The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice

Concise Student Edition

The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice: Concise Student Edition aims to answer the questions: Why is prejudice so persistent? How does it affect people exposed to it? And what can we do about it? With cutting-edge research from top scholars in the field, the chapters present an overview of psychological models of prejudice and investigate key domains such as racism, sexism, and the criminal justice system. This student edition of the award-winning Cambridge Handbook includes new pedagogical features such as learning objectives, core terms and definitions, summary points, discussion questions, recommended readings, and an instructor’s test bank. It also features a new conclusion chapter that analyzes eight hard problems currently faced by researchers and activists, thus engaging students in deep, forward-thinking discussion. Developed specifically for use in Psychology of Prejudice courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the Concise Student Edition is an essential teaching and learning resource.

Fiona Kate Barlow is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow at the School of Psychology, the University of Queensland, Australia. She is a social psychologist specializing in the study of race relations, with a particular focus on how the small interracial interactions that we have shape our racial attitudes and behaviors. From 2012 to 2014 Barlow held an Australian Research Council Early Career Fellowship, and in 2017 she was the chief scientist on the critically acclaimed documentary The Truth About Racism. She is also the recipient of the 2013 Society for Australasian Social Psychology Early Career Researcher Award, and multiple teaching and postgraduate supervision awards.

Chris G. Sibley is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He is a social psychologist and the founder of the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS), a twenty-year longitudinal national probability study of social attitudes, personality, and health outcomes across New Zealand. As an author of over 200 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, he was identified as a ‘Rising Star’ by the Association for Psychological Science in 2011 and received the Erik Erikson Early Career Award in 2014 from the International Society of Political Psychology. He is a long-time collaborator of Dr Fiona Kate Barlow.
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Concise Student Edition

Edited by

Fiona Kate Barlow, University of Queensland
Chris G. Sibley, University of Auckland
This book is dedicated to our students.
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Preface

Fiona Kate Barlow and Chris G. Sibley

Why We Edited This Handbook

Prejudice is a difficult topic to talk about, let alone teach; we all have a vested interest in prejudice, whether through experiencing it personally, perpetrating it, or defending dearly held positions as non-prejudiced. A commitment to researching, understanding, and talking about prejudice, however, was what brought us (the editors) together 10 years ago. In 2007 we both attended a conference, and after hearing each other speak about applying psychological techniques to the study of intergroup antipathy and warmth, we knew we had to meet. Over a coffee in the morning break of the conference we began chatting, and over a decade later we have not stopped. Although living in separate countries, we typically make the time to talk weekly, and email even more frequently. We both have a borderline obsession with data analysis, and a perpetual desire to apply the scientific lens to social issues. In particular, while a lot has changed over the last 10 years, our commitment to studying prejudice has not. We have conducted research on how personality, intergroup contact, ideology, and group membership contribute to the genesis and experience of prejudice. Consequently, when the opportunity arose for us to edit The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice, we could not pass it up.

We have both taught widely, from early undergraduate through to postgraduate courses. One thing that we have noticed separately, and discussed at length, is how difficult it is to communicate about prejudice to students. The reasons for this are manifold, and we only touch on a few here. First, and perhaps most importantly, the topic of prejudice is not one divorced from emotions; it is inherently tied to lived experiences, to debates, and to ideological positions. Second, prejudice is hard to understand; there is no one explanation for the development of prejudice, and no one target. Third, there is often a large gap between the scientific study of prejudice, and on-the-ground experiences and activism. Finally, many students resist the idea of “the psychology of prejudice” forming a legitimate and important topic of study and teaching, while others simultaneously perceive a need for an enhanced focus on the psychology of social life and social problems.

When we came together to work on this handbook, we wanted to create a resource that would walk students through multiple aspects of understanding prejudice. We wanted to engage with different (and often competing) perspectives about how prejudice develops. Is it evolution? Basic group processes? A struggle for wealth and resources? The answer to any complex question is typically complex itself. In bringing together diverse
perspectives on prejudice, we aimed to encourage students to think both holistically and critically about the problem of prejudice.

We were also mindful of embedding our book within a wide historical context. To this end, we invited Jane Elliott to contribute a chapter to our handbook. In the days following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, primary school teacher Elliott decided to give her class a lesson none would forget. Her mainly White class, she felt, had very little practical understanding of the experience or effects of racism, and consequently little empathy for those subjected to it daily. She developed an exercise where students would discriminate against each other on the basis of a random phenotypic feature – eye color. What resulted is one of the world’s best known (and controversial) classroom exercises on prejudice and discrimination: the blue-eyes/brown-eyes exercise. When we invited Elliott to write a chapter for our handbook we hardly dared hope for a response, let alone one in the affirmative. In this student edition, Elliott’s chapter serves as an intermission breaking up our first block of chapters on general theoretical perspectives on prejudice, and our second block of chapters on prejudice in specific domains. In this latter part we ask students to engage with the research on prejudice against women, racial minorities, immigrants, and sexual minorities. We also focus in on the issue of prejudice as it manifests in the criminal justice system.

