

Chapter 18

Application: Reducing Prejudice

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Introduction

Imagine you are denied entry into a fraternity or sorority because of the color of your skin. Imagine you are not considered for a job for which you are qualified because the name on your resume is Hector Martinez. Imagine you are treated as if you are incompetent by one of your science teachers or classmates because you are a female. Imagine you are called a “terrorist” because you are Muslim. Unfortunately, these scenarios are a reality for many people and represent a social phenomenon we have come to understand as *prejudice*, a negative or hostile attitude toward people because they belong to a particular group. Although prejudice has to do with irrational attitudes and opinions, discrimination refers to behavior. This behavior (discrimination) is usually seen as unfair treatment of a person or group. Despite efforts like the women’s rights movement and the civil rights movement, our society continues to struggle with prejudice and discrimination in the workforce, the education system, law enforcement, the political arena, and a broad spectrum of domains in daily life. Although laws enacted to reduce discrimination have reduced much overt discriminating behavior, those who have studied prejudice believe that they have had little impact on underlying attitudes and opinions, or prejudices, of many.

Prejudice favors one’s in-group and excludes and demeans members of an out-group solely because of their belonging to that group. There are many negative consequences for recipients of prejudice compared with individuals who do not experience prejudice, including poorer mental and physical health, higher rates of depression, higher rates of incarceration, poorer grades, lower high school graduation rates, lower college acceptance and graduation rates, fewer job offers, less pay, poorer job performance, increased amounts of stress, decreased ability to focus, and a greater likelihood of overeating (Inzlicht and Kang 2010). There is a serious need to reduce prejudice, and many social psychologists have examined how people develop prejudice and how it can be reduced.

History

The increase in fascism and anti-Semitism after World War I and the extermination of millions of Jews during the Holocaust in the 1930s and 1940s led many social

scientists to explore how individuals develop prejudice. The German philosopher and social scientist Theodor Adorno and his colleagues (1950) proposed that prejudice results from having an *authoritarianism personality*. Such a personality type stems from “early childhood rearing practices that are harsh, disciplinarian, and emotionally manipulative,” which produces “people who are obsessed by status and authority, intolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty, and hostile and aggressive toward weaker others” (Hogg 2013, p. 9). In his influential work *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), psychologist Gordon Allport shifted the discourse on prejudice toward social “categorization processes” that all humans employ. According to Allport, “The human mind must think with the aid of categories. . . . Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it” (p. 20). Through such categorization processes, we simplify our social environment by grouping people into social categories such as “women,” “nerds,” “jocks,” “African Americans,” “immigrants,” and so on. These categorization processes shape interpersonal judgments and consequently interpersonal behaviors. Allport’s theory set the stage for a vast amount of research on how categorization processes and categorical thinking shape our impressions of others, and our attitudes and prejudice toward them.

In the famous Robbers Cave experiment, Sherif and colleagues (1954/1961) separated 22 American boys who were attending a summer camp in Oklahoma into two groups of 11. During the first phase of the study, the two groups were kept apart and did not know of the other group’s existence. They each came up with names for their own group (The “Rattlers” and the “Eagles”), adopted group flags, and established separate group identities. During the second phase of the study, the two groups were brought into competition with each other through a series of activities like baseball and tug-of-war games. During this phase, the two groups became increasingly more hostile and offensive toward each other (for example, the Eagles burned the Rattlers’ flag and the Rattlers ransacked the Eagles’ cabin). In the third phase, Sherif hoped to bring the boys together through different get-to-know-you activities like watching a movie together and celebrating the Fourth of July with fireworks together. Such activities proved to be unsuccessful, with the boys still exhibiting negative attitudes and behaviors toward each other. Only when Sherif organized several activities in which the two groups worked toward *superordinate goals* did they start to show improved attitudes toward each other. The superordinate goals included working together to secure a safe water source for everyone at the camp ground; jointly pulling a truck (carrying food for them to eat) that had gotten stuck on a road by using the tug-of-war rope they had previously used against each other; and by joining forces to cover the cost of watching a film together on the camp grounds.

The Robbers Cave experiment was important because it showed how quickly groups can form and how groups can influence social identity. *Social identity* is people’s sense of who they are or the part of their self-concept that is based on their membership in a specific group (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Sherif showed that when group members are brought into competition, their social identity is at stake. Thus, individuals within a group develop *in-group* and *out-group* biases that

can lead to discriminatory and hostile behaviors toward another group of individuals. The experiment also showed that social identity could change under certain circumstances (for example, when members of different groups work toward a common goal that requires cooperation between them).

Research Methods Background

To draw conclusions from social psychology experiments, it is necessary to understand the research methods that are used. Researchers draw a distinction between experimental and nonexperimental research, as well as between laboratory and field research.

The differences between these methods of research can affect the validity of any study's conclusions and what those conclusions tell us about the general population being investigated (Er-rafiy, Brauer, and Musca 2010).

An *experimental design* is one in which we are trying to answer a scientific question about a *causal relationship* between one variable and another. There are several important elements to an experimental design, including: (1) an "intervention condition" and a "control condition," (2) "random assignment" to either the intervention or control condition, and (3) "pre-test" and "post-test" measurement of the outcome variables of interest (while important, this is not necessary like the other two elements). An experiment must include at least one intervention condition and at least one control condition. In an intervention condition, participants are exposed to some strategy for prejudice reduction that we are interested in. In a control condition, participants are not exposed to a prejudice reduction strategy or they are exposed to a neutral strategy or stimulus that is not related to prejudice. The different conditions allow us to identify whether there are any differences between a group that receives an intervention of interest and a group that does not. For example, if we wanted to know whether listening to pop music makes people more or less prejudiced, we would have some participants listen to a selection of pop songs (intervention condition) and others listen to a selection of classical music (control group).

