

Review: A Tribute to Allport: Surveying the Last 50 Years of Research on Prejudice

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A Tribute to Allport: Surveying the Last 50 Years of Research on Prejudice

On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years After Allport

Edited by John F. Dovidio, Peter Glick, and Laurie A. Rudman. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 488 pp. Paper, \$46.95.

"There is no debate that Gordon W. Allport's (1954/1979) *The Nature of Prejudice* is the foundational work for the social psychology of prejudice." We wholeheartedly agree with this opening sentence (p. 1) of *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years After Allport*, edited by John Dovidio, Peter Glick, and Laurie Rudman. Gordon Allport's seminal work did indeed guide much of the social psychological research on prejudice throughout the last 50 years. And in a fitting tribute to Allport's contributions, this follow-up volume aims to review that substantial body of research and outline an agenda for the future of research on prejudice.

On the 50th anniversary of Allport's original text, the editors of this book assembled an impressive collection of scholars to reflect on the history of the social psychological study of prejudice, speculate on the future of the field, and contemplate Allport's contributions. The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) is the official sponsor of the book, with its royalties going toward SPSSI's educational and scientific programs, a detail that we strongly applaud.

Although intended to celebrate Allport's insights, this book is not a blatant display of adulation. Rather, the editors and authors examine his assertions through a critical—but fair—lens, applauding his hits without sugarcoating his misses. This is clearly an asset of the volume, leaving the reader with an accurate impression of the theoretical foundations laid by Allport, the areas where empirical research has failed to support his analysis, and his hypotheses that remain yet untested.

The book's editors intended it to serve as a companion to Allport's text. We think the current volume would indeed benefit from being teamed with the original work because there is an implicit assumption that the reader has at least a passing familiarity with Allport's analysis of prejudice. To facilitate the pairing of these books, the editors have followed the same sequence of topics and chapters as in Allport's work, with each team of authors tackling its own specialty. This explicit substantive parallel between the original and subsequent works was certainly a wise decision.

Just as the original work did, this book covers a lot of ground on the topic of prejudice, from social cognitive to motivational to sociocultural processes. However, the current volume is necessarily terser than the original, because these authors aim to cover Allport's perspective, developments since that original analysis, and projected topics for future discovery. In an attempt to unify the large number of chapters, each written by a different research team, the editors chose a common expository structure to frame each chapter: a summary of Allport's analysis on the focal topic, a description of theoretical and empirical developments since Allport, a description of new conceptual frameworks for the relevant topic, an examination of extant support for Allport's analysis, and suggestions for fruitful future directions. We think most readers will find this consistency very helpful. However, because this volume covers so much ground in a cursory way, our general sense is that the most appropriate audience includes graduate students and beyond.

The book begins with a basic introductory chapter penned by the team of editors. This sets the stage for the rest of the book by both applauding Allport's contributions and identifying important theoretical considerations beyond his analysis. Because this chapter discusses the book's overarching themes, many readers may benefit from reading it both before and after digesting the rest of the book. The book is then divided into eight substantive sections, each covering a section from Allport's book. Part I ("Preferential Thinking") lays the foundation for a consideration of prejudice by covering social cognitive discussions of how and why people draw meaningful distinctions between their own group and other groups. In chapter 2, Eagly and Diekmann tackle Allport's seminal definition of prejudice as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization," concluding that, although it is useful, researchers are wise to expand this conceptualization to better capture a broader range of prejudices found in human social lives. Fiske next addresses the normal categorization processes related to prejudice and ways in which social motives interplay with those cognitive processes. Brown and Zagefka (chapter 4) examine the psychological consequences related to conceiving of oneself as a member of an ingroup. Importantly, they conceptualize identification processes as allowing multiple identities rather than inducing a choice between the ingroup and the outgroup. In the next chapter, Gaertner and Dovidio take a broad look at the connections between categorization, recategorization, and the prejudice-reducing effects of intergroup contact. This chapter nicely foreshadows subsequent discussions (in chapters 16 and 17) of one of Allport's most influential insights: the contact hypothesis, or the notion that intergroup contact under appropriate conditions can reduce intergroup prejudice. In chapter 6, Jackman considers Allport's assertion that the rejection and mistreatment of outgroups results from intergroup hostility. She concludes with the recommendation that researchers should further consider the social structures (e.g., social class, income) affecting intergroup relations. We wholly agree with Jackman's assessment that analyses of social structural variables are integral to advancing our understanding of intergroup relations. Rudman concludes this section by highlighting a conceptual angle somewhat overlooked by Allport: prejudice against women.