Our conclusion chapter serves as a call to arms – we both spent many hours brainstorming and writing, trying to articulate eight big challenges (or “hard problems”) that we see facing those who currently investigate, and communicate about, prejudice. The impact of prejudice in shaping our day-to-day experiences, and the rabbit-warren complexity of trying to understand, explain, and challenge prejudice, cannot be understated. We hope that this book serves as a useful tool for those aiming to understand, teach, research, or challenge prejudice.

Audience

The student edition of The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice has a wide intended audience. Perhaps most intuitively it can be used in universities by those wanting to teach a focused course on prejudice (this could be in general psychology, social psychology, politics, social science, arts, and the list goes on). The handbook read from beginning to end would serve as an ideal structure for a course; students could cover one chapter a week, perhaps with individual students giving talks on the different topics. Multiple-choice questions are included in the student edition, and discussion points are already developed for each week.

That said, the handbook does not rely heavily on assumed knowledge – an enthusiastic high school teacher may introduce single or multiple chapters to their class, and likewise, university professors who simply wish to teach a week on the psychology of prejudice may pick one or two chapters for the class to focus on.

In addition, we hope that the handbook will be useful to lay readers who are looking for an introduction to the science of prejudice. It is clearly and accessibly written, and contains a wide overview of prejudice from differing theoretical perspectives of generalized prejudice,
to prejudice directed toward specific groups (e.g., women, lesbian and gay people, people of color, immigrants). A student or lay reader asking questions about how prejudice develops and is maintained will find clear answers within this handbook.

Finally, we have designed the handbook so that it will also be of use to those formally researching or teaching the psychology of prejudice. For example, in our final chapter we outline eight big problems yet to be sufficiently dealt with in the psychological understanding of prejudice, and hope to set a clear direction for future research.

Features

**Pedagogy.** We aim to create a student edition of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice* that is accessible and above all useful for both students and teachers. Specific features include:

- Clear and brief abstracts for every chapter, providing a chapter overview, so that students and teachers can quickly review the content of each
- A summary of learning objectives for each chapter; these can be used to guide students as they read and engage with the chapters, or by teachers as they set course or class learning objectives
- Core terms and definitions that provide students with critical information as they read and engage with each chapter’s material
- At the conclusion of each chapter, concise summary points are provided; these act as “take-home” messages about the content of each chapter/theoretical perspective/area of study, and can also be used as a study guide
- Discussion questions for each chapter that can prompt classroom conversation and debate, or be used as essay questions
- Each chapter contains a list of core recommended readings for students and teachers wishing to go further with the content of any one chapter; these provide the cornerstones for the scientific study of prejudice, at both a theoretical and an applied level
- 20 multiple-choice questions per chapter, with answer key, that can be used on examinations or as a study guide; the questions vary in levels of difficulty of knowledge, and test both recall and fluid application of the theories and findings of each chapter
- A brand-new conclusion chapter that lays out eight hard problems facing prejudice researchers and activists, that aims to set an agenda for future prejudice research, and prompt deep engagement in students

**Style.** The handbook aims to be accessible to students from high school onwards, while containing sufficient theoretical depth and complexity to be useful to researchers currently working in the area of prejudice and prejudice reduction. Each chapter is written in a clear and coherent style, replete with examples, descriptions of current events that illustrate prejudice, and pithy summaries of theories and research on the psychology of prejudice.
Content. The handbook walks students and teachers through multiple perspectives on how racism develops and manifests. Broadly, the handbook is broken into the following sections.

1. **General theoretical perspectives**: In the eight chapters contained within this part, we approach prejudice from multiple different directions. Where does prejudice come from? Why and how is it maintained? How is it ameliorated? To answer these questions, chapter authors look to basic group processes (Chapter 2), evolution (Chapter 3), the unconscious (Chapter 4), exploitation and social hierarchies (Chapter 5), threat and competition (Chapter 6), and genes (Chapter 7). The vital role that positive and friendly contact plays in reducing intergroup prejudice is covered in Chapter 8, and then a challenge is issued in Chapter 9: is prejudice really the problem, and instead could intergroup antipathy leading to collective action actually be what is needed to redress injustice?

2. **Intermission: Historical perspective**: Jane Elliott’s chapter reflects on her development of the blue-eyed/brown-eyed exercise, community responses to it, and how her understanding of prejudice has grown and changed over the years. Elliott’s chapter is full of heart (and fire!). She contends that prejudice is not the problem; we should stop trying to increase warmth and assume justice will follow. Instead, she urges us to pursue justice, and see attitudes change (potentially very slowly) in its wake.

