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Introduction to the Special Issue on Hate, Prejudice and Discrimination

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Guest editorial

Robert J. Cramer and Phyllis Gerstenfeld

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Introduction to the special issue on hate, prejudice and discrimination

Welcome to issue 8.4 of the *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*. This issue presents a special initiative addressing hate, prejudice, and discrimination in unique contexts. Articles in this issue reflect a combination of empirical and theoretical work. These articles address a range of timely topics, including, but not limited to, factors influencing perceptions of immigration, demographically based biases in legal decisions, and multi-level framing of aggression and conflict in international settings. Two clear themes emerged to offer new theoretically informed insights into hate, prejudice, and discrimination.

First, a series of articles examines the roles of defendant minority identity and fact-finder demographics in courtroom dynamics and legal decision making. Salerno and colleagues explore the intersection of religious and sexual minority identities. Among their interesting findings is a pattern in which Christian-identifying fact finders perceive gay defendants more negatively, a pattern of discrimination the authors ground in existing theories of prejudice (e.g. the Black Sheep Effect). In line with the topic of same-sex discrimination, Carlucci and Golom test perceptions of female same-sex relationships in the context of sexual harassment. Participants rendered biased patterns of legal judgments against lesbian females, with this pattern worse among male fact finders. Girvan and colleagues provide a novel methodological approach to evaluate sexual, racial, and ethnic disparities in decisions concerning civil damage awards, reporting demographically discriminative patterns suggestive of the influence of both economic and psychological manifestations of prejudice in jury decisions.

Second, and consistent with the journal's broad scope of aggression and conflict, several papers provide novel insight into international violence and bias. Addressing one of the worst manifestations of prejudice and hate, Gasana gives a theoretical framework for understanding genocide in the context of Rwandan Tutsi murders. Tuntivivat employs qualitative methods to articulate a multi-level understanding of factors influencing violence in the education system in southern Thailand. Notably, the author highlights a triadic range of influences of violence at play: direct (e.g. murder), cultural (e.g. social norms), and structural (e.g. poverty). Erhart provides a timely cross-cultural examination of attitudes toward immigration in 29 countries. Among the findings, the author reports that political conservatism is a particularly salient factor predicting anti-immigrant prejudice in western democracies. Adding to empirical knowledge concerning beliefs about immigration, Wood and Miller identify key individual differences associated with attitudes toward immigration in two samples. Among their novel contributions to this literature, the authors note that higher attributional complexity and higher need for cognition were both associated with pro-immigration beliefs, suggesting prejudice may be mitigated by social-cognitive individual differences.

The current issue of the *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research* offers a wide range of inter-disciplinary perspectives on hate, prejudice, and discrimination using differing methodological approaches. We hope this series of articles helps spur conversation and further study of these issues.