INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES: The Interplay of Cognitive, Motivational, and Behavioral Activities in Social Interaction

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ABSTRACT

This analytic review is concerned with the interpersonal processes, and the characteristics of situations and persons that influence them, that lead to the confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations in the course of social interaction. We examine the steps in the chain of events by which the expectations of one person guide and direct the dynamics of social interaction such that the behavior of the target of those expectations comes to confirm or disconfirm those expectations. We further inquire into the motivational and structural foundations of confirmation and disconfirmation in social interaction, using these inquiries to address frequently asked, but rarely answered, questions about expectations and social interaction. Finally, we argue that investigations of expectations in social interaction provide a paradigm for more general theoretical and empirical considerations of interpersonal processes and social relationships.

273

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

For most of us, many of the moments of our lives are spent in social interactions through which we learn about ourselves, other people, and the world. Theorists have long considered the origin of the self to be within the context of social interactions, with other people's responses to our actions providing some understanding of who we are (Bem 1972, Cooley 1902, Mead 1934, Stryker & Stratham 1985). As well, the social contexts of our interactions can influence our dealings with other people. Many social interactions, especially those that occur between strangers, are ritualized and formal (Goffman 1955, 1959; Grice 1975). At other times, in less formal interactions, the qualities of those with whom we interact (such as gender, age, race) may determine how we act; as social interaction becomes habitualized, many of these factors may affect us so automatically that we may not recognize their influence (Higgins 1989, Bargh 1997).

The combination of interaction rules, the personalities of the people who are interacting, and the settings and the purpose of their interactions affects not only each person's perception of the other and of self but also the

outcomes of the interaction, including the likelihood of future interactions. Given the importance of these outcomes, people have learned to make use of cues that may signal the likely course of interaction. Among these cues are the expectations with which people begin their interactions with others, expectations about what will be required of them and expectations about how their interaction partners will act (Olson et al 1996). Indeed, these preconceived expectations, and those formed immediately on beginning interaction, can channel our thought and behavior toward others before they have a chance to provide any behavioral basis for our impressions (Snyder 1984).

Much of the time, expectations are based on personal experience with specific others' behaviors in past interactions; at other times, when people interact with strangers or even with familiar people in strange situations, their behaviors may be guided by overgeneralized and/or erroneous expectations (Fiske & Neuberg 1990). Whatever their origins, these expectations may elicit the very behaviors that are expected—a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1948). Our own behavior, too, may be affected by others' expectations; we may conform to others' visions of who we are rather than to our own, perhaps not even realizing that our own self-presentations have been influenced by the expectations of others (Vorauer & Miller 1997).

This analytic review is concerned with the interpersonal processes, and the characteristics of situations and persons that influence them, that lead to confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations in social interaction. Research has revealed a process that links one person's expectations to another person's actions in response, actions that confirm or disconfirm those expectations. Such research, we argue, provides a paradigm for studying the dynamic processes of social interaction. Our goals are, first, to review and integrate diverse programs of research on the confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations in social interaction, and second, to point out how this integrative review suggests answers to persistent questions about the nature of these processes, as well as how it helps to chart new directions for research on interpersonal processes.

THE PHENOMENA

The self-fulfilling prophecy in social interaction has been demonstrated in empirical investigations in which one person (the perceiver), having adopted beliefs about another person (the target), acts in ways that cause the behavior of the target to appear to confirm these beliefs. The consequences of expectations can be separated into two kinds: (*a*) *perceptual confirmation* of expectations in the mind of the perceiver (as revealed in perceivers' impressions of targets) and (*b*) *behavioral confirmation* of expectations by the actions of the target

during the interaction (as documented by third-party raters' judgments of targets).

The Prevalence of the Phenomena

Early work on perceptual and behavioral confirmation demonstrated that these phenomena exist and can be documented in diverse domains. Several research traditions can be identified, each with its own characteristic features. One tradition began in the field and is best exemplified by demonstrations that teachers, led to expect particular levels of performance from students in their classrooms, act in ways that elicit performances that confirm initial expectations (Rosenthal 1974, 1993, 1994; Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968). Related studies have demonstrated confirmation in organizational settings (Dougherty et al 1994, Dvir et al 1995, Eden 1993). Another research tradition has used the psychological laboratory to investigate social interaction sequences. One such study demonstrated, in getting-acquainted conversations, perceptual and behavioral confirmation of the stereotyped assumption that physically attractive people have socially appealing personalities (Snyder et al 1977). For previous reviews of laboratory studies of confirmation, see Miller & Turnbull (1986), Neuberg (1996a,b), and Snyder (1984).

In addition, research traditions on confirmation can be characterized by whether survey or experimental methods are used (a characterization partially confounded with the lab/field split). Survey methods allow a glimpse at naturally occurring expectations and how they may be related to perceptual and behavioral confirmation (Hart 1995; Jussim & Eccles 1992, 1995a). Because many such studies concern expectations based on objective and presumably valid information (e.g. records of students' past performance), they may have greater relevance for the effects of accurate, rather than erroneous, expectations. Experimental methods are at their best in the use of random assignment and experimental control to determine causal influences. Experiments are particularly suited to precise control of the perceiver's expectation, which is essential to knowing that the perceiver's expectation, and not some preexisting attributes of the target that happen to be correlated with the perceiver's expectation, is affecting the target's behavior.

Boundary and Delimiting Conditions

At present, the accumulated body of evidence indicates that confirmation effects occur reliably, although they are not the inevitable consequences of expectations (Jussim 1986, 1993; Jussim et al 1996; Miller & Turnbull 1986; Neuberg 1994; Snyder 1984, 1992). Rather, most researchers agree that there are boundary conditions to the effects of expectations (Jones 1986; Jussim 1986, 1991; Snyder 1984, 1992). Just as there are circumstances in which con-

firmation occurs, other situations produce outcomes that neither validate nor dismiss initial expectations, and others provide opportunities for targets to disconfirm expectations (Hilton & Darley 1991; Jussim et al 1996; Neuberg 1994, 1996a,b; Snyder 1984, 1992; Madon et al 1997). On yet other occasions, behavior that appears to confirm expectations may do so because the expectations are accurate; specifically, research on teachers' expectations suggests that expectations based on earlier achievement scores and reports from other teachers may reflect long-standing behavioral differences (Jussim 1989, 1991, 1993; Jussim & Eccles 1995b; Jussim et al 1994), and more so than expectations based on gender or racial differences (Jussim et al 1996, Madon et al 1997).

