The Psychology of Legitimacy

Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations

This book summarizes and integrates the best social scientific research currently going on in a previously neglected but rapidly emerging interdisciplinary field seeking to understand processes of legitimation and delegitimation in social relations. Contributors are leading researchers in sociology, psychology, political science, and organizational behavior, and the themes they cover are overlapping and mutually informative. The book is constructed primarily around the authors and their theories, and there is an uncommon degree of dialogue among the authors. The chapters converge on key questions concerning the ways in which people construct ideological justifications or rationalizations for their own actions and for the actions of others taken on behalf of valued groups and systems. The result is a general approach to the psychological basis of social inequality, which may be applied to distinctions of race, gender, social class, occupational status, and many other forms of inequality.

John T. Jost is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. His research on system justification theory, the internalization of inequality, and the depressed entitlement effect among women has been featured in national and international newspapers, business magazines, and on National Public Radio. He has published articles in numerous scientific journals and is a past winner of the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize.

Brenda Major is Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She is a past winner of the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize and has won numerous other awards for her research on the psychological implications of membership in oppressed groups and how people cope with adversity. Dr. Major has been an associate editor of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin and has served on the editorial boards of numerous professional journals. She has published more than 90 articles in refereed journals and edited books, and has given more than 100 talks on her research in the United States and Europe.
The Psychology of Legitimacy

Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations

Edited by

John T. Jost
Stanford University

Brenda Major
University of California at Santa Barbara

© Cambridge University Press 2013
www.cambridge.org
For my father, Lawrence J. Jost,
my first and best teacher, a truly legitimate authority figure,
and a strong voice for the cause of justice.

J.T.J.

For my parents, Bertram and Avonelle Major,
with love and thanks.

B.N.M.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>page ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Contributors</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part One. Introduction

1. Emerging Perspectives on the Psychology of Legitimacy
   - *John T. Jost & Brenda Major*
   - 3

## Part Two. Historical Perspectives on Sociological and Psychological Theories of Legitimacy

2. Theories of Legitimacy
   - *Morris Zelditch, Jr.*
   - 33

3. Reflections on Social and Psychological Processes of Legitimization and Delegitimization
   - *Herbert C. Kelman*
   - 54

## Part Three. Cognitive and Perceptual Processes in the Appraisal of Legitimacy

4. A Perceptual Theory of Legitimacy: Politics, Prejudice, Social Institutions, and Moral Value
   - *Christian S. Crandall & Ryan K. Beasley*
   - 77

5. Blame It on the Group: Entitativity, Subjective Essentialism, and Social Attribution
   - *Vincent Yzerbyt & Anouk Rogier*
   - 103

   - *Robert J. Robinson & Laura Kray*
   - 135
# Part Four. The Tolerance of Injustice: Implications for Self and Society

1. **Tolerance of Personal Deprivation**  
   *James M. Olson & Carolyn L. Hafer*  
   157

2. **Legitimacy and the Construal of Social Disadvantage**  
   *Brenda Major & Toni Schmader*  
   176

3. **Individual Upward Mobility and the Perceived Legitimacy of Intergroup Relations**  
   *Naomi Ellemers*  
   205

4. **Restricted Intergroup Boundaries: Tokenism, Ambiguity, and the Tolerance of Injustice**  
   *Stephen C. Wright*  
   223

# Part Five. Stereotyping, Ideology, and the Legitimation of Inequality

1. **The Emergence of Status Beliefs: From Structural Inequality to Legitimizing Ideology**  
   *Cecilia L. Ridgeway*  
   257

2. **Ambivalent Stereotypes as Legitimizing Ideologies: Differentiating Paternalistic and Envious Prejudice**  
   *Peter Glick & Susan T. Fiske*  
   278

3. **Legitimizing Ideologies: The Social Domination Approach**  
   *Jim Sidanius, Shana Levin, Christopher M. Federico, & Felicia Pratto*  
   307

4. **The (Il)legitimacy of Ingroup Bias: From Social Reality to Social Resistance**  
   *Russell Spears, Jolanda Jetten, & Bertjan Doosje*  
   332

5. **Conflicts of Legitimation among Self, Group, and System: The Integrative Potential of System Justification Theory**  
   *John T. Jost, Diana Burgess, & Cristina O. Mosso*  
   363

# Part Six. Institutional and Organizational Processes of Legitimation

1. **The Architecture of Legitimacy: Constructing Accounts of Organizational Controversies**  
   *Kimberly D. Elsbach*  
   391

2. **A Psychological Perspective on the Legitimacy of Institutions and Authorities**  
   *Tom R. Tyler*  
   416

3. **License to Kill: Violence and Legitimacy in Expropriative Social Relations**  
   *Mary R. Jackman*  
   437

# Index

469
We first began planning a conference and an edited volume on the “Psychology of Legitimacy” when both of us were in the Department of Psychology at the University of California at Santa Barbara during the academic year of 1996–1997. Our plans gained realism only because of the generosity and commitment of the Graduate School of Business (G.S.B.) at Stanford University. Because of the magnificent support of two associate deans, Margaret Neale and David Brady, we were able to hold a 3-day conference at Stanford in August 1998, where collective work on this book began in earnest. We know of no other academic institution that would have the ability or the inclination to fund so generously a conference being organized by one of its first-year assistant professors, and for the G.S.B.’s munificence we are immensely grateful. Details of the conference itself were handled with extreme care and competence by Aileen Lee, Diana Burgess, and Hector Rastrullo.

