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The Effects of Perspective-Taking on Prejudice: The Moderating Role of Self-Evaluation

Adam D. Galinsky

Gillian Ku

Northwestern University

Perspective-taking, by means of creating an overlap between self and other cognitive representations, has been found to effectively decrease stereotyping and ingroup favoritism. In the present investigation, the authors examined the potential moderating role of self-esteem on the effects of perspective-taking on prejudice. In two experiments, it was found that perspective-takers, but not control participants, with temporarily or chronically high self-esteem evaluated an outgroup more positively than perspective-takers with low self-esteem. This finding suggests an irony of perspective-taking: it builds off egocentric biases to improve outgroup evaluations. The discussion focuses on how debiasing intergroup thought is often best accomplished by working through the very processes that produced the bias in the first place.

Keywords: *perspective-taking; self-esteem; prejudice*

The role and importance of self-esteem in individuals' lives has been repeatedly demonstrated—how we feel about ourselves has profound and widespread implications for a host of domains, ranging from the intrapersonal (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Steele, 1988; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993; Taylor & Brown, 1988) to the interpersonal (e.g., Festinger, 1954; Tajfel, 1978, 1982). Maintaining positive self-esteem is such a vital and constant endeavor that we will try to achieve it by any means necessary, including lashing out against others (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).

In understanding how to increase intergroup harmony, reduce prejudicial beliefs, and decrease the insidious activation of stereotypes, we need to take into account the self and the processes of self-esteem maintenance. Indeed, self-esteem maintenance processes have been implicated in such pernicious responses as stereotyping and prejudice (Fein & Spencer, 1997), bias toward outgroup members (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971), and a host of cognitive processes that

conspire to maintain our stereotypes (Brewer, Dull, & Lui, 1981; Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1996; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Kunda & Oleson, 1995, 1997; Rothbart, Sriram, & Davis-Stitt, 1996; Weber & Crocker, 1983). How do the interventions designed to increase outgroup evaluations and decrease stereotyping affect self-esteem maintenance processes and how and when does one's self-esteem moderate the effects of these interventions? This is a particularly important query because research has found that it is the ingroup's association with the self that often leads to ethnocentric responses in favor of the ingroup (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996; Otten & Bar-Tal, 2002; Otten & Wentura, 2001; Smith & Henry, 1996). In addition, some successful means of decreasing ingroup favoritism and stereotyping—perspective-taking, for example—have been shown to be mediated by activation of the self-concept (Davis, Conklin, Smith, & Luce, 1996; Galinsky, 2002; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

In the current article, we combine the self-esteem, prejudice and stereotyping, and perspective-taking literatures to consider a fundamental process behind the effects of perspective-taking on evaluations, namely, the activation and application of the self-concept. We present evidence that one's self-evaluation plays an important role in moderating the effects of perspective-taking on prejudice reduction. By prejudice, we mean a negative attitude toward or evaluation of a group (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; Judd & Park, 1993; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997, 2001; Wolsko, Park,

Authors' Note: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Adam D. Galinsky, Department of Management and Organizations, Leverone Hall, 2001 Sheridan Road, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208; e-mail: agalinsky@kellogg.northwestern.edu.

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Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Thus, in this article, we use the terms *prejudice* and *evaluations* interchangeably.

SELF-ESTEEM, SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND PREJUDICE

When considering how one views and evaluates the self, self-esteem can refer to global assessments of self-worth or to domain-specific evaluations of aspects of the self (see Crocker & Wolfe, 2001, for a summary). In their contingency model of self-worth, Crocker and Wolfe (2001) suggest that self-esteem can be simultaneously conceived of as a trait and a state, with momentary self-relevant domain-specific judgments of self-worth varying around a baseline level of global trait self-esteem. As a result, our overall competency in domains in which we have a psychological stake defines our trait self-esteem. In addition, our ability to satisfy specific domains defines our state self-esteem (for that particular domain). Many psychologists (e.g., Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1951; Steele, 1988; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Tesser, 1988) have argued that a positive self-concept is central to psychological well-being.

Given the importance of self-esteem for well-being, how do people maintain and enhance their self-esteem? One mechanism is through associations with self-relevant groups. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) assumes that portions of individuals' identities, and hence their self-esteem, result from membership in various social groups. Social identity theory argues that individuals engage in social relationships and group behavior, in part, to enhance and maintain positive self-esteem. Unfortunately, maintaining individual self-esteem is often accomplished at the intergroup level by bolstering the status of the ingroup and/or denigrating the outgroup. Thus, the need to think well of oneself can result in intergroup conflict as individuals strive to view their own group more positively than outgroups (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

This research on social identity suggests that it is the relative standing of important groups that determines an individual's level of self-esteem. However, another explanation for the psychological favoring of ingroups is that individuals extend their positive self-representations to encompass their groups (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996; Otten & Bar-Tal, 2002; Otten & Wentura, 2001; Smith & Henry, 1996). Indeed, self-evaluations are oftentimes the best predictor of ingroup evaluations (Otten & Wentura, 2001). The ingroup is accorded self-status, accruing all the benefits of being included in the self, from attributions to judgments (e.g., Pettigrew, 1979).

