Misanthropic Memory for the Behavior of Group Members

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The research reported here examined whether misanthropic memory occurs for groups, that is, whether people best remember negative behaviors of group members that have been dispositionally attributed and positive behaviors that have been situationally attributed. Experiment 1 established a baseline, showing that behaviors that were not associated with attributions displayed an incongruity effect in which behaviors incongruent with prior expectancies were better recalled than were behaviors congruent with prior expectancies. In Experiment 2, attributions were associated with the behaviors used in Experiment 1, resulting in an attenuation of the incongruity effect and the emergence of a strong misanthropy effect. Experiment 3 indicated that misanthropic memory is only found for outgroups and not for ingroups. The implications of the findings for intergroup perception were discussed.

We often perceive people in terms of the groups to which they belong. Research indicates that the cognitive processes associated with perceiving persons as members of groups differ from the processes associated with perceiving persons as isolated individuals (Srull, 1981). Most of this research involves participants learning about the behaviors of unknown others in an attempt to form impressions of them. In the current research, we use this approach to examine people's processing of group members' behaviors. Specifically, we assessed the recall of behaviors that were linked to explicit attributions explaining why the behaviors occurred. For example, participants not only learned that "John offered his seat to the elderly woman" but were also told that he did so either "because he likes being helpful" (dispositional attribution) or "because he was trying to impress the woman sitting beside him" (situational attribution). We refer to this type of information as attributed behavioral information.

It would seem to be important to understand the processing of attributed behavioral information about groups for several reasons. First, attributed behavioral information is commonly available about members of social groups. For example, others often try to influence our impressions of social groups by providing particular types of explanations for the group members' behaviors ("members of group 'X' have traditionally done poorly on tests because the tests are biased against them"). Attributions also are often included when group members explain their own behaviors to us ("I got the promotion not because I'm a member of group 'Y' but because I am qualified"). In addition, at the core of the person perception process is the tendency for people to causally understand others' behaviors (Hastie, 1984), which in turn affects the degree to which information is elaborated and remembered (Hamilton, 1988). Eliminating the need for causal analysis (by providing causal attributions) should affect the nature of the processing that occurs and, as a consequence, the type of information that is remembered.

In cases where attributional information is available for the behaviors enacted by members of social groups, what will people remember? Will they be more likely to remember expectancy-consistent or inconsistent behaviors? Or will they be more likely to remember disposi-

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tionally or situationally attributed behaviors? Also, what role, if any, does the valence of the behaviors play? The present research will help to provide answers to these and other related questions.

Misanthropic Person Memory and the Person Memory Incongruity Effect

Many studies in person memory have found support for an incongruity effect, whereby perceivers show better memory for expectancy-inconsistent as opposed to expectancy-consistent behavioral information (Hastie & Kumar, 1979; Srull, 1981). Expectancy-inconsistent behaviors tend to be well recalled because people compare them with other behaviors in memory (Srull, 1981) and generate more extensive attributions for them (Hastie, 1984), leading them to be better represented. The incongruity effect typically occurs when processing information about individual targets but not when processing information about groups, unless the groups are thought to be cohesive units, which causes the group to be seen as a single psychological entity similar to an individual person (e.g., Srull, 1981; Srull, Lichtenstein, & Rothbart, 1985).

Recent research in person memory has shown, however, that when perceivers learn about an individual target and are asked to process attributed behavioral information, they no longer show biases in remembering expectancy-inconsistent as opposed to expectancy-consistent information (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996). Generally speaking, expectancy-inconsistent information is better remembered due to people's attempts to relate it to the preexisting expectancies and other information in memory in order to understand its causes (Hastie, 1984; Srull, 1981). Ybarra and Stephan (1996) have argued that the availability of explicit attributions that explain why the behaviors occurred bypasses this causal attribution/comparison process, thus preventing expectancy-inconsistent behaviors from enjoying additional cognitive processing. Instead of finding an incongruity effect in the recall of behaviors linked to attributions, the findings obtained by Ybarra and Stephan (1996) showed a robust misanthropy effect. This effect was characterized by people having better memory for negative behaviors that were dispositionally rather than situationally attributed and better memory for positive behaviors that were situationally rather than dispositionally attributed. This recall pattern was labeled misanthropic because it reflects processing that casts the other person in a negative light by emphasizing the negative acts for which the target can be blamed and the positive acts for which the target is not given credit.

Ybarra and Stephan (1996, 1999) have explained misanthropic memory in terms of implicit causal theories. They propose that people possess implicit causal theories that they use to process behavioral information about others. These implicit causal theories indicate that negative behaviors tend to be caused by dispositional factors, whereas positive behaviors tend to be caused by situational factors. Misanthropic memory occurs when people disproportionately recall attributed behaviors that are consistent with these implicit causal theories.

