

Rethinking the prejudice problematic: A collaborative cognition approach.

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Prejudice is understood as the human individuals' psychological tendency to make unfavorable evaluations about members of other social groups. (Ibanez et al, 2009, p. 81).

It blunts the thinking to speak of the participants in the social scene as "individuals" (Asch, 1952, p. 180).

The vagueness of prejudice.

As Pawlik and d'Ydewalle (2006) have noted, psychologists generally tend to refer to their research objects in common-language terminology. Consequently, authors of academic texts often start out by providing formal definitions of any key terms, in order to establish a clear boundary between their own scientific understanding and the imprecise, inaccurate, forms of conceptualisation typical of "mere" common sense (cf. Billig, 1990; Shapin, 2001). Social psychological work on prejudice is, of course, no exception, and most authors offer their readers a definition of term "prejudice", which they typically distinguish from purportedly less accurate or precise everyday uses of the word.

Academic terminology is, of course, subject to change over time.

Psychologists originally used the term "attitude" to refer to a physiological condition (Danziger, 1997), and although contemporary social psychologists like to trace their definitions of "stereotype" to Lippmann's (1922) text, *Public Opinion*, Lippmann's original use of the term was actually more akin to the current construct of schema (Newman, 2009).

When introducing the construct of “prejudice”, social psychologists often point to historical shifts in non-scientific usage of the term (Allport, 1954; Billig, 1988), and suggest that psychological definitions have gradually developed in line with advances in scientific theory and research (e.g. Stangor, 2009). However, detailed attention to published work in social psychology actually indicates a high level of consistency in formal definitions of prejudice over the past century. When originally employed in academic psychology, the term “prejudice” was used to refer to a general affective “prepossession” towards any kind of object or idea (e.g. Morse, 1907). In social psychology, however, the word quickly came to refer specifically to antipathy towards members of a social category. In the first decades of the twentieth century, US social psychologists often adopted the ordinary language term, “race prejudice”, defined by W.O. Brown, (1933, p.294) as, “the tendency to react with varying degrees of hostility to a group regarded as racial”. It is instructive to compare this definition with Stangor’s (2009 p.1) claim that, “We *now* define prejudice as a negative attitude towards a group or towards members of the group” (our emphasis). In fact, we can appreciate that - apart from the substitution of the concept of “attitude” for “react[ion]” – Stangor’s own definition of “prejudice” is essentially identical to the definition of “race prejudice” offered by W.O. Brown three quarters of a century earlier.

Similarly, social psychologists’ claims concerning the distinctiveness of their formal scientific usage of the term “prejudice” do not necessarily withstand critical scrutiny. Admittedly, some aspects of contemporary social psychological theorizing on prejudice are, to borrow Borgida and Fiske’s (2008) formulation, “beyond commonsense”. Nevertheless in many respects the definitions, normative concerns, prototypes and theories of prejudice employed by ordinary social actors display

distinct parallels with the more elaborate, formalised, models employed in the reified universe of social psychological science (Billig, 1988; Figgou & Condor, 2006, Hodson & Esses, 2005; Wetherell, chapter 9, this volume).

In particular, we may note that although social psychologists often claim that their definitions of “prejudice” have been carefully formulated with a view to scientific precision, in practice their accounts are often not less specific than common language versions. For example, Stangor’s description of prejudice as, “a negative attitude towards a group or towards members of the group” leaves the terms “negative”, “attitude” and “group” open to a range of interpretations.

The vagueness of social psychological definitions of “prejudice” need not be regarded as a problem. On the contrary, it is possible that the enduring popularity of prejudice as an object of social psychological theory and research may be in part attributable to the “permanent imprecision” (cf. Lowy, 1992) of both the term and the construct to which it refers¹. Although social psychologists typically treat precision as the *sine qua non* of scientific language, in fact loose, fluid, vague constructs often facilitate empirical innovation (Lowy, 1992), by enabling researchers in one field to make use of ideas and methods developed by people working on different topics or in different academic disciplines (Galison, 1999).