Given the important relationship between the self and relevant social identities, it is not surprising that the need to maintain high self-esteem can play a critical role

in stereotyping and prejudice (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Spencer, Fein, Wolfe, Fong, & Dunn, 1998). In fact, individuals engage in stereotyping and express prejudice, in part, to maintain a feeling of self-worth (Fein & Spencer, 1997). For instance, Fein and Spencer demonstrated that self-affirmation (describing a personally relevant value) resulted in less negative evaluations of a Jewish woman, that a threat to an individual's self-esteem (false negative feedback on an intelligence test) increased stereotypic expressions toward a gay target, and finally, that such increased stereotyping actually restored participants' threatened self-concepts (Fein & Spencer, 1997). Thus, affirming one's self-worth reduced both stereotyping and prejudice, whereas threats to the self increased these biases. Similarly, Spencer et al. (1998) demonstrated that the automatic activation of stereotypes only occurs when one's self-image is threatened. Hence, threats to individuals' self-esteem can have widespread and socially damaging consequences. Overall, then, there appears to be an iterative relationship between self-esteem maintenance and intergroup behavior, with self-esteem being both a cause and a consequence of prejudice and stereotyping. It is clear that the self is intimately connected to intergroup attitudes and behavior.

The impact of self-esteem on intergroup reactions may, however, depend on whether the self-concept is activated. For instance, work by Steele et al. (1993) suggests that the differential tendency for high and low self-esteem individuals to justify their past behavior depends on whether the self-concept has been recently brought on-line. High self-esteem provides individuals with a reservoir of resources from which to draw when psychologically threatened, but only when the self-concept is called to active duty. In their studies, participants with high self-esteem engaged in less self-justification only when their self-concepts had been activated by filling out a self-esteem measure prior to the dissonant situation (Steele et al., 1993). Hence, it seems likely that the effects of self-esteem on prejudice and stereotyping will only be apparent when the self-concept has been activated, a situation that occurs when people engage in perspective-taking (Davis et al., 1996; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

Perspective-taking, or putting oneself in the shoes of another, has been linked with moral development (Kohlberg, 1976), empathy and altruism (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997), and increased prosocial behavior (Batson, Batson et al., 1995). Recently, researchers also have demonstrated that perspective-taking aids in debiasing social thought and reducing intergroup conflict (Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky, 1999, 2002; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

Despite its importance in socially and psychologically healthy individuals, the concept behind perspective-taking is surprisingly simple—perspective-taking entails the active consideration of another's point of view, imagining what the person's life and situation are like, walking a mile in the person's shoes.

Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) demonstrated that perspective-taking is a more effective strategy than stereotype suppression for decreasing stereotyping and outgroup derogation. They contend that participants in their perspective-taking condition reduced outgroup derogation because the act of perspective-taking activated the self-concept, which was then applied to the outgroup. In fact, activation of the self-concept seems to be a crucial, underlying process of perspective-taking. Davis (1983) provided some preliminary evidence that perspective-taking and the self-concept are connected, finding that perspective-taking, as measured by an individual difference measure, was positively correlated with both social competence and self-esteem. Providing more direct evidence for self-concept activation during perspective-taking, Davis et al. (1996) demonstrated that perspective-taking results in greater overlap between cognitive representations of the self and of the target. According to the authors, perspective-taking results in the target becoming more "self-like"; after perspective-taking, the cognitive structures for the self and the target share more common elements, resulting in a merging of self and other. It is noteworthy that this increased self-target overlap is not mediated by increased liking and is generally impervious to the availability of cognitive resources, suggesting that the overlap occurs implicitly (Davis et al., 1996). Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) showed that perspective-taking not only results in greater overlap between representations of the self and the target but also leads to greater overlap between the self and the group to which the target belongs. In their study, it was the increased overlap between the self and outgroup representations that reduced stereotyping (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

These findings suggest a potential irony in the ability of perspective-taking to reduce intergroup biases: perhaps perspective-taking builds off egocentric biases to decrease stereotyping and improve outgroup evaluations. Our proclivity for thinking of ourselves as better, smarter, more attractive, and more well-intentioned than others (Kramer, 1994; Miller & Ross, 1975) may result in positive self-descriptors being ascribed to the targets of perspective-taking (Galinsky, 2002). The effects of perspective-taking on prejudice may therefore depend on the possession of high self-esteem; that is, self-esteem is likely to moderate the effects of perspective-taking on outgroup evaluations and prejudice reduction. When perspective-takers feel positively about themselves, their

positive self-concept will be activated and applied to outgroup members, elevating opinions of the target group. However, when individuals suffer from low self-esteem, no reduction in prejudice should occur. To test this hypothesis, we conducted two experiments in which we measured (Experiment 1) and manipulated (Experiment 2) self-evaluations.

