# Social Psychology of Identity and Stereotyping in the Media: The Case of Refugee Media Bias

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**Abstract**

Social Psychology studies the ways in which the social world impacts our thoughts, feelings and behaviours, as well as how we impact the social world. The increasing ubiquity of media, and social media, means that we are rarely without the implied presence of virtual others. Hence, this chapter introduces a social psychological perspective on how media, particularly coverage of refugees, may influence societal attitudes and behaviours, but also how our individual brains respond even to short-term media exposure. We, therefore, begin with traditional social psychological approaches to core concepts of identity, categorization and prejudice, linking each to the case of refugee media coverage. We then present more current models in the area, such as intergroup emotions, threat and the BIAS model, with the example of refugee media bias, and implications for avoiding such unintentional outcomes. Therefore, we will first review traditional theories and current research in this area, and then apply them to a lab-based case study about how the news media can activate refugee in bias in thoughts and behaviours. We conclude our exploration of media bias, and the production of "us vs. them" identity narratives, with a series of five evidence-based strategies for avoiding such unintentional bias in journalism.

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## Introduction

The field of Social Psychology emerged around the dawn of the 19th century with the work of Triplett on social facilitation (1898), although human social behavior has been of interest to social philosophers for millennia before, from Plato and Miletus to Comte and Kant (Nisbet, 1973). The field exploded post World War II led by Lewin (1951). He moved the discipline away from the dominant paradigm of behaviourist thought, based on the study of the human mind through observing human and animal behaviours (see Farr 1996 for the roots of social psychology), and towards an exploration of the human mind through self-reflection on the nature of self-hood, and how the self is affected by one's context . This shift led to a closer relationship with the more established field of sociology- arguing that behavior is context-specific, and our behavior when alone is very different when in the company of even one other person (see Hogg & Vaughan, 1995 for full review of social psychology). The focus of social psychology is thus on how the social world impacts upon our thoughts, feelings and behaviours, as well as how we impact upon the world around us (*Ibid).* Sherif's (1948) outline of the discipline is centred on motivations, social change, and social reactions, but the largest section is devoted to social norms and social group interactions. Given the ubiquity of media - and the rise of social media use in particular – our engagement with others online and in the real world, has strengthened the urgency for an applied social psychology of media and journalism. Hence, this chapter is crucial to understanding how the media influences societal attitudes (and even behaviours, such as voting and charitable giving), but also how our individual brains respond even to short-term media exposure.

In 1954, Allport wrote the first book on prejudice, and social psychology took a crucial turn towards its core concepts of identity, categorization and prejudice (see Dovidio, Glick & Rudman, 2008 for 50 year review of the field's progress). Therefore, we will begin with traditional social psychological work on normative influence, and as it has been applied to the media in general, moving then on to the core social psychological area of identity and categorization, with implications for stereotyping and prejudice in the media, then moving to more modern theoretical frames for bias and emotions in the field, which can then be applied to refuges media bias as a case study, with practical guidance for avoiding such unintentional bias in journalism and media outputs more widely.

**Media as Social Influence**

Social Psychology has a wealth of theory and research on the nature of media as an entity for social influence, for instance Chamberlain & Hodgetts (2008) review traditional social psychological approaches to media research, highlighting a need for a more critical review of media consumption as social practice, and not simply a direct and explicit relationship. Although a full review of how the media, and increasingly, social media, acts as a significant influencer of human attitudes, behaviours and development is far beyond the scope of this chapter, we must at least signpost social psychology's contributions to such debates on the media as a force for pro and anti-social outcomes, such as aggression (e.g. L'Engle, Brown & Kenneavy, 2006; Anderson et al., 2003), health behaviours (e.g. L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy, 2006) and attitudes towards women (e.g. Trolan, 2013) and marginalised groups. Slater (2007) presents the social influence of media as broadly reinforcing spirals, whereby resulting attitudes and behaviours from consuming media direct future media attention, selection and consumption.

According to social psychology, the presence of real or implied others, including the media, may have positive effects on one's thoughts and behaviours, for example mobilising, facilitating or group cohesion effects (e.g. Zajonc, 1965; Drury, Cocking & Reicher, 2007). However, initial forays of social psychology into the world of media influence, stemmed from traditional social influence research, which largely concluded that groups sway our opinions and behaviours, for example extensive social psychology research in the area of conformity and even obedience to group norms (e.g. Asch 1951, Milgram 1963, Moghaddam, 2013). Recently, although social influence research on conformity and obedience has stressed divergent outcomes for individuals, including reactance to social norms (for recent debate in this area please see Haslam & Reicher, 2003; 2012, Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2010).

Scholars initially classified the type of influence exerted by media as either normative or informational (McDavid & Sistrunk, 1964; Price, Nir & Capella, 2006). The former consists of bringing the individual's opinion in line with what is expected of the social or cultural group, for instance family or peers (*Ibid)*. We may think of this as peer pressure or "media pressure" to fit in with others whose opinions matter to us. On the other hand, informational influence, consists of the individual's desire to be in line with factual or legitimate arguments, or to bring their opinion more in line with factual reality (as they perceive it). These two spheres of influence are not unavoidable, nor are they distinct; however, it has

been put forth that there may be additional types of social influence which the media may exert- termed "referent informational influence" (Turner, 1982). According to this perspective, the most likely influence will come from groups, to which we identify and who best represent our social norms, rather than those who are more accurate, or even more personally valued (*Ibid)*. This referent informational influence explains the power over which some politically leaning media might have over and above the influence of our friends and family (Price, Nir & Capella, 2006). It becomes clear therefore, that the processes of selection and interpretation of news can be influenced by how we see ourselves (that is our sense of identity), as well as the relative importance we place on the groups to which we belong. In fact, the effect of news on our thoughts and behaviours, may even depend on the specific group we are presently thinking about (for instance our home nation).