Ybarra and Stephan (1999) argue that people's implicit causal theories are abstracted from various social experiences (e.g., family, society), which generally prescribe positive conduct but proscribe negative conduct. Positive behavior is commonly reinforced through norms, social pressure, and rewards. Hence, positive behavior is heavily guided by situational demands (cf. Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Lienhardt, 1964). Positive behavior, although potentially indicative of people's dispositional characteristics, is equally if not more influenced by the social situations in which people find themselves. In contrast, negative behavior represents a deviation from the normative injunctions of social systems. Engaging in negative behavior often reflects an inability to conform to social requirements and typically eliminates situational considerations as explanations for the act. Hence, negative behavior is likely to be seen as indicative of a person's dispositional characteristics (cf. Lingle & Ostrom, 1979; Reeder & Brewer, 1979; Rothbart & Park, 1986; Yzerbyt & Leyens, 1991).

Misanthropy and Groups

The present set of studies examines whether misanthropic person memory applies to group targets and also assesses what factors involved in group perception may contribute to the occurrence of misanthropy. The person memory and misanthropic person memory perspectives lead to different predictions concerning memory for the behaviors of group members when the behaviors are accompanied by attributions. Based on previous research in person memory dealing with the unattributed behavior of group members, it would be expected that the recall of attributed behaviors of group members would favor incongruity encoding, at least under certain conditions. It would be expected that behaviors that are inconsistent with the stereotype would be better recalled than would consistent behaviors when the group is thought to be cohesive (e.g., group members know and interact with each other). When the group is thought to be loosely knit (e.g., the group is just a collection of individuals who do not know or interact with each other), stereotype-inconsistent and consistent behaviors would be expected to be equivalently recalled or expectancy-consistent behaviors would be favored in recall (Srull, 1981; Srull et al., 1985; Stangor & McMillan, 1992).

However, based on previous research on misanthropic person memory (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996), it would be expected that group stereotypes and knowledge about group cohesiveness would play a more limited role given the presence of explicit attributions. First, the available attributions should reduce people's need to relate the behaviors to each other or to the expectancy in order to ascertain why the behaviors occurred. Thus, tendencies toward enhanced incongruity encoding should abate given that the mechanism by which expectancy-inconsistent information comes to enjoy a memory advantage is being disengaged. Instead, when processing attributed behavioral information, people should apply their implicit theories regarding the typical causes of positive and negative behaviors (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, 1999). It is assumed that these implicit causal theories have been abstracted over the course of people's lives and are thus well developed (Ybarra & Stephan, 1999). As a consequence, reliance on these implicit theories should facilitate the processing of theory-consistent information (Stangor & McMillan, 1992; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, Experiment 3; 1999, Experiment 4), which would result in a tendency toward misanthropy in recall.

To be in a position to evaluate these two perspectives, we conducted a preliminary experiment to establish that our manipulations of group stereotypes and knowledge of the cohesiveness of the groups were powerful enough to produce the effects on the recall of group members' unattributed behaviors that have been obtained in previous research (e.g., Srull, 1981; Srull et al., 1985).

EXPERIMENT 1

Method

DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-eight students participated in the study for course credit. Participants in this experiment either learned about a positively stereotyped group or a negatively stereotyped group. In addition, the group was described as cohesive or loosely knit. The behaviors people used to form an impression of the group were either consistent or inconsistent with the stereotype expectancies. Thus, the design of the experiment was a 2 (positive stereotype vs. negative stereotype) × 2 (closely knit vs. loosely knit group) × 2 (stereotype-consistent, inconsistent behaviors) mixed-factorial design, in which the first two factors varied between participants and the latter factor varied within participants. Participants were run in noninteracting groups of 2 to 4 and were distributed in equal numbers to the between-participant conditions.

STIMULI AND MATERIALS

To induce the positive or negative expectancies about the groups, half of the participants were told that the group was composed of ministers (positive stereotype), whereas the other half of the participants were told that the group was composed of muggers (negative stereotype). The minister and mugger stereotypes were chosen for the study because they embody the same two attributes used to manipulate the trait expectancies in the earlier research by Ybarra and Stephan (1996), but in opposing directions (friendly and honest for ministers, unfriendly and dishonest for muggers). In pilot testing various stereotypes, a separate group of students ($n = 23$) was asked to indicate for a variety of social groups the percentage of group members who possessed the traits friendly, honest, unfriendly, and dishonest. The response format consisted of a 10-point scale representing 10% increments running from 0% to 100%. Out of all the stereotyped groups tested, two groups, one positive (ministers) and one negative (muggers), were selected. The results indicated that ministers were rated as possessing the traits friendly ($M = 7.50$) and honest ($M = 6.95$) but that they were not regarded as unfriendly ($M = 0.92$) or dishonest ($M = 1.33$). Muggers, on the other hand, were rated as possessing the traits unfriendly ($M = 6.13$) and dishonest ($M = 8.04$) but not the traits friendly ($M = 0.78$) and honest ($M = 0.56$).

