

# 1 What Is Prejudice? An Introduction

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## What Is Prejudice?

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What makes something, say a particular attitude or belief, an expression of prejudice? What defines a particular attitude as racist or sexist? We are often asked these questions by our students, reporters, and, sometimes, although perhaps not often enough, by policymakers. The question of ‘*what is prejudice?*’ is a difficult, and extremely important, question to answer. According to Gordon Allport (1954, p. 9), and many of the subsequent textbooks in social psychology and related areas, prejudice can be defined as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he [*sic*] is a member of that group.”

Allport’s definition of prejudice-as-antipathy, or to use some other synonyms, prejudice-as-overt-dislike, hostility, or aversion, is consistent with many of the types of attitudes that members of the public may tend to naturally think of as being, for example, sexist, racist, homophobic, and so forth. Researchers working in the area of prejudice and intergroup relations owe Gordon Allport a huge intellectual debt for his founding work in the area. However, when it comes to a working definition of prejudice, Allport’s was incomplete.

Indeed, in the introduction to *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport*, Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman (2005) commented that the definition of prejudice-as-antipathy was “Allport’s most fundamental blindspot” (p. 10). We agree. The chapters in this handbook illustrate the point. For example, in their chapter on Ambivalent Sexism, Connor, Glick, and Fiske emphasize that patronizing attitudes that position one group as weaker than the other and in need of protection (such as Benevolent Sexism) perform remarkably well in maintaining inequality. Similarly, in the chapter on intergroup discrimination, Brewer highlights that disparity can arise *not* as a result from outgroup hate, but rather from ingroup love. Neither of these phenomena fit a definition of prejudice-as-antipathy. However, they may sometimes have a more powerful effect on diffusing resistance to inequality and hierarchy, and legitimizing violence and oppression, because of the very fact that they seem caring, or are focused on ingroup preservation, rather than overt anti-outgroup hostility. In this sense, we define prejudice as those ideologies, attitudes, and beliefs that help to maintain and legitimize group-based hierarchy and exploitation (see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005; Jackman, 1994).

In our view, asking whether a particular attitude or belief may be defined as prejudice is not necessarily the most important question. Instead, determining whether certain beliefs,

attitudes, ideologies, stereotypes, and so forth function to help maintain hierarchy and exploitation may be more productive, at least if the goal is to challenge inequality. It is at this point that we can begin to investigate what factors can disrupt the creation and maintenance of prejudice and inequality.

Answering such questions is no easy feat. As we often admit to our students (but sadly, less so to reporters and policymakers), if we had a ready “one size fits all” answer to the question of how the processes that cause – for lack of a better term – prejudice could be disrupted, then the problem of prejudice would probably already be solved.

### A Brief Historical Overview

Clearly, the concept of what prejudice is, and the orientations that societies and policymakers have adopted to address prejudice have changed over time. The theoretical lens through which we view prejudice has changed substantially since Allport (1954) penned his seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, and his theorizing too was anchored in the historical period and context of the times in which he worked. To understand current scholarship on the social psychology of prejudice, an understanding of the historical content of our theories and models is needed. Duckitt (2010) argued that the social scientific study of prejudice has undergone eight distinct paradigm shifts since the scientific study of the topic began early last century. Duckitt’s (2010) model of these eight historical paradigms is presented in Table 1.1. They begin with a perspective of prejudice as a natural response to so-called “backward” peoples that prevailed up until around the 1920s; and lead up to the current zeitgeist, which emerged sometime in the new millennium, where prejudice tends to be viewed as complex, affective, and motivationally driven. Duckitt’s (2010) summary of historical paradigms through which prejudice has been studied, along with the prevailing definition of prejudice at the time, are summarized in Table 1.1.

One of the most interesting elements of Duckitt’s (2010) analysis of the paradigm shifts which our discipline has undergone is that they do not all necessarily follow a linear progression in identification and refutation of inadequate theories and their replacement with more advanced (and more scientifically valid) ones. Certainly, this is true to some extent, but as Duckitt (2010) noted, the history of study of prejudice seems also to have shifted focus in reaction to changing historical circumstances. A good example of this is the development of the theory of authoritarian personality, which was proposed in the context of understanding Nazi racial ideology and the holocaust.

