



Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Theoretical Lessons (Part 1):

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- 2- An introduction to the group dynamics (2)***
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 - *Power and Domination*
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 - *Evolutionary Perspectives*

- ***Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us and Them***
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- ***Intergroup Conflict Resolution: Uniting Us and Them***
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As a social species, humans strive to establish close ties with one another. Yet the same species that seeks out connections with others also meets out enmity when it confronts members of another group. Intergroup relations are more often contentious than harmonious



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Evolutionary Perspectives

Evolutionary psychology offers a final set of causes, somewhat more distal than proximate, for conflict between groups. The tendency for conflict to emerge between groups is so pervasive, and so difficult to keep within nonlethal limits, that some experts believe that it may have a genetic basis.



Evolutionary psychologists suggest that, during the longest period of human evolution, individuals lived in small bands of between 50 and 150. These groups provided such an advantage to their members in terms of survival that, over time, humans became a social species—ready to cooperate with other humans in the pursuit of shared goals

Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Evolutionary Perspectives

These same evolutionary pressures, however, also *left humans ready to respond negatively to any human who was not a member of his or her group or tribe.*



Each group competed, forcefully, against all other groups to the point that each group plundered the resources of neighboring groups and harmed the members of those groups (the males, in particular). These groups were likely territorial, staking a claim to exclusive use of a geographic area, but if a member strayed too far from the safety of the group then the greatest danger was not from wild animals but from humans who were outsiders.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Evolutionary Perspectives

Because the outgroups were a substantial threat, the *human mind developed the capacity to recognize others and determine, with unerring accuracy, the other persons' tribal allegiance*. Those who failed to distinguish between insiders and outsiders were less likely to survive.



Intergroup conflict was also instrumental in fostering the conditions needed to promote ingroup cooperation. Few experts believe that humans, as a species, could have survived had they not developed the means to cooperate with one another in the pursuit of joint outcomes.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Evolutionary Perspectives

The development of this remarkable human capacity required a ***stable community of members***, with care focused ***first on genetically related individuals*** and secondarily on ***group members who would be present on future occasions*** when the helping could be reciprocated.

These conditions, so essential to the survival of these fragile groups, could be maintained only if group members were well-known to one another and normatively bound to reciprocate exchanges without undue levels of selfishness.

- ***Cooperation may have been further enhanced by the presence of outgroups.*** Facing a threat from an outgroup, the ingroup became more unified, producing a level of solidarity that increased each members' likelihood of surviving by linking him or her to the survival of the group as a whole (Van Vugt, De Cremer, & Janssen, 2007).

These aspects of the evolutionary environment, over time, ***resulted in adaptations that increased the fitness of the individual, but at the price of creating a generalized hostility for members of other groups.***

The ***human species developed an extraordinary capacity for altruism, cooperation, and selflessness, but these prosocial behaviors are usually reserved for members of the ingroup*** and sustained by hostility toward the outgroup.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Groups are everywhere, and so are conflicts between them. Intergroup conflict occurs at all levels of social organization—rivalries between gangs, organized disputes in industrial settings, race riots, and international warfare. Groups provide the means to achieve humanity's most lofty goals, but when groups oppose each other, they are sources of hostility, abuse, and aggression.

Although conflict between groups is one of the most complicated phenomena studied by social scientists, the goal of greater understanding and the promise of reduced tension remain enticing. (Bornstein, 2003; Brewer, 2007; Dovidio et al., 2003).

Many of the things that people want and need are available in limited supply. Should one group acquire and control a scarce commodity—whether it be food, territory, wealth, power, natural resources, energy, other groups must do without that resource.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

- According to **Realistic group conflict theory**, this struggle between groups to acquire resources inevitably leads to conflict (Campbell, 1965; Esses et al., 2005).
- Theorists have traced many negative intergroup dynamics—including **struggles between the classes of a society** (Marx & Engels, 1947), **rebellions** (Gurr, 1970), **international warfare** (Streufert & Streufert, 1986), **racism** (Gaines & Reed, 1995), **religious persecutions** (Clark, 1998), **tribal rivalries in East Africa** (Brewer & Campbell, 1976), **police use of lethal force against citizens** (Jacobs & O'Brien, 1998), **interorganizational conflicts** (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), and even the **development of culture and social structure** (Simmel, 1955)—to competition over scarce resources.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

