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## Intergroup Theory and Communication Processes

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While the study of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination has flourished among social psychologists in recent years (Brewer & Gaertner, 2003), communication scholars have been slower to address intergroup issues, at least until recently, despite their relevance to society. The current book is intended to stimulate more research and theory examining the key role of communication in intergroup relations. Messages about groups and the exchange of messages between groups constitute a fundamental part of the intergroup landscape, and it is time for communication researchers to play more of a pivotal role in providing an understanding of group-based injustice (Harwood, in press; Lambert, 1980).

The study of intergroup processes in social psychology can be traced to the early twentieth century (e.g., Katz & Braly, 1933; Lippmann, 1922), and notable landmarks can be identified in subsequent years (e.g., Allport, 1954; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In Europe, work on intergroup issues was largely sparked by the development of social identity theory (SIT) by Tajfel and his colleagues at the University of Bristol in the early 1970s (Tajfel, 1978). SIT remains a powerful influence on the field to this day. Mainstream social psychology books and journals are paying increasing attention to intergroup issues, specifically SIT (e.g., in the form of *Annual Review of Psychology* chapters, dedicated journals such as *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, handbooks [e.g., Brown & Gaertner, 2003] and numerous articles in journals such