As the chapters in this handbook show beyond contestation, prejudice remains one of the central social problems facing humanity. This is so today, and we expect prejudice and inequality to become more pressing in the future with increased population pressure, diminishing resources, increased globalization, and the growing likelihood of massive population displacement. The problem, or perhaps it would be more apt to say the challenge, of prejudice is also intertwined with the enduring problem of reducing inequality around the globe, and solving large-scale human cooperative dilemmas. Such dilemmas are likely to include, for example, how we respond to climate change, how we

Table 1.1 *Historical Overview of the Major Paradigms in the Social Scientific Study of Prejudice\**

Social and Historical Context and Issues	Concept of Prejudice and Dominant Theoretical Approach	Domination and Prejudice
Up until the 1920s: White domination and colonial rule of “backward peoples”	Prejudice as a natural response to the deficiencies of “backward” peoples: Race theories	Domination and Prejudice
The 1920s: The legitimacy of White domination challenged	Prejudice as irrational and unjustified: Measuring and describing prejudice	Prejudice and Discrimination
The 1930s and 1940s: The ubiquity and tenacity of White racism	Prejudice as an unconscious defense: Psychoanalytic and frustration theories	Group Processes and Prejudice
The 1950s: Nazi racial ideology and the holocaust	Prejudice rooted in anti-democratic ideology and authoritarian personalities	Discrimination and Prejudice
The 1960s: The problem of institutionalized racism in the American South	Sociocultural explanations: Racism rooted in social norms of discriminatory social structures	Discrimination and Prejudice
The 1970s: The problem of informal racism and discrimination in the North	Prejudice as an expression of dominant group interests in maintaining intergroup inequality	Reciprocal Processes and Prejudice
The 1980s and 1990s: The stubborn persistence of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination	Prejudice as an expression of universal cognitive processes: Social categorization and identity	Multiculturalism and Prejudice
Post 2000: Confronting a complex world of multiple-based and often irrationally intense intergroup hostilities	Prejudice as complex, affective, and motivationally driven?	Broader Contexts and Prejudice

\* Adapted from Duckitt, 2010.

allocate scarce resources on a global scale, and how we react to massive population displacement, likely due to climate change and war, in the decades to come. This, we think, is likely to be the socio-historical context for the contemporary social scientific study of prejudice.

The socio-historical context shaping the contemporary study of prejudice interacts with the unprecedented advances in our ability to collect novel forms of data and statistically model the processes involved in the generation and outcomes of prejudice. In our view, the extent to which methodological innovations have influenced past paradigm shifts in the study of prejudice is one aspect of Duckitt's (2010) model of paradigm shifts which warrants further elaboration.

In this regard, our current research context is unprecedented with regard to the development of reaction-time, neuropsychological, physiological, and genetic measures. It is unprecedented with regard to the ability to collect so-called "Big Data," the relative ease of conducting large-scale cross-national surveys, and availability of data culled from online activity or automated passive observation. The analysis of data from this latter source is also something of which our field will need to carefully consider the ethics. Our current research context is also unlike any other time in history because of rapid and exciting development of accessible new methods of statistically analyzing these and many other types of data – and we should add, in the open and transparent sharing of data and the growing focus on replication.

Quite simply, the effect of novel methods in data modeling and analysis on consequent theory development cannot be underestimated. Nor can developments in our ability to easily and rapidly collect new forms of data and measure new types of processes. To echo Greenwald (2012), who was in turn paraphrasing Lewin (1951), "there is nothing so theoretical as a good method." Greenwald was talking about science in general when he opined this, and it is an observation that the rapid pace of development in new methods in the fields of prejudice and intergroup relations corroborates. In short, it is an exciting – and important – time in our history to be involved in the scientific study of prejudice, intergroup relations, and related fields of research.

## **An Overview of the Handbook**

This handbook aims to move us closer toward the goal of understanding the factors that produce prejudice within both individuals and wider groups, as well as outcomes of prejudice. This handbook also aims to bring us a little closer to the end-goal: that of increasing our understanding of how to go about disrupting the processes that generate or maintain prejudice, inequality, oppression, and their subsequent effects.

The chapters in this handbook represent the cutting-edge of the scientific study of prejudice in a variety of different domains, and from a variety of different perspectives. Their aim as a whole is to provide a comprehensive coverage of current theorizing about prejudice, and many, if not all, of the chapters tend to converge on the consensus that prejudice is indeed, as Duckitt (2010) argued, complex, affective, and motivationally driven.

The handbook is organized into two parts. The chapters in Part I summarize general theoretical perspectives on prejudice at an overall level. The focus of Part I is thus on reviewing theories that provide the foundation for understanding the psychology of prejudice generally, and which are relevant for understanding prejudice toward multiple specific target groups and in diverse contexts. Part II contains chapters focusing on prejudice in specific domains; such as sexism and racism; and related to this, theories about specific forms of prejudice and how prejudice operates in specific contexts.