3. **Prejudice in specific domains**: Following the intermission, we turn our attention toward specific forms of prejudice. Specifically, we focus on racism (Chapter 11), prejudice in the criminal justice system (Chapter 12), anti-immigrant sentiment (Chapter 13), sexism (Chapter 14), and sexual prejudice (Chapter 15).

4. **Conclusion**: Our conclusion chapter, a new addition to this student edition of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice*, aims to lay out the eight big problems facing the psychological study of prejudice. In particular, we address the debate about whether prejudice still exists, whether stereotypes can reflect information accurately, whether calling people prejudiced makes them more prejudiced, the phenomena by which engaging with personal privilege is painful and potentially polarizing, the difficulty of understanding multiple intersectional identities, the rise of populism, the inherently political nature of prejudice, and the amazing stability and resilience of prejudice. We also include practical evidence-based suggestions for how prejudice can be challenged personally, and politically, and conclude by calling for new research, methods, and innovations in the fight to understand prejudice and increase social equity.

**How the Book Should Be Read and Taught**

We aimed to make this handbook as flexible as your teaching methods and requirements are. We iterate that the handbook serves as an ideal course outline in and of itself, and can be read from beginning to end, with students gaining more knowledge about the theory and reality of prejudice with each subsequent chapter. Taught this way, the teacher ideally has an easy task, and the student a clear direction — learning objectives, definitions, and summary points are already generated. Further, discussion questions can be used in class,
or set as essays, and multiple-choice questions can be randomized into exams, or used as study aids.

This said, we also recognize that many lecturers or teachers do not have the time to spend an entire semester or course focusing on the psychology of prejudice. Consequently, selections from the handbook can be used in isolation to serve as companion readings for particular lectures, tutorials, or learning modules. For example, a lecturer may be teaching evolutionary psychology, and want to focus in on how evolutionary theories help us to understand modern-day intergroup conflict. This lecturer may choose several chapters (e.g., Chapter 3: *Evolutionary Approaches to Stereotyping and Prejudice*, Chapter 7: *Is Prejudice Heritable? Evidence from Twin Studies*, and Chapter 6: *The Dual Process Motivational Model of Ideology and Prejudice*). Another lecturer may simply want to spend a week educating students about how prejudice manifests in modern societies. They will benefit from assigning Chapter 11: *Aversive Racism and Contemporary Bias*, to students. Whether a teacher is focusing on how inequality and competition spark prejudice, how gender relations are similar to and different from other intergroup conflicts, or how collective action develops, this handbook can be utilized. In every case, the pedagogical features aim to make this handbook an important resource for those teaching students about prejudice.
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Notes on the Contributors

Fiona Kate Barlow, School of Psychology, University of Queensland

Michelle Birkett, School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Marilynn B. Brewer, Department of Psychology, Ohio State University

Huseyin Cakal, Department of Psychology, University of Exeter

Héctor Carvacho, Department of Psychology, Harvard University; and Escuela de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Rachel A. Connor, Department of Psychology, Princeton University

Sarah Cotterill, Department of Psychology, Harvard University

Paul G. Davies, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia

Thierry Devos, Department of Psychology, San Diego State University

John Dixon, Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University

John F. Dovidio, Department of Psychology, Yale University

John Duckitt, School of Psychology, University of Auckland

Kevin Durrheim, Discipline of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Jane Elliott, Independent scholar

Susan T. Fiske, Department of Psychology, Princeton University

Samuel L. Gaertner, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, University of Delaware

Peter Glick, Department of Psychology, Lawrence University

Shirley Hutchinson, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia

Nour Kteily, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University

Agostino Mazziotta, Institut für Psychologie, FernUniversität in Hagen

Kyle Nash, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury
Notes on the Contributors

STEVEN L. NEUBERG, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University
DANNY OSBORNE, School of Psychology, University of Auckland
ADAM R. PEARSON, Department of Psychology, Pomona College
V. PAUL POTEAT, Lynch School of Education, Boston College
JENNIFER SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON, Department of Psychology, University of Oslo
JAMES M. SHERLOCK, School of Psychology, University of Queensland
CHRIS G. SIBLEY, School of Psychology, University of Auckland
JIM SIDANIUS, Department of Psychology, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University
OLIVER SNG, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University
CLIFFORD STEVENSON, Department of Psychology, University of Anglia Ruskin
JAIMEE STUART, Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington
AGNES SZABO, Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington
LINDA R. TROPP, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
COLEEN WARD, Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington
KEELAH E. G. WILLIAMS, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University
STEPHEN C. WRIGHT, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University
KUMAR YOGEESWARAN, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury
BRENDAN P. ZIETSCH, School of Psychology, University of Queensland; and QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute