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FORMATION AND CHANGE OF ETHNIC AND NATIONAL STEREOTYPES: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL

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ABSTRACT. *The paper suggests an integrative model which explains the formation and change of the contents, as well as their intensity and extensiveness, of ethnic and national stereotypes. The model focuses on three categories of variables which determine the stereotypic contents and their intensity and extensiveness. The first category, labelled as Background Variables, consists of the history of intergroup relations, political-social climate, economic conditions, behavior of other groups, characteristics of the outgroup and nature of intergroup relations. These variables, being interrelated, influence the second category, labelled as Transmitting Variables. This includes political-social-cultural-educational mechanisms, family's channel and direct contact. Finally, the influence of the above-mentioned factors is mediated by the category of Personal Mediating Variables consisting of a person's values, attitudes, personality, motivations, and cognitive styles. The paper describes the essence of the variables and discusses their interrelationships by analyzing previously proposed theories of prejudice formation and by reviewing the supporting empirical evidence. Finally, the implications of the integrative model are presented and especially the social nature of stereotyping phenomenon is emphasized, which is influenced not only by intrapersonal processes, but also by intergroup, intragroup, and interpersonal ones. © 1997 Published by Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.*

INTRODUCTION

Stereotype, together with prejudice, as one of the central topics in social psychology, is considered a significant social phenomenon. Defined as stored beliefs about characteristics of a group of people, stereotypes shed light on intergroup processes. They serve at the same time as an antecedent and an outcome for analyzing the nature of intergroup relations. It is

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therefore important to understand the process of stereotype formation and change, as well as factors facilitating or inhibiting this process.

Although stereotypes are formed, held and changed by individuals, their essential meaning and implication emerge only in the context of group membership because individuals' aggregation into groups serves as a basis for stereotyping. To explain this point it is necessary to realize that individuals continuously organize themselves in collectives in order to satisfy their needs. They belong to a variety of groups—many of which they voluntarily select while to some their membership is ascribed. One consequence of this belonging to a group is that individuals form self-social identity, defining themselves as group members (Tajfel, 1981).

Since group membership is one of the most salient and important of personal characteristics, individuals not only consider themselves as group members, but also perceive other people in this way. That is, individuals constantly classify others into social categories and evaluate them on this basis. In this framework, categorization is seen as an underlying process of stereotyping and prejudice (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986; Stephan, 1989; Taylor, 1981; Wilder, 1986). Group members ascribe to members of other groups homogeneous traits, intentions, and other characteristics (i.e., stereotypes).

Allport (1954) outlined this view in his seminal work about *The nature of prejudice*. But, with the emerging cognitive revolution, the study of stereotyping has increasingly focused on the intrapersonal cognitive processes in general and on the categorization process in particular (e.g., Fiske & Neuberg, 1989; Hamilton, 1981a; Stephan, 1985; Tajfel, 1969). This line of research has inquired into the formation of cognitive categories or structures, disregarding the question of content acquisition.

Although the question of universal processes of categorization cannot be underestimated, the question of stereotypic content acquisition is of great importance as well. The contents that group members have determine to a large extent the nature of intergroup relations. Particular traits, intentions, abilities and other characteristics attributed to another group may influence the behaviors of group members towards this group. This effect should be considered when we acknowledge that individuals are not born with the specific contents (Aboud, 1988), but learn, as well as change them, through the socialization process that takes place during their life. Thus, stereotypic content is not universal, but is culturally and individually bound. That is, different groups usually hold different stereotypic contents about the same group, and within the same group, individual group members may hold different stereotypic contents about a particular outgroup. The focus of the present analysis is on cultural stereotypes which characterize group perception (e.g., nation). This is the case when group members share stereotypic content which is expressed in various societal channels.

Since the study of stereotyping emerged about 60 years ago, a number

of theories have been suggested to explain the formation of specific stereotypic contents. Theories such as realistic conflict theory, scapegoat theory, belief congruence theory, social learning theory, or authoritarian personality theory have attempted to account for individual and/or cultural differences of stereotypic contents held by various groups. Each of these theories focused on a particular aspect of stereotypic content acquisition. Each of them illuminated part of the picture, dealing with one-level analysis only—either intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup or intergroup. However, there is a need to assemble the pieces of the puzzle into a complete picture. This need is not only a result of the described fragmentation among the various theories, which attempted to explain the formation and change of stereotypic contents, but also because the proposed theories focus mainly on the intrapersonal level of analysis and they do not differentiate between the particular and the universal implication of the explanation (Hamilton, 1981a; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993; Stephan, 1985). The former point refers to the fact that major effort in stereotypic research has been directed to study the intrapersonal aspects of stereotype's formation, mainly cognitive ones. This trend reflects the domineering influence of cognitive psychology on the study of stereotypes. The latter point indicates that there is a need to differentiate between those explanations of stereotype formation which account for universal processes of all human beings, regardless of their group membership (for example, categorization theory) and those explanations which concern the formation of particular stereotypic content of a specific person and a group (for example, scapegoat theory).

The present paper, in an attempt to satisfy these needs presents a comprehensive and integrative model of stereotypic content formation and change. It thus not only elaborates different levels of analysis as was done by Allport (1954), Ashmore (1970) or Stroebe and Insko (1989), but also integrates them into one whole by specifying the interrelationships among the various parts and levels of the model. The proposed model is applied mainly to national and ethnic stereotypes, since its major objective is to extend our understanding of international and interethnic relations which are determined, at least partially, by the stereotypic contents that the two parties in relationship hold.

Specifically, the model can explain but not predict the specific contents of stereotypes. It is impossible to hypothesize the specific characteristic that a particular group may attribute to another group in a particular context, even when generally the background variables are known, since there are many hundreds of words which may be used as labels to characterize a group (Allport, 1937). The model can be used to predict the valence (i.e. evaluative connotation) of the stereotypic contents on the positive-negative dimension. The evaluative connotation provides the most important implication of the stereotypes for intergroup relations. It reflects the

attitude towards the outgroup and is one of the determinants of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

One important remark should be noted before beginning the description of the model. It is that any model dealing with the formation and change of stereotypic content has to account for four characteristics implied in the above written lines:

1. It has to reflect the fact that a particular stereotypic content is unique to a specific group. On the basis of their specific intergroup relations, their history and political-social-economic conditions, groups form unique stereotypes of other groups.
2. It has to express the fact that within each group, group members differ, at least to some extent, with regard to stereotypic content about a given outgroup. The unique personal experiences and personal differences regarding various characteristics such as personality, motivation, values or cognitive skills cause to individual variance of the formed stereotypic contents.
3. It has to assume that individuals acquire stereotypic contents through their life. They are born as *tabula rasa*, not having any stereotypes, but with time, they learn to categorize and characterize various social groups.
4. It has to describe the changeability of the stereotypic contents by individuals and groups. Stereotypic contents are not fixed and stable, but change with time. The model which will be presented complies with these four requirements. It accounts for group differences and individual differences. It explains how stereotypes are learned and changed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL

The present model views stereotypic contents as knowledge which is formed mostly on the basis of information coming from external sources. The source can be a member(s) of an outgroup who provides the information via direct contact, and/or political-social-cultural-educational ingroup channels which supply information about outgroups. The model proposes three categories of factors (i.e., background variables, transmitting mechanisms and mediating variables) which determine stereotypic contents as well as their intensity and extensity. These two aspects of stereotypic content require an explanation. Intensity refers to the degree of confidence a person has in a stereotypic content. Extensity refers to the extent of consensus in which group members hold a specific stereotypic content. The model, presented in Figure 1, will

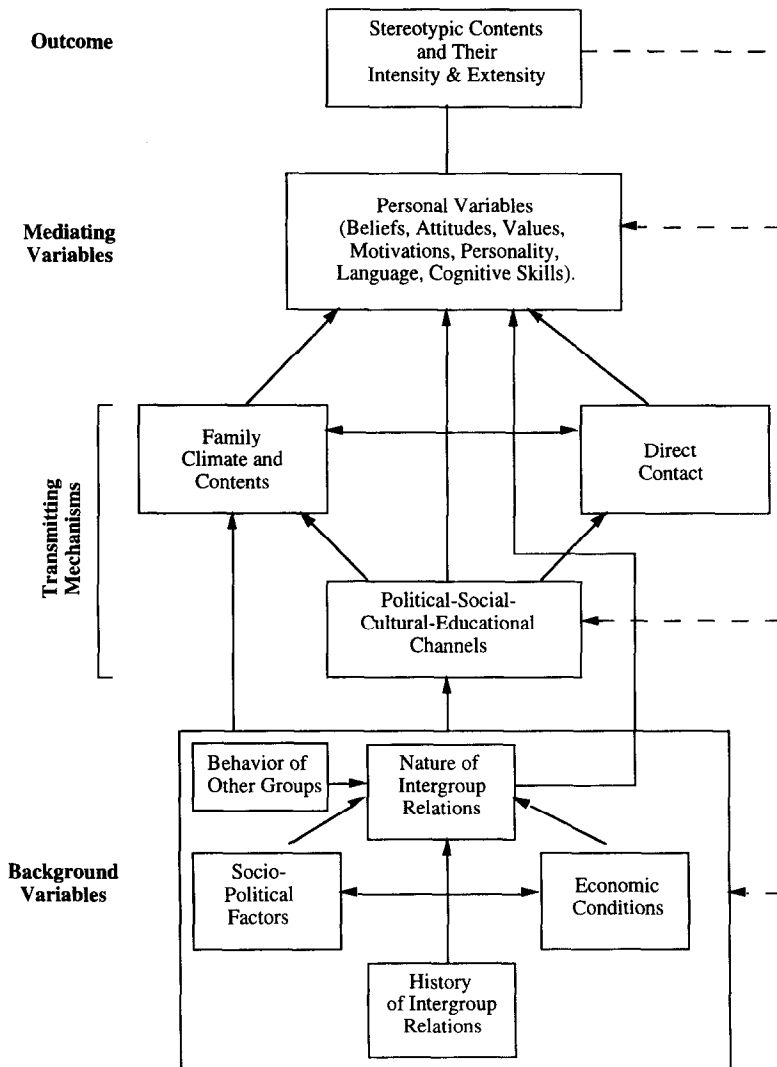


FIGURE 1. Model of Stereotypic Contents' Formation and Change.

now be described in brief and subsequently its parts will be elaborated in detail.

According to the model, the first category of factors are contents of macro-societal variables. They serve as background and basis for the formation and change of stereotypic contents. They involve socio-political and economic conditions, on the one hand, and the nature and history of

intergroup relations, together with the characteristics of the outgroup and the behavior of other groups, on the other. Socio-political factors and economic conditions are indirect determinants which can either foster or inhibit the formation and change of particular stereotypic contents. They are related through mutual influence: economic conditions affect socio-political factors and vice versa. Both determinants influence the nature of intergroup relations, and together with the characteristics of the outgroup and the history of intergroup relations they have a direct effect on the content of stereotypes held by group members.

The present nature of intergroup relations is a *major* determinant of held stereotypic contents. It provides the basis for the information flowing through political-social-cultural-educational channels. It also serves as a background against which individuals come into direct contact with members of an outgroup, when such an encounter takes place. In addition to the present nature of intergroup relations, their history also has a direct influence on the formed stereotypic contents. The nature of past intergroup relations is not easily forgotten. Past wars, animosity, hostility or, in contrast, help, cooperation and friendship have a cumulative impact over time on the present nature of intergroup relations, reflected also in the contents of group members' stereotypes. In addition, various characteristics of the outgroup such as its power, status, customs or standard of living may influence the contents of stereotypes. Finally, the behavior of other groups also has an influence on bilateral relations. Other groups can facilitate or inhibit intergroup relations and thus influence the formed stereotypes.

The transmitting mechanisms are of special importance. Through them individuals receive information which serves as a basis for formation and change of stereotypic contents. The first type of transmitting mechanisms consists of societal channels such as the political (e.g., leaders' speeches, broadcasted news, written commentaries); social (e.g., prevailing norms, friends' circles); cultural (e.g., books, films, art); and educational (e.g., school books, educational television programs, educational curricula). In addition to these societal channels, the family also plays a role as a socializing agent of stereotypic contents. The socializing members of the family (parents, grandparents, older siblings, or other members of the extended family) do not only pass stereotypes on to the younger generation, but also create a climate which serves as facilitator or inhibitor of particular stereotypic contents. The other type of transmitting mechanism, also affected by the previously described channels, is direct contact. Through direct contact individuals collect information about outgroup members via an impression-formation process. This information serves as a basis for formation and change of stereotypic contents.

The model takes into account that the incoming information about the outgroup is not represented in its new form, but rather absorbed,

interpreted, evaluated, elaborated, organized and stored via a cognitive process which is influenced by a series of personal mediating variables such as past knowledge, values, attitudes, personality, cognitive skills and motivations. All these variables shape the eventually stored stereotypic content.

Finally, the model suggests that the formed stereotypic content, in turn, exerts its influence. It becomes part of the individual's repertoire (stored knowledge) and serves as a mediating personal variable for the processing of newly acquired information. In addition, on a societal level, the stereotypes formed by group members have an effect on the nature of intergroup relations and societal channels. They provide important information for the ingroup members about the outgroup and supply the contents for various channels of communication.

The model integrates different levels of analyses. It includes psychological variables on the one hand, and sociological, economic and political variables on the other hand. The former variables allow a micro level of analysis, while the latter variables open the possibility of macro level analysis. A combination of both levels provides a comprehensive and holistic picture of stereotypes' formation and change (see similar approach in the analyses of race relations by Kinloch, 1974 and minority group relations by Kinloch, 1979). In the following section each of the described variables will be analyzed at length and theoretical conceptions which explain parts of the model will be presented.

BACKGROUND VARIABLES

A model of stereotype formation or change has to include macro societal-political-economical variables. Stereotypes are formed within a social milieu on which these factors have a profound effect. They provide the determinative background on which basis individuals as group members form and change their stereotypes. That is, they are responsible to a large extent to collective stereotyping indicating that groups often have consensus about stereotypic contents of outgroups and hold them with high confidence.