The history of social psychological work on prejudice certainly bears witness to a quite extraordinary level of intellectual customization. At various points in time researchers have adapted their understanding of prejudice to capitalize upon changing social psychological fashions, interests and technological developments. Theorists

¹ In addition, the enduring appeal of the construct also undoubtedly stems from the fact that prejudice has typically been regarded as a psychological defect and/or pressing social problem (cf. Krueger & Funder, 2004), meaning that researchers can readily justify an interest in the topic through forms of utility accounting (cf. Potter & Mulkay, 1982).

have been able to approach prejudice variously as a matter of instinct, drive, motivation, emotion, categorization, social identity, attribution, personality, executive control, or rhetoric. Researchers have been able to customise the prejudice problematic to enable them to employ almost every technique in the toolbox of social psychological methods: Field experiments; Sociograms; Direct self-report questionnaires (including Thurstone and Likert scales, Semantic Differential scales, Adjective Check-lists and Social Distance Scales); Repertory Grids; Bogus Pipelines; Non-reactive self-report measures (e.g. the California E Scale and the Modern Racism Scale); Projective tests (e.g. the Thematic Apperception Test, Sentence Completion tests); Clinical (or “insight”) interviews; Qualitative interviews and focus groups; Galvanic skin response; Pupil dilation; Eye blinking; Eye contact; Response latency, and functional magnetic resonance imaging, to name but a few.

The taxonomic imagination.

Faced with the diversity of social psychological work on prejudice, it has become common for authors to attempt to impose some overarching order by formulating classificatory schemes. On the one hand, authors have developed taxonomies of *academic perspectives*, ordered roughly chronologically (e.g. Dovidio, 2001; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Gaertner, & Dovidio, 2005) or according to level of analysis (see Duckitt, 1992). On the other hand, authors have formulated taxonomies of *prejudices*, sub-classifying the construct into distinguishable types, including: old fashioned, classical, modern, new, contemporary, symbolic, blatant, aversive, subtle, overt, benign, public, private, explicit, implicit, indirect, covert, automatic, controlled, latent, ambivalent, hostile, benevolent, instrumental, negative, everyday, complementary, and colour blind. Once distinguished, the relationships between

these different forms of prejudice may be described through various types of integrative model (e.g. Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009; Ekehammar et al, 2009; Gawronski et al., 2008; Nail et al., 2003; 2008; Son Hing et al, 2008).

Whilst some theorists attempt to develop an overarching integrative account of the various ways in which prejudice may be manifested, others contend that the prejudice construct has evolved into a conceptual monster. Authors question, for example, whether subtle prejudice is “really” prejudice; whether IAT responses are in fact indicative of negative attitudes; or whether “prejudice” should be distinguished from constructs such as “bias”, “stigma”, “stereotyping”, “discrimination”, or “ingroup favouritism”. Going further, critical social psychologists have questioned the general adequacy of what Wetherell and Potter termed the “prejudice problematic” for the conceptualization and explanation of macrosocial conflict, racist social processes, and societal structures of social inequality (e.g. Adams et al., 2008; Henriques, 1984; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, chapter 9, this volume).

Compared to many current discussions of the social psychology of prejudice, our objective in this chapter is comparatively modest. We will not be presenting a new integrative model, nor will we offer a swinging critique of past work. Rather, taking advantage of the scope for innovation afforded by the vagueness of the prejudice construct, we will advocate a new approach that draws upon contemporary cognitive science perspectives on collaborative cognition.

Reconceiving the agent of prejudice: From methodological individualism to collaborative cognition.

Our point of conceptual departure is based on the observation that, notwithstanding their evident differences, existing social psychological approaches to prejudice share a tendency towards methodological individualism, defined by Weber ([1913] 1981, p. 158) as the tendency to treat “the single individual and his action as the basic unit, as [the] ‘atom’ ...” of a social event or process.

Some social psychological approaches to prejudice are quite clearly individualistic in focus. This is true both of attempts to account for individual differences with reference to personality variables such as Right Wing Authoritarianism or Social Dominance Orientation, and also of approaches which emphasize the role of universal, lower-level, cognitive processes in the formation or suppression of prejudiced attitudes². However, we would argue that methodological individualism is not confined to this kind of work.

Social Identity theorists³ tend in principle to oppose “individualistic” approaches to social psychology in general (Turner & Oakes, 1986), and to prejudice in particular (Reynolds, Turner, Haslam & Ryan, 2001; Reynolds & Turner, 2006; Reynolds, Haslam & Turner, chapter 2, this volume). However, although these authors eschew forms of accounting which focus on individual differences, or which emphasise the role of dispositional over situational factors in the genesis of intergroup hostility, they nevertheless tend to subscribe to *methodological* individualism, in so far as they accept Turner’s (1987 p.4) claim that, “psychological processes reside only

² The former perspective (which emphasises the uniqueness of the individual) corresponds to Simmel’s (1917) construct of “Germanic” individualism, whereas the latter (which considers individuals to be exemplars of a general human type) corresponds with Simmel’s notion of “Romantic” individualism.