The cohesiveness of the group was manipulated in a manner that was similar to the manipulations used in previous research (e.g., Srull, 1981; Srull et al., 1985, Experiment 7). The target group was described as an entity whose members were or were not part of an organized group. In the loosely knit group condition, the expectancy read as follows: "The individuals you will be forming an impression of have their profession in common. They are all ministers (muggers)." In the cohesive group condition, the expectancy read as follows: "The collection of individuals you will be forming an impression of are all members of an organized alliance of ministers (mugging ring) in the greater Dallas area."

BEHAVIORAL STATEMENTS

The behavioral stimuli used in this experiment were taken from the earlier research by Ybarra and Stephan (1996, Experiment 1). Half of the behaviors (12) were positive in valence and half (12) were negative. The positive behaviors all concerned acts of friendliness (6) and honesty (6), whereas the negative behaviors all concerned acts of unfriendliness (6) and dishonesty (6). Previous pilot testing (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996) had demonstrated that the positive behaviors were consistent with the traits friendly and honest (inconsistent with the traits unfriendly and dishonest). The negative behaviors were shown to be consistent with the traits

unfriendly and dishonest (inconsistent with the traits friendly and honest). Slight modifications were made to the behaviors to refer to group members instead of the same individual, such as "this mugger (minister) did such and such." Examples of the positive behaviors included the following: "This minister (mugger) chatted a while with the vendor when he bought the newspaper" (friendly) and "This minister (mugger) returned the extra change he received at the supermarket" (honest). Examples of the negative behaviors included the following: "This minister (mugger) will not talk to the postman" (unfriendly) and "This minister (mugger) flattered people at the party by telling them favorable lies" (dishonest).

Four presentation sequences of the 24 behaviors were created. The presentation sequences were constrained so that each of the four types of behaviors (friendly, honest, unfriendly, dishonest) appeared once in each of the six blocks of 4 behaviors.

PROCEDURE

Participants were recruited to take part in an experiment on social information processing. After arriving at the lab, participants were told that they would be forming an impression of a group of people. Before reviewing the behaviors of the different members of the group, participants were asked to read through a brief paragraph that described the group about whom they would be learning in addition to describing whether the group was or was not cohesive.

After reading through the description of their assigned group, the participants were presented with a set of 24 behaviors (each performed by a different group member) at 8-second intervals. Following the impression formation task, participants were given a 5-minute interpolated task in order to clear working memory. A surprise recall task followed the interpolated task. Participants were asked to recall and write down as many of the behaviors of the group members as they could from those that were presented to them during the impression formation phase. They also were told that if they could not remember the exact wording, they could write down the idea. They were given 8 minutes to complete the recall task and were then debriefed.

Results

Participants were credited with correctly recalling a behavior if their reproductions captured the gist of an originally presented item. The recall data presented in Table 1 were submitted to a 2 (positive stereotype vs. negative stereotype) × 2 (closely knit vs. loosely knit group) × 2 (stereotype-consistent vs. inconsistent behaviors) mixed-factorial design, with repeated measures on the last factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for type of behavior recalled, $F(1, 24) = 5.03$, $p < .03$, which indicated that stereotype-inconsistent behaviors were better recalled ($M = 4.37$) than were stereotype-consistent behaviors ($M = 3.71$). However, this main effect was qualified by the interaction of behavior type and group cohesiveness, $F(1, 24) = 8.12$, $p < .008$. This interaction indicated that stereotype-inconsistent behaviors were better remembered than were consistent behaviors, but only when the group was thought to be cohesive, $F(1, 12) = 13.03$, $p < .003$. When the group was thought to be loosely knit, stereotype-inconsistent behaviors were recalled to the same extent as consistent behaviors, $F(1, 12) < 1.00$. No other effects were reliable.

TABLE 1: Mean Recall for Experiment 1 as a Function of Group Cohesiveness and Behavior Consistency With Stereotype

	Group	
Behavior	*Cohesive* (n = *12*)	*Loosely Knit* (n = *12*)
Inconsistent	4.54	4.21
Consistent	3.03	4.39

NOTE: The higher the scores, the more items recalled.

Discussion

Experiment 1 was conducted to examine whether the recall of unattributed behaviors enacted by group members would be a function of expectancies about the group (stereotypes) and how cohesive the groups were thought to be. The findings of Experiment 1 are consistent with those obtained by other researchers (e.g., Srull, 1981; Srull et al., 1985; Stangor & McMillan, 1992). Expectancy-inconsistent behaviors were more likely to be recalled than were expectancy-consistent behaviors when the group was thought to be cohesive but not when it was thought to be loosely knit. In all likelihood, this effect occurred because the participants attempted to reconcile the inconsistent behaviors of the cohesive group members with the behaviors of other group members and the stereotype of the group. The more extensive processing from such attempts at reconciliation would have made these behaviors more memorable (Srull, 1981).

Having established the influence of the manipulations on how people process the expectancy-consistent and inconsistent behaviors, the next experiment turned to examining whether memory for stereotype-consistent and inconsistent behaviors would be affected by group stereotypes and group cohesiveness when explicit dispositional and situational attributions were added to the behaviors enacted by the group members.

