



James M. Jones, John F. Dovidio,  
and Deborah L. Vietze

# The Psychology of Diversity

Beyond Prejudice and Racism

**WILEY** Blackwell

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# Praise for *The Psychology of Diversity*

Unlike older and traditional texts on prejudice and intergroup relations, *The Psychology of Diversity* offers a sharply different approach—one much better suited to the complexities and subtleties of present-day intergroup phenomena. It is also authoritative as one would expect from a text written by leading social psychological experts in the field.

**Thomas F. Pettigrew, University of California, Santa Cruz**

This is the most comprehensive survey of diversity since the groundbreaking Jones *Prejudice and Racism* volume, the undisputed bible of the field for decades. *The Psychology of Diversity*, authoritatively written by some of the field's foremost leaders, will rightfully take its place as the go-to resource for students, researchers, and practitioners alike, to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

**Professor Susan Fiske, Eugene Higgins Professor, Psychology and Public Affairs, Princeton University**

One could not hope for better guides through the maze of social-psychological work on diversity in America. Jones, Dovidio, and Vietze prove to be map-makers of “Lewis and Clark” quality, never losing their way over difficult terrain, and steering the reader through defining research on psychological processes, and an analysis of diversity in terms of culture, power, and institutions.

**Miles Hewstone, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Oxford, UK**

The successful management of increasingly diverse societies is a major imperative of our times. In their extraordinarily comprehensive volume, *The Psychology of Diversity*, Jones, Dovidio, and Vietze do a masterful job of presenting the latest scientific evidence concerning both the challenges to and opportunities for moving beyond prejudice and racism. This volume is essential reading for anyone interested in social diversity or intergroup relations.

**Jim Sidanius, Department of Psychology, Harvard University**

*The Psychology of Diversity: Beyond Prejudice and Racism* is an illuminating book on the psychological processes behind power, bias, and cultural difference, as well as the broad influences and challenges that diversity presents. In this outstanding book, distinguished authors James M. Jones, John F. Dovidio, and Deborah L. Vietze provide us with a historical perspective alongside up-to date information on the psychological principles that influence our diverse society. This book is unique in that it not only addresses the negative consequences of bias and discrimination, but also contributes research-based solutions to these problems by providing techniques to improve intergroup relations. *The Psychology of Diversity* has a wide applicability and utility; I highly recommend this book not only for students, but for professionals and all individuals who care about reducing prejudice and respecting and benefitting from diversity in our society.

**Florence L. Denmark, Ph.D., Robert Scott Pace  
Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology,  
Former President of the American Psychological  
Association**

# About the Authors

**James M. Jones** is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for the Study for Diversity at the University of Delaware. He was Executive Director for Public Interest, and Director of the Minority Fellowship Program at the American Psychological Association. After earning his Ph.D. in psychology at Yale University, he taught at Harvard University, and Howard University. He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1973 to study Calypso Humor in Trinidad. His book, *Prejudice and Racism* (1997) is a classic text on this subject. His awards include the Lewin Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, and the Distinguished Psychologist Award from the Association of Black Psychologists.

**John F. Dovidio** is Professor of Psychology at Yale University. His publications include *Reducing Intergroup Bias* (with Samuel Gaertner, 2000) and *The Social Psychology of Helping and Altruism* (with David A. Schroeder, Louis A. Penner, and Jane A. Piliavin, 1995). He is co-editor of Blackwell's *On the Nature of Prejudice* (with Laurie A. Rudman and Peter Glick, 2005) and chair of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues' publications committee. Jack is also the editor of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and has been editor of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and of the Association of Psychological Science. He received SPSSI's Kurt Lewin Award in 2004 for his career contributions to the study of prejudice and discrimination.

