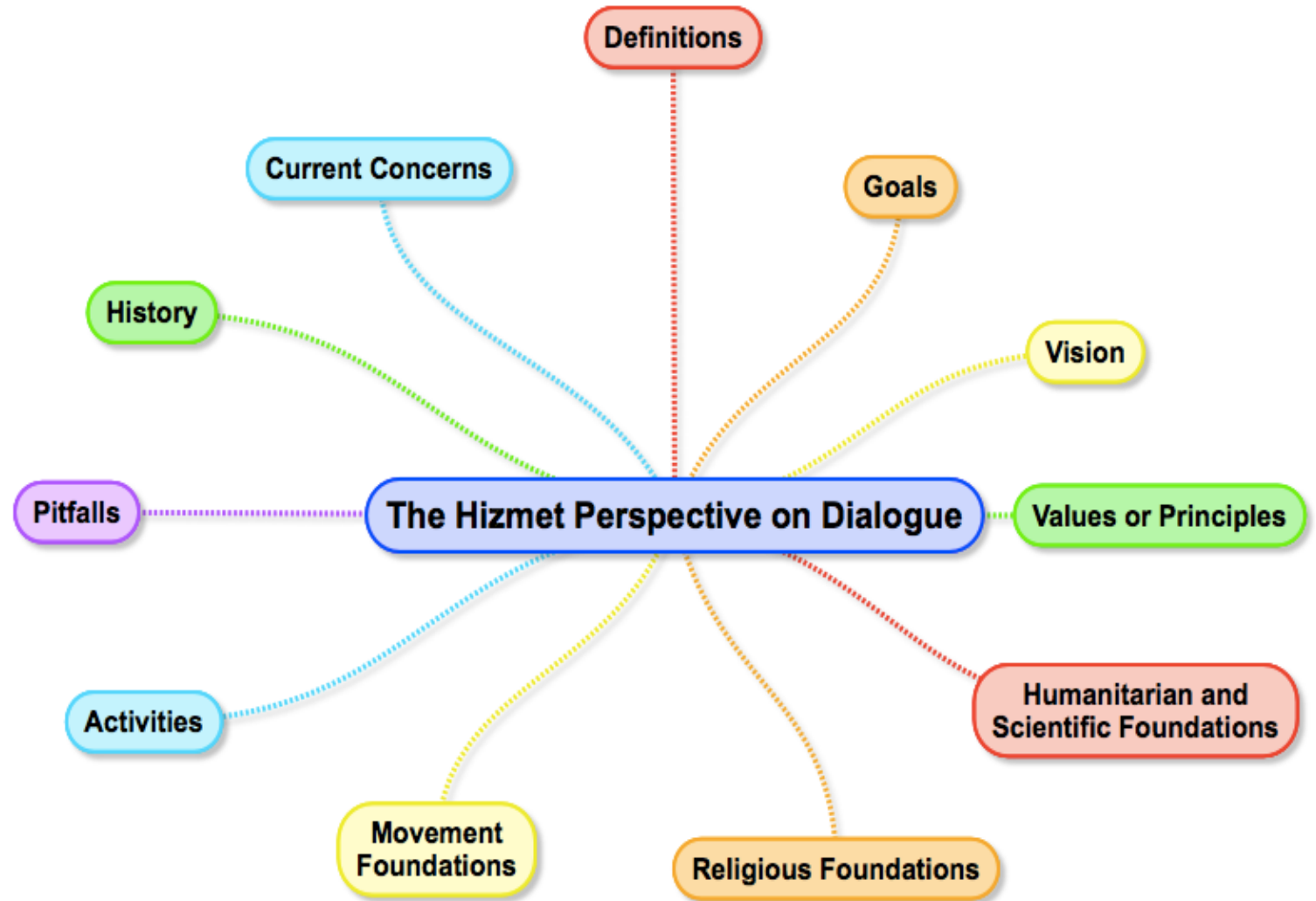


A Hizmet Perspective on **Dialogue** & **Civic** **Engagement**



Dialogue is ...