³ We are using the term “social identity theory” to refer both to intergroup theory, and to self-categorization perspectives.

in individuals”. Methodological individualism is also evident when social identity theorists conceptualise collective behaviour as the outcome of the co-occurrence of individual psychological states of social identity (characterised by Turner as “a ‘socially structured field’ *within the individual mind*”, 1987, p. 207, our emphasis). This kind of perspective is reflected, for example, in research that treats the individual social actor (albeit one who may be “acting in terms of group”) as the analytic case, and which operationalizes “shared” stereotypes as statistical aggregates of individual responses (e.g. Haslam et al., 1999; Haslam & Wilson, 2000; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

Similarly, discourse analytic approaches are often associated with anti-individualist epistemological perspectives. In practice, however, a good deal of research on racist or prejudiced discourse has tended to focus on the ways in which culturally-available interpretative repertoires are reflected in the accounts produced by individual speakers. Discourse analysts typically treat hate speech and more subtle forms of verbal discrimination as rhetorical phenomena. Verbal acts of discrimination are hence construed as attempts on the part of one individual to persuade another (e.g. Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001)⁴. Alternatively, theorists may prefer to stress the way in which individual thought takes the form of internal dialogue between prejudiced and tolerant themes (Billig, chapter 7, this volume; Billig et al., 1988).

In this chapter, we consider how social psychologists might avoid methodological individualism by re-conceiving of prejudice as a matter of collaborative cognition. Developed in cognitive science, the construct of collaborative

⁴ It is common for social psychologists to treat rhetorical perspectives as compatible with Bakhtinian dialogic approaches to communication (e.g. Billig, 1987). However, in so far as Bakhtin focused on dialogue as communicative *interaction*, his work in fact challenged individualistic rhetorical approaches (Kent, 1998).

cognition incorporates three key premises. The first is the simple observation that, in everyday life, human cognition “mostly takes place in the context of other people” (Smith, 2008, p. 24). The second premise is that cognitive processes may be effectively *distributed* (Hutchins, 1994) between individuals, and that social networks may constitute dynamical information processing systems (Gureckis & Goldstone, 2006). Cognitive scientists hence suggest that “the boundaries of cognition extend beyond the boundaries of individual organisms” (Robbins & Aydede, 2009 p. 3).

Third, collaborative cognition is often understood to be *emergent* in so far as interacting networks of social actors to accomplish things that individuals would be unable to do alone. This can involve coordinated effort aimed at the implementation of complex planned action (Rogoff, Topping, Baker-Sennett, & Lacasa, 2002, cf. Asch, 1952), but can also result in ironic outcomes, unanticipated by the social actors concerned (Suchman, 1987).

A concern over processes of collaborative cognition has a number of general implications for the way in which social psychologists understand person perception and social judgement (Semin & Cacioppo, 2008; Smith, 2008; Smith & Collins, 2009). In the following pages we will develop some of our own work on the expression and suppression of prejudice in dialogue (Condor, 2006; Condor et al., 2006; cf. Condor, 1990) to consider some of the ways in which a collaborative cognition perspective may shed new light on the processes involved in the construction, expression and suppression of public prejudice.

Studying collaborative processes.

Rediscovering public prejudice.

In principle, a collaborative cognition approach is quite compatible with most existing definitions of prejudice. However, as Stahl, (2006; p.5) noted, “Whereas individual cognition is hidden in private mental processes, group cognition is necessarily publicly visible. This is because any ideas involved in a group interaction must be displayed in order for the members of the group to participate in the collaborative process”. Since it makes sense for a collaborative cognition approach to focus on public forms of prejudice, for the purposes of this chapter, we will be adopting Rupert Brown’s (1995, p. 8) definition of prejudice as: “the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs” and also “the *expression* of negative affect, or the *display* of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group” (our emphasis).

This principled focus on public prejudice itself represents a departure from most current social psychological theory and research. Contemporary social psychologists are often inclined to assume that “genuine” prejudice can be equated with an individual’s private – often implicit - evaluations of social groups (see also Durrheim, chapter 9, this volume). For example, Crandall and Eshleman (2003) describe “genuine” prejudice as “primary, primal, underlying, powerful, early-learned, automatic, cognitively simple, and relatively effortless” (p. 415). Accordingly, social psychologists are inclined to view public expressions of intergroup attitudes as – in Crandall and Eshleman’s terms - “inauthentic prejudice” (or, more properly, inauthentic tolerance). In contrast, it is interesting to note that earlier generations of social psychologists did not generally treat public attitudes as less genuine, or as less socially psychologically important, than private attitudes. As Donald Katz and Floyd