Random assignment is another very important element of experimental research and entails randomly distributing participants into each of the conditions in the study. Researchers often use a random number generator on a computer to decide which participant is in which condition. They then assign participants to the randomly ordered conditions when they actually take part in the study. Randomly assigning participants to either of the conditions prevents biases in our data that might occur if people end up in a particular condition because they have certain traits or attitudes a priori. In other words, random assignment reduces the chances that there is something systematically different about the people in the conditions before the study, which in turn increases our confidence that the observed difference is indeed due to the prejudice reduction method under consideration.

Finally, pre-test data are measurements of the outcome variable of interest that are collected before the intervention is given. Although pre-test data are not required in experimental research, acquiring pre-test and post-test measurements of the

outcome variables we are interested in allows us to detect changes over time. As we can see, experimental research is a powerful way of detecting differences and changes caused by a specific mechanism or intervention.

Nonexperimental designs allow us to answer scientific questions about a relationship between any two variables or phenomena. However, these designs do not allow for the detection of causal relations between variables. Instead, nonexperimental research designs detect *correlational relationships* between variables. Nonexperimental research tends to examine existing relations between variables in the world without the use of intervention and control conditions. Whereas experimental research allows us to draw conclusions about differences caused by a particular treatment, nonexperimental research is limited to examining relations, as they may exist, without providing the kind of information that allows for conclusions about causal relations. For example, you might survey a group of people who vote and people who do not vote to assess how prejudiced they are. You might find that the people who vote show less prejudice than those who do not. Although such a study might reveal a correlation between voting and prejudice, it would not inform us whether voting causes people to be less prejudiced. Thus, nonexperimental research provides us with information about interesting relationships between different variables in the world; however, it does not provide us with information about whether one of the variables causes the other. Although nonexperimental research provides us with useful information, we do not focus on nonexperimental designs in this chapter; we focus on prejudice-reduction methods that have been examined using experimental designs in different contexts.

The setting in which research takes place is also important for understanding the extent to which the findings and conclusions of a given study are useful. *Laboratory studies* typically take place in a highly controlled and contrived environment that researchers set up prior to the study. Researchers are able to control for extraneous factors that may influence the results of a study (for example, exposure to other variables in the world that could drive a similar effect as the intervention or treatment of interest). The level of control laboratory studies offers increases the validity of conclusions drawn from a specific experimental design. However, laboratory studies are not always realistic for the real world and are therefore not easily applicable or generalized to naturalistic settings. *Field studies* take place in schools, at the workplace, and in communities. Their conclusions are more useful for real-world contexts. Although field studies do not allow for the same level of control that laboratory studies do, researchers can randomize participants into conditions in a field study to test important hypotheses. Field studies typically require more attention to various elements of the study like who the participants are and how they will be reached, how the intervention is delivered, and how the outcome variable of interest will be evaluated (Paluck and Cialdini 2014).

Experimental Laboratory Research

If you are a sports fan for a particular team, you have likely found yourself blaming a referee or a player on the opposing team for a penalty being called on a member

of the team you are rooting for. You have likely also agreed that the same penalty being called on a player from the opposing team was deserved because he or she made a mistake. In reality, the penalty was likely deserved by players on both teams, but you favored your team over the other. Social psychologists have found that people favor members of their own group more than members from other groups. Many prejudice-reduction methods are based on this premise. Intergroup approaches to reducing prejudice aim to reduce people's positive bias toward members of their in-group and their negative bias toward people from the out-group.

Intergroup Contact

The *contact hypothesis*, sometimes called *intergroup contact theory*, asserts that intergroup contact is one of the most effective ways for reducing prejudice if it occurs under a number of social conditions (Allport 1954). These conditions include that both of the groups in the interaction have equal status, they share a common superordinate goal (as in the Robbers Cave experiment), they work in cooperation to achieve that goal, and they receive support from an authority that they both recognize. In his research, Cook (1971, 1978) hired racially prejudiced white individuals to work a part-time job on a task for a supposed railroad company. The participants were under the impression that they were working for a real company, but the job and environment were artificially created. Participants were assigned to work with two confederates (one white and one black) on the task over a month. At the end of the study, the prejudiced white hires rated their black coworker as highly competent, likeable, and attractive. In an allegedly unrelated questionnaire, the participants expressed less racial prejudice than participants in a control group made up of prejudiced white individuals who did not have the intergroup contact with the confederates.

Many people have proposed additional conditions that must be present for the intergroup interaction to be successful in reducing prejudice. Some research has found that the method is most effective when the shared superordinate goal is successfully achieved (Blanchard et al. 1975). Some psychologists have suggested that the length and frequency of intergroup interaction is important for the interaction to be meaningful enough to have any effect on prejudice (Cook 1978). This idea has been supported by a nonexperimental survey of about 3,800 Europeans, which showed that those with more friends from minority groups showed less prejudice toward those groups and admired them and sympathized with them more (Pettigrew 1997). Thus, *cross-group friendships* are one form of intergroup contact that can improve intergroup relations and reduce prejudice. Research on *extended contact* suggests that simply knowing that members of your in-group have friends from the out-group can reduce intergroup biases and prejudice (Wright et al. 1997). For some people, direct intergroup contact is not always a possibility because they may live in areas or regions that have little or no diversity among the population. Researchers have suggested that *imagined contact*—a mental simulation of a positive interaction with a member from an out-group—can be a useful method for

creating more positive attitudes toward members of an out-group and reducing prejudice (Miles and Crisp 2014).

The contact hypothesis and its offshoots have been important for our understanding of how to reduce prejudice. We must note, however, that intergroup contact can increase prejudice and hostility in situations where the contact is negative (Stangor et al. 1996). Furthermore, situations that establish positive intergroup contact through friendly or congenial interactions are difficult to achieve (Hewstone 1996). In real-world settings, it is difficult to control for the conditions social psychologists have proposed as necessary for intergroup contact to be an effective strategy of prejudice reduction. Although these laboratory studies shed light on ways intergroup contact can affect human attitudes and behaviors, they are limited when it comes to understanding how intergroup contact can be used in the real world. Nevertheless, the research discussed in this section shows that intergroup contact can be a very useful way for reducing prejudice. You can probably now imagine ways you might apply this strategy in your own life. If you are a student, you might decide to talk to the foreign exchange student you have noticed studies at the same café you like to study at. If you are an employer, you might create diverse groups of employees to work on a project together. Indeed, there are many possibilities for how we might use intergroup contact strategies in our daily lives.

