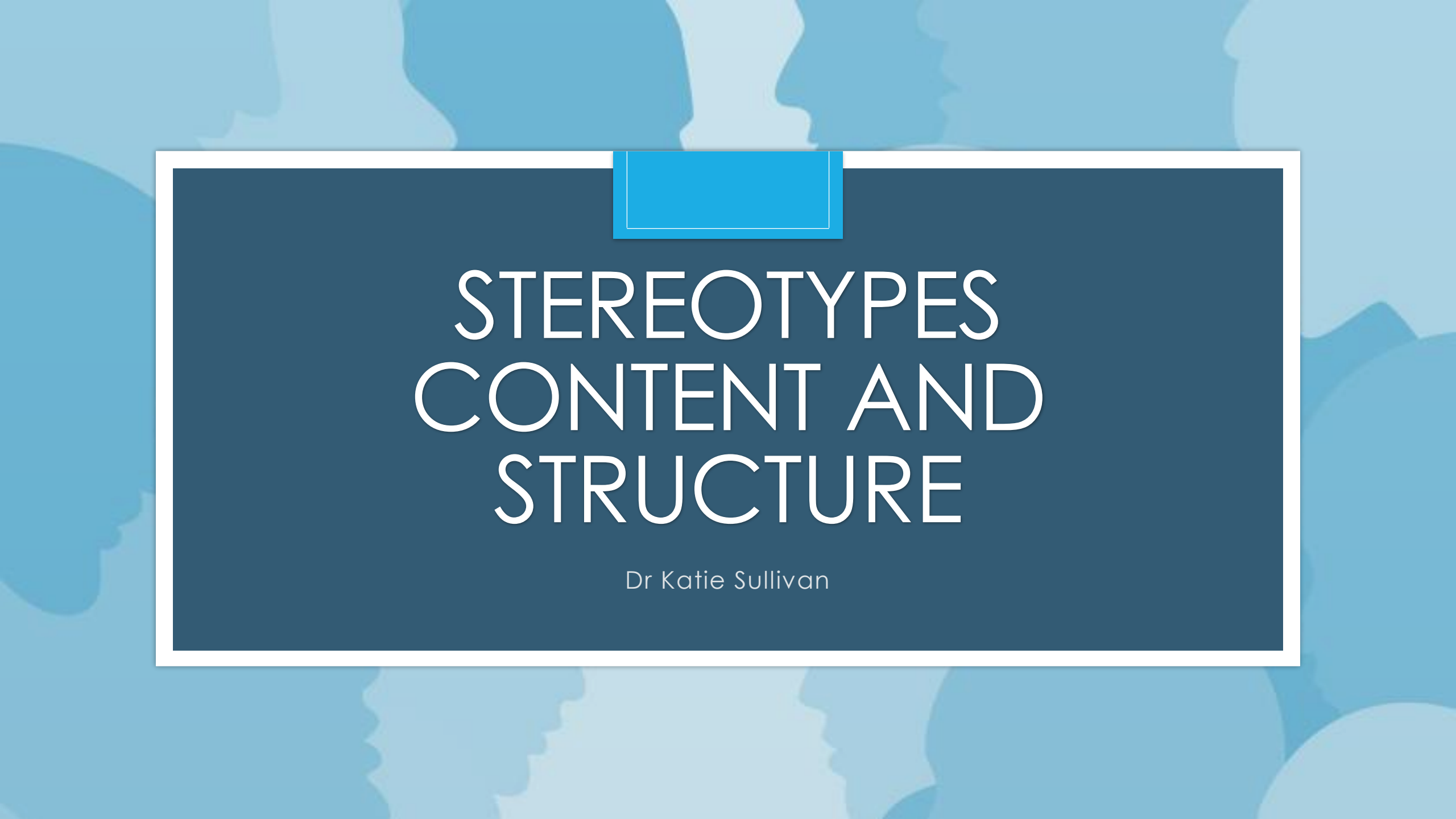




# STEREOTYPES CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Dr Katie Sullivan

# This week...



Early theories



What  
stereotypes  
are and  
why we use  
them



How do  
stereotypes  
develop?



Why do  
stereotypes  
persist?



