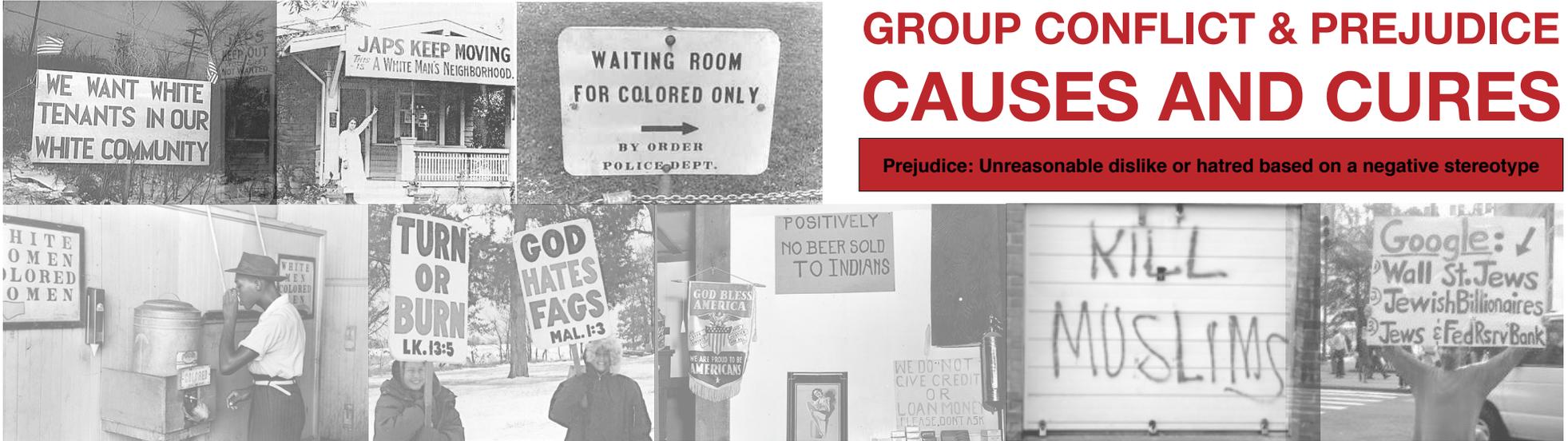


# GROUP CONFLICT & PREJUDICE CAUSES AND CURES

**Prejudice: Unreasonable dislike or hatred based on a negative stereotype**



## HOW IS PREJUDICE DEFINED AND MEASURED?

Prejudice is a challenge to define and measure. Is prejudice blatant hostility, vague discomfort with another group, a patronizing attitude of superiority, or unconscious feelings of dislike?

Psychologists disagree on whether racism and other prejudices are declining or have merely taken new forms. Because many people are unwilling to admit their prejudices openly, some researchers are trying to measure prejudice indirectly: by seeing whether people are more likely to behave aggressively toward a target when they are stressed or insulted; by observing changes in the brain; or by assessing negative or positive associations with a group.

### Sample items from a discrimination questionnaire

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. It is as easy for women to succeed in business as it is for men.
2. I am against affirmative action programs in business.
3. I would feel okay about my son or daughter dating someone from a different race.
4. I feel somewhat more secure that a man, rather than a woman, is president of the United States.
5. I think White people's racism toward racial minority groups is still a major problem in America.
6. If I were to adopt a child, I would be happy to adopt a child of any race.

### An example of prejudiced thinking:

In his classic 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport described the responses characteristic of a prejudiced person (Mr. X) when confronted with evidence contradicting his beliefs:

**Mr. X:** The trouble with Jews is that they only take care of their own group.

**Mr. Y:** But the record of the Community Chest campaign shows that they give more generously, in proportion to their numbers, to the general charities of the community, than do non-Jews.

**Mr. X:** That shows they are always trying to buy favor and intrude into Christian affairs. They think of nothing but money; that is why there are so many Jewish bankers.

**Mr. Y:** But a recent study shows that the percentage of Jews in the banking business is negligible, far smaller than the percentage of non-Jews.

**Mr. X:** That's just it; they don't go in for respectable business; they are only in the movie business or run night clubs.

## WHAT CAUSES PREJUDICE?

| Psychological   | Social   | Economic  | Cultural   |
|---|--|---|--|
| Low self-esteem<br>Anxiety<br>Insecurity                                  | Conformity<br>Parental messages<br>Societal messages<br>Groupthink | Status preservation<br>Jobs<br>Power                                    | Ethnocentrism<br>Group identity<br>Justification of war    |
| <i>"Those people are not as good as we are, not as moral and decent."</i> | <i>"My parents taught me those people can't be trusted."</i>       | <i>"Those people aren't smart enough to do the kind of work we do."</i> | <i>"We have to protect our country from those people."</i> |

## HOW CAN WE REDUCE CONFLICT AND PREJUDICE?

Given the many sources and functions of prejudice, no one method will work in all circumstances or for all prejudices. But social psychologists have identified four of the conditions that must be met before prejudice and conflict between two groups can be lessened.

1. Both sides must have equal legal status, economic opportunities, and power.
2. Authorities and community institutions must provide moral, legal, and economic support for both sides.
3. Both sides must have opportunities to work and socialize together, formally and informally.
4. Both sides must cooperate, working together for a common goal.