Social Identity and Social Categorization

Another intergroup approach to reducing prejudice focuses on *social identity and categorization processes*. Have you ever wondered what makes you belong or not belong to a specific group? Have you ever wondered how belonging to a certain group affects your perception of others? Imagine you are a part of a Harry Potter reading group, which you clearly differentiate from a Lord of the Rings reading group. Now imagine your next-door neighbor is a member of the Lord of the Rings reading group. You would probably categorize that person as an out-group member when it comes to your reading group, but an in-group member when it comes to the matter of your neighborhood. We engage in these kinds of categorization processes every day. According to *social identity theory* (Tajfel and Turner 1979), one's social identity is a source of self-esteem for the individual and is directly tied to the sense of self that is based on belonging to a particular group, as we mentioned earlier in our discussion of the Robbers Cave experiment. Thus, people tend to favor members of their in-group over members of an out-group in such a way that can lead to serious prejudice and discrimination. Merely categorizing yourself with a group can lead to in-group/out-group biases (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Some psychologists have explored how different categorization processes might reduce the magnitude of in-group versus out-group distinctions, reduce the importance of a particular social identity that is associated with group membership, or reduce the significance that certain group memberships have in motivating thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Shifting and influencing social identity through different categorization processes is believed to reduce prejudice and discrimination (Brewer 2000). Thus, many psychologists have studied ways in which categorization processes can be used to reduce prejudice.

The process of *deategorization* (Brewer and Miller 1984) emphasizes individual identities over the group identity. In decategorization interventions, participants are trained to think of people from different groups as individuals rather than as members of the out-group only. In one study, researchers divided participants into two groups of people (overestimators and underestimators) (Bettencourt et al. 1992). Participants were then placed on teams with both overestimators and underestimators to complete a cooperative task. Some teams were instructed to focus on the individuals who made up their team, other teams were instructed to focus on the quality of the work done to complete the task, and the control teams had no such instructions. Those teams that focused more on individuals were less likely to favor their own teams over other teams showing that the decategorization process can lead to less biased intergroup attitudes.

Recategorization is when people from different groups come to think of each other as sharing one superordinate category. This method shifts the way people think about individuals from other groups as members of their own group, leading to more positive attitudes and behaviors toward those people. Some studies induce the recategorization process by emphasizing shared group membership such as being students of the same school (Gómez et al. 2008), by emphasizing goals or rewards that the different groups share (Gaertner et al. 1999), or by emphasizing markers that are shared by different groups like having the same T-shirt color. For example, Gaertner et al. (1989) assigned participants to groups comprising three people to form discussion groups of six and emphasized that they all belonged to a single group. They had other groups of three form discussion groups of six, but emphasized that they belonged to two separate groups. Those participants whose single group identity was emphasized exhibited less intergroup bias than those participants who were in groups that emphasized separate group identities and a control group with individuals only. Those who integrated as one group found members of the previous out-group to be more attractive, whereas those who maintained the separate group identities found the out-group members less attractive. These recategorization studies successfully influenced people to think of themselves as members of a common in-group, which consequently led to greater cooperation with individuals previously thought to be out-group members and less favoring of in-group members with regard to rewards and evaluations (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000).

Similar to recategorization, the process of *crossed categorization* encourages people to think of a common in-group identity with members of an out-group based on their shared membership in some other group (Crisp and Hewstone 1999). For example, if you observe an audience at a sporting event, you would notice some of the people are fans of one team, while some are fans of the opposing team. The audience would probably comprise individuals of different racial and ethnic groups, genders, ages, occupations, and so on. Now imagine that two women are sitting next to each other rooting for opposing teams. In the midst of watching their favorite teams play, their belonging to a group of fans for opposing teams is likely to be more salient to them than their belonging to any other groups. Now imagine that they start to relate to one another because they are both women and they

discover that they are both grade school teachers in their mid-20s. Although they are fans for different teams, they begin to see each other as women from the same age group with the same occupation. By making these cross-categorizations salient, the women are less likely to feel prejudice toward each other because they recognize that they have other group memberships in common.

Imagine you are a teacher or professor and you observe tensions between students from different ethnic groups in your classroom. What could you do or say to reduce these tensions? Based on some of the social categorization processes, you might encourage your students to recategorize themselves as fans of the school's football team. You might have them complete some decategorization exercises that help them discover information about their individual interests, hobbies, or goals. Perhaps you will make them realize that they share memberships in other groups outside of their ethnic groups through some exercise. You might ask them to raise their hands when they identify with a particular group that you will list (for example, "Raise your hand if you like to eat pizza" or "Raise your hand if you are a female"). The research on social identity and social categorization provides us with a useful foundation for dealing with prejudice we might observe or experience in our daily lives.

Perceived Heterogeneity of the Out-group

At some point in your life you have probably heard someone talk about members of another group as if they are all one unit. People sometimes make sweeping statements—usually stereotypical—about out-groups as though the statement describes all members of that group. You may have heard something like "Black people are so lazy," "Arabs are aggressive," "Jews are so cheap," "Women are bad at math," or "Asians are good at science." Although it is highly unlikely for an entire group of people to possess a single trait in the same way, some individuals make statements that refer to groups composed of millions of people and attribute a single characteristic to them all. You might ask yourself: How can people make such sweeping statements? In addition to judging members of their own group more favorably than out-group members, people tend to judge members of their in-group as more heterogeneous and members of the out-group as more homogenous (Jones, Wood, and Quattrone 1981). In other words, people are more likely to see members of their in-group as very different from one another and to perceive members of the out-group to be quite similar to each other. Researchers have found that people tend to organize and recall information about out-groups in terms of abstract attributes (for example, laziness or cheapness) and in-groups in terms of individuals such as the name of a person (Ostrom et al. 1993). Furthermore, perceiving members of out-groups as homogenous leads to more extreme evaluations of individuals from the out-group—more extremely positive when the evaluation is positive and more extremely negative when the evaluation is negative (Linville and Jones 1980). In light of this research, psychologists have explored ways in which perceiving in-groups as heterogeneous and out-groups as homogenous influences prejudice. On the one hand, when we view another group as