## Part I: General Theoretical Perspectives

In Chapter 2, Brewer presents a comprehensive review of ingroup bias and outgroup hostility. Brewer argues that it is critical for research on prejudice and discrimination to differentiate between these two concepts, and further, that ingroup bias (or “love”) can account for a substantial portion of the prejudice and discrimination in society. Brewer emphasizes the important point that prejudice and discrimination can readily arise in the absence of outgroup hostility and that ingroup favoritism alone may be enough to produce systemic discrimination and resulting inequality. Brewer discusses novel ways in which prejudice and discrimination can be reduced or ameliorated by reducing group boundaries and creating more inclusive ingroups or a common identity.

In Chapter 3, Sng, Williams, and Neuberg present a broad evolutionary perspective on prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. This general evolutionary perspective underpins much of the research on the social scientific study of prejudice more generally, and many of the following chapters in the handbook make explicit assumptions grounded in evolutionary psychology. To paraphrase Dobzhansky’s (1973) well-known quote, nothing in the scientific study of prejudice and intergroup relations makes sense except in light of evolution.

Sng et al. begin their chapter by presenting an overview of evolutionary theory and address possible, and sometimes all too common, misconceptions about the theory. The authors then present an overview of the concept of affordance management systems – psychological systems adapted to identify and react to social threats and opportunities – and explain how modern-day expressions of prejudice are a result of such evolved systems. Evolutionary psychology provides a rich theoretical framework for generating novel hypotheses in many domains of psychology. Sng et al. take full advantage of this to review and derive a number of nuanced hypotheses that expand our understanding of the psychological processes that generate prejudice, and the contexts in which different specific forms of prejudice will be expressed. This chapter, in conjunction with Chapter 2, provide two of the key overarching meta-theoretical perspectives that anchor the remainder of the handbook.

In Chapter 4, Yogeewaran, Devos, and Nash provide a review and summary of reaction-time and neuropsychological measures of implicit prejudice. The development of such measures is arguably one of the most important advances in the scientific study of

prejudice in recent decades. Yogeeswaran et al. provide a comprehensive review of the factors known to shape implicit biases and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of many of the most popular measures in the area. They review the Implicit Association Test, priming designs, the Go/No-Go Association Task, designs using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and Electroencephalography. Yogeeswaran et al. also discuss how measures of implicit bias inform our understanding of prejudice in applied domains, such as non-verbal behavior, job hiring, voting decisions, medical decisions, and economic choices. This chapter provides an extensive review of the methods available for assessing implicit prejudice, and serves as an excellent starting point for researchers and students new to the field, as well as those wanting to keep abreast of key developments shaping the area.

In Chapter 5, Sidanius, Cotterill, Sheehy-Skeffington, Kteily, and Carvacho review Social Dominance Theory. As the authors note, this chapter represents the first major review of the theory in a decade (the last being Pratto et al., 2006). Sidanius and colleagues review and discuss research on a number of new and emerging aspects of Social Dominance Theory, including the stability and contingent effects of Social Dominance Orientation, the causal relationship between empathy and Social Dominance Orientation, and a new mechanism through which they propose ideology contributes to the maintenance of inequality. The chapter also contains a comprehensive response to some of the recent criticisms of the theory, and notes a number of new promising directions for future research. In addition to all of this, Sidanius et al. also provide an exhaustive bibliography of research applying Social Dominance Theory in different domains since 2005. This bibliography should prove invaluable to both students and scholars new to the theory.

In Chapter 6, Duckitt and Sibley review and update 15 years of research on the Dual Process Motivational Model of Ideology and Prejudice (following the original formulation of the model by Duckitt, 2001). Duckitt's model provides an overall framework identifying *dual processes* that generate individual differences in prejudice and related ideologies. The theory draws on Social Dominance Theory and the identification of Social Dominance Orientation as one of two core motivational goals predicting prejudice. According to the dual process model, the other core motivational goal predicting prejudice is based on a threat-driven motivation for social cohesion, as indexed by Right-Wing Authoritarianism. In this chapter, Duckitt and Sibley expand the dual process model by differentiating between legitimizing myths, group stratifications, targets of prejudice, and support for different policies and leadership styles that should be predicted by Social Dominance Orientation and Right-Wing Authoritarianism.

In Chapter 7, Barlow, Sherlock, and Zietsch review literature that suggests that individual tendencies to be prejudiced (or not) are genetic. They describe the classic twin study design, which forms the basis of all the research reviewed, before highlighting multiple studies showing that intergroup attitudes, political conservatism, and social dominance orientation (among other things) are often in large part heritable. They end by engaging with the troubled history of genetics and prejudice (with faulty understandings of the former often contributing to the latter) and speculate on how we

wed together evidence-based interventions designed to reduce prejudice with the knowledge that some people are going to be more (or less) oriented toward intergroup suspicion and antipathy to begin with. As discussed earlier in this chapter, we feel that the discipline will only continue to grow and improve by taking into account biological as well as psychological determinants of prejudice, as the two are inextricably linked.

