

# Pride and prejudice: Pride impacts racism and homophobia

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A new University of British Columbia study finds that the way individuals experience the universal emotion of pride directly impacts how racist and homophobic their attitudes toward other people are.

The study, published in the April issue of [Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin](#), offers new inroads in the fight against harmful prejudices such as racism and [homophobia](#), and sheds important new light on [human psychology](#).

"These studies show that how we feel about ourselves directly influences how we feel about people who are different from us," says Claire Ashton-James, who led the study as a postdoctoral researcher in UBC's Dept. of Psychology. "It suggests that harmful prejudices may be more flexible than previously thought, and that hubristic [pride](#) can exacerbate prejudice, while a more self-confident, authentic pride may help to reduce racism and homophobia."

The findings build on research by UBC Psychology Prof. Jessica Tracy, a co-author of the study, who has previously shown that pride falls into two categories: "authentic pride," which arises from hard work and achievement, and the more arrogant "hubristic pride," which results through status attained by less authentic means such as power, domination, money or [nepotism](#).

In this new study, Tracy and Ashton-James, a new professor at VU University Amsterdam, found that "authentic pride" creates a self-

confidence that boosts empathy for others, which in turn reduces prejudices towards stigmatized groups. In contrast, the feelings of arrogance and superiority that result from "hubristic pride" reduce empathy, thereby exacerbating people's [prejudices](#) against stigmatized groups.

The researchers found a direct link between pride and prejudice in both participants induced into "authentic" or "hubristic" pride states, and those with predispositions towards particular forms of pride. For example, those prone to "hubristic pride" exhibited greater levels of racism, while those prone to "authentic pride" harbored less [racism](#).

With pride as a central emotion for people with power or high social status, the findings may offer important insights into the attitudes of political and economic leaders.

"The kind of pride a leader tends to feel may partly determine whether he or she supports minority-group members or disregards them," says Tracy, a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar.

The study involved 1,400 participants in Canada and the United States.

**More information:** To view the full study, *Pride and Prejudice: Feelings about the self influence feelings about others*, [psp.sagepub.com/content/38/4/466](https://psp.sagepub.com/content/38/4/466)

Provided by University of British Columbia

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