**Deborah L. Vietze** is Professor of Psychology at the City University of New York in the Human Development and Urban Education Ph.D. programs. Her most recent work focuses on cultural influences on social behavior, social and spiritual orientations that predict recycling behavior, and the perception of institutional bias. She was a co-editor of the 2006 *Child Development Special Issue on Culture, Ethnicity and Race*. She is the 1990 recipient of the American Psychological Association's Minority Achievement Award for excellence in integrating research and service for ethnic minority populations and the 1991 C. Everett Koop (former Surgeon General of the U.S.) National Health Award for health-related services research. Deborah has also served as an American Psychological Association representative to the United Nations.

# The Psychology of Diversity

Beyond Prejudice and Racism

James M. Jones, John F. Dovidio, and Deborah L. Vietze

**WILEY** Blackwell

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# Preface

The idea for this book began when James Jones was asked about updating his earlier book, *Prejudice and Racism* (Jones, 1997). He was loath to do so because, in his view, *diversity* was the compelling challenge of the twenty-first century. The three of us met at a multicultural conference in New York and talked about what a new book addressing diversity issues would look like and how it could be accomplished. Thus began a collaboration that has produced the current volume.

The very last pages of *Prejudice and Racism* included a major heading, “Diversity is a Strength in the Species and Society.” This section argued for both the inevitability of diversity and its fundamental benefits. Subheadings began to explore the idea that diversity exists not only between groups but also within groups. Upon reflection, we realized that prejudice and racism, while continuing to be major deterrents to social justice and a better society, were not sufficient to capture the complexity and challenges of the twenty-first century. The United States and the whole world had changed too much. We began discussing the relationship of diversity to prejudice and racism, and how a textbook could help students and others understand the challenges of diversity and how managing and supporting it across all levels of society would make this a better nation.

“Diversity” is a label that can be applied to any noticeable differences in a context or setting—a forest, a community, the world, the planet. Trying to understand and study diversity in its broadest sense is daunting. When we take too broad an approach, it is difficult to bring clarity to the discussion. When we take too narrow a view, then its meaning and relevance is challenged by all that is excluded

from its purview. Finding the proper balance and perspective has been our aim. We know that differences matter and the world has struggled to deal with differences from the beginning of time. We have plunged into an effort to educate readers about the ways in which members of our society have collectively responded to differences among us, and the promise that our differences may combine to create better institutions, societies, and a better world.

# **What Is This Book About and Who Is It For?**

Increasingly, diversity is a fact of life in the United States and globally. *The Psychology of Diversity: Beyond Prejudice and Racism* examines the challenges created by differences among us, and the opportunities these differences offer for creating stronger, more effective institutions and full participation of diverse members of society. This book is about the challenges diversity poses socially and psychologically and how people can choose to address and benefit from those challenges. The book is mainly for students in classes on prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination; multiculturalism and society; and intergroup relations. It should also appeal to a broad audience of people who are interested in understanding social diversity. The coverage is evidence-based; it is about the facts as we currently know them. These facts tell a story that we attempt to recount, of the past, present, and future of our society and the challenges and opportunities of diversity in everyday life.

# **What Is the Purpose of this Book?**

The purpose of *The Psychology of Diversity* is to help people understand the ways in which differences among people produce a broad array of psychological responses that determine how they are perceived and the effects they have. Diversity is not simply about the experiences of members of selected traditionally disadvantaged groups or about people who bring different values and cultures to new countries when they immigrate. Diversity affects and includes us all. People usually find comfort from being

around others similar to themselves, and seek support for their views of the world and their place in it. We document that sharing varied perspectives, talents, and worldviews is beneficial to human interaction and institutional performance. We also demonstrate the resistances that diversity elicits and the benefits that arise when we overcome them. We also focus on approaches that have been shown to produce positive outcomes; that we can learn and benefit from what makes us different from one another. This challenge of diversity is not simply to control or manage it; it is to understand and profit from it. Increasing diversity is inevitable. We use research, case studies, and historical illustration to show that by understanding diversity, we can more constructively navigate our everyday lives and prepare, individually and socially, for a world that is more diverse, more interdependent, and more complex.

