

Part II: What Can We Do About Racism?

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Summary of Part I

Racism includes individuals' prejudiced attitudes, but also cultural and institutional aspects, all serving to support racial domination or hierarchy

This means we cannot take comfort in the thought that the problem is due to a few hate-filled individuals

We ourselves may be part of the problem

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Things we can do

Reducing overt prejudice and nonconscious biases

Contact, conversation, friendship across group lines

Changing organizations, structures, and the culture

Changing social norms

Confronting racism

Advocating for social change

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I am a social psychologist; much of my research and teaching centers on prejudice, stereotyping, and intergroup relations

My PhD advisor was Thomas Pettigrew, one of the leading prejudice researchers in the last half-century

For this discussion I also draw on specifically Lutheran sources:

ELCA Social Statement "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" (1993)

ELCA webcast "Confronting Racism" (Aug. 6, 2015) with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

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Summary of Part I

Much discrimination occurs without evil intent

Nonconscious biases, often held even by people of good will, can cause discriminatory judgments and actions

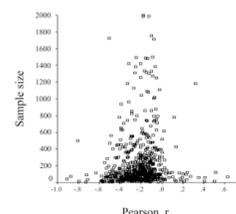
Discrimination often motivated by favorability to the ingroup rather than hostility to the outgroup

Many typical, accepted social and organizational structures perpetuate racial inequality

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Intergroup Contact

Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) meta-analysis of contact studies: 94% show reduction of prejudice



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Are people who have contact with outgroups just less prejudiced in the first place (so they choose to engage in contact)?

No, contact has a causal effect on prejudice

Variable	r	95% CL	Z	k	N	Q _B
Participant choice (samples)						
No choice	-.280	-.31/-25	-16.13***	116	15,133	
Some choice	-.190	-.21/-17	-18.45***	279	95,267	
Full choice	-.218	-.24/-20	-21.51***	301	89,430	21.52***
Between-classes effect						
Publication source (samples)						
Published	-.211	-.23/-20	-18.08***	477	167,085	

Variable	Racial and ethnic samples					Nonracial and nonethnic samples				
	r	95% CL	Z	k	Q _B	r	95% CL	Z	k	Q _B
Type of study										
Surveys and field studies	-.215	-.23/-20	-22.05***	299		-.186	-.21/-16	-15.26***	193	
Quasi-experiments	-.211	-.26/-16	-8.25***	54		-.251	-.29/-22	-13.49***	114	
Experiments	-.221	-.34/-09	-3.37***	9	0.03	-.377	-.44/-31	-9.67***	27	27.89***
Between-classes effect										
Quality of contact measure										
Single item	-.210	-.25/-17	-10.98***	65		-.184	-.22/-15	-10.40***	86	

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Why does contact help?

Learning about the outgroup, stereotype change

Becoming less anxious about intergroup interaction

Most important: development of friendships

Liking, positivity

Self-disclosure

Empathy or feeling other's emotions

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How much do contact effects generalize?

Across situations (workplace - town)

From individual to entire outgroup

Even to other outgroups

Variable	r	95% CL	Z	k	N	Q _B
Between-classes effect						2.17
Type of generalization (tests)						
Within situation	-.231	-.26/-20	-13.03***	152	31,554	
Across situations	-.244	-.33/-15	-5.20***	17	7,553	
Whole outgroup	-.213	-.22/-20	-26.08***	1,164	333,608	
To other outgroups*	-.190	-.28/-10	-3.89***	18	3,396	
Between-classes effect						1.61

Note: * These analyses were conducted with Eickens's transformed z-scores. Mean effects and confidence limits.

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Intergroup contact works best when interaction and conversation explicitly deal with group memberships and differences rather than avoiding such potentially difficult topics.

ELCA pp. 6-7, e.g. "model an honest engagement with issues of race, ethnicity and culture, by being a community of mutual conversation, mutual correction, and mutual consolation."

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Beyond immediate direct contact: positive effects of

Extended contact (knowing that your White friend has a Black friend)

Vicarious contact (seeing another White person interacting with a Black person)

Imagined contact (taking a minute to visualize a positive interaction with a Black person)

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Informal neighborhood contact — Christ et al., *PNAS*, 2014

Whites living in ethnically diverse neighborhoods are less prejudiced — in UK, Europe, US, South Africa

Does not depend on personal interaction with other groups, just observation of positive interactions

Not due to less-prejudiced people choosing such neighborhoods to begin with

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Cultural norms

“Astonishingly, we don't just see reduced prejudice among people who have direct contact with ethnic minorities. It isn't even confined to those whose friends have contact with minorities. Simply living in a neighbourhood where other people are mixing with minorities is enough to reduce racial prejudice”

An implication: “Governments should do more to encourage different groups to mix with each other, as we now know that this reduces prejudice not just in individuals but throughout entire neighbourhoods. Social interventions that aim to increase contact between groups will help to establish more tolerant social norms in society. In the long run, this should lead to more harmonious neighbourhoods.”

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1940s, 1950s: Research (studying extreme prejudice; Nazis, KKK members) suggested prejudice was due to abnormal psychology

Pettigrew (1950s): stereotypes and prejudice mostly reflect conformity to social norms

Crandall & Eshleman (2003): negativity of feelings about different groups almost perfectly matches norms (ratings of how socially acceptable is prejudice against the group)

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Do norms just get people to keep quiet about their prejudice, rather than actually reducing prejudice?

No. Norms are highly effective among people who internalize or personally endorse them

e.g., who say that prejudiced acts are inconsistent with their self-image or their personal moral code

Less effective among people who see norms as externally enforced

e.g., who say that they avoid prejudiced acts fearing negative reactions from their friends

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Changing norms

At the cultural level: work to change social norms that make prejudice and racism acceptable, even traditional and expected

These changes can only come from intentional and sometimes uncomfortable actions

confronting individuals who make prejudiced or stereotypical comments

speaking out against organizational policies that benefit traditionally advantaged groups and fail to advance diversity

ELCA p. 6: “racism must be confronted in order to build a society where diversity is truly valued.” “We encourage public witness by members, and stand publicly as a church against injustice.”

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Confronting overtly prejudiced comments or actions

“I think you're relying on outdated stereotypes there.”

“That kind of joke is really unacceptable today.”

Confronting thoughtless acts that contribute to disadvantage

“Shouldn't we interview one of the African American job applicants, as well as these three white men?”

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Effects of confronting:

On the perpetrator: won't change the person's views, but may make him hesitate before saying/doing the same thing in the future

On bystanders, observers: change their perception of norms (prejudice is not acceptable)

On you (the confronter): empowerment, satisfaction of standing up for your values

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Unique role of Whites in confronting racism

Blacks who speak up are usually just tagged as “complainers,” “over-sensitive”

or seen as seeking their own self-interest

Whites are less likely to be viewed in those negative ways

Whites look to other Whites to learn the current group norms about expressions of prejudice

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Advocacy has to include questioning ideologies that are superficially non-racial but function to justify continuing racial hierarchy

“People get what they deserve and deserve what they get”

“I worked hard for what I have, those other people should do the same.”

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From Presiding Bishop Eaton’s webcast: What’s the single most important word in Lutheran theology?

GRACE: We are saved by grace freely given (not earned by us)

This should lead us to strongly question the ideas that people get what they deserve, that I worked hard to earn what I have, that if you are not doing well it’s your own fault

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Advocating for change

Structural and institutional levels: Many needed changes are not within the power of individuals or even organizations, but require structural or legal changes. We need to advocate for policies and programs that offer justice

ELCA p. 7, “A Time for Advocacy:” “This church will support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that guarantee to all persons equally: civil rights, including full protection of the law and redress under the law of discriminatory practices; and to all citizens, the right to vote, ...” and “...will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees.”

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It is hard to acknowledge our own privilege; we want to believe we deserve what we have

Reality: children who grow up in different neighborhoods often will not have the same chance to get a good education, lead a decent life

It’s not that we are bad people, but do we allow such a system, favoring some groups over others, to stand?

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What can I personally do?

- We are all rich. But we are rich in different kinds of assets, resources, and privileges

Social connections and community position

Interpersonal empathy and the desire to serve in specific individual relationships

Education and articulateness

Time to devote to service to others

Financial resources

ALL of us are called to use our diverse gifts to serve others (and this includes fighting racism)

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How Long, Lord, How Long?

The problem of racism is huge and daunting

Take heart!

Think about what “we” can do, not what “I” can do

Think on a longer timescale

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“I think we are born into this world and inherit all the grudges and rivalries and hatreds and sins of the past. But we also inherit the beauty and the joy and goodness of our forebears. And we’re on this planet a pretty short time, so that we cannot remake the world entirely during this little stretch that we have.

But I think our decisions matter. And I think America was very lucky that Abraham Lincoln was President when he was President. If he hadn’t been, the course of history would be very different. But I also think that, despite being the greatest President, in my mind, in our history, it took another hundred and fifty years before African-Americans had anything approaching formal equality, much less real equality. I think that doesn’t diminish Lincoln’s achievements, but it acknowledges that at the end of the day we’re part of a long-running story. We just try to get our paragraph right.”

Barack H. Obama, interview with David Remnick, *The New Yorker*, 1/27/14

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Summary

Because racism is so multidimensional, overcoming it requires changes not just in the way we think, but in the way we live

Have conversations with others who are different from yourself

Confront expressions of stereotypes or prejudice, to shift social norms

Call attention to aspects of business-as-usual that (often unintentionally) disadvantage minority groups

Use your resources (of whatever type) to advocate for social change

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Comments? Questions?

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