The Discontinuity Effect

When two or more groups compete, intergroup conflict becomes more likely. In fact, ***the competition–conflict relationship is even more powerful at the group level than at the individual level, resulting in the discontinuity effect: the competitiveness of groups is out of proportion to the competitiveness displayed by individuals*** when interacting with other individuals. Even though individuals in the group may prefer to cooperate, when they join groups, this cooperative orientation tends to be replaced by a competitive one (Wildschut et al., 2003)

Discontinuity effect

The markedly greater competitiveness of groups when interacting with other groups, relative to the competitiveness of individuals interacting with other individuals.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

The Discontinuity Effect

This discontinuity between individuals and groups is not confined to laboratory groups playing a structured conflict game. When researchers examined everyday social interactions, they found that group activities were marked by more competition than one-on-one activities. Participants diligently recorded their interpersonal activities for an entire week, classifying them into one of five categories:

One-on-one interactions: playing chess, walking to class with another person, and so on.

Within-group interactions: interactions with members of the same group, such as a club meeting or a classroom discussion.

One-on-group interactions: the individual participant interacting with a group, such as a student meeting with a panel of faculty for career information.

Group-on-one interactions: the individual is part of a group that interacts with a single individual.

Group-on-group interactions: a soccer game, a joint session of two classes, ...

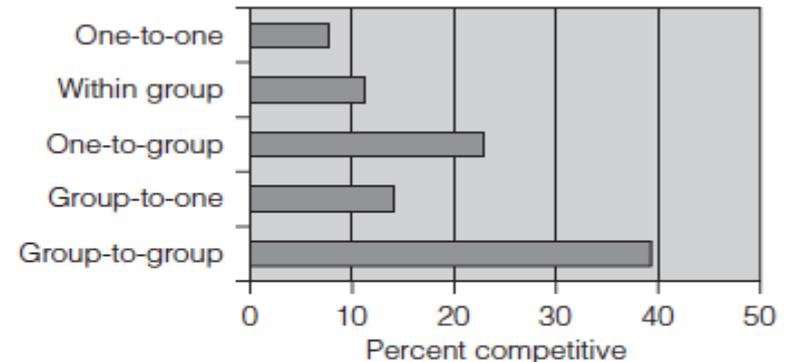


FIGURE 14.3 The level of competitiveness of five everyday situations ranging from one-to-one interactions to group-to-group interactions.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Causes of discontinuity

- The consistency of the discontinuity effect suggests that ***it springs from a number of causes that combine to exacerbate conflicts between groups, including greed, anonymity, fear, ingroup favoritism, and diffusion of responsibility*** (Pinter et al., 2007).
- First, ***individuals are greedy, but greed is even greater in groups***. When people discover that others in the group are also leaning in the direction of maximizing gains by exploiting others, this social support spurs the group members on to greater levels of greed (Wolf et al., 2008).
- Second, ***people fear groups more than they fear individuals***. They describe groups as more abrasive (competitive, aggressive, proud) and less agreeable (cooperative, trustworthy, helpful) than individuals. (Hoyle, Pinkley, & Insko, 1989).
- This generalized distrust, in the extreme, has been termed ***intergroup paranoia***: the ***belief held by the members of one group that they will be mistreated in some way by the members of a malevolent outgroup*** (Kramer, 2004).
- ***Group members may feel that, as part of a group, they should do what they can to maximize the group's collective outcomes***—that part of being good group members or leaders is to do what they can to increase the team's achievements, even if that comes at a cost to those outside of the group (Pinter et al., 2007).
- ***Diffusion of responsibility may also contribute to the discontinuity effect*** (Meier & Hinsz, 2004).

Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Power and Domination

Intergroup conflicts, though initially rooted in competition for scarce resources, can escalate into intergroup exploitation as one group tries to dominate the other. Not only do groups wish to monopolize and control scarce resources but they also wish to gain control over the other group's land, resources, peoples, and identity (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

As Herbert Spencer wrote in 1897, the first priority of most governments is the identification of "enemies and prey"



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Power and Domination

Just as groups seek to subdue and exploit other groups, the targets of these attacks struggle to resist this exploitation.

- In some cases, this competition is purely economic. By manufacturing desirable goods or performing valuable services, one group can come to dominate others in the intergroup trade system (Service, 1975).
- But domination can also occur through force and coercion (Carneiro, 1970).

Social Dominance Theory

An approach to oppression and domination, developed by Jim Sidanius, Felicia Pratto, and their colleagues, assuming that conflict between groups results from dynamic tensions between hierarchically ranked groups within society.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Power and Domination

These conflict-laden relationships among social groups result from the **natural tendency for people to form subgroups within the larger society**, and then for these subgroups to vie with one another for power and resources. Some groups come to control more of the resources of the society, including wealth, property, status, and protection. Other groups, in contrast, occupy positions subordinate to these higher status groups, and may even be oppressed by them. They **are unable to secure the resources they need**, and so **experience a range of negative outcomes**, including poorer health, inadequate education, higher mortality rates, poverty, and crime.