Allport (1931) argued:

The popular distinction between what [people] “actually” think or feel and what they report when they attempt a rational or public accounting of attitudes is often misconceived. From a psychological as well as a logical standpoint, there is no justification for asserting that the attitude which [a person] reveals privately and confidentially...is his *real* or *true* opinion, whereas the attitude which he expresses on the same subject to a professor or to an audience is a pure fiction significant only as an evasion or as a means of securing popularity...[S]ince much of human behavior is social, and so many of the situations in which we find ourselves are public or institutional in character, we shall miss a great deal that is important in understanding both the social order and the part which the individual plays in it if we do not consider ... “public” as well as ... “private” attitudes. (ix-x)

In considering the ways in which prejudice can be occasioned, displayed and suppressed collaboratively in the course of situated social interaction, one of our aims is to reinstate public prejudice as a legitimate object for social psychological enquiry in its own right.

Beyond the laboratory: Prejudice in the wild.

The processes by which cognitive processes may operate through complex dynamical social systems may be studied using computational modelling (e.g. Goldstone & Janssen, 2005; Smith & Collins, 2009). However, as Stahl (2006) noted, it is perfectly possible to observe collaborative cognition in action. Consequently, studies of collaborative and distributed cognition generally use qualitative, observational methods, involving some form of interaction analysis (Jordan & Henderson, 1995), including techniques drawn from conversation analysis⁵.

⁵ These “noncognitivist” perspectives in cognitive science, which “[avoid] speculating on psychological processes hidden in the heads of individuals and instead looks to empirical observable group processes of interaction and discourse” (Stahl, 2006, p. 5), have evident

Work on collaborative and distributed cognition generally emphasises the situated character of human thought and reasoning. Consequently, researchers typically question the wisdom of assuming that “basic” research can be adequately conducted in laboratory contexts (Resnik, 1991, cf. Tajfel, 1972), and stress the necessity of studying cognitive processes as they are manifested “in the wild” (Hutchins, 1995). Applied to the issue of prejudice, this kind of perspective calls for a measure of methodological innovation. As we have noted, social psychologists have used an enormous variety of methods to interrogate the prejudice problematic. However, they have not generally been disposed to study prejudice “in the wild”⁶. Apart from La Piere’s (1928) comparative analysis of race prejudice in France and England, and Minard’s (1952) rather better remembered analysis of race relations in West Virginian mining communities, social psychologists have generally been disinclined to analyse prejudice as it is manifested in ordinary social life⁷.

For the purposes of this chapter, we will be considering forms of public prejudice that, whilst not entirely wild, were at least born and reared in semi-captivity. Specifically, our data generally come from informal research encounters, in which the participants are aware of the presence of the researcher, and of the recording device, but have not been specifically prompted to produce reports of their attitudes towards

parallels with the kind of approach advocated by discursive psychologists (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 2005).

⁶ Even research on the formation and maintenance of stereotypes in conversation has tended to be conducted in laboratory rather than naturalistic conversational contexts (e.g. Kashima, 2000; Karasawa, Asai & Tanabe, 2007; cf. Ruscher, 1998; 2001; Semin, 2007).

⁷ Apart from matters of habit and pragmatics (it is, after all, relatively cheap and easy to conduct research on a captive subject-pool of university undergraduates) there are good reasons why social psychologists may have shied away from studying prejudice in the wild. Most ethnographic accounts are rather anecdotal for empirical social psychological tastes, and contemporary field research on “everyday” racism (e.g. Eliasoph, 1999) has not collected the kind of audio or video recordings that would afford detailed analyses of the precise content, and dynamics, of prejudiced talk in interaction.

particular outgroups. In these settings, claims to, or displays of, racial, ethnic or national antipathy are typically produced by the respondents as a form of side-play. In all of these cases, the research is taking place on the respondents' "home turf", and the recorded interactions are taking place between individuals who (apart from the researcher) have an established relationship with each other. The informality of the conversations is marked by jocularity, profanity and sub-standard speech (cf. Goffman, 1959, p. 128).

Collaboration in Action.