EXPERIMENT 2

Based on the findings of Experiment 1 and previous research in person memory dealing with the unattributed behavior of group members, it would be expected that the recall of attributed behaviors of group members would follow a similar pattern, with expectancy-inconsistent behaviors being better recalled when the group is thought to be cohesive than when it is loosely knit. When the group is thought to be loosely knit, stereotype-inconsistent and consistent behaviors would be expected to be equivalently recalled.

In contrast, based on the misanthropic person memory research (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, 1999), it would be expected that the presence of group stereotypes and knowledge about group cohesiveness would play a more limited role given that the available attributions should reduce people's need to relate the behaviors to each other or to the expectancy. Instead, when processing attributed behavioral information, people should rely on their implicit theories of the causes of positive and negative behavior (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, 1999). The outcome of such processing should be a misanthropy effect in the recall of group members' behaviors. Experiment 2 was conducted to examine these hypotheses.

Method

DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

Sixty-four students participated in the study for course credit. Participants in this experiment learned about a positively stereotyped group or a negatively stereotyped group. In addition, the group was described as cohesive or loosely knit. The behaviors people used to form an impression of the group were either consistent or inconsistent with the stereotype expectancies. In addition, the different behaviors had dispositional or situational attributions linked to them. Thus, the design of the experiment was a 2 (positive stereotype vs. negative stereotype) × 2 (closely knit vs. loosely knit group) × 2 (stereotype-consistent vs. stereotype-inconsistent behaviors) × 2 (dispositional vs. situational attributions) mixed-factorial design. The first two factors varied between participants, whereas the latter two factors varied within participants. Participants were run in noninteracting groups of 6 to 8 and were distributed in equal numbers to the between-participant conditions.

BEHAVIORAL STATEMENTS

The behavioral stimuli used in this experiment were the same as those used in Experiment 1. However, the behaviors were linked to explicit dispositional and situational attributions explaining why the behaviors occurred. Just as the consistency (inconsistency) of the unattributed behaviors had been pilot tested in the earlier research (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, Experiment 1), so too were their valence and locus of causality (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, Experiment 2). The findings from the pilot testing indicated that in evaluating the behavior stems, the negative behaviors associated with the dispositional attributions were as negative as those associated with situational attributions. The same equivalence was found for the positive behaviors. In judging locus of causality, the results indicated that the situational attributions were regarded equally situational regardless of whether they were paired with negative or positive behaviors. The same equivalence was established for the dispositional attributions. Examples of the behaviors with attributions included the following: "This minister (mugger) chatted a while with the vendor when he bought the newspaper because he enjoys talking to people" (friendly, dispositional attribution) and "This minister (mugger) returned the extra change he received at the supermarket because the person behind him noticed the mistake" (honest, situational attribution). Examples of the negative behaviors included the following: "This minister (mugger) will not talk to the postman because he does not like communicating with him" (unfriendly, dispositional attribution) and "This minister (mugger) flattered people at the party by telling them favorable lies because he had been given too much to drink" (dishonest, situational attribution). A behavior's consistency or inconsistency with the stereotype expectancy was determined by considering the implications of the behavior stem and not the stem in conjunction with its associated attribution.

PRESENTATION AND PROCEDURE

Similar to Experiment 1, four presentation sequences of the 24 behaviors were created. For purposes of the presentation format, the behaviors were classified by their valence and type of attribution (positive-dispositional, positive-situational, negative-dispositional, negative-situational). The presentation was constrained so that one of each of the four types of behaviors appeared in each of the six blocks of the presentation. The remaining aspects of the procedure were the same as those of Experiment 1.

Results

Similar to the earlier research by Ybarra and Stephan (1996), participants were credited with correctly recalling a behavior if their reproductions captured the gist of an originally presented item, both the behavior and the associated attribution. Half credit was given if participants recalled a behavior stem without the attribution, but no credit was given if an attribution was recalled without its designated behavior stem. The recall data were submitted to a 2 (positive stereotype vs. negative stereo-

type) × 2 (cohesive vs. noncohesive group) × 2 (stereotype-consistent vs. stereotype-inconsistent behaviors) × 2 (dispositional vs. situational attributions) mixed-design ANOVA, with repeated measures on the latter two factors.

Unlike Experiment 1, this experiment did not yield an incongruity effect, $F(1, 60) < 1.00$, *ns*. Stereotype-inconsistent and stereotype-consistent behaviors were recalled equivalently. Furthermore, the interaction of behavior type and group cohesiveness obtained in Experiment 1 failed to reach conventional levels of significance in this experiment, $F(1, 60) = 3.05$, $p < .09$. An examination of recall in the conditions comprising this interaction indicated that the memory trends were partially consistent with previous research on the unattributed behaviors of group members (Srull, 1981; Srull et al., 1985; Stangor & Ruble, 1989). Although the stereotype-inconsistent behaviors ($M = 3.31$) were somewhat better recalled than were consistent behaviors ($M = 3.04$) in the cohesive group condition, the mean difference was much smaller than it was in the first experiment and this contrast was not reliable, $F(1, 31) < 1.00$, *ns*. In the loosely knit group conditions, stereotype-consistent behaviors ($M = 3.57$) were somewhat better recalled than were inconsistent behaviors ($M = 3.06$), but this contrast also was not reliable, $F(1, 31) = 2.71$, $p < .11$. Thus, although the trends present in this interaction are in accord with previous research and the results of Experiment 1, the addition of explicit attributions to the behaviors reduced the incongruity effect to marginal significance.

