Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination in Europe

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This article provides an introduction to research on European prejudice and discrimination. First, we list the distinctive characteristics of a European perspective and provide a short sketch of European immigration and ethnic groups. Europe has become a multicultural community. Nevertheless, public opinion and the continent’s politics often do not reflect this empirical fact. Prejudice and discrimination directed at immigrants are a widespread phenomena across Europe. Several cross-European surveys support this conclusion, although theoretically driven surveys on prejudice and discrimination in Europe remain rare. Cross-European research studies classical and modern theories of prejudice and discrimination and attempts to uncover the psychological mechanisms that explain individual readiness to exclude ethnic groups. A brief sketch of recent European research is presented. This issue offers both important cross-national perspectives as well as needed comparisons with the more studied case of racial prejudice and discrimination in the United States.

Why an Issue Focusing on Intergroup Relations in Europe?

Scholars who study ethnic group relations have repeatedly shown the dependence of ethnic relations on the societal context (Trickett, Watts, & Birman,
Yet social psychological research on ethnic intergroup relations has been dominated by a North-American perspective, focusing in particular on the unique case of Black–White relations. The present issue on prejudice and discrimination addresses this problem by presenting research on the great variety of intergroup relations throughout Europe.

But why focus on Europe for the needed comparisons? First, as this issue demonstrates, recent years have witnessed a belated outpouring of research on intergroup relations throughout the continent. This literature has not been widely available to North American social scientists. Thus, we hope this issue will serve to make this expanding and important research literature more widely known and available.

Second, the apparent similarities between Europe and North America are more superficial than their deep differences. Focusing on European ethnic research not only means an extension from one cultural context to another but also taps vastly different historical backgrounds that shape even current debates on interethnic relations. Europe has had a longer and deeper history of colonization than the United States. In turn, the United States had slavery—an institution unknown in Europe as a mass phenomenon since the Middle Ages. Additionally, Europe never had a comparable civil rights movement primarily driven by ethnic minorities as the United States did in the 1960s. One critical consequence of this is that European ethnic minorities typically have severely limited political influence (ERCOMER, 1997).

Moreover, 20th century Europe had two horrific wars on its soil, with a total renewal of the political system in many countries after World War II. Thus, in many European countries the end of the war, the polarization between the Eastern Block and the Western N.A.T.O. coalition, and the establishment of the European Community (now the European Union [E.U.]) are significant milestones that shaped interethnic relations and set the context for the migration between different European countries and the immigration of millions of non-Europeans. Still another factor is that the holocaust significantly influences the current debate on ethnic intergroup relations in Europe—especially in Germany.

There are other crucial differences between the continents. Compared to Canada and the United States, European states still do not consider themselves to be countries of in-migration. Many nations, such as Germany, regard the new immigration as a novel event and ignore that they have actually experienced immigration for centuries. This fact helps to explain the often-arbitrary categorization of European ethnicities. Thus, the children and grandchildren of the immigrants of the 1960s and 1970s are still often considered foreigners. This perception affects citizenship policy (Martiniello, 1995). In some nations, such as Germany, most immigrants and their progeny have never received citizenship, even if they were born and raised in the country. In other states, such as the United Kingdom and France, immigrants of the third generation still are often considered to be foreigners despite their citizenship.
Third, parts of Europe in between are unified in European Union. Nevertheless, Europe is still extremely heterogeneous, as can be seen from Table 1, delivering some selected demographic, economic, and social background variables for different European countries.¹

In addition, even the E.U. is sharply different from the governance structures of Canada and the United States. Not surprisingly, Europe does not yet offer a widely adopted common identity. National identities remain strong. Characteristically, the basic identity is Greek, Swedish, Irish, or French—not European. One consequence of this regional identification involves group comparisons. Typically, Europeans not only distinguish themselves from non-Europeans, as U.S. citizens distinguish themselves from noncitizens but also compare themselves with other European countries (Breakwell & Lyons, 1996). Thus, regionalization and differentiation affects ethnic relations more than in North America—with the exception of the Deep South in the United States.

