EDITED BY

Martha Augoustinos and **Katherine J. Reynolds**

UNDERSTANDING

PREJUDICE,

RACISM, AND

SOCIAL CONFLICT

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Preface

As with most fields of social inquiry, the wider social and political climate over the last decade has been significant in shaping and influencing the research concerns and interests of this book: the psychology of prejudice and racism. Australia has witnessed an unprecedented period of public debate and controversy over matters of 'race', immigration, and national identity in the last decade. 'Race' has always been a central feature of the Australian political landscape since colonization. The treatment of Indigenous Australians throughout this period has been likened to genocide (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), and Australia maintained a race-based immigration programme known as the 'White Australia' policy until the early 1970s. Since the 1970s, however, 'multiculturalism' has been officially embraced by successive federal governments, and in line with this change Australia came to be recognized internationally as a 'successful' model of a multicultural society. More recently however, sustained attacks on 'multiculturalism' and racial politics emerged after the election of the conservative Howard government in 1996 and the rise of Pauline Hanson and the 'One Nation' party she founded. Since this time, Australia has witnessed a continual erosion of the 'liberal' social policies of the previous Keating Labor government. Indigenous people have borne the brunt of these attacks: their entitlements to land have been undermined by government policy, Prime Minister Howard has steadfastly refused to publicly apologize to Indigenous people for the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities (the Stolen Generations), and heated public debates have emerged over the nature of 'Reconciliation' that should be negotiated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It has been this political and social climate, a climate that transformed Australia from a liberal society that embraced, officially at least, cultural diversity and difference, to one in which racial politics took centre stage, that Australian social researchers have tried to make sense of. How could the political and social landscape change so quickly and dramatically? Were Australians deep down 'really' racist, but had repressed such tendencies because of the norms of 'political correctness'? The 'chattering classes' the 'educated elite', conservatives argued, had stifled open and free speech about politically sensitive issues for too long and now 'mainstream Australia' was reasserting itself. One political analyst refers to this political backlash as 'the revenge of the mainstream' (Johnson, 2000).

While this book is largely a product of trying to understand and make sense of these political and social events within Australia, during the same period several Western countries experienced and witnessed similar political debates over 'racial' concerns, for example, Le Pen and the National Front in France, the proliferation of Neo-Nazi sentiment in a unified Germany, the electoral support of Joerg Haider and the Far-Right Freedom Party in Austria. Our book,

therefore, should not be viewed as being concerned with parochial issues, to do with Australian political and social issues alone. Each and every chapter tries to grapple with prejudice and racism as not only a domestic concern, but also a pervasively international one.

Such shifts in the social and political landscape, where prejudice and racism become more or less culturally dominant, highlight the ephemeral nature of particular value systems and the interplay between the nature of the social system and individual attitudes and values. In our view, it is explaining this dynamic nature of prejudice that presents a significant and pressing challenge to the discipline of psychology. This point highlights our own theoretical biases. We believe that prejudice and racism as social phenomena, cannot be understood as the product of individual psychology. Of course prejudice is expressed discursively and behaviourally at the individual level, but an exclusive focus on the contents and processes of the individual mind ignores the structural context and the social identities within which people live out their everyday lives. In these terms, we believe that the interplay between the individual and the social system provides the most fertile ground for understanding the depth and complexity of social phenomena such as prejudice and racism. Judging from recent trends in social psychological research toward more asocial theories and research methods (e.g., information processing accounts, implicit prejudice measures, and personality approaches) ours is a minority view. However, this book reflects an attempt not only to represent current trends but also to emphasize their potential limitations and to highlight and advance more socially-based approaches to the study of prejudice and racism.

In terms of these aims, leading researchers were asked to provide an overview of theory and research related to their specific area of expertise and to identify strengths, weaknesses, and future directions. We also emphasized that the target audiences for the book were undergraduates, interested members of the general public, and academics looking for an introduction into prejudice and racism theory and research. We would like to thank all the authors for the enthusiasm with which they have embraced our vision and for their informative, thought-provoking, accessible, and up-to-date contributions.

We also would like to express our gratitude to Michelle Ryan and Lynette Webb for their assistance with organizing and compiling the references and the various indexes and for their careful attention to detail in formating much of the manuscript. The editorial team at Sage: Michael Carmichael, Naomi Meredith, and Ziyad Marer provided constant guidance, encouragement, and enthusiasm for the book. Finally, we would like to thank our families, Dave, Dylan, Tony, and Georgina, who yet again have demonstrated their patience and encouragement with respect to our academic endeavours.