To the extent that social psychologists have been concerned to study the expression of prejudice in social encounters, they have generally been inclined to focus on the ways in which a particular individual may moderate his or her expression of prejudiced thoughts and sentiments in public settings. A consideration of the ways in which people actually express views concerning racial, ethnic or national outgroups in relatively naturalistic conversational contexts suggests that this kind of focus may be, at best, partial, and at worst positively misleading. When people are engaged in (relatively) informal conversations with friends, workmates and family, they are often less inclined to suppress, mitigate or justify expressions of prejudice than social psychologists have been wont to suppose. In these kinds of settings, co-present social actors rarely adopt the role of passive audience, but tend rather to actively engage in a multiparty conversation. In the following pages, we will draw attention to three particular ways in which the expression or suppression of prejudiced views may be collaboratively accomplished, which we will term, *Interactional Scaffolding*, *Joint Construction*, and *Distributed Inhibition*.

Interactional Scaffolding I: Entrainment.

The concept of scaffolding was introduced to Psychology by Bruner, to describe the ways in which an adult can support a child's acquisition of concepts or skills (Bruner, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). More generally, the term refers to the processes by which one individual's acquisition of understanding or skills is supported by prompts and models provided by more experienced co-actors.

The strip of conversation reported in extract 1 illustrates a case in which one individual is helped to produce a racist narrative by two of his friends. The context was an informal interview conducted over drinks in the respondent's ("local") public house. At the point at which this extract starts, Frank⁸ is extemporizing about his views on immigration and multiculturalism, a topic which he had introduced in response to an earlier question about national identity. Although the researcher's (R) questions are addressed directly to Frank, his friends Jim and Chris (who, unlike Frank, were both members of the Far Right British National Party) provide prompts and "model answers", encouraging Frank to voice a particular form of racist account.

Extract 1

- 1 Frank I don't mind the Indians, I think the Indians are quite all right,
2 actually. Because they fought in the war with us and everything.
3 So, got a bit of respect for the Indians. I don't like them all, but I got
4 respect for them, cos they fought in the war with us. But Pakis.
5 R What's up with them?
6 Frank What's up with them? They fucking stink.
7 Jim No. It's not that. It's just, they like, they hate us (.) an' all that
8 Frank And they come and live in this country and they
9 say they hate (2)
10 Chris They come to this country, and they say, 'Yeah, we hate,
11 we hate the English' and all that. Well, why do you wanna come
12 and live here? Why do they wanna sponge off us? Why, why should
13 I pay my taxes every week to give them some money out of my
14 taxes, so they can go and fucking open a Paki shop, on a corner?
15 And they're saying they hate the English.
16 Frank And at the end of the day we've made a home for them. They've got
17 a home, they've got a nice corner street [sic] and all that, if they

⁸ All names in the extracts are pseudonyms.

18 lived over in Pakistan, they'd mostly probably have nothing. When
 19 we've treated them, I think we've treated them fair dos, all the way
 20 through.
 21 Jim We civilised them.
 22 Frank Well, we did. We civilised them didn't we? (.)
 23 R What, though, if, they're born here, are they not English anyway?
 24 Chris No. Are they fuck.
 25 Frank No, are they fuck.
 26 R Why not?
 27 Chris Get out.

The first thing to note about this stretch of talk is the presence of explicit expressions of ethnic hostility indicated, amongst other things, by the use of the recognizably pejorative term, *Paki*. In this case, the presence of an audience does not prime normative concerns to suppress displays of prejudice. On the contrary, at various points we see the speakers treating the expression of *positive* views of ethnic others as normatively accountable. Early in the extract Frank presents a relatively positive assessment of “*the Indians*” (lines 1-4), whom he positions as a model minority. Significantly, immediately after producing this utterance he attends to the possibility that his account might be interpreted as positively favourable towards “*the Indians*”, and qualifies his original assessment with the disclaimer, “*I don't like them all, but...*” (line 3)⁹. When the researcher asks whether people of Pakistani origin are English, the three men treat this question as provocative banter, to which “*are they fuck*” and “*get out*” are responses in kind.

The second thing to note is the way in which Jim and Chris actively support Frank's attempt to formulate a prejudiced narrative about people in England of

⁹ This extract also exemplifies how symbolic racist arguments are not always employed as a “subtle” forms of prejudice. Most of the arguments against Pakistanis proffered by Chris, Jim and Frank focus on “their” their failure to comply with “our rules”, and “their” tendency to take advantage of the “fair” treatment that they have received. However, in this case the speakers are clearly using these symbolic racist arguments to work up their collective display of hostility towards Pakistanis, rather than to disguise or to sanitize their own negative attitudes.