THE MECHANISMS

One approach to examining social phenomena is to decompose them into their microlevel constituent elements (Kelley 1992). Following this strategy, researchers have parsed the behavioral confirmation sequence into a series of steps: (*a*) perceivers adopt beliefs about targets; (*b*) perceivers behave toward targets as if these beliefs were true; (*c*) targets fit their behavior to perceivers' overtures; and (*d*) perceivers interpret targets' behavior as confirming their beliefs. Researchers have developed strategies for looking at one or more of these steps (Brophy & Good 1974; Darley & Fazio 1980; Deaux & Major 1987; Harris & Rosenthal 1985; Jones 1986; Jussim 1986; Miller & Turnbull 1986; Rosenthal 1974; Snyder 1984, 1992).

A study by Pelletier & Vallerand (1996) elegantly captures all of the steps in the sequence of events in behavioral confirmation. They led supervisors to believe that their subordinates were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to complete spatial puzzles. They then observed the instructional strategies of the supervisors, the subordinates' perceptions of the supervisors, and the eventual motivation of the subordinates. With all of the pieces in place, Pelletier & Vallerand (1996) were able to demonstrate how supervisors' expectations were translated into supportive or controlling actions that then produced intrinsically or extrinsically motivated subordinates.

Origin and Activation of Expectations

To understand the expectations that start the behavioral confirmation process, Olson et al (1996) distinguished between *properties* of expectations and *types* of expectations. Properties of expectations include certainty, accessibility, explicitness, and importance. Increases in certainty, accessibility, explicitness, and importance of expectations should lead perceivers to act on expectations in ways that generate confirmation. As an exception to this rule, Olson et al

(1996) note that the relation between expectation-certainty and hypothesis-testing may be curvilinear: No tests are needed for expectations held with absolute certainty.

Although Olson et al (1996) did not offer a categorization of types of expectations, we suggest that the content domains of expectations may be classified as being positive or negative, as about morality or ability, and as having a domain circumscribed to the situation or attributed to general dispositions of personality. Relevant to this system, researchers have asked whether positive and negative expectations result in asymmetrical confirmation effects (Madon et al 1997, Major et al 1988), whether diagnosticity varies according to whether traits concern ability or morality (Reeder & Brewer 1979; Skowronski & Carlston 1987, 1989), and about the role of global and circumscribed accuracy of expectations (Stukas & Snyder 1995, Swann 1984).

But from where do expectations come? Some expectations come from past experiences with targets or from third parties who know the targets (e.g. teachers' expectations derive in part from students' past academic work and the reports of previous teachers). Such detailed, often firsthand, information may provide the most accurate basis on which perceivers can base their expectations, accurate in the sense that such expectations about the dispositions of targets and their likely future behavior are clearly linked to their prior behavioral histories. For such expectations, it may be difficult to disentangle the effects of the perceiver's expectations and the target's actual behavioral dispositions on the target's behavior, since both expectations and dispositions would tend to promote the same actions on the part of the target.

Other expectations may be generalizations based on characteristics associated with group membership; for example, research has demonstrated that perceivers easily generate expectations about others based on such relatively nondiagnostic traits as physical attractiveness (Snyder et al 1977), race (Chen & Bargh 1997, Word et al 1974), and gender (Skrypnek & Snyder 1982). These expectations often involve the application of general stereotypes about the personalities thought to be associated with membership in certain categories to specific individuals who happen to belong to such categories. There appears to be greater inherent potential for "slippage" between such expectations and the actual attributes of individual targets, and hence greater potential for the confirmation of general stereotypes erroneously applied to specific cases.

There are also emerging indications that perceivers' own personalities may be related to the expectations they hold about other people. For example, Downey (Downey et al 1998, Downey & Feldman 1996) and Murray (Murray & Holmes 1997, Murray et al 1996) have suggested that individuals who fear rejection may be likely to form expectations of their relationship partners as

rejecters and may even elicit such rejection. Deaux & Major (1987) have suggested that gender serves as a filter for expectations about men and women; Andersen & Bem (1981) have made the same point with regard to sex-typing. Similarly, self-certainty about their own traits may lead perceivers to see those traits in others (Sedikides & Skowronski 1993).

Such personality-based expectations may develop from repeated encounters that lead familiar expectations to become chronically accessible (Higgins & King 1981). Chronically accessible expectations may influence perceivers to interpret target behavior as consistent with expectations (Skowronski et al 1993). Expectations may also be automatically activated by features of situations and persons and thus made more accessible to perceivers (Higgins 1989). In fact, situationally primed and chronically accessible expectations have similar effects on attentional and interpretational activities of perceivers (Bargh 1997). Once activated, both types of expectations can lead perceivers to act in ways that elicit behavioral confirmation from targets (Chen & Bargh 1997).

Ways in Which Perceivers Act on Expectations

Recently, researchers have begun to compare whether automatically activated expectations affect confirmation in different ways than overt expectations. Skowronski et al (1993) have reported that overt expectations lead to greater attention to expectation-incongruent information and that automatically activated expectations lead to greater attention to expectation-congruent information. This finding implies that automatically activated expectations may result in stronger perceptual and behavioral confirmation effects than the overt expectations typically used in research, suggesting that results found using overt expectations may actually be attenuated estimates of the power of expectations to influence behavior.

Bargh (Bargh 1997, Bargh et al 1996, Chen & Bargh 1997) has proposed that automatically activated (and chronically accessible) expectations can induce perceivers to act in line with these expectations through an ideomotor process. As evidence, Bargh et al (1996) demonstrated that students in whom an "elderly" expectation was automatically activated (by subliminal presentation of a photo on a computer screen) walked more slowly down the hall after the study than those for whom the expectation was not activated. Additionally, students for whom an African-American expectation was activated acted in a more hostile fashion than did those without this expectation. Moreover, Chen & Bargh (1997) have extended their research to involve an actual behavioral confirmation sequence and showed that automatically activated expectations can and do lead to behavioral confirmation—both perceivers and targets acted in a more hostile fashion when perceivers were subliminally primed with an

African-American photo than when perceivers were primed with a White photo.

Reliance on expectations, whether automatically activated or controlled, has been theorized to become more pronounced when perceivers are under greater cognitive load (Fiske & Neuberg 1990, Harris & Perkins 1995). Thus, with less attention to devote to individuating targets, perceivers may rely on categorical expectations to dictate their behavior toward the target. Yet the use of expectations may not be entirely the result of a need to preserve diminished cognitive resources. In fact, Leyens and Yzerbyt (Leyens et al 1992, Yzerbyt et al 1994) have demonstrated that when situations justify social judgments, perceivers expend great amounts of energy to seek confirmation of expectations (rather than to seek out individuating information), suggesting the utility of viewing some confirmation processes as products of deliberate and intentional expenditure of effort and resources (Yzerbyt et al 1997).