Any meaningful interaction and exchange

- among people of different ethnic, social, cultural, political, religious, and ideological backgrounds
- through various kinds of conversations and activities
- without imposing their ideas, beliefs or values upon others,
- in an atmosphere of equality, tolerance, honesty, openness, sincerity, and courtesy.

(*) Based on a definition by Journal of Dialogue Studies

Dialogue is not ...

- Conversion
- Compromise
- Unification
- Debate

Activity Examples

- Church/synagogue/temple visits
- Family dinners/iftars
- Group dinners/iftars
- Guided-conversation dinners
- Luncheons/breakfasts
- Book clubs/meetings
- Panels
- Workshops, seminars, symposia
- International Trips

Civic Engagement

- The process of connecting individuals in society with one another to share common interests and work for the common good.
- A broad set practices and attitudes of involvement in social and political life that converge to increase the health of a democratic society. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)
- Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. (*APA*)

Examples of Civic Engagement

- Associational / Institutional:
 - Business associations,
 - professional organizations,
 - reading clubs,
 - film clubs,
 - sports clubs,
 - NGOs,
 - trade unions, and
 - cadre-based political parties.
 - _____ (examples from audience)
- Everyday:
 - Families from different communities visit each other,
 - eat together regularly,
 - jointly participate in festivals, and
 - allow their children to play together in the neighborhood
 - Play sports together
 - _____ (Examples from audience)



India Study: What prevents ethnic/religious conflict?