homogenous, we more readily apply stereotypes to feel prejudice toward and discriminate against that group. On the other hand, when we see members of another group as being rather variable, we have trouble maintaining hostile thoughts, feelings, and actions toward the group. As such, researchers have tried to increase how variable or heterogeneous people find members of an out-group to be as a way to reduce prejudice. By showing people that a group is made up of individuals with a wide variety of qualities, we can interfere with the kind of “they’re all alike” thinking and establish more nuanced views of the out-group. In a series of laboratory studies (Brauer et al. 2012), researchers either attracted participants’ attention to the variability of an out-group or not (for the control group). For example, in some of the studies, participants in the intervention condition were exposed to posters that included individuals from the target out-group who varied in age, gender, names, and characteristics (that is, some were stingy, some were funny, some were sad, and so on), while participants in the control condition were exposed to neutral posters with information about unrelated issues (for example, the benefits of eating more fruits). Another method for changing how heterogeneous people find members of an out-group to be is by showing that members of the out-group have different views and beliefs. In one study, Brauer and Er-rafy led participants in a heterogeneous intervention condition to believe that a group of Chinese female students all had very different answers to a series of questions, while those in a homogenous condition were led to believe that the Chinese female students had very similar answers to the same questions. In yet another approach, they had participants in a heterogeneous condition read a journal article that highlighted subgroups of Moroccans (for example, farmers, working women, and the elderly) and participants in a homogenous condition read an article that emphasized Moroccans as a single entity (for example, “they,” “Moroccans”). After participants were exposed to an intervention that influenced and increased how heterogeneous they believed a particular out-group to be, the researchers assessed participants’ attitudes and behaviors toward individuals from the out-group. Prejudice and discrimination were assessed in terms of self-reported attitudes toward the out-group, the distribution of rewards between in- and out-group members, evaluations of job candidates from the out-group in simulated hiring situations, and implicit measures of prejudice, which exists outside of one’s conscious awareness. Across the studies, Brauer and Er-rafy found that those individuals who perceived the out-group as more heterogeneous evaluated members of the out-group more positively, expressed more positive attitudes toward them, and exhibited more positive behaviors (for example, helping) toward them. It is important to note that out-groups must be portrayed as having both positive and negative characteristics (Brauer et al. 2012) and not just positive characteristics for such interventions to be effective. Communicating that the out-group has only positive characteristics is problematic because it can reinforce the idea that the group is homogeneous and it can cause reactance among viewers who may feel they are being coerced or manipulated. Perceiving members of an out-group as being rather different from one another reduces prejudice toward that group. You might imagine ways you could respond to someone who makes a sweeping statement about a particular group of people. You might respond by

saying, “Sure, maybe some Arabs are aggressive, but some are really passive. Many Arabs are neither passive nor aggressive. Some are really sensitive, while others are kind of rude. Some are really kind and some are kind of mean.” The idea is to emphasize how variable members of a group can be to make it difficult for someone to hold a view that all members are the same, which in turn leads to less prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors toward that group.

Belief in Group Malleability

Intergroup contact can be an effective way of reducing prejudice if certain conditions are fulfilled. Researchers have found that a major barrier to engage in positive intergroup interactions that can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations is a lack of motivation to do so (Crisp et al. 2010). In other words, although intergroup contact can be an effective way of reducing prejudice, many people deliberately avoid such contact. Unfortunately, the groups that tend to need it the most are also those most likely to avoid engaging in intergroup contact. Intergroup anxiety that entails fear, discomfort, or unease—caused by the presence of or interaction with members of an out-group—is an underlying cause for avoiding intergroup contact (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Some social psychologists have proposed that changing beliefs and emotions regarding an out-group can increase motivation to engage in intergroup contact and reduce prejudiced attitudes toward an out-group. However, obvious and direct attempts at such changes can fail or backfire, especially in situations where there is strong intergroup conflict. Thus, some social psychologists suggest using more latent, implicit methods to produce changes in beliefs and attitudes.

In situations of intergroup conflict, believing that people have characteristics that are malleable (that is, not fixed) reduces the likelihood of attributing some kind of wrongful or negative behavior to another person’s fixed qualities, reduces the likelihood of recommending punishment for the behavior, and increases the likelihood to recommend negotiation with the other person or group. Believing a group’s characteristics are fixed rather than malleable leads to more stereotyping of the group. In a series of studies, researchers demonstrated that believing that groups have a malleable nature rather than a fixed one influenced people’s attitudes and openness to intergroup cooperation for peace in the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the first study, 500 Israeli Jews were asked whether they believed groups were fixed or malleable, followed by questions about their attitudes toward Palestinians and their willingness to compromise with Palestinians for peace. Individuals who believed groups had a malleable nature expressed more positive attitudes toward Palestinians and a greater willingness to negotiate for peace. The following three studies took place with Israeli Jews, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Palestinian citizens from the West Bank. Participants were randomly assigned to either read an article that simply stated groups are malleable or not to read anything. Those who read the article about groups being malleable were again more positive toward the other group and more willing to engage in peace negotiations.

Similar research took place in Cyprus where Greek and Turkish Cypriots are involved in an ongoing conflict. Sixty-one Turkish Cypriots were randomly assigned to either read an article stating that groups have malleable characteristics and behaviors or an article that stated groups are fixed. Those participants who read the article stating that groups are malleable showed less intergroup anxiety about Greek Cypriots and were more willing to engage in peace discussions than those who read the article stating that groups have a fixed nature. As the findings from these studies show us, believing groups have a malleable nature can produce more positive attitudes toward and a willingness to cooperate with members of an out-group in contexts of major conflicts. Interestingly, one does not need to believe that a specific group is malleable to have more positive attitudes toward an out-group and be more willing to engage in contact with the group; one simply has to believe that groups, in general, can change. Altering beliefs about group malleability seems to be a powerful way of improving intergroup relations in regions of conflict and may be a key strategy for improving relations and reducing prejudice between different groups across a variety of contexts.