A significant interaction was obtained for behavior type and the stereotyped group about which people learned, $F(1, 60) = 5.64$, $p < .02$. However, this interaction was qualified by a substantial three-way interaction that included type of attribution, $F(1, 60) = 110.52$, $p < .0001$. Table 2 presents the means for this interaction. The means indicate that the recall of stereotype-consistent behaviors was greater for muggers when the behaviors were dispositionally than situationally attributed. In contrast, for ministers, stereotype-consistent behaviors were better recalled when situationally than dispositionally attributed. A reversal occurred for the recall of stereotype-inconsistent behaviors; these behaviors were better recalled for muggers when situationally than dispositionally attributed. For ministers, stereotype-inconsistent behaviors were better recalled when dispositionally than situationally attributed.

The three-way interaction can be simplified by reconceptualizing the different behaviors. Behaviors consistent with the mugger stereotype are negative in valence, whereas behaviors consistent with the minister stereotype are positive in valence. Behaviors that are inconsistent with the mugger stereotype are positive in valence, whereas behaviors inconsistent with the minister stereotype are negative in valence. Thus, the behaviors can be conceptualized by using their valence instead of using their consistency with the stereotype. A reanalysis of the data according to this scheme, a 2 (positive vs. negative stereotype) × 2 (cohesive vs. noncohesive group) × 2 (positive vs. negative behaviors) × 2 (internal vs. external attributions) mixed-design ANOVA, resulted in a main effect for behavior valence, $F(1, 60) = 5.64$, $p < .01$, and a main effect for attribution type, $F(1, 60) = 14.54$, $p < .0003$. The former main effect indicated that positive behaviors ($M = 3.51$) were better recalled than were negative behaviors ($M = 2.98$). The latter main effect indicated that situationally attributed behaviors ($M = 3.72$) were better recalled than were dispositionally attributed behaviors ($M = 2.77$). Both of these effects were qualified by the interaction of behavior valence and attribution type, $F(1, 60) = 110.52$, $p < .0001$. This two-way interaction captures all of the information in the three-way interaction above but simplifies the interpretation of the results. It indicates that attribution type had opposite effects on recall depending on the valence of the behavior (see Table 3). Closer examination of this effect indicates that participants showed better recall for negative behaviors that were dispositionally than situationally attributed, $F(1, 60) = 18.26$, $p < .0001$. In contrast, participants showed better recall for positive behaviors that were situationally than dispositionally attributed, $F(1, 60) = 82.71$, $p < .0001$. This memory pattern is equivalent to the misanthropy

TABLE 2: Mean Recall for Experiment 2 as a Function of Group Stereotype, Behavior Consistency, and Attribution Type

	Attribution	
Behavior	*Dispositional*	*Situational*
Ministers ($n = 32$)		
Consistent	0.92	2.92
Inconsistent	1.94	1.25
Muggers ($n = 32$)		
Consistent	1.68	1.08
Inconsistent	1.00	2.18

NOTE: The higher the scores, the more items recalled.

TABLE 3: Mean Recall for Experiment 2 as a Function of Behavior Valence and Attribution Type

	Attribution	
Behavior	*Dispositional*	*Situational*
Positive	0.96	2.55
Negative	1.81	1.17

NOTE: The higher the scores, the more items recalled.

TABLE 4: Mean Recall for Experiment 2 as a Function of Group Stereotype, Behavior Valence, and Attribution Type

	Attribution	
Behavior	*Dispositional*	*Situational*
Ministers ($n = 32$)		
Positive	0.92	2.92
Negative	1.94	1.25
Muggers ($n = 32$)		
Positive	1.00	2.18
Negative	1.68	1.08

NOTE: The higher the scores, the more items recalled.

effect found for individual targets (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996).

A three-way interaction involving the stereotype factor, attribution type, and behavior valence also was obtained in this analysis, $F(1, 60) = 4.70$, $p < .03$. Despite the contribution of the stereotype factor to this interaction, the misanthropy pattern was present under both stereotype conditions, as shown in Table 4. The emergence of the three-way interaction results from one difference—there was a greater recall advantage for positive situationally attributed behaviors as opposed to positive dispositionally attributed behaviors in the minister stereotype compared to the mugger stereotype condition, $F(1, 60) = 5.50$, $p < .01$. Thus, although the stereotype factor did influence memory, its influence was more a matter of degree than quality, facilitating greater misanthropy in the favorable stereotype (minister) condition.

