



## **Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups**

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Stereotyping is one of the biggest single issues in social psychology, but relatively little is known about how and why stereotypes form. *Stereotypes as Explanations* is the first book to explore the process of stereotype formation, the way that people develop impressions and views of social groups. Conventional approaches to stereotyping assume that stereotypes are based on erroneous and distorted processes, but the authors of this book take a very different view, namely that stereotypes form in order to explain aspects of social groups and in particular to explain relationships between groups. In developing this view, the authors explore classic and contemporary approaches to stereotype formation and advance new ideas about such topics as the importance of category formation, essentialism, illusory correlation, interdependence, social reality and stereotype consensus. They conclude that stereotypes are indeed explanations, but they are nevertheless highly selective, variable and frequently contested explanations.



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