## **What Is Special About this Book?**

Many books, including other ones we have written, focus more narrowly on bias and its consequences. This book is subtitled *Beyond Prejudice and Racism*, and also devotes considerable attention to the problems of prejudice and discrimination toward diverse groups. But each chapter also discusses the solutions to these problems; they describe research on techniques for improving intergroup relations in different ways. Moreover, this book goes beyond prejudice and discrimination to emphasize how an understanding of diversity offers unique insights and opportunities to better prepare people for a diverse society.

The story of diversity and its challenges is both broad and complex. This book can't tell it all, so it has particular

emphases. The book is primarily social psychological in its orientation, but we consider how historical, political, educational, economic, and societal factors shape the way people think about and respond to diversity. The approach is multilevel, with coverage of the neuroscience of prejudice through the sociology and politics of diversity. Our discussions primarily center on racial and ethnic biases in the United States, partly because most research on these topics is based on people from the United States.

Another reason is because we believe that an understanding of the challenges of diversity should consider the particular historical, political, institutional, societal, and cultural context in which individual-level biases—the emphasis of social psychological approaches—are embedded. To tell that story within a limited number of pages, we have used race and ethnic relations within the United States as a thematic case study. However, we do not limit our discussion to these issues. We examine the implications to a range of other “isms” (e.g., sexism, heterosexism, weightism) regularly throughout the book and discuss diversity and social bias globally. And finally, we have included evidence-based examples that point the way to approaches to differences that have been shown to be effective in bringing people together for mutual benefit.

# Dedication

To my students who really want to live fulfilled and meaningful lives in a diverse society and seek guidance in how to do that. We hope this book will help show the way.

J.M.J.

To Rita Kerins (my favorite sister) who spent a career in education learning about the challenges of diversity in everyday life.

J.F.D.

To my husband, daughters, and sons for unwavering support and love during the writing of this book.

D.L.V.

# Acknowledgments

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# Part One

## Framing Diversity

# Chapter 1

## Psychology of Diversity

### Challenges and Benefits

Introduction  
The Goals of this Book  
Perspectives on Diversity  
The Diversity Divide: Benefits versus Challenges  
Organization of this Book  
Summary

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

Thomas Jefferson

*Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776*

*Major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. High-ranking retired officers and civilian military leaders assert that a highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps is essential to national security. Moreover, because universities, and in particular, law schools, represent the training ground for a large number of the Nation's leaders, ... the path to leadership must be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity. Thus, the Law School has a compelling interest in attaining a diverse student body.*

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor  
*Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)

## Introduction

This book is about diversity. **Diversity** refers to those things that make us different from one another. Race, ethnicity, and gender are the most common differences that are mentioned in diversity conversations. But diversity is much more than demographic differences. We are different by virtue of our country of origin, our culture, sexual orientation, age, values, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, and able-bodiedness. Our psychological tendencies, abilities, or preferences also mark diversity.

There are more than 7 billion people on the planet and each person is uniquely different from every other. Diversity is a global reality. Diversity becomes significant in Germany and the Netherlands when increasing numbers of immigrants arrive from Turkey, Africa, and South America. African, West Indian, and South and East Asian immigrants diversify the United Kingdom and Canada. Sub-Saharan Africans immigrate to South Africa and challenge locals for jobs and opportunities. Ethnic differences in the Pacific Islands, Eastern Europe, Canada, and many countries of Africa highlight both differences and similarities. To this we add the pressures created by trying to meld the diverse countries of Europe into a common union, the European Union (EU). Differences in politics, economic policy, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs challenge the fabric of a common identity. All of these diversity trends reflect global dynamics of difference. A recent Google search of the term yielded 229,000,000 hits, evidence of its relevance to our everyday experiences. So how can we possibly address diversity of this magnitude?