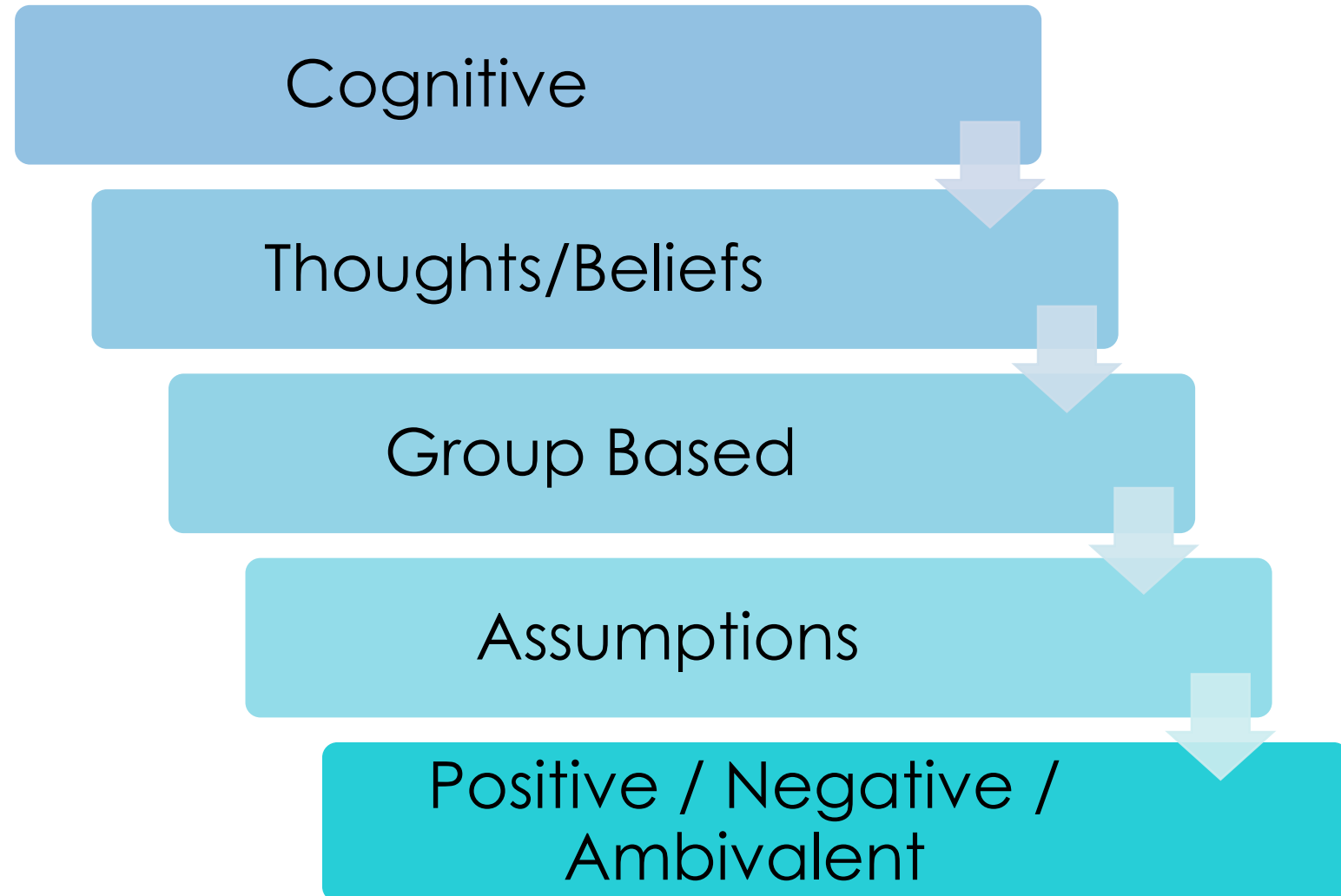
Automatic  
stereotyping



Consequences  
of stereotyping

# What is a Stereotype?

Stereotypes are cognitive structures that contain our knowledge, beliefs and expectations about social groups (Hamilton & Troler, 1986).



# Early Theory: Lippmann versus Dewey



All strangers of another race proverbially look alike to the visiting foreigner. Only gross differences of size or color are perceived by an outsider in a flock of sheep, each of which is perfectly individualized to the shepherd. A diffusive blur and an indiscriminately shifting suction characterize what we do not understand. The problem of the acquisition of meaning ... into what is otherwise vague and wavering (Dewey, 1910, pp. 121 – 122).

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture (Lippmann, 1922, p. 32).



Stereotype

- Cognition Component
- Example: "Older adults are forgetful"

Prejudice

- Affective Component
- Example: Dislike of older adults

Discrimination

- Behavioural Component
- Refusing to hire older adults

The background of the image is a photograph of a Princeton University building, likely Old Chapel, featuring stone architecture and multiple windows. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a paved walkway where a few people are walking. A large, semi-transparent dark blue rectangle is centered over the image, containing the title text. A small, solid blue rectangle is positioned at the top center of the dark blue area.

# THE PRINCETON TRILOGY

## **Katz & Braly (1933)**

- Participants were asked to match 10 ethnic/national groups with a list of 84 traits. They selected traits they believed were characteristic of each group.
- High consensus on stereotypical traits.
- Stereotypes were overwhelmingly negative for minority groups (e.g., African Americans = lazy, Jews = shrewd).
- Demonstrated that stereotypes were widely shared and culturally transmitted.

## **Gilbert (1951)**

- Same trait-matching procedure with a new cohort of Princeton students.
- Lower consensus on negative stereotypes.
- Participants expressed discomfort with the task, suggesting increased social desirability concerns.
- Some stereotypes persisted, but there was a shift toward more neutral or positive traits.

## **Karlins, Coffman & Walters (1969)**

- Same methodology, with added questions about perceived accuracy and personal endorsement of stereotypes.
- Continued decline in negative stereotypes.
- Increased awareness of stereotype inaccuracy.
- Participants distinguished between knowing a stereotype and personally believing it.

## **First Empirical Study of Stereotypes**

- The first systematic attempt to measure stereotypes empirically.
- It introduced the idea that stereotypes are shared social beliefs, not just individual opinions.
- Found that students consistently attributed fixed traits to groups, showing consensus in stereotypical thinking.

## **Revealed Changes Over Time**

- Some stereotypes weakened or changed.
- This suggested that social attitudes are not fixed; they can evolve with cultural and political shifts (e.g., civil rights movement).

## **Highlighted Social Desirability Bias**

- Gilbert (1951) noted that participants were less willing to report negative stereotypes, possibly due to increased awareness of prejudice.
- This introduced the idea that social desirability can affect how people express stereotypes—an early insight into implicit vs. explicit bias.

## **Laid the Groundwork for Modern Research**

- Implicit stereotypes (e.g., Implicit Association Test)
- Stereotype content models
- Social cognition and categorisation
- It also raised methodological questions about how to measure stereotypes ethically and accurately.

# Are All Stereotypes Negative?

Older  
people are  
wise

Women are  
nurturing

Asian  
students are  
hardworking

Men are  
natural  
leaders

Can positive stereotypes be harmful?

# Why Do We Stereotype?



## Cognitive explanations

Categorisation, heuristics, cognitive economy (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000)



## Social Explanation

Ingroup favouritism, social comparison, belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)



## Social Learning and Cultural Explanations

Family, peers, media, culture (Aboud, 1988; Nadal, 2013)



## Motivational Explanations

Self-esteem, uncertainty reduction, threat management (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Stephan & Stephan, 2000)



## Emotional Explanations

Fear, anxiety, perceived threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000)