The next section (Part II, "Group Differences") covers perceived and actual differences between groups, especially the roles those group differences play in the development and reduction of prejudice and in the psychological responses of the targets of prejudice. In chapter 8, Judd and Park focus on the extent to which people perceive stereotypic differences between groups—which may reflect bias or accuracy—and the connections between perceived group differences and prejudicial responses. The next two chapters depart from the other chapters in that they highlight the perspectives of the targets of prejudiced feelings rather than the holders of those prejudiced feelings. More specifically, Major and Vick (chapter 9) consider the psychological impact of prejudice on those who are its targets and typical responses to prejudice (e.g., sensitivity to cues of prejudice, ingroup identification vs. disidentification). Furthermore, in a consideration of the responses of African American targets, Jones (chapter 10) encourages researchers to examine the dynamic connections between individual cognitive responses and a group's collective actions. We think it is crucial to continue studying intergroup relations from the viewpoints of the targets of prejudice and discrimination.

In general, Part III (“Perceiving and Thinking About Group Differences”) addresses the cognitive influences on stereotypic beliefs about other groups. In chapter 11, Yzerbyt and Cornielle cover the cognitive factors related to prejudice (e.g., autistic or motivated reasoning), concluding that researchers must continue to discover the ways in which cognitive and motivational processes interplay to create prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. Mullen and Leader (chapter 12) next consider the role of language in prejudice and stereotyping, noting Allport’s frequent use of ethnophaulisms to illustrate specific elements of prejudice and stereotyping throughout *The Nature of Prejudice*. In the next chapter, Jost and Hamilton examine the social categorization processes (e.g., perceptions of group entitativity, intuitive theories of group stereotypes) leading to stereotypes and the related societal and cultural factors that can lead stereotypes to serve purposes related to ego, group, and system justification.

The next section (Part IV, “Sociocultural Factors”) focuses on sociocultural factors in the development, persistence, and reduction of prejudice. Esses, Jackson, Dovidio, and Hodson (chapter 14) discuss the ways in which competition and conflicts between groups create, sustain, and magnify prejudice. In chapter 15, Glick considers Allport’s treatment of scapegoating processes and proposes a modified analysis of scapegoating in which psychodynamic factors are discarded and social-cognitive factors (e.g., individual and collective propensities toward prejudice, prior envious stereotypes of scapegoats) are brought to the forefront. The next two chapters return to Allport’s contact hypothesis, which was introduced in chapter 5. In chapter 16, Pettigrew and Tropp cover the historical traces of research testing the contact hypothesis, concluding with accumulating meta-analytic evidence in support of Allport’s conjecture. In chapter 17, Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, and Voci tackle the issue of the psychological processes underlying the prejudice-reducing effects of intergroup contact.

Broadly speaking, the various psychological pathways to prejudiced beliefs and behavior are covered in Part V (“Acquiring Prejudice”). Crandall and Stangor (chapter 18) examine the causal role of conformity in prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. In the next chapter, Aboud considers the developmental processes by which children acquire prejudice toward others. And in chapter 20, Devine covers the intrapersonal turmoil that can arise from the incompatibility of prejudiced attitudes and egalitarian values. Sears (chapter 21) continues this discussion of such inner conflict, although he focuses on the role of racial prejudice in political life.

In general, the next section (Part VI, “The Dynamics of Prejudice”) focuses on the intrapersonal dynamics of prejudice. In chapter 22, Smith and Mackie examine the hotter side of Allport’s theorizing on prejudice: emotional reactions (e.g., anger, hatred, fear) toward members of other groups. Newman and Caldwell (chapter 23) next consider Allport’s suggestion that psychological projection (and other defensive processes) can play important roles in stereotyping and prejudice, a notion receiving a revival in interest after a long era of ostracism from mainstream psychological conversations about prejudice.

Individual differences in prejudice are addressed in Part VII (“Character Structure”). Duckitt (chapter 24) examines the personality processes relevant to prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. In particular, he analyzes the determinants

of right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation in the context of an integrative model. Then, Batson and Stocks (chapter 25) discuss the social psychological roles of religion—especially different ways of being religious (e.g., extrinsic, intrinsic, quest)—in prejudice. Whereas extrinsic religion tends to be associated with increased prejudice, religion as a genuine quest for meaning appears to be related to decreased prejudice.

