

## Prejudice a Major Societal Problem: Review

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### ABSTRACT

Prejudice is defined as an unjustified or incorrect belief system or attitude (usually negative) that one has towards an individual based exclusively on his/her affiliation with a social group. Prejudices form the breeding ground for all kinds of discrimination that play out in real life. It fuels ignorance, xenophobia and insensitivity towards the groups and communities that we're prejudiced against. Throughout history, prejudice has spawned some of humankind's worst atrocities against one another like war, genocide, torture, starvation, murder, human rights violation and despotism. This review articles highlight various consequences caused by prejudice in the society today such as stigmatization, domestic violence and lots more.

Keywords: Prejudice, Xenophobia, starvation and violation of human right.

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### INTRODUCTION

Prejudice is an affective feeling towards a person based on their perceived group membership [1]. The word is often used to refer to a preconceived, usually unfavorable, evaluation of another person based on that person's political affiliation, sex, gender, beliefs, values, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, beauty, occupation, education, criminality, sport team affiliation or other personal characteristics [2]. Prejudice can also refer to unfounded or pigeonholed beliefs and it may include "any unreasonable attitude that is unusually resistant to rational influence". [3] defined prejudice as a "feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on, actual experience". [4] also defines prejudice as characterized by 'symbolic transfer', transfer of a value-laden meaning content onto a socially formed category and then on to individuals who are taken to belong to that category, resistance to change, and overgeneralization.

A social issue is a problem that influences many citizens within a society. It is a common problem in present-day society and one that many people strive to solve. It is often the consequence of factors

extending beyond an individual's control. Social issues are the source of a conflicting opinion on the grounds of what is perceived as morally correct or incorrect personal life or interpersonal social life decisions. Social issues are distinguished from economic issues; however, some issues (such as immigration) have both social and economic aspects [5]. There are also issues that do not fall into either category, such as warfare. There can be disagreements about what social issues are worth solving, or which should take precedence. Different individuals and different societies have different perceptions. In Rights of Man and Common Sense, Thomas Paine addresses the individual's duty to "allow the same rights to others as we allow ourselves." The failure to do so causes the creation of a social issue. There are a variety of methods people use to combat social issues. Some people vote for leaders in a democracy to advance their ideals. Outside the political process, people donate or share their time, money, energy, or other resources. This often takes the form of volunteering. Nonprofit organizations are often formed for the sole purpose of solving a social issue.

Community organizing involves gathering people together for a common purpose [6].

### Types of prejudice

Broadly speaking, there are 7 types of prejudices that are based on dominant factors such as:

1. Racism
2. Sexism
3. Ageism
4. Religious Prejudice
5. Classicism
6. Homophobia
7. Nationalism

**Table 1: showing the various characteristics that causes prejudice.**

Age	Physical disability	Ancestry
Sex	Criminal conviction	Political belief
Race	Aboriginal origin	Marital status
Gender	Social condition	Social disadvantage
Color	Sexual orientation	Family status
Creed	Mental Disability	Language
Religion	Source of income	Citizenship
Ethnicity	Linguistic background	Civil status
Pregnancy	Gender identity	Nationality
Irrational fear of illness or diseases		Place of origin

### Consequences Of Prejudice

Like the wide variety of prejudices that exist in societies around the world, the consequences of the prejudices and the behavior influenced by them are similarly varied. Prejudice affects the everyday lives of millions of people across the globe [7]. Prejudice held by individuals unnaturally forces on others who are targets of their prejudice a false social status that strongly influences who they are, what they think, and even the actions they take. Prejudice shapes what the targets of prejudice think about the world and life in general, about the people around them, and how they feel about themselves. Importantly, prejudice greatly influences what people expect from the future and how they feel about their chances for self-improvement, referred to as their life chances. All of these considerations define their very identity as individuals. People acting out their prejudices cause domestic violence, crime, death, and the loss of billions of dollars in lost productivity, property loss, and expense to society, such as cost of court trials and social services provided to victims including psychological counseling, in dealing with dysfunctional (abnormal behavior) elements of society. Other prejudicial behavior, such as male teachers favoring calling on male students in a classroom, may be more

subtle (less obvious). But its effect can be just as broad-sweeping as the more violent consequences of prejudice [8]. Opportunities in life are lost and personal relationships damaged when people act upon their prejudice. When not acknowledged and confronted, prejudice negatively impacts the lives not only of the victims, but of those holding the prejudice. Prejudice can impose very dramatic barriers or invisible barriers on individuals. For example, in the United States, many children are raised with certain beliefs, one being the American Dream [9]. The children are taught if they apply themselves and work hard enough and set their sights on what they want most, they can achieve it by persistence. They are not taught about certain social barriers, such as racial or gender discrimination in hiring or in job promotions that may present themselves throughout their lives that counter the progress made by solid work habits.

### Everyday prejudices

Since multiple prejudices are present throughout society in a complex way, at minimum, the consequences of prejudice are always present in subtle, if not more obvious, ways [10]. For example, because people are largely aware of the prejudices held by others toward them, the prejudice has a self-fulfilling effect. This means people behave the way others expect

them to behave. Similarly, people holding a prejudice treat others differently based on how the person with prejudices expects the others to behave or how the person with prejudices wants the others to behave. These behavioral expectations are often based on stereotypes [11]. Stereotypes are an oversimplified prejudgment of others using physical or behavioral characteristics, usually exaggerated, that supposedly apply to every member of that group. In addition, people behave differently from person to person when interacting with others, depending on whether they expect hostility from others either in attitude or in action. Studies have shown that a person targeted by stereotype expectations held by others may end up behaving as the stereotype. More generally, a person is likely to behave as the other person expects him to behave. All of these behaviors mean that prejudice, or anticipated prejudices, affect everyday interactions with almost everyone a person comes in contact with [12].

Consequences of everyday prejudice go beyond simply shaping relationships between people. People are relentlessly assaulted by value judgments based on skin color, social class, gender, religious affiliation, political views, and so on. Such constant exposure to ridicule and discrimination leads to a lowered self-esteem. Those subjected to such prejudice become unsure where they belong in society. They develop hatred and anger directed both outwardly at those holding prejudices against them and inwardly for having the supposed traits that attract such prejudices. Such prejudices are destructive of individuals and society. But they extract a hidden cost as well by prohibiting individuals from living up to their true potential. Very small but harmful prejudicial actions can create barriers for entire populations, such as women or minorities, seeking to enjoy the benefits of participating in mainstream society. Often these actions are unintentional, caused by prejudices a person is little aware he has. However, many times they are intentional acts

Levinson and Sanford meant to degrade another person considered inferior. It is sometimes difficult to determine if an act is unintended and simply insensitive or meant as intentional hostility. Regardless of intentions, the consequence of action is often the same [13]. Many times the person who is the target of such prejudicial actions is placed in difficult situations. Any protest he or she might make of such prejudicial actions would give the appearance of oversensitivity and possibly incite further reaction from the initiator. For example, a woman may be placed in an awkward situation when she is congratulated for offering a solution to a technical engineering problem as if such an idea would not be normally expected of a woman. The person targeted by prejudicial actions is not the only person affected. Prejudice affects the behavior of the person holding the prejudice as well. That person may harbor anxieties or anger, or alter his normal activity because of the prejudice he feels for someone else. Such feelings of prejudice can lead to alcohol and substance abuse just as for people who are the targets of prejudice [14].

#### **Creation of stigma**

Insensitive actions and the projection of stereotypes onto other people can create a stigma (a feeling of shame or lessened social value) [15]. The stigma shapes how the target group behaves when in future contact with the dominant group. Anxiety is created within the stigmatized person, and her personal expectations of her life chances are lowered. People in a group devalued due to prejudices against them are placed in a no-win situation. If their behavior does not conform to expected behavior or society's norms, or standards, they are considered deviant. The dominant group considers the deviance a result of some psychological or physical problem or defect. The person targeted by prejudice becomes stigmatized. If the targeted, or subordinate, group adopts the behavior of the dominant group so as to escape prejudice, then a person's own group may consider him deviant [16]. For example, African Americans have labeled blacks who adopt white dominant cultural

behaviors, such as joining certain automotive clubs, as Uncle Toms (black people who are perceived by other blacks as being too submissive to whites) or Oreos (blacks who have behavior patterns that are perceived by some to be typical of white people). Stigmas lead to marginalization, meaning a person or group becomes isolated from mainstream society and excluded from protections others may take for granted, such as due process of the law (legal protections through established formal procedures). International human rights watch groups see war and genocide as the extreme forms of marginalization, in which people are viewed as the enemy and devalued as humans. They may even be considered subhuman [17]. Less extreme results of marginalization lead to poverty, poor health, lack of education, and unemployment. Racism (prejudice against people of color) and sexual orientation prejudice (a negative attitude toward persons because of the sexual preferences) are two common forms of marginalization. Populations in Third World (nations lagging in economic development) countries are marginalized to the extent that they are allowed to die from hunger and disease in large numbers with little assistance from more affluent societies.

### **Health consequences**

One of the most basic needs in life is maintaining physical health. However, due to prejudice, the condition of people around the world is largely influenced by their perceived race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation [18]. Those trapped in low-income areas with prejudicial barriers to jobs and education opportunities are significantly more likely to suffer health problems. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006 the overall life expectancy of Americans, French, and British was seventy-eight years. However, life expectancy differed among the various races and ethnic groups within these Western nations. For example, in the United States most racial minorities had shorter expected life spans than whites. African Americans' life expectancy was five years shorter than

whites. Those in lower economic classes suffered greater chronic diseases, such as heart disease, lung cancer, and diabetes, all of which contributed to the lower life expectancy. Hurst in the 2004 book *Social Inequality: Forms, Causes, and Consequences*. Health problems from the work environment of lower-paying jobs included greater exposure to such hazards as lead poisoning, greater occurrence of injury, and increased chances of eventually developing arthritis from the physical labor. The death rate from injury among low-income males was over three times higher than persons in higher social classes. Not only were the occurrences of disease greater, but the prospects of death from the disease were greater. For example, black females in low-economic situations had the shortest survival period and highest death rate from breast cancer as compared to the white females in the population. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office of Minority Health, among blacks trapped in impoverished neighborhoods with little access to education and jobs, the infant mortality rate in 2000 was at a rate of 14.1 deaths per 1,000 births, a rate more than double that of whites living in more affluent suburbs, which was 6.9 deaths per 1,000 births [19]. According to the CDC in 2000, the rate of AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome; a condition of immune deficiency associated with infection of the immune system cells) among black men in America was six times greater than among white men and nineteen times higher among black women than white women. Loss of self-esteem among minorities trapped in low-income communities led to greater alcohol and drug abuse and smoking of tobacco [20]. These self-destructive behaviors led to greater health problems including cardiovascular disease.

According to [21] the greater the economic inequality in a community, the greater the incidence of suicide in the subordinate, or secondary, groups. Overall, those trapped in conditions of low income and little chance for self-improvement were less likely to live

healthy lifestyles. Those individuals diagnosed with mental health issues were found more frequently among women, the unemployed, and the impoverished. Among women with limited opportunities to the education and employment that they desired, cases of mental depression occurred with greater frequency than in society in general. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in 1998 women were two to three times more likely to suffer major depression than men. This trend had been documented in various nations including the United States, Sweden, Germany, Canada, and New Zealand. Other chronic health conditions also surfaced such as various digestive problems, anemia, and migraine headaches. [22] highlighted that racial minorities and low-income social classes (groups of people sharing similar wealth and social standing) were much less satisfied with their personal lives, housing, jobs, and free time. This dissatisfaction built through a lifespan frequently leading to increased health problems in later life. For example, people must have a feeling of control over their lives to give them greater chances for favorable mental health. This feeling of satisfaction also led to greater economic productivity and increased contributions to society in general. Feelings of powerlessness came from being in jobs of repetitive work with little complexity and close supervision. Education was often seen as the gateway to increasing a person's control over his life chances at jobs and personal fulfillment. Therefore, restrictions established by prejudices and discrimination led to feelings of powerlessness and, eventually, despair. People were financially unable to leave their low-income neighborhoods where streets were filthy and dangerous. Prejudice, poverty, and despair were very closely linked and formed a cycle from which it was nearly impossible to break free. Economic costs to society resulting from lost personal potential due to prejudice would likely be staggering if they could be calculated.

### **Crime**

Loss of self-esteem and hope for future betterment contributes to criminal behavior. Though crime occurs in all classes of society, such as white-collar crime in the upper classes, social class position influences the type of crime that someone will commit. Through violent and property crimes committed by lower classes, not only is there a loss of productivity to the community, but other costs associated with crime include the expenses of police in crime-fighting activity. The percentage of policing funds spent in the world and the percentage of costs of losses from criminal activity triggered by various form of prejudice would be difficult to calculate from crime statistics kept, but they would likely be considerable. Not only does prejudice contribute to criminal behavior, prejudice also influences how crime is fought [23]. According to Willard M. Oliver in his 2001 book *Community-Oriented Policing: A Systematic Approach to Policing*, police departments in various Western countries often have their own prejudices. Police on routine patrol often spend more time patrolling in low-income neighborhoods, which usually contain a high percentage of racial minorities. Despite this increase in patrol time in minority communities, actual response time to reported crimes against minorities in these same low-income neighborhoods is often much slower than in upper-class neighborhoods. Residential areas in the United States and France remain highly racially segregated (to publicly keep separate social groups based on physical characteristics, such as skin color), with minorities concentrated in overcrowded city settings. Single-parent families are prevalent with many members of the minority community living on welfare programs [22]. Opportunities for education and jobs seem remote to many. Such segregation maintains these education and job limitations on minorities, with little chance for improvement despite individual capabilities and achievements. Minorities in these communities cannot enjoy the benefits of social mobility (the amount of



opportunity a person has in a particular society to change social standing from one social class to another) from their achievements like whites living in white-dominated communities. Such non-minority neighborhoods have strong social controls to combat crime tendencies. With little to gain from individual achievement, racial minorities often feel little attachment to society in general, including its values and social controls [12]. As a result, crime rates are often related to poverty and unemployment, especially crimes against property, such as burglary and motor vehicle theft. Oliver further points out that the greater the economic inequality in the form of discrimination in a particular community, the higher the violent crime rates. Violent crimes are linked more to greater social class prejudicial inequality than racial prejudice [7]. The feelings of powerlessness, anger, anxiety, and alienation lead to aggressive behavior. These geographic concentrations of minorities and others with low social-class status means that minorities and low income people not only suffer the direct effects of prejudice and discrimination, but also are more likely to become victims of crime propelled by racial and economic segregation and discrimination [5]. For example, according to [3], the Color of Crime, the chances of a young black male becoming a victim of homicide were ten times greater than for white youth in the United States at the end of the twentieth century. Not only do minorities and low-income communities become crime victims at a higher rate than whites, but that crime rate is often inflated (considered higher) further in the minds of others. Perceptions of racial groups held by those in the dominant white society often feed fears and perceptions of crime rates. A high percentage of minorities in a neighborhood creates a higher perception of crime rates, usually much greater than what the crime rates actually are [21]. Fear of becoming a crime victim greatly influences people's behavior [1]. They spend more money on security gadgets

Levinson and Sanford and systems for their homes and cars. It also influences their behavior patterns about when and where they may go to visit stores, friends, or places of entertainment [13].

Additionally, the bias of policing leads to another cost of prejudice and that is minorities' distrust of not only police, but of the criminal justice system in general [22]. This distrust was evidenced by riots in Los Angeles, California, in 1992 after a jury acquitted police officers in the beating of black motorist Rodney King, an event that was captured on home video, and by riots in France in October 2005 when two minority youths died while being chased by police. King was severely beaten for what appeared to be a traffic violation [23]. The French riots grew out of decades of accusations of police brutality toward minorities.

Statistics indicate that minorities are affected by prejudice in the criminal justice system beyond policing activities. Minorities are six times more likely than whites to receive more severe sentences including the death penalty for committing the same crimes [7]. Similarly, the murder of white victims in the later decades of the twentieth century more often led to death sentences than when blacks were the homicide victim. Advocates for minorities charge that these statistics show that the criminal justice system devalues black victims, meaning they are considered less important than white victims. The factors of gender and social class follow similar trends in criminal justice. Women and low-income victims frequently see their aggressors penalized less severely than do men and upper-class victims [9]. A tragic consequence of the marginalization of minorities and the underclass created by prejudice and discrimination is that a crime cycle develops. This cycle consists of minorities and unemployed developing crime records. These crime records then hurt the criminals' future chances of being employed, which may lead again to more crime or, if they do not revert to a life of crime, they remain in poor-paying jobs with a dead-end future [4].

### **Domestic violence**

A major consequence of prejudice is violence[10]. The scale of violence can vary greatly, ranging from occurrences of domestic violence to mass murder (genocide). Domestic violence is when a family member, partner, or ex-partner physically or psychologically harms or harasses another family member. Aside from physical contact and child abuse, domestic violence can include intimidation and threats of violence. This intimidation can take the form of stalking (harassing someone by relentlessly pursuing her). Domestic violence is often driven by frustrations of lack of economic opportunity due to prejudice and discrimination, and the resulting feelings of powerlessness. It is frequently further fueled by drug and alcohol abuse, which is also often a result of domestic result. Unemployment, health problems, isolation from society in general, and lower education are all factors of domestic violence [15]. The pressures and frustrations resulting from discrimination mount up for those trapped in low social class conditions. Domestic violence leads to costs for private assistance organizations and governmental social services for both the victim and abuser in addition to costs of police and court time [15]. Studies in the late twentieth century indicate that only about one-third of cases of actual domestic violence are actually reported in the United States and Britain [18]. In other countries where public awareness of domestic violence is much lower, the rate of reporting is probably even lower. According to Charles E. Hurst in *Social Inequality: Forms, Causes, and Consequences*, in 2000, it was estimated that domestic abuse affected 10 percent of the population in the United States, or approximately thirty-two million Americans including children. Like most consequences of prejudice and discrimination, domestic violence has long-range implications. Children often grow up with behavior patterns learned from their home life. Those who witnessed domestic violence and abuse or were victims of abuse could grow into adults having very similar behavior

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patterns. The dollar cost of domestic violence is huge. In the United States, \$3 to \$5 billion was annually spent in the late 1990s on medical expenses resulting from domestic violence. Sick leave, absenteeism, and lost productivity resulting from domestic abuse was estimated to be \$100 million annually to U.S. businesses in the late 1990s [17].

### **Social protests**

Prejudice and discrimination leads to organized social protests and sometimes, confrontations by the targeted groups. Prime examples of this involved the events surrounding the civil rights and women's rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s [24]. Property damage, loss of life, policing expenses, and lost job productivity were extensive costs of the protests as they lasted years and involved tens of thousands of people across many communities and cities. Labor strikes, store boycotts (protests by refusing to do business with someone), sit-ins (when protestors refuse to leave a business or public building until their demands are met), and other tactics of social disorder disrupted business productivity. A major consequence of mass opposition to social or governmental prejudices is the loss of legitimacy of society and its institutions to those victimized by prejudice and discrimination. Laws and social customs that perpetuate prejudice undercut the very validity of the nation's social institutions. This loss of legitimacy was the reason behind the 1992 Los Angeles riots [25]. Minorities had lost faith in police and the criminal justice system as minorities typically received longer prison sentences and harsher treatment by police than non-minorities for the same alleged offenses. Violence was seen as the only means to increase public awareness of these inequalities in society. Over 150 race riots were recorded in the United States between 1960 and 1993. In the 1992 Los Angeles riots fifty-two people died and over \$800 million of damage occurred including the destruction of 1,100 buildings. Broad conflicts over prejudices can lead to social instability. During these times of peak protest activity, society lives with a

tension in which any minor incident could trigger a major explosion of violence.

### **Displaced persons**

Prejudices can lead to consequences on a large scale. The term "displaced persons" came into use during World War II [13]. A massive relocation of populations during the late 1930s and early 1940s resulted from the combination of international war and genocide. Basically anyone forced to leave his home, regardless of reason, became a displaced person. It was estimated in the early twenty-first century that approximately twenty-five million displaced persons who did not cross international boundaries existed in the world. Many were in various African and Middle Eastern countries where ethnic conflict was rampant. Those who cross international boundaries either due to prejudice and persecution or environmental crises in their home countries, such as prolonged droughts, are called refugees [9]. The most common reasons for people to become refugees are political and religious persecution. They fear persecution because of their race, religion, or nationality. Those trying to leave persecution behind by journeying to a new country often seek asylum (provided safety from prejudice and persecution of another nation). Many people leave their home country for another for economic reasons, such as to seek employment and permanently settle in the new country. They are known as immigrants, not refugees. International laws apply to protection of refugees, but not to displaced persons who stay within the boundaries of their own nation. Usually they are considered the responsibility of their nation's government. Actions by any other country would be considered an unlawful intrusion on their sovereignty (independence) [25]. However, some cases arose in the late twentieth century where nations did intercede in internal atrocities. This included U.S. military intervention in the Balkan region of the Kosovo crisis in the late 1990s when Serbian forces were carrying out ethnic cleansing of ethnic Albanians. The U.S. intervention succeeded in stopping the

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mass killing. In the early twenty-first century, the government of Sudan was resisting foreign involvement in its Darfur region, where reports of genocide and dislocations were steady. The Sudanese government claimed that it was an internal conflict and any foreign intervention would be an illegal intrusion on its national sovereignty. This claim successfully kept foreign forces out [9]. Refugees create international problems and disputes. Some governments might readily accept refugees and ultimately grant them citizenship [2]. Others may arrest all refugees for unauthorized entry into their country and place them in detention centers for months and maybe even years. The United Nations (UN; an international organization created to resolve conflicts in the world and provide humanitarian aid where needed) High Commissioner originally sought in the 1950s simply to see that refugees found safe asylum in their new country or in some other country eventually, or return voluntarily to their home country [15]. The United Nations expanded its role through the years to provide humanitarian assistance to all displaced persons. At the beginning of 2005, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, established in December 1950 and located in Geneva, Switzerland, reported the existence of more than nine million known refugees in the world. This did not include another four million Palestinians who had become permanently displaced and were no longer officially considered refugees because of their permanent displacement [4]. A major result of refugees is the establishment of refugee camps. With more than nine million refugees worldwide, humanitarian emergencies result, and the camps need sanitation, food, water, clothing, and shelter. Relief organizations, such as Red Cross, spend millions of dollars in providing for the needs of refugees. Creation of large refugee camps naturally leads to major health problems inside the camps, including prevalent psychological issues. Major depression and other mental health disorders include sleeplessness and



anxiety. Refugees remain in these camps sometimes for years leading to millions of dollars in costs to provide supplies such as hygiene kits, emergency shelter kits, water, and soap. Five refugee camps existed in Darfur, Sudan, alone in 2006, holding 100,000 people. Some refugees risk their lives to ride flimsy boats or anything else that will let them float to safety from their country to another. They became known as boat people in the 1970s, when some two thousand refugees fled Vietnam by boat between 1977 and 1981 after the end of the Vietnam War [18]. Other large migrations by boat included people fleeing Cuba to the United States since 1960 including 125,000 in 1980 and 55,000 others fleeing Haiti to the United States between 1972 and 1981. The boats refugees commonly use are unstable crude vessels, sometimes made from scrap materials, and often overloaded. Lives are often lost on the journey to safety. For example, in 2001, 353 refugee boat people drowned trying to escape from Indonesia to Australia to escape political instability and seek better job opportunities [13]. The number of refugees escaping injustice based on prejudice since the early twentieth century is staggering. The occurrence of refugees in Europe in the twentieth century included 1.5 million people fleeing the new Communist government in Russia during the Russian Revolution from 1917 to 1921 [16]. (Communism is a system of government in which the state controls the economy and a single party holds power.) During World War I, over one million Armenians fled genocide in Eastern Europe (known as Turkish Asia Minor at the time). The Turk Ottoman government murdered and deported hundreds of thousands of Assyrians and Armenians accused of fighting on the side of the Allies during the war. Following the Spanish Civil War in 1939, several hundred thousand refugees fled to France. World War II led to the dislocation of twelve million Germans including Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Between the end of World War II and construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, 3.7 million refugees fled

Communist-controlled East Germany to West Germany. Immediately following the fall of the Soviet Union and eastern European Communist governments in 1991, two million people were displaced in the former Yugoslavia due to ethnic conflicts. Refugee movements in Asia during the last half of the twentieth century included more one million refugees displaced in the 1950s by the Korean War (1950-53) and the fall of Tibet to Chinese control in 1959 [16]. One of the largest population displacements in recent world history occurred in 1947 with the political separation of India and Pakistan. Over eighteen million people were displaced, with Hindus and Sikhs leaving Pakistan for India, and Muslims leaving India for Pakistan. Another ten million were displaced in 1971 as Bengalis fled the newly established Bangladesh to India. Three million people were displaced in Indochina largely from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia following the end of the Vietnam War and the rise of Communist governments [11]. The Afghan War (1978-92) caused six million refugees to flee to Pakistan and Iran. They were joined in Iran with 1.4 million Iraqi refugees from the Persian Gulf War (1990-91).

The African continent saw repeated population movements in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. They resulted from civil wars and ethnic conflicts following removal of colonial rule after World War II. Africa had been divided into colonies by European nations in the 1880s. This led to the establishment of new national boundaries. When Africans gained independence in many of the colonies following World War II, wars erupted [8]. The new nations fought to establish revised boundaries to match their native homelands that existed prior to the 1880s or they purged other ethnicities from their new nations through genocide or ethnic cleansing. The number of refugees in Africa grew from 860,000 in 1968 to almost seven million in 1992. Many more millions were displaced within their own countries. The resulting refugee and displaced persons camps became fertile

grounds for the rise of armed rebel groups who sought to regain their lost lands. For example, the 1994 Rwandan genocide caused two million refugees to flee, mostly to Zaire [22]. Hutu rebels, in reaction to the ethnic Tutsi regaining control of the Rwandan government and expelling ethnic Hutu, launched attacks from the refugee camps against the new government of Rwanda. Political stability in some areas of Africa by the early twenty-first century led to a decline in refugee numbers from seven million to less than 2.8 million refugees at the beginning of 2005. The greatest number of African refugees in 2005 and 2006 were from Sudan. Many fled from the Darfur region to neighboring Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya to escape ethnic cleansing being carried out by Muslims controlling the Sudanese government against black African populations within Sudan.

The Western Hemisphere of the Americas was not without its large refugee movements as well. The 1960s and 1970s saw many boat people fleeing Cuba following the rise of the dictatorship, or tyrannical rule, of Fidel Castro [10]. Some 55,000 refugees fled Haiti by boat between 1972 and 1981 to the United States. The refugee movements led to new communities in the United States that were dominated by peoples from Cuba and Haiti. The Cuban refugees became a political force in the Miami area. The refugees also created problems in areas where they settled including the increased costs of public services needed to provide schools, healthcare including often severe mental health needs, housing, and other basic needs. One of the longest lasting displacements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century occurred in the Middle East when Palestinian Arabs were forced from their homelands following establishment of the Jewish state of Israel within the Palestinian territory in 1948. Over 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in the late 1940s. That number grew to four million through population growth throughout the following several decades. Palestinian rebel groups used the refugee

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camps as bases for attacks against Israel and Israeli occupational forces. Because of their seemingly permanent condition, displaced Palestinians were no longer considered refugees by the UN by permanent Palestinian inhabitants. In 2000, the United Nations designated June 20 as World Refugee Day, a day to call attention to the plight of millions of people around the world who have suffered from displacement, prejudice, and persecution [4].

### **Genocide**

The ultimate consequence of prejudice is genocide. Genocide refers to one group attempting to murder all members of another group because of their race, ethnic relations, national affiliation, or religious beliefs. Genocide has been an all too common occurrence throughout human history. The Holocaust from 1933 to 1945, in which the German government killed eleven million people including six million European Jews, was the most noted case of genocide in history. The Germans also targeted Poles, Gypsies, Slavs, homosexual men, and various political opponents in order to rid German society of those they considered undesirable contributors to the idealized German race and society. Germany had actually turned genocide into an industry, complete with specially constructed death camps, railroad systems for transporting targeted people, large gas chambers, and crematoriums for disposal of bodies. It was mass murder on a large scale [21]. Gas chambers were disguised as showers. It would take only a small number of camp staff to kill tens of thousands of people a month. Occurrences of mass deaths resulting from hostile actions occurred throughout the twentieth century. At the beginning of the century, the American seizure of Philippine lands for American sugar planters during the Spanish-American War (1899) led to the deaths of an estimated one million civilians Filipinos between 1899 and 1913. American forces overthrew a newly established Philippine government that sought political independence from the United States [23].

## CONCLUSION

Prejudice can take many forms, ethnic and religious bias, racism, nationalism, sexism, classism, and prejudice against people based on sexual orientation. It also occurs in all societies around the world, including Western developed countries to Third World countries. Because of the wide range and many types of prejudice, the consequences of prejudice are highly varied and pervasive around the world. Current events in the early twenty-first century have shown that the deadly effects of prejudice in the new century are no less dramatic than in centuries past. It is evident human populations will have to continue coping with the

consequences of prejudice for years to come including the costs of pain and suffering. It's important to know that we aren't born with any preconceived notions about anyone in the world, all our prejudices are something that we've learned over time. The human mind likes to simplify things, including the behavior of the people around us, especially when we lack sufficient data. Even though we now have extensive laws that protect the rights of people, we still have a long way to go. There's a strong undercurrent of intolerance that linger in the consciousness of many people, which needs to be addressed.

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