Nature of Intergroup Relationships

Among the background variables, the nature of ingroup-outgroup relations is of major importance. The intergroup relations can range from violent conflict in the form of war, to friendly, peaceful cooperation. Between these two sides of the dimension can be found many nuances expressing various types of intergroup relations. These are based on perceived events which form an evaluative gestalt of the nature of relations. Each type of relation provides the information for the formed contents of

stereotypes. The ingroup members infer much about the characteristics of the other group from the nature of these relations. On this basis it is possible to attribute the intentions, goals, dispositions, capabilities, or traits of the other group. Friendly intergroup relations yield information about positive characteristics of the outgroup. The observed cooperation, support, aid, or exchange are attributed to the positive traits and favorable intentions of the outgroup members. Other attributions are made when the relations are competitive, and obviously a violent conflict provides different information about outgroups characteristics. It can be assumed that the nature of the relations has special effect on the intensity and extensity of the stereotypic contents. The more polarized is the nature of the relations (either very negative or very positive) and the more central it is in the life of the group, then the stereotypes are more intensive and extensive.

The imaginative studies by Sherif and his colleagues (see Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Sherif & Sherif, 1969), clearly demonstrated that the nature of intergroup relations has a strong effect on the formed contents of stereotypes. In the first phase of these experiments, Sherif encouraged competitive and even conflictive relations between the two groups. As a result, unfavorable attitudes and negative stereotypes of the outgroup emerged. For example, in one of the experiments, while the evaluations of the fellow group members were almost exclusively favorable in both groups, the evaluations of the outgroup were predominantly unfavorable. Group members used such terms as "sneaky, smart alecks and stinkers" to describe the outgroup. However, the second phase of the experiments consisted of a series of steps involving cooperative activities toward superordinate goals. All of them were taken to reduce intergroup hostility. As the nature of intergroup relations changed and became cooperative, so changed the attitudes and contents of the stereotypes. From choosing their best friends almost exclusively from their own group, many subjects shifted to listing members of the outgroup. In addition, the new evaluations of the outgroup members were largely positive.

The experiments by Sherif and his associates were not the only to demonstrate that the stereotypic contents which one group forms of another reflect the conflicting or cooperative nature of relations between them. Other studies, by manipulating the nature of intergroup relations, obtained similar results. They showed that conflictive relations between two groups led to the formation of negative stereotypic contents, while cooperative relations led to positive contents (Harvey, 1956; Mannheim, 1960).

The described experiments are considered as supportive of realistic-group-conflict theory which focuses on the particular nature (i.e. conflict) of the influence of intergroup relations on stereotypic contents and explains its sources. It suggests that real conflicts over scarce resources, territories, or dominance result in a perception of threat which in turn causes attri-

bution of negative characteristics to the threatening group in order to explain the experienced threat (Bar-Tal, 1990a; Bernard, 1957; Campbell, 1965; Sherif, 1967). Campbell formulates the premises as follows: "Real conflict of interests, overt, active, or past intergroup conflict, and/or the presence of hostile, threatening, and competitive outgroup neighbors, which collectively may be called 'real threat' cause perception of threat.... Real threat causes hostility toward the sources of threat" (Campbell, 1965, p. 288).

The negative contents of stereotypes, thus, are a consequence of ingroup members' perceived conflict of interests with an outgroup. This tendency has been demonstrated by several studies examining stereotypes during international conflicts. It was found that stereotypes about Germans and Japanese became more negative in the U.S. during World War II (Dudycha, 1942; Meenes, 1943; Seago, 1947). Similarly, Indians used especially negative characteristics to describe Chinese as a result of the 1950 Sino-Indian border dispute (Sinha & Upadhyaya, 1960).

An ethnocentric model suggested by Bar-Tal (1990a) can also be ranged under the category of negative intergroup relations. This model proposed that the ethnocentric tendency to perceive the other group by virtue of its mere otherness as different and devalued can be the underlying basis for negative stereotypic contents. This tendency is especially manifest when the outgroup obviously differs and arouses despise and/or fear. The relations between Whites and Blacks in the Southern United States, or between Spaniards and Indians in South America are historic examples of relations grounded in ethnocentric views.

The effect of the nature of intergroup relations on stereotypic content is not limited to conflicts, but extends to cooperative, friendly and peaceful relations too, as was demonstrated by the previously described study by Sherif and his associates in 1961. Satisfactory political, economic, social and cultural cooperation, the experience of friendship, security, mutual support and trust are all translated into positive stereotypic contents. Studies have shown that an end to hostile and conflictive relations between groups and a movement towards cooperation is followed by a change in stereotypic contents from perception of negative characteristics to positive ones (e.g. Karlines, Coffman, & Walters, 1969).

The inference of stereotypic contents on the basis of intergroup relations can be explained in two ways. First, group members, as observers of outgroup behavior which contributes to the shaping of intergroup relations, explain it by attributing it to the dispositions of the outgroup members (Hewstone, 1988). Second, group members who almost always evaluate themselves favorably and mostly attribute to themselves moral and positive characteristics (LeVine & Campbell, 1972), think that the fluctuating nature of intergroup relations (especially the conflict) is determined by the intentions and dispositions of the other group. This tendency

forces ingroup members to pay attention to the behavior of the other group in order to be able to infer its characteristics.

While group members receive most of the information about the nature of intergroup relations indirectly from various societal transmitting channels, as will be elaborated later, they can also learn about it directly. Uncensored televised press conferences with leaders of the other group, published interviews, broadcast speeches, films or T.V. programs provide knowledge which can serve as a basis for assessing the nature of the relations and subsequently the contents of stereotypes.

It should be noted, finally, that the nature of intergroup relations is not static but changes over time. Groups move from a state of war to friendly relations as well as in the opposite direction, from cooperation to conflict. These changes directly influence the contents of stereotypes (Benyamini, 1980; Karlins et al., 1969). In fact, changes in stereotypic contents as a result of changes in the nature of intergroup relations serve as supportive evidence for the influence of intergroup relations on stereotypic contents.

History of Intergroup Relations

In order to understand the origin of stereotypic contents, one should not only consider present intergroup relations but also be acquainted with the history of these relations. The present nature of the relations explains only part of the contents. History of the relations is also reflected in the present stereotypic contents. Centuries and even decades of hostility or friendship, as well as major events involving the other group leave their marks on the stereotypes currently used by group members and on their intensity and extensity. Can Poles forget at least five centuries of continuous active conflict with Germans, including two world wars? Can Bulgarians or Greeks forget at least three centuries of domination by the Turks? Can the Jews forget the Holocaust perpetrated on them half a century ago by Germans?

Past events are not easily forgotten. Each group carries its history and transmits it to new generations. The collective memory stores the events of the past and many of them not only serve as group heritage, but also become part of the ethos maintained through culture, education and other institutions. Past intergroup relations are selectively remembered and serve as a foundation on which new types of relations are constructed.

The past may involve years of antagonism, hostility and major wars which are not forgotten in spite of present cooperation and friendship. In other cases, on the contrary, the present conflict should be seen against the background of long peace and amity. An example of the first case is present French-German relations. The question that may be raised whether, on the basis of these relations, we can explain the French stereotypes of Germans. Years of hostility, two major wars and occupation in

the present century, contribute to the present perception of Germans and far from being erased, they stay and mix with the impact of present relations. It is difficult to find an example of the second case, since histories of intergroup relations are mostly loaded with conflicts interspersed by periods of peace. Nevertheless, maybe the present mutual perceptions of Rumanians and Hungarians, in view of the developing conflict over minority rights and territory, should be examined against cultivated friendship and cooperation in the past decades.

Of special importance for understanding the repertoire of stereotypic content are major events involving an outgroup, which stamp the collective memory of a group. Genocides, cruel wars, terrorizing occupations, or unexpected help and support leave their marks for many years. Group members do not forget them and are affected by them in forming stereotypic contents. The genocide of Armenians by Turks or the crucial help given in the previous century by Russians to Bulgarians in their attempt to liberate themselves from Turkish occupation are examples of such major events.

Intergroup relations have to be examined also from the point of view of the influence on them of socio-political factors and economic conditions.

Socio-Political Factors

Stereotypic contents are not only shaped by the nature of intergroup relations, but also by various socio-political factors characterizing the ingroup. Among them are norms of tolerance, social cohesion, solidarity, societal polarization, the openness of the society, possibilities of mobility, and hierarchical structure.

In principle these socio-political factors are indirectly related to the formation and change of stereotypic content through the level of tolerance maintained by the group and the degree of frustration experienced by group members as a result of the given socio-political structure. The former antecedent refers to the formal and informal norms which the group prescribes regarding behaviors toward other individuals or other groups who are perceived as different. Lack of tolerant norms indicates high likelihood of negative behavior toward an outgroup, while norms of tolerance may inhibit such behavior. The norms of tolerance are not only reflected in the formal legal code of the group, or in its institutions, but they are also represented in cultural and personal norms and expressed both directly and symbolically. A tradition of tolerance prevents the group from applying overgeneralized negative labels to an outgroup, particularly when such labels have correspondingly negative behavioral implications. Lack of tolerant norms, or difficulties in enforcing them, remove the inhibitions on hostile behaviors accompanied by negative stereotypes towards an outgroup. In extreme cases, negative attitudes and behaviors

toward outgroups can become part of formal group ideology, supported by legislation, formal societal institutions, political system, and the dominant culture. The Nazi's treatment of Jews in Germany between 1933–45 is one extreme example of what institutionalized lack of tolerance can accomplish (Bar-Tal, 1990b).

With regard to the other antecedent, socio-political factors such as hierarchical structure, possibilities of mobility, or societal polarization have an effect on the level of ingroup members' frustration. The more complex the hierarchical structure, the less possibilities for mobility, or the larger the political polarization, the more frustration, alienation, and deprivation are found among members of such groups (e.g. Schwartz, 1973; Sowell, 1975; Steinberg, 1981). These phenomena are found to be related to negative stereotyping, hostility toward and discrimination of an outgroup (Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1964; Simpson & Yinger, 1985). Group members direct their resentments towards outgroups which are not responsible for the existing injustices or social societal inequalities.

The described phenomenon is explained by the scapegoat theory (Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1964; Miller & Bugelski, 1948), which is based on Freud's theory of defense mechanisms and the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). Scapegoat theory suggests that hostility including prejudice and negative stereotyping, are a result of frustration. Specifically, when group members experience frustration and its source is either too powerful or unidentified, then their hostility will be arbitrarily displaced towards members of minority groups. The act of displacement, including the attribution of negative labels to the minority is justified by blaming the outgroup for the frustration.

Of special importance for understanding the formation of stereotyping is the recently developed theory on societal hierarchy and dominance (e.g., Jackman & Muha, 1984; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). The social dominance theory developed by Sidanius and his colleagues suggests that human social systems which are predisposed to establish hierarchies also form legitimizing beliefs for the differential structure. Stereotypes are part of these legitimizing beliefs since they provide the justification for the group-based hierarchical social structure and the unequal distribution of value in social systems. Powerful groups tend to attribute negative stereotypes to other groups in order to justify and legitimize their power.

Economic Conditions

The above described scapegoat theory also explains the relationship between economic conditions and negative stereotypic contents. Hardship as a result of economic conditions, which relates to deprivation of basic needs, feelings of inequality and/or considerable worsening of personal

economic conditions cause frustration. Group members who experience frustration in these cases may displace their hostility and negative stereotyping towards outgroups, since the real sources of frustration are often unknown or beyond their reach. The level and scope of frustration determines the level of intensity and extensity of negative stereotyping.

Several examples provided by Ashmore (1970) support the described interrelationship among economic conditions, nature of intergroup relations and stereotypic contents. According to Ashmore (1970) prior to the Civil War in the mid 1860s, the Chinese in California were generally perceived positively. However, when the construction of the trans-continental railroad was completed and the war had ended, there was increased competition for jobs between Caucasians and Chinese, which in turn led to the negative stereotyping of the Chinese. Similarly, the Japanese were received in California with positive perceptions until the 1890s when they became significant competitors for jobs. Then, as economic competition increased, anti-Japanese perceptions appeared and grew dominant.

Another study with implications on the relationship between economic conditions and extreme prejudice was done by Hovland & Sears (1940). They found a significant negative correlation between the annual per-acre value of cotton in the South of the United States and the number of lynchings per year for the period from 1882 to 1930. The negative correlation indicates that economic prosperity is inversely related to anti-Black sentiment and behavior. Similarly, a study by Dollard (1938) of aroused hostility in a small American town is directly relevant to the analyzed interrelationships. In this town, intense anti-German sentiment developed as Germans moved in and began to compete with the local people for jobs in a woodware factory.

Characteristics of the Outgroups

Characteristics of the stereotyped outgroup have a profound effect on the stereotype's contents (see Kinloch, 1974; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). The scope of characteristics can be classified to several categories: demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or size of the group; societal characteristics such as group's power, its level of education, dominative values and norms, or culture's roots; economic characteristics such as group's economic resources, standard of living, dominant occupations, or wealth. The information about these characteristics is transmitted through various channels of communication and serves as a basis for stereotype's formation by ingroup members. (Information derived from direct contact with outgroup members will be discussed later).

The stereotyping process on the basis of this information is mostly

mediated by the comparison between outgroup's characteristics and one's own. The comparisons which determine the evaluations of similarities and differences between the ingroup and outgroup lead to stereotyping on the basis of affective and cognitive reactions such as feelings of commonality, closeness, empathy, pity, threat, despise, disgust, or envy. The first four feelings lead to positive stereotypes while the latter four lead to negative stereotypes. In this vein, Kinloch (1974), who provided an analysis of ethnic and race relations in the United States, also pointed out the importance of demographic characteristics on stereotyping. For example, according to Kinloch, the negative stereotyping of the Mexican Americans can be at least partially explained by their "religious and linguistic dissimilarity, along with low occupational skills, little economic resources, and a traditional noncapitalistic culture" (Kinloch, 1974, p. 177). In contrast, the positive stereotypes of Swedish, German, or Dutch immigrants can be explained by their similarity to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture.

Behavior of Other Groups

The relations between two groups do exist in vacuum but are influenced by the behaviors of other groups, as well. Each group has different types of relations with many groups, which in many cases are relevant to the specific bilateral intergroup relations. In fact, bilateral relations must be considered within the context of multilateral relations among groups. First, of all, groups have deep interest in the type of relations that other groups have. Groups actively influence these relations either by facilitation or inhibition. That is, a group may encourage or discourage a development of relations between two groups which have an effect on stereotyping. In the former case, a group may mediate in cases of disagreement or conflict, and as a result facilitate a change of negative stereotyping, as for example, United States intervened to resolve peacefully the Israeli-Egyptian conflict. In the latter case, it may demand a cessation of relations and thus reinforce negative stereotyping, as for example, the United States has tried to set an international embargo on Iraq or Libya. In addition to instrumental considerations, there is also an affective aspect of multigroup relations which has a direct influence on stereotypes' formation. The principles "A friend of a friend is also a friend" or "A friend of an enemy is also an enemy" can be applied to intergroup relations too. The negative effect of Jordan's support of Iraq during the Gulf War on USA-Jordan relations or the positive effect of close relations between the USA and Israel on the relations between Israel and countries in Asia and Eastern Europe are a few examples of the above presented principles which also influence stereotypic perceptions.

TRANSMITTING MECHANISMS

The information about outgroups which serves as a basis for the formation or change of stereotypic contents comes from three main sources. It is absorbed from various political-social-cultural-educational channels; from the outgroup members during direct contact in the process of impression-formation; and from family sources, especially during childhood and adolescence.

Not always do individuals have an opportunity to be in direct contact with outgroup members and to form their own impression of the outgroup on the basis of such an encounter. In many cases, individuals who do not have direct contact with outgroup members form stereotypic contents on the basis of the information received from group channels. But even in cases of direct contact, previously received information from group sources plays an important role in the formation of stereotypic content in the process of impression formation.

Channels of Information

Various societal channels provide information about the outgroups. School books, films, newspapers, television programs, leaders' speeches, theatrical plays, literature and other sources provide information which allows characterization of outgroups. Sometimes this is done directly, when the sources describe the characteristics of another group, and sometimes it is done indirectly when the provided information refers to such subjects as behaviors or styles of life and the characteristics are inferred by the receivers of the message. In any event, because of their natural societal channels, they reach the masses of the group and are responsible to the similar perception of outgroups by group members. They thus plan a crucial role in affecting the intensity and extensity of the stereotypes.

Information provided by the societal channel is of special importance in shaping the stereotypes about the outgroups. It often exerts a great, if not a determinative, influence on the formation and change of group members' stereotypic contents, as well as on their intensity and extensity. First of all, information coming from societal channels such as media is widely spread. Secondly, in some groups or cases, information coming from institutionalized sources may be the only information available. Thirdly, institutionalized sources are often trusted and perceived as reliable. In many groups, formal channels of information such as newspapers, books, or television and radio programs are viewed as epistemic authorities. That is, knowledge coming from these sources is unquestioningly received as valid and truthful (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Brosh, 1991). The same is the case with leaders who often, both in their appearances and writings, refer to outgroups and thus help to shape stereotypic

contents held by group members (Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Raviv, 1992). These societal sources serve as models, provide legitimization to formed stereotypes and reflect institutionalized view about them.

In discussing the societal communication channels it is necessary to direct attention to the function of language in formation and change of cultural stereotypes. Language used by political-social-cultural-educational sources cues the activation of stereotypes, expresses them, influences the communicative distance established between the groups, and affects the emotional reactions of ingroup members towards the outgroup (Giles & Saint-Jacques, 1979; van Dijk, 1984, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Its production and reception strategies feedback and reinforce stereotypes, and in combination with the context, it may lead to breakdowns and dissolution of intergroup communication (Hewstone & Giles, 1986).

Information about outgroups, coming from group sources, is always influenced by the group's values, ideology, beliefs and goals. This suggests that the references to outgroups through institutionalized channels of communication should not be seen as merely expressing the stereotypic contents. In fact, the stereotypic contents reflect the group's ethos by guiding the provided information and are unseparable from the macro-societal factors described previously. Ashmore (1970) and Greenberg and Mazingo (1976) provided evidence about the effect of mass media on stereotypic content. They pointed to the downgrading image blacks had in newspapers, popular magazines, television and films during the middle of this century. Similarly, Dovidio and Gaertner (1986) noted that in 1949–50 almost all the blacks appearing in magazine advertising were in low-skilled labor categories and in 62% of the cases they were presented in subordinate relationships with whites. However, as the legal rights struggle succeeded to change the attitudes of the American society, by 1980 only 14% of the blacks in magazine advertising held low-skilled labor jobs, and in 89% of the cases the depicted relations were of equal status. The same changes were observed in television programs and advertising. Not only did blacks' image improve dramatically, their roles also changed almost completely from low class jobs to middle class positions (Greenberg & Mazingo, 1976; Humphrey & Schuman, 1984).

The nature of the relations between the ingroup and the outgroup has special influence on the information transmitted from the societal sources. For example, when relations are conflictual, the supplied information selectively portrays the enemy with negative contents (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1988, 1990a, 1993). Bar-Tal (1988) showed the attempts of Israeli Jews and Palestinians in view of their protracted conflict to delegitimize each other through various societal channels. Specifically, he described examples from political leaders' speeches, documents and newspaper commentaries, analysis of literature and school books which were all transmitting infor-

mation portraying the other group in an extremely negative way. Similarly, during the Cold War and until very recently, American sources of information, including mass media, films, and political leaders invested all their efforts to describe Russians negatively through using such unfavorable characteristics as their presumed brutality, primitiveness, aggressiveness, ruthlessness, or cruelty (Bar-Tal, 1993; Bialer, 1985; Dallin, 1973; English & Halperin, 1987; Ugolnik, 1983). In contrast, in times of cooperation the provided information focuses on positive contents in portraying members of an outgroup. This trend was especially salient during World War II when the USA and the Soviet Union jointly fought against the Axis forces. In this period of cooperation, the American channels of communication went out of their way to provide information characterizing the Russians positively (Small, 1974).

In this context, it should be noted that the history of intergroup relations cannot be disregarded. The transmitted information not only often refers to the past, but the described present, but is also marked by the history of these relations. For example, the information provided by the Israeli channels about Germans has to be understood in the perspective of past events which still play a crucial role in shaping Israelis' image of Germans. In addition, the information about stereotypic contents transmitted through group channels, is often related to socio-political factors and economic conditions. They often affect the content of information regarding outgroups. For example, economical needs were the main factor for the institutional dehumanization of blacks by the formal sources of information in the American South during past centuries (Genovese, 1966; Stamp, 1956). Moreover, group leaders sometimes may use the channels of communication for their own purposes (Weinstock, 1995). They may, for example, in times of economic hardship or societal alienation direct the accumulated frustrations against outgroups in general, or against minority groups in particular (Bar-Tal, Y., 1989). It is a well-known historical fact that the Russian authorities before the 1917 revolution used to generate antisemitic information in order to deflect the dissatisfaction of the masses against the Jews and reinforce antisemitism.

Direct Contact

Formation of stereotypic content not only takes place via the indirect flow of information about the outgroup but also through personal contact. Group members meet in person members of the outgroup and thus directly obtain information. That is, they form impressions about the individuals who are members of an outgroup through face to face interaction. They attribute traits, abilities and other characteristics on the basis of physical appearance, verbal and non-verbal behavior. They often perceive the out-

group members they meet as true representatives of this group and ignore large individual differences by generalizing the formed impression to other group members (Fiske & Neuberg, 1989; Wilder, 1986). "You meet some outgroup members, you know them all" is the principle underlying formation of the stereotypic content via direct contact.

