

## Guest Editorial

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This issue of IJCV takes two different perspectives on prejudice and the processes of intergroup differentiation. The first looks at causes, expressions, and outcomes of prejudice and prejudice-based differentiations between groups, including discrimination, violence, and exclusion. In doing so, the authors focus on one of the most crucial characteristics of intergroup conflicts, since there is no conflict without prejudice. Prejudice against outgroups is often the most relevant legitimizing myth that inflames, maintains, and prolongs conflicts. Violent clashes based on intergroup comparisons use prejudice to discriminate, oppress, and continuously exclude groups within societies. This also means that prejudices are highly relevant indicators of the civic state of societies. Such a focus is not new, but research on prejudice suffers from going in and out of fashion. It becomes relevant in public and scientific discourses when racist violence or hate crimes are committed, but it rapidly recedes when these events leave the headlines. This wavering attention leads societies and scholars to overlook that prejudice and discrimination, nested within the normality of cultures and nations, more and more are critical devices for measuring the civic state of societies. Open borders and transparent international communications have made prejudice an overt as well as a covert indicator of control, normality, and democracy in states. So this collection of papers not only offers new insights into the causes, expressions, and outcomes of prejudice in intergroup conflicts, but also hints at the civic state of societies. Their authors address a wide range of measures, results, and indicators of stereotypic devaluations and prejudice.

The other perspective focuses on the comparative understanding of prejudice, explicitly addressing the problem of comparability of empirical studies across national and social contexts. The goal is to gain more evidence on the relation between culture or society and the social dimension of prejudice and intergroup conflict. This comparative perspective has been hard to apply because of methodological limitations. Very rarely are cross-cultural comparisons conducted explicitly. We find a large number of entries when searching scientific databases for the keywords “prejudice” or “intergroup conflict,” but rarely discover “cross-cultural comparisons of these phenomena. The comparative perspective on prejudice and intergroup conflict is still in the early stages of development, perhaps in part because of the labor-intensity and cost of running cross-cultural comparisons – whether their sample size is small, as in qualitative studies, or larger as in cross-cultural or cross-national surveys.” Comparative studies are even more burdensome for

specific regions. In Western societies like Europe, Canada, and the United States we have some survey data which are accessible for secondary data analyses, but for other regions of the world studies and data are rare.

From within these two perspectives on prejudices and intergroup conflicts, we are fortunate to have found seven strong papers to present, plus two closely related papers in the open section. While each paper makes unique contributions, it is understood that one journal issue cannot encompass the entire range of scientific research into cross-cultural perspectives of prejudice and discrimination. Nonetheless, these articles, as a group, represent an approach that shares six specific features:

1. The papers contribute to an *interdisciplinary perspective*. Prejudice and conflicts are themselves found in social-scientific disciplines. The papers offer sociological, psy-

chological, political science, and social science approaches, theories, explanations, and concepts. We hope that each paper is read across disciplinary boundaries. We strongly support attempts to cross disciplinary borders in order to foster understanding of prejudice and intergroup conflicts from a wide range of perspectives.

2. The papers address a wide range of stereotypes, prejudices, and conflicts. The *phenomenological range* of explanatory concepts is broad, although concentrated on hostile intergroup conflicts. The papers explicitly address prejudices and conflicts in Burundi, Chile, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the Xinjian region of China.

3. The papers prove empirical insights into the so-called *emics and etics* of prejudices and conflicts. They show that across cultures and countries some causes, expressions, and outcomes are similar and universal (etic). Prejudices and conflicts are triggered by similar social and psychological causes and are expressed in comparable evaluations of outgroups, and so forth. The papers also identify roots of prejudices and conflicts which are specific to a certain culture (emic).

4. All papers are empirical, but they are not restricted to specific methods. A *wide range of methodological approaches* to studying prejudice, discrimination, and conflict is presented in this issue. Surveys, small-sample quantitative interviews, qualitative interviews, and analyses of debates are all used to understand the phenomena. Taken together, the papers make clear that the borders between methodological approaches are fluid. Methods are not restrictions but opportunities to make phenomena accessible.

5. The issue has a *multilevel focus*. The papers look at micro-, meso-, and macro-social roots of prejudice and conflict between groups, and discuss the interaction of individual and contextual explanations for them. They show that the authors take seriously the relations among individual, group, and societal factors.

6. Last but not least, another special character of this issue is its freshness. The majority of the authors are excellent *young*

*scientists*. We do not know how this affects the insights offered, but we deliberately recruited young scholars to publish in this peer-reviewed open-access journal.

These and many more features characterize the whole issue, allowing the development of a comparative perspective on prejudice and conflict between groups in several societies. Each paper contributes in its own right to this understanding. The issue starts with micro- and meso-social perspectives and tries to reach the macro-social level of explanation. Additionally, it starts with smaller units of analysis and ends with a broader focus on politics.

*Eva Green, Nicole Fasel, and Oriane Sarrasin* discuss how different types of cultural diversity can influence anti-immigration attitudes across the small comparative unit of municipalities in Switzerland. They refer to two fundamental basic theories that are cited in this issue by several authors. Threat theory argues that a high number of immigrants within a region increases subjective threats, which foster prejudice. Contact theory proposes that culturally diverse societal contexts increase contacts, and that these are accompanied by reduced prejudice. The authors present data from a multilevel study showing that contact indeed is associated with lower rates of prejudice and exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants, via reducing perceived threat. However, the presence of a larger proportion of Muslims is related to higher threat perceptions and more prejudice. On the basis of their findings the authors invoke critical questions on the construction of immigrant categories, the social position of groups, and the ideological climate.

