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Intergroup stereotyping

Vincent Yzerbyt

Stereotypes correspond to perceivers' beliefs about the attributes, typically personality traits, that define a group. In line with the idea that intergroup stereotyping follows from, and shapes, the relations between groups and their members, recent research efforts on the so-called Big Two, reveal that two dimensions of stereotyping, that is, warmth and competence, organize the way groups are stereotyped by virtue of their relative status and their interdependence and orient downstream emotions and behaviors. Next to stereotype assessment, we devote special attention to the question of stereotype ambivalence as well as to the compensation effect, two phenomena related to the fact that perceivers tend to see groups either high on warmth and low on competence or vice versa. Yet another important theme in contemporary work is that interactions are greatly influenced by the fact that people prove sensitive to stereotypic views that they think others hold about them. A final set of issues concern the degree of accuracy of stereotype content in light of their sensitivity to structural and contextual factors impinging on groups as well as the various functions that stereotypes serve.

Address

University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

Corresponding author: Yzerbyt, Vincent (vincent.yzerbyt@uclouvain.be)**Current Opinion in Psychology** 2016, 11:90–95This review comes from a themed issue on **Intergroup relations**Edited by **Jolanda Jetten** and **Nyla R Branscombe**<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.06.009>

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Stereotypes are people's beliefs about the attributes, typically personality traits, that define a group [1^{••}]. Early work promoted the idea that stereotypes show a substantial level of inertia, leading generations of scholars to study process rather than content [2]. During the last 50 years, researchers thus investigated how stereotypes are acquired, triggered, used, and changed [3] and these efforts continue today with new tools from social neuroscience [4^{••}]. Social perceivers build their stereotypic knowledge from direct observation but also by learning from parents, peers, and the media. Current consensus has it that people first categorize others rather automatically in one of many possible categories, with a premium for gender, race, and age [5]. Under specific conditions of

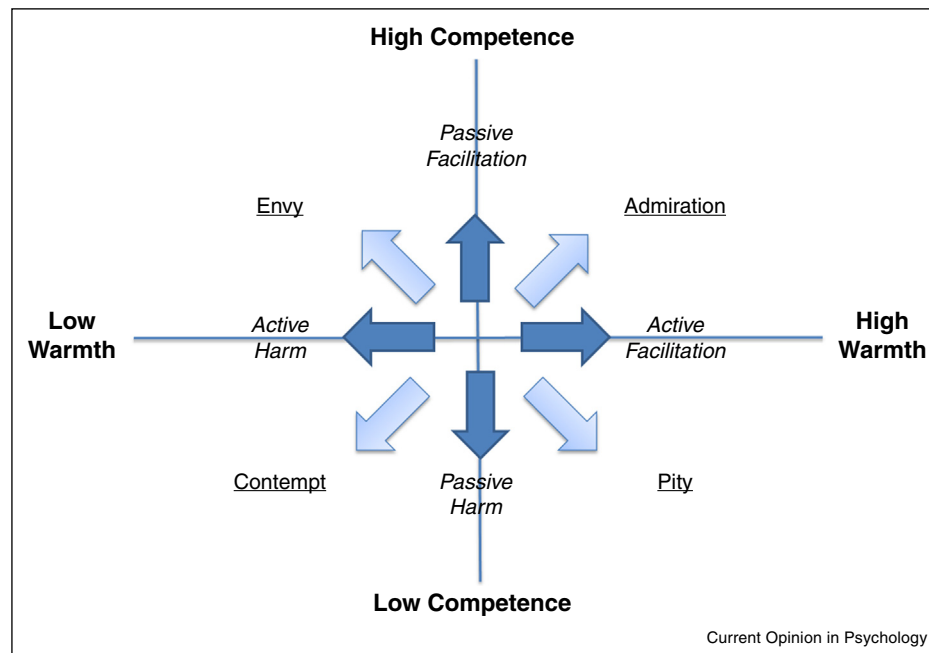
cognitive and motivational resources, the associated stereotypical knowledge is then activated and possibly applied to make sense of the interaction. For the past 15 years, several models tackled the issue of stereotype content anew, uncovering factors that lawfully organize group perceptions and influence emotions and behaviors [6,7[•]]. Intergroup stereotyping is a key element resulting from, as well as shaping, the relations between groups and their members [1^{••}]. The present review focuses on stereotyping in a generic sense and, in so doing, rests heavily on the Stereotype Content Model [8], a model that identifies warmth and competence as two orthogonal dimensions along which groups are stereotyped. In particular, this contribution explores the work on ambivalent stereotypes [9] and compensation [10^{••}], shedding new light on intergroup stereotyping phenomena.