- **Members of the dominant groups tend to believe that this inequitable apportioning of resources is justified by precedent, by custom, or even by law.** They may deny that the distribution of resources is actually unfair or claim that the dominance of one group over another is consistent with the natural order (Sidanius et al., 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).
- **This cycle of domination and resistance occurs between nations, classes, ethnic groups, the sexes, and even small groups in controlled experimental situations** (Forsyth, 2014).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Norms of Engagement

Conflicts between groups—protests between rioters and police, war between nations, gang fights—are not out-of-control, a typical interpersonal actions that occur when the social order breaks down. Normatively, competition and hostility between groups are often completely consistent with the standards of conduct in that situation.

Reciprocity Groups, like individuals, tend to obey the norm of reciprocity. They answer threats with threats, insults with insults, and aggression with aggression.

Cultural Norms The extent to which groups respond in hostile ways to other groups varies from culture to culture. Frequently the group norms leave them ready to respond aggressively when others provoke them.

Group Norms Some groups within the larger society adopt unique norms and values pertaining to intergroup conflict. Some types of groups, such as urban youth gangs, sports fans, and cliques in schools, accept norms that emphasize dominance over other groups.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Anger and Scapegoating

When intergroup competitions end, one side is often branded the winner and one the loser.

- ***The winners experience a range of positive emotions, including pride, pleasure, happiness, and satisfaction. Losers, experience the “agony of defeat”—humiliation, anger, embarrassment, and frustration*** (Brown & Dutton, 1995).
- ***These emotions can contribute to continuing conflict between groups***, for negative emotional experiences such as frustration and anger can provoke aggression and retaliation (Meier, Hinsz, & Heimerdinger, 2008).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

In most cases, if a group interferes with another group, the injured party retaliates against the perpetrator. **If, however, the aggressor is extremely powerful, too distant, or difficult to locate, then the injured party may respond by turning its aggression onto another group.**

This third group, although not involved in the conflict in any way, would nonetheless be blamed and thereby become the target of aggressive actions. The third group, in this case, would be the **scapegoat**—a label derived from the biblical ritual of guilt transference.

Anger originally aroused by one group becomes displaced on another, more defenseless group. Attacking the guiltless group provides an outlet for pent-up anger and frustration, and the aggressive group may then feel satisfied that justice has been done.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Anger and Scapegoating

The scapegoat theory of intergroup conflict explains why frustrating economic conditions often stimulate increases in prejudice and violence (Poppe, 2001).

- Studies of anti-Black violence in southern areas of the United States between 1882 and 1930 have indicated that *outbreaks of violence tend to occur whenever the economy of that region worsened* (Hovland & Sears, 1940).
- *The correlation between the price of cotton (the main product of that area at the time) and the number of lynchings of Black men by Whites ranged from $-.63$ to $-.72$* , suggesting that when Whites were frustrated by the economy, they took out these frustrations by attacking Blacks (see also Hepworth & West, 1988).
- **Scapegoating**, as a possible cause of *intergroup* rather than *interindividual conflict*, requires a degree of consensus among group members. Individuals often blame others for their troubles and take out their frustrations on them, but group-level scapegoating occurs when the group, as a whole, has settled on a specific target group to blame for their problems (Glick, 2005).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Conflict: Us versus Them

Anger and Scapegoating

- ***Scapegoating is also more likely when a group has experienced difficult, prolonged negative experiences***—not just petty annoyances or a brief economic downturn, but negative conditions that frustrate their success in meeting their most essential needs (Staub, 2004).
- ***Scapegoating can also prompt oppressed groups to lash out at other oppressed groups.*** Even though the minority group is victimized by the majority group, minorities sometimes turn against other minority groups rather than confront the more powerful majority (Harding et al., 1969; Rothgerber & Worchel, 1997).

Scapegoat Theory

An explanation of intergroup conflict arguing that hostility caused by frustrating environmental circumstances is released by taking hostile actions against members of other social groups.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

When the ingroup began to be clearly delineated, there was a tendency to consider all others as outgroup....

The conflict is usually fueled by the competitive setting, situational norms, the struggle for power, and the frustrations that followed each loss, but these factors cannot fully account for the almost automatic rejection of members of the other group. Group members reject members of other groups not because they fear them or because they must compete with them, but simply because they belong to a different group.





Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Conflict and Categorization

The basic social categorization process, although adaptive in the long run, nonetheless provides a cognitive foundation for intergroup conflict.

As Sherif (1966, p. 12) explained, “Whenever individuals belonging to one group interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group identification, we have an instance of intergroup behavior.”

Research by Henri Tajfel, John Turner, and their colleagues, demonstrated the pervasiveness of the intergroup bias in their studies of the minimal group situation.

Tajfel and Turner concluded that the “mere perception of belonging to two distinct groups—that is, social categorization per se—is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination favoring the ingroup” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 13; see also Hogg & Abrams, 1999).

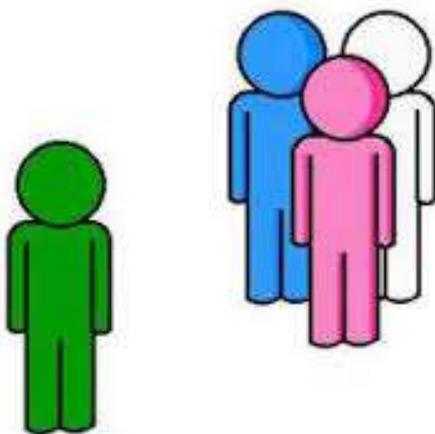
Ethnocentrism

The belief that one’s own tribe, region, or country is superior to other tribes, regions, or countries.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Conflict and Categorization



Categorization sets in motion a number of affective, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal processes that combine to sustain and encourage conflict between groups. People do not simply segment people into the categories “member of my group” and “member of another group” and then stop.

Once people have categorized others according to group, they feel differently about those who are in the ingroup and those who are in the outgroup, and these evaluative biases are further sustained by cognitive and emotional biases that justify the evaluative ones—stereotypic thinking, misjudgment, and intensification of emotions.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

The Ingroup- Outgroup Bias

The sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) maintained that humans are, by nature, a species that joins together in groups. But he also noted a second, equally powerful, human tendency: favoring one's own group over all others. "Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders".



At the group level, this tendency is called the ingroup-outgroup bias. This bias, among such larger groups as tribes, ethnic groups, or nations, is termed ethnocentrism (Sumner, 1906). The magnitude of the bias depends on a host of situational factors, including the group's outcomes, the way perceptions are measured, ambiguity about each group's characteristics, and members' identification with the group.

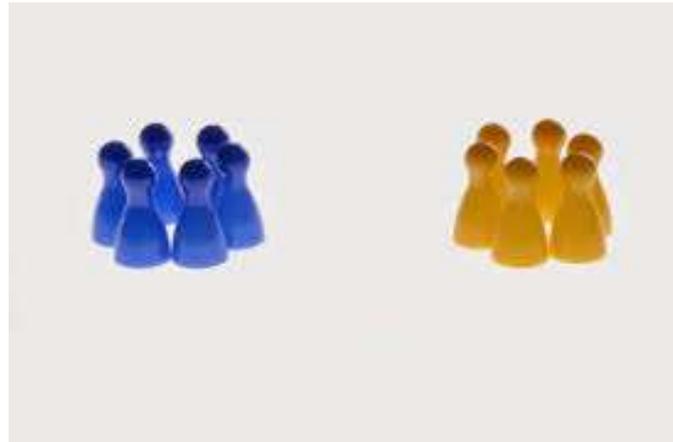
Overall, however, the ingroup-outgroup bias is robust.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Ingroup Positivity and Outgroup Negativity

The ingroup-outgroup bias is really two biases combined: (1) the selective favoring of the ingroup, its members, and its products, and (2) the derogation of the outgroup, its members, and its products.



In many intergroup conflicts, ingroup favoritism is stronger than outgroup rejection.

Marilyn Brewer concluded that the expression of hostility against the outgroup depends on the similarity of ingroup and outgroup members, anticipated future interactions, the type of evaluation being made, and the competitive or cooperative nature of the intergroup situation (see Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Brown, 1998; Hewstone et al., 2002).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Implicit Intergroup Biases

In many cases, the ingroup–outgroup bias is an implicit one—subtle, unintentional, and even unconscious, operating below the level of awareness (Fiske, 2004).

Even though people may, when asked, claim that they are not biased against outgroup members and do not favor their own group, their biases emerge when their implicit attitudes are measured.