Pakistani ethnic heritage. Frank's original response to the researcher's query "*What's up with them?*" (line 5) is dismissive and cursory ("*They fucking stink*", line 6). At this stage Jim intervenes to "correct" Frank's account, and to prompt a preferable line of argument ("*the hate us*", line 7). Frank accepts this assistance, and takes the narrative forward by substituting Jim's generic "*and all that*" (line 7), with the specific, "*they come and live in this country*" (line 8). At this point Frank's account peters out. Chris then helps out by reinforcing Frank's offering, and then contributing the additional consideration that, "*they...sponge off us*" (line 12) in order to run "*a Paki shop, on a corner*" (line 14). Frank again accepts the offering, adding the evaluative gloss, "*we've treated them fair dos*" (line 19). Jim finally offers an upgrade assessment ("*we civilized them*", line 21) which Frank then echoes.

Interactional Scaffolding II: Facilitation and Reinforcement.

In psychology, the scaffolding metaphor generally refers to situations in which more experienced people provide a supportive structure for another individual's development of conceptual skills and narrative reasoning. However, Clark (1997) has extended the notion of "external scaffolding" to encompass a variety of situations in which an individual's cognitive work is supported by bodily functions (as is the case, for example, when we count on our fingers), objects and symbols (as is the case when we perform calculations using a paper and pencil) and by other people in the environment. Understood in this more general sense, we can see scaffolding at work in many mundane forms of social interaction. Work on the choreography of dialogic interaction has pointed to the ways in which any particular actor's behaviour will be contingent upon the responses of others. Even when an individual appears to be producing a monologue, in practice the occasioning, content and prosody of their talk

will be shaped by other co-actors, who afford a suitable conversational opening, permit them to retain the floor, and provide ongoing feedback through back-channel responses (Bavelas et al, 2000), and postural and gaze coordination (Bavelas, & Gerwing, 2007; Goodwin, 2000; Shockley et al., 2009).

When we consider the form of prejudiced talk in actual social encounters, we can appreciate the role routinely played by co-present social actors in supporting and reinforcing the narrator's account. This is illustrated in extract 2, in which we see an exchange between a researcher and two couples, the Abbotts (Gwen and Larry, both in their 80s), and the Bishops (Pete and Sheila, both in their 70s). The researcher had initially approached the Abbotts and the Bishops as they were chatting over their garden fence, and requested their help for a study about "people's attitudes to where they live". The exchange reproduced below was occasioned by the researcher asking about how London (where they had lived previously) had "changed":

Extract 2

- 1 GA I'm not- I'm not prejudiced, a- about [coloured] people
2 SB [No, no]
3 R Uhuh?
4 GA But, when you've been living in a house, we lived in a house for
5 nearly 50 years, and you had neighbours, Pakistani neighbours
6 R Uhuh?
7 GA Frying all their stuff-
8 PB What's wrong with the Pakis?
9 GA No-
10 SB No, [listen to her!]
11 GA [Nothing wrong] with them
12 SB Wait, wait, wait.
13 GA They were very friendly
14 SB Yes
15 R [Uhuh?]
16 GA [But], they weren't us.
17 R Uhuh?
18 GA You know what I mean, they're a different
19 LA They've got their own=
20 GA =race.
21 LA Yeah. They've got their own side, yeah.

22 GA As I say, I'm not prejudiced against them, um-
 23 PB Yes you are!
 24 GA No I'm [not].
 25 SB [No] she's not actually.
 26 PB You're not allowed to shoot them anymore, you realise that
 27 don't you?
 28 ((all laugh))
 29 SB [((laughing)) Shut up!]
 30 GA [((inaudible))] I gave my gun up!
 31 SB Can I take him away?
 32 ((all laugh))
 33 GA I said I gave my gun up!
 34 SB Yes
 35 LA I'll tell you something-
 36 GA It's the same with people that are not even black people. [I've got a
 37 grandchild who's married] =
 38 LA [We're the only ones to be married in a submarine.]
 39 GA =to a Jamaican boy.
 40 R ((to LA)) Really?
 49 SB We're not even married.
 50 LA During war time ((inaudible))
 51 R That's fantastic

The conversation reported in extract 2 does not involve the kind of explicit collaboration between speakers evident in extract 1. Pete, Shelia and Larry do not prime Gwen with particular considerations, nor do they add anything substantive to her line of argument. However, once we consider the details of the exchange, we can appreciate how Gwen's Pakistani neighbours narrative is in fact being sustained and promoted through the effective support of others. The unfolding of the story is not simply contingent upon Gwen Abbott's own intentions and discursive efforts, but also upon the other participants who (in the case of the researcher) provide a suitable conversational opening¹⁰; allow her to take and to retain the floor, and provide

¹⁰ This exchange was promoted by what the research team termed a "trigger question", designed to afford a conversational opening for talk about race and ethnicity. On the basis of pilot work we had learned that white people who had moved from urban to rural areas often had "white flight" explanations available, but could be reluctant to voice these in response to direct questions. The researcher's question about how London has changed was strategically designed to provoke precisely the kind of talk that followed.

reinforcement through markers of continued attention (from the researcher, until line 40), agreement (in the case of Sheila Bishop), co-operative completion and echoing (from her husband, Larry), and heckling banter (from Pete Bishop).

Improvisation and Joint Construction

Up to this point, we have considered how in everyday social encounters displays of prejudice may represent the product of collaborative social interaction. However, we have not considered how the content of these accounts may represent an emergent product of social interaction. Extract 3 has been taken from an informal research conversation conducted on the beach with three young women aged between 15 and 16 (see Condor, 2006). The extract starts at the point when the researcher poses a question about their opinions concerning a current political policy issue.

Extract 3.

- 1 R So wh- what do do you think about Scotland having their own
2 parliament?
3 Chloe What?
4 R You know, eh Scottish people, they've recently got got their own
5 parliament uh and Wales have got an Assembly
6 Gem I hate the Welsh
7 ((laughter))
8 Katie Yeah. Sheep-shaggers.
9 ((laughter))
10 Chloe They're not as as bad as the French though (1.5)
11 R What's wrong with the French?
12 Chloe [I dunno]
13 Katie [They eat] horses
14 Gem An' frogs. An' they are frogs so that makes them cannibals
15 ((laughter))
16 Chloe Yeah. And the Chinese, they eat dogs [and stuff]
17 Katie [Yeah]
18 ((laughter))
19 Chloe Sweet and sour Doberman
20 Gem Tastes like dog shit anyway
21 ((laughter))
22 Katie Yeah. They're terrible, the Chinkies
23 Gem Not as bad as the Pakis though. [I hate Pakis].
-

24 Katie [No. Yeah] They're the worst. Cos the
 25 Chinkies they just stay in in their house and places, but the Pakis
 26 they're everywhere you go fucking harassing you an' an'
 27 Gem them fucking Pakis is well outa order
 28 Katie Perverts. An' they smell [an' all]
 29 Gem [An' they] smell an' all. Y'know that boy,
 30 Naheed, I sat next to in maths. He smelt like piss an' that
 31 ((laughter))
 32 Chloe Poo vindaloo
 33 ((laughter))
 34 Gem I dunno [I hate em all]
 35 Katie [An' they got] little dicks
 36 Gem Well you'd know you slag
 37 ((laughter))

Once again, we can appreciate how the public character of this encounter does apparently prime norms of tolerance. Gemma, Katie and Chloe openly advertise their hostile attitudes: '*I hate the Welsh*', '*I hate Pakis*', '*I hate them all*'. The respondents are clearly expending a good deal of effort in an attempt to trumping each other's display of prejudice. This observation might lead us to question the assumption that expressions of prejudice reflect relatively "automatic" responses, and it is only the suppression of prejudice that requires "controlled" forms of behaviour.

This exchange also demonstrates how pejorative representations of Others need not simply involve giving voice to pictures that pre-exist in the heads of the participants. There is a clear improvisational quality to this fast-paced banter, and the conversation displays the moment-to-moment contingency, whereby each actor's contribution sets a context for other participants' subsequent response. The eventual catalogue of ethnic and national stereotypes represents an emergent phenomenon in so far as it could not have been anticipated or formulated by any of the individual participants in isolation.

Distributed Inhibition.

Social psychologists commonly suggest that the act of suppressing, justifying or otherwise mitigating public expressions of prejudice is likely to be cognitively effortful. In recent years, social psychologists have paid a good deal of attention to the motivations for, and techniques used to accomplish, prejudice inhibition (Plant & Devine, 2009). To date, most of this work assumes that the motives and resource-intensive cognitive techniques required to inhibit explicit expressions of prejudice are necessarily located within the heads of discrete individuals.

In contrast, a collaborative cognition perspective would allow for the possibility that the work of prejudice inhibition, like other complex multi-stage cognitive processes, may be distributed between agents¹¹. Clarke and Chalmers (1998) coined the term “cognitive offloading” to refer to the process of devolving some aspects of a complex cognitive task to other people, symbols or objects. Once we move beyond the circumscribed universe of the psychological laboratory or formal research interview, we can begin to appreciate how the “brakes” (cf. Allport, 1954) on public expressions of prejudice can be applied by people other than the primary speaker (see also, Condor et al., 2006).