Direct contact allows also to observe the particular role, or roles, the outgroup members occupy in the society. This is powerful information which not only indicates their relative status, prestige, and power, but also a series of attributes which can be inferred (Aboud, 1988; Eagly, 1987). Thus for example, individuals form different stereotypes about an outgroup whose members are encountered mostly in low level jobs than when outgroup members are met mostly in highly prestigious jobs. The learning about outgroups via direct contact is obviously limited to the social context in which it takes place. It is always possible that the social context* of the inter-personal contact provides only partial information about the outgroup, since the contact may be carried out with an only partially representative segment of the outgroup society, in a particular setting and situation.

It should be remembered that individuals rarely come into contact with members of an outgroup without already having preconceptions about their characteristics. They usually meet outgroup members after having at least some knowledge about the outgroup acquired through group channels of communication. As a result, individuals enter these encounters with a set of expectations which are based on previously acquired knowledge which also includes stereotypes. Nevertheless, the personal experience has special importance. Individuals have, in these situations, an opportunity to collect first hand information. This information allows a reappraisal of held knowledge including stereotypes and even may cause its change. Brewer and Campbell (1976) on the basis of their data collected in East Africa, pointed out that "the content of intergroup perception is largely a function of the frequency and type of contact between ethnic groups and the degree of personal acquaintance of the individual informant with members of each target outgroup" (Brewer & Campbell, 1976, p. 121).

Since it has been widely accepted that direct contact has an effect on the formed impression of the outgroup (see Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969, 1976; Cook, 1962), the question to be asked then, is what kind of contribution does a direct contact make to the change of stereotypic content? This question has been of major interest to social psychologists because it has direct relevance to various decisions of public policy, mainly with regard to housing projects and desegregation in education (e.g., Deutsch & Collins, 1951; St. John, 1975).

Direct contact may have a variety of effects on stereotypic contents. It may strengthen or weaken positive as well as negative held images. It

may, alternatively, not affect these contents at all—and only confirm the previously acquired stereotypes. Social scientists attempted to elucidate the conditions under which the contact, has influence on the stereotypic contents. Amir (1969) suggested several conditions which may influence change of stereotypic content in the direction of more positivity. This is the case when:

1. contact is between individuals of equal status;
2. contact occurs in a social climate where authorities and norms support intergroup interaction;
3. the interaction is intimate rather than casual or superficial;
4. contact is the form of a pleasant interaction and occurs in a rewarding context;
5. contact takes place in a cooperative context where the goals are of a common superordinate nature.

In the research which was done in recent years these conditions emerged as core factors which determine the outcome of intergroup contact (Brewer & Miller, 1988; Miller & Brewer, 1984; Stephan & Brigham, 1985).

Family Sources

An analysis of stereotypic content formation has to take into account variables related to family functioning. First of all, it can be assumed that in a family the child is exposed to stereotypic contents. Second, the family climate indirectly has an influence on the contents of stereotypes that the child acquires. Children who spend most of their time with their family learn from its members about outgroups. Parents and other family members teach the children stereotypic contents through various learning techniques, elaborated by social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Children hear their parents and other senior relatives referring to members of outgroups. They may describe the behaviors of outgroup members, relations with them, or even attribute characteristics to them. Sometimes children absorb this information as family members talk about various topics, and sometimes it is transferred to them directly as older family members discuss with them and answer their questions.

Usually, parents are the most influential figures during childhood and adolescence since they are perceived, especially in the early phase of children's life, as knowledgeable and reliable (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Houminer, 1990; Bar-Tal et al., 1991). They have an almost absolute power over the children, supplying all their needs, serving as figures of identification and therefore exert determinative influence on children's knowledge. Thus, it is not surprising that the study by Mosher and Scodel (1960)

found that mothers' degree of prejudice correlated highly with that of their children, independently of the authoritarian child-rearing practices used. It can be assumed with high confidence that prejudice reflects negative stereotyping (Mackie & Hamilton, 1993; Stroebe & Insko, 1989).

The learning of stereotypic content is not only done through listening and modeling or instruction, but also by reinforcement. Parents eventually reinforce stereotypic contents and prejudice by means of rewards and punishments. They reward their children for expressing contents held by them and punish when children express contents inconsistent with their beliefs. In one of the early studies on this subject, Horowitz and Horowitz (1938) found that white children were very often punished for playing with black children. Similarly, Bird, Monachesi, and Burdick (1952) found that white children whose parents posed definite prohibitions against playing with black children were more prejudiced than white children who did not have to comply with these rules.

Acquisition of stereotypic contents is not only a consequence of direct learning, but also results more indirectly from the family climate. Family climate pertains to child-rearing practices and the nature of relationships between family members. It has determinative influence on many of the children's personality characteristics, including authoritarianism, tolerance, rigidity or openness, which in turn have their effect on the formation of stereotypic contents. One of the early theories which suggested that there is a link between patterns of child rearing and attitudes towards outgroups is the Scapegoat theory. It suggested a relationship between the harshness of parental discipline and the degree of the child's prejudice (Ashmore, 1970). Indeed, several studies found that highly prejudiced children received harsher punishments by their parents than low prejudiced children (e.g., Frenkel-Brunswik, 1948; Harris, Gough, & Martin, 1950; Weatherley, 1963).

A classic work by Adorno and his colleagues (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) provided an illuminating analysis on how child rearing practices determine the development of authoritarian personality, which is characterized, among various other features, by prejudice. They found that prejudiced individuals reported a punitive home discipline which was perceived as arbitrary. Their parents tended to exhibit rigid dominance and require submission from their children. In addition, these parents adopted a rigid set of values, guided merely by social desirability. Deviation, difference and social inferiority were considered as negative outcasting. Adults who grew up in such a climate tended to rely on authority figures, conform to group norms, deny their personal conflicts, externalize them, displace their hostility and project their tabooed impulses. These characteristics caused them to be prejudiced, as they tended to channel their hostility towards outgroups via projection, displacement and other processes.

PERSONAL MEDIATING VARIABLES

Information about the outgroup, absorbed from either channels of communication and/or impression-formation as a result of direct contact is mediated by personal variables, as is all processed information. Personal variables have influence on how information about outgroups is identified and interpreted, causing to individual differences: at the end of cognitive processing individuals show a different understanding of the same information. Variables such as personal knowledge, cognitive skills, language, values, attitudes, motivations, or personality influence the absorbed information and thus the formed stereotypic contents. These variables mediate the information processing. Cognitive research has shown that in the process of information acquisition, individuals tend to select particular aspects of the available information—what seems meaningful, consistent and relevant to them—and tend to impose upon this information their own structure and interpretation (Bransford, 1980; Markus & Zajonc, 1985). This is so because individuals differ in their stored knowledge, cognitive abilities and motivations, and this has determinative effects on outcomes of information processing. The study of the effects of personal mediating variables, especially cognitive factors, on stereotyping has been one of the most fruitful directions of research in the last two decades and therefore only few remarks will be made (see Hamilton, 1981a; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993; Stephan, 1985, 1989 for further details).