One such measure, the Implicit Association Test (IAT) assesses the extent to which people associate one concept—such as the ingroup—with another concept—such as goodness.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Implicit Intergroup Biases

- **When individuals are shown pairs of words or images that match their intuitive associations of these two concepts, such as ingroup/kind, outgroup/evil, they respond more quickly and without error.** When, however, they respond to pairings of concepts that they do not associate with one another, such as ingroup/ bad and outgroup/friendly, then they respond more slowly (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 2008).
- **The IAT has revealed robust ingroup–outgroup biases in dozens of studies using all types of social categories, including race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, and sex.** These biases occur even when people are striving to suppress their biases or when they claim that they are free of such tendencies (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007).
- **The IAT has also revealed biases in the most minimal of intergroup situations.** In one study, participants were categorized on the basis of their supposed preference for one of two artists; one named Quan and the second Xanthie (Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Monteith, 2001).

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Double Standard Thinking

The ingroup-outgroup bias often fuels double-standard thinking. Members rationalize their own group's actions as fair and just and condemn the actions of the outgroup as unfair and unjust. Our warnings are requests, but the other side calls them threats.

- ***We are courageous, though they consider us stubborn.*** Pride in our own group is nationalism, but the other group takes it as evidence of ethnocentrism. We offer them concessions, but they interpret them as ploys (De Dreu, Nauta, & Van de Vliert, 1995).
- ***People judge actions that their own group performs positively, but they negatively evaluate these same actions when they are performed by outsiders.*** People also attribute other nations' hostile actions to internal factors—things about that country—but their nation's actions to external factors (Doosje & Branscombe, 2003).

Double-standard thinking

The tendency to consider the actions and attributes of one's own group as positive, fair, and appropriate, but to consider these very same behaviors or displays to be negative, unfair and inappropriate when the outgroup performs them.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Cognitive Bias

When people categorize others, their perceptions of these individuals are influenced more by their category-based expectations than by the evidence of their senses.

Outgroup Homogeneity Bias Most group members are quick to point out the many characteristics that distinguish them from the other members of their own group, but when they evaluate members of outgroups, they underestimate their variability.

- **Group members' conceptualizations of other groups are simplistic and undifferentiated, but when they turn their eye to their own group, they note its diversity and complexity** (see Boldry, Gaertner, & Quinn, 2007, and Linville & Fischer, 1998).
- The outgroup homogeneity bias does not emerge across all intergroup settings. **The group that is disadvantaged in some way is usually viewed as more homogeneous**, whereas the more powerful group is viewed as more variable (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002).
- **The bias can also reverse entirely, resulting in ingroup homogeneity bias** (Haslam & Oakes, 1995; Simon, Pantaleo, & Mummendey, 1995).

Under conditions of extreme conflict, both tendencies may emerge, prompting group members to assume that “none of us deserve this treatment,” and “they have harmed us; they must all be punished” (Rothgerber, 1997).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Outgroup Homogeneity Bias

The perceptual tendency to assume that the members of other groups are very similar to each other, whereas the membership of one's own group is more heterogeneous.

Law of Small Numbers

The tendency for people to base sweeping generalizations about an entire group on observations of a small number of individuals from that group.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Group Attribution Error

Group members tend to make sweeping statements about the entire outgroup after observing one or two of the outgroup's members.

- ***Individuals in intergroup situations tend to fall prey to the law of small numbers:*** They assume that the behavior of a large number of people can be accurately inferred from the behavior of a few people (Quattrone & Jones, 1980).
- ***The opposite process—assuming that the characteristics of a single individual in a group can be inferred from the general characteristics of the whole group—can also bias perceptions.*** If we know our group's position on an issue, we are reluctant to assume that any one of us agrees with that position.
- ***When we know another group's position, however, we are much more willing to assume that each and every person in that group agrees with that position.*** (Allison & Messick, 1985b; Allison, Worth, & King, 1990).



Group Attribution Error

The tendency for perceivers to assume that specific group members' personal characteristics and preferences, including their beliefs, attitudes, and decisions, are similar to the preferences of the group to which they belong; for example, observers may assume that each member of a group that votes to reelect the president supports the president, even though the group's decision was not a unanimous one.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Ultimate Attribution Error

- ***When individuals form impressions of other individuals, the fundamental attribution error (FAE) prompts them to attribute the actions of others to their personal qualities rather than to the constraints of the situation.*** But when group members form impressions of outgroup members, the ultimate attribution error (UAE) prompts them to attribute only negative actions to outgroup members' dispositional qualities (Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 2001).