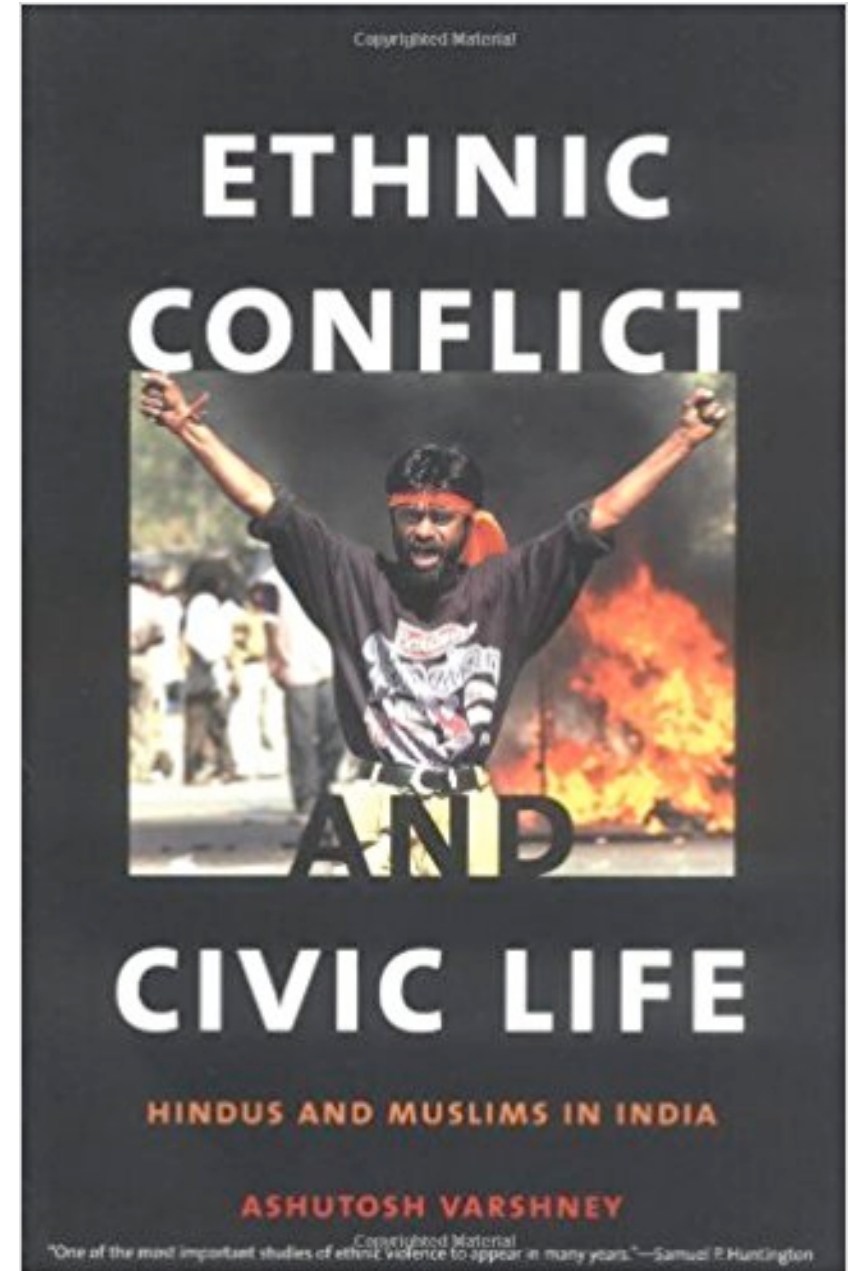


TABLE 1
HINDU-MUSLIM RIOTS IN 28 INDIAN CITIES ^a
(1950-95)