EXPERIMENT 1

In Experiment 1, we examined the role of self-esteem and perspective-taking on decreasing prejudice by measuring participant's chronic self-esteem. Perspective-taking was manipulated by having participants write about a day in the life of a photographed elderly man (see Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994). Participants then evaluated the elderly along a semantic differential scale. Because we were concerned with participants' overall evaluations of the elderly, we used a typical 13-item semantic differential scale because it serves as an all-purpose measure of evaluations (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) and is often used to determine intergroup attitudes (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Self-evaluation was measured by having participants complete Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale. We predicted that self-esteem would moderate the effects of perspective-taking on opinions of the elderly, with high self-esteem perspective-takers rating the elderly more positively than low self-esteem perspective-takers.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 67 undergraduates who were run individually and received credit for participation as part of a course requirement.

PROCEDURE

The experiment had a between-participants design with two conditions that varied the narrative essay instructions: perspective-taking versus control. When participants arrived in the laboratory, they were informed that they were going to participate in a number of different experiments. First, participants were informed that the researchers were interested in investigating their abilities to construct life event details from visual information. Using the same target that was used in Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), participants were shown a photograph of an older man sitting on a chair near a newspaper stand and were asked to write a typical day in the life of this individual. Half of the participants were in the perspective-taking condition and were asked to "take the perspective of the photographed individual. That is, go through the typical day in their shoes, as if you were that person." The other half of the participants

were in the control condition and were given no further instructions on how to write their narrative essays.

Upon completion of the narrative essay, participants engaged in a short filler task to separate the narrative essay task from their evaluation of the elderly. Next, participants completed the semantic differential task, in which they were asked to rate how each pair of traits (i.e., stupid-intelligent, weak-strong, insecure-confident, passive-active, cruel-kind, awful-nice, cold-warm, dishonest-honest, low self-esteem-high self-esteem, unfair-fair, unpleasant-pleasant, dependent-independent, and stingy-generous) described the elderly in general. When rating the elderly, participants were informed that “although not all group members are exactly alike, group members tend to be similar on many traits and you should provide your personal opinions about the general characteristics of the elderly.” Finally, after completing a number of other tasks, participants completed the Rosenberg (1965) trait self-esteem scale, which consists of 10 items measuring levels of chronic self-evaluation. Participants used a 4-point response scale anchored at (1) *strongly agree* and (4) *strongly disagree* that asked for their agreement with each item. Examples of the items included: “I feel that I’m a person of worth at least on an equal plane with others” and “All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.” For higher scores to correspond to higher levels of self-esteem, items similar to the first example were reverse-scored. Participants were then debriefed and thanked.

Results and Discussion

Overall, self-esteem scores ranged from 25 to 40, with a mean of 33.7 ($SD = 4.3$). In addition, there was no skewness, suggesting that self-esteem scores were normally distributed. Also, the measurement of self-esteem at the end of the experimental procedure was not affected by the perspective-taking manipulation—there was no difference in self-esteem scores or in the variability of these scores between perspective-takers ($M = 32.9$, $SD = 4.3$) and control participants ($M = 34.4$, $SD = 4.2$), $F(1, 65) = 2.26$, $p = .14$. To check if perspective-takers were putting themselves into the targets’ shoes, we coded whether participants’ essays were written in the first or third person. These codings revealed that 70% of perspective-takers wrote their essays in the first person compared to 3% of participants in the control condition, $\chi^2 = 27.27$, $p < .001$, demonstrating a successful manipulation of perspective-taking. We also coded the essays for their affective tone following the procedure of Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000). Specifically, two coders were instructed to rate the overall valence of the passage using a 9-point scale anchored at 1 (*very negative*) and 9 (*very positive*). The coders’ ratings were reasonably reliable, intraclass correlation = .59, and therefore the ratings

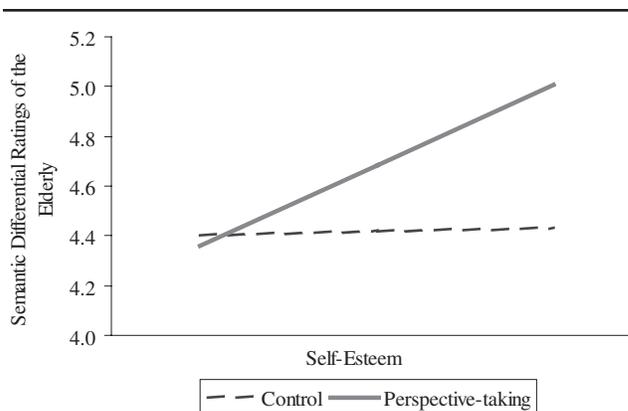


Figure 1 Semantic differential ratings of the elderly when self-esteem is measured.

were averaged. Neither self-esteem nor the Self-Esteem \times Condition interaction predicted the overall affective tone of the narrative essays, both $\beta s < .12$, $p s > .53$. There was a trend for perspective-takers ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 1.5$) to write more positive essays than did control participants ($M = 5.0$, $SD = 1.0$), $\beta = .19$, $p = .19$. Finally, because we were interested in participants’ overall evaluations of the elderly, we averaged the 13 semantic differentials to form one measure of outgroup evaluation (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$).

