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# Bilateralism

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Although interest in studying bigotry has varied over the years, a renewed interest in the topic is evident among researchers addressing issues related to cyberhate, terrorism, and religious and nationalistic fanaticism. In the case of cyberhate, the speed of the Internet and its widespread accessibility make the spread of bigotry almost instantaneous and increasingly available to vulnerable populations (Craig-Henderson 2006). As for the relationship between bigotry and nationalism, there are a host of researchers studying the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East (e.g., Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005). That particular conflict has roots in the Zionist occupation of the country of Israel, formerly known as Palestine. Because of the historical realities that have created the state of Israel, today's Arabs and Jews in that region have very distinct group identities that have given rise to their intergroup conflict. Social science researchers who study this kind of group conflict have demonstrated that the strength of identification with one's in-group is associated with one's expressed bigotry toward the out-group. In many situations, the more strongly one identifies with an in-group, the more bigoted one is against members of the out-group.

Bigotry can be minimal and manifested in avoidance or social exclusion of the out-group, or it can be severe and deadly. In 1998 James Byrd Jr., an African American man in Jasper, Texas, was murdered by white supremacists who dragged him to death behind their pickup truck after offering him a ride home. As members of a white supremacist group, Byrd's murderers were extreme in their bigotry. As a black man, Byrd was perceived by his murderers to be a member of a despised out-group.

Similarly brutal attacks have targeted sexual minorities. In 1998 the murder of the college student Matthew Shepard near Laramie, Wyoming, was attributed to anti-gay bigotry. Most public opinion polls reveal continuing evidence of this form of bigotry (Herek 2000). Shepard's bigoted murderers were highly prejudiced toward gay people. Other examples of well-known bigots include David Duke, the former leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; Nazi chancellor of Germany Adolph Hitler (1889–1945); and French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen.

### RESOLVING BIGOTRY

One popular and long-standing idea within the social psychological literature has been that bigotry can be reduced with intergroup contact. That is, through contact with one another under ideal conditions, formerly bigoted out-groups could come to look favorably upon one another and thereby attenuate conflict and bigotry. However, this optimistic outlook has fallen out of favor in recent years as its theoretical underpinnings have been challenged by a number of researchers studying bigotry. For example, when one considers the pervasiveness of gender bias against women and the paradoxical intimacy that characterizes relations between heterosexual males and females, it becomes clear that contact, while necessary, is not sufficient to eliminate bigotry. Furthermore, there is relatively little research investigating the extent to which contact between different real-world racial and ethnic groups can actually breed harmony. How then to solve the problem of bigotry? The best strategy is one that includes education, interaction, and legislation. Indeed, any efforts aimed at eliminating bigotry must involve attention to each aspect of this tripartite approach.

**SEE ALSO** *Ethnocentrism; Prejudice; Racism*

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## BILATERALISM

Bilateralism concerns relations or policies of joint action between two parties. It can be contrasted with unilateralism (where one party acts on its own) and multilateralism (where three or more parties are involved). Typically, the term has applications concerning political, economic, and

security matters between two states. Bilateralism has both costs and benefits, and there is a debate on its merits relative to unilateral or multilateral approaches.

States have traditionally related to each other on a bilateral basis. They recognize each other as states and agree to send ambassadors to each other's capital. Diplomatic relations can be unilateral, of course, but unless relations are bilateral, some tensions are likely. China and the United States concluded a Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations on January 1, 1979, and formally established embassies in Beijing and Washington, DC, on March 1, 1979. The result was a normalization of relations, which had often been turbulent between 1949 and 1972.

Economic bilateralism is common. In trade, for example, countries have struck bilateral agreements in which they mutually agree to lower their tariffs. The effect is to encourage trade between the two sides to their mutual benefit. Such arrangements can also lead, however, to conflict with third parties excluded from such benefits. Bilateral agreements tend to be more common during or just after periods when economic nationalism (unilateralism) dominates or when multilateral options are stalled.

In security affairs, bilateralism is also found in agreements between states to come to each other's defense if attacked or threatened by a third party. Otto von Bismarck negotiated such a treaty with the Austrian Habsburg Empire in 1879. That treaty also antagonized Russia and helped fuel insecurities that gave rise to World War I. During the cold war, the United States and the Soviet Union concluded a number of agreements to mutually limit nuclear weapons, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Bilateralism has advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the alternatives. With respect to unilateralism, it offers less freedom of action. Yet it also offers the ability to realize mutual gains that may be available only from acting jointly, for example, greater economic activity from freer trade, reduced armament burdens from agreed limitations, and greater security from cooperation against external threats.

With respect to multilateralism the calculus reverses itself. Bilateralism affords greater freedom and efficiency of action because fewer actors are involved. The League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, have often been criticized for ineffectiveness because too many parties are involved.

Yet bilateralism is too costly and is insufficient to deal with some world problems. For example, the multilateral World Trade Organization is a much easier way to organize free trade than to have every country negotiate bilateral free-trade agreements with each other. And bilateral agreements would be unwieldy and not comprehensive enough for a systemic problem like global warming. The efficacy of bilateralism depends on the issue and the situation.

**SEE ALSO** *International Relations*

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## BILL OF RIGHTS, U.S.

The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights. The guarantees of the Bill of Rights include freedom of religion, the rights of expression and association, the right to privacy, the right to due process, and freedom from unjust restraint or trial and from cruel and unusual punishment. The U.S. Bill of Rights has served as a model for other nations in the development of their own constitutions.

The U.S. Constitution was shaped in large part by compromises between Federalists who advocated a strong, centralized government, and Anti-Federalists who believed that the balance of power should favor the states. One of these compromises involved the adoption of a bill of rights—an enumeration of the fundamental and inalienable rights of citizens.

A proposal to include a bill of rights was rejected by the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The Federalists believed that a bill of rights was unnecessary since the government possessed only those powers enumerated in the Constitution. They asserted that state constitutions protected individual rights and that the federal Constitution did not repeal those protections. The Federalists also feared that a listing of specific rights would endanger rights that were not listed. Not persuaded by these arguments, some Anti-Federalists withheld their signatures from the final document because of the absence of a bill of rights. Others proposed that a second constitutional convention be held to draft a bill of rights.

At state conventions to consider ratification of the Constitution, opposition focused on the failure to include a bill of rights. Anti-Federalists asserted that the