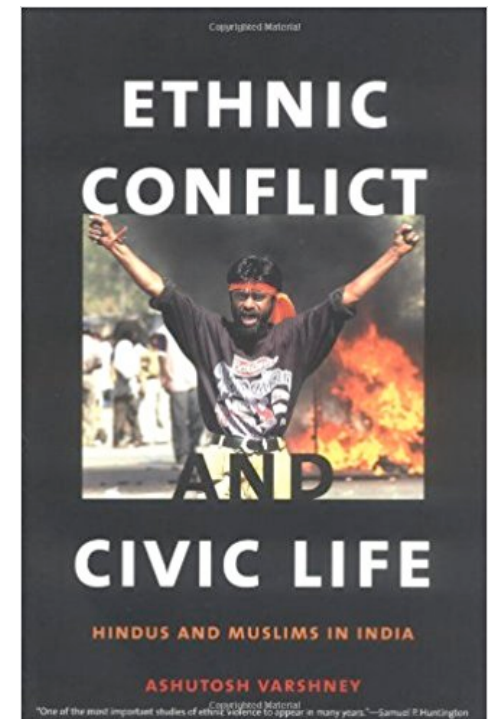
Compare riot
deaths in

Aligarh vs.
Calicut

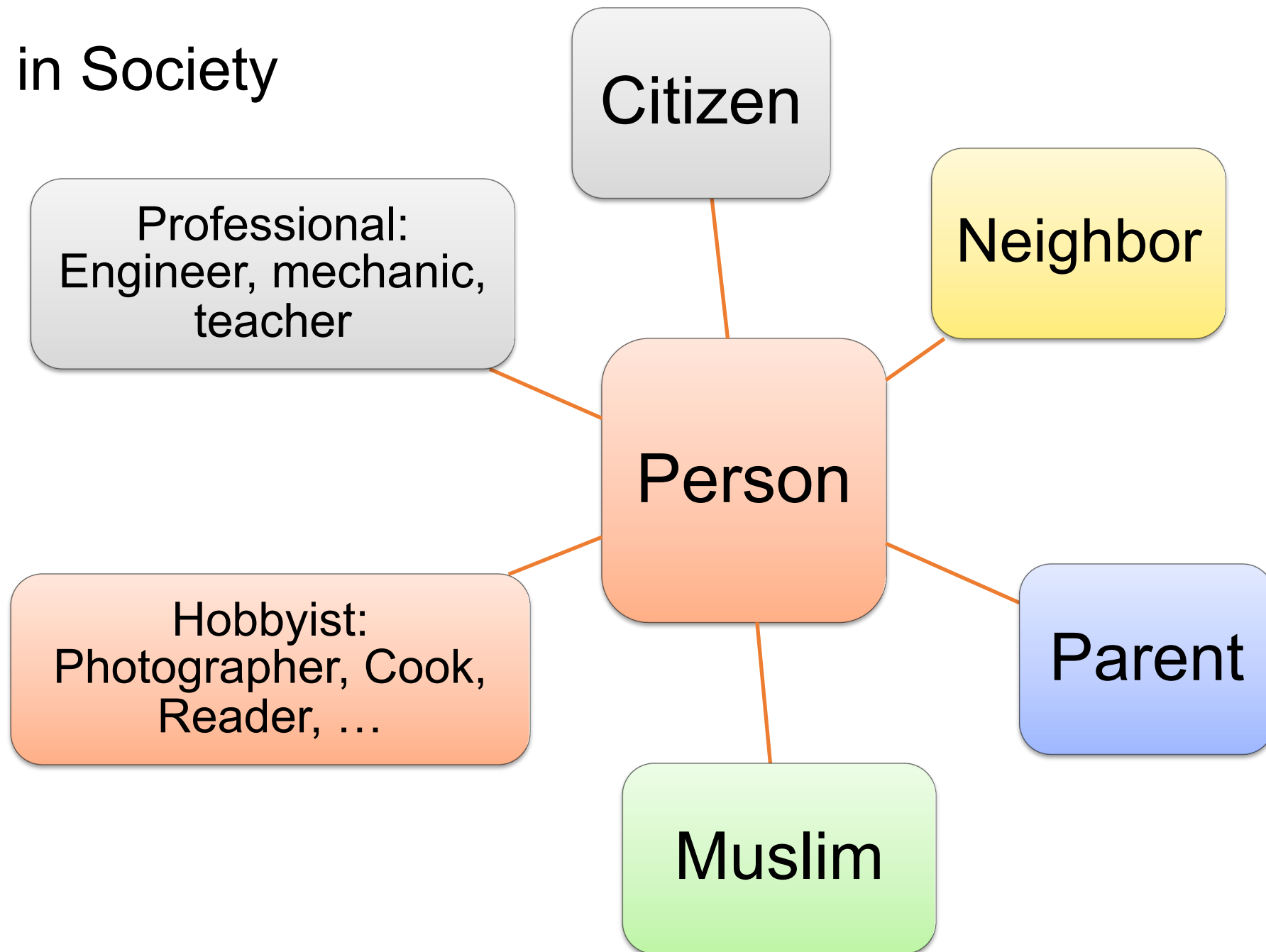
<i>Minimum of 15 Deaths in 3 Riots over 2 Five- Year Periodsb</i>	<i>Minimum of 20 Deaths in 4 Riots over 3 Five- Year Periodsc</i>	<i>Minimum of 25 Deaths in 5 Riots over 4 Five- Year Periodsd</i>	<i>Minimum of 50 Deaths in 10 Riots over 5 Five- Year Periodse</i>	<i>Total Deaths 1950-95</i>
Bombay	Bombay	Bombay	Bombay	1,137
Ahmadabad	Ahmadabad	Ahmadabad	Ahmadabad	1,119
Hyderabad	Hyderabad	Hyderabad	Hyderabad	312
Meerut	Meerut	Meerut	Meerut	265
Aligarh	Aligarh	Aligarh	Aligarh	160
Jamshedpur	Jamshedpur	Jamshedpur		198
Bhiwandi	Bhiwandi			194
Surat				194
Moradabad	Moradabad			149
Baroda	Baroda	Baroda	Baroda	109
Bhopal	Bhopal	Bhopal		108
Delhi	Delhi	Delhi	Delhi	93
Kanpur	Kanpur	Kanpur		81
Calcutta	Calcutta	Calcutta	Calcutta	63
Jabalpur				59
Bangalore	Bangalore	Bangalore		56

Answer: Inter-ethnic/religious networks of civic engagement are agents of peace.