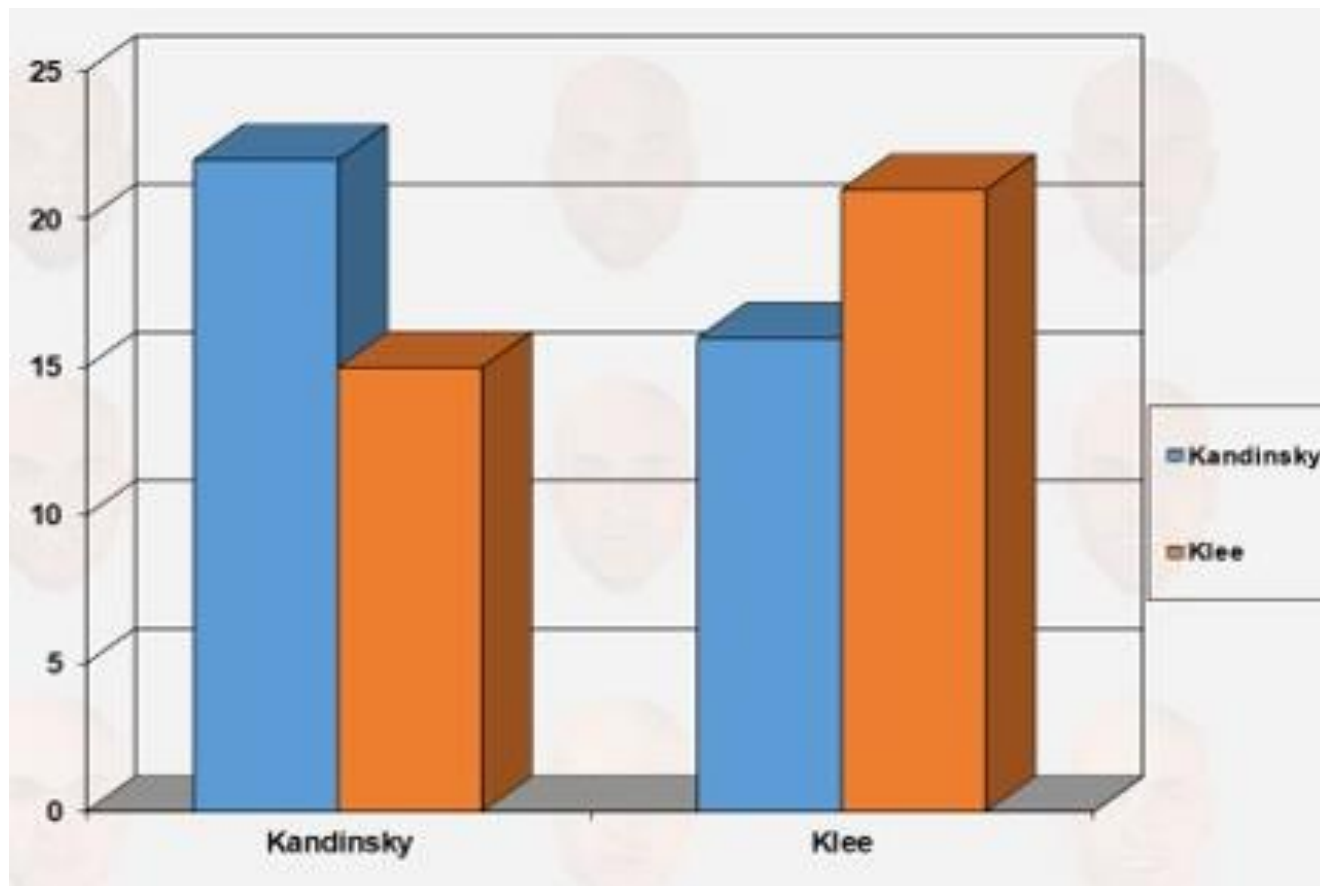
# Categorisation of Group Membership

Social categorisation helps simplify the social world but can exaggerate group differences (Tajfel, 1969).