Discussion

Experiment 1 indicated that the recall of behaviors performed by group members was a function of the consistency of the behavior with the stereotypes for the group and knowledge concerning the group's cohesiveness. Although the findings of Experiment 2, which used attributed behavioral information, showed a pattern similar to that obtained for unattributed behaviors, none of the comparisons was reliable. Thus, it appears that adding explicit attributions to the behaviors performed by group members reduced the tendency to remember expectancy-inconsistent information.

After analyzing the results of Experiment 2 according to their valence, it was clear that recall for the attributed behaviors of group members displayed a strong misanthropy effect similar to that found for individuals (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996). People remembered negative behaviors best when they were dispositionally rather than situationally attributed but positive behaviors best when they were situationally rather than dispositionally attributed. Although the favorability of the stereotype interacted with this misanthropic memory pattern, the misanthropy pattern was present in both stereotype conditions (ministers, muggers). It appears that the presence of attributions reduces people's need to relate the behaviors to their expectancies or to each other to understand why they occurred. Instead, people appear to process the attributed behavioral information misanthropically, which is presumably a function of relying on implicit causal theories that link behaviors that differ in valence to different types of attributions (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, 1999). The thrust of these implicit causal theories is that others tend to be seen as the cause of negative acts but that situations and norms are thought to bring about positive acts.

EXPERIMENT 3

The use of implicit causal theories to process attributed behavioral information can explain misanthropic memory for both individuals and groups. This framework also helps to understand why misanthropy occurs under conditions where the opportunity for extensive cognitive processing is reduced (Ybarra & Stephan, 1996, Experiment 3) because well-developed knowledge structures make for efficient information processing (Bargh & Thein, 1985). This framework also helps to explain why misanthropy occurs even when processing information about favorable targets such as ministers. The use of these implicit causal theories is a default option for understanding others' behaviors and is applied to groups with both favorable and unfavorable stereotypes. The use of such theories reduces the influence of expectancies and stereotypes.

Although these implicit causal theories are cognitive in nature, the resultant consequences are misanthropic. The effect of using them is misanthropic because they result in a pattern of recall that denies others credit for the positive things they have done and blames them for the negative things they have done. The misanthropic processing of attributed behavioral information enables people to make favorable social comparisons with others and thus may have a self-serving motivational function. Previous research indicates that the misanthropic pattern of recall is not obtained when people have experienced a recent success, suggesting that when evaluations of the self are positive there is less motivation to make positive social comparisons with others. Also, when people are asked to process information about the attributed behaviors of the self, they do not display misanthropy in recall (Ybarra, 1999).

The motive toward self-enhancement that is being served here resembles a common set of findings in the intergroup relations literature. For example, people tend to attribute the negative behavior of outgroup members to dispositional causes, but they attribute their positive behaviors to situational causes. However, they do

not display this attribution pattern in explaining the behavior of ingroup members (Hewstone, 1990; Pettigrew, 1979; Stephan, 1977). Similarly, when describing the behavior of outgroups, people tend to describe negative behaviors using abstract language (e.g., trait adjectives), thus denoting stable characteristics of group members. However, their positive behaviors are more likely to be described concretely with contextual verbs, thus denoting nonstable characteristics or isolated events. However, people's descriptions of the negative and positive behavior of ingroup members tend to not show this bias (e.g., Arcuri, Maass, & Portelli, 1993). At times, the attribution and linguistic patterns even reverse for the ingroup.

Based on the research by Ybarra (1999) and what appear to be related findings from the intergroup perception literature, we wished to examine the possibility that the processing of attributed behavioral information about groups also might be influenced by motivational factors. That is, having established that recall of the attributed behaviors of members of other groups is misanthropic, we wished to determine if the misanthropic pattern of recall would disappear for the attributed behavior of ingroup members.

We would argue that the misanthropic pattern of recall should not be found for ingroups because people's evaluations of themselves are derived in part from the groups to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see Brewer & Brown, 1998; Mackie, Hamilton, Susskind, & Rosselli, 1996, for reviews). In addition, as indicated in research by Smith and Henry (1996), representations of the self overlap with representations of ingroups. These findings combined with the research by Ybarra (1999) showing that people do not show misanthropy for the self but do for strangers, would suggest that misanthropic memory would not occur when perceiving ingroups. People may rely on their implicit causal theories when learning about outgroups and experience it as self-enhancing, but they may find using their implicit causal theories to process information about ingroups to be disadvantageous and experience it as threatening.

The outgroups and ingroups we employed in the third experiment were based on gender. We chose these categories because they are fundamental to social existence and because a substantial body of research indicates that sexism is still all too alive (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995; Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995). Similar to Experiment 2, it was expected that when people learned about outgroup members' behaviors (e.g., women learning about a group of men) they would approach this information in a misanthropic manner, emphasizing negative, dispositionally attributed behaviors but positive, situationally attributed behaviors. In contrast, it was expected that when people learned about the attributed behavior of ingroup members (e.g., women learning about a group of women), they would be less likely to display misanthropy in recall.