**Social Psychology of Identity and Belonging**

Identity is a key area of theory and research for social psychologists, and for many decades, psychologists have sought to outline stages in the development of our sense of self (such as classical stage development theories by Erikson, 1968; Maslow, 1943 and Freud, 1905). Social psychology concerns not only the introspective aspect of our identity (our "personal" self-perception), but also our social identity, which is the aspect of our self, derived from belonging to groups which are important to us (see Brown, 1988; Brewer et al, 1998; Brown & Pehrson, 2019). These may be groups into which we are born (ascribed groups such as your family or national group), or groups we acquire and choose to join (based on interests, such as clubs, or peer groups).

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986), individuals will categorize themselves as being members of many different demographic and social groups in society. This categorization helps humans to function, as it provides access to previously experienced "social scripts", to better understand our social environment, and more importantly, to offer us the feeling of belonging to wider communities. Such categorization leads to a sense of "social identification" (*Ibid*). Social identification is a mental process we employ to determine the extent to which we belong within a particular group, and this subsequent belonging may then directly affect our self-esteem (Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007). SIT is not only concerned with the cognitive processes linked with categorization, but also with (1) the consequences of such categorization for our interactions with others and (2) with the motivations driving these interactions (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For instance,

experiencing affiliation to a group may help us meet our individual belonging needs, but equally it may lead us to prioritize the needs of our group over others (in-group bias), as well as protect the needs of our group if threatened, potentially even derogating an out-group as a result. In this way, SIT explains many pro-social behaviours stemming from a group-based identity (e.g., positive outcomes of national pride), as well as negative outcomes stemming from derogation of out-groups (e.g., prejudice stemming from nationalism).

In addition to needs of belonging, SIT highlights the relevance of identity needs on self-esteem and one's sense of positive distinctiveness in the world around us (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Authors have expanded the range of needs that underlie social identity processes, including belonging (Brewer, 1991) and subjective meaning (Hogg, 2000). Most recently, some researchers have integrated in a unified model different identity needs, the so-called Motivated Identity Construction Theory (MICT; Vignoles, 2011). This theoretical approach states that people are motivated to belong to groups when the social identities derived from these memberships enable them to fulfil the needs of self-esteem, distinctiveness, belonging, efficacy, meaning and continuity. This means that people would value social identities that would make them feel: a) positive about themselves compared with others (self-esteem need), b) unique (distinctiveness need), c) as belonging to a group (belonging need), d) capable and influential for their environment (efficacy need), e) as having a purpose in life f) as with a sense of continuity over time (continuity need). Empirical evidence has shown that satisfaction of needs for self-esteem, efficacy, and meaning predicted higher positive affect (Vignoles et al., 2006), whereas satisfaction of needs for distinctiveness, belongingness, and continuity predicts greater in-group bias (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014; Vignoles & Moncaster, 2007). Some researchers have shown that with real groups these values can be clustered in fewer groups (e.g. Celebi, Verkuyten & Bacgi, 2017). Scholars have shown how identity-related models can drive media consumption and use, in the case of Social Media in particular (Manzi et al., 2018).

A theory emerging from SIT is Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT, Turner et al., 1987), according to which our identity can be collocated along a continuum which goes from individual to collective (group-level) categorization; certain aspects of the situations we encounter will lead us to act on a more individualized level, others on a higher group-based level. Both SIT and SCT emphasize the complexity of social identities in how they may influence pro and anti-social behavior. Trepte and Loy (2017) illustrate how these theories

can be usefully applied to explore and understand media effects, for example, by interpreting the "hostile media effect" as an intergroup phenomenon based on social identity-related processes. It is worth noting that other theorists, have further explored our overlapping social identities from social psychological, sociological and intersectional lenses (Deaux, 1991; Markus & Nurius,1986; Crenshaw, 1990). They highlight how social context dictates which aspects of our social identity may become "salient", and how such dynamic identity shifting may affect our attitudes and behaviours.

Belonging is the key driving factor behind most theories of social categorization, social identification and developmental stage theories. Relevant to the context of this book, scholars have fruitfully applied the constructs of identity and belonging to country-affiliations, and the implications of an "us vs. them" approach for deploying nationalism and xenophobia in media discourse. Paasi (2003) argues that identity discourses are becoming increasingly personalized in the Western World, and that movements away from larger, more collective identities are leading to a resurgence in national identification. Moreover, Paasi (2009) highlights the need for re-examining and re-defining the nature of regions and regional identities in the changing context of the European Union. In the world of journalism, this is mirrored by a growing tendency towards personalization in news reporting, and the way in which journalists (and their "followers") talk about domestic vs EU-related issues on social media (Barbera, Vaccari & Valeriani, 2017).

