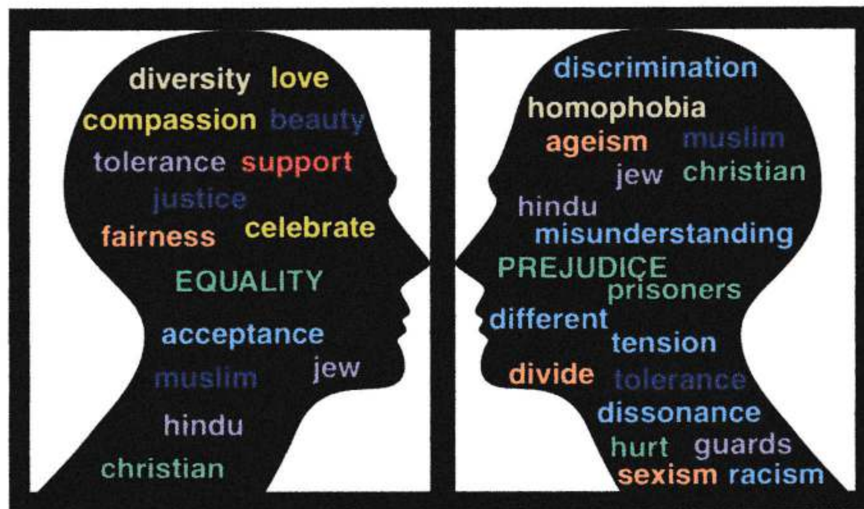
Chapter 7

Prejudice: Foundations, Causes, Effects, and Remedies

Figure 7.1 What does the word "prejudice" trigger in your mind and emotions?

What can we do about it? In this chapter, learn about the foundations of prejudice, its common effects, and ways you can work toward overcoming it.



Learning Objectives

7.1 Summarize the theories that serve as the foundations of prejudice

7.2 Distinguish scenarios of stereotyping from prejudice and discrimination

On the morning of September 11, 2001, millions of Americans got up and went about their business as usual, thinking it was just another day. In New York City, it was a particularly beautiful day, with late summer sunshine lighting the clear blue sky. At 8:46 A.M., that sense of normalcy and peace was shattered when a hijacked airliner carrying 92 people and 20,000 gallons of jet fuel slammed into the North Tower of New York's World Trade Center. Minutes later, a second jet crashed into the South Tower, and with it came a dawning awareness that what was initially thought to be a terrible accident was instead an unimaginable act of terror. In the next hour, a third hijacked plane hit the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, diverted from an intended fourth target in Washington, D.C., by a group of heroic passengers. Some 3,000 people, including firefighters and rescue personnel, financial wizards and janitors, parents and children, were killed in the attacks of what has come to be known universally as simply "9/11."

Parisians experienced a similar tragedy in November 2015, when a series of terror attacks at restaurants, sports, and entertainment venues killed 130 people who

were simply trying to enjoy their Friday night. Sadly, these events are no longer isolated incidents: Terror attacks have become shockingly commonplace from Beirut to Bangkok, Syria to South Carolina. In 2015 alone, more than 300 separate incidents left more than 5,000 people dead.

In the aftermath of these horrific tragedies, Americans and friends around the world have struggled to understand the causes of these events. What kind of people would commit such atrocious acts against innocent bystanders? Why? And what can we do to stop them? In trying to understand and cope with these new threats, increased vigilance seems reasonable and necessary. But because many of the attacks have been carried out by members of extremist, radical groups of Islamic fundamentalists, an unfortunate outgrowth of that newfound vigilance has become increased suspicion of all Arab Americans and people of the Muslim faith.

That increased suspicion sometimes even prompts hate crimes, such as the September 15, 2001, killing of gas station attendant Balbir Singh Sodhi in Mesa, Arizona—a man guilty of nothing more than having a beard and wearing a turban. He was neither Muslim nor of Arab descent, but his killer felt angered by the attack on America and threatened by Sodhi's superficial resemblance to the perpetrators of the terrorist attack. What Sodhi's murderer didn't understand was that his act of vengeance made him no different than the terrorists he was seeking to punish.

This chapter will examine the roots of the prejudices with which all humans struggle and the suspicions that, for some, have become more pronounced as the threat of terror attacks has escalated worldwide. We will seek to understand the universal causes of these attitudes and behaviors, and to learn how some of them may be overcome with ongoing effort and education.

7.1: The Foundations of Prejudice

7.1 Summarize the theories that serve as the foundations of prejudice

What causes prejudice? Cross-cultural research over the past half-century has identified several contributing factors, some of which seem to be rooted in our biological makeup, and others which stem from social forces. In studying these origins of prejudice, along with the ways it perpetuates itself in societies, studies are focusing more and more on what we can do—on an individual level, as well as on a group or societal level—to decrease its negative impacts on the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and the world.

In this chapter, our discussion of prejudice will take a two-tiered approach that parallels the research. First we will examine the contributing factors that appear to be inevitable, which we will call the *foundations* of prejudice. Then, we will explore the *social factors* that seem to rest on that foundation. Throughout, our focus will be on understanding how the elements of prejudice develop, and how they can be overcome.

To help you visualize this process, think of a camera on a tripod. Just as a tripod has three legs, prejudice is also supported by three "legs"—which are the three foundations of prejudice we will explore in the first section of this chapter. They include:

1. Group Formation
2. Ethnocentrism
3. Stereotyping

The camera on top of the tripod, then, can be compared to the social forces of prejudice perched on top of the foundation. As we will see later in this chapter, these social factors—like a camera—can offer different perspectives, through different lenses, from many angles, to help reveal the complex "whole picture" of prejudice. By swiveling the camera, swapping lenses, or changing filters or settings, we can see a different viewpoint. In the same way, examining various perspectives of prejudice and its impact on individuals and societies will offer you a deeper and more holistic understanding—not only of prejudice, but of what you can do about it to improve your relations with others.

Just as a different angles and camera lenses offer different viewpoints on a scene, social influences combine to create the complex reality of prejudice. These social forces rest on universal foundations, much like a camera rests on a tripod. Learning about them can reduce your own risk of prejudice.

7.1.1: The First Leg: Group Formation

7.1.1 Describe the causes and consequences of ingroup bias

Throughout our history, humans have joined together in groups. Early civilizations lived in bands and tribes, working together to feed and protect themselves. More modern civilizations are not that different: We, too, typically band together with others in families or similar social groups to feed and protect ourselves. From an evolutionary standpoint, then, group membership facilitates our very survival.

But from a psychological standpoint, group membership is a bit more complicated. Just as we fall prey to **self-enhancement** and **self-verification** biases in processing information about our personal identity, similar biases operate for the social identity that connects us to the groups with whom we identify. In other words, our group memberships contribute to our identity—and we are as protective of them as we are of our personal identity. As a result, we inherently favor our own groups at the expense of "other" groups—which, as you might imagine, sets the stage for prejudice. And, as we will see in the following sections, it doesn't take much to make us identify with a group—it happens on a very subtle level all the time, and often without our conscious awareness or intent. Let's explore more about the processes that contribute to group formation, and investigate the possible ways we can try to counteract these processes to help us avoid prejudice.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AND INGROUP BIAS One key factor in understanding the psychological implications of group formation is *social identity*, which is our sense of connection to the various groups with whom we identify. For example, your own social identity might include being a student at your school, a skater, a member of your race and/or religion, a member of your soccer team, a mom or dad, and so forth with regard to people you hang out with and things you like to do. In other words, social identity is the "we" part of our **self-concept** (Myers, 1999); **social identity theory** includes the idea that, in our efforts to maintain positive self-esteem, we tend to develop biases that favor our own groups over other groups. Thus, liking our own groups more than other groups contributes to a higher sense of self-esteem.

Example

How Easily Does Group Identity Create Favoritism?

The classic experiment that demonstrated how easily we form groups and identify with them was conducted in 1971 by European psychologist Henri Tajfel.

In his study, participants were shown a series of slides, each containing a random number of dots. Each slide was flashed very briefly, without sufficient time to count the dots, and participants were asked to estimate the number of dots on each slide. Participants worked alone.

At the end of the testing session, participants met with someone on Tajfel's lab team to hear their results. Some were told they were "underestimators," and others were told they were "overestimators."

Later in the experiment, the same participants, still each working alone, were told they must divide 15 points (each point worth money) among 9 other participants of the experiment. The other participants, whom they had never met, were identified on their worksheet by only a coded participant number, and the designation "overestimator" or "underestimator."

Do you think they divided the points as fairly as possible among the other participants?

Compare Your Thoughts

- Participants who had been told they were "underestimators" awarded a significant majority of points to other "underestimators"; participants told they were "overestimators" similarly rewarded other "overestimators" with the lion's share of the available points.
- Furthermore, when each participant completed his or her work and joined the other participants, someone in the group inevitably asked, "Which were you?" The answer was met by cheers from the like group and boos from the other (Tajfel and others, 1971). Despite the meaningless basis of group affiliation—overestimator or underestimator—participants favored their own group members over others.

Numerous other studies have replicated Tajfel's work with similar results. Typically, people assign about two-thirds of the rewards to their own group and about one-third to the other, and this finding holds true for women and men alike, as well as for various age groups, and cross culturally. This favoritism is known as **ingroup bias**, and Tajfel demonstrated how easily we tend to demonstrate this bias, even when the groups are defined by something as meaningless as "overestimator" or "underestimator." When our group affiliation is based on something that is actually meaningful to our self-concept—such as political and social beliefs, ethnicity, religion, or gender—you can imagine how much stronger the bias becomes. Research in this area indeed demonstrates that the more strongly we identify with a group, the more ingroup bias we exhibit toward it (Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990). The effect becomes even stronger when we perceive our group to be part of a minority (Ellemers and others, 1997; Hewstone and others, 2002). So, for example, if you are a political liberal in a town that is largely conservative, you will feel more strongly biased toward your liberal viewpoints and against the opposition than you would if most of your neighbors were also liberals.

INGROUP BIAS VISIBLE IN THE BRAIN Importantly, this bias is not a conscious choice. Stunning new research is revealing a neurological basis for ingroup bias. Scientists using brain scanning techniques and genetic measures have discovered multiple brain-based origins of this foundation of prejudice. One common method puts participants into situations where they see pictures or read stories about a fictional person who is experiencing physical or social pain, such as being stuck with a needle, or failing at an important task. Some of the pictures and stories are about a person in one of the participant's ingroups (such as the same race or ethnicity), while others are not. Would participants' reactions to the fictional person's suffering differ based on whether the victim was from one of their ingroups? Indeed they did: Participants felt greater **empathy** for victims who were in their ingroup—and the difference in empathy could be traced to certain regions in the brain, as well as activation of brain chemicals such as **oxytocin** (Chiao and Mathur, 2010; Luo and others, 2015). In other words, neurological processes seem to be at the root of the favoritism we feel for ingroup members. This neurological basis suggests that ingroup bias may have evolved as an important aid to survival.

One common example of ingroup bias is seen in sports fans around the world. Here, Brazilian soccer fans show their unity and group identification with their clothing, wigs, and face paint.

Ingroup bias has a flip side, too, which is **outgroup bias**, or downgrading others who are different or not in your group. What's more, these biases don't just apply to the people in the group, but extend to norms and customs of groups as well – prompting us to favor the rules and norms of our own culture while perceiving behaviors of other cultures as strange or even wrong. Ingroup and outgroup bias exists all over the world, inextricably linked to our need to belong to a group. We can see how these biases have been beneficial from an evolutionary standpoint, because they promote and strengthen the bond among people in the same group. In our increasingly multicultural world, however, ingroup and outgroup bias can easily evolve into prejudice and discrimination.

WRITING PROMPT

Critical Thinking About the Effects of Your Own Ingroup Bias

Give an example of an ingroup bias of your own. How is that bias beneficial? How is it harmful?

▶ `The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.`

Submit

IDENTITY FUSION: SOCIAL IDENTITY TAKEN TO THE EXTREME Although ingroup bias seems to be a normal, human quality, most people retain a strong individual identity that merely overlaps somewhat with the various social identities that drive their ingroup biases. Recently, however, University of Texas psychologist Bill Swann and his colleagues discovered an extreme form of social identity which they call **identity fusion**. Identity fusion occurs, according to their theory, when a person's individual identity merges, or fuses, with their group identity. As a result, their typical human motivation to protect their personal identity extends to their merged social identity, so that they become passionately protective of perceived threats to their social group. Studies conducted by the research group indeed support the theory, finding that individuals whose personal identity is fused with their group identity are significantly more likely to express willingness to fight or die for their group (Swann and others, 2009, 2012). For more about the effects of identity fusion, and how it may help explain extreme behaviors such as acts of terrorism, Listen to Dr. Swann explain it in his own words in the clip titled: Identity Fusion.

REDUCING INGROUP BIAS

Are there any remedies to help us overcome ingroup bias if or when it becomes a problem?

Just as the complexity of our **self-concept** can help protect us against loss and threat to our **self**, the complexity of our social identity affects the strength of our ingroup biases. Studies show that people who identify with a diverse set of social groups (in other words, have more complex social identities) exhibit less outgroup bias than people whose social identities connect only to groups that are very similar to one another (Brewer and Pierce, 2005). Please refer to the following video.

And, going one step further, endorsing **multiculturalism**—which is a belief system that aims to reduce intergroup conflict by appreciating the diversity of different groups rather than trying to be "color blind"—leads to even greater reduction of ingroup bias, according to controlled studies (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). It seems, then, that

Identity Fusion

Dr. William Swann discusses how extreme instances of social identity can lead to identity fusion—with important implications for extremist behavior such as terrorism.

by developing connections to a broader, more diverse representation of the people in our environment, and embracing both our similarities and our differences, we can take an important step toward reducing our own biases.

7.1.2: The Second Leg: Ethnocentrism

7.1.2 Summarize the four steps to flexible ethnocentrism

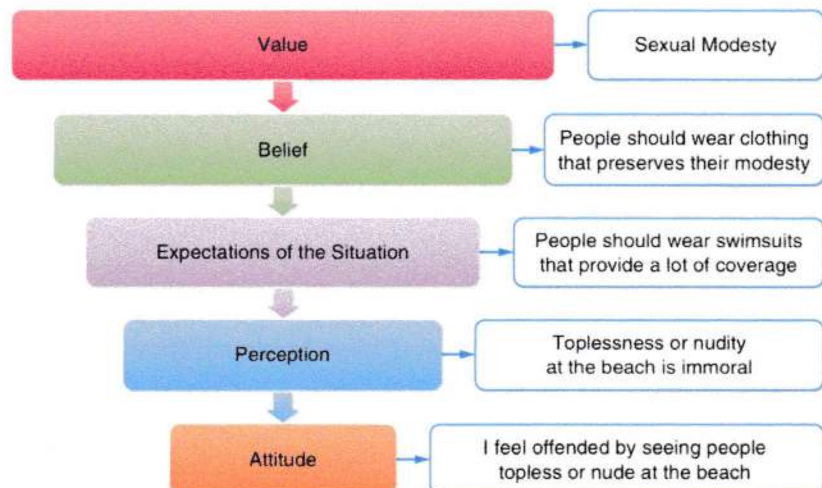
The next component that serves as a foundation for prejudice is **ethnocentrism**, or our tendency to see the world through the lenses of our own culture. Professor David Matsumoto of San Francisco State University, an important contributor to our understanding of how psychological principles can be used to improve multicultural relations, suggests that ethnocentrism can have two different outcomes:

- One outcome results in the ingroup and outgroup biases discussed earlier, which Matsumoto (2000) calls **inflexible ethnocentrism**, or judging others as wrong simply because they are different. This negative consequence, in fact, is the outcome typically associated with ethnocentrism.
- A more positive outcome is **flexible ethnocentrism**, which involves a less judgmental perspective toward unfamiliar cultures—in turn, leading to better human relations. Let's examine Matsumoto's ideas in more depth.

WE'RE ALL ETHNOCENTRIC In a departure from the traditional view of ethnocentrism, which argues that we should not be ethnocentric, Matsumoto argues for a viewpoint that is both more realistic and more optimistic. First,

Figure 7.2 Values Are the Foundation of Culture

Review this figure, which was introduced earlier in this text, to recall how a culture's values influence the beliefs and attitudes of the members of that culture. This process stands as a powerful illustration of ethnocentrism: These culture-based beliefs we develop bias us to see our ways as "right" and other ways as "wrong."



we must recognize that ethnocentrism is an inevitable by-product of our upbringing, in all cultures. As we grow up within a social group, we learn the rules of our society and the expected behaviors, beliefs, and values that go along with them. These rules and norms define a culture and are integral to successful adaptation to its social group. In other words, they teach us what is "normal."

In this way, we learn to see others' behavior through the lenses of our own culture, judging whether it fits or not—whether it is "right" or "wrong"—based on our own norms and expectations. This ethnocentrism, present in all cultures, is not only inevitable, but may be necessary, for if we don't value the rules and norms of our culture, what motivation do we have to uphold them? Ethnocentrism, then, helps keep a society functioning smoothly, avoiding mass chaos. But, Matsumoto argues we can divert ourselves from the negative outcome of ethnocentrism to a more flexible viewpoint. Here's how.

BECOMING MORE FLEXIBLY ETHNOCENTRIC The key to avoiding the negative outcome of ethnocentrism (inflexible ethnocentrism) lies in our *awareness* of our own ethnocentrism. We must recognize that we are ethnocentric, and that it is a natural condition. Then we can follow a series of steps to help ensure that ours is a flexible ethnocentrism.

The first step toward flexible ethnocentrism is to become consciously aware of the rules of our own cultural group, and to recognize how these rules affect our perceptions and judgments of others.

Western culture, for example, places a high value on beauty, especially in women: Women are supposed to do their best to look as attractive as possible at all times. Toward this end, women spend an enormous amount of money on cosmetics, clothing, and ongoing attention to their hair. Enhancement and exhibition of physical beauty, then, is a cultural rule for Western women. This norm affects Westerners' perceptions and judgments of others, in that women who do not adhere to this norm are looked down upon and often criticized with derogatory language. Becoming aware of norms such as these, and the judgments that often arise from them, is the first step toward flexible ethnocentrism.

The next step is to recognize that other cultures have their own set of rules, beliefs, and behaviors that, although they may be very different from our own, are just as important to their own society as ours are to us.

Continuing with the same example, one group of women that does not value exhibition of female beauty is Muslim women. Instead of showing off the latest hairstyle, it is Islamic custom for a woman to cover her head with a scarf, called a *hijab*. In addition, a traditional Muslim woman may also shun slacks and wear only loose-fitting dresses or similar garments. This custom is at odds with the Western practice of showing off one's physical attributes. When a Muslim woman adheres to Islamic custom by wearing the hijab and traditional dress in a Western country such as the United States, Westerners need to remember that she is doing so because it is important to her belief system. Too often, we react instead by thinking how different she looks and then unconsciously assuming that she must be different from us in many other ways as well. Essentially, the difference in clothing—whether it be traditional Muslim, hip-hop, grunge, biker, or corporate—creates a noticeable visual difference that we psychologically interpret as a barrier.

The third step on the path to flexible ethnocentrism is to learn about other cultures' specific beliefs and norms, so we can better understand them in their own context.

Most Westerners are aware that Islamic women traditionally wear a hijab and loose clothing, but fewer understand why. Talking to a Muslim woman or even conducting a quick Internet search reveals the reasons behind her attire. The Qur'an, which is the Muslim equivalent of the Christian Bible, decrees that women should cover their heads and let their bodies be known only to their husbands. In addition, it emphasizes modesty for both women and men, so that they will be evaluated on the basis of their intelligence and abilities instead of their physical attributes. Interestingly, the Qur'an offers guidelines for men as well: They are not supposed to wear tight-fitting clothes, either, and they are also prohibited from wearing silk or gold. Women, on the other hand, can wear silk and gold. These guidelines stem from Allah's statement that men and women should not appear like each other. Adhering to these rules is considered a sign of dignity and good moral character, both of which are highly valued in Muslim society. Understanding the origin of these Islamic customs helps us make sense of them and to recognize that although they may be different from Western beliefs and customs, they work just as well for Muslims as Western beliefs and customs do for Westerners. (And when you think about it, women in Western culture didn't typically wear slacks, either, until partway into the 20th century.)

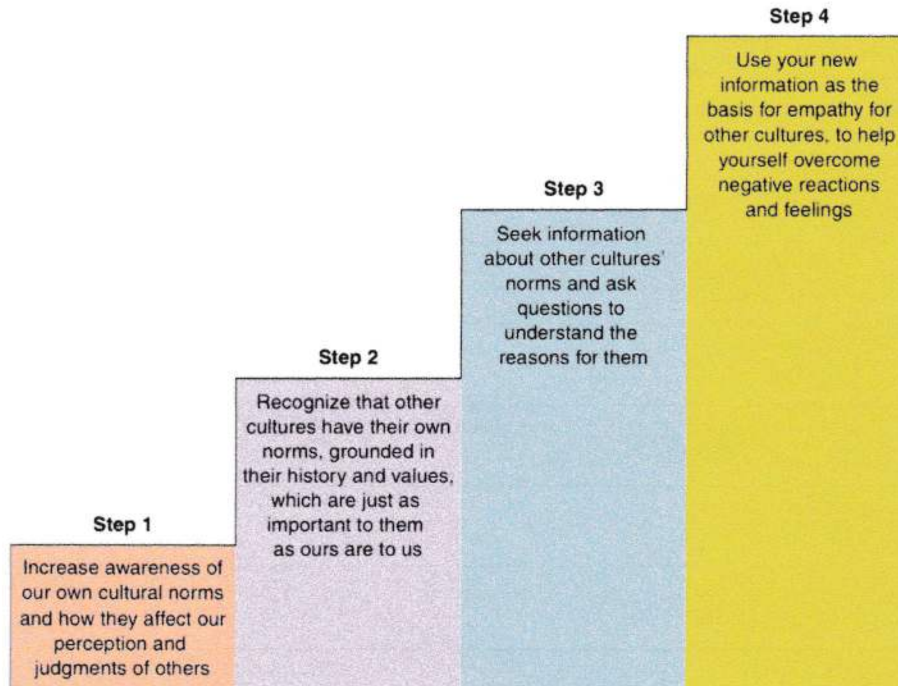
For some powerful insights into what it's like to wear the hijab you can take a look at the video titled "Women share the reality of wearing a hijab. Their wisdom has lessons for us all" on www.upworthy.com.

The fourth and final step in becoming flexibly ethnocentric is this: As you learn more about other cultures, be mindful of your new knowledge.

By paying attention, and considering how various patterns of behavior flow naturally from various value systems, you can build an ever-broadening set of perspectives from which to draw when you encounter someone who, at

Figure 7.3 Steps to Flexible Ethnocentrism

This figure summarizes the steps to flexible ethnocentrism.



first glance, seems "different." Instead of instantly rejecting it as "wrong," you can apply your new cultural awareness to help recognize that there is a logical and valid explanation for the cultural difference, and try to learn more about differences so you can better appreciate them.

Figure 7.3 summarizes the steps to flexible ethnocentrism.

WRITING PROMPT

Critical Thinking About Flexible Ethnocentrism

Compare the idea of flexible ethnocentrism to the tips for overcoming ingroup bias discussed in the previous section. Discuss one similarity you see between the two concepts.

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THE LIVING LIBRARY Interested in becoming more flexibly ethnocentric? Check out a book from the living library—but don't plan on reading it. "Books" in a **Living Library** aren't books at all in the traditional sense: Instead, they are living, breathing men and women from groups that are frequently targets of stereotypes and prejudice.

Created in 2000 by a group of youth from Denmark who wanted to do something to reduce violence toward immigrants and refugees, this innovative new movement aims to break down barriers between people who may not understand each other by offering them opportunities to ask questions and engage in dialogue. "Books" are volunteers who are willing to tell their stories, and "readers" can be anyone who feels ready to confront one of their own prejudices. Titles are widely inclusive of prejudices, ranging from Skateboarder to Vegetarian, from Rabbi to Ex-prisoner, from Jew to Police Officer to Lesbian to Black Person.

Living libraries (sometimes called human libraries) are sprouting up all over the world, and new research investigating their impact is promising. In Hungary, for example, prejudice against LGBT and the Roma community (sometimes called Gypsies—a term considered by many to be a racial slur) is widespread. Sixty percent of Hungarians in one study agreed that "the inclination toward criminality is in the blood of gypsies" (Bernát and others, 2013) and less than half of Hungarians believed that gays and lesbians "should be free to live their own lives as they wish" (Lipka, 2013). People who participated in the Living Library experiment in Hungary, however, showed significantly reduced prejudice toward both these groups after their experience (Orosz and others, in press). To learn more about the Living Library, check out their website http://humanlibrary.org/.

a. For each group named in question 1, brainstorm a list of the assumptions you tend to make about that group.
b. Which assumptions are positive, and which ones are negative?
c. Where do you think your stereotypes came from?

2. Give an example of a time when the confirmation bias strengthened one of your stereotypes.
3. Give an example of a way in which the outgroup homogeneity effect influenced one of your stereotypes.
4. Give an example of a time when your emotional state (happy, stressed, or angry) activated a stereotype, and describe that situation.
5. If someone were to stereotype you, what would that stereotype be, and why?
6. How accurate is the stereotype you described in question 7? Explain your answer.
7. How do you feel when someone stereotypes you? Does it also affect your behavior? Explain your answer.
8. What reflections do you have on this exercise? Discuss one important insight you've developed from it, along with how you will use it to improve your relations with others.

7.1.4: The Foundations of Prejudice: A Final Word

7.1.4 Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of group formation

Group formation and its accompanying ingroup/outgroup biases, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping are not limited to a particular culture. They are universal phenomena that experts agree are probably inevitable, because they grow out of the basic human need for survival. Group affiliation has been part of human survival since our beginning. We can't seem to help but band together with others whom we perceive as similar to ourselves. Ethnocentrism contributes to survival by way of social learning, which is a process that helps us fit into our social group. Stereotyping contributes to survival by acting as a cognitive shortcut to information processing. In their purest form, they can all be beneficial. Their value becomes more ambiguous when we allow them to evolve into prejudice, which we will examine next.

WRITING PROMPT

Critical Thinking About the Foundations of Prejudice

Before undertaking the next section, briefly reflect on how these foundations of prejudice contribute to what seems to be an increasingly hostile divide between groups in and between many countries of our world. Identify a recent news story that illustrates some kind of prejudice. Then, choose one of these three foundations of prejudice, and discuss how that foundation may have contributed to prejudice in that situation.

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7.2: Prejudice and Discrimination

7.2 Distinguish scenarios of stereotyping from prejudice and discrimination

Now that we understand the roots of prejudice, let's examine prejudice itself in more detail. Simply put, **prejudice** is a prejudgment about a particular group of people. Typically, we think of prejudice as consisting of negative judgments, but research shows that people can be positively prejudiced as well (Crandall and Eshleman, 2003). Either way, we are prejudiced when we judge a person or group based only on our stereotypes about them, rather than a rational evaluation of the facts available to us. The difference between a stereotype and a prejudice is that a stereotype is strictly a cognitive process, whereas a prejudice is an attitude, which includes an emotional component. A stereotype, then, is an assumption, and a prejudice builds on that assumption by judging it as good or bad. Some common prejudices in American culture include those based on race, sex, age, weight, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Anti-gay prejudice has contributed to thousands of hate crimes, instances of bullying and cyberbulling, and even led some individuals to commit suicide. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that allows same-sex couples to marry in any state was an important step towards reducing prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Many people think that discrimination is the same thing as prejudice, and although they are often related, they are not the same thing.

Discrimination *is the unfair treatment of a person or group solely on the basis of their group membership.*

Discrimination, then, is often the behavioral extension of prejudice: A person feels prejudiced (an attitude), which leads him or her to discriminate against the object of the prejudice (a behavior).

Discrimination can sometimes be unrelated to prejudice, however, in one of two ways.

1. The first situation is when we unknowingly discriminate, as in the case of the business that spreads the word of a new job opening by word-of-mouth. If everyone who already works there is of the same race, age group, or sex, chances are the people who hear about the job will be, too. In this case, the employer may not be prejudiced against a particular group, but may discriminate simply by unwittingly excluding that group from the hiring process.
2. Second, people who are prejudiced may refrain from discriminatory behavior when they abide by laws prohibiting discrimination.

7.2.1: Prejudice

7.2.1 Determine trends in prejudice

Prejudice is a universal phenomenon, present in cultures all around the world in varying forms and degrees. For example, the English have traditionally been biased against Africans; Russians and Europeans prejudiced against Jews; Japanese against Koreans; and Chinese against Japanese (Taylor and others, 2000). Many times, the bias becomes more pronounced when the dominant group begins to feel threatened by an influx of immigrants from another country, such as the French prejudice against immigrants from North Africa that have contributed to a series of riots. In addition to racial and ethnic prejudice, gender bias is prevalent in the world as well. Two-thirds of the world's illiterate population is female, and UNICEF reports that girls are still less likely than boys to be allowed to go to school in one-third of the world's countries (2015).

In the United States, some prejudices appear to have dramatically declined over the past 50 years. Whereas a large majority of whites favored school segregation based on race in the 1940s, almost none express support for segregation today. Similarly, people are less likely today than in previous decades to express a preference for a male boss than a female boss—although 1 in 3 Americans still say they'd rather work for a male (Gallup, 2014). One interesting method of tracking changes in prejudice is to look at who Americans say they would or would not vote for in a presidential election. As you can see from Table 7.1, some prejudices have decreased, while others remain alive and well.

Implementation and enforcement of equal rights legislation have played a key role in reducing some prejudice and discrimination—but even though Americans are less likely to openly admit prejudice, carefully designed research reveals that prejudice still exists. Why? Essentially, two strong forces conflict with each other: The increasing value placed on equality in the United States (supported in many cases by laws) is in direct conflict with the extremely persistent nature of longstanding prejudices. As a result, modern prejudice has become more and more subtle; you could perhaps say it has "gone underground." For example, many whites feel comfortable working with blacks, but may express discomfort with more intimate contact such as interracial dating and marriage. Similarly, while people may express support for women in roles that are not traditionally feminine, their emotional reactions to and judgments of women in these roles may remain negative (see Figure 7.6).

Table 7.1 Prejudice in Politics

Since 1937, the Gallup organization has polled Americans to measure prejudice against certain candidates based on group affiliation. As you can see in the table, some prejudices have diminished over time, but others are alive and well.
The question that Gallup's poll asks is: *If your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for President who happened to be____, would you vote for that candidate?*

	2015 Percent saying Yes	2003 Percent saying Yes	1987 Percent saying Yes	1978 Percent saying Yes	1965 Percent saying Yes	1958 Percent saying Yes	1937 Percent saying Yes
Catholic	93	93	92	91	87**	70	60
Woman	92	87	82	76**	56	54	33
Black	92	92	79	77	59	38	*
Hispanic	91	87 (2007)	*	*	*	*	*
Jewish	91	89	89	82	80	62	46
Mormon	81	*	*	*	75	*	*
Gay or lesbian	74	59 (1999)	29 (1983)	26	*	*	*
Muslim***	60	*	*	*	*	*	*
Atheist	58	*	44	40	*	18	*
Socialist***	47***	*	*	*	*	*	*

* Empty cell indicates that poll did not inquire about that group that year.

** Support for a Catholic as President jumped after Kennedy was elected. Similarly, support for a female President increased after two women ran in 1972.

*** Only recently did Gallup begin to ask about Muslims or socialists.

How can researchers test whether prejudice exists or not?

Expert Analysis

A powerful illustration of the current state of prejudice and discrimination can be seen in a study conducted recently at Yale University, where researchers put scientists to the test by giving them application packets from a person applying to be a lab manager. Half the application packets had the name of a male applicant, and half had the name of a female applicant. Other than that, though, the packets were identical. Would they be judged the same way, regardless of whether the scientists thought the applicant was male or female?

Sadly, they were not. When the application packet appeared to come from a female applicant, the applicant was judged to be significantly less competent than the same packet that supposedly came from a male student. Scientists also expressed less interest in mentoring the "female" applicant, and when they considered starting salaries, women averaged about 15% lower salaries than men in the study. Even female scientists in the study were biased—they were just as likely as the male scientists to favor the "male" applicant over the "female" applicant. When questioned about their reasons for preferring one applicant over the other, however, none of the scientists believed their judgments were biased by gender; instead, they truly perceived the applicant as less competent when the application had a female name attached. In other words, the female name triggered an unconscious bias in the scientists that led them to interpret the applicant's qualifications in a less positive light. This study stands as powerful current evidence of the "underground" and insidious nature of modern prejudice (Moss-Racusin and others, 2012).

WRITING PROMPT

Predicting Trends in Prejudice

After reviewing Table 7.1, consider these questions: predictions would you make about future Gallup polls, say in 2025, 2040, and 2050? What changes would you predict in levels of support for these groups? Are there other groups not represented here that you think might eventually be included? If so, what percentage of support would you expect those groups to have over time?

▶ **The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.**

Submit

7.2.2: Causes of Prejudice

7.2.2 Summarize the causes of prejudice

Psychological research has discovered several key factors that promote the formation and maintenance of prejudice. Building on the foundations of social identity, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping, now let's examine the "lenses" that influence us to see others from a prejudicial viewpoint. They are:

1. Realistic Group Conflict
2. Social (Observational) Learning
3. Relative Deprivation

Just as we can lower the legs of a tripod to decrease the foundations of our prejudice, we can also swap lenses or rotate the camera to a different angle to see others from a less prejudiced viewpoint. In this section, we will examine what those prejudicial "lenses" are.

REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT THEORY One of the most widely discussed contributors to prejudice is the **realistic group conflict theory**, which argues that people become prejudiced against others with whom they must compete for limited resources such as jobs, money, or status. This theory has been put forth to explain why, for example, African-American shopkeepers in Los Angeles felt prejudice against Asian Americans who began to buy the stores in their neighborhood, or why some white Americans oppose affirmative action. In both of these cases, the group that has traditionally enjoyed the dominant position feels threatened, and the other group has long-held feelings of frustration over the lower status they have traditionally held. Both of these emotions play a significant role in the development and maintenance of prejudice.

The realistic group conflict theory as a contributor to prejudice was dramatically demonstrated in a landmark study involving normal, healthy boys on a summer camping trip (Sherif, 1966).

Example

The Robbers' Cave Experiment

With their parents' permission, 22 well-adjusted, middle-class 11-year-old boys from Oklahoma were selected to participate in a study of conflict and cooperation (although the parents knew it was an experiment, the boys, of course, did not). Randomly divided into two groups of 11 boys each, the boys were taken

in their separate groups to a Boy Scout camp in the woods for a 2-week camping trip.

For the first week, neither group knew of the others' existence; their separate camps were more than half a mile apart, and camp counselors kept each group busy with swimming, games, and other camp activities. During this first week, the campers formed a bond with other boys in their group, evidenced by the group identity each group developed: One group named themselves the Eagles, priding themselves on clean language and instituting a ban on profanity, while the other group established more of a "tough-guy" image, dubbing themselves the Rattlers.

Then, the counselors began the second phase of the experiment—arranging for the two groups to discover one another, by allowing one group to find the other playing baseball on "their" baseball field. Bias was evident immediately, with boys from each group banding together and calling the other group derogatory names, reflecting the threat they perceived to their space and their resources. So, when the counselors suggested the boys compete in a tournament, with the winners getting medals and a trophy, both teams enthusiastically agreed. Over the next few days, they competed against each other in 10 games, including football, baseball, tug-of-war, treasure hunts, and various other activities. As the competition continued, with each team winning some of the games and the tournament championship at stake, hostility between the groups escalated. Teams began to ransack each other's cabins, vandalizing them and even burning each other's flags. When the Eagles eventually won the tournament, the aggression culminated when the Rattlers retaliated by stealing the winners' medals and trophy. In just a few days, competition for resources had created strong prejudice in well-adjusted middle-class boys.

Realistic group conflict theory helps explain resistance to refugees, if current residents worry that the immigrants will take their jobs.

Realistic group conflict theory may help explain a disturbing new prediction about the impact of greater diversity on people's prejudices. Typically, most of us probably assume that, as our society becomes more diverse and we become more exposed to others of different ethnicities, our prejudices might slowly dissolve—right? Wrong! New studies suggest the opposite may be true.

A series of experiments conducted by the research team of Maureen Craig and Jennifer Richeson (2014) exposed participants to current information about the percentage of various ethnic minorities in the U.S., along with statistical predictions from the Census Bureau that white Americans will constitute the minority of citizens by the year 2042. After receiving this information, white participants expressed a greater desire to interact solely with their own ethnic ingroups, an increased automatic bias in favor of whites, and more negative attitudes toward blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans. These findings are consistent with those of earlier studies (Brief and others, 2005). Thus, increasing diversity in the racial and ethnic landscape of a country may foster less tolerance instead of greater acceptance if the traditional majority group perceives the increasing diversity as a threat.

WRITING PROMPT

Realistic Group Conflict Theory and Prejudice in Your Environment

Think about one of the types of prejudice you see most often in your own environment. Has realistic group conflict theory played a role in facilitating the development of that prejudice? If so, how?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY **Social learning** also plays a role in prejudice. Just as we learn mannerisms, communication styles, skills (like how to play sports or to paint), and fashion sense from the people around us, we also learn belief systems—including prejudice. As children and teens, when we hear our parents, teachers, friends, or media figures express viewpoints, we emulate them: They are our role models (for better or for worse), and we conform because we want to belong and because we want to be "right." These viewpoints sometimes contain prejudices, though, which in turn become ingrained in us, often without our awareness.

And prejudice starts very early in life: By the age of 3 or 4, young children already understand racial differences, and exhibit bias toward their own race and against others (Dunham and others, 2015). The mass media play a role in our social learning as well. On average, Americans spend 20% of their waking hours watching television—more than we spend on any other activity other than work—thus (unknowingly, perhaps) developing attitudes and beliefs based on the programs we watch.

Social learning theory, however, can promote compassionate behaviors as well as prejudicial ones. You can go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ejh_hb15Fc to see how a group of middle-school kids taught everyone—including themselves—a powerful lesson about how to reduce prejudice.

In his excellent book *Nobody Left to Hate*, Aronson (2000) applies 30 years of research in the jigsaw classroom to the ongoing and disturbing trend of school violence, making a strong case that such incidents as those at Columbine High School in 1999, Virginia Tech in 2007, Sandy Hook in 2012, and Umpqua Community College in 2015 could be avoided with careful implementation (beginning in grade school) of the basic philosophies and practices of the jigsaw classroom. Creating more equity and inclusion in school classrooms can set the stage for a more harmonious culture, thus reducing bullying and other forms of interpersonal aggression that create divides between people and risk leaving some completely outcast. With more inclusive social groups, everyone has access to positive role models and support in times of stress.

To try your hand at using superordinate goals to overcome prejudice, complete Activity 7.4.

Activity 7.4

Overcoming Prejudice

Click here to download the activity and add your responses.

Instructions: *Apply the model of superordinate goals to some type of group prejudice that you see in your own life. Use the following steps to help develop your program. For best results, brainstorm with your classmates or other people in your life.*

1. Briefly describe the prejudice you see that you'd like to try to help correct. Who exhibits the prejudice? Who is the target of the prejudice? What behaviors illustrate the prejudice?
2. Applying the theory of superordinate goals, how could you get these two groups together to work toward a goal that (a) is meaningful to both groups, and (b) requires them to work together to achieve it (in other words, neither group could accomplish it alone)?
   a. What goal do you think would be effective? If you can't decide, think about what values are important to both of these groups. They may include family, health, children, and so forth. List as many possibilities as you can think of, then choose the one you think is the most promising.
   b. How can you facilitate these two groups working together to achieve the goal? Remember that the groups need to have equal status and play equal roles in the development and implementation of the plan.

INTERGROUP CONTACT Must there be a superordinate goal, though, for two groups to overcome their perceived differences and reduce prejudice? Or could it be enough simply to promote greater contact between the two groups?

Early investigations of what was first called "contact theory" had mixed results: in some studies, merely exposing groups to each other reduced their prejudice, but in others exposure actually increased the tension. In the 21st century, however, psychologists have refined their methods and the theory, and today—as a result of more than 500 studies—we can say that intergroup contact does typically does reduce prejudice to a significant degree (Pettigrew and others, 2011). When the contact involves shared goals (such as superordinate goals), involves no competition between the groups, and the groups are of equal status, contact reduces prejudice even more. Thus, intergroup contact is seen as a highly promising route to reducing prejudice and, subsequently, discrimination.

In addition to reducing prejudice, intergroup contact seems to have additional benefits. Studies indicate that such contact increases trust between groups, reduces anxiety people often feel upon exposure to outgroups, and—importantly—increases empathy for each other. Even indirect contact reduces prejudice: exposure via media, or even knowing that "a friend of a friend is ____" (fill in the blank with an outgroup) has positive effects.

One final important point in favor of intergroup contact is the wide variety of groups among whom it has proven effective: Studies have included all kinds of ethnic and racial groups in numerous cultures, and also looked at prejudice based on age, sexual orientation, gender, mental illness, disabilities, and nationality. In all these groups, increasing exposure to each other reduces prejudice. The only exception seems to be when the contact is non-voluntary, and if it involves a threat to one or both groups. Otherwise, however, intergroup contact offers great potential for reducing prejudice.

The Living Library provides an excellent example of how intergroup contact is reducing prejudice and discrimination around the world.

CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS THROUGH MINDFULNESS Social norms may influence the decline of prejudice as well, as each generation is born into an increasingly multicultural world. Psychologist Patricia Devine (e.g., Devine and Monteith, 1999) argues that we can speed up this process on a personal level by making a conscious effort to challenge our stereotypes. The effort she proposes begins with an awareness of one's own prejudices and the stereotypes that fuel them. Then, when we come into contact with an object of our prejudice, we must consciously activate our stereotype and challenge it. It takes a strong and ongoing commitment, but Devine's research has demonstrated that it can be successful in helping people "unlearn" their prejudices.

Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer and her associates have also studied mindfulness in prejudice reduction. An important distinction in Langer's studies is the way mindfulness is defined: Instead of suggesting that participants ignore the differences between themselves and their outgroups, Langer asks them to notice and identify the differences. By doing so, we become more aware of that person as an individual—and thus less likely to perceive them based on a group stereotype. And it seems to be working: In numerous studies, Langer and others have found that by activating our conscious awareness of differences, we actually exhibit less prejudice (Djikic and others, 2008).

The work on mindfulness fits nicely with that of David Matsumoto and his theory of flexible ethnocentrism. Matsumoto adds that, in order to be successful in overcoming our prejudices, we must also learn to control the negative emotions that accompany them. The valuable work of these researchers and others like them offer hope that we can overcome some of the cultural divides that plague our generation and our world, and learn to live and work together with an appreciation of both our similarities and our differences.

Summary: Prejudice: Foundations, Causes, Effects, and Remedies

7.1: The Foundations of Prejudice

Throughout history, prejudice has been a powerful influence on our relations with others. To better understand the complex psychological processes that fuel prejudice, we must begin with its foundations. The important role group membership plays in our physical safety and our psychological well-being drives us to group together with others, and also to value our group over competing groups. **Ingroup bias** has a neurological basis, and—taken to the extreme—can become identify fusion. **Ethnocentrism**, our tendency to filter our perceptions through the lenses of our own culture, supports prejudice when we assume that our cultural perceptions are the only correct ones. Increasing our awareness of our tendency to do this, educating ourselves about alternative cultural beliefs and values, and recognizing their validity, are steps we can take toward **flexible ethnocentrism** and, subsequently, toward a reduction in our own prejudice. The **Living Library** is a promising movement worldwide that aims to promote flexible ethnocentrism, thus reducing prejudice.

Stereotypes are an outgrowth of our need to mentally classify things. In and of themselves, they can be useful when we need to make a quick assessment of a new situation. Too often, though, they are either inaccurate or overused, both of which contribute to prejudice when we make a generalization about a group of people based on our personal observation in one or a few isolated situations. **Confirmation bias**, the **outgroup homogeneity effect**, and the intergenerational effect all strengthen our tendency to stereotype, as does an individual's need for structure, his status, cognitive demands, and his or her mood and stress level.

7.2: Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice is a universal phenomenon that, although on the decline in some areas, still persists. **Realistic group conflict theory**, **social learning**, **relative deprivation**, and emotions all fuel prejudice, and when prejudicial attitudes begin to affect behavior, **discrimination** occurs. Perceptions of discrimination influences people's interpretation of feedback and their sense of personal control. It can also create **stereotype threat**, which can be reversed under certain conditions.

Psychological research has identified several strategies that can successfully combat prejudice. When two or more groups are in conflict with each other, prejudice can be reduced by the implementation of **superordinate goals**. One type of superordinate goal was demonstrated in Aronson's **jigsaw classroom**, whereby students in racially diverse classrooms had to rely on each other to fully and accurately learn each day's lessons. Increasing their reliance on each other created a sense of support and interdependence that replaced intergroup hostility and also increased students' personal **self-esteem** and overall classroom performance levels. Intergroup contact also successfully reduces prejudice in almost all situations and is effective with prejudice of many kinds. Mindfulness can also help us combat our prejudices.

Chapter 7 Quiz: Prejudice: Foundations, Causes, Effects, and Remedies