For these many reasons, research on European ethnic relations provides a rich array of social contexts with which to test how societal processes shape social psychological processes of ethnic intergroup relations (see also Pettigrew, Wagner, & Christ, in press). Before discussing the individual articles, we turn next to a sketch of European immigration.

Immigration and Emigration in Europe

Europe has become a multicultural patchwork with millions of new immigrants. After World War II, Europe received significant labor migration from its former colonies as well as major internal migration from the south and east to the north and west of Europe. In the 1950s and 1960s, rapidly industrializing Europe recruited millions of misnamed “guest workers.” Although Western European countries stopped this recruitment during later economic crises in the 1970s, immigrants from all over the world kept coming (Jackson, Brown, & Kirby, 1998). Southern European countries began to record significant immigration flows in the 1970s when migrants could no longer get direct access to Western Europe.

Most of the world’s immigrants live in Europe (about 56 million), Asia (50 million), and North America (42 million) (United Nations, 2002; see also Table 1 for net migration rates). Since 1990, all European countries save Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Iceland have experienced more immigration than emigration. It is difficult to obtain solid ethnicity data in Europe because of differences in official statistics and ethnic definitions. For example, resettlers of German

¹Several demographic, social, and economic indicators are available by data set of Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Commission, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, and the OECD (see also Atkinson, Cantillon, Marlie & Nolan, 2002). The most important free access surveys on attitudes and opinions of European citizens are the Eurobarometer (European Commission), the European Community Household Panel (Eurostat), the European Value Study, and the European Social Survey.
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Note. (a) Eurostat estimate; (b) Provisional; (c) 2002, Eurostat; (d) Measure for the economic activity; defined as the value of all goods and services produced less the value of any goods or services used in their creation. The volume index of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) is expressed in relation to the European Union (U-27) average set to equal 100. If the index of a country is higher than 100, this country’s level of GDP per head is higher than the EU average and vice versa. Basic figures are expressed in PPS, that is, a common currency that eliminates the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries; (e) forecast; (f) break in series; (g) The share of persons with an equivalized disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalized disposable income (after social transfers) (data by Eurostat); (h) Eurostat estimate; (i) Eurobarometer 62.1, 2004; (j) European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, survey 2003; Mean value on a scale of 1 “very dissatisfied” to 10 “very satisfied” with the own present standard of living (see also European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2004); (k) 2002.
origin from Romania and Russia are not counted as immigrants in Germany (Zick, Wagner, van Dick, & Petzel, 2001). Nonetheless, Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Commission, calculated that in 2001 Germany had the highest level of immigration both from within the E.U. (879,217) as well as from non-E.U.-countries (564,669), followed by Spain (414,772/343,960), U.K. (372,206/209,234), Italy (226,968/182,034), The Netherlands (133,404/72,095), and non-E.U. Switzerland (122,494/80,079). Eastern European countries probably have far less in-migration—though those that have recently entered the E.U. may now experience higher rates.

The mean amount of 5% non-European immigrants in the continent’s total population may seem small compared to such multicultural societies as Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States, or even Rwanda (see Dovidio & Esses, 2001). But the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (O.E.C.D.; 2003) reported an annual and substantial inflow of migrants into the E.U. (1,310,600)—a figure larger than that of the United States (849,800), Canada (227,200), Australia (92,300), and New Zealand (38,300) combined.

But to grasp fully the larger immigration picture, one must also consider emigration. The O.E.C.D. notes that emigration rates are quite high in Germany (562,400), Switzerland (55,800), Austria (44,400), and Belgium (35,600). Table 2 delivers a comparison of national immigration and emigration numbers.

<table>
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<th>Table 2. Population and Migration Indicators for the Continents in Thousands and Percentage of Population</th>
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In addition to first-generation immigrants, millions of the descendents of immigrants now live in Europe, and millions of Europeans are crossing the open E.U. borders. A vast array of diverse groups—from asylum seekers, refugees, and legal and illegal workers to sojourners, tourists, international students, resettlers, descendents of the second- and third-generation immigrants and many others—make up modern Europe today. This picture became even more multicultural with the 2004 inclusion into the E.U. of eight Eastern European countries, Malta, and Cyprus. And the diversity will increase even further when there is additional E.U. expansion.

Public Reactions and Cross-European Studies

Europe has responded to this sweeping change in diverse ways ranging from full acceptance to prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Pettigrew, 1998a, 1998b; Pettigrew et al., 1998). The media, governmental institutions, and social science research all report severe and continuing discrimination of minorities in Europe. Immigrants are particular targets of prejudice and discrimination (Wagner, Christ, & Heitmeyer, in press). Especially during economic recessions in Western Europe, foreign workers are often blamed for economic and social problems. And there is scant recognition that immigration made Western Europe’s remarkable postwar economic recovery possible.

There have been no uniform European immigration practices (Noiriel, 1994). And from the beginning, immigration was constructed and framed as a problem and often perceived as a threat by the native population. Indeed, the very term “guest worker” implies a temporary, low-status position in society. Surveys document the continuing effects of these policies on public opinion. The Eurobarometer 48 showed that in 1997, 45% of E.U. Europeans thought that there were “too many” foreigners living in their country (Greece 71%, Belgium 60%, Italy 53%, Germany 52%, Austria 50%, France 46%, Denmark 46%, U.K. 42%, the Netherlands 40%, Sweden 38%, Luxembourg 33%, Portugal 28%, Spain 20%, Ireland 19%, and Finland 10%). In 2002, the Eurobarometer 57 showed that 15% of the respondents did not find ethnic discrimination of immigrants to be unjustified (Marsh & Sahin-Dikmen, 2003). The European Social Survey in 2002 confirmed that ethnic prejudice and discrimination are widespread, but it also revealed sharp differences among European countries. Figure 1 shows the mean agreement that “Immigrants make [home country] a worse or better place” on an 11-point rating scale.

These surveys, limited to one point in time, offer just a snapshot of opinions. Longitudinal surveys on prejudice and discrimination are needed but still rare. Most available data on European prejudice derives from unrelated studies in various European countries using different measures and target groups. Cross-European research on prejudice, exemplified by the E.U.’s Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey, is relatively recent. And it has largely lacked theoretical frameworks
for cross-cultural comparisons. Consequently, unique European contributions are only now emerging.

As in the North America, European cross-national research demonstrates that different expressions of prejudice and discrimination must be considered. In particular, the distinction between old-fashioned and modern racism has shaped recent work (Macmaster, 2001; Pettigrew et al., 1998). Using the 1988 Eurobarometer 30, Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) developed two different measures of prejudice. The Blatant Prejudice Scale consists of two components—one a threat and rejection factor (e.g., “West Indians have jobs the British should have.”), the other an intimacy factor (e.g., “I would not mind if a Turk who had a similar economic background as mine joined my close family by marriage.”).

Thus, blatant prejudice is the more traditional form—close, hot, and direct. By contrast, subtle prejudice is the modern form—distant, cool, and indirect. This new form has been widely studied and validated throughout the Western world. The Subtle Prejudice Scale has three components that share an ostensibly nonracial focus. The first consists of a traditional values factor (e.g., “Asians living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in France.”). The second component concerns views of the outgroup as extremely
different culturally from the ingroup. The Subtle Scale’s final component involves the denial of sympathy and admiration for the outgroup. Note this component tests for the denial of positive emotions rather than the expression of negative emotions—fear, envy, hatred—that are associated with blatant prejudice.

Researchers have successfully employed these two scales and their adaptations in a great variety of European nations and intergroup situations—including Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and the United States (Arcuri & Boca, 1999; Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997; Hightower, 1997; Pedersen & Walker, 1997; Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew et al., 1998; Rattazzi & Volpato, 2001; Rise, Haugen, Klinger, & Bierbrauer, 2000; Rueda & Navas, 1996; Six & Wolfradt, 2000; Vala, Brito, & Lopes, 1996; Villano, 1999; Volpato & Rattazzi, 2000; Wagner & Zick, 1995; Zick et al., 2001). Several articles in this issue use these blatant and subtle prejudice scales.

Another major topic of European work concentrates on the links between social structural, political, and individual determinants of prejudice (Wagner et al., in press). This research highlights the potential threat raised by immigration and the resulting prejudice generated by this perceived threat. For instance, Hello, Scheepers, and Mérove (2002) analyzed data from the cross-national survey on religious and moral pluralism in 11 European countries. Their analyses show that in Hungary ethnic prejudice is highest (mean = 3.94; max = 7) followed by Poland (3.56), Italy (3.22), and Belgium (3.11). More interesting are their findings concerning the link between education and prejudice. Research throughout the world has repeatedly found the poorly educated to be more prejudiced (Wagner & Zick, 1995). However, these investigators show that this education effect is weaker in the new democracies of Eastern Europe than in the longstanding democracies of Western Europe (see Coenders & Scheepers, 2003; and Hjerm, 2001, for comparable results from the International Social Survey Programme—the ISSP). Furthermore, the more religiously heterogeneous a country is, the smaller the differences between educational groups. Neither unemployment rate nor the percentage of nonnationals affected the relation between education and prejudice. These results suggest that cross-cultural differences in the transmission of tolerant values explain in part education’s effects on prejudice.

Coenders and Scheepers (1998) emphasize ethnic competition theory. They assume that social groups compete for such scarce resources as jobs and housing. Perceived ethnic competition is then predicted to be positively related to an increasing number of people from different ethnic groups who compete for the same scarce resources, or a decreasing amount of scarce resources for which the same number of people compete. This theory holds that even with a stable level of scarce resources the relative number of people from ethnic minorities can initiate the perception of threat. Ethnic competition theory, with its hypothesis that prejudice is a direct expression of realistic group conflicts, is quite popular in European political debates.
Kunovich (2002, 2004) tested group-threat theory’s predictions that the effects of social structural variables are stronger in countries with larger immigrant populations and poorer economic conditions. The rival hypothesis is that the effects of social structural variables are weaker in countries with larger immigration populations and poorer economic conditions. Kunovich reanalyzed the ISSP of 1995 using data from 17 Eastern and Western European countries as well as the nations of North America, Oceania, and Southeast Asia. For individual respondents, he developed an anti-immigrant prejudice scale and measured such social location variables as labor market position, education, and income. On the country level, he built an index of relative group size of immigrants and controlled for economic conditions. Kunovich showed that social structural variables, except for poverty, have a more powerful influence on prejudice in Western than in Eastern Europe. According to group-threat theory, nations with larger immigration populations should show greater prejudice. But if the other country-level variables are included in the analyses, the effect of the size of the immigration-population relationship disappears. Contrary to threat theory, countries with poor economic conditions yield significantly lower effects of immigration population. Economic conditions are much more important than the number or ratio of immigrants. Moreover, poor economic conditions have a much stronger effect on prejudice in Eastern than in Western Europe.

Further research helps to explain this apparent falsification of threat theory. A recent study using the German General Social Survey of 1996 measured the actual immigrant proportion in small districts, the perceived immigrant proportion, the perceived threat from immigrants, and exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants (Semyonov, Raijman, Tov, & Schmidt, 2004). No relationship was uncovered between the actual immigrant proportion and either perceived threat or anti-immigrant attitudes. But perceived immigrant proportion did correlate with both perceived threat and exclusionary attitudes. Surprisingly, the actual immigrant percentage in the area and the perceived percentage were essentially unrelated. Note that threat, as sociological theory asserts, mediates the effect between the perceived proportion and prejudice. But it is the perceived—and not the actual—proportion of immigrants that is the critical predictor of threat and anti-immigrant opinions.

Through increased contact, larger immigrant population ratios can even reduce prejudice. For example, Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, and Wolf (2006) demonstrated that with larger foreigner populations in a German district, the frequency and intensity of intergroup contacts also increase. And this intergroup contact in turn reduces ethnic outgroup rejection. Similar results have been presented by Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) and Pettigrew (1997) who showed with European survey data that having close friends of another cultural group reduces the prejudice of dominant group members. McLaren (2003) similarly finds in his cross-European research that contact and perceived group threat predict European prejudice.
Beyond the role of threat, other cross-European research focuses on social identity. Several European studies indicate that citizens with strong national identity are more prone to prejudice and discrimination (Billiet, Maddens, & Beerten, 2003; Kirch, Kirch, Pettai, & Tuisk, 1997; Maddens, Billiet & Beerten, 2000; Triandafyllidou, 2000; Verkuyten & Hagendoorn, 1998; Weiss, 2003). But other forms of identification relate to intergroup acceptance. Thus, those respondents who “feel” European and often think of themselves as European are less prejudiced against immigrants (Becker, Wagner, & Christ, 2007). Moreover, a universalistic identification that involves respondents expressing pride in their nation’s democratic institutions also is associated with greater acceptance of immigrants (Heyder & Schmidt, 2002).

The often-replicated finding that individuals who are highly identified with their nation express prejudice against nonnationals is closely connected to the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This most prominent European intergroup theory defines prejudice and discrimination as processes of intergroup differentiation. Expanding on this basic work, several articles that follow treat this issue.

This Issue

Although research in Europe has a special focus on immigration, prejudice and discrimination are not limited to these new minorities. Right-wing activity also relates to increasing anti-Semitism in Europe. Since September 11, 2001, growing hostility toward Muslims is also apparent (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). And recent surveys also have uncovered widespread prejudice against such nonethnic minorities as the homeless, handicapped, homosexuals, persons with AIDS, Gypsies, and other groups. The many changing processes—migration, political transformations, the European unification process, and widespread negative opinions toward ethnic and social minorities—underline the importance of social context for prejudice and discrimination. These sweeping changes call for increased attention to the links between the macro- and micro-determinants of prejudice and discrimination. This perspective connects the articles of this issue.

New perspectives and questions are raised by the entry into the E.U. of eight nations of Eastern Europe. Research on intergroup prejudice and discrimination in the East is sparse. The influence of national identity in Eastern European countries is especially intriguing. The sudden transformation from old to new political systems should have consequences for both the self-definition of the dominant society and its relation to minorities. Early research suggests that strong national identity is closely connected to prejudice and discrimination of ethnic minorities. Another focus concerns the rise of far-right-wing political parties—phenomena observed throughout Europe since the early 1990s. Open hostility against ethnic minorities shocked much of the public. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy,
and even the Netherlands all witnessed increasing political support and mass media attention to extreme right-wing groups. This political movement obviously affects the analysis of European prejudice and discrimination.

The following articles demonstrate in detail that the rejection of ethnic and social groups is approaching dangerously high levels in both Western and Eastern Europe. All the articles concentrate on empirical findings throughout Europe as well as cross-national comparisons. This research reveals both consistent patterns and intriguing differences across countries. The studies test for differences between traditional prejudices, such as anti-Semitism, and prejudices against the new immigrants and other target groups. This focus allows comparisons between Eastern and Western European patterns of prejudice as well as between Europe, North America, and other areas of the world. The authors represent three social science disciplines—political science, sociology, and social psychology. Thus, this issue will propose diverse perspectives, theoretical approaches, and levels of analysis.

The issue starts with a look at the “extreme pole” of prejudices and discrimination. Survey results repeatedly demonstrate that Belgians on average evince greater prejudice, racism, and right-wing opinions than most E.U. countries. By contrast, Belgium’s neighbor, the Netherlands, is known as one of the most tolerant European countries with, until recently, a long liberal immigration and integration history. Billiet and de Witte (2008) consider the case of racism in Flanders (Belgium) in detail. They note that cross-European studies reveal Belgium as one of the most anti-immigrant. Yet these Belgian attitudes toward immigrants have over recent decades been quite stable, while the support of the right-wing, anti-immigration Flemish Vlaams Blok political part has steadily increased over the past generation. The article discusses the historical, political, and social reasons of this striking discrepancy. Billiet and de Witte show that prejudice is closely related to political movements and political reasoning in Belgium. Their analysis of election and opinion surveys underline the importance of the distinction between attitude direction and attitude strength, structural changes in society, and the emergence of such issues as “fear of crime.”

Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers, and Verkuyten (2008) critically consider the widespread reputation of the Netherlands for tolerance toward ethnic minorities. They compare Dutch public opinion with that of their neighbors and utilize the distinction between blatant and subtle prejudice. The authors argue that the Dutch norm of tolerance grew out of its distinctive political system over the centuries. In Dutch history, separate communities retained a high level of autonomy and separation but compromised and cooperated through their elites. The authors discuss different historical and sociological explanations for the rise of this system; and they add their psychological focus on the analysis of attitudes and values. Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers, and Verkuyten (2008) believe that the impact of multiculturalism, political correctness, and social dominance can explain the
nation’s low level of blatant prejudice as well as its high level amount of subtle prejudice.

The next article discusses specific cultural cases of ethnic prejudice in a post-colonial country. The article by Vala, Lopes, and Lima (2008) concentrates on prejudice against Africans in Portugal. Though widely distributed in the E.U., due to geographical closeness, Africans have come in greater numbers to Portugal in recent years. Vala and coworkers argue that due to Portugal’s specific colonial history the social representation of luso-tropicalism has developed which still contributes to weaken the traditional association between national identity and overt prejudice which can be observed in many other countries. Thus, luso-tropicalism seems to protect against the expression of overt prejudice. However, their data also show that despite luso-tropicalism that Portuguese express covert negative evaluations of cultural differences attributed to immigrants.

Tam et al. (2008) focus on the tragic violent conflict in Northern Ireland and means to overcome it. They argue, that in Northern Ireland identifying as “Catholic” and “Protestant” is an intergroup process and is as much ethnic and political as it is religious. Their article addresses psychological processes crucial to moving beyond such a history of violent sectarian conflict. In their research, they present intergroup forgiveness, changes in intergroup emotions, infrahumanization, increase in empathy, and trust as possible means to reduce intergroup bias. The results are discussed in terms of their implications for postconflict reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Minescu, Hagendoorn, and Poppe (2008) extend the discussion beyond Western Europe with results of a recent survey of the ethnic prejudices of both majority and minority peoples in 10 republics of the Russian Federation measuring Russians’ and titulars’ identifications with their ethnic group, their republic, and the Russian Federation as well as the effects of these identification on intergroup stereotypes. They show that identification at various inclusiveness levels is differently reflected in the positive/negative stereotypes about ingroups and outgroups. While ingroup stereotypes are positively affected by all types of identification, outgroup stereotypes become negative by high ethnic identification and more positive by republican and federal identification. The authors propose a model of intergroup differentiation that takes into account social identification at different inclusiveness levels.

Can we generalize these findings from ethnic groups to other social groups in Europe that have long been target groups of prejudice and discrimination? The next two articles focus on different target groups of prejudice in Europe. Consistent with the social psychological literature over the past seven decades, they reveal that prejudices against different groups are positively intercorrelated. The first article, by Werner Bergmann (2008), investigates modern anti-Semitism. It presents comparative data and the history of European opinion about Jews. Adopting a social identity assumptions of intergroup processes (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Bergmann
assumes that European anti-Semitism, both currently and historically, is closely tied to issues and crises of national self-identification. Attitudes toward Jews are determined less by concrete experiences of cultural differences, or conflicts over scarce resources, than by a perceived threat to the national self-image, which leads to an accentuation of those pertinent prejudices, which categorize Jews as being responsible for it.

Zick et al., (2008) present their interdisciplinary approach to the syndrome of group-focused enmity. The syndrome is compounded of diverse types of prejudice: racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and antinewcomer (e.g., special rights for the already established). Data from three probability surveys as well as a three-wave panel study have so far been conducted. The authors’ primary contention is that prejudices are linked by a syndrome of group-focused enmity, which rests upon a generalized ideology of inequality. By cross-sectional and longitudinal probability survey data from Germany, Zick et al. show that a syndrome of group-focused enmity exists. Additionally, the same predictors, such as right-wing authoritarianism and relative deprivation, trigger the syndromatic devaluation of outgroups, and this devaluation influences the same discriminatory behavioral intentions.

The remaining articles explore specific issues concerning ethnic prejudice. First, the influence of relative deprivation is studied. The next article analyzes a basic question of research on prejudice: When do individuals and groups act out their prejudice?

Pettigrew et al. (2008) analyze the relationships between relative deprivation and ethnic prejudice. They utilize both macro- and micro-data from three European surveys. Pettigrew and his colleagues demonstrate how the individual (IRD) and group (GRD) forms of relative deprivation relate to each other. Next they show that GRD relates directly and positively with prejudice, but IRD does not. Moreover, GRD mediates the effects of IRD on prejudice. Thus, individual relative deprivation influences prejudice only through its tendency to increase the sense of group relative deprivation. In addition, these investigators show that GRD also mediates in part the effects of social class and identity predictors of prejudice.

One of the central questions of prejudice research is the connection of prejudiced attitudes and behavior toward outgroups. Wagner, Christ, and Pettigrew (2008) analyze representative survey and panel data from Germany to ascertain the link between prejudice and discrimination. They show on the basis of longitudinal data that prejudice is in fact an important predictor of both avoiding of ethnic minorities as well as of aggressive behavior intentions against these outgroup members. In addition, the effect of prejudice on behavior remains substantial even after controlling for potential confounding variables. And finally, their data deliver evidence that intergroup contact and intergroup threat affect behavior intentions in relation to ethnic outgroups and that the influence of contact and threat is at least partially mediated by intergroup prejudiced attitudes, thus again
supporting the authors’ view that prejudice is an important predictor of intergroup behavior.

The concluding chapter, authored by Stephan (2008), summarizes the articles of this issue from the perspective of Allport’s (1954) lens model of the multiple causes of prejudice. The lens model specifies that historical, sociocultural, situational, and personality factors all contribute to prejudice. Stephan comes to the conclusion that the articles in this issue examine numerous variables located at different levels of Allport’s lens model. He recommends more comparative and multilevel studies. And he also demands comprehensive theories that both integrate the results from different levels of analyses and acknowledge different cultural backgrounds as moderators of known causes of prejudice. Stephan suggests that the social sciences should use all possible means to get an overview of intergroup relations in Europe and other parts of the world. This achievement, he maintains, would allow us to develop practical intervention programs to fight more effectively racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

To sum up, this issue provides a comprehensive overview of prejudice in Europe from an interdisciplinary viewpoint. All articles presented are based on survey data, many of them on large representative samples. This kind of data allows generalization for the populations from which they are drawn, thus giving the opportunity to come to scientific conclusions about intergroup situations in, for example, a national state. Other data, as those based on student samples, are very restricted in this respect. On the other hand, testing assumptions about relevant causal influences on prejudiced attitudes and analyzing the consequences of prejudice, for example, discriminatory behavior, is often not extremely difficult on these basis of cross-sectional survey data: Correlational data deliver information about the covariation of some preconditions and consequences with individuals’ prejudice, however, they usually do not allow testing what is cause and what is effect. An exception is the analysis of longitudinal data, as shown by Wagner et al. (in press). On the other hand, covariation is also a precondition of causality, that is, if a hypothesis about relevant predictors and consequences of prejudice cannot be shown on the basis of correlational data, this is a clear falsification of the hypothesis. Thus, the data presented here are of extreme value for an international comparative perspective, they have to be added, however, in the future by additional studies based on alternative methods, such as experiments, to come to a more secure test of causal relations, and also more qualitative methods to get a deeper insight about the subjective and culturally bound interpretation of the intergroup encounter in consideration.

One journal issue cannot resolve the complexities of prejudice and discriminatory behavior. But the articles presented here do clarify which predictors and theories are important. They demonstrate the significance of the interaction between individual and contextual factors. And they supply valuable markers with which to compare European phenomena with the voluminous North American research literature on prejudice and discrimination.
Europe is currently undergoing a prolonged process of rapid intergroup changes. The responses to this sweeping transformation have included prejudice, discrimination, and violence as well as acceptance and cultural enrichment. Such a massive and important phenomenon deserves intensive social scientific study for what we can learn as well as for what we can contribute to the continent’s future harmony and social justice.

References


Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination


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