If outgroup members rob a bank or cheat on a test, then their actions are explained by reference to their personality, genetics, or fundamental lack of morality. But should an outgroup member perform a positive behavior, that action is attributed to a situational factor—perhaps good luck or a special advantage afforded the outgroup member. In any case, the perceiver will conclude that the good act, and the outgroup member who performed it, is just a special case. Because of the UAE, the perceiver concludes that there is no need to reappraise the group because the outgroup member is not responsible for the positive act.

Ultimate Attribution Error

The tendency for perceivers to attribute negative actions performed by members of the outgroup to dispositional qualities and positive actions to situational, fluctuating circumstances.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Linguistic Intergroup Bias

The linguistic intergroup bias is a more subtle form of the UAE. Instead of attributing the behavior to dispositional factors or to the situation, group members describe the action differently depending on who performs it.

If an ingroup member engages in a negative behavior, such as crying during a game, then members would describe that behavior very concretely—Elliott “shed some tears.” If an outgroup member performed the same behavior, they would describe the action more abstractly—Elliott “acted like a baby.” Positive behaviors, in contrast, are described in abstract terms when attributed to an ingroup member but in very concrete terms when performed by an outgroup member (Carnaghi et al., 2008; Maass, 1999).

Linguistic Intergroup Bias

The tendency to describe positive ingroup and negative outgroup behaviors more abstractly and negative ingroup and positive outgroup behaviors more concretely.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Stereotypes

The Social Expectations are based on stereotypes—cognitive generalizations about the qualities and characteristics of the members of a particular group or social category.

- In many ways, *stereotypes function as cognitive labor-saving devices by helping perceivers make rapid judgments about people based on their category memberships* (Schneider, 2004).
- Because they are widely adopted by most of the ingroup, *stereotypes are group-level perceptions; shared social beliefs rather than individualistic expectations* (Bar-Tal, 2000).

But stereotypes tend to be exaggerated rather than accurate, negative rather than positive, and resistant to revision even when directly disconfirmed. People tend to cling to stereotypes so resolutely that they become unreasonable beliefs rather than honest misconceptions.

Stereotype

A socially shared set of cognitive generalizations (e.g., beliefs, expectations) about the qualities and characteristics of the members of a particular group or social category.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Stereotypes

As Gordon Allport (1954) wrote, “Prejudgments become prejudices only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge”.

If stereotypes have all these perceptual and cognitive limitations, why do they persist?

- Walter Lippmann (1922), who first used the word stereotype to describe mental images of people, argued that the ***stereotype resists disconfirmation because “it stamps itself upon the evidence in the very act of securing the evidence.”*** When group members see through eyes clouded by stereotypes, they misperceive and misremember people and events.
- Because individuals tend to interpret ambiguous information so that it confirms their expectations, ***stereotypes can act as self-fulfilling prophecies*** (Allport & Postman, 1947).
- ***Stereotypes also influence memory***, so that recall of information that is consistent with stereotypes is superior to recall of stereotype-inconsistent information (Howard & Rothbart, 1980; Rothbart, Sriram, & Davis-Stitt, 1996).
- Because ***members expect outgroup members to engage in negative behavior*** and can ***more easily remember the times that they acted negatively*** rather than positively, they feel vindicated in ***thinking that membership in the outgroup and negative behaviors are correlated*** (Hamilton & Sherman, 1989).

Group and Decision

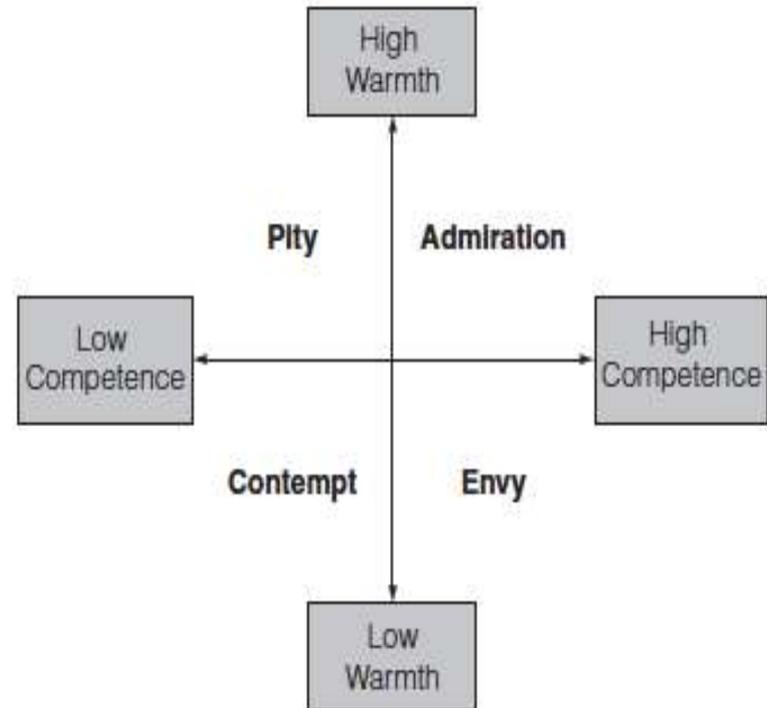
Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Stereotypes