Method

DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

A 2 (gender of participant) × 2 (gender of target group) × 2 (positive vs. negative behaviors) × 2 (dispositional vs. situational attribution) mixed-factorial design was employed. The latter two factors were within participants. Eighty students (40 women and 40 men) participated in the study as part of a course requirement and were randomly assigned in equal numbers to the different conditions. Participants were run in same-gender, noninteracting groups of 4 to 6.

STIMULI AND MATERIALS

For this study, participants were told that they would be learning about members of a group of men (women) composed of students at their university. The participants were also told that this "group of men (women) knows one another well and gets along together."

BEHAVIORAL STATEMENTS AND PROCEDURE

The same behavioral stimuli and procedure used in Experiment 2 were used in this experiment, although minor modifications were made to some statements to make it equally plausible that men and women had engaged in the behavior (e.g., the person returned some "equipment" instead of a "lawnmower").

Results

The same recall scoring procedure used in Experiment 2 was used in the third experiment. The recall data were submitted to a 2 (gender of participant) × 2 (gender of target group) × 2 (positive vs. negative behaviors) × 2 (dispositional vs. situational attribution) mixed-design ANOVA with repeated measures on the latter two factors. The analysis yielded a main effect for attribution type, $F(1, 76) = 4.57$, $p < .03$. This effect indicated that situationally attributed behaviors ($M = 2.87$) were better recalled than were dispositionally attributed behaviors ($M = 2.47$). This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction involving behavior valence and attribution type that is characteristic of the misanthropy effect, $F(1, 76) = 28.55$, $p < .0001$. Overall, people recalled more negative behaviors that were dispositionally attributed ($M = 1.56$) than situationally attributed ($M = 1.27$), $p < .02$. For positive behaviors, though, people recalled more situationally attributed ($M = 1.61$) than dispositionally attributed behaviors ($M = 0.90$), $p < .0001$.

The four-way interaction was significant, $F(1, 76) = 16.33$, $p < .0001$, generally indicating that the misan-

thropy pattern depended on both the gender of the participants and whether participants learned about a group of men or women. This interaction can be simplified by classifying the relationship between participants' gender (female, male) and the gender of the target group (female, male) into ingroup (e.g., women learning about the group of women) or outgroup perception (e.g., women learning about the group of men). The means in Table 5 indicate that in recalling positive behaviors, people showed a greater difference in recalling situationally as opposed to dispositionally attributed behaviors when they had learned about the outgroup (M difference = 1.10) than the ingroup (M difference = .30), $F(1, 78) = 11.46$, $p < .0005$. In contrast, when recalling negative behaviors, people showed a greater difference in recalling dispositionally as opposed to situationally attributed behaviors for the outgroup (M difference = .65) than the ingroup (M difference = –.06), $F(1, 78) = 6.02$, $p < .005$. Comparisons of the differences across type of attribution provide similar results. When recalling dispositionally attributed behaviors, people recalled more negative than positive behaviors to a greater extent about the outgroup (M difference = 1.04) than the ingroup (M difference = 0.28), $F(1, 78) = 7.00$, $p < .0004$. And when recalling situationally attributed behaviors, people recalled positive as opposed to negative behaviors to a greater extent about the outgroup (M difference = 0.71) than the ingroup (M difference = –0.04), $F(1, 78) = 6.90$, $p < .005$. Thus, these data show misanthropy in the recall of attributed information about the outgroup but not the ingroup, presumably because people use their implicit causal theories to understand and process attributed behavioral information about the outgroup but not the ingroup.

TABLE 5: Mean Recall for Experiment 3 as a Function of Behavior Valence, Attribution Type, and Outgroup or Ingroup Status

	Attribution	
Behavior	*Dispositional*	*Situational*
Outgroup ($n = 40$)		
Positive	0.77	1.87
Negative	1.81	1.16
Ingroup ($n = 40$)		
Positive	1.04	1.34
Negative	1.32	1.37

NOTE: The higher the scores, the more items recalled.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The findings from Experiment 3 indicate that when people learned about outgroups, they displayed the misanthropy effect in memory. The results for outgroups replicate those of Experiment 2, where people learned about positive and negative outgroups, and the results suggest that people process attributed information about outgroup members in a manner similar to the way in which they process information about unfamiliar individuals (Ybarra, 1999; Ybarra & Stephan, 1996). However, some of the findings also contrast with those of Experiment 2 by showing that when people learned about an ingroup, they no longer displayed the misanthropy effect in memory. The memory findings for the ingroup are in line with those obtained by Ybarra (1999), who found that when people processed attributed information about the self they did not display misanthropy in memory. Because ingroups are cognitively represented as part of the self (Smith & Henry, 1996) and are relevant to social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the behaviors of ingroup members reflect on the self. Thus, for the behaviors of ingroup members, self-enhancement motives cannot be served by misanthropic processing. Processing information about the ingroup misanthropically may actually create an informational threat by suggesting that ingroup members possess negative characteristics.