Consciousness Raising and Self-Regulation

Imagine the following scenario: A young white woman is walking along an empty street at dusk. Half a block ahead, she sees a young black man turn the corner and now he is walking toward her. Although she has no concrete reason to suspect any threat from the man, she feels anxious and crosses the street. She sees the man pull out his keys as he walks up to a house. He opens the door and walks in. The young woman begins to ask herself why she felt threatened by the young man. She asks herself whether she would have felt equally threatened if the man had been white. You might be able to imagine a time you felt something negative toward a member of an out-group for no clear reason. Or you might be able to imagine a time you saw someone else treat a racial or ethnic minority differentially for no clear reason. Indeed, these experiences are often related to prejudices individuals hold. Unlike intergroup approaches that aim to reduce intergroup biases through subtler or naturally occurring scenarios, the approaches discussed in this section depend on a more active involvement from the target of the prejudice-reduction intervention.

Although overt, direct forms of prejudice have declined over the past few decades after the passing of many civil rights laws in the 1960s, a number of experimental studies have found that subtle, automatic forms of prejudice are still pervasive among many people (Devine et al. 2000). Even those who are not aware of it and openly endorse egalitarian views (the belief that all people are equal) can have prejudiced attitudes and beliefs (Devine 1989)—a form of prejudice known as *aversive racism*. Aversive racism is defined as a negative evaluation of a racial or ethnic minority that manifests itself in the real world through avoidance of interactions with people from minority groups. This kind of racism is widespread and leads to many negative outcomes for its targets. As an example, let us imagine how aversive racism manifests in the education system. You might observe that students

from a dominant group leave out and alienate a minority student. As a result, that student is likely to have less confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging—all of which lead him or her to perform worse academically. To be sure, this kind of racism is pervasive in and outside of the education system. Thus, many researchers have explored how people are affected when they are made aware of their own prejudice.

In light of the discrepancy between overt and covert prejudice and research on people's awareness and motivations for behaving in prejudiced or nonprejudiced ways, psychologists have explored how *self-regulation* or *consciousness raising* might help reduce prejudice. It is important to note that such processes rely on individuals making a conscious effort to control their behavior and achieve a specific goal. Furthermore, these approaches require a high level of attention, intention, and conscious awareness of one's own.

Research shows that when people are made aware of discrepancies between how they believe they should act toward a minority and how they would actually act toward that minority, they experience higher levels of guilt than those with small or no discrepancies. This is important because guilt is widely recognized as an important factor for self-regulation processes and a motivator for prosocial changes. What is self-regulation? *Self-regulation* is a person's capacity to be able to change his or her behavior in accordance with some sort of internal or societal norm or expectation. Indeed, scientists have found that internal and external motivations to control people's prejudice play an important role in how individuals self-regulate and behave in private and public settings. Some people can be internally motivated to respond to social situations and interactions without prejudice and are thus driven by their desire to be consistent with their own standards and egalitarian beliefs. They may also be externally motivated to behave without prejudice and be driven by their desire to avoid being negatively evaluated by others for responding to others and to situations in prejudiced ways.

An important idea in developing useful prejudice interventions that target the discrepancy between a person's overt and covert prejudices is *cognitive consistency*, which is based on the person's need to be consistent in their more prominent thoughts, beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors to maintain their self-worth. Inconsistencies among these factors lead to dissonance and disharmony within the person (Festinger 1957). Making prejudiced people aware that their egalitarian values and their prejudices are highly inconsistent could lead them to change their attitudes or behaviors to be more consistent. One strategy that hinges on the idea of cognitive consistency is *awareness raising*, a method that entails encouraging individuals to be aware of beliefs, attitudes, or memories they have that relate to prejudice. The underlying idea with this strategy is that when people become aware of certain beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and memories that are prejudiced, they can develop the motivation to reduce them, whether the motivation is external or internal. To reduce prejudice, individuals must first be aware of that prejudice. In one study, researchers asked participants to use different words to describe Asians. Those with higher levels of the kind of aversive, implicit prejudice described previously used more negative stereotypical words to describe Asians (for example,

short or sly). Participants were then randomly assigned to a hypocrisy condition in which they wrote about a time when they had treated an Asian person in a prejudiced way or a control condition in which they did not have any writing exercise. Those in the hypocrisy condition showed more guilt than those in the control condition. Furthermore, among participants in the hypocrisy condition, those who had greater levels of implicit prejudice, as gauged by the word task, showed more guilt than those with lower levels of implicit prejudice. Consequently, they behaved more favorably toward Asians by supporting more funding for Asian student groups in a follow-up questionnaire. Among those with low implicit prejudice, funding recommendations were not affected by the hypocrisy manipulation. This study suggests that raising someone's awareness of their prejudiced attitudes and behaviors can help reduce prejudice.

Furthermore, people who openly held and endorsed egalitarian values exhibited some level of prejudice; despite their egalitarian values, people displayed low, intermediate, or high levels of prejudice. On the one hand, those who were less prejudiced in the study associated egalitarianism with equal opportunity. On the other hand, those who were more prejudiced associated egalitarianism more with the *Protestant work ethic* (*you get what you work for*). When those high in prejudice were retrained to associate egalitarianism with equal opportunity instead of the Protestant work ethic, they felt more morally obligated to respond positively toward blacks. The study suggests that highlighting inconsistency between a particular understanding of egalitarianism and prejudice toward blacks can lead to more positive attitudes toward blacks. Further aligned with these findings are *self-affirmation approaches* that reinforce people's sense of personal value and increase their self-worth. Self-affirmation theory poses that when people's self-worth is affirmed, they will not behave in derogatory and demeaning ways toward others. Some research shows that when people wrote about things they value as a way of affirming their self-worth or received positive feedback about their intelligence as an affirmation of their self-worth, they were more likely to evaluate Jewish job candidates' personalities and suitability for the job in positive ways (Fein and Spencer 1997). In another study, participants who received positive feedback from a black laboratory manager during an experiment decreased in the number of negative stereotypes about black people they expressed in a word completion task.