Much research has focused on how perceivers elicit confirmation of their beliefs in the context of explicit hypothesis-testing paradigms (Snyder & Swann 1978b, Swann & Giuliano 1987). Recent studies provide a new perspective on such hypothesis-testing activities, suggesting that confirmatory strategies may reflect perceivers' social competence and may help to create an appearance of empathy between perceivers and targets (B Dardenne, manuscript in preparation; Dardenne & Leyens 1995; Leyens 1989; Leyens et al 1998). Thus, confirmatory strategies may have social value, increasing the smoothness and pleasantness of interaction; intriguingly, a recent study by Judice & Neuberg (1998) demonstrated that perceivers seeking to explicitly confirm *negative* expectations also created more smooth and pleasing interactions than those seeking accurate impressions. Therefore, confirmatory strategies may occur via two routes: one rather effortless and automatic and one relatively effortful and intentional (SA Goodwin, ST Fiske, VY Yzerbyt, manuscript under review).

Even the very grammar that people use to frame questions to test their hypotheses may have substantial effects on the responses they receive. Semin & De Poot (1997a,b) have demonstrated that questions that use action verbs elicit different answers than questions that use state verbs. What is even more fascinating is that targets appear to be unaware of the differing connotations of their answers; third-party observers, however, judge targets quite differently depending on their responses (Semin & De Poot 1997a). In addition, Semin & De Poot (1997b) have shown that perceivers select questions with verbs that indicate their expectations about the agency of the victim or the accused in a rape investigation, questions that presumably will guide interviewees' responses.

In other approaches to the ways perceivers act on expectations, Rosenthal and Harris (Harris 1993, Harris et al 1994, Harris & Rosenthal 1985, Rosenthal

1993) have examined particular behaviors that mediate self-fulfilling consequences, particularly for teachers' expectations in the classroom, including the effects of such nonverbal behaviors as smiles, nods, and eye contact. Finally, an additional (but little-studied) mechanism by which confirmation may be elicited is the guiding influence of the perceiver on the situations in which they interact with the target, with expectations about the likely behaviors of targets leading perceivers to choose to interact with targets in situations conducive to those very behaviors (Gresham & Snyder 1990, Ickes et al 1997).

Ways in Which Targets Respond to Perceivers' Actions

Research on the effects of perceivers' expectations on targets' behaviors has often viewed targets as rather passive, reciprocating or matching the actions of perceivers (Miller & Turnbull 1986). In part, this may be due to the impoverished situation that targets are placed in, without knowledge of the perceivers' expectation (Miller & Turnbull 1986, Snyder 1992). Still, recent evidence suggests that it may be targets' tendency to fall prey to an "acquiescence orientation" (being more likely to answer positively than negatively to perceivers' questions) that leads to confirmation as much as their presumed passivity (Zuckerman et al 1995).

Increasingly, researchers have come to conceptualize an "active target," a target who uses active strategies of coping with their interactions (Hilton & Darley 1985, Smith et al 1997, Snyder 1992, Stukas & Snyder 1995). There are indications that when targets confirm expectations, they do so in an attempt to facilitate the flow of their interactions with perceivers (Snyder & Haugen 1995). For example, when Smith et al (1997) instructed targets to act in either a "deferent" or a "nondeferent" manner in an interview, targets who acted deferentially were more likely to confirm perceivers' expectations than those who acted nondeferentially. Thus, targets' active strategies may contribute to the outcomes of their interactions with perceivers.

Effects on Perception of Self and Other

Perceptual confirmation is a reliable, although not necessarily inevitable, phenomenon (Darley & Gross 1983, Kulik 1983). Perceivers often maintain initial expectations throughout the course of social interaction (Miller & Turnbull 1986; Snyder 1984, 1992). What is striking is that even when targets have behaviorally disconfirmed their perceivers' expectations, perceivers may still retain these expectations (Hilton & Darley 1985, Ickes et al 1982, Neuberg 1989, Snyder & Haugen 1995). In part, perceptual confirmation in the face of behavioral disconfirmation may be due to perceivers' coming to believe in the

truth of their own expectations merely by thinking about them and using congruent language (Fiedler et al 1996).

Researchers have also examined targets' self-conceptions after interactions with perceivers who hold incongruent expectations of them (Fazio et al 1981, Major et al 1988, Swann & Ely 1984). In some studies, targets retained their original self-conceptions even when providing behavioral confirmation (Judice & Neuberg 1998, Major et al 1988, Vorauer & Miller 1997). In other studies, targets changed their self-conceptions in the direction of the expectations they had confirmed (Fazio et al 1981, Harris 1990, Snyder & Swann 1978a).

Characterizing the issue in a different way, some researchers have asked whether it is perceivers' expectations or targets' self-conceptions that are more stable. Many of these studies (Grinder & Swim 1991, Major et al 1988, McNulty & Swann 1994, Miene et al 1991, Swann & Ely 1984, Testa & Major 1988) have sought to pit behavioral confirmation, in which perceivers bring targets to act in line with expectations, against self-verification (Swann 1983, Swann & Hill 1982, Swann & Read 1981), in which targets bring perceivers to change their expectations to be congruent with targets' self-conceptions. One resolution to this "battle of wills" is that both processes work simultaneously (Jussim 1991, Miene et al 1991, Swann 1987); indeed, McNulty & Swann (1994) found that in a longitudinal study of college roommates, perceivers' expectations and targets' self-conceptions both changed in the direction of their roommate's views. Similarly, Miene et al (1991) found that both perceivers' expectations and targets' actual personalities contributed significantly to targets' behavior.

Consequences for Future Behavior and Interaction

The effects of expectations on interpersonal processes may extend beyond the circumstances in which confirmation first occurs. If targets have provided behavioral confirmation for perceivers' expectations, this "evidence" may be used by perceivers to justify further actions toward targets. Among these actions are decisions about further interaction between perceiver and target. Individuals may be more likely to initiate further social contact with the targets of positive rather than negative expectations. Indeed, given the confirmation of a negative expectation, there may only be a first encounter—that is, perceivers may choose to avoid future interactions with targets who have confirmed their negative expectations (Harris 1993).

MOTIVATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

When it comes to understanding the confirmation sequence scenario, the strategy of parsing the sequence into its steps is particularly fruitful because the

constituent elements of the behavioral confirmation scenario are themselves key aspects of interpersonal processes—attribution, person perception, belief-behavior relations, self-presentation, reciprocity, and so on. Use of this strategy, however, can entail some loss of the perspective that is provided by seeing the entire sequence unfolding (Kelley 1992); for that reason, studies that articulate all of the steps of an interaction sequence in a single investigation may provide the most clarity.

With the evident success of the parsing strategy in informing us about what is happening in confirmation scenarios, researchers have turned their attentions to the social and psychological processes that underlie interactions between the holders of expectations and the targets of expectations. They have been seeking to understand *why* perceivers act in ways that initiate confirmation and disconfirmation scenarios and *why* targets come to behave in ways that confirm or disconfirm expectations. Conducted from interrelated theoretical perspectives, such research suggests that the motivations of perceivers and targets are those that may be most useful to them and that the interactional strategies that lead to confirmation and disconfirmation are ones that perceivers and targets regard as functional to them in their dealings with each other.

The Interaction Goals Approach

One line of research by Hilton & Darley (Darley et al 1988; Hilton 1995; Hilton & Darley 1985, 1991; Hilton et al 1989) has examined the "interaction goals" that arise for both targets and perceivers in the context of their interaction. They suggest that perceivers may be in an "assessment set," with the goal of forming an accurate impression of the target, or in an "action set," with the goal of working on a specific task in which impression formation is only indirectly involved. Perceivers in an "action set" are thought to elicit behavioral confirmation more readily than perceivers in an "assessment set." Hilton (1995) has expanded the taxonomy of interaction goals to include explicit goals (seeking an accurate impression), nonconscious goals (reducing threats to self-esteem), implicit goals (following unstated conversational norms), and recursive goals (such as second-guessing targets' own interaction goals).

Another line of work on the goals of perceivers and targets has been pursued by Neuberg (Judice & Neuberg 1998; Neuberg 1989, 1994, 1996a,b; Neuberg et al 1993; Smith et al 1997). Neuberg (1989) has demonstrated that perceivers who were motivated to gain an accurate understanding of targets were more likely to elicit disconfirmation than confirmation. Similarly, Neuberg et al (1993) have shown that when perceivers are motivated to get targets to like them, they do not elicit self-fulfilling outcomes. On the target side of the

equation, Smith et al (1997) have examined targets' motivations to be either deferent to perceivers or nondeferent, finding confirmation only in the former condition.

The Functional Approach

Another approach to studying motivational foundations takes a "functional" perspective to examine the reasons and purposes, needs and goals, and plans and motives that underlie and generate confirmation and disconfirmation (Copeland 1993, 1994; Copeland & Snyder 1995; Miene et al 1991; Snyder 1992; Snyder & Haugen 1994, 1995). Researchers using this framework seek to identify the psychological functions being served by the activities of perceivers and targets that generate behavioral confirmation. Empirical investigations have indicated that behavioral confirmation occurs most readily when the activities of the perceiver serve the function of *acquiring knowledge* and the activities of the target serve the function of *facilitating interaction* (Copeland & Snyder 1995; Snyder & Haugen 1994, 1995). In a study of perceiver functions, Snyder & Haugen (1994) demonstrated that perceivers, interacting with targets who were depicted as either obese or normal weight, elicited behavioral confirmation only when they were motivated to acquire stable and predictable knowledge and not when they were motivated to facilitate smooth and coordinated interactions. In a study of target functions, Snyder & Haugen (1995) demonstrated that targets, who were believed to be either obese or normal weight, confirmed expectations only when they were motivated to facilitate interaction and not when they were motivated to seek knowledge about perceivers.

An understanding of the motivational foundations of behavioral confirmation may also provide the basis for an understanding of the interpersonal processes of social interaction more generally. The motivation to seek social knowledge and the motivation to facilitate social interaction may capture the orientations of "getting to know" and "getting along," respectively, that are thought to be integral to and intricately intertwined in acquaintance processes and, by extension, social interaction and social relations more generally (Snyder 1992).

Research on the motivational foundations of confirmation is also informative about the origins of disconfirmation. It suggests that interactions in which perceivers are not motivated by considerations known to initiate confirmatory orientations to social interaction and/or ones in which targets are not motivated by the considerations that lead them to adopt their confirmatory orientations will not lead to self-fulfilling consequences of expectations.

STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS

That perceivers and targets differ in their motivations has led to inquiry about differing features of the roles of perceiver and target that may be linked to their differing motivational orientation to their interactions with each other. Scrutiny of perceiver-target dyadic relationships has revealed that there are relevant structural features of interactions between perceivers and targets that may set the stage for confirmation to occur. In particular, researchers and theorists have examined power differentials between individuals engaging in social interaction (Copeland 1994; Darley & Fazio 1980; Harris 1993; Harris et al 1998; D Operario & ST Fiske, manuscript in preparation; Snyder 1992, 1995; Virdin & Neuberg 1990).

Power and the Structural Relations Between Perceiver and Target

Typically, the role of the perceiver is defined in terms of the guiding influence of his or her beliefs about the target. It is the perceiver and not the target who holds preconceived beliefs and expectations. It is also the perceiver who has more explicit opportunities than the target to use their interaction as an opportunity to evaluate beliefs. For example, in interview formats for studying behavioral confirmation, the perceiver asks the questions and the target answers them. Similarly, in the getting-acquainted situations used in many behavioral confirmation experiments, it is typically the perceiver who initiates conversation by speaking first and taking a guiding and directing influence in the ensuing interaction (M Snyder & LJ Mobilio, manuscript under review). Moreover, explicitly manipulating the flow of information so that perceivers start by talking about themselves, rather than by getting the targets to talk about themselves, blocks this chain of events and prevents behavioral confirmation (Mobilio & Snyder 1996).

By contrast, the role of the target is defined in relation to behavioral reactions to the perceiver's overtures. The very fact that targets know less about perceivers than perceivers know about them (a direct consequence of the fact that perceivers rather than targets are provided with expectations) indicates that the role of target is one characterized by an informational deficit that may lead targets to turn to perceivers for guidelines for how to construe their interaction and how to behave in the course of it. Thus, in the absence of competing considerations, the role of the target seems to be defined to promote taking cues from, and fitting oneself into, the outlines laid down by one's interaction partner—a role of essentially low power to influence, to determine, and to control the ensuing interaction.