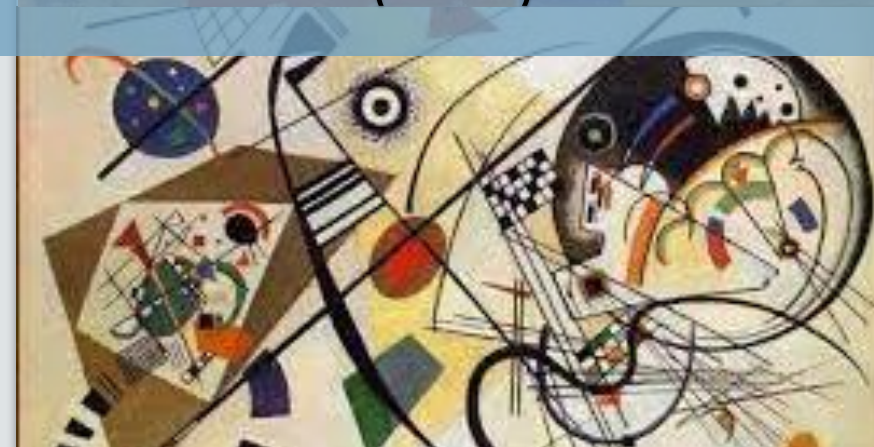
Simplification

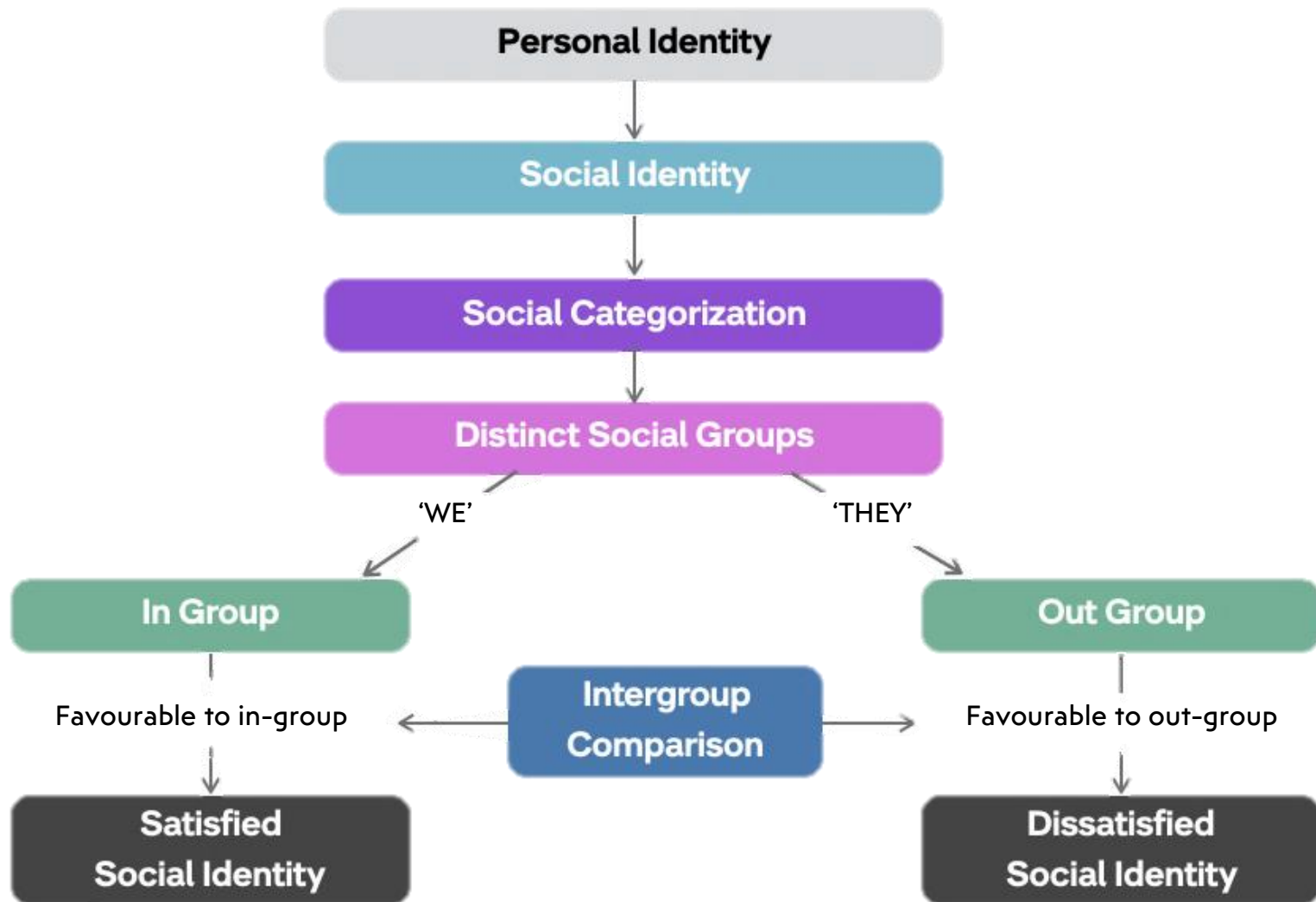
Accentuation

Differentiation



## **MINIMAL GROUP PARADIGM:** TAJFEL, BILLIG, BUNDY, AND FLAMENT (1971)





# SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY (SIT; TAJFEL & TURNER, 1979)

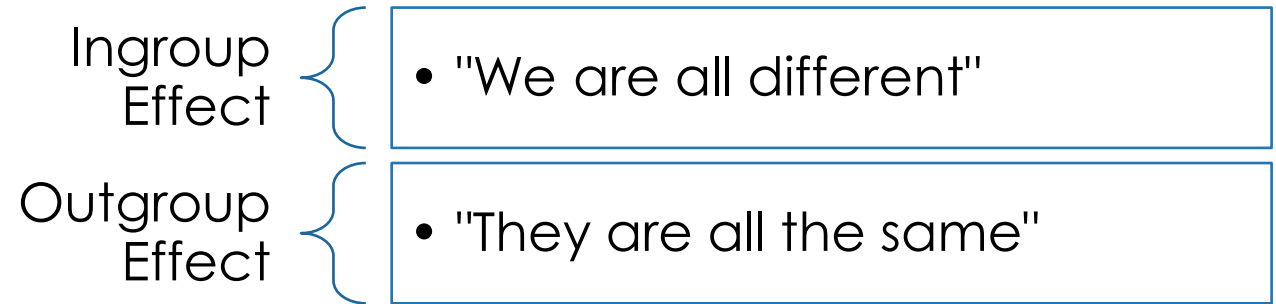
# Ingroup Favouritism & Outgroup Derogation

Tajfel et al. (1971)

Theimer, Killen & Stangor (2001)

Brewer (1999)

# Outgroup Homogeneity Effect (Quattrone & Jones, 1980)



## Key Findings

- Greater perceived diversity within the ingroup
- Greater perceived similarity within the outgroup
- Contributes to stereotyping and prejudice