Intellectual and moral support for the conference and the book were provided by a number of highly valued colleagues, especially Mahzarin Banaji, Jim Blascovich, Nancy Collins, Curtis Hardin, Rod Kramer, Hazel Markus, Joanne Martin, Michael Morris, Michael Pervis, Jeff Pfeffer, Lee Ross, and Claude Steele. Preparation of the book manuscript itself was aided enormously by Lea Richards, Chris Folkman, and Oliver Sheldon. The editors at Cambridge University Press, Julia Hough and Phil Laughlin, proved to be energetic and dependable, and we are grateful to have worked with them on this project. Finally, we benefited in direct and indirect ways from the personal and professional support of Orsi Hunyady and Jim Blascovich for this and related work.

John T. Jost
Brenda Major
List of Contributors

Ryan K. Beasley received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University and is a political scientist at Baker University. He has published work in political psychology, group processes, international relations, and the case method, and he has served as an instructor at the Ohio State University Summer Institute in Political Psychology.

Diana Burgess received her Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Minnesota and worked as Director of the Behavioral Laboratory in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. She is currently working in the Consumer Insights division of General Mills in Minneapolis, where she is conducting organizational research on knowledge sharing within General Mills and research on the Latino consumer. Other research interests include knowledge management, ethnic marketing, and issues around corporate diversity.

Christian S. Crandall received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and is a social psychologist at the University of Kansas. He has published work in social influence, stereotyping, prejudice, and attribution theory. He has spent many hours in the University of Kansas Archives, reading Heider’s original notebooks.

Bertjan Doosje (Ph.D., University of Amsterdam, 1995) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Amsterdam. His dissertation research was concerned with stereotyping in intergroup contexts. Current research interests include intergroup relations, social identity, collective guilt, culture, and gender.

Naomi Ellemers is a Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at Leiden University in the Netherlands. She has coedited two book volumes on social identity theory and intergroup relations and has published a
List of Contributors

range of articles and book chapters on basic and applied topics in social identity research.

Kimberly D. Elsbach is an Associate Professor of Management at the Graduate School of Management at the University of California, Davis. She received her Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Stanford University. Her research focuses on the perception and management of individual and organizational images, identities, and reputations. She has studied these symbolic processes in a variety of contexts ranging from the California cattle industry and the National Rifle Association to radical environmentalist groups and Hollywood screenwriters.

Christopher M. Federico received his B.A. in Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1995 and his M.A. in Social/Political Psychology from U.C.L.A., where he is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Psychology. He has been an author or coauthor on several scientific papers in the areas of political psychology and intergroup relations.

Susan T. Fiske, Professor of Psychology, Princeton University, received her Ph.D. from Harvard University and most recently taught at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for the past 15 years. Her research addresses social structural motivations (interdependence, power) that drive stereotyping. She is editor of the Handbook of Social Psychology (4th ed.) and the Annual Review of Psychology.

Peter Glick (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1984) is Professor of Psychology at Lawrence University, where he has taught for the past 15 years. His research interests center on prejudice. His paper, “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism,” coauthored with Susan T. Fiske, won the 1995 Gordon Allport Prize for “best paper or article of the year on intergroup relations.”

Carolyn L. Hafer is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Her main research interests are justice, especially individual differences in the belief in a just world, and social cognition. She was the first author of a chapter in the book Responses to Victimization and Belief in a Just World (Plenum, 1998), edited by L. Montada and M. Lerner.

Mary R. Jackman is Professor and Chair of Sociology at the University of California, Davis. Her work explores the political and ideological dynamics of long-term relations of inequality. She is a past recipient of the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize, and she has served on the editorial boards of The American Sociological Review, Social Psychology Quarterly, and...
List of Contributors


Jolanda Jetten (Ph.D., University of Amsterdam, 1997) is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Queensland, cofunded by the Royal Dutch Science Research Council. Her dissertation research was concerned with social identity and group distinctiveness, and she has broad interests in intergroup relations.

John T. Jost received his Ph.D. in social psychology from Yale University in 1995. He is currently Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. His research involves stereotyping, prejudice, intergroup relations, political psychology, and the theory of system justification. He is a past winner of the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize.