**Categorization and Stereotypes**

A core component of the identity processes described above stem from our need to categorize ourselves and the world around us, in order to make sense of the massive amount of stimuli we encounter in our daily lives (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991). We describe this process in social psychology broadly as "social categorization", and we often do it automatically, particularly when we encounter other people- ascribing them to groups based on gender, race, ethnicity, social roles or social status and by other (mainly demographic) criteria (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007).

Once we categorize someone (including ourselves) to a particular social group, we are likely to also assign to that person a series of personal characteristics which we often associate to members of that group. This process is called stereotyping. Stereotypes are viewed in social psychology mainly as cognitive structures, or "schemata", consisting of mental associations

between concepts (such as a demographic group of people) and its associations (such as traits). For example, a stereotype may consist of the mental association between asylum seekers and terrorism, crime, and/ or victimization highlighted above (see further details in Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986; Perdue et al., 1990).

Once a stereotype or concept has been activated, other related stereotypes may also be activated, theorized as the process of *spreading activation*, whereby the activation of one concept leads to the activation of related "nodes", or associations, presumed to be stored in long-term memory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Domke, Mckoy, & Torres, 1999; Valentino, 1999). From a journalistic perspective therefore is important not only to consider the extent to which certain groups are present (or represented in news but also the contexts in which they are represented. For example, Chiricos and Eschlnoz (2002) conducted a study on the representation of ethnic minorities in crime news in Orlando, and showed how ethnic minorities were more likely to appear as criminal suspects than as victims or positive role models. Moreover, minorities seemed in general to appear in more threatening contexts than whites. Why is this problematic? According to theories of associative learning, the more often these associated nodes are activated in conjunction with each other, the deeper the association and the likelihood that the activation of one will trigger the activation of the others in future (Dixon & Azocar, 2017) When it comes to journalism, therefore, one would expect that the frequent exposure to news in which a particular group is presented in association with particular attributes or in particular contexts will mean that whenever that particular group is activated, people will be more likely to think about those attributes or contexts.

Research has traditionally been focused on the activation of a stereotype and the application of the stereotype (through one's judgements and behavior) as separate processes; research suggests that the first step does not necessarily lead to the second (Lido et al., 2005; Kawakami, Dovidio & Kamp, 2007). Once a stereotype has been activated, its application may be prevented if one has the motivation, cognitive resources, and time in which to do so (Moskowitz, 2012; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Arendt, 2013). For instance, if one reflects on values such as equality, one may be able to prevent the activation of negative stereotypes (Devine, 1989; Shrum, 2002). In addition, if someone's goals are fundamentally egalitarian, possibly chronically egalitarian, then unintentional stereotype activation may be avoided (Moskowitz, 2012). However, if one does not have the motivation, or ability to prevent the

activation of the stereotype, then it is likely to occur automatically, and stereotype congruent judgments may then be applied to tasks following the stereotype activation. Although recent research suggests that even the first step - stereotype activation - may be automatically inhibited by personal beliefs (e.g. Moskowitz et al.,1999; Moskowitz, 2012), there still remains the risk that cognitive stereotypes, activated by exposure to the media, may automatically bias judgements in everyday life without our intention or awareness, even when we are low in explicit prejudice.

Traditional approaches have been outlined above, as to how social psychologists perceive identity processes, social categorization (leading to stereotypes), and biased judgements in our everyday life. Before we apply this more fully to the journalistic context and specifically to bias in the media regarding refugees, we must visit more recent frameworks to assess how such categorization and stereotypes may affect our thoughts and behaviours in the real world - posing questions, such as “to what extent does exposure to stereotypes affect the thoughts and behaviors toward a specific cultural group?”, and “what are other components are relevant for predicting such bias, particularly in the media?”

**Current Models of Inter-Group Bias**

A growing body of research, begun in the nineties, has been focused on intergroup emotions as an essential connector between stereotypes and specific types of behaviour towards different groups (e.g. for reviews, see Giner-Sorolla, Mackie & Smith, 2007; Mackie & Smith, 2017). Intergroup emotions can be defined as specific emotional responses that people experience towards ingroup and outgroup members because of their respective group memberships. As Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead underlined (2005), intergroup emotions need to have their basis in an individual’s membership of a group, and also take another group as a target. In other words, intergroup emotions are experienced by individuals when both the subject and object of the emotions are groups rather than individuals, as it is perceived to have been done “to them” or “by them” as members of social groups.

What are the advantages of studying intergroup emotions? According to intergroup emotion researchers, specific emotional prejudices can more accurately predict differentiated types of group behavior, and are a better predictor than general prejudice - which is defined as a negative attitude experienced undistinguishably towards outgroups (Dijker, 1987; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Ray, Mackie, Smith & Terman, 2012). Although stereotypes are associated

with intergroup discrimination, the relationship between specific intergroup emotions, such as intergroup anger or fear, and different types of intergroup behaviour, such as harm or avoidance, has been found to be well supported by evidence (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). Importantly, intergroup theoretical models have shown that specific stereotypes generate differentiated intergroup emotions towards particular outgroups, which in turn leads to particular action tendencies toward them (Fiske & Taylor, 2008; Parkinson et al., 2005). For instance, if one endorses a stereotype of immigrants as contributors to a multicultural society, then one would feel admiration and respect towards them, perhaps supporting their inclusion within the community. However, if one associates immigrants with negative stereotypes, and potentially as a threat, then one may feel annoyed or angry with their participation in the community. These core assumptions have been supported by many researchers, and different theoretical approaches have been proposed and tested, three of which are reported below.