The possessed knowledge plays a crucial role as a mediating variable. Individuals elaborate new information on the basis of the previously acquired knowledge. An example of this influence can serve a theory of belief congruence proposed by Rokeach, Smith, and Evans (1960). The conception indicates that negative stereotypic contents regarding a different race stem from assumption that outgroup members possess dissimilar and possibly threatening beliefs (see review by Insko, Nacoste, & Moe, 1983). Also, individuals' language is of importance. On the one hand, it reflects personal knowledge and, on the other hand, it feeds cognitive repertoire. Language, as used by individuals, is the carrier and transmitter of stereotypic contents (Bond, 1985; Maas, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989).

The illusory correlation phenomenon can be seen as another example describing the mediation of a cognitive factor (in this case cognitive bias) in the formation of stereotypic content. It shows that individuals selectively process information and subjectively interrupt it on the way to forming stereotypic content. Research reviewed by Hamilton (1981b) and Hamilton and Sherman (1989) clearly demonstrates that individuals tend to either overestimate or underestimate an actual association between certain characteristics (including dispositions, behaviors, traits) and certain groups. In other words, the formed stereotypic content is the consequence of an interaction between information which might have been

received from any source, and the individual's cognitive bias. Individuals tend to characterize groups on the basis of distinctive stimulus events (for example, a perceived distinctively undesirable behavior will tend to be taken as characterizing a minority group).

Several examples can illustrate the influence of cognitive skills on the processing of absorbed information about outgroups. With regard to cognitive complexity, it was noted that while persons who are high in cognitive complexity discriminate between stimuli and organize them into subclasses within categories, persons who are low in cognitive complexity do not discriminate well among stimuli and organize them into a few simple categories (Schroder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967). On the basis of this difference, it is possible to assume that persons with high cognitive complexity foster a more differentiated view of the outgroup, storing various contents which might even be of contradictory nature. In contrast, persons with low cognitive complexity perceive the outgroup simplistically, forming few contents and tending to generalize to either overall favorable or unfavorable contents (Wilder, 1981). Accordingly, the extensive field study by Glock, Wuthnow, Piliavin, and Spencer (1975) showed that level of cognitive sophistication was related to degree of subjects' prejudice. Cognitively sophisticated adolescents displayed less prejudice than cognitively unsophisticated ones.

In this vein, Bar-Tal, Y. (1994) recently proposed that the ability to structure information has an effect on black and white characterization of an outgroup. While high ability individuals, with high need for structure, tend to avoid inconsistent information, simplify the available information, and make unidimensional, categorical judgments, low ability individuals have difficulty in making clear cut judgments and cannot avoid ambiguous information. He thus found that in Israel the ability to structure information correlated with negative stereotyping of the Palestinians when there was a high need for structure.

Psychoanalytic theories contributed to the understanding of the unconscious motives which also influence the contents of stereotypes. It has been proposed that the perception of certain outgroups is mediated mainly by the two defense mechanisms of displacement and projection (e.g., Ashmore, 1970). Displacement occurs when hostility aroused by an external factor is directed against another person or a group. Individuals who use this defense mechanism tend to blame an outgroup for the experienced frustration. Campbell (1947) reported that Americans who were dissatisfied with their personal economic conditions and national political situation were more antisemitic than those who felt satisfied. Projection, as an attribution of own hostility to external sources, serves as justification and rationalization of own animosity directed against the outgroup (Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1950). In this case, impulses producing conflict or hatred are projected onto another group. Bettelheim and Janowitz (1950) found that

U.S. veterans projected their rejected identity impulses onto blacks using such stereotypes as “sloppy”, “dirty” or “immoral”.

Under the influence of the psychoanalytic approach, Adorno et al. (1950) described the authoritarian personality, which among other characteristics, represents a tendency to subsume things mechanically under rigid categories and respond with hostility against outgroups. This personality was suggested to predispose individuals to respond with prejudice towards outgroups, because individuals with authoritarian personality tend to judge other groups negatively, applying rigid categories, overgeneralizing and disregarding individual differences.

Social identity theory provides an additional perspective which sheds light on the formation of stereotypes. The theory proposed by Tajfel and his associates (Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that social identity defined as “a part of the individuals’ self concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255) is associated with the motive to achieve positive self-evaluation. Individuals’ desire for positive social identity provides a motivational basis for differentiation between social groups and ingroup favoritism. Stereotyping is the process which allows selective accentuation of intergroup differences and ingroup positive evaluation. Recently on the basis of self—the categorization theory—Oakes, Haslam, and Turner (1994) proposed that stereotypes represent categorizations at the level of social identity and are fluid and context-dependent. In their view the stereotype of a given group may vary “as a function of . . . the frame of reference, the dimensions of comparison, and the background knowledge . . . expectations, needs, values and goals of the perceiver” (Oakes et al., 1994, p. 211).

Finally, it should be noted that in the category of personal variables can also be found temporary variables which influence the final outcome of stereotypic content formation. Variables such as level of arousal or scope of attention mediate information processing (Wilder, 1981). It has been observed that heightened arousal narrows focus of attention and decreases capacity to process information (Kahneman, 1973). It can thus be expected thus that aroused individuals view outgroups in a simplified way by exercising less discrimination and using more superficial characteristics as a basis for stereotypic content formation. Similarly, limited attention results in the collection of less information and a greater tendency to view the outgroup in relatively simple terms.

CONCLUSIONS

The present model describes the general factors which affected the formation and change of stereotypic contents, beginning with variables on

the macro-societal level and ending with variables on the micro-intra-personal level. In addition, it depicts the direction of these levels' inter-relationships. Specifically, the model suggests that three categories of factors determine the contents of stereotypes. First, macro factors must be considered which serve as a basis and background for the formed contents; they include: nature of intergroup relations, their history, characteristics of the outgroup, behavior of other groups, socio-political factors and economic conditions. Then the model describes three major ways through which group members receive information about outgroups: political-social-cultural-educational channels of group communication, direct contact with outgroup members, and family sources. Finally, it is noted that the transmitted information is mediated by various personal variables.

The model assumes not only that stereotypic contents result from intergroup relations, intragroup and interpersonal processes, but also that they serve as inputs which extend personal knowledge and influence the nature of intergroup relations. That is, on the one hand they are outcomes and the present paper has elaborated their formation at length. On the other hand, however, stereotypic contents feed back into the relations by influencing group members' behavior towards the outgroup. Intergroup relations serve both as justification and explanation for the behavior. Stereotypes, in this respect, serve as antecedents and consequences of intergroup relations. They are part of a cycle that can be positive or negative. In the latter case, the stereotypes contribute to the vicious circle since they are formed on the basis of a conflict or war and, at the same time, they inflame them.

In this vein it should be noted that the same model can be used not only for the description of how stereotypic contents are formed or changed but also for analyzing the intensity and extensity of stereotypic contents. Both characteristics are of great importance but have been almost completely disregarded by social psychological research. They provide two dimensions of the stereotypic content which cause it to be influential. One refers to the level of confidence that group members have in the contents of the stereotypes. The other describes the degree of consensus among group members. The former characteristic is partially determined by personal variables, while the latter is influenced entirely by intrasocietal processes and channels of communication. The effects of stereotypic contents are determined by their intensity and extensity. The more intense and extensive they are, the more influence they have on group behavior. Intensity and extensity of stereotypic contents are determined by the classes of variables described by the model (see Figure 1).