Regression analyses were used with main effects entered into the model in the first stage and then a mean centered interaction term entered in the second stage. Those who took the perspective of the elderly were coded as 1, whereas control participants were coded as 0. There was a significant main effect of self-esteem, $\beta = .27$, $p < .05$. There was also a marginally significant effect for perspective taking, $\beta = .20$, $p = .11$, with perspective-takers ($M = 4.6$, $SD = .7$) rating the elderly more positively than did control participants ($M = 4.4$, $SD = .5$). However, these main effects were qualified by the higher order Self-Esteem \times Perspective-Taking interaction, $\beta = .35$, $p < .05$. Using standard procedures (Aiken & West, 1991), simple slope analyses confirmed that there was a significant effect of self-esteem for perspective-takers, $\beta = .52$, $p = .003$, but not for control participants, $\beta = .02$, $p = .89$. These data suggest that perspective-takers with higher self-esteem rated the elderly more positively than did those with lower self-esteem. These findings, using predicted values, are graphically represented in Figure 1. Finally, Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) found that the affective tone of the narrative essays did not correlate with the amount of stereotyping. We also found no relationship between the affective tone of participants’ essays and outgroup evaluations ($r = -.08$, $p = .57$).

Consistent with previous findings (Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000), perspective-takers tended

to rate the elderly more positively. More important, the findings from Experiment 1 demonstrate the novel finding that the effects of perspective-taking on group evaluations are moderated by chronic self-evaluations. Because perspective-taking activates the self-concept, self-esteem had a larger impact on the overall evaluation of the elderly for perspective-takers than for control participants. These data are consistent with work by Steele et al. (1993), in which self-esteem only had an impact when the self-concept was brought on-line. For perspective-takers who felt positively about themselves, positive self-concepts were activated and applied, resulting in overall positive, less-prejudicial evaluations of the elderly. In contrast, for those perspective-takers who had lower trait self-esteem, no prejudice reduction occurred. Perspective-taking, by activating the self-concept, leads self-evaluation to have a moderating effect on outgroup evaluation.

A potential limitation of Experiment 1 is that self-esteem was measured after the perspective-taking manipulation and the ratings of the elderly. We chose to measure self-esteem with the Rosenberg trait self-esteem scale at the end rather than the beginning of the experimental session for a number of reasons. One of our overarching goals was to find supportive evidence that perspective-taking involves the activation of the self-concept. However, Steele et al. (1993) have shown that simply filling out a trait self-esteem scale is sufficient to activate one's self-concept, suggesting that the completion of a trait self-esteem measure prior to the essay-writing task and group ratings might have prevented our predicted effects from emerging. That is, filling out the self-esteem scale at the beginning of the experimental session would have activated the self-concepts of all participants and thereby potentially masked the moderating effects of self-evaluation for perspective-takers. Given the need to avoid measuring self-esteem at the beginning of the experimental session, we chose to use Rosenberg's (1965) trait self-esteem scale because it is more impervious to momentary changes in self-concepts. Hence, although other self-esteem measures are available that tap into state self-esteem (e.g., Heatherton & Polivy's, 1991, state self-esteem scale was successfully used in Fein & Spencer, 1997), the use of such a measure would have been incongruous with our goals. For these reasons, we chose to measure self-esteem with the Rosenberg scale at the very end of the experimental session. In addition, because our data show that there was no difference in self-esteem levels between perspective-takers and control participants, the use of the Rosenberg scale at the end of the procedure seems justified. However, to ensure the robustness of our findings, in Experiment 2, we chose to manipulate rather than measure self-esteem.

EXPERIMENT 2

In Experiment 2, we sought to replicate our findings. Instead of measuring chronic self-esteem, we chose to manipulate self-esteem. According to our model of perspective-taking, self-esteem, whether manipulated or measured, should produce the same moderating effect on perspective-takers' outgroup evaluations. Therefore, consistent with methods used by Fein and Spencer (1997) and Steele et al. (1993), we experimentally manipulated self-evaluations through the presentation of self-esteem enhancing (positive) or self-esteem threatening (negative) feedback on a juror judgment prediction task. Later, participants wrote about a day in the life of the same elderly male target and evaluated the elderly along the same semantic differential scale as in Experiment 1. We predicted that perspective-takers with manipulated enhanced self-esteem would rate the elderly more positively than perspective-takers with manipulated threatened self-esteem.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 45 students (19 men, 26 women) who participated for payment of \$10.