Another self-regulation method that has been explored is *thought suppression* or *stereotype suppression*. In one study, participants were asked to write a descriptive passage about someone in a photograph who looked like a "skinhead." Those who were randomly assigned to receive instructions to avoid stereotypic thoughts described the target using less stereotypic terms than those who received no instructions (Macrae et al. 1994). However, when participants were asked to write another passage about a skinhead without any instructions, those who had previously been asked to avoid stereotypic thinking wrote more stereotypically than those who previously received no instructions. Such stereotype-suppression methods seem to have the opposite of the desired effect by increasing access to stereotypic thoughts. In one study, business students who had been instructed to suppress negative

thoughts about elderly people while watching a diversity training video rated older job candidates more negatively than people who received no instructions while watching the video. Although some research suggests that suppression does not inevitably lead to more stereotyping, especially when coupled with mental retraining strategies (Kawakami et al. 2000), most research indicates that it is not an effective way to reduce prejudice.

In recent research, students underwent a 12-week intervention in a laboratory consisting of a series of self-regulatory processes to reduce implicit biases. The strategies included replacing stereotypical information about the out-group with nonstereotypical information and reflecting on why the stereotype creates a bias; imagining famous (for example, Barack Obama) or nonfamous (perhaps a friend) counterstereotypic figures; individuating members of the out-group (Brewer 1988) as done in the decategorization strategies previously described; taking the perspective of out-group members as one's own perspective; and providing opportunities to meet with members of the out-group. For participants in the study, those who showed higher levels of concern with discrimination in the world were most positively affected by the multifaceted intervention.

As we can see, self-regulation and consciousness-raising approaches offer some promising ways to reduce prejudice. You might now be able to imagine scenarios in your own life where your egalitarian and nonprejudiced values and beliefs do not align with your attitudes or behaviors toward members of an out-group. To be sure, some researchers would argue that this mere awareness would lead you to feel and behave more consistently with your values. This awareness might just be enough to motivate you to behave in more nonprejudiced ways moving forward. However, not all people will be motivated internally or externally enough to change their discrepant attitudes and behaviors to be more consistent with their values. Thus, there is a need to further understand how motivations, situational factors, and emotions affect people's ability to engage in self-regulation. Furthermore, a serious limitation of prejudice-reduction methods that rely on self-regulation processes as in the studies described previously is that they require a lot of attention, intention, awareness of biases, and a concern with discrimination.

Social Norms

Imagine you and a group of friends are out for your friend's birthday at her favorite Ethiopian restaurant. You order your food and when it arrives, you realize, there are no utensils. Suddenly, your friend tears off a piece of bread and dips it into her dish. You look around at others in the restaurant and observe that many people are dipping bread in their dishes. You tear off a piece of the bread that came with your dish and dip it like your friend. You found yourself in a new situation and searched for social cues that informed you how to behave appropriately in the situation. Your concern with how to behave and your search for social cues from others for how to behave are a result of social norms. Social norms are customary standards for behavior, attitudes, and beliefs that members of a group share. See Chapter 17

of this book for an in-depth discussion of social norms. Social norms play a powerful role in influencing and determining human behavior. Gordon Allport (1954) proposed that prejudice results from societal norms. Although social norms increasingly renounce and condemn prejudice and discrimination toward members of minority groups, prejudice persists toward minority and stigmatized groups like gay men and Iraqis (Crandall et al. 2002).

Research examining the effect of social norms on individuals' attitudes and prejudice toward other groups has found that social norms strongly influence and shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In one study, a group of white students at an American university who had heard another student condemning racism expressed more antiracist opinions—publicly and privately—than students in a control group that did not hear another student expressing any condemnation of racism. In a series of three experiments, Stangor et al. (2001) found that views and beliefs of one's in-group play an important role in determining an individual's beliefs and behaviors. In the first experiment, white American students indicated their beliefs about positive and negative stereotypes of black people. They then estimated what they thought other students at their university would believe about those same stereotypes. Each student was then randomly assigned to either receive feedback that students at their university had more favorable evaluations of black people than they had estimated or less favorable evaluations. Those students who had received feedback stating other university students had more favorable attitudes than they had estimated evaluated blacks more positively when they were asked to complete evaluations of the same stereotypes a second time. Those students who had received feedback stating other university students had less favorable attitudes than they had estimated evaluated blacks less positively when asked to complete the evaluation a second time. In their second experiment, Stangor and colleagues found that this effect was greater when participants received feedback from an in-group versus an out-group. Finally, in their third experiment, they found that participants who received feedback that confirmed their beliefs about stereotypes of blacks were more resistant to changing their beliefs. These experiments attest to the powerful role social norms play in determining attitudes and beliefs about members of out-groups.

Imagine you are a student at a high school that is predominately comprised of white students with only about 10 percent of the student population being minority students. What kinds of social norms would you want to establish at your school? You would probably want the social norm to be that minority students are accepted and included by the rest of the student body. You would probably try to establish a social norm that discourages discriminatory and prejudiced behaviors. Social norms can powerfully affect prejudice; it is important that we take the next step in trying to develop ways to use social norms for affecting positive change in the world.

Emotions

Emotions play an important role in determining how we react to, interact with, and behave toward each other. Some psychologists argue that emotions influence

expressions of prejudice toward individuals from an out-group. Emotions can influence thought processes that are associated with prejudice such as people's tendency to stereotype out-group members (Smith and Mackie 2010). For example, happy and angry individuals stereotype more than individuals who are sad. Sometimes, emotions like anxiety can arise when individuals encounter people from an out-group making interactions uncomfortable, unpleasant, and awkward (Stephan and Stephan 1985).