Our approach is to narrow it down. Although our goal is to help people understand diversity and people's responses in the broadest global context, much of this book is a case study of diversity issues in the United States. In this book, diversity is examined primarily with respect to racial and ethnic differences, although we also cover differences in gender, religion, ability, and sexual orientation. Diversity, and how people respond to it, depends on the history, economics, and politics of a society and the psychology of its members. For this reason, we focus primarily on diversity in the United States. However, we also refer to diversity in other nations and cultures and how responses to diversity may be similar or different.

As the book's subtitle implies, prejudice and racism play an important role in the context of diversity; they are a challenge to achieving its positive potential effects. One of the challenges of diversity in everyday life is to understand and reduce the biases that hinder the creation of diversity in groups, institutions, organizations, and societies. But equally challenging is to find the proper balance of approaches to diversity that simultaneously strengthen the fabric of our institutions and society and enrich our individual lives, while preserving the cherished values of equality of opportunity and social justice for all.

Diversity is based in difference, but a variety of similarities intersect these differences. Tsui and colleagues, for example, propose that both demographic differences *and* similarities between co-workers and supervisors affect task performance and behavior in organizational settings, but in somewhat different ways (Tsui, Porter, & Egan, 2002). They call this idea **relational demography**. Objective similarities—actual similarity in a given context—are important, but subjective similarities, the extent to which people *perceive* how similar they are to others, and how people weigh them against differences often matter even

more. In general, perceiving greater similarity among workers in an organization is related to better performance and commitment to the organization. But perceiving greater similarity does not mean that people do not recognize or respect differences, as well.

What differences and similarities mean in a given relationship will depend on the norms and expectations in that context. A Black and a White female nurse may work together better and show greater support for the organization because of their normative similarities—both are women in a field in which women are the norm—than might a White male and a White female nurse, who are demographically similar by race but normatively dissimilar in the nursing context. In this case, gender similarity is more important than racial similarity. The simple fact of difference then does not create problems. Differences relative to what, when, and where play an important role in determining what the effects are. Diversity offers many ways for us to see similarities with others; it's not just about differences.

The two quotes at the beginning of this chapter, one from the *Declaration of Independence* and the other from Justice O'Connor, illustrate a major challenge we face as a democracy. These statements, made at widely varying times, demonstrate that the United States has a fundamental commitment to equal opportunity and equal rights, and a compelling interest in diversity. As enunciated by Justice O'Connor, **compelling interest** provides the legal basis for determining when and how taking race into account may be used to further diversity objectives in higher education. This commitment to diversity raises three fundamental questions that are the subject of this book: How can we create equality in a society that is so diverse? What are the impediments or barriers to realizing this goal? What are the benefits when we achieve it?

The biggest barriers to equality, given the diversity of our society, have historically been prejudice and racism, because they are premised on the belief that people are *not* equal. Prejudice and racism shape how we think about diversity and difference. When the institutions of society, such as law and education, reinforce these beliefs, the result is a self-perpetuating social hierarchy in which some groups have more, privileges and wealth for example, and other groups have less. One national ideal is to treat everyone equally, and yet everyone is not equal, because we *are* a diverse society. There are real and imagined differences among us. The challenge is to treat people fairly, recognizing that we are not all equally qualified for the same job, and respect the differences among us. Diversity has come to be valued in global and local businesses, in educational institutions, and in the military. Justice O'Connor's statement recognizes this and argues that we have a compelling interest to engage every citizen in the social, educational, and economic institutions that provide direct paths to leadership. Do you agree? America has always been diverse, but over time we have become diverse in different ways. Despite our increasing diversity and the recognition by many that dealing effectively with diversity is essential to our security and economic well-being, engaging diversity remains controversial and raises challenging problems.

Sturm and colleagues refer to successfully achieving diversity in colleges and universities as **full participation**: “an affirmative value focused on creating institutions that enable people, whatever their identity, background, or institutional position, to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others” (Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011, p. 3). Diversity is not a static, or a fixed number.