And in the final section (Part VIII, “Reducing Group Tensions”), Stephan and Stephan (chapter 26) examine the effectiveness of programs—both old and new—designed to improve intergroup relations. These programs appear to offer modest benefits, although the moderators of their effectiveness remain unclear.

Working through these 26 chapters, several points become evident. First, the scholars contributing to this book are a tremendous strength. These authors represent the established leaders in the contemporary study of prejudice, and they have successfully created another influential text to complement the groundbreaking Allport text. Also, given the large number of chapters and the vast ground they cover, the chapters cross-reference each other frequently, allowing the book as a whole to flow fairly well.

Although Allport—single-handedly and skillfully—set the agenda for the last 50 years of prejudice research, it also becomes evident throughout the book that the field will further benefit from the expansion of its research agenda for the next 50 years and beyond. The editors and authors have noted some issues they consider valuable for future research. Here we compile our own list of agenda items for the future, both by building on those outlined in the book and by reflecting on our own perspectives on the field.

First, it seems clear that all forms of prejudice and discrimination—whether related to differences in ethnicity, religion, gender, and so on—may not be identical or interchangeable. That is, individuals may direct qualitatively different negative emotions, cognitions, and actions toward different target groups, a point that was somewhat obscured by Allport’s focus on the monolithic constructs of antipathy and exclusion (see Eagly and Diekmann’s chapter 2 and Smith and Mackie’s chapter 22). Recently, a small set of researchers has begun to systematically explore people’s diverse reactions to different targets (Brewer & Alexander, 2002; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; for an overview, see also Mackie & Smith, 2002). This research holds great promise, because a more complete understanding of reactions to different groups should improve our tools to eliminate or prevent those negative reactions. Along similar lines, Rudman (chapter 7), Jackman (chapter 6), and Eagly and Diekmann (chapter 2) all note that gender prejudice is fundamentally different from other forms of prejudice (see also Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). We agree and think that many benefits, both theoretical and applied, will come from a better understanding of the unique features of sexism.

Recently, researchers have started to extend systematic explorations of prejudice to focus on the perspectives of the targets of prejudice (e.g., Swim & Stangor, 1998). To better understand the dynamic social relationships between groups in American society and throughout the world, we think it is crucial to give targets’ perspectives additional consideration. Two issues in particular stand out along these lines. First, as the editors clearly describe in chapter 1, many researchers have

underappreciated the full impact of prejudice and discrimination on people who are the targets of this negative treatment. Second, researchers have also tended to underappreciate the complexity of intergroup relations by focusing largely on the majority group's perceptions of minority groups, rather than also on each minority group's perceptions of the majority group (and other minority groups). Our social world is a heterogeneous one consisting of many diverse, interdependent networks. Thus, a more thorough consideration of how different groups view each other may offer valuable means to improve often-strained relationships within those social networks (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2003, 2006).

In addition, we concur with the editors, who note that Allport did not fully appreciate the nonconscious processes involved in prejudice. For instance, a wealth of research on the Implicit Association Test (e.g., Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), including recent scholarly disputes on its meaning and measurement (e.g., Blanton & Jaccard, 2006; Greenwald, Nosek, & Sriram, 2006), clearly demonstrates the role nonconscious factors may play in prejudice and discrimination. As these debates suggest, however, many unresolved questions about nonconscious processes remain to be clarified in the coming decades.

Allport's focus clearly was on the individual contemplating members of other groups. As a result, he did not paint a complete picture of the various levels at which prejudice-related processes may occur. We think the field would benefit from continued considerations of additional levels of analysis. For instance, we look forward to future research building on recent advances in the social neuroscience of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (e.g., Amodio et al., 2004; Phelps et al., 2000). In addition, we also think it's important to move up a level to consider group-level interactions in the context of the ongoing globalization and internationalization of our social world.

Although our list could continue, we'll close by noting one more arena for additional future empirical and theoretical development. Whereas research on prejudice has focused largely on the *processes* of prejudice, we think it is also important to understand the *contents* of prejudice and discrimination (Schaller & Conway, 2005). That is, the substance of prejudice may not be random and arbitrary, and a better understanding of this content should yield valuable insights into intervention programs that might best reduce prejudice (Neuberg & Cottrell, 2006; Schaller & Neuberg, 2006).

All in all, there can be no doubt that Gordon Allport laid the foundation for research on prejudice. However, we think the editors and authors of this volume have successfully built on that solid base by adding their own theoretical and empirical layers, ones that further strengthen the field's knowledge for the future.

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