## Real-World Examples

- Political groups
- Football supporters
- National identities



# Stereotype Process...

**Fig. 1: Schema Theory**



# Stereotype Process...



**Radvansky and Zacks (2011)**

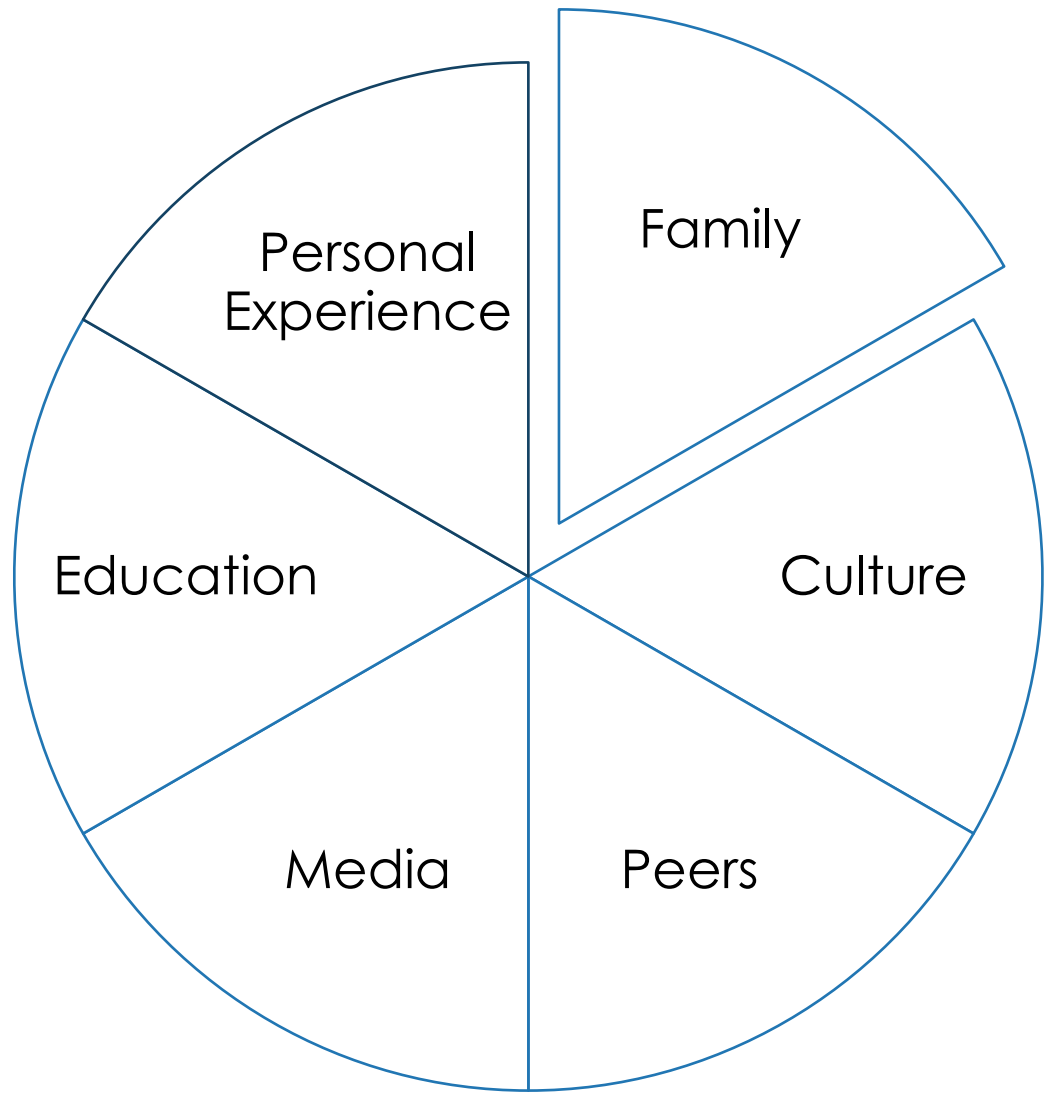
Memory reconstruction

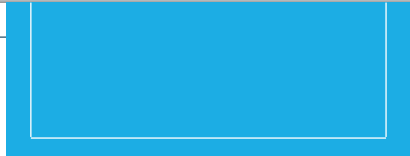


**Cohen (1981)**

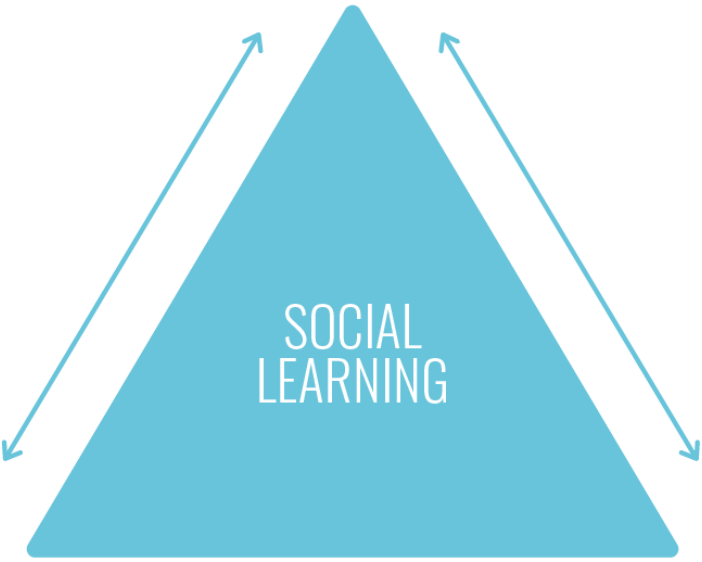
Waitress/librarian study

# How Do Stereotypes Develop?





BEHAVIOUR CHANGE  
Engaged & Proactive Learning

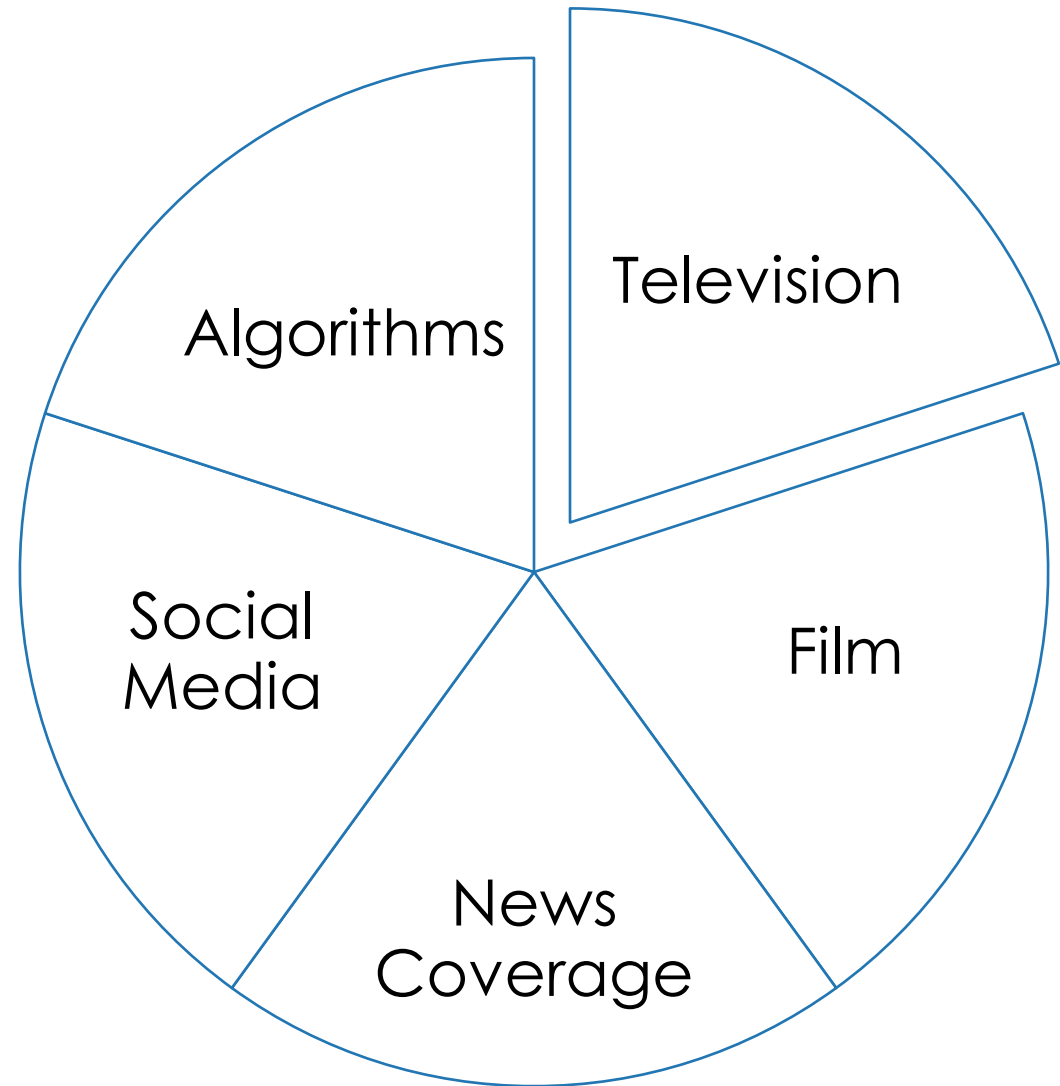


ENGAGED SELF  
Intrinsic Reinforcement

ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT  
Observational Learning

SOCIAL  
LEARNING  
THEORY  
(BANDURA,  
1977)

# Media as a Source of Stereotypes



Do media reflect stereotypes, or create them?

# Illusory Correlation (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976)

- People sometimes perceive relationships between two variable, when in face, there is no logical reason for them to be correlated.
- Specifically, we tend to notice distinctive events.

|                            | Effect is Present | Effect is Absent |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Potential Cause is Present | A                 | B                |
| Potential Cause is Absent  | C                 | D                |

# TASK: Illusory Correlation

## Group A

- 26 Positive Behaviours
- 13 Negative Behaviours

## Group B

- 13 Positive Behaviours
- 6 Negative Behaviours

# Distinctiveness & Attention

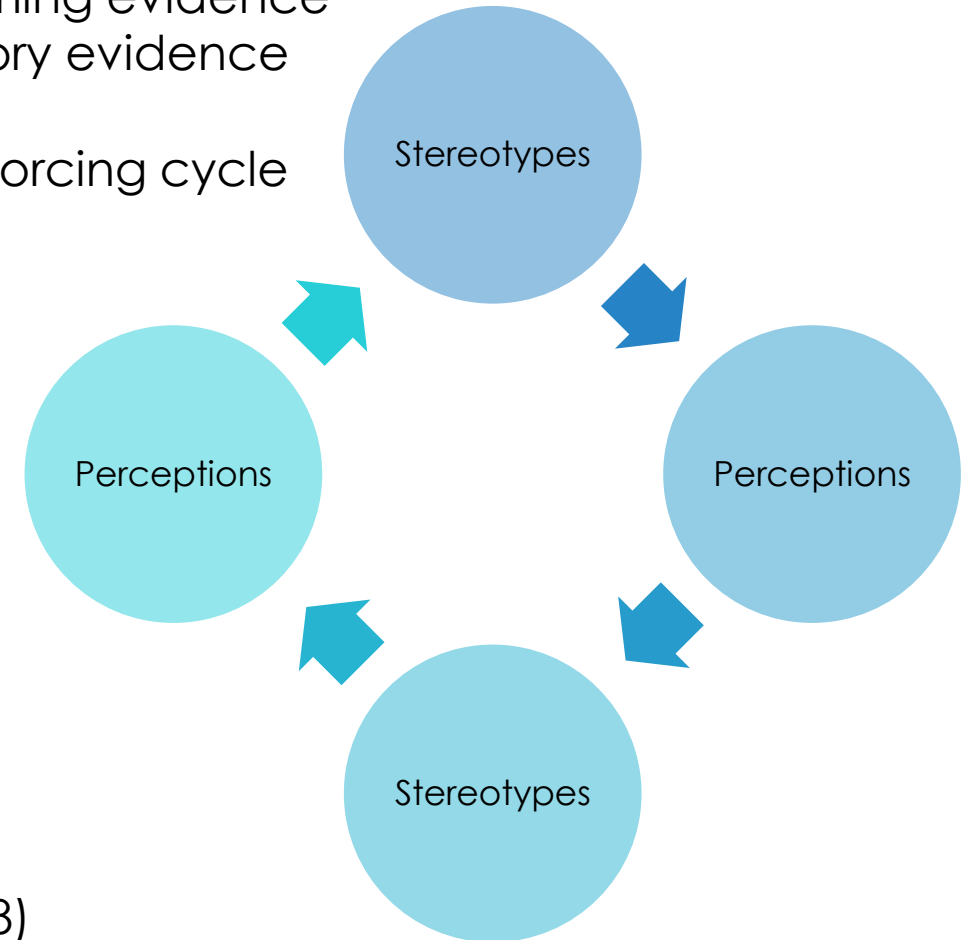
(McConnell, Sherman &  
Hamilton, 1994)

- Certain types of information naturally attract our attention.
- You do not tend to remember ordinary interaction
- You are more likely to remember something out of the ordinary
- Stereotypes are often developed around memorable information
- Distinctive events are more likely to be noticed, discussed and remembered.
- Cognitively we are designed to notice difference/novelty
- This helps to explain why some stereotypes exist... despite having contradictory evidence

# Confirmation Bias

The tendency to:

- Seek confirming evidence
- Notice confirming evidence
- Remember confirming evidence
- Ignore contradictory evidence
- This creates a reinforcing cycle



## Key Research

Snyder & Swann (1978)

# Self-fulfilling Prophecies

## **Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968)**

- Found that pupils randomly identified as 'late bloomers' subsequently showed greater academic improvement, suggesting that teacher expectations can influence student outcomes.

## **Jussim & Harber (2005)**

- Expectancy effects are typically small
- Teachers' expectations often predict achievement because they are reasonably accurate rather than because they create performance differences.
- Self-fulfilling prophecy effects appear to be stronger for some students, particularly those from stigmatised groups

## **Villiger (2025)**

- Expectations may both reflect existing social realities and contribute to maintaining them over time.
- This helps explain how stereotypes can persist, even when individuals genuinely believe they are responding objectively to what they observe.

# Subtyping

Occurs when we encounter someone who does not fit a stereotype, but instead of changing the stereotype itself, we treat that person as an exception.

## **Weber and Crocker (1983)**

- When people encounter information that contradicts a stereotype, they often preserve the original stereotype by creating subtypes.

## **Kunda and Oleson (1995)**

- Stereotype-inconsistent individuals are frequently viewed as exceptions rather than evidence that the stereotype is inaccurate.

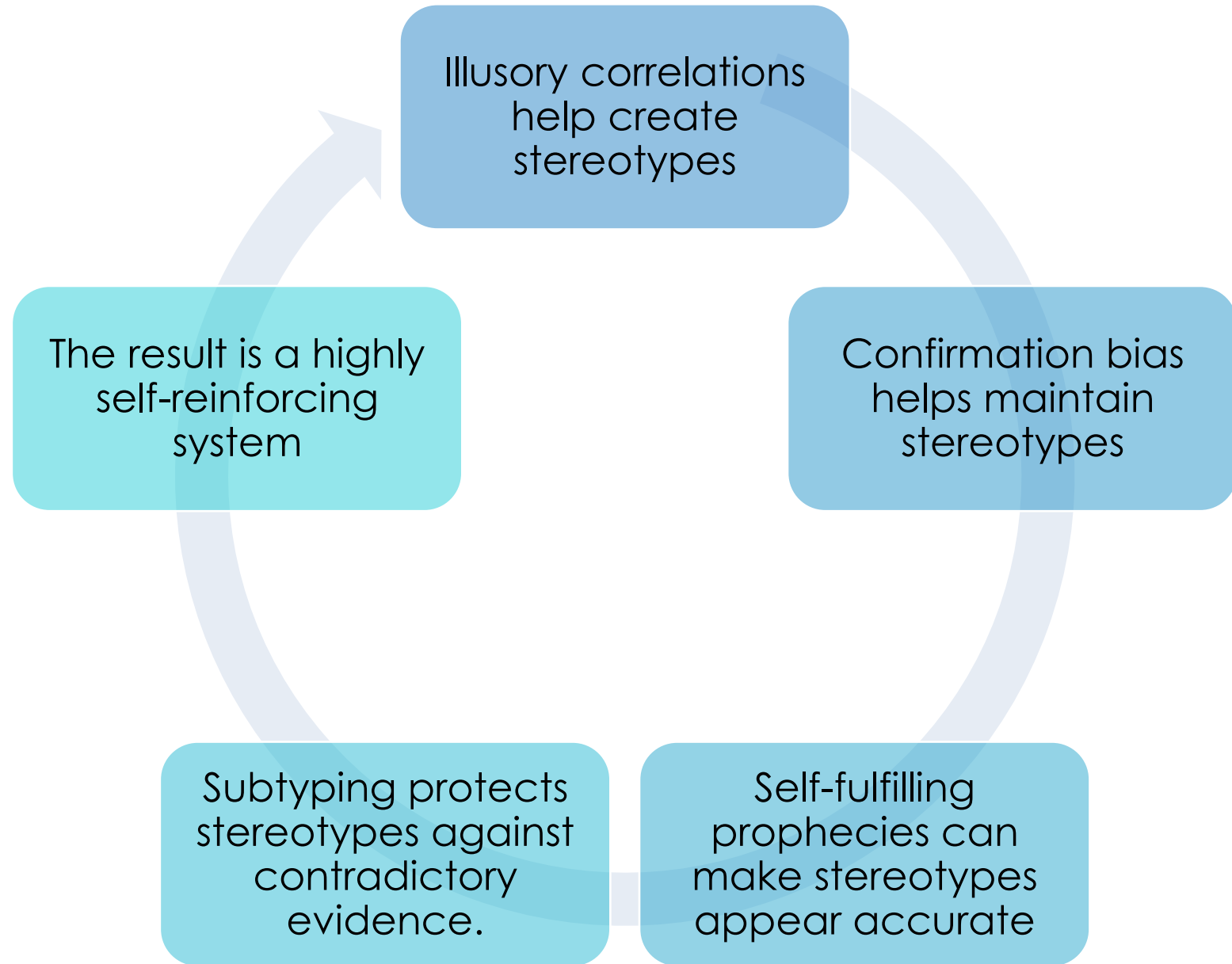
## **Olsson & Martiny (2018)**

- Simply encountering a counter-stereotypical person is often insufficient to produce stereotype change.

## **Stewart, Rai, and colleagues (2023)**

- People are more likely to revise stereotypes when they encounter multiple, diverse examples that challenge the stereotype across different contexts.

# Why Are Stereotypes So Difficult to Change?



## Automatic Stereotyping

Can stereotypes  
influence us even  
when we disagree  
with them?

# Automatic vs Controlled Stereotypes (Devine, 1989)

## Key Proposition

### **Stereotype Activation $\neq$ Personal Belief**

People may:

- Know a cultural stereotype
  - Automatically activate the stereotype
  - Consciously reject the stereotype
  - Regulate their responses
- 
- Dual- Process Model:

#### Automatic Processes

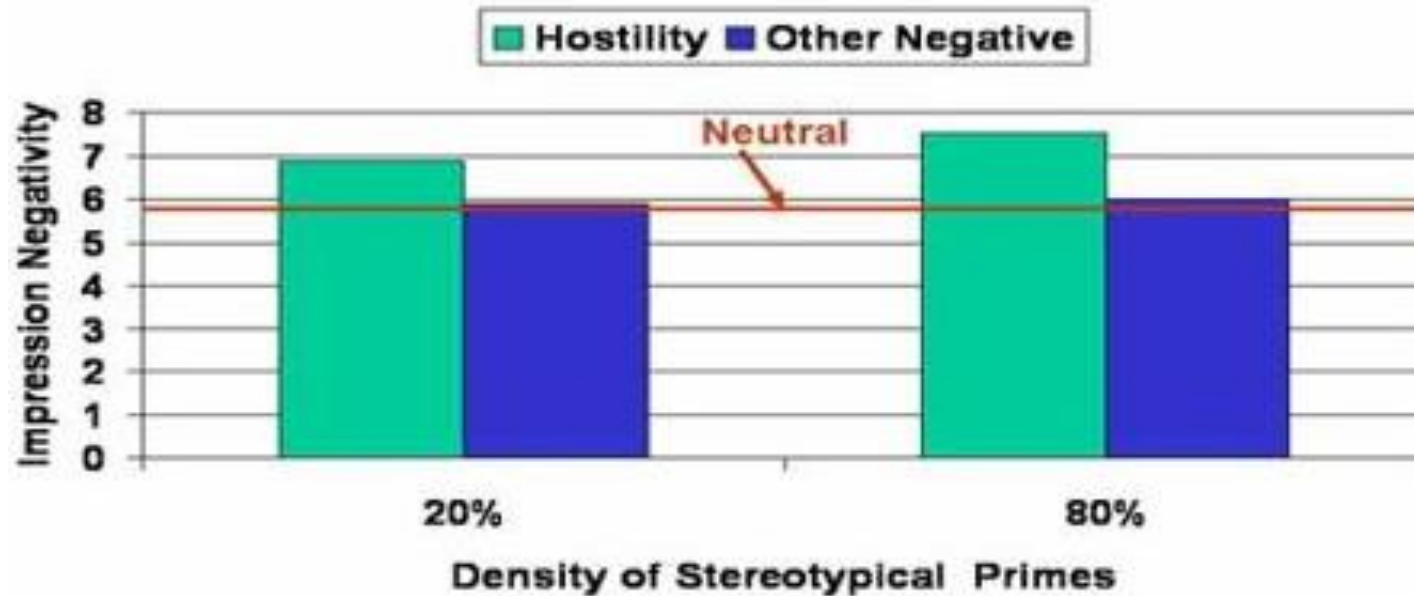
- Fast
- Unconscious
- Effortless
- Automatic Activation

#### Controlled Processes

- Slower
- Conscious
- Effortful
- Deliberate Correction

# Personality Impressions after Preconscious Race-Based Priming

After Devine (1989), Experiment 2



DEVINE'S  
THEORY OF  
STEREOTYPE  
ACTIVATION  
EXPERIMENT 2  
(1989)

# When Cognitive Resources Are Limited

(Gilbert & Hixon, 1991)

What happens when people are distracted or mentally busy?

People were:

- Primed with stereotypes
- Placed under cognitive load
- Asked to complete a word task

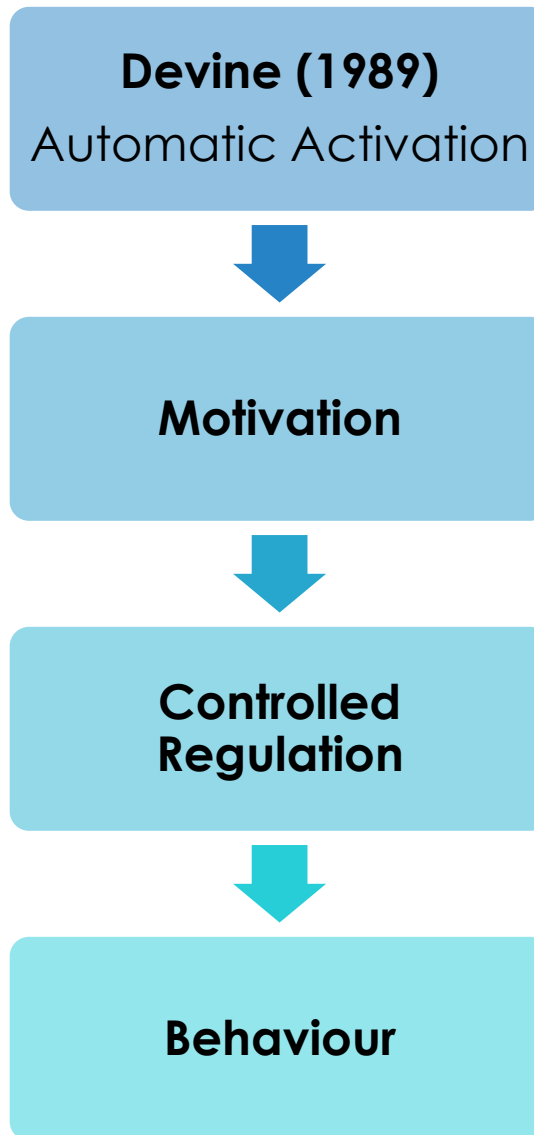
## **Findings**

- Greater reliance on stereotypes
- Reduced stereotype regulation
- Cognitive effort matters

## **Key Message**

Controlling stereotypes requires mental resources.