The Big Two

A host of theoretical and empirical contributions in social, but also in personality, organizational, and cultural psychology point to two dimensions organizing our everyday judgments [11,12[•]]. The SCM, formalized by Fiske and colleagues [13], builds upon earlier work on group perception [14] and proposes that social targets are seen as varying in warmth and competence as they fall in one of the four quadrants formed by the combination of these two dimensions (Figure 1). Because warmth relates to the perceived intent of the group members, it assumes precedence, both in content and speed, in people's representations [15]. Competence reflects others' perceived ability to act upon their intent. Not only do warmth and competence in SCM relate to the communion versus agency distinction [16] but there is also a connection with Osgood's dimensions [17]. The Big Two can be further decomposed: warmth covers friendliness and trustworthiness whereas competence includes skills and assertiveness [11]. For warmth, several efforts show that morality occupies a special place in people's evaluations, especially of their ingroup [18]. For competence, assertiveness is indicative of the motivational underpinning of behavior and preferentially associated with high power targets whereas skills, referring to resources, are more evenly distributed across groups [19].

Evidence for the SCM rests on an impressive wealth of studies, using a wide variety of groups tested in a large number of cultures [20[•],21] and even relying on the neural signature of stereotypical warmth and competence. For instance, Harris and Fiske [22[•]] presented their participants with members of various groups from each of four SCM quadrants and checked whether the medial

Figure 1



The two dimensions of warmth and competence as proposed by the SCM along with their associated emotional and behavioral responses according to the Bias Map model.

prefrontal cortex (mPFC), the neural headquarters of social cognition, came online [23]. Confirming that low warmth low competence outgroups would be dehumanized, the mPFC failed to activate in presence of such groups as homeless or drug-addicts.

The wide range of tools and data used to study the SCM provides a solid basis for its validity. This two-dimensional space constitutes a marked progress relative to earlier unidimensional conceptions in which stereotypes were hardly differentiated from valence/prejudice. Capitalizing on the insights and efforts of the work on ambivalent sexism [9], one clear innovation of SCM is to bring researchers' attention to the existence of ambivalent stereotypes [24••] (see also Fiske, Dupree, Nicolas, & Swencionis, in this issue).

Assessment

Measuring stereotypes in the context of the SCM follows the steps of a long tradition [25] whereby respondents are asked to rate social targets on a series of scales. Warmth is evaluated with such traits as likeable, sociable, and sincere, whereas competence relies on traits such as capable, skilled, and motivated. In some cases, more unobtrusive techniques have been used, such as Multidimensional Scaling, as a means to first uncover the standing of various groups with respect to each other. The resulting factors are then regressed on independent judgments of the same groups on both structural aspects and stereotypical judgments (see

next sections). Direct association measures, such as the lexical decision task, or cognitive interference measures, such as the Stroop Task or the Implicit Association Task, are increasingly used to uncover spontaneous activation and application of stereotypes upon confrontation with a group and to avoid intrusion of social desirability concerns. Respondents are then asked to identify warmth and competence words that either are or are not primed with the critical category [26,27] or complete two IAT's, associating targets with competence on one IAT and with warmth on the other [28,29].

Antecedents and consequences

The SCM posits that groups' interdependence shapes perceived warmth while status differences predict perceived competence. Specifically, people ask questions such as 'Are we competing? Are we in danger of being exploited or cheated of resources?' to address a target group's warmth. And questions such as 'Do they possess the skills, the will, and the resources to enact their intentions?' allow gauging its competence. Empirical evidence confirms that the correlation between status and competence is strong and emerges in all cultures whereas the relations between competition/cooperation and warmth are often found but less robust. Across 25 nations, only 18 of 36 competition-warmth correlations proved significant [20•]. Broadening the definition of competition and cooperation by incorporating symbolic threat in addition to realistic threat aspects traditionally

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