The present findings showing divergent memory patterns for ingroups and outgroups are consistent with research on intergroup perception, namely, the ultimate attribution error and the linguistic intergroup bias (e.g., Arcuri et al., 1993; Pettigrew, 1979). The resemblance of these different effects to each other at an abstract level may point to a general, underlying mechanism that finds expression through various cognitive and judgmental processes. People appear to be inclined to ascribe negative characteristics to others and to deny the existence of positive characteristics in others who are not incorporated into the self. A variety of other findings in social cognition support this idea. Research by Rothbart and Park (1986) has found that people believe it takes very little confirming information to ascribe negative characteristics to others; however, in ascribing positive characteristics to others, people believe it takes a great deal of confirming evidence. Additional research by Lingle and Ostrom (1979, Experiments 2 and 3) found that after forming impressions of targets based on either negative or positive trait information, people were faster at deciding whether the target was suitable for an occupation if they had formed negative compared to positive impressions. Related research by Yzerbyt and Leyens (1991) also has shown that when making decisions about different targets, people requested significantly less information to make a decision about an unfavorable than a favorable target. Perceivers appear ready to accept that another person has negative dispositional qualities but less disposed to accept that others may possess positive qualities. Misanthropy may be an appropriate label for what appears to be a general approach to processing information about strangers and members of outgroups.

The recall of misanthropic information about outgroups has several potentially important implications. When people recall negative behavioral incidents that have been attributed dispositionally and positive behavioral incidents that have been attributed situationally, it contributes directly to the creation of negative stereotypes. In Experiment 2, these misanthropic tendencies appeared even when the group members belonged to a positively stereotyped group (ministers). If this pattern of recall is supported in subsequent research, it suggests that all outgroup stereotypes, even positive ones, may have a tendency to evolve into negative stereotypes as attributed social information accumulates.

In the case of minority groups, misanthropic processing of group information could foster the creation of negative illusory correlations. The pairing of minority groups with negative behaviors has consistently been found to be overrecalled in comparison to the recall of positive information or negative information paired with majority group membership (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976; Mullen & Johnson, 1990). Because misanthropic recall involves negative dispositionally attributed behaviors, these behaviors could easily become building blocks for illusory correlations if the behaviors were committed by minority group members.

The tendency to remember behaviors that imply negative characteristics but deny the existence of positive characteristics for outgroup members may serve as a subtle mechanism contributing to friction between groups (e.g., men and women). Misanthropic processing of information could affect evaluations of outgroup members in certain types of situations. After observing the same positive and negative behaviors accompanied by the same attributions, ingroup and outgroup members are likely to emerge with different memories. When evaluations are required, for instance in a performance appraisal setting, ingroup members may rely in part on the attributed behavioral incidents that they recall and the resulting evaluations may be biased against the outgroup.

If misanthropic recall characterizes the processing of information about outgroups, it also has implications for attempts to modify the stereotypes associated with these groups. Misanthropic recall instantiates negative stereotypes by adding to the store of negative dispositionally attributed instances of outgroup behavior. The recall of this type of information reinforces negative stereotypes and makes them resistant to change. To modify negative stereotypes it is necessary to facilitate the processing and recall of positive, dispositionally attributed behaviors and perhaps negative behaviors that are attributed situationally. Merely providing instances of positive behaviors, even if they are attributed dispositionally, may have little impact on existing stereotypes because such behaviors are unlikely to be well recalled. This may be one reason why it appears to be necessary to provide multiple instances of positive behaviors that occur in diverse situations and are engaged in by various members of the outgroup in order to change negative stereotypes (Rothbart & John, 1985; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

One way to reduce misanthropic information processing may be to get people to identify with the outgroup or stranger. In intergroup relations research, recategorization processes, in which others who were previously regarded as outgroup members are now thought of as being in one's group, have been shown to reduce negative evaluations of the outgroup (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). It may be that such recategorization processes bring representations of the self more in line with those of the outgroup or strangers (Smith & Henry, 1996). This overlap in representation should have the effect of reducing misanthropy because people do not appear to rely on their implicit causal theories when processing information about a target with whom they identify.

In sum, the present research suggests that for groups, the processing of attributed behavioral information differs from the processing of unattributed behavioral information. When processing attributed behavioral information, the role of group expectancies and knowledge of the cohesiveness of the group appears to be attenuated (Experiment 2) and a strong tendency toward misanthropic recall emerges. However, when people process attributed behavioral information about ingroup members, this biased pattern of recall is eliminated. These findings not only represent an addition to our understanding of the processing of attributed behavioral information but help to forge another link between research in social cognition and well-established findings in intergroup relations. These links may help in developing future research as well as stimulating new ways of thinking about techniques of counteracting people's seemingly incessant propensities to view outgroup members in a negative light.

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