PROCEDURE

The experiment had a 2 (feedback: positive vs. negative) \times 2 (narrative essay instructions: perspective-taking vs. control) between-participants factorial design. Participants arrived in the lab and were told by the experimenter that they would be participating in a study of managerial behavior and that because managers often perform a variety of tasks in organizations, they would be performing several different tasks. The experimenter told participants that the first task was a juror judgment task, in which they would play the role of a paralegal and make a series of judgments about 30 potential jurors. Following the procedure of Fein and Spencer (1997), we made the task diagnostic of underlying ability. Specifically, participants were told that the juror judgment task was "predictive of decision making skills and intellectual ability, which are associated with career success." Participants read a case titled *Ms. Smith v. City Hospital*. The case described a woman with an incurable degenerative disease who wanted the hospital to stop treatments that were keeping her alive. However, the hospital was unwilling to do so. Ms. Smith had decided to take the matter to court in the hopes that a jury would order the hospital to cease treatment. Participants were given information that age, education, belief in an afterlife, and whether the juror favored the death penalty for convicted murderers were the most helpful factors for predicting the jurors' attitudes toward assisted suicide. When they finished reading the scenario, participants were asked to

choose jurors who would be favorable to Ms. Smith's case from a pool of 30 jurors (for each juror, participants were given different pieces of information in terms of age, education, belief in an afterlife, and attitudes toward the death penalty for convicted murderers).

*MANIPULATION OF POSITIVE
AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK*

In this experiment, we manipulated positive and negative feedback by giving participants false information on how well they performed on the juror judgment task. We held constant the score that each person received (17 correct out of 30) and simply varied the interpretation of that score using social comparison information as follows (see Forgas, 1998).

Positive, self-enhancing feedback. In this condition, participants received the following feedback:

The people described here as "jurors" are *real people* in a random-sample survey of the U.S. adult population. Thus, there is an objectively correct answer to the question of whether each juror does or does not favor assisted suicide. This task has been used many times with diverse samples of college students, giving us baseline data with which to evaluate your performance. You correctly predicted 17 out of 30 on the juror judgment task. Based on past research, answering 7-12 questions correctly indicates average performance, whereas answering more than 12 correctly is above average, indicating superior performance. Answering fewer than 7 questions correctly indicates below average performance.

Negative, self-threatening feedback. In this condition, participants received the following feedback:

The people described here as "jurors" are *real people* in a random-sample survey of the U.S. adult population. Thus, there is an objectively correct answer to the question of whether each juror does or does not favor assisted suicide. This task has been used many times with diverse samples of college students, giving us baseline data with which to evaluate your performance. You correctly predicted 17 out of 30 on the juror judgment task. Based on past research, answering 21-26 questions correctly indicates average performance, whereas answering more than 26 correctly is above average, indicating superior performance. Answering fewer than 21 questions correctly indicates below average performance.

After describing the feedback, the experimenter briefly left the room, leaving the participant with the feedback document to read. Participants were also asked to complete two questions. One question asked them how well they thought they had performed using a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored at (1) *very poorly* and (7) *very well*. We also asked participants to assess their cur-

rent mood using a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored at (1) *sad* and (7) *happy*.

Participants then engaged in a half-hour Lego building filler task to separate the false feedback from the perspective-taking manipulation. After the Lego building task, as in Experiment 1, participants were asked to write a narrative essay about the photographed elderly man under either perspective-taking or control conditions. Upon completing the narrative essays, participants engaged in a 10-min filler task to separate the narrative essay task from the semantic differential evaluation of the elderly. In this final task, participants completed the same semantic differential task used in Experiment 1. After the semantic differential task, participants were thoroughly debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results and Discussion

Participants in the positive feedback condition reported thinking that they had performed significantly better on the task ($M = 5.6$, $SD = 1.0$) than did participants in the negative feedback condition ($M = 3.2$, $SD = .9$), $F(1, 43) = 64.53$, $r = .77$, $p < .001$, suggesting a successful manipulation of self-evaluation. As in Experiment 1, we also examined participants' essays to determine whether they had taken the perspective of the target and written their essays in the first person. These codings revealed that 76% of perspective-takers wrote their essays in the first person but only 18% of control participants wrote their essays in the first person, $\chi^2 = 13.25$, $p < .001$, demonstrating a successful manipulation of perspective-taking.

We again coded the affective tone of the narrative essays. The coders' ratings were reliable, intraclass correlation = .81, and therefore the ratings were averaged. These ratings were submitted to a 2 (feedback: positive vs. negative) \times 2 (narrative essay instructions: perspective-taking vs. control) ANOVA. The only effect to emerge was a marginally significant interaction, $F(1, 35) = 3.00$, $r = .28$, $p = .09$.¹ Perspective-takers wrote more positive essays following positive feedback ($M = 5.6$, $SD = 2.2$) than after negative feedback ($M = 4.7$, $SD = .7$), whereas control participants showed the reverse pattern (positive feedback: $M = 4.4$, $SD = 1.1$; negative feedback: $M = 5.2$, $SD = 1.7$).