In Chapter 8, Tropp, Mazziotta, and Wright introduce the applied section of the handbook with their comprehensive treatment of recent developments in intergroup contact theory. Intergroup contact is one of the most enduring and widely researched theories for reducing prejudice. The field of intergroup contact is also rapidly expanding in contemporary social psychology, generating many new exciting developments and innovations in recent years. Tropp and colleagues provide a comprehensive review of contact research, and focus on three key emerging areas within the field: the effects of affective processes in both direct and indirect contact, the effects of group status, and the effect of contact valence. This chapter thus provides an excellent review of “classic” contact research, as well as explanations of how contact works to reduce prejudice, while also directing contact researchers toward new avenues of study.

In Chapter 9, Dixon, Durrheim, Stevenson, and Cakal discuss the difference between models of social change that focus on prejudice reduction (which tend to be the majority of them, as evidenced by the title of this section) and those that focus on collective action. This distinction is something that had been largely overlooked until rather recently, with the emergence of work documenting the so-called ironic effects of contact (Dixon et al., 2007) and encapsulated in the pithily titled article on the topic “Let them eat harmony . . .” (Dixon et al., 2010).

In their chapter, Dixon and colleagues bring the first part of the handbook to a close with their discussion of psychological processes that may either (a) reduce prejudice (in terms of increasing how much groups feel positive toward each other), but not necessarily lead to reductions in inequality or hierarchy, or (b) lead to political mobilization and may result in reductions in inequality, but not necessarily more liking. Critically, and in their own words, the authors point to how it is inaccurate to think of this distinction in terms of a simple “prejudice reduction *versus* collective action” formulation. In this chapter, Dixon et al. lay the groundwork for future research exploring the strengths of both approaches, and the contexts in which they may be more or less effective for social change more broadly. Dixon et al. make an extremely important point in this regard, and we echo their call for further research on social change that explicitly considers both prejudice reduction and collective action.

### Intermission: Historical Reflection

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In the intermission, we take a break from reviews and theoretical models of prejudice and instead hear the personal story and reflections from one of the key figures in the history of our discipline, Jane Elliott. Jane Elliott is not a psychologist or researcher, but a teacher and activist. Elliott’s work has been massively influential in informing members of the general public (and our students) about the experience of prejudice, and shaped much

consequent public debate and research. In Chapter 10, Elliott offers her perspective on a life spent campaigning and developing interventions to reduce discrimination.

In 1968, Jane Elliott was working as a grade-school teacher in the United States. It was directly after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. that Elliott entered her third-grade classroom, in her own words: “determined to teach my students about the ugliness of prejudice and the discrimination that results from it . . .” Many of our students read secondary accounts of Elliott’s Blue-eyed/Brown-eyed exercise in their undergraduate social psychology textbooks, or watch footage from documentaries. Along with such summaries, they also read secondary analyses by social scientists discussing the psychological mechanisms through which Elliott’s exercise operates to cause self-reflection intended to reduce discrimination. Here, Elliott offers her own account of the events leading up to the creation of the Brown-eyed/Blue-eyed exercise, her personal analysis of why the exercise is such a powerful intervention, and her reflections on how to reduce racism more generally. With her incisive wit, she challenges us as researchers, arguing that *prejudice is not the problem*. Instead, she suggests, we need to challenge systems (rather than individuals) and actions (rather than feelings). Comparisons can be drawn between the arguments that Elliott makes and those highlighted by other authors within this book.

Elliott’s challenge to us is real and difficult. She asks us to ensure that our work is not just for show – she calls on us to make a difference. On an empirical level, she also (indirectly) asks us to think about our methods and measures – are there ways that we can make sure that behavior is assessed (not just attitudes), for example? Finally, she asks us to be brave. Again, she does not do this directly. Instead, through her stories, including the sometimes frightening reactions to her work, she demonstrates qualities much needed in those who work to combat inequality: persistence, dedication, and perhaps even *chutzpah*. Elliott’s chapter provides an important historical context for anyone studying the psychology of prejudice, or the history of psychology more generally.