The stereotypes about any given group include unique information pertaining to that group, but the **Stereotype Content Model** suggests that most stereotypes are based on two general qualities: warmth and competence.

Some groups (including the ingroup, in most cases) are viewed as warm, nice, friendly, and sincere, whereas other groups are considered to be filled with unpleasant, unfriendly, and even immoral people.

The second dimension is competence: Some groups are thought to include competent, confident, skillful, able individuals, whereas others are viewed as incompetent or unintelligent (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007, 2008).





Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Intergroup Emotions

People do not just categorize and judge the outgroup. They also respond emotionally to the outgroup, usually leaning in a negative direction. This negativity may be relatively mild, amounting to little more than mild discomfort when interacting with outgroup members or a general preference to be with someone from the ingroup rather than the outgroup, but this negativity bias can reach the emotional extreme of hatred and loathing.

- In some cases, **people may not even admit their negativity towards members of the other group**, yet they display it through their nonverbal actions, social awkwardness, and nervousness when in the presence of the outgroup (Dovidio et al., 2004).

In addition to these more general negative and positive reactions to the outgroup and ingroup, respectively, people may also display specific emotions, depending on the nature of the intergroup context.

- **Intergroup emotions theory** suggests that when individuals are members of a group that has lower social status than other groups, its members will experience a different set of intergroup emotions than will members of higher status groups (Smith & Mackie, 2005).

Fear and jealousy, for example, are more common emotions in members of the lower status groups, whereas contempt or anger are characteristic of those who are members of higher status groups.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Intergroup Emotions

The stereotype content model links intergroup emotions to expectations about the warmth and competence of the outgroup.

Envy is most likely when the outgroup, although judged negatively, is nonetheless higher in status than the ingroup and this status difference is thought to be due to the competence of the outgroup. Groups who are envious of other groups covet what the outgroup has achieved and view the outgroup as a competitor.

Contempt is one of the most common of intergroup emotions, occurring when the outgroup is the most negatively stereotyped, that is, viewed as low in terms of both competence and warmth. The members of such an outgroup are viewed as responsible for their failings, and there is little consideration given to the idea that the division between the two groups can ever be lessened.

Pity, as an intergroup emotion, is directed at outgroups that are viewed negatively in terms of competence, but are thought to also have positive, endearing qualities. Pity is usually directed downward, to outgroups that are low in the overall status ranking. Outgroups that evoke pity are not blamed for their plight, unlike outgroups that are held in contempt.

Admiration is rare in intergroup contexts, for it is experienced when the outgroup is perceived as being both high in warmth and high in competence, an unusual occurrence. Intergroup admiration occurs when the outgroup is thought to be completely deserving of its accomplishments, when the outgroup's gains do not come at a cost to the ingroup, and when the outgroup members are generally judged positively.



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Group Hate

Hatred, as Allport (1954) explained in *The Nature of Prejudice*, is usually a group-level emotion. Drawing on ideas discussed by Aristotle, Allport observed that “anger is customarily felt toward individuals only, whereas hatred may be felt toward whole classes of people” (1954, p. 363). And while individuals often regret giving way to anger directed at another person, they feel no such remorse about their group-level hatred.

- “Hatred is more deep-rooted, and constantly desires the extinction of the object of hate” (1954, p. 363).

Often, group members fear the other group, for example, when outgroup members are viewed as competitors who may take harmful action towards the ingroup (Halperin, 2008; Sternberg, 2003).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Moral Exclusion and Dehumanization

Throughout history, the members of one group have done great harm to the members of other groups. When intergroup conflict reaches extreme levels, with members of one group attacking, harming, and killing members of other groups, the ingroup–outgroup bias becomes equally extreme.