Automatic  
Does Not  
Mean  
Inevitable



**Important Distinction**

Knowing a stereotype is not the same as acting upon it.

# Stereotype Content Model (SCM)

|           | Lo Competence                                      | Hi Competence                                          |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Hi Warmth | older, disabled,<br>Pity=prescribe                 | ingroup, allies,<br>reference groups<br>Pride=humanize |
| Lo Warmth | poor, homeless,<br>Immigrants<br>Disgust=objectify | rich, professionals<br>Envy=resent, harm               |

Stereotype  
Content  
Model: Fiske,  
Cuddy, Glick  
& Xu (2002)

Intersectional  
Stereotypes:  
Galinsky, Hall,  
& Cuddy  
(2013)

# From Stereotypes to Behaviour The BIAS Map Cuddy, Fiske & Glick (2007)

Stereotype

- Admiration



Emotion

- Pride



Behaviour

- Help / Support

Stereotype

- Pity



Emotion

- Sympathy



Behaviour

- Help / Protect

Stereotype

- Envy



Emotion

- Jealousy



Behaviour

- Passive Harm

Stereotype

- Contempt



Emotion

- Disgust



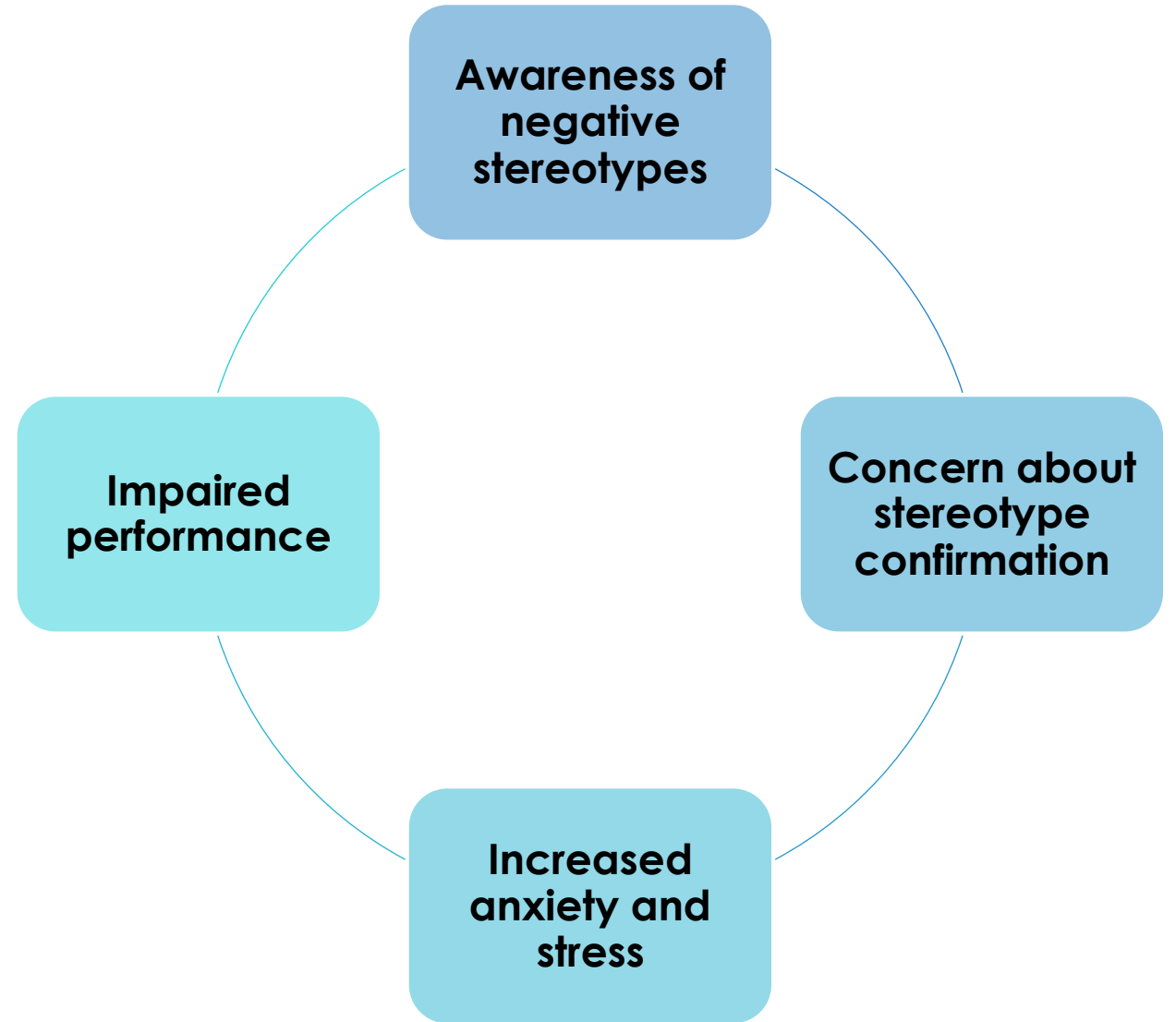
Behaviour

- Active Harm

# The Consequences of Stereotyping

What happens when  
people become aware  
of stereotypes about  
their own group?

# Stereotype Threat



# Stereotype Threat



## ***Gender and Math Performance***

Spencer, Steele & Quinn (1999)



## ***Gender and Physics***

Keller (2002)



## ***Ethnicity and test performance***

Gonzales, Blanton & Williams (2002)



## ***Gender and Maths***

Schmader & Johns (2003)



## ***Gender and Computer Science***

Cheryan et al. (2009)



## ***Ethnicity and academic performance***

Walton & Cohen (2007, 2011)

# Mechanisms Behind Stereotype Threat

Increased Anxiety and Arousal

- Osborne (2007)
- Mendes & Jamieson (2011)
- Yağan & Avcı (2023)

Reduced Working Memory Capacity

- (Schmader & Johns, 2003)
- Beilock, Rydell, & McConnell (2007)
- Piroelle, Abadie, & Régner (2022)

Hypervigilance and Self-Monitoring

- Mendes & Jamieson (2011)
- Thomas & Cassady (2020)

Disengagement from the Domain Over Time

- Steele (1997)
- Block et al. (2011)
- von Hippel et al. (2024)

# Recent Developments and Extensions

**Intersectional Stereotype Threat:**  
Remedios & Snyder (2015)

**Chronic vs. Situational  
Threat**

**Environmental Triggers:**  
Murphy, Steele & Gross (2007)

**Stereotype Lift and Boost:**  
(Walton & Cohen, 2003)

# Interventions to Reduce Stereotype Threat

## **Values Affirmation**

- (Cohen et al., 2006).

## **Role Models and Representation**

- (Marx & Roman, 2002).

## **Growth Mindset Messaging**

- (Good, Aronson & Inzlicht, 2003).

## **Belonging Interventions**

- (Walton & Cohen, 2011).



THANK YOU FOR  
LISTENING