In effect, these considerations point to *power differences* inherent in the roles of perceiver and target (Snyder 1995). Structural differences in information available to them combined with differing potential to direct interaction make the perceiver's role one of greater power and the target's role one of lesser power. In addition, perceivers and targets often interact in circumstances that themselves dictate an imbalance of power. Many demonstrations of the self-fulfilling prophecy have occurred in real or simulated interactions between teachers and students (Harris & Rosenthal 1985), between employers and employees (Pelletier & Vallerand 1996), and between therapists and clients (Copeland & Snyder 1995). In these cases, therapists, employers, and teachers, by virtue of their roles, can be thought of as often functioning as perceivers with the power to influence individuals who depend on them for jobs, education, or solutions to problems (who may be the targets of expectations about their likely job performance, educational attainments, and therapeutic prognosis). These differences in power between perceivers and the dependent targets of their expectations may set the stage for self-fulfilling prophecies.

Research on Power, Status, and Behavioral Confirmation

An empirical examination of power and behavioral confirmation has been conducted by Copeland (1994), who explicitly manipulated the presence of an expectation about the partner and the power to control the partner's outcomes and found that during a getting-acquainted interaction, behavioral confirmation occurred only when the perceiver had the power to control the target's outcomes. When targets had the power to control perceivers' outcomes, behavioral confirmation did not occur. Copeland (1994) also reported that the motivations of perceivers and targets changed with the power they were granted in the interaction. When perceivers had power over targets' outcomes, they were motivated to seek knowledge about targets (the motivation linked to the activities of the perceiver in behavioral confirmation scenarios; Snyder & Haugen 1994), but when they did not have power, perceivers were motivated to facilitate favorable interaction outcomes. Similarly, targets with power were motivated to acquire knowledge about their partners, but those without power were motivated to facilitate pleasant interactions (a target function that contributes to behavioral confirmation; Snyder & Haugen 1995). Thus, the structural effect of power may serve to create the very motivations that underlie the behavioral confirmation sequence.

Also relevant to the dynamics of power and behavioral confirmation, research by Harris et al (1998) suggests that the activities of high-power perceivers may be more influential in determining confirmation than the behaviors of low-power targets. In addition, social power may elicit behavioral confirma-

tion through mechanisms of attentional focus. Power may reduce attentional focus on the individuating characteristics of others, thus leading to greater reliance on existing knowledge structures that may be confirmed when acted on by perceivers (Fiske 1993; Fiske & Morling 1996; Fiske & Neuberg 1990; SA Goodwin, ST Fiske, VY Yzerbyt, manuscript under review). However, JC Georgeson, MJ Harris, and RM Lightner (manuscript under review) found that powerful perceivers who initiated confirmation sequences actually reported paying greater attention to the targets of their expectations.

A consideration of power and behavioral confirmation takes on added meaning when one realizes that the same people who are typically the targets of social and cultural stereotypes are often those who have less power in our society (e.g. members of minority groups). These low-power targets may find themselves dependent on powerful perceivers for their outcomes. Their positions of lesser power may engender a deferent orientation as they seek to get along well with, and to accommodate themselves to the will of, those with power. Because of this outcome dependency, these targets may be more responsive to cues given off by their perceivers (Geis 1993), cues that may be founded on stereotype-based expectations, cues that effectively lead targets onto the path of behavioral confirmation, possibly in hopes of minimizing negative outcomes at the hands of those with power over their fates.

Research on gender differences in behavioral confirmation is potentially relevant to matters of power and the dynamics of social interaction. Some research has suggested that the largest confirmation effects tend to occur in dyads composed of male perceivers and female targets (Christiansen & Rosenthal 1982), a dyadic relationship that may be construed as involving a perceiver relatively higher in status and power than the target (for related points about women and men as perceivers, see Dvir et al 1995, and as targets, see Jussim et al 1996). Other research, however, has indicated that the magnitude of behavioral confirmation may not be so reliably linked to the gender composition of the perceiver-target dyads (Andersen & Bem 1981, Hall & Briton 1993).

SOME ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Throughout the course of research on the effects of expectations in social interaction, there have been questions that have been often asked. The accumulated body of theory and research now places us in a position to bring new perspectives to these questions.

Aren't Both Parties to the Interaction Really Perceivers and Targets?

Typically, in experiments on behavioral confirmation, one participant is assigned to be a perceiver, by virtue of being provided with an expectation, and the other participant becomes, de facto, the target. The question can be asked: Is it perhaps artificial to designate one interactant as perceiver and the other as target? After all, it can be argued, it is probably the case that both parties have expectations about each other that they bring to their interaction (Olson et al 1996). To be sure, it is a procedural convenience to have participants function either as perceivers or as targets, a procedural convenience that may facilitate the demonstration of causal linkages between the perceiver's expectations and the target's behavior.

Yet, without denying that both parties to an interaction may bring expectations into their encounter, we wish to assert that there are considerations that will make one of these parties functionally the perceiver and the other party functionally the target. These considerations are precisely the same considerations of status and power that we have already seen to be relevant to understanding why and when perceivers' expectations will influence targets' behavior. As we have already noted, some role relationships are structured in ways that confer more power to one member than to the other—therapists have more power than clients, teachers have more power than students, and employers have more power than employees. In such role relationships, we predict that the flow of influence will be from the expectations of the party with higher structurally conferred power (who will functionally be the perceiver) to the behavior of the party with lower structurally conferred power (who will functionally become the target). Thus, even though therapists and clients, teachers and students, and employers and employees each may harbor expectations about the other, the power differences structured into their roles dictate that it will be the expectations of therapists, teachers, and employers that will likely find behavioral confirmation in the actions of clients, students, and employees.

However, even when there are no explicit role relationships to structurally confer power differentials, there are often differences in the "resources" possessed by the parties to ostensibly "equal" relationships. In getting-acquainted interactions, in friendships, and in romantic relationships, the parties involved may differ in the "resources" of, for example, physical attractiveness, wealth, charm, or alternate choices for companionship that they bring to their dealings with each other. These greater resources may give greater "power" to one party and hence make that party functionally the perceiver, resulting in a flow of influence from that party's expectations to the other party's behavior.

What Are the Consequences of Expectations That Are Not Erroneous?