Each level of the presented analysis by itself has limited power of explanation. The personal level accounts for individual differences, while the macro level explains cultural differences and why particular outgroups are labeled with a specific content. The inclusion in the model of the

individual, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels allows a comprehensive analysis and a more complete picture of the formation and change of stereotypic contents.

Similarly, the model incorporates various theories which have been offered to explain the formation of stereotypic contents. Each of these theories deals with a particular segment of a large picture. Thus, for example, while the realistic conflict theory is concerned with the macro level background factor, the illusory correlation theory focuses on micro-intrapersonal bias of information processing. Both of them are important pieces of the puzzle and neither of them claims to provide an exclusive description of how the stereotypic content is formed. Therefore, the various theories of stereotypic content formation and change should be seen as complementary. It is assumed that in order to understand the formation of stereotypic content all the various theories describing different aspects are needed, particularly given the complexity of the process. This assumption leads to the recognition of the necessity to integrate the different theories and levels of analysis into one explanatory framework.

Examination of the model reveals both factors to which social psychology has devoted much attention and factors which have been relatively neglected. While much research has gone into the study of direct contact effects and the influence of several mediating personal variables, the investigation of macro level variables, societal channels of transmission or family function are all receiving little attention. Formation of social knowledge, including stereotypic contents, is based not only on intrapersonal cognitive processes, a focus of mainstream social psychological research, but also on micro and macro social processes (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1990). The "facts" of our experience are social in so far as they depend for their meaning on a larger societal context which includes all the previously analyzed variables (Bar-Tal & Kruglanski, 1988). Thus, this context has to be examined if one desires to understand why certain stereotypic contents emerge or change.

It is difficult to determine the relative weight of each of the variables and levels in the formation and change of stereotypic contents. There are probably individual and cultural differences in the influence of the variables. Factors such as credibility of institutionalized channels of information, extent of availability of stereotypic contents in institutionalized channels of information, or availability of alternative information about outgroups determine how transmitting variables influence formation and change of stereotypic contents. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that with free flow of credible information the macro variables, and especially the nature of intergroup relations, have determinative influence on the formation and change of stereotypic contents. The nature of intergroup relations not only provides vivid, salient and sometimes striking information about the outgroup, but also occupies group public/agenda and

shapes consensual view. Socio-political factors, economic conditions, or the history of intergroup relations serve more as facilitatory or discounting factors which can enhance or diminish particular direction, dictated by the nature of intergroup relations. In this position, the societal channels of information play a special role. They transmit the information about the outgroups and describe the nature of intergroup relations. Without them this information could be unavailable to individual group members.

Of special importance is a change of stereotypic contents in times of conflict or war when they often consist of delegitimizing labels (Bar-Tal, 1990a). In these situations the delegitimizing stereotypes are part of the vicious cycle of violence. A peaceful conflict resolution requires both a cessation of violence, negotiation and, at the same time, a change of stereotypic content at first by the political and social mechanisms.

The above described model of stereotypic content formation does not characterize a particular group, but is universal. It goes beyond the features of the specific group to describe general factors and their direction of influence, which can be used in an analysis of any group. The model does not aim to list all the individual's specific variables such as personal mediating attributes, or all the educational channels of transmission. Instead the model is designed to serve as a general, descriptive and explanatory framework which allows a study of specific cases as well. Thus the model is applicable for investigating specific variables which characterize a particular group at a certain point in time. Upon providing the general framework, specific variables can be inserted and studied. For example, it is possible to examine the effects of the specific nature of intergroup relations, a particular educational transmission mechanism or given personality characteristics, on stereotypic content formation and change. The model, therefore, allows a formulation of specific hypotheses that allow investigation.

The presented model focuses on the formulation and change of stereotypic contents, which are unique to individuals and groups. In each case a different set of specific variables is responsible for different outcomes in the form of stereotypic contents. This line of study diverges from the dominant directions of research in social psychology, which focuses on universal processes and outcomes. Both categorization theory and social identity theory, two major contributions to the study of stereotype formation, consider phenomena common to all human beings. Social categorization theory focuses on processes of category formation, including social categories of people; social identity theory deals with formulation of social identities, development of a motive to achieve and maintain positive social identity, and differentiation between ingroup and outgroups. The assumption of both these theories is that everyone forms social categories and social identities and they therefore focus on the universal process and outcome, using the particular contents only as exam-

ples for their investigation. In contrast, the present model is concerned with contents of stereotypes, which differ from group to group and even from individual to individual. Recognizing the importance of specific contents as well as individual and cultural differences, the proposed general model functions mainly for the purposes of studying particular cases. It facilitates the investigation of the sources of individual and cultural differences in stereotypic contents. As indicated, however, although the model can explain the use of specific attributed labels, it cannot predict particular contents. There is a need for research which will determine the specific personality traits, behaviors, social roles, intentions, and other qualities that people employ as labels of groups. This line of research has been carried out in the study of person perception (e.g., Asch, 1958; Peabody, 1987) and could be applied to the study of stereotypes. The work by Ehrlich (1973) in which he proposed 14 categories for classifying ethnic stereotypes is a good example of such a study. However, such research cannot only identify the scope of descriptions in a given group, but has to relate them to independent variables of the type described in the present model.

My work about delegitimization (Bar-Tal, 1988, 1989, 1990a) may provide one example of studying particular stereotypic contents. Delegitimizing labels refer to five extreme negative categories which deny group's humanity (Bar-Tal, 1989). They are especially prevalent in two situations. In the first situation, delegitimization appears in view of protracted and violent conflict and in the other situation, it results from an extreme case of ethnocentrism, when an outgroup is perceived as very different and devalued (Bar-Tal, 1990a). Another example of this direction of study can be found in the classical work on ethnocentrism by LeVine and Campbell (1972). On the basis of ethnographic work, they generated several generalizations with regard to relations between certain group characteristics (e.g. urbanism, occupation, political-technological dominance) and stereotypic contents. For example, they propose that "Rural groups are seen by urban groups as unsophisticated, guileless, gullible, and ignorant" (LeVine & Campbell, 1972, p. 159), or "Groups doing manual labor are seen as strong, stupid, pleasure-loving, improvident" (p. 160). There is a need for more research to establish the link between specific antecedent variables and between specific stereotypic content in order to be able to predict contents of stereotypes.

In this perspective the present paper refocuses attention to the study of formation and change of stereotypic content—a direction which does not receive at present the desirable attention in social psychology. The study of stereotypic content formation and change is of special importance. Individuals behave consistent with their beliefs and therefore the contents of stereotypes they hold determine their behavior on both the interpersonal and intergroup level. As Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachy suggested:

"Man acts upon his ideas. His irrational acts no less than his rational acts are guided by what he thinks, what he believes, what he anticipates. However bizarre the behavior of men, tribes or nation may appear to an outsider, to the men, to the tribes, to the nation, their behavior makes sense in terms of their own views" (Krech et al., 1962, p. 17). Stereotypic contents are ideas which also guide human behavior. There still is much to do in order to investigate their origin.

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