative aspects of the Asian American stereotype. Their research found that, although there are negative traits associated with Asian Americans (e.g., unsociable, competitive), the positive traits (e.g., intelligence, diligence, ambitious) explained most of the overall perceptions of Asian Americans. Asian Americans have been

referred to as the **model minority** because of their (perceived) industriousness and value placed on academic and career achievement. Asian American students do score slightly higher than comparable White students on standardized tests (Kao, 1995). Other research, however, shows that Asians earn less than Whites with the same level of education (Kim & Park, 2008). Although the model minority label is more myth than fact, the stereotype nevertheless puts pressure on Asian Americans to live up to the high educational and occupational expectations held for members of their group. Sapna Cheryan and Galen Bodenhausen (2000) selected Asian students for whom math was very important, and, before giving them the math test, made some of them aware of the high expectations Whites held about their group. Under these conditions, the positively stereotyped participants scored worse on the math test than those who were not aware of the positive stereotype about their group.

Carmel Saad and her colleagues (2015) replicated this study with a twist. They also measured how important math achievement was to the Chinese American female college students. Compared with participants who were not reminded of the Asian American stereotype, those who *were* scored better on the math test but only if math achievement was important to them. Among participants for whom math was not important, being reminded of the positive Asian American stereotype actually led to poorer math scores. So positive stereotypes have the ability to facilitate performance in stereotypic domains, but you might have to regard that domain as personally important to reap the benefits of being positively stereotyped by others.

A recent survey of Asian Americans found that endorsement of the positive stereotype held about their group (e.g., agreeing with the statement "Most Asians are smart") was associated with more physical and psychological distress and less willingness to seek professional help (Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011). Using an experimental approach, John Siy and Cheryan (2013) studied how Asian Americans react when they are positively stereotyped by a partner in an interaction. Compared with participants who heard no stereotype, Asian American participants whose partner mentioned the positive stereotype (e.g., "Asians are good at math") disliked their partner more and had more negative feelings themselves. The researchers went on to uncover that this response was linked to valuing individualism rather than collectivism in one's identity. Negative responses to the partner's stereotyping were greatest among participants who had individualistic, compared with interdependent, self-concepts.

In the Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002) stereotype content model, positively stereotyped groups would be in the upper right quadrant—that is, high on both competence and warmth. Accordingly, the Asian stereotype rates high on the competence dimension and moderate on the warmth dimension. Three other groups, however, are rated equally high on competence and equally, if not somewhat higher, than Asian Americans on warmth, according to Fiske et al.'s (2002) research: Black businessmen, business women, and Northerners.

Perhaps you can do a little research on your own:

What other groups are positively stereotyped?

What are some of the benefits and burdens of being a member of a positively stereotyped group?

Interview someone from a positively stereotyped group and find out how he or she experiences the stereotype. Are there particular circumstances in which the stereotype has benefits? Drawbacks?

The website Asian Nation has a page on the model minority image of Asians. See the online resources that accompany this chapter.

KEY TERMS

FOR FURTHER READING

Czopp, A., Kay, A., & Cheryan, S. (2015). Positive stereotypes are pervasive and powerful. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10*, 451–463.

This article reviews positive stereotypes and their implications for members of positively stereotyped groups.