Herbert C. Kelman is the Richard Clarke Cabot Research Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard University, and Director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He is coauthor, with V. Lee Hamilton, of *Crimes of Obedience: Toward a Social Psychology of Authority and Responsibility* (Yale University Press, 1989), and recipient of the 1997 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

Laura Kray received her Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Washington and completed a postdoctoral position at the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. She is now an Assistant Professor at the Eller College of Business and Public Administration at the University of Arizona. Her research concerns individual and multiparty judgment and decision making. Specifically, she is examining the role of gender stereotypes in negotiations, how perceptions of injustice are socially constructed in organizations, and how creativity relates to conflict resolution.

Shana Levin is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Claremont McKenna College. She received her B.A. in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1990 and her Ph.D. in social psychology from U.C.L.A. in 1996. She has conducted research on diversity in higher education, ethnic identification, group dominance motives, and intergroup attitudes in the United States and Israel.

Brenda Major is Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. From 1978 to 1995 she was a Professor in the Psychology Department at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She received
List of Contributors

her Ph.D. from Purdue University in 1978. Her research explores the impact of cultural, social, and individual factors on how people cope with, adapt to, and overcome adversity. Her research interests include the psychology of stigma, the psychology of legitimacy, strategies of self-esteem protection, and predictors of coping with abortion.

Cristina O. Mosso is currently a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in social psychology at the University of Turin in Italy. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Bologna with a dissertation that examined the mediating role of societal beliefs in the transmission of stereotypes measured through linguistic abstraction. Her research interests include stereotyping, language, intergroup relations, self, and social identity.

James M. Olson is Professor and Chair of the Psychology Department at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. His main research interests are reactions to injustice, attitude formation and change, counterfactual thinking, and humor. He is a former associate editor of the Journal of Personality and the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Felicia Pratto is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Connecticut. Professor Pratto specializes in attention and consciousness, stereotypes, intergroup relations, and general issues of social cognition. She received her Ph.D. from New York University. Her latest book is entitled Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Cecilia L. Ridgeway is Professor of Sociology at Stanford University. Her research focuses on status and social hierarchies in interaction and uses an expectation states theory approach. She is particularly interested in the role that social hierarchies in everyday interaction play in the larger processes of stratification and inequality in a society. Current projects include experimental tests of status construction theory, which is a theory about the power of interactional contexts to create and spread status beliefs about social differences. Other work addresses the role of interactional processes in preserving gender inequality despite major changes in the socioeconomic organization of society.

Robert J. Robinson received his Ph.D. in social psychology from Stanford University. Since 1991 he has been on the faculty of the Harvard Business School, where he teaches negotiation and entrepreneurship. His primary research interests involve intergroup conflict and partisanship, and the negotiations that small entrepreneurial firms go through. He is co-author of Angel Investing (Jossey Bass Wiley, 2000).
List of Contributors

Anouk Rogier is a graduate student at the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. She is also a Research Fellow at the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research. Her research interests include the formation and perpetuation of stereotypes.

Toni Schmader is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Arizona. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1999. Her research examines the consequences of social stigma and ideology for self-definition, self-esteem, performance, and social identity.

Jim Sidanius is Professor of Psychology at U.C.L.A. and works in the areas at the interface between political ideology and cognitive functioning, the political psychology of gender, and intergroup relations. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Stockholm, Sweden. His latest books are Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Racialized Politics: Values, Ideology, and Prejudice in American Public Opinion (University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Russell Spears (Ph.D., University of Exeter, United Kingdom, 1985) is Professor in Experimental Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam, where he has worked for the last 10 years, having previously held research positions in the United Kingdom. He has broad interests in social psychology, including stereotyping, intergroup relations, social influence, collective emotions, computer-mediated communication, and critical social psychology. Recent books include (with P. Oakes, N. Ellemers and S. A. Haslam) The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life (Blackwell, 1997) and (with N. Ellemers and B. Doosje) Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content (Blackwell, 1999).

Tom R. Tyler is a Professor of Psychology at New York University. His research concerns the dynamics of authority systems in organized groups. He is the author or coauthor of The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice (Plenum, 1988), Why People Obey the Law (Yale University Press, 1990), and Social Justice in a Diverse Society (Westview Press, 1996).

Stephen C. Wright is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He received his Ph.D. from McGill University. His research interests focus primarily on intergroup relations, collective action, prejudice, and issues of minority language and culture. He has published in major social, educational, and cross-cultural psychology journals and is coauthor of Social Psychology in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Free- man, 1993).
Vincent Yzerbyt is Professor of Social Psychology at the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. His research focuses on person perception, stereotyping, prejudice, and intergroup relations. Among other books, he is coauthor (with J. P. Leyens and G. Schadron) of Stereotypes and Social Cognition (Sage, 1994) and (with G. Lories and B. Dardenne) of Metacognition: Cognitive and Social Dimensions (Sage, 1998).

Morris Zelditch, Jr. (Ph.D., Harvard University, 1955) is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Stanford University. He is coauthor (with Joseph Berger) of Status, Power, and Legitimacy (Transaction Publishers, 1997). He is a past President of the Pacific Sociological Association and a past editor of the American Sociological Review.