- ***During extreme intergroup conflicts, group members view their own group as morally superior and members of the outgroup as less than human*** (Bandura, 1999; Leyens et al., 2003; Reicher, Haslam, & Rath, 2008).
- ***Such moral exclusion is more likely to occur in cases of extreme violence perpetrated by one group against another***—European Americans enslaving Africans; Nazi Germany’s attempted genocide of Jews; “ethnic cleansing” in Croatia and Serbia; and the continuing warfare between Israelis and Palestinians (Staub, 2004).

Those who subjugate others tend to rationalize their violence by attributing it to the actions, intentions, or character of their victims. As their aggression intensifies, however, their rationalizations prompt them to increasingly devalue their victims.

Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Moral Exclusion and Dehumanization

Moral exclusion places the outgroup outside the moral realm. Dehumanization moves the outgroup outside the human realm.

- ***Dehumanization occurs when the ingroup denies the outgroup those qualities thought to define the essence of human nature.*** Some of these qualities may be ones thought to be uniquely human: culture, refinement, high moral standards, and the capacity to think rationally. Others are qualities that the ingroup associates with humanity's strengths, such as emotional responsiveness, warmth, openness, self-control, and depth (Haslam, 2006).
- ***The ingroup may also come to believe that the outgroup experiences raw, primary emotions such as anger or happiness, but not the more refined emotions that make humans truly human: affection, admiration, pride, conceit, remorse, guilt, and envy*** (Leyens et al., 2003).
- **People describe dehumanized outgroup members as disgusting or revolting because they are thought to be sources of contamination and impurity** (Chirrot & McCauley, 2006; Maoz & McCauley, 2008).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

This concept of dehumanization is no hyperbole. When researchers used an fMRI scanner to track perceivers' reactions to images of people from various groups, their results suggested that dehumanized outgroup members are no longer perceived to be humans.

- ***When individuals viewed general images of people, the areas of the brain that typically respond when people process social information*** (the medial prefrontal cortices) showed increased activity. However, when they were shown images of people from an extreme outgroup—homeless individuals and drug addicts—those same areas did not rise above their resting state of neuronal activity. The insula and amygdala were activated, however; these portions of the brain are most active when people are experiencing strong emotions, such as disgust and contempt (Harris & Fiske, 2006).

Dehumanization also increases the likelihood that the ingroup will aggress against the outgroup.

Albert Bandura and his associates tested this possibility experimentally. As expected, when dehumanized by the experimenter the groups increased their hostility and aggression, delivering more intense shocks (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975).



Group and Decision
Intergroup Bias: Perceiving Us versus Them

Moral Exclusion

A psychological process whereby opponents in a conflict come to view each other as undeserving of morally mandated rights and protections.

Dehumanization

Believing that other individuals or entire groups of individuals lack the qualities thought to distinguish human beings from other animals; such dehumanization serves to rationalize the extremely negative treatment often afforded to members of other groups



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Categorization and Identity

Social identity theory offers a compelling explanation for the robust relationship between categorization and conflict. This theory assumes that membership in groups can substantially influence members' sense of self.

- ***Group members, therefore, stress the value of their own groups relative to other groups as a means of indirectly enhancing their own personal worth*** (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- The basic premise of social identity theory is supported by evidence that ***people favor their group, even in minimal group conditions, and by the fact that the biasing effects of group membership are even more substantial when*** (a) ***individuals identify with their group rather than simply belong to it*** and (b) ***the relative status of existing groups is salient*** (Kenworthy et al., 2008).
- ***Black Africans' attitudes toward an outgroup (Afrikaans Whites) were negatively associated with the strength of their ingroup identification*** (Duckitt & Mphuthing, 1998).
- ***British people's attitudes toward the French were negatively correlated with the strength of their British identities*** (Brown et al., 2001).
- ***When individuals feel that the value of their group is being questioned, they respond by underscoring the distinctiveness of their own group and by derogating others*** (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1998).



Group and Decision

Intergroup Bias: Categorization and Identity

Social identity theory

Social identity theory's suggestion that ingroup favoritism is in the service of ingroup members' self-esteem is also consistent with findings that individuals who most need reassurance of their worth tend to be the most negative towards other groups.

- ***Individuals who experience a threat to their self-esteem tend to discriminate more against outgroups***, and low-status, peripheral members of the group are often the most zealous in their defense of their group and in the rejection of the outgroup (Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995).
- ***Individuals are also more likely to draw comparisons between their group and other groups in areas where the comparison favors the ingroup.*** (Reichl, 1997).
- ***Group members also display group-level schadenfreude.*** They take pleasure when other groups fail, particularly when the failure is in a domain that is self-relevant and when the ingroup's superiority in this domain is uncertain (Leach et al., 2003).



... and many thanks for the attention!