- Both associational and everyday forms of civic engagement, if robust, promote peace: contrariwise, their absence or weakness opens up space for ethnic violence.
- *Associational forms are more resistant to efforts to polarize people.*



Roles in Society

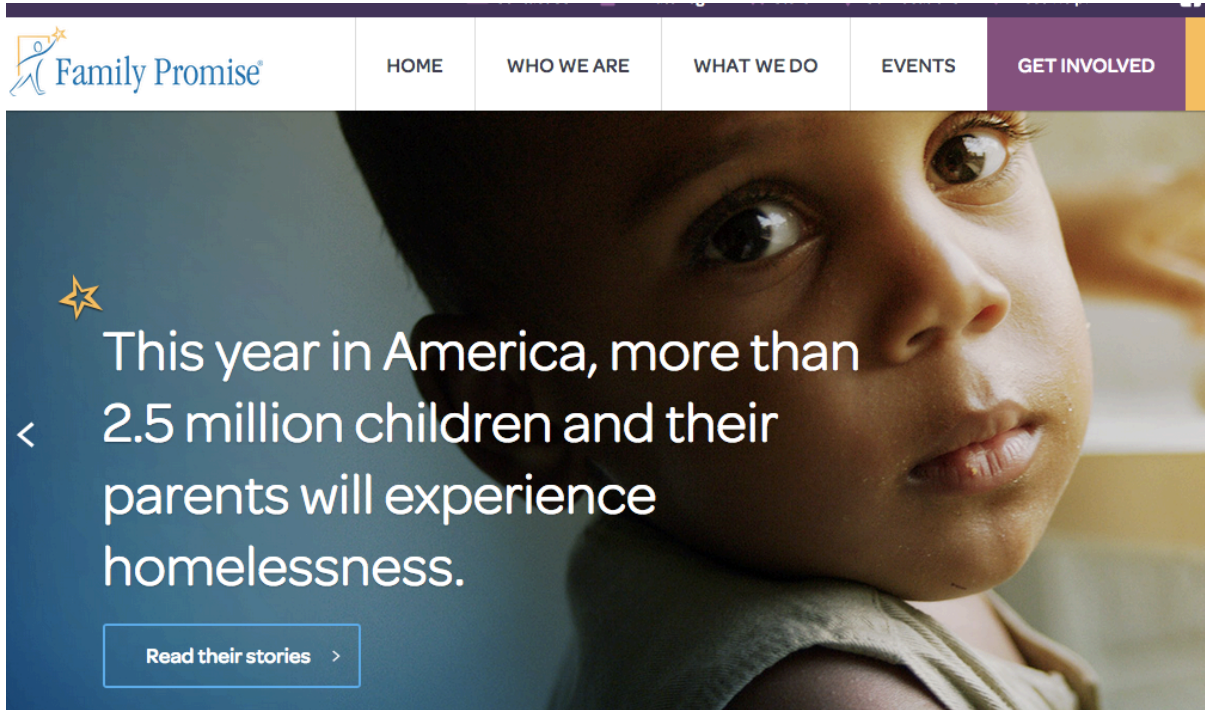


Examples of Civic Engagement

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- Everyday:
 - Families from different communities visit each other,
 - eat together regularly,
 - jointly participate in festivals, and
 - allow their children to play together in the neighborhood
 - Play sports together
 - _____ (Examples from audience) (*) Do everything with your children.



Social Responsibility Projects as a Platform for Dialogue/Civic Engagement

A screenshot of the Family Promise website. The header features the Family Promise logo on the left and navigation links: HOME, WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, EVENTS, and GET INVOLVED. The main banner shows a close-up of a young child's face. Overlaid text on the left side of the banner reads: "This year in America, more than 2.5 million children and their parents will experience homelessness." Below this text is a button that says "Read their stories" with a right-pointing arrow.

Family Promise

HOME WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO EVENTS GET INVOLVED

☆ This year in America, more than 2.5 million children and their parents will experience homelessness.

Read their stories >



Social Responsibility Projects as a Platform for Dialogue and Civic Engagement



[Volunteer Sign Up](#)



[View Photos](#)

Goals of Dialogue and Civic Engagement

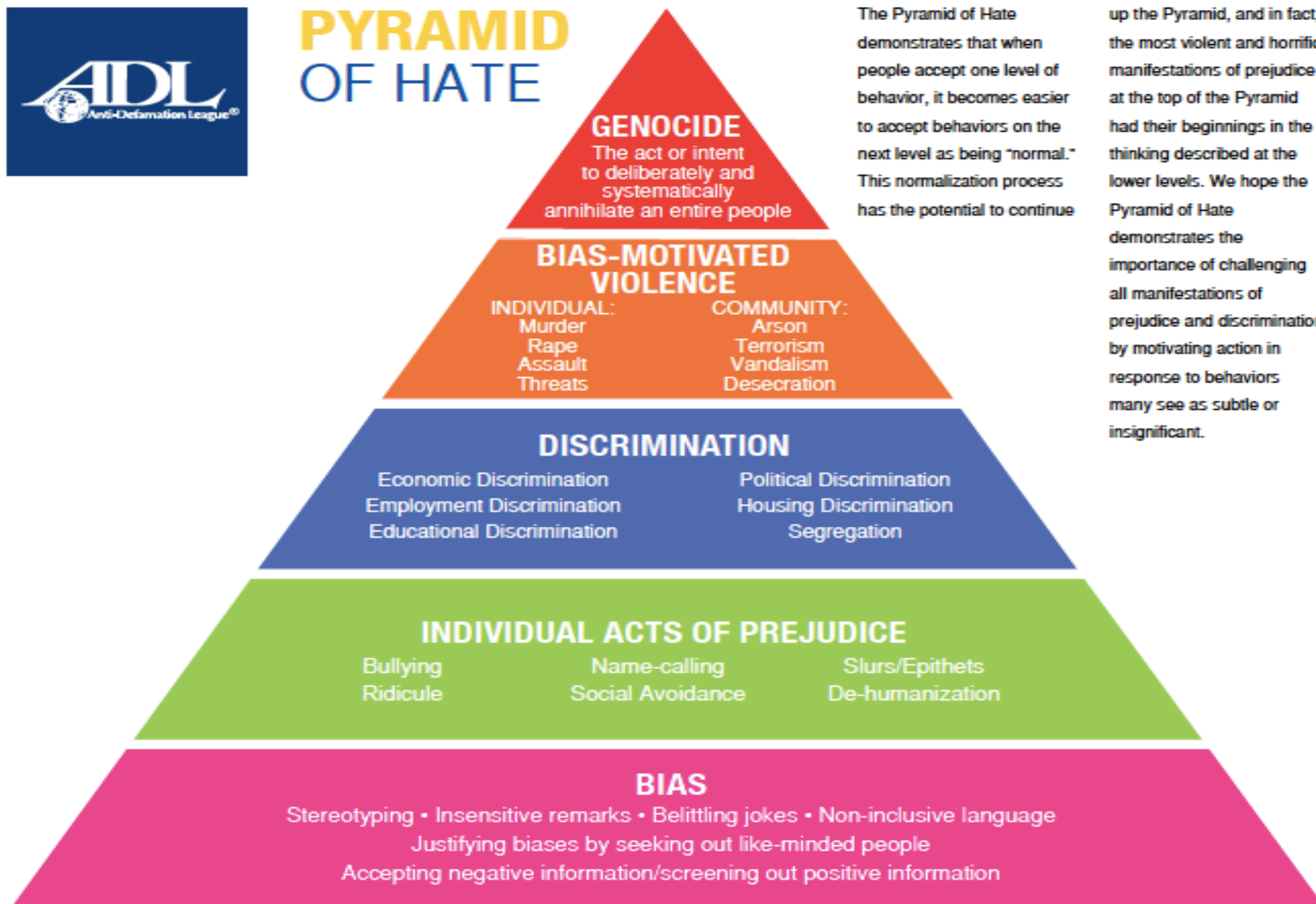
- Prevent/reduce/eliminate: Ignorance, fear, anger, hatred, enmity, discrimination, violence (*)
 - “fear-mongers”, those who benefit from polarization
- Develop/strengthen: Familiarity, knowledge, empathy, acceptance, trust, harmony, cooperation
 - From “LABEL” to Ahmet/Hatice
 - Around shared values, goals and concerns

Stories: College Station, TX, House warming party in Chicago; Mayor of Kemah; Experiments in ingroup/outgroup perception/empathy

(*) To turn the Pyramid of Hate on its head and build on the positive