You have probably heard the expression "walk a mile in my shoes." One method that has been examined by this idiom in the context of prejudice is perspective taking. *Perspective-taking* interventions encourage perceivers to imagine and experience the emotions a target of prejudice might have. The approach aims to induce feelings of similarity, liking, and closeness with individuals who might typically be the targets of prejudice and discrimination to create more positive attitudes toward a target out-group (Vescio et al. 2003). For example, it was found that having participants write essays from the perspective of an elderly individual reduces stereotyping of the elderly. Additionally, writing an essay from the perspective of an individual from an out-group can lead to more positive evaluations of that group. Try to imagine applying perspective taking in your own life. Maybe you have a classmate or coworker who you do not talk to very much because he is from some out-group that you do not know much about. Imagine what that person is like with his family, what that person does while shopping at a grocery store, or what that person is like when he is playing a sport that you also like. You might find yourself feeling more similar to that person or that it becomes easier to relate to him. In turn, you might become more positive toward that person, reach out to him, and maybe even become friends.

A similar emotional approach for reducing prejudice uses *empathy*. Empathy is the ability to recognize, understand, and share feelings that another person is experiencing. Empathy is said to play an important role in reducing prejudice among those who can experience the feelings of out-group members. Researchers have found that inducing empathy through instruction can improve attitudes toward a target out-group. For example, some researchers have found that simply asking whites to be more empathic when reading about blacks' experiences with discrimination on a daily basis removes the difference between how they evaluate white and black Americans. Similar research found that participants who read instructions that said to "focus on your feelings" rather than thoughts while watching a video that depicted discrimination toward blacks showed a greater desire to interact with blacks. The experimenters attributed this effect to a change in the participants' emotions toward blacks.

Researchers have also examined other ways of inducing and strengthening empathy like *role-playing*. In a study that used a game to simulate a situation that called for an expression of empathy, third graders were separated into two groups. One group was assigned to wear orange armbands and the other group was assigned to wear green armbands. The students in the orange bands then experienced an entire day of being discriminated against, negatively stereotyped, and not receiving any praise from the teacher. The next day, the roles were reversed and the students in

the green bands experienced the same things those in orange bands had experienced the day before. The study found that groups of students who shared the negative experience were less prejudiced than students who were divided into the same groupings, but did not both share the negative experience. In other words, this experiment created a situation to induce empathy among third-grade students and successfully lead them to exhibit less prejudice toward members of the other group up to two weeks later.

Emotions can be an effective way of reducing prejudice in the real world as they allow people to relate to and empathize with members of an out-group. Imagine that you are currently a camp counselor for a group of youth at a summer camp. The summer camp program divides the campers into two groups. You notice that the campers from both groups begin to express hostility toward members from the other group. How would you try to influence the campers' emotions toward the other group? Would you encourage people to engage in perspective taking or try to strengthen their empathy levels? What kinds of activities or exercises would you ask the campers to complete? What might you expect to occur?

Cooperative Learning

Think back to a time when you worked with a group of peers on a “group project” during your elementary or high school education. Your teacher likely put you in a group with some people you did not know, but at the end of the project, you probably felt you had become friends with everyone in your group. You likely learned what each member of the group was good at and learned that if each person contributed what they were good at to the group project, you would perform well as a group. Indeed, you may have even learned to depend on different people for specific things over time. Where you may have taken notes for the group because you were organized and wrote neatly, someone else may have done all the drawing for the group because he was a very good artist, and another person may have been the group's spokesperson because she was a good public speaker. Over time, you learned about each other's strengths, weaknesses, interests, hobbies, passions, personal histories, and how to work with one another. You were able to predict how specific group members would respond to certain situations, felt insulted when they felt insulted, understood when they were sad or happy, and shared in that experience, understood how to approach them regarding different issues, and so on. It may surprise you that this kind of group work may have resulted from a conscious effort on behalf of your teacher to pair you with a variety of students so that you maybe come to know one another and learn to work with each other. This kind of group work is based on a process called cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning aims to reduce racial prejudice in schools and involves bringing students from different racial and ethnic groups to work together, or “cooperatively,” to achieve different academic goals. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* case that segregation was unlawful in public schools because it made them unequal. This ruling resulted in the desegregation of American public schools—a process that created

prejudice, hostility, and discrimination between different racial and ethnic groups. In 1971, the city of Austin, Texas, faced so many racial problems in its schools that it hired psychologist Elliot Aronson to help devise a solution for the Austin school system. Based on Morton Deutsch's theory of interdependence (1949)—which contends that two groups are more likely to work in cooperation with each other when they recognize that they have a common goal that can only be achieved by pooling their unique skills and resources together—Aronson developed the jigsaw classroom.

In a *jigsaw classroom* (Aronson et al. 1978), students are divided into small groups of five or six people each. The teacher then typically gives each student in the group different pieces of information that make up the overarching group assignment. Each person is responsible for relaying the piece of information received to the other members of the group. When the group gets together, the students have to work with each other to put together the pieces of the “puzzle” and achieve their goal. This method creates interdependence between the members of the jigsaw group such that there is a need for everyone's participation, contribution, and cooperation. The jigsaw classroom and other variations of it have been found to reduce prejudice among schoolchildren, with students in cooperative learning or jigsaw groups showing more interpersonal liking, attraction, and social support, engaging more in perspective taking and helping behaviors, and managing conflict more constructively.

Aronson and Bridgeman (1979) argue that improvements in prejudice and intergroup relations that occur in jigsaw classrooms are partly due to empathy. The cooperative learning approach has been shown to reduce prejudice in the immediate classroom, and approximately 79 percent of elementary schools in the United States used cooperative learning (Puma 1993) by the early 1990s. Its results are promising and have had an important effect on intergroup relations in the United States over the past few decades.