Martha Augoustinos and Kate Reynolds, 2001

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John Turner is Professor of Psychology at the Australian National University, Canberra. He obtained his BA and PhD in social psychology from the Universities of Sussex and Bristol (UK) respectively. He collaborated with Henri Tajfel at the University of Bristol in the early 1970s in developing social identity theory, and also originated self-categorization theory in the late 1970s

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Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1 Prejudice, Racism, and Social Psychology

Martha Augoustinos and Katherine J. Reynolds

During the last years of the twentieth century, a range of international events has focused attention on issues of prejudice and racism: increasing ethno-nationalistic tensions in the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union; ethnic conflict in the Middle East and Africa; and a resurgence of debates and controversies concerning issues of 'race', racism, multiculturalism, nationalism, and immigration in western Europe, the US, and Australasia. In the 1990s alone we witnessed several sustained and systematic programs of genocide in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Rwanda. These sociopolitical events have led to a resurgence of research around issues of 'race', racism, and intergroup relations within the social sciences. With the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950, by Adorno and his colleagues and Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954, psychology, as a discipline, has contributed consistently and extensively to theories of prejudice and racism. While the common core of these theories has been to understand the psychology of prejudice, they have differed significantly in their theoretical approach and level of analysis. It is timely then, that as we enter the twenty first century we take stock and critically reflect upon what psychological theory has contributed to our knowledge of this pressing social issue, and offer some insights as to how the knowledge we generate may be put into practical service in understanding intergroup conflict and oppression. The present edited book has been written with this purpose in mind.

Most social researchers have argued that prejudice and racism manifest themselves at different levels, at the individual, interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels. As such, a variety of theoretical and conceptual approaches are therefore necessary to fully understand this social issue. Each of these perspectives is well represented by the contributors to this book, who outline significant and recent developments in relation to each approach. In presenting a variety of different analytic frameworks to understanding racism and prejudice, the present book also raises the difficult question as to whether it is possible to integrate these different approaches. This question has always been a bone of contention within psychology, as analytic frameworks differ significantly in their epistemological assumptions and orientations. As we will see, there are

very different views regarding whether such a theoretical integration is possible or even desirable in understanding prejudice and racism.

This introductory chapter is designed to orient the reader to the conceptual and theoretical content discussed throughout this book. Firstly, we will define the concepts 'prejudice' and 'racism', by reviewing the historical and contemporary definitions of these constructs. Secondly, we consider the role of scientific racism within the discipline of psychology itself, and what implications this has had on psychological theory and practice throughout the last century and into the present. Thirdly, we provide a brief overview of prejudice research within psychology, identifying four broad and distinct levels of explanation into which psychological theories can be classified: the individual, the cognitive, the intergroup, and the socio-cultural. Similarly, we have organized the parts of this book to correspond to these different explanatory levels. Lastly, we describe the contents of each chapter in this book, detailing the central arguments and theoretical orientation of each.

Prejudice

A plethora of terms within social psychology have been used to describe the concept of prejudice including: discrimination, ethnocentrism, ingroup favouritism, ingroup bias, outgroup derogation, social antagonism, stereotyping, and social distance. Many of the definitions of prejudice that have been popular at various times in social psychology are consistent with different theoretical approaches. Typically though, prejudice or related terms refer to negative attitudes or behaviours towards a person because of his or her membership of a particular group. However, use of such terms also conveys, more or less explicitly, a value dimension that such treatment is bad and unjustified (Ashmore and DelBoca, 1981; Duckitt, 1992). For example, prejudice was defined as being, 'without sufficient warrant' (Allport, 1954: 7), 'a failure of rationality' (Harding et al., 1969: 6), and 'irrational, unjust, or intolerant' (Milner, 1975: 9).

Consistent with this view, prejudice traditionally has been understood as: (a) a negative orientation towards members of particular groups, (b) bad and unjustified, (c) irrational and erroneous, and (d) rigid. Irrational, because prejudice is not seen to be tied to the social reality of the perceiver. Erroneous, because such views are the outcome of cognitive distortions due to, amongst other things: information processing limitations, the impact of mood effects, and dysfunctional personalities (e.g., authoritarianism). Bad, because of the negative consequences such attitudes can foster, and rigid because of the belief that prejudiced people are unlikely to change their view even in the face of contrary information. Clearly then, 'prejudice' and 'discrimination' have largely been constructed as pejorative terms (Harding et al., 1969).

More recent work, however, has avoided the inherent value connotations associated with the term. This has led to the use of a range of more 'evaluatively neutral' definitions of prejudice such as 'ingroup favouritism' or 'bias' (Duckitt,

1992). For example, Tajfel defined prejudice as 'a favourable or unfavourable predisposition toward any member of a category in question' (Tajfel, 1982b: 3). Similarly, Brewer and Kramer defined prejudice as 'shared feelings of acceptance-rejection, trust-distrust, and liking-disliking that

characterize attitudes towards specific groups in a social system' (1985: 230). In general, the move towards less pejorative definitions has been associated with the rise of cognitive models of prejudice that have come to view prejudice increasingly as a natural and inevitable consequence of inherent cognitive processes such as categorization and stereotyping. However, in many instances this more neutral terminology means that the affect and *values* that characterize prejudice have become more difficult to detect and recognize in theories of discrimination and social conflict. Moreover, as many social theorists have argued, this has had the net effect of obscuring the political and ideological dimensions of prejudice.

Racism

There has been a tendency within the literature to use the terms prejudice and racism interchangeably. Jones (1972) however, makes the case that racism is distinct from prejudice. While prejudice is usually regarded as an individual phenomenon, racism is a broader construct that links individual beliefs and practices to wider social and institutional norms and practices.

The belief in a racial hierarchy between groups is a central defining characteristic adopted by many theorists to define racism. For example, Jones defines racism as a 'belief in the superiority of one's own race over another, and the behavioral enactments that maintain those superior and inferior positions' (1972: 5). The belief that the differences between racial groups are biologically driven implies that such variability is fundamental and fixed. These essentialist beliefs lead to the categorization of people into groups based on assumptions that surface characteristics reflect deeper essential features (Allport, 1954; Medin, 1989; Rothbart and Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt et al., 1997). Such characteristics it is believed, are inherent, unchangeable, and reflect the 'real' nature of the groups they are established to represent (Miles, 1989).

It has been argued however, that this definition of racism is quite restrictive because contemporary racism is less about beliefs in the biological superiority/inferiority of groups, and increasingly about beliefs in a *cultural* hierarchy (Essed, 1991). Contemporary racism justifies and legitimates inequities between groups, not on the basis of biology or 'skin colour', but on claims that certain groups transgress fundamental social values such as the work ethic, self-reliance, self-discipline, and individual achievement. Another contemporary variant of racism, referred to as the 'new racism', rejects the notion of a cultural hierarchy altogether, but instead, emphasizes the need and desirability of the separate development of cultural groups, claiming that it is not in 'human nature' for us to co-exist peacefully with culturally different 'others' (Barker, 1981). This distinction between the 'old' and the 'new'

racism(s) is a theme that runs throughout the book (see Chapter 2 in particular), but for now the important point is that racism has been defined and constructed variously, and often there are very fierce debates both within academe and in everyday life contesting what it is exactly that constitutes racism.

The second important difference between prejudice and racism relates to the role of power. At an individual level, a person can display race prejudice: 'a negative attitude toward a person or group based upon a social comparison process in which the individual's own ['racial'] group is taken as a positive point of reference' (Jones, 1972: 3), but this in itself does not necessarily constitute racism. In racism, the significance of ingroup preference (i.e., ethnocentrism) lies in the ingroup being able to exercise *power* over the outgroup (Operario and Fiske, 1998; Reicher, Chapter 16). If we define racism, without reference to power differentials between groups, it is clear that anyone can engage in ingroup preference and outgroup bias. 'Everybody is racist' is a counterclaim that is often used to counter accusations of racism (Hage, 1998). Indeed, this is often the implication of cognitive theories of prejudice: whether we like it or not, we are all prone to favouring our own group and discriminating against an outgroup. Importantly, the power one group has over another transforms race prejudice into racism and links individual prejudice with broader social practices (Jones, 1972, 1998).

Racism, practiced at a structural and cultural level, maintains and reproduces the *power* differentials between groups in the social system (Jones, 1998). Racism practiced at this broad societal level has been referred to as institutional and cultural racism. Institutional racism refers to the institutional policies and practices that are put in place to protect and legitimate the advantages and power one group has over another. Institutional racism can be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional, but the consequences are that racist outcomes are achieved and reproduced. For example, Jones (1972) highlights the entrance practices of university colleges in the US as an example of institutional racism. Universities relied on certain standardized tests to warrant entry despite the fact that African-American applicants had inferior training in the content that was assessed and in test taking. In this case, institutional practices are unequal and restrict the choices, rights, access, and opportunities of different groups.

Cultural racism occurs when those in positions of power define the norms, values, and standards in a particular culture. These mainstream ideals that permeate all aspects of the social system are often fundamentally antagonistic with those embraced by the powerless (e.g., African-Americans). In circumstances such as these the powerless, in order to participate in society, have to surrender their own cultural heritage and adopt new ones (e.g., those of the White majority).

Racism in Psychology

While psychology has contributed important insights to the study of prejudice and racism, at the same time it has not been immune from serious criticisms