On occasions, individuals may rely on others to undertake some of the labour of “self”-monitoring. In particular, we have often witnessed husbands offloading the task of monitoring their talk for (potential) public displays of prejudice onto their wives. In the following extract, for example, we see Sheila alert her husband to the fact that he is about to utter the taboo term, “*Paki*”:

¹¹ The networks across which complex cognitive operations are distributed are typically hybrid in form, including both human actors, and non-human agents, including symbols, and technologies (Latour, 1993; see Condor, 1996). For the purposes of this chapter, however, we will confine our attention to the distribution of the task of prejudice suppression between interacting human subjects.

Extract 4

Barry: It was just across the road from the Pak
 Sheila: BARRY
 Barry: corner shop.

In extract 4, Barry accepts his wife's assistance with the task of "self" monitoring, and self-corrects accordingly. In other cases of the social division of cognitive labour (cf. Lutz & Keil, 2002), we find the responsibility responsibility for "modernizing" the expression of racism distributed between social interactants. In extract 5, July inhibits her mother's articulation of the term "*negro*", and substitutes "*Afro Caribbean*":

Extract 5

Diana I'm appalled – appalled at the Guardian, the adverts in the Guardian. A team of something or other, to join a team, ethnic and so and so, and – I remember reading something about the lesbian and gay ones in – and the town hall ones, and then it has to be for the ne-
 Julie Afro Caribbean
 Diana Afro Caribbean and my friend's boss had to be sacked because he wasn't willing to go along with the trend

In extract 6, similarly, we see Alan's teenage children attempt to inhibit his expression of prejudice by changing the subject and, when this fails, open admonishment:

Extract 6

Alan And this country's too small, we can't cope. And as a country I mean there are these people coming in and saying um "we've just come from Pakistan and we've taken up er residence here, we insist the government start an Urdhu school" or whatever
 Ellie Have you seen what they've done to the old High School, Dad?
 Ben They've made it into flats.
 Ellie Yeah.
 Alan And what I ask myself is why are they here? Because you know the rule is they are meant to claim asylum in the first safe country they come to. And they have to pass through other countries to get here. So why aren't they in France, saying, "we don't" -
 Ben - you and Mum thought of moving to France once, didn't you Dad?
 Ellie Why didn't you? It would have been great with all that wine and sunshine and we could of –
 Alan The reason they're not in France is because the French won't put up with this. They say that if you're living in France you have to like accept the

Ellie way of life. You can't just come in and start-
 -give it a rest, Dad.

Concluding comments.

Social psychologists are apt to regard vagueness in terminology or conceptualisation as an impediment to scientific progress. In contrast, we have suggested that the fact that prejudice has been, and remains, a vague construct has enabled social psychological research to capitalise general innovations taking place in psychological science. In this chapter, we have attempted to continue in this tradition, by taking advantage of some contemporary developments in cognitive science. The construct of collaborative cognition draws attention to the self-evident fact that in everyday life neither thinking nor speaking are typically solitary activities. The tendency on the part of social psychologists to trace prejudice to cognitions, emotions or actions of discrete individuals has distracted our attention from the ways in which pejorative representations of social outgroups may be collaboratively formulated, mobilised or inhibited.

A concern over the ways in which public displays of prejudice unfold over the course of social interaction has allowed us to rethink some aspects of the conventional social psychological wisdom concerning the nature of prejudice. First, a consideration of prejudice “in the wild” demonstrates the current persistence of blatant displays of ethnic, racial or national antipathy (see also Pehrson & Leach, chapter 6, this volume), and leads us to question Sears’s (2005, p. 351) assessment of explicit forms of racism as now “nearly non-existent”. Second, this work has led us to question the common presumption that individuals are generally inclined to moderate the views that they voice in the presence of others. In cases in which social actors are familiar, and comfortable, with the other people present, an individual’s expression of both subtle

and blatant prejudiced views may in fact be prompted and facilitated by others, through coaching, reinforcement or merely tacit permission.

Third, we questioned the common assumption that public expressions of prejudice represent the (possibly censored) articulation of sentiments and images that pre-exist in the minds of the individual speakers. We showed how public prejudice can constitute an emergent product of social interaction.

Finally, on a more positive note, the capacity to inhibit public expressions of prejudice need not, in practice, be limited by an individual's motivations or executive function. When prejudiced talk emerges in everyday social encounters, a dual-braking system can operate, with the responsibility for "self" monitoring and correction becoming effectively distributed between participating social actors.

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