## Part II: Prejudice in Specific Domains

In Chapter 11, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Pearson discuss contemporary forms of racism in the United States. Dovidio et al. first describe the development of subtle forms of racism, which developed in response to changing social norms in the post-civil-rights era in the United States. They then introduce the concepts of Symbolic Racism, Modern Racism, Ambivalent Racism, and Aversive Racism. It is this latter theory for which Dovidio and colleagues are well known, and they provide a detailed and comprehensive review and update of their theory. A key concept in Aversive Racism Theory is that people can express pro-egalitarian sentiments, but simultaneously hold non-conscious or implicit biases. Dovidio et al. extend the general review of implicit measures provided in Chapter 4 by Yogeeswaran et al. to focus specifically on measures of implicit or non-conscious racial bias. They also dedicate a substantial part of the chapter to discussing implications for interventions informed by research on Aversive Racism Theory. These include designs aiming to reduce implicit bias, correcting for unconscious bias, and



harnessing egalitarian motives, and redirecting the forces of ingroup bias. Aversive Racism Theory, and other theories of contemporary racism, form a cornerstone of research on racism more generally, and it is for this reason that we locate the chapter in Part II. However, the informative reflections and discussion of interventions aimed at reducing or eliminating the effects of implicit racial biases mean that this chapter also speaks to prejudice reduction in applied contexts.

In Chapter 12, Osborne, Davies, and Hutchinson discuss stereotypicality biases in the criminal justice system. The chapter provides a natural follow-on from the methodological focus on implicit prejudice provided by Yogeeswaran et al. in Part I, and discusses how such biases result in race-based injustices within the justice system. More generally, Osborne et al. provide a comprehensive review of research on how perceived stereotypicality (the extent to which one is believed to look like a prototypical member of one's group) may affect outcomes for people within the criminal justice system. This includes the likelihood of one being shot by police, biases in eyewitness identification, and even an increased likelihood of being sentenced to death – a chilling effect referred to as “looking deathworthy” (Eberhardt et al., 2006). Osborne et al. provide a comprehensive and systematic update of the accumulating studies that have consistently identified such biases, and document the extent to which such biases can have a powerful cumulative effect on the outcomes experienced by disadvantaged and minority groups.

In Chapter 13, Ward, Szabo, and Stuart review theory and research on prejudice and discrimination directed toward immigrants. Immigration is on the rise worldwide, and this has and will continue to increase the cultural diversity of many nations. Ward et al. expand this discussion by synthesizing research on intergroup relations with research on acculturation to present a unified multilevel framework for the cross-cultural study of prejudice and discrimination against immigrants. Their model provides a much-needed conduit between the acculturation and intergroup literatures.

In Chapter 14, Connor, Glick, and Fiske present a review and update of 20 years of research on Ambivalent Sexism Theory. Since its initial presentation by Glick and Fiske in 1996, Ambivalent Sexism Theory has perhaps become the most influential theory of sexism. No handbook on the psychology of prejudice would be complete without a chapter on this topic. The theory describes how two forms of sexism – hostile and benevolent – operate together to provide a powerful and synergistic ideological system that maintains and legitimizes patriarchy. As we alluded to in our opening discussion of the nature of prejudice, a key insight of the theory is that beliefs and attitudes that idealize women and position them as wonderful and caring are a key building block in a larger set of ideologies that justify gender inequality and the oppression of women. Connor et al. review recent research on Ambivalent Sexism Theory, and focus specifically on discussing how the theory informs our understanding of physical and sexual violence toward women.

In Chapter 15, Poteat and Birkett review research on sexual prejudice. Poteat and Birkett begin by describing the different ways in which sexual prejudice has been operationalized over the years, in terms of homophobia, sexual stigma, heterosexism,

and the modern definition of sexual prejudice (negative attitudes toward individuals based on their sexual minority group membership). The chapter draws on a wide range of theories and presents a comprehensive review of the individual and intergroup/societal factors associated with sexual prejudice. These include gender ideology, Social Dominance Orientation, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, the salience of sexual identity, levels of intergroup contact, and peer socialization and norms. Poteat and Birkett also discuss the importance of considering sexual prejudice in combination with multiple stigmatized identities, and make a call for future research in this area.

## Conclusion

Finally, in Chapter 16, we conclude by identifying and discussing eight “Hard Problems” that we think remain to be resolved in the contemporary scientific study of prejudice and its reduction. In 1900, David Hilbert proposed a list of 23 key challenges or problems in mathematics (Hilbert et al., 1902). These became known as the “Hilbert Problems” and formally defined major challenges for the field of mathematics. The scientific study of prejudice and intergroup relations has lacked a framework for defining the most challenging problems in research on the psychology of prejudice. In this chapter, we provide a framework listing these problems for research on prejudice.

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