Media and the Printed Word

Every single day, people across the world gain exposure to media through their television sets, radios, computers, and other devices. Media are powerful tools for influencing and shaping peoples' attitudes and behaviors (Bandura 2004). Recently, some psychologists have been exploring how media affects prejudice through the scope of entertainment education. Entertainment education “is a communication strategy to bring about behavioral and social change” as it is a “process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change behavior” (Singhal and Rogers 2004, p. 5). Entertainment education has been used in all kinds of health interventions, including awareness campaigns about the adverse effects of smoking to breast cancer screening interventions that have increased screening rates among target communities. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control has an *Entertainment Education Program*, which has a mission to provide “expert consultation, education,

and resources for writers and producers who develop scripts with health story lines and information” as seen in popular programming like NBC’s *Parenthood* and ABC’s *Desperate Housewives*.

Although psychologists have not extensively examined the role of media in reducing prejudice, it is a promising avenue for changing prejudice. Media programming exposes audiences to characters they may not always come across, and this can be for an extended period of time. Media programming also involves narrative persuasion, which transports people into story lines and increases their ability to take on the perspectives of the characters and feel empathy toward them. You can probably imagine ways that portraying characters from a typical minority group can influence how someone feels or behaves toward members of that group in real life. Expectedly, the way those characters are portrayed and the narrative they are part of is very important in determining how an audience receives certain characters and relates to the story line—a topic that psychologists must further study. Can you imagine a TV show or movie that exposed you to members of an out-group? Do you think the portrayal of those out-group characters made you more positive or hostile toward those out-groups? Why or why not?

Husna Haq (2016) described a series of studies by Murrar and Brauer. Randomly assigned participants between the ages of 18 and 60 were asked to watch a TV show that depicted a target minority group or a TV show that depicted a dominant group. Participants who watched the TV show about members of a minority group had more positive evaluations of them and showed less prejudice toward them across a series of measures. Studies show such effects have important implications for the real world as they provide us with an understanding of how we might use media to reduce prejudice on a broad scale.

Another one of the few studies examining the role media can play in reducing prejudice through an intergroup conflict framework took place in post-conflict Rwanda. In 1994, the ethnic majority tribe in Rwanda, the Hutus, was responsible for the mass murder of approximately 800,000 people—mostly comprising people from the minority Tutsi tribe. The study, which took place a decade and a half after the conflict had ended, looked at the effects of two radio soap operas on intergroup prejudice and conflict. In the study, eight different communities of Rwandans were randomly assigned to listen to one of two radio programs: a reconciliation radio soap opera, which was the intervention’s condition, and a health soap opera, which was the control condition. The reconciliation radio soap opera included characters that were similar to most Rwandans—most Rwandans live in rural and underdeveloped communities—and story lines that resembled everyday life. The communities gathered in a communal area and listened collectively to the soap operas over a span of a year. After a year of listening to the soap opera, they completed a series of questionnaires, interviews, and group discussions. Although the study found that the reconciliation soap opera did not significantly change people’s beliefs, it affected perceptions of and behaviors toward some of the most critical issues for Rwanda’s post-conflict society, such as intermarriage, open dissent, trust, and talking about personal trauma. In a related study researchers found that those Rwandans who listened to the reconciliation radio soap opera were more likely to consider the

historical perspective of the out-group tribe, showed less competitive attitudes when it came to the degree of victimization their tribe experienced, and expressed less mistrust toward the out-group tribe than Rwandans who heard the control group soap opera. As these studies show us, media can be powerful resources for shaping prosocial behaviors and reducing prejudiced attitudes and behaviors.

The entertainment and news media play an important role in influencing and shaping our attitudes and behaviors toward target out-groups. And so do reading books and articles. Characters from novels or short stories, or those people described in nonfiction books and articles can open readers' minds to imagining the lives of others. Reading about people from other groups, whether they are of a different age group, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic group, education, socioeconomic level, or from a different nation or historical period, can influence the way you feel about others. So the next time you choose a podcast or radio program to listen to, a TV or online show or movie to stream or watch, or a book or article to read, you might be more conscious about the content of the story line or narrative and how out-group characters are portrayed. Perhaps you will find that you dislike some characters heavily and relate to others. Perhaps you find the story line at some part very interesting and completely boring at others. As you make these considerations, think about ways they may positively or negatively affect your perceptions of others and your behavior toward them.

Current State and Recommendation for the Future

Psychologists have come a long way in understanding prejudice reduction. However, a concern with our current state of understanding has to do with the population that social psychologists have studied. Participants in a majority of the studies performed in the laboratory are conducted with WEIRD participants, that is, they are Western, Educated, from Industrialized, Rich, Democratic countries. In many ways, such participants are not representative of the people on this planet. Thus, future research should extend its participant pool beyond university students to ensure a representative sample. Another issue with our current understanding of prejudice interventions is that most studies assess prejudice immediately after an intervention, which leaves the question of the long-term efficacy of these interventions unanswered. To address this issue and gauge the long-term efficacy of prejudice interventions, researchers should measure prejudice immediately after an intervention and at later time points.

Finally, although laboratory studies inform us about what ought to happen in the real world, we do not actually know whether or not they would work in real-world contexts. Researchers need to conduct theoretically driven randomized controlled field experiments that will help us understand what is and what is not effective in real-world contexts. Furthermore, we suggest using *randomized rollout designs* (Paluck and Cialdini 2014), which entails carrying the study out in phases. In such a design, participants are randomly assigned into conditions, but do not all participate at the same time. Instead, some people participate during the first phase and the rest

during the subsequent phase(s). Such designs allow scientists to test interventions in real-world settings in phases to ensure an intervention is effective before mass application and to allow for intervention maintenance from one phase to the next.

Although our understanding of prejudice and ways of reducing it have come a long way, much work still needs to be done to build a society that provides everyone with a secure and just space in which they can live and thrive.

See also: Classic Experiments in Social Psychology: “1950—Clark Doll Experiments”; and “1968—The Blue-Eyed Children Experiment”

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