We averaged the 13 semantic differentials to form one measure of prejudice (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$). To examine the moderating effect of self-esteem on perspective-taking and prejudice, the semantic differential ratings were submitted to a 2 (feedback: positive vs. negative) \times 2 (narrative essay instructions: perspective-taking vs. control) analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA revealed a nonsignificant trend for feedback, $F(1, 41) = 1.97$, $r = .21$, $p = .17$, and a marginally significant main

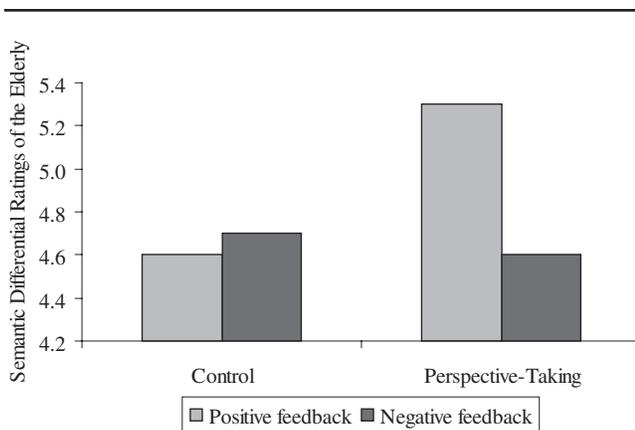


Figure 2 Semantic differential ratings of the elderly when feedback is manipulated.

effect for perspective-taking, with perspective-taking participants ($M = 4.9$, $SD = .6$) rating the elderly more positively than did control participants ($M = 4.7$, $SD = .5$), $F(1, 41) = 3.52$, $r = .28$, $p < .07$. Of importance, the Feedback \times Perspective-Taking interaction was significant, $F(1, 41) = 6.12$, $r = .36$, $p = .02$.² Figure 2 shows this interaction and simple effects revealed that perspective-takers who received positive feedback ($M = 5.3$, $SD = .7$) evaluated the elderly more positively than perspective-takers who received negative feedback ($M = 4.6$, $SD = .5$), $F(1, 41) = 7.13$, $r = .39$, $p = .01$. On the other hand, control participants who received positive feedback ($M = 4.6$, $SD = .5$) did not evaluate the elderly more positively than did control participants who received negative feedback ($M = 4.7$, $SD = .5$), $F = .61$, $r = .12$, $p = .44$. As in Experiment 1, the affective tone of the narrative essays did not correlate with the semantic differential ratings, $r = -.05$, $p = .75$.

Although the above pattern of findings that self-esteem moderated the relationship between perspective-taking and evaluations is consistent with Experiment 1 and our predictions, a potential alternative explanation is that perspective-takers who received positive feedback on the juror judgment task were in a better mood and, hence, evaluated the elderly more positively. Indeed, general and incidental mood, both positive (Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Süsser, 1994) and negative (Sherif & Sherif, 1953), have been connected to stereotyping and prejudice. In fact, participants in the positive feedback condition did report being in a better mood ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.3$) than did participants in the negative feedback condition ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.0$), $F(1, 43) = 4.92$, $r = .32$, $p = .03$. Thus, it may be that it is not feeling good about the self but simply feeling good more generally that leads to more positive outgroup evaluations. It is therefore important and meaningful to distinguish between incidental, general mood from more specific attitudes about the self. The

two postfeedback measures allow us to explore the differential effect between specific feelings toward the self and more general mood. One postfeedback question asked how well participants thought that they had performed on the juror judgment task; because this task was framed as being diagnostic of underlying ability, the question can be seen as measuring self-evaluation. The other question asked participants what their current mood was. We regressed both of these questions onto evaluations of the elderly to see if one was a better predictor of outgroup evaluations. Participants' evaluations of their performance marginally predicted outgroup evaluations, $\beta = .28$, $p = .08$, but mood did not, $\beta = .13$, $p = .40$. However, our predictions are that self-evaluation should be a particularly potent predictor in the perspective-taking condition. We therefore performed the same analysis for perspective-takers and control participants. For perspective-takers, evaluation of performance was a significant predictor of outgroup evaluations, $\beta = .65$, $p = .003$, but mood was not, $\beta = .05$, $p = .81$. For control participants, neither ratings of performance, $\beta = -.17$, $p = .43$, nor mood, $\beta = .08$, $p = .71$, were significant. Hence, mood does not seem like a viable alternative explanation. Rather, it appears that self-evaluation, or feelings concerning the self, are responsible for the pattern of results.