In many investigations of confirmation processes, particularly those conducted with experimental methods, great care is taken to decouple the perceiver's expectations from actual attributes of the target through the random assignment of perceivers to expectation conditions. This research strategy, of course, facilitates the goal of being able to make causal inferences about the impact of perceivers' expectations on targets' behavior. But it also reflects the particular interests of many researchers in understanding the self-fulfilling consequences of initially *erroneous* expectations, particularly those that derive from global stereotypes of questionable validity, and the possibility that the behavior of targets may be as much, if not more, a reflection of the expectations of perceivers than a reflection of their own personalities. Relevant to this possibility, PK Miene, M Snyder & A Gresham (manuscript in preparation) have demonstrated, in a laboratory investigation of interactions between perceivers and targets, that the behavior of targets reflected not only their perceivers' expectations that they were extraverts or introverts but also their own extraverted or introverted dispositions of personality; moreover, the effects of the perceivers' manipulated expectations remained in evidence even when the effects of the targets' measured personalities had been controlled statistically.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that studies of naturally occurring expectations have suggested that such expectations may be at times less erroneous than those often used in laboratory studies (Jussim 1991). Indeed, expectations that are based on presumably valid and/or readily observable information (such as students' test scores and their records of past achievement) may be more accurate for a given target than expectations based on hearsay or social stereotypes. In this regard, Jussim (1991, Jussim et al 1996) has reported that in studies of teachers and students, expectation effects (that is, associations between teachers' expectations and students' performance) are typically smaller than "accuracy" effects (that is, associations between students' prior performance and their current performance). This finding has led to a search for the "powerful" self-fulfilling prophecy (Jussim et al 1996, Madon et al 1997), which has suggested that the effects of teachers' expectations are larger for female students, African-American students, students from lower socioeconomic groups, and students who were lower achievers in the past—groups that may be particularly low in status and power vis-à-vis their teachers. This pattern of results from field studies of teachers and students would seem to be consistent with laboratory studies that link confirmation processes to dyads in which targets have less power and status than perceivers (e.g. Copeland 1994, Virdin & Neuberg 1990).

Still, there are consequences even of the most accurate expectations. For one, whether these expectations are negative or positive will likely determine whether there will be further interaction; future interaction seems more likely to be chosen in the context of positive expectations about one's prospective interaction partners than when expectations are negative. And, given that perceivers will be particularly likely to see evidence that confirms expectations that are accurate (because targets are likely to behave consistently), such accurate expectations may be particularly resistant to change, even if the target's behavior were to change over time (and the expectation thereby became inaccurate). There may be tremendous pressure placed on targets not to change; in other words, even accurate expectations may serve to preserve the status quo. Smith et al (1997) suggest that even expectations based on the most objective information (teachers' expectations based on earlier student performance) may result in self-fulfilling prophecies if previous teachers held erroneous expectations and these expectations were internalized by students after their behavior changed in reaction.

The matter of accuracy is a particularly difficult one, especially when it comes to defining appropriate criteria for assessing the accuracy of expectations. Some guidance is provided by the standards of criterion validity and predictive validity as used in evaluating the accuracy of psychological assessment procedures. For all intents and purposes, if targets come to behave congruently with perceivers' expectations (that is, if objective outside raters judge them to have behaved so, which is the criterion used in research on behavioral confirmation), then, in those particular interactions, perceivers' expectations were accurate—at least by typical standards of criterion validity (Snyder & Gangestad 1980). Of course, such confirmatory behavior may have been elicited by perceivers' behaviors, even behaviors based on initially erroneous expectations. It may also be the case that if perceivers and targets regularly meet in the same situations, perceivers' expectations may also hold predictive validity, another standard for assessing accuracy; of course, this accuracy also may be the result of perceivers eliciting expectation-congruent behavior from targets on repeated occasions (Snyder & Gangestad 1980).

Similarly, and of relevance to considerations of the accuracy of expectations, it may be that, through their treatment of targets, perceivers are able to elicit exaggerated displays of traits that targets actually possess. In such cases, perceivers will have a distorted sample of target behavior, but again one that might be considered accurate since the target possesses the trait, just not to the degree indicated by his or her behavior. As Swann (1984) has argued, perceivers may pragmatically need only circumscribed accuracy of their expectations; thus, it may be functionally important only for them to know targets under the conditions in which they will interact with them. Therefore, even a distorted

view of targets may be accurate enough for perceivers to predict behavior in the specific situations in which they interact.

Is There an Asymmetry Between Positive and Negative Expectations?

Often, studies of the consequences of expectations contrast a condition in which perceivers hold a positive expectation (e.g. this attractive person will have a good personality) with one in which perceivers hold a negative expectation (e.g. that unattractive person will have a bad personality). Quite understandably, researchers have asked whether the effects in studies of behavioral confirmation are being carried by the positive or the negative expectations and whether there are differences in size or likelihood of effects for negative and positive expectations (Darley & Oleson 1993). As it happens, points about asymmetry have been difficult to make because most research on behavioral confirmation has not included a no-expectation condition as a baseline. However, it is unclear what kind of a baseline a no-expectation condition would provide. Perceivers in such a condition just might give targets about whom nothing is known the benefit of the doubt; therefore, a no-expectation condition, rather than serving as a neutral (i.e. neither positive nor negative) expectation condition, might be functionally more like a positive expectation condition (making the negative expectation effect look much larger, artifactually).

Nevertheless, the literature on person perception does provide a firm basis for theorizing about positive and negative asymmetries in the effects of expectations (Reeder & Brewer 1979, Rothbart & Park 1986). For many expectations, particularly those that concern morality, negative actions are taken by perceivers as more diagnostic (e.g. one theft makes you dishonest) than positive actions (Martijn et al 1992; Reeder & Brewer 1979; Reeder & Coovert 1986; Skowronski & Carlston 1987, 1992). Thus, a negative expectation concerning moral behavior may be weighted more heavily in a perceiver's mind than a positive one and may lead to an asymmetry favoring the confirmation of negative expectations over positive ones.

However, researchers (Reeder & Brewer 1979) have also suggested that for expectations related to ability, positive behaviors may be more diagnostic than negative ones (e.g. to demonstrate intelligence, you must actually be intelligent). Extending this analysis to the behavioral confirmation arena, it may be that ability-based expectations lead to asymmetrical effects favoring the confirmation of positive judgments of ability over the confirmation of negative judgments of ability. Indeed, Madon et al (1997) recently found a stronger effect for positive teacher expectations of student ability than for negative teacher expectations. However, when Martijn et al (1992) presented

behaviors related to morality and ability to perceivers, they found that perceivers weighted moral behaviors, especially negative ones, more strongly than behaviors related to ability when making global judgments about targets.

Considerations of the diagnosticity of behavior suggest that when perceivers encounter behavioral evidence that they regard as particularly diagnostic of the dispositions of the targets of their expectations (e.g. negative expectations about morality and positive expectations about ability), there will be more perceptual confirmation of their expectations. But for behavioral confirmation to follow from such expectations, there should also be asymmetries in perceivers' actual investment in eliciting behavioral evidence from targets. As evidence for such asymmetries, Yzerbyt & Leyens (1991) found that perceivers spent more time gathering information from targets when they had positive expectations than when they had negative ones, which implies that perceivers may believe less evidence is needed to confirm negative than positive expectations. As a result, targets may have fewer opportunities to disconfirm negative expectations and more opportunities to confirm positive ones; in fact, in a study by Major et al (1988), the targets of positive expectations were more likely to change their behavior and their self-concepts in line with perceiver expectations than were targets of negative expectations.

In addition to these sources of asymmetry, positive and negative expectations may function differently in the interpersonal orientations behind the confirmation scenarios associated with them. It is not unreasonable to propose that most people would prefer to interact with others about whom they hold positive expectations than with the targets of negative expectations. And, given the choice, most people would probably choose to seek further contact with those about whom they hold positive expectations and to avoid further contact with the targets of negative expectations. That is, people may harbor *inclusionary* orientations toward the targets of positive expectations (wishing to include them in their patterns of social relations) and *exclusionary* orientations toward targets of negative expectations (wishing to exclude them from their patterns of social relations). When, in the course of social interaction, perceivers create perceptual and behavioral confirmation for their positive expectations, this confirming evidence may appear to support and justify an inclusionary orientation toward the targets of these expectations; by the same logic, when perceivers create perceptual and behavioral confirmation for their negative expectations, this confirming evidence may appear to support and justify an exclusionary orientation toward the targets of those expectations. Even though the end result may be the same, namely confirmation, there may be an asymmetry in the inclusionary and exclusionary interpersonal orientations served by the confirmation of positive and negative expectations.

Is Behavioral Confirmation a Phenomenon of First Encounters Between Strangers?

Much research on behavioral confirmation has been conducted in analogs of first encounters between strangers (Miller & Turnbull 1986, Neuberg 1994, Snyder 1992). To be sure, most (if not all) relationships do begin as first meetings between previously unacquainted parties. And what happens in first encounters may set the stage for what is to come as relationships grow and develop. From this perspective, studies of behavioral confirmation provide opportunities to study the dynamics of relationships in their infancy and to see how the relationships that emerge from initial encounters are structured into the roles of relatively powerful holders of expectations, who set the terms of the relationships, and relatively powerless objects of expectations, who fit themselves into the outlines provided for them. Such roles, laid down early on, may take on lives of their own over the course of the relationships that ensue.

Yet, as much as these considerations underscore the importance of understanding the early stages of relationships, it is surely necessary for research to go beyond beginnings and to look at the effects of expectations in the context of social relationships that go beyond first encounters. One way to do so is to examine the effects of expectations in first interactions that are themselves the preludes to longer-term interaction. Will such interactions attenuate confirmation effects? This attenuation might happen if perceivers become more cautious about relying on expectations and if targets become more wary of accommodating themselves to perceivers when they feel that the course of their future relationship rides on the outcomes of their first interaction. Or, will such interactions enhance confirmation effects? This enhancement might happen if perceivers and targets become more motivated to carry out their respective agendas of acquiring knowledge and facilitating interaction if these motivations become more functionally relevant in the context of interactions that provide more time and more opportunity for them to be useful. In answer to these questions, Haugen & Snyder (1995) demonstrated that when participants believed that there was the definite possibility of future interaction, behavioral confirmation effects were larger than when they were explicitly told that there would be no further meetings. Thus, it may be that behavioral confirmation, when it occurs in first encounters, may be occurring precisely because of the relevance of first encounters for subsequent interaction; moreover, behavioral confirmation may occur in first interactions to the extent that first interactions are steps along the way to future interaction.

Another way to address the effects of expectations over time is, of course, for research to go beyond studies of first interactions and to study those second, third, fourth, and subsequent interactions. One way to do so is to examine

multiple interactions, either a succession of interactions between a single perceiver and target or a diversity of interactions involving multiple perceivers, each of whom hold expectations about the same target. Presumably, repeated interactions in which confirmation occurs should result in an accumulated confirmation effect (Jussim et al 1996). In the case of a single perceiver, the extent of accumulation should depend on continued activation of the perceiver's expectation. If repeated contact facilitates the activation of the expectation, accumulation of confirmation should occur, but if repeated interactions lead to habituation and diminished salience of the expectation, accumulation should be attenuated. In the case of multiple perceivers, the extent of accumulation should depend on the consensus of the perceivers' expectations about the target (if they all share the same expectation, confirmation should accumulate) and on the consensus of perceivers' actions based on their expectations (if they all adopt the same strategies of coping with the target, confirmation should accumulate). In a related vein, Darley & Oleson (1993) have suggested that bystanders to an interaction that involves behavioral confirmation of an expectation may learn to treat targets as perceivers did; such bystanders should contribute to an amplified expectation effect.

The next question to ask is whether these repeated encounters, perhaps over a lifetime in the case of individuals with continuing stigmatizing conditions, will have a resultant effect on targets' actual conceptions of self and their personalities. Certainly, self-perception theory (Bem 1972) would suggest that they will. Two recent studies that included more than one interaction are instructive in regard to these hypotheses about encounters between perceivers and targets.

In one study, Smith et al (1997) had targets interact with two different perceivers, holding opposing expectations, in an interview setting. Targets motivated to be deferent to perceivers confirmed the expectations of the perceiver in the first interview and continued to confirm the first perceiver's expectations in a second interview, even though they were interacting with a new interviewer who held the opposite expectation for them.

In another study of successive interactions, Stukas & Snyder (1995) had dyads converse with each other twice. In the interval between the two interactions, targets learned of the perceivers' expectations; targets also learned that perceivers thought that their expectation-congruent behavior was due either to their personalities or to situational constraints. When they learned that they were targets of negative expectations attributed to their personalities, targets acted in a more positive fashion in the second encounter (as did all targets who learned that perceivers held positive expectations); however, when targets learned that they were the objects of negative expectations attributed to situational causes, they continued to behave in a negative and expectation-congruent fashion.

Thus, these two studies suggest that interactions with perceivers who hold erroneous expectations may have lasting effects; however, they also indicate that the continuing effects of these early interactions may be moderated by targets' motivations and perceptions. As Smith et al (1997) point out, targets may be "complicit" in the continued confirmation of expectations, even those of which they have been made explicitly aware (Stukas & Snyder 1995).

Hasn't the Literature Overemphasized the Perceiver and Underestimated the Target?

Typically, the confirmation scenario is characterized as a flow of influence from perceivers' expectations to targets' behavior—a scenario in which the perceiver, having adopted beliefs about the target, acts in ways that cause the behavior of the target to confirm these beliefs. Such a characterization clearly imputes a more active role to the perceiver, who forms and acts on expectations and who guides and directs interaction, than to the target, who may seem by comparison rather passive, reacting and adapting to the overtures of the perceiver. Over time, as we have seen, it has become increasingly apparent that targets take an active role in shaping the dynamics and outcomes of their interactions with perceivers. Their interaction goals (Hilton & Darley 1991) and their motivational functions (Snyder 1992) are essential ingredients in producing behavioral confirmation. And it is very often the active role played by targets, whether using power granted to them (Copeland 1994) or taking a challenging stance toward perceivers (Smith et al 1997), that attenuates or eliminates behavioral confirmation.

Moreover, as the active role of target has been more clearly delineated, it has also become increasingly apparent that targets can and do take actions that generate behavioral *disconfirmation* outcomes. They are particularly likely to do so when they experience others' views of them as threatening to their identities. Thus, targets, made aware of perceivers' negative expectations about them, may actively seek to disconfirm these expectations (Hilton & Darley 1985). Targets, when motivated to do so, can maintain their strategic self-presentations in the face of powerful perceivers who might be expected to hold negative views of them (D Operario & ST Fiske, manuscript in preparation). Similarly, targets of social stigmas may be able to overcome the negative effects of such expectations through their own actions; for example, obese targets act in ways that overcome perceivers' negative expectations, but only when they believe that they are visible to these perceivers (Miller & Myers 1998, Miller et al 1995). Disconfirmatory outcomes of this form can be interpreted as serving an identity-defensive function of protecting targets from accepting potentially unpleasant, unflattering, threatening, or otherwise unwelcome beliefs about the self (Snyder 1992).

These considerations of an "active" target lead to the question: If the target is an active participant in the interaction with the perceiver, why would he or she ever confirm a negative expectation? Of course, targets may never even become aware of negative expectations, as perceivers may be less likely to reveal negative expectations directly to targets than positive ones (Hilton & Darley 1985, Swann et al 1992). If targets are more likely to become aware of positive than negative expectations, they may also find themselves with more opportunities to actively confirm positive expectations and fewer opportunities to actively disconfirm negative expectations. The lack of opportunity to actively disconfirm negative expectations may facilitate perceptual confirmation, in that perceivers with negative expectations may consider the absence of overt disconfirmation to be tantamount to confirmation of their negative expectations (one can almost hear perceivers saying to themselves, "Well, he never actually denied being a bad person, so it must mean that he really is a bad person").

But what happens when people become explicitly aware that they are targets of negative expectations? Will they confirm those expectations? And if so, why? It is, of course, possible that targets might knowingly and willingly confirm negative expectations that they believe to be accurate (Swann 1983). But even with erroneous negative expectations, targets may find it difficult to disconfirm such expectations, motivated as they may be to cast off such labels. As we have suggested, targets are often in low-power roles and therefore they may not be able to take sufficient charge of their interactions to disconfirm the negative expectations held by powerful perceivers. Moreover, targets in positions of low power may fear possible recriminations were they to actively contradict the negative expectations of powerful perceivers (who may use their positions of power to punish those who challenge their preferred views of the social world). For this reason, targets may knowingly, but not happily, confirm the negative expectations of powerful perceivers. In such circumstances, they may use situational pressures not only to allow but also to justify their confirmation of erroneous negative expectations, regarding such confirmation as circumscribed to specific interactions (Swann 1984) and not carrying necessary implications for their own global dispositions (Stukas & Snyder 1995).

Further, targets who are aware of the negative expectations of perceivers may at times choose a strategy of neither actively confirming nor actively disconfirming these expectations. That is, targets may choose to ambiguate their behavior (so that self-presentations, even if not explicitly disconfirming negative expectations, at least do not overtly confirm them either). However, the consequences of this strategy of ambiguation may nevertheless be the perceptual confirmation of negative expectations. In line with research demonstrating that ambiguous behavior is often taken by perceivers as consistent with initial expectations (Darley & Gross 1983, Hamilton et al 1990), low-power

targets who ambiguate their behavior in an effort to avoid confirming negative expectations may still be the targets of perceptual confirmation on the part of perceivers who manage to "read" confirmation into these ambiguated self-presentations.

Still, ambiguated behavior may protect targets from the negative ramifications to their self-concepts of enacting behavior that confirms a negative expectation. Ambiguous behavior also has the possibility of being interpreted by third-party observers, who do not hold negative expectations, as being unrelated or even opposed to possible negative expectations (Fleming 1993). Notable here is the possibility that both perceivers and targets may finish their interactions believing that behavior has conformed to their view of reality, with perceivers satisfied that their initial negative expectations remain intact and targets satisfied that they have withheld active confirmation of negative expectations (see Major et al 1988).

CONCLUSION

As we conclude this analytic review, we wish to underscore a recurring and integrative theme in our considerations of the confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations in social interaction. As we have seen, theory and research in this domain have involved a progression from attempts to document the existence of these phenomena and to define their limiting conditions to efforts to parse the scenarios of confirmation and disconfirmation into their constituent elements, to inquiries into the motivational foundations of confirmation and disconfirmation, and to investigations that place confirmation and disconfirmation in their structural contexts. In each case, it has become readily apparent that considerations of the confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations are considerations of the dynamics of social interaction itself. The processes of confirmation and disconfirmation involve a complex intertwining of cognitive, motivational, and behavioral activities in social interaction—a dynamic intertwining in which features of perceivers and targets, of their motivation and their roles, and of their personal characteristics and their situational contexts are all integrated into scenarios of mutual and reciprocal influence on the processes and outcomes of social interaction. Also, the motivational foundations of confirmation and disconfirmation appear to be interaction goals and psychological functions of more generic relevance to social interaction. And the structural contexts that provide opportunities for confirmation and disconfirmation seem to involve features of roles and social position that themselves are of more generic relevance to interpersonal processes. Finally, as we look to the future, we note that emerging attempts to place scenarios of confirmation and disconfirmation in a more extended temporal context of continuing and ongoing interactions can only enhance the potential for investigations of con-

firmation and disconfirmation in social interaction to serve as paradigmatic opportunities for theoretical and empirical inquiry into interpersonal processes and social relationships.

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