*Jolanda van der Noll's* paper is consistent with this analysis, as she presents a cross-European view focusing on a highly relevant, aggressive, and sometimes violent discourse in Europe, which is legitimized by widely shared prejudices against Islam and Muslims. She compares psychological explanations of support for a ban on headscarves in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. She also focuses on threats and prejudice, but her secondary analyses of representative survey data in these countries show that context matters: countries differ. The paper also shows the limited impact of prejudices on the support for the ban of headscarves. This is relevant for an estimation of

the attitude-behavior link of prejudice and discrimination. When it comes to Islam and Muslims in Europe, it seems as though differences in prejudice disappear.

*Beate Küpper, Carina Wolf, and Andreas Zick* concentrate on a comprehensive and often quoted theory of intergroup conflict, the Social Dominance Theory introduced by Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto. Basically the theory assumes that prejudices are legitimizing ideologies which are used to discriminate against low-status groups. Societies and social contexts produce individuals with high and low levels of social dominance orientation. This orientation predicts the readiness to adopt prejudice. The authors present the first complete test of the theory with survey data from eight European countries. They test the theory with reference to anti-immigrant prejudices and intentions to discriminate against immigrants. Contrary to the theory itself, structural equation modeling of the theory shows that low-status groups express prejudice. These results require a critical discussion about theoretical modifications. A theory is needed that includes assumptions about the impact of social positions, status hierarchies, and relative positioning of individuals within and between groups.

Taking a similar focus, *Héctor Carvacho* argues that social dominance orientations have to be addressed as ideological configurations. Carvacho offers a fresh perspective on the two most frequently cited concepts for understanding prejudice and discrimination: authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. Using survey data from Chile and Germany, he shows that both can be defining dimensions of an ideological schema. This ideological configuration is used to predict attitudes toward foreign residents in Germany and toward Peruvian and Argentinean immigrants in Chile. This psychological perspective on the etics (universal processes) of ideological configurations offers a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of the attitudes underlying prejudice.

*Michal Bilewicz and Ireneusz Krzemiński* add an interesting approach by focusing on anti-Semitism and its relation to the most classical cause of prejudice: scapegoating. They argue that anti-Semitism can become a comprehensive ideology, especially in countries that suffer from social and

economic crises. The authors refer to the ideological model of scapegoating, which has been used to explain anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. By comparing survey data from Poland and Ukraine they show that conspiracy beliefs about Jews (that they are powerful, cunning, and dangerous) are linked only in Poland to economic deprivation. In Ukraine, anti-Semitism is directly linked to discrimination. These results suggest that a closer look be taken at the societal conditions and processes in which dispositions, ideological configurations, prejudices, and discrimination take control.

*Enze Han* analyses a specific conflict that is accompanied not only by prejudice and discrimination but also by patterns of severe violence. Han concentrates on the extremely tense ethnic relations between the Uighur and Han Chinese in the Xingjian Uighur Autonomous Region. He cites Fredrik Barth's approach to ethnicity and focuses consistently on intergroup boundaries. The paper explores how rigid boundaries generate distrust and discrimination between the groups. It opens the debate between micro-social approaches that focus on categorical differentiation, and macro-social approaches that focus on boundaries and their function.

The issue concludes with *Carla Schraml's* comprehensive review of ethnicized politics. She discusses conventional definitions of politics of exclusion. Schraml compares Rwanda and Burundi theoretically, historically, and empirically, as two institutional models for overcoming ethnicized politics. She presents evidence for her conceptualization of ethnic politics as patterns of interpreting exclusion based on ethnic categories. Beyond prejudices and the traditional frame of exclusion for understanding discrimination, the paper shows the impact of taken-for-granted realities of ethnic relations and how they constitute different social realities. This is close to the micro-social effect debated by Carvacho and Küpper et al., who stress the legitimizing function of prejudice.

The above papers reflect the binary focus of this special issue on prejudice and intergroup conflict. However, we would also like to direct readers' attention to the two excellent papers in the open section of this issue:

Chiara Volpato, Federica Durante, Alessandro Gabbiadini, Luca Andrighetto, and Silvia Mari present a study that is highly interesting for our understanding of prejudice, and which calls for a cross-cultural comparison. The paper discusses and empirically analyzes images of Italian fascist propaganda and present-day right-wing materials in considering the impact of political propaganda in different historical periods. It also adds the theory of delegitimization as a framework for the understanding of racist prejudice and ideologies.

Judy Tan, Tania B. Huedo-Medina, Carter A. Lennon, Angela C. White, and Blair T. Johnson present an excellent methodological addition. Their paper provides an overview of meta-analysis as a tool for examining geotemporal trends in intergroup relations. The authors do not explicitly address the causes of prejudice, conflict, and discrimination but introduce meta-analyses as greatly needed methods for understanding the phenomena. The paper also discusses the gains, limits, and opportunities of cross-cultural comparisons based on a meta-analytic approach. These features are highly relevant for other methods as well.

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