Experiment 2 demonstrated that, consistent with findings by Batson et al. (1997) and Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), perspective-takers tended to evaluate a stereotyped and stigmatized group more positively. More important, replicating the pattern found in Experiment 1, reduction of prejudice was only apparent when perspective-takers had received positive feedback and thus had temporarily elevated self-esteem. Bolstered by positive feedback, these participants had a positive self-concept available to be activated during perspective-taking and to be applied to the elderly, resulting in reductions in the expression of prejudice.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The experiments reported here examined the relationships among perspective-taking, prejudice, and self-esteem; they extend research and theory in a number of important ways. First, we provide further evidence that taking the perspective of one target can affect evaluations of the target's group. Extending findings from Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) about the success of perspective-taking on stereotyping and reducing ingroup bias, we found that perspective-taking of an individual target improved overall attitudes and evaluations of that target's group (see also Batson et al., 1997). Because the effect of perspective-taking on prejudice reduction was marginally significant in both experiments, we performed a meta-analysis (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

The meta-analytic test was significant, $z = 2.32$, $r = .23$, $p = .01$, suggesting that the success of perspective-taking on improving outgroup evaluations is a reliable finding.

The findings from our two experiments also speak to yet another important consequence of self-esteem. Although the need for high self-esteem may lead to a host of self-serving biases that maintain an overly optimistic view of oneself and one's abilities (Taylor & Brown, 1988) and to ingroup bias and intergroup conflict (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the current studies demonstrate that self-esteem can also allow one to be less prejudicial. The effect of self-esteem (whether measured or manipulated) on outgroup evaluations across the two studies was reliable, $z = 2.58$, $r = .25$, $p < .01$, showing that positive self-concepts do help to improve evaluations of outgroups. The current study shows that outgroup members may inadvertently benefit from an individual's high self-esteem. Feeling good about oneself can lead an individual to feel good about others, even stereotyped and stigmatized outgroups.

Most important, we report the novel finding that the effect of perspective-taking on outgroup evaluations is moderated by self-esteem. Only when an individual had engaged in perspective-taking and possessed high self-esteem did prejudice decrease. In addition to demonstrating an important prerequisite for successful prejudice reduction by perspective-taking, the present research provides more evidence, consistent with Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) and Davis et al. (1996), that the self-concept is activated during perspective-taking. Our findings also support work by Steele et al. (1993), which suggests that self-esteem will only have moderating effects when it has been brought on-line. Because perspective-taking activates the self-concept, the self-evaluation of the perspective-taker has a moderating effect on outgroup evaluations. For those with high self-esteem, positive self-concepts are activated and applied to the target during perspective-taking, resulting in an overall positive evaluation of the outgroup. However, for perspective-takers with low self-esteem, no reduction in prejudice occurs.³

These findings of a moderated effect of perspective-taking on outgroup evaluations were replicated across two studies with two different operationalizations of self-esteem, suggesting the robustness and generalizability of the relationship. In addition, the data from Experiment 2 suggest that it was self-evaluation, or feelings concerning the self, and not incidental, generalized mood that was responsible for the pattern of results.

We should note one potential limitation of the current experiments: the reliance on one stereotyped group (the elderly). The elderly present an interesting and potentially unique target because participants real-

ize (or hope) that one day they will grow old and become a member of that group. Hence, the moderated and unmoderated effects of perspective-taking on outgroup evaluations may differ depending on whether we may one day share membership with the target's group. Future studies should use a variety of targets to examine the robustness of the moderating effect of self-evaluation on the relationship between perspective-taking and prejudice reduction.

Biasing and Debiasing Intergroup Relations Through the Same Processes

One interesting approach to debiasing intergroup attitudes is to build off the cognitive processes that underlie the biases (see Galinsky, 2002); that is, given that many biases are rooted in cognitive processes (many of which have functional bases; see Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994) that are not easily eliminated or extinguished, approaches that build off these cognitive processes, that work through them, may be particularly effective. For example, categorization (Allport, 1954; Bruner, 1957; Higgins, 1996) is a basic, fundamental human process that provides stability and order to a chaotic world and underlies many forms of intergroup bias. Because categorization is a basic component of mental life, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (1998) propose that recategorization may be more effective than decategorization in decreasing intergroup bias. By recategorizing two separate conflicting groups as one cohesive group, former outgroup members receive the benefits of ingroup biases (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). However, decategorization, that is, thinking of the two separate groups as consisting of discrete individuals, reduces the attractiveness of former ingroup members without increasing affections toward former outgroup members. Thus, categorization principles suggest that outgroup evaluations can be improved if representations of the two groups can be recategorized into one group (Gaertner et al., 1989).

Perspective-taking also appears to take advantage of the very cognitive processes that produce intergroup bias in the first place. Although ethnocentrism is a natural extension of egocentrism, perspective-taking utilizes egocentric tendencies—our proclivity for thinking highly of ourselves—to reduce bias rather than increase it. Ingroup favoritism is partially the result of people extending their positive self-representations to encompass the ingroup (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996; Otten & Bar-Tal, 2002; Otten & Wentura, 2001; Smith & Henry, 1996). By activating the self-concept, perspective-taking increases the probability that the positive (and egocentric) self will be applied to the outgroup, thereby improving evaluations of that outgroup. Thus, even though egocentric tendencies result in unrealistic perceptions of

one's place in the world, these very same egocentric tendencies can lead to perspective-taking-induced reductions in prejudice (Galinsky, 2002).

However, building off and working through our own egocentric tendencies during perspective-taking is not without its own costs. As demonstrated in this article, when our egocentric tendencies break down, as they do for those with chronically or temporarily lowered self-esteem, so too do the benefits of perspective-taking. Similarly, perspective-taking can increase outgroup evaluations at the cost of other valued beliefs and norms, such as justice, fairness, and equity. When taking the perspective of particular targets, we afford them all the benefits that we egocentrically provide for ourselves, and these targets often end up receiving preferential treatment at the expense of others and the larger community (Batson, Batson, et al., 1995; Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). Hence, perspective-taking produces systematic effects that can result in positive or negative social outcomes.

Cultural Considerations

Given that the success of perspective-taking in reducing prejudice depends on the perspective-taker possessing relatively high self-esteem, how often will the positive benefits of perspective-taking occur? Because individuals in Western societies usually have positive and high self-esteem (e.g., Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Diener & Diener, 1996), it seems likely that perspective-taking by members of these societies will typically decrease prejudice. But the role of the self in impacting the evaluations of outgroup members raises important questions about the effects of perspective-taking on outgroup evaluations in non-Western cultures. Researchers have argued and demonstrated that self-esteem is actually not a universal concept but is really a reflection of local and historical contexts (Brockner & Chen, 1996; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Instead of an emphasis on independency as in North America and Western Europe, some cultures (e.g., Latin, Southern European, and Asian countries) place more emphasis on interdependency and the social unit and, hence, less emphasis on self-esteem. In these cultures, individuals tend to think in terms of "we" rather than "I," rendering self-esteem a rather irrelevant concept (Leung, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Schwartz, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

However, despite their emphasis on social cohesiveness, individuals in collectivist cultures are not indiscriminately considerate of all around. Instead, studies have found that compared to participants from individualistic cultures, those from collectivist cultures are more likely to engage in outgroup derogation and intergroup bias

(Al-Zahrani & Kaplowitz, 1993), are more willing and likely to pursue a conflict with an outgroup disputant (Leung, 1988), and are more likely to be (overly) generous when dealing with friends (Hui, Triandis, & Yee, 1991). In their concern for maintaining ingroup harmony, individuals in collectivist cultures can inadvertently generate greater intergroup discord.

Given the decreased importance of self-esteem and the greater likelihood of intergroup conflict in collectivist cultures, can perspective-taking, which depends on the application of a positive self-concept, successfully decrease intergroup bias in collectivist cultures? This question remains to be answered but such cross-cultural research would serve multiple purposes, helping further enlighten the role of self-esteem in both perspective-taking and the expression of prejudice and assisting in understanding the implications of cross-cultural differences for both the self and intergroup conflict.

CONCLUSION

The current experiments have illuminated the relationship among self-esteem, perspective-taking, and prejudice. One way to view the current findings is that perspective-taking has boundary conditions—perspective-taking only decreases prejudice when individuals have high self-esteem. However, a more optimistic view suggests that perspective-taking can successfully decrease intergroup conflict in many instances, and given the egocentric tendencies of Westerners (Heine et al., 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), it is only on the rare occasions when the perspective-taker has low self-esteem that prejudice is likely to persist.

NOTES

1. The degrees of freedom are smaller for these analyses because six of the essays were illegible.

2. Further analyses showed that sex of participant did not interact with the perspective-taking manipulation, $F(1, 37) = 1.23, p = .28$, the feedback, $F(1, 37) = 1.78, p = .19$, or the interaction of the two independent variables, $F(1, 37) = .44, p = .51$.

3. One may note that the pattern of results in both experiments appear to show outgroup enhancement effects, whereas other research that has been concerned with the relationship between self-evaluation and outgroup evaluation, namely, Fein and Spencer (1997), have shown a pattern of data suggesting outgroup derogation effects. However, the terms *derogation* and *enhancement* only make sense relative to some control group. It is important to recognize that Fein and Spencer and our studies used different baseline comparisons. Fein and Spencer compared evaluations of a target from a stereotyped group (Jewish and gay) versus targets from a nonstereotyped group (Italian and straight). At no point did participants exhibit more positive evaluations of the stereotyped target relative to the nonstereotyped targets, and thus, the authors' results are put under the guise of outgroup derogation. Our studies, on the other hand, compared perspective-taking to a control condition and never looked at how participants evaluated other, less stereotyped groups or participants' own ingroup. Had we compared evaluations of the elderly to another group, we may not have shown any pattern resembling outgroup enhancement. In addition, we should note that Fein and Spencer's Experiment 1 actually does show a

pattern that could be considered to be outgroup enhancement: Participants in their study evaluated a Jewish woman more positively following an opportunity to self-affirm than did participants who did not have an opportunity to self-affirm (which could be seen as a type of baseline control similar to the one we employed).

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