### *(1) Intergroup Emotion Theory*

Smith (1993, 1999) and colleagues (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000) proposed the Intergroup Emotions Theory, stemming from SCT described above (Turner et al., 1987), which expands upon how people experience different emotions depending on their self-categorizations and group identification in intergroup contexts. According to the IET (for reviews see Mackie, 2017; Giner-Sorolla, 2019), people emotionally react and consequently behave towards others, depending on whether they perceive themselves as individuals or as group members in specific situations. Research has shown that when people were asked to report their emotions thinking of themselves as individuals, their reports were qualitatively and quantitatively different from when asked the same question when thinking of themselves as a university student or national citizen. In other words, when their group identity was subtly activated with songs or symbols, they shifted away from their personal sense of self (Seger, Smith, & Mackie, 2009; Moons, Leonard, Mackie & Smith, 2009). As Parkinson et al. (2005) pointed out, among the factors that increase the salience of social identity are: actual or imagined presence of an outgroup, competition with that outgroup, and perception that characteristics (e.g., views, values, behaviour) covary with group membership. Hence, if personal or social identities are salient, the outcomes are very different. For example, if a British person is in the elevator with three people speaking a foreign language, then one's national or cultural identity is likely to be made salient, however if the encounter with the

foreign stranger happened on a one to one conversation, then personal identities will likely be more prominent, with less automatic activation of conceptions of inter-group differences.

According to the IET, self-categorization and ingroup identification affect the degree and the type of intergroup emotions that people experience in intergroup contexts (Devos, Silver, Mackie, Smith, 2002; Mackie, 2017). For example, the activation of specific social memberships changes how one feels towards a group. As Ray et al. (2008) demonstrated, participants reported different emotions towards Muslims and the police, when they were asked to think of themselves as either "an American" or as "a student". Social identification also changes the way in which people appraise intergroup situations. For example, participants reported feeling more unjust and more anger towards a proposal of increasing tuition fees for non-residents at the University of Colorado, when they identified as students, rather than as Colorado residents (Gordijn, Yzerbrt Wigboldus, & Dumont, 2006). Lastly, ingroup identification also affects the extent to which group members experience intergroup emotions. As Mackie pointed out (2017), high rather than low identifiers experience more intensive intergroup emotions that support rather than negate their ingroup. Thus, with a positive image of the ingroup, pride or anger (for example) are felt more intensely (Combs, Powell, Schurtz, & Smith, 2009; Maitner, Mackie, & Smith, 2007), whereas emotions which reflect negativity toward their ingroup (such as guilt) are felt less intensely (Kuppens & Yzerbyt, 2014; Maitner et al., 2007). Empirical evidence indicates how group membership and identification affect the way in which people emotionally react and behave towards others in face-to-face contact, but this can also be abstracted to intergroup contexts that are perceived or implied (such as by the media). For example, the more people identify with being British, the angrier they may feel reading online newspaper coverage that a national charity cannot respond to local needs because of its international aid expenses, and perhaps then the more they will respond with negative posts and tweets about this issue.

The IET has conceptualized how group-based or stereotypical appraisals play a relevant role in generating intergroup emotions and intergroup behavior in intergroup situations (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000). By combining appraisal theories of emotion (see Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001 for a review) with the principles of SCT (Turner et al., 1987) and then applying this to the inter-group sphere, IET researchers transpose the question "Does this situation affect me personally?" to the intergroup context question "Does this situation affect my group?" In this way, IET may predict the specific emotions that members of a group are

likely to experience in intergroup emotion-eliciting situations (such as, successes, threats, or injustices). Fiske and Taylor (2008) have explained how appraisals in intergroup contexts are stereotypes that entail dimensions of perceived responsibility, fairness and certainty.

Smith (1993) offered the applied example of emotional intergroup reactance, whereby western industrialized citizens might be more likely to perceive asylum seekers as unfairly taking money from the ingroup's public money, thereby limiting the money available for the ingroup. This intergroup situation, involving perceived resource competition with an outgroup over limited resources, may lead citizens to experience anger against weaker outgroups (in line with Realistic Conflict Theory; Campbell, 1965). This intergroup anger is, in turn, associated with action tendencies associated with this emotion, for example-manifesting in aggressive actions against asylum seekers within one's community. We illustrate below how identity processes, categorization, stereotypes and intergroup emotions can be deployed by news media, in short and long-term strategies, to (intentionally or unintentionally) trigger inter-group emotions and stereotypical appraisals in society.

### *(2) Stereotype Content Model and BIAS map*

According to the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002; for a review, see Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007), to understand intergroup emotions and consequent action tendencies, it is important to analyze two social structural variables: perceived relative status and perceived competition with one's own group. These social structure components are associated with how people perceive outgroups on two fundamental social judgment dimensions, namely *competence* and *warmth*. According to the SCM, the combinations of these two dimensions generate four types of stereotypes, two ambivalent ones, such as high on one dimension and low in another one, and two univalent ones, namely low or high on both dimensions.

The BIAS map (Behaviours from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes) offers an extension of the SCM, predicting how these stereotype-based clusters may be associated with specific intergroup emotions (Fiske et al., 2002), and intergroup behaviours (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). More precisely, groups stereotyped as capable but not warm, for example Asian-American people, may be targeted with envy and resentment, and their behaviours perceived as passive accommodation or potentially even active harm (see also Salovey, 1991; Smith, 2000). Social groups stereotyped as incapable, but warm and trustworthy, such as elderly

adults, may trigger pity, an emotion which involves unequal status, undermining autonomy, perhaps leading to active helping, or social neglect (Smith, 2000; Weiner, 2005). Groups stereotyped as low in warmth and competence, for instance homeless people, are likely to elicit emotions such as contempt and disgust, which in turn may lead to passive neglect and active attack (Rozin & Fallon, 1987). The groups associated with both high competence (namely ingroup members) and warmth are likely to elicit pride and admiration, and are more likely to lead to positive associations and behaviours (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007).

Cultural variations and historical changes affect the stereotypes associated with various social groups (Cuddy et al., 2009; Durante et al., 2013). According to the SCM and BIAS map (Fiske, 2013), changes of the social structure variables (increased perceived cooperation and competence of outgroups) can lead to improving intergroup perceptions, emotions and derived behavioural tendencies. It might be expected that if refugees were framed in the news as future citizens, not stealing jobs, but supporting the countries in which they reside, doing necessary jobs, and vital in creation of new employment avenues, thus contributing to national economic growth, they would associated with more warmth (Fiske, 2013). If refugees are described not as a drain on societies, unable to navigate job markets, but rather resilient humans, able to overcome adverse circumstances, then their associations with competence will also grow (in line with Cikara & Fiske, 2013). Such new frames offered in journalistic discourse would shift affective associations of refugees and asylum-seekers.

### *(3) The Threat Model*

The Integrated Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Renfro, 2002) attempts to integrate sociological and psychological frameworks to explain when prejudice might arise between groups, under various conditions of perceived “threat” from the out-group (often minority or marginalized groups). This theory identifies several antecedents of perceived intergroup threat including intergroup relations (e.g., conflict, unequal status), individual differences (e.g., ingroup identity, contact experience), cultural dimensions (e.g., collectivism) and intergroup context. These precursors are thought to predict how some outgroups are perceived as being either a *realistic threat* (bringing tangible harm to the ingroup, stealing resources, damaging economy, bringing criminality and diseases) and/or a *symbolic threat* (eroding socio-moral-cultural ingroup values). Hence, outgroups perceived as realistic and/or symbolic threats will elicit intergroup anxiety which strengthens stereotypical views and results in greater outgroup prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

These theoretical assumptions have been supported by a range of empirical evidence, which also provided suggestions on how to improve intergroup relations (Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Roland, 2000; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005). More recent empirical work has also shown how specific threats lead to differentiated emotional reactions and consequent action tendencies (Abeywickrama, Laham, & Crone, 2018). This theory well represents how prejudice and anxiety against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the UK can be related to the stereotypical representations of these social groups as both realistic and symbolic threats of British values in the UK mass media (Arif, 2018; Innes, 2010; Kale & Hart, 2017; Looney, 2017). According to ITT theorists, the general public should be encouraged to experience empathy to contrast intergroup anxiety felt towards outgroups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Abeywickrama et al. (2018) have shown that threat to ingroup morality (an ingroup is experienced as immoral), is associated with positive emotions towards outgroups, and this result should be replicated and explored further. Research evidence above implicates a need for clear and factual information about demographic groups, particularly those marginalized within society, in order to reframe social representations of such stigmatized groups (Johnson, Olivo, Gibson, Reed, Ashburn-Nardo, 2009; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Migrant Voice, 2014; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Journalism plays a crucial role in shifting cultural perceptions of refugees and asylum-seekers from active threats  to recipients of empathy, as knowledge about outgroups helps to decrease prejudice and increase familiarity (see Berry et al, 2016); however, as we have shown above, warmth alone is not enough to activate conceptions of equality and inclusion.

To sum up, intergroup emotions frameworks encourage us to change how social groups are appraised and associated with threat, relative competition and unequal status (see for a study Gaucher et al., 2018 for perception change). The theories and frameworks we have reviewed all emphasize the role of emotional reactions as key predictors of intergroup behaviour. This suggests the need for a change in media messages, moving away from emotion-provoking material, such as wave metaphors (for association of metaphors and emotions, see Citron, Gusten, Michaelis, Goldberg, 2016), and toward individual perceptions of warmth, competence and contribution toward societies. Increasing actual contact between groups has consistently been shown to positively change both cognitive and emotional associations involved in contact with outgroups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Therefore, changing journalistic coverage of migration issues can promote meaningful and positive

social relations amongst people from different groups (Briant, 2016). Thus, journalists may be the most powerful weapon society has for prejudice reduction.

**Direct effects of stereotype exposure from media**

The McQuail (1987) model of media effects places theoretical findings of media bias from intention to unintentional and long to short term. This section deals with the unintentional and short-term effects of media exposure on one's thoughts and behaviours, due to so-called priming or "framing" effects. The media has been shown to effectively activate stereotypes in the short term in prior empirical studies (e.g., Lido et al., 2005; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Mastro & Tukachinsky, 2012; Esses & Medianu, 2013; Arendt & Marquart, 2007), including meta-analytic evidence of media exposure as a replicable short-term effect (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Klinger, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). For instance, recent research has shown short-term media exposure to stories of black criminals in news media can increase the perceived culpability of a black suspect, and moreover this is moderated by longer-term new exposure, whereby heavy TV news viewers were more susceptible to this effect, illustrating a chronic activation of a black-criminal stereotype (Dixon & Azocar, 2017).

Along with effectively activating stereotypes, the media, in the first instance, contributes to the formation (content) and maintenance of stereotypes themselves. When significant portions of the news media consistently put forward the same idea about a group of people, such as asylum seekers, the information will begin to hold "reiteration bias" (e.g., Hertwig, Gigirenzer & Hoffrage, 1997). Reiteration Bias states the more one hears a piece of information repeated from a number of sources, the more likely one is to believe it as factual (Ibid.). In addition, these stereotypes become chronically accessible, as the more stereotype-consistent information is absorbed, the stronger the cognitive connections become (Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Devine, 1989; Domke et al., 1998; Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

The more that stereotype consistent information is activated in regard to a particular group, the stronger the cognitive connections, between the stereotypical characteristics and the group which the stereotypes are applied to (Devine, 1989; Domke et al,. 1998; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The biased information which has been put forward about the group in question quickly becomes part of the schemata used to understand that group (Ramasubramanian, 2007). One experiment demonstrated the cumulative effects of news-viewing by directly comparing heavy news viewers to light news viewers, showing that the

concept of crime was more likely to prime anti-black racism in the former than the latter. In other words, in a context in which the media consistently links blackness and criminality, the association was stronger in those who had had greater exposure to the news (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Another study showed that with regard to several stereotype priming paradigms such as race and gender, co-occurrence of the stereotyped group and the stereotype in culture can almost completely explain the effect of priming (Verhaeghen, Aikman & Van Gulick, 2011). This further implicates the media, which is a key source of the formation of cultural attitudes (Verhaeghen et al., 2011) in stereotype formation.

For example, the negative news portrayal of asylum seekers may constitute chronic activation of stereotypes about asylum seekers. The portrayals of asylum seekers as criminal, a threat to security, and a strain on the system (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017) may consistently strengthen the associations between these concepts and asylum seekers. This chronic exposure to negative stereotypes may in turn lead to the formation of attitudes which can influence behaviour (Appel, 2011; Arendt, 2013). It is therefore important to investigate the ways in which media portrayals of asylum seekers affect perceptions of them, so that we may understand the way in which these portrayals may influence behaviour toward asylum seekers and asylum policy.

A few studies have examined portrayals of asylum seekers in the media in the wake of the 2015 refugee influx, due largely to the Syrian conflict (Goodman et al., 2017; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Prior research revealed it is possible to activate both positive and negative attitudes towards asylum seekers. Pedersen and Thomas (2013) for instance, primed differing attitudes towards asylum seekers and then assessed prejudiced attitudes. In this study, participants were primed to think of asylum seekers as either similar to or different from themselves, and the results showed that when thinking of asylum seekers as similar, participants showed higher prejudice - presumably in an attempt at social distance, although this effect was moderated by the subjective importance participants placed on identity. Yet few studies have explored the potential for media coverage to directly activate attitudes towards asylum seekers post the 2015 refugee influx, which potentially offers a crucial turning point in the media coverage and public opinion about the refugee crisis. The case study presented below will address this gap in the literature by presenting the work of Lido et al. (2005) and its partial replication in 2015, which examined whether newspaper article exposure could directly affect attitudes towards asylum seekers in the U.K.

**Case Study: Direct effects of media refugee bias on stereotypes**

In 2005, Lido et al. conducted a series of studies aimed at examining the impact of the British media on attitudes towards asylum seekers. In these studies, participants were divided into three groups and exposed to either a negative article about asylum seekers, a positive article about asylum seekers, or an unrelated control article. The negative article associated asylum seekers with criminality and suggested that they were an economic burden. The positive article described an incident in which an asylum seeker exhibited exceptional honesty, and the control article discussed trains and was unrelated to asylum seekers. Participants read the article assigned to them and were then asked to make judgements on mock asylum applications. They also filled out a measure of explicit prejudice which was made up of items adapted from a measure of subtle and blatant prejudice (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995) and a measure of ingroup favoritism (Calitri, 2005). These studies found that exposure not only to the negative article, but also to the positive article led to significantly higher levels of explicit prejudice towards foreigners, than exposure to the control article. It also found that participants in both the positive and negative news groups were less likely to believe that asylum applications were legitimate and less likely to want to grant them asylum, than those exposed to the control article.

In 2017 these studies were replicated. Many of the themes and stereotypes about asylum seekers appearing in news coverage remained the same as when the original studies were carried out, with an emphasis on invasion, criminality, and being a threat to the social and economic stability. The context however had changed between 2005 and 2017. The increase in number of refugees arriving in Europe in 2015 brought on by the Syrian Civil War and the increase in traffic through the Mediterranean Route had complicated the narratives surrounding asylum seekers, or at least added new ones. There was also an increased emphasis on the threat of terrorism, and an emerging political landscape publicly opposed to migration, immigration and acceptance of refugees. The replication, therefore employed articles which had been updated to reflect changes in public perception of refugees. For instance, the negative news article was based around the idea of refugees as terrorists rather than as criminals. It also tested prejudice using the same measure of explicit prejudice and similar mock asylum applications (with names changed to sound more Syrian in origin).

Like the original studies, this replication found that exposure to a negative article about asylum seekers led to higher levels of prejudice on an explicit prejudice scale. However, unlike in the original studies, the negative article was not associated with more negative assessments of individuals in mock asylum applications. Furthermore, unlike the original studies, the replication did not find higher levels of prejudice in those who had read a positive article than those who had read the control article. This could be due to increased accessibility of warmer stereotypes of asylum seekers than when the original studies were conducted, such as the notion of asylum seekers as in need of help.

Among the narratives about asylum seekers, there was a greater emphasis on humanitarianism in 2017 than there had been in 2005, which had begun with the appearance of the photograph of Aylan Kurdi. This showed a horrific photo of a drowned child (Aylan Kurdi), who had been washed up on a beach in Turkey. The photo made the front page of newspapers around the world, regardless of their political leaning. The Daily Mail which had previously been very aggressive in tone toward refugees ran the photograph with the headline, “Tiny Victim of a Human Catastrophe.” (Berry, et al., 2016). However, such these warmer narratives (which could also be viewed as another form of stereotype, see Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002), were not sufficient to activate attitudes which were more positive than those seen in the control condition.

The story across both series of studies was that exposure to negative news media content activated stereotyped associations of asylum seekers, and produced negative outcomes (attitudinal and even behavioural, in the form of dishonest behaviours, such as accepting a second payment when given the opportunity or lying on a lie scale; see Lido et al. 2005). However, positive news media exposure did not activate any positive associations, attitudes or outcomes. These findings may be explained by the chronic accessibility of negative stereotypes of asylum seekers, due to the prevalence of negative content of the news media. If negative views of asylum seekers are more easily accessible than positive ones, then it may be that the very mention of asylum seekers, regardless of the context, may be enough to activate negative associations, leading to more negative judgements on mock asylum applications, and explicit measures of prejudice (even for those low in prejudice). In the ten years between these studies, there has reportedly been a surge in far-right political parties,

which often base much of their traction on anti-refugee rhetoric, and appeals to nationalistic identities and xenophobia (Berry et al., 2016; Vieten & Poynting, 2016). There has also been media coverage which has briefly increased support for refugees, such as the Aylan Kurdi coverage described above (de-Andrés, Nos-Aldas, García-Matilla, 2016; Berry, et al., 2016). Some of this coverage may feed into what may be construed as a positive stereotype: the representation of refugees as victims. Although this stereotype is still negative in that it ties into the notion of refugees as lacking in agency and their dependence on others (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017) it may simply produce a sub-typing stereotype, leading to higher warmth toward refugees, but not competence, nor contribution to citizenship (as described in the BIAS map above).

**Strategies for reducing media stereotype reliance: what could work?**

Media-biased information can have a real impact on prejudice towards refugees, as illustrated by the case study above. Media reporting has even been tied to hate crimes (e.g., Githens-Mazer, & Lambert, 2010). It appears urgent to propose strategies for responsible journalism, and for audiences to be more overtly aware of misleading bias, particularly within written (often newsprint) media - given the direct effects illustrated by Lido (2013; 2015) and other social psychologists. Below, we list some useful tips for a) supporting journalists to be more factually accurate in reporting about migration and b) guiding UK (and global) audiences to critically evaluate mass media information to which they are exposed. The following points are the result of discussions among academics, journalists and the public attending a symposium on Media and Migration (2018). We have grounded these suggestions in the social psychological evidence base, and integrated them with suggestions elaborated by the authors of this chapter, based upon from current theoretical knowledge and research findings on this topic across different disciplines.

1. ***Avoid reification of authorities' opinions:*** Consistent research has shown that claims by politicians and other authorities are over-reported in media outlets about migration (Briant, 2016; Coen, 2018, Mongtomery et al., 2018; Migrant Voice, 2014). It is important , for conceptual honesty, that authorities' speeches, that often embed stereotypical views about refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants more widely, are clearly presented as quotes rather than facts, enabling people to shape their own opinions regarding migration, considering different perspectives, questioning others' opinions, and simultaneously getting to know the facts.

2. ***Report the right numbers:*** journalists should report figures, statistics and the results of polls about migration in the UK, retrieving them from official and reliable sources of information and checking for their consistency across reliable sources. Numbers and percentages about migration should be explained and contextualized, providing some points of reference to interpret them (Ford, 2011; Philo, Briant & Donald, 2013). Information reported with accurate numbers and clear graphs will contrast the stereotypical view of refugees and asylum seekers as an unmanageable mass of people invading the country.

3. ***De-construct the "migration" threat.*** As Migrant Voice (2014) and Simon Goodman have empathized (2018), news should also be reported with some historical, economical and geographical information to contextualize the facts, for instance, the role of the UK in modern international relations and conflicts. This additional information could be useful, if repeated consistently across different channels, to change the stereotypical image of asylum seekers, refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants as a physical, economical and symbolic threat for the country (see for techniques of stereotype change Rothbart, 2004). This message is also supported by intergroup emotion researcher (above), as changing emotional appraisals of intergroup situations involving refugees, as well as their perceived social status and competition, will affect attitudes toward such stigmatized outgroups (Fiske, 2013; Mackie, 2017). Some authors have also emphasized the importance of eliciting empathy towards refugees (e.g. Finlay & Stephan, 2000) and photos of individual refugees have helped with this (de-Andrés-del-Campo et al., 2016) Reporting children's photos and voices has also been considered a strategy to implement, also to empower minority status groups, but ethical issues need to be considered, given the vulnerable nature of refugee groups and children in particular (Sime, 2018).

4. ***Disconfirm junk news:*** Nowadays, social media are used as a primary source of information by thousands of people around the globe (Reuters Digital News, 2017). A vast amount of non-factual, unreliable "junk news" is spread around the globe via these channels. A report focusing on Twitter accounts and Facebook pages illustrates how far right-wing users provided the majority of news including misleading, deceptive or incorrect information as if it was real news about politics, economics or

culture (Bradshaw et al, 2019). Although people tend to believe and defend information that support their points, even if it is provenly untrue, some authors have shown that critical skills reduce this tendency (Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Wood & Porter, 2019); hence, training to uncover so-called "fake news", and develop critical skills are needed.

5. ***Report positive news (but not only) about integrated communities:*** As highlighted by the journalist Catriona Stewart and by academics during the Media and Migration symposium (see also Briant, 2016), regional coverages can provide a multifaceted and more realistic perspective on refugees' reality and their integration in the communities. Providing voice to people affected by forced migration can also identify problems and potential solutions to these difficulties, particularly when attempting to promote positive intergroup relations in communities with recent demographic population change. Including in the news, stories that highlight good relations between refugees and local people; for instance, reporting intergroup helping and friendships, is likely to change intra-group norms (De Amicis & Rahim, in prep, 2019; Paluck, 2009).

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

This chapter began with an overview of social psychology, identity, stereotyping and prejudice and the role of emotions in such processes. We then explored how notions of social identity are affected by stereotype content manufactured by, and activated by, media in terms of development of stereotype content and direct activation of stereotypes. Such consumption, particularly of negatively biased news media regarding refugees can directly impact upon people's beliefs, feelings and behaviours.

We have highlighted how the field of social psychology, and specifically social cognition, have offered theoretical approaches and research methods to understand and investigate how media can affect attitudes and behaviours through the formation of stereotype content and direct activation of such content, such as through exposure to print or social media. Moreover, we presented our own and others' experimental work, which highlighted how negative news may affect the general public, but concluded that there is not a similar effect for positive news in the area of migration and refugees. We offered conclusions from a symposium making use of such academic findings, and sharing them with journalists and the

public alike, to gather multiple stakeholder views on media bias of refugee and migration issues in the UK. We offer recommendations based on a triangulated analysis of historical social psychological theory, current empirical evidence, and views of journalists themselves, to explore how news and media information could become more accurate, less misleading, and with a more mindful migration discourse, offering strategies to improve news to reduce audience's stereotypical perceptions, and to shift the valence of media content to be more positive.

Traditional and social media offer also the possibility of positive use/outcomes for refugees, with a global reach. It is important to notice that the effects of media have been so far explored on the majority groups to check their relations with their prejudice. In the future, investigation of how news are perceived by minority groups about their groups and other groups (majority and minority) is also needed.

In light of the current replication crisis in the wider field of psychology, in which there may be a dearth of successful replications of accepted research findings (see Maxwell, Lau, & Howard, 2015), we strongly encourage further replications of direct asylum seeker news exposure effects, both short and long-term. We also advocate further studies employing different version of "positive news coverage," to contribute to stereotype change, and eventually, prejudice reduction. Although the chapter authors' research is in line with previous research, which has successfully primed negative attitudes but failed to prime positive ones (Arendt, 2016), it remains possible that effective positive news has simply not been developed, or longitudinally tested. Discovering which types of coverage might lead to the development of more positive attitudes towards refugees and foreigners would be invaluable in providing practical advice for media reporting on refugee and asylum-seeking issues. It would also be of value to explore more direct effects of specific vocabulary deployed in refugee news coverage.

Much of the literature researching representations of refugees and asylum seekers in news coverage, has analysed metaphorical language such as comparisons of asylum seekers to waves or catastrophes (El Rafaie, 2001; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Other research has examined the ways in which different metaphorical framings of a problem may prime different responses about the best solution to that problem (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). For instance, research has shown that framing crime as a beast is more likely to prime

aggressive action as a recommended solution to the crime problem than framing prime as a disease, which is more likely to prime participants to recommended therapeutic solutions, like drug-rehabilitation centres for criminals (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011).

The recommendations we have offered stem from the theoretical and empirical developments in social psychology over the years and arose out of discussions with diverse stakeholders- psychologists, sociologists, journalists, media information experts and the general public. We feel that such interdisciplinary dialogue is needed to address unintended effects of media identity discourse and stereotype activation. In future research, it would be valuable to consider the ways in which type and quantity of prior news exposure to moderate such effects. Furthermore, politicians and decision makers are exposed to the same media about refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants (more widely) as the rest of the country, therefore negatives stereotype activated by the media could activate attitudes which could subtly influence policy decisions. As such, this chapter argues that addressing media bias overtly with journalists and publishers is also urgently needed. Furthermore, public opinion can influence policy (de-Andrés-del-Campo, 2016) and this chapter supports the growing body of evidence that media, to some extent, directly and indirectly influences public attitudes - particularly toward marginalized out-groups. It is important for press agencies as well as those responsible for making asylum application decisions to be aware of the ways in which the media may directly affect one's stereotype activation and judgements. We therefore conclude with a series of recommendations for journalists, academics and the public audience to engaged when consider the social psychology of news representations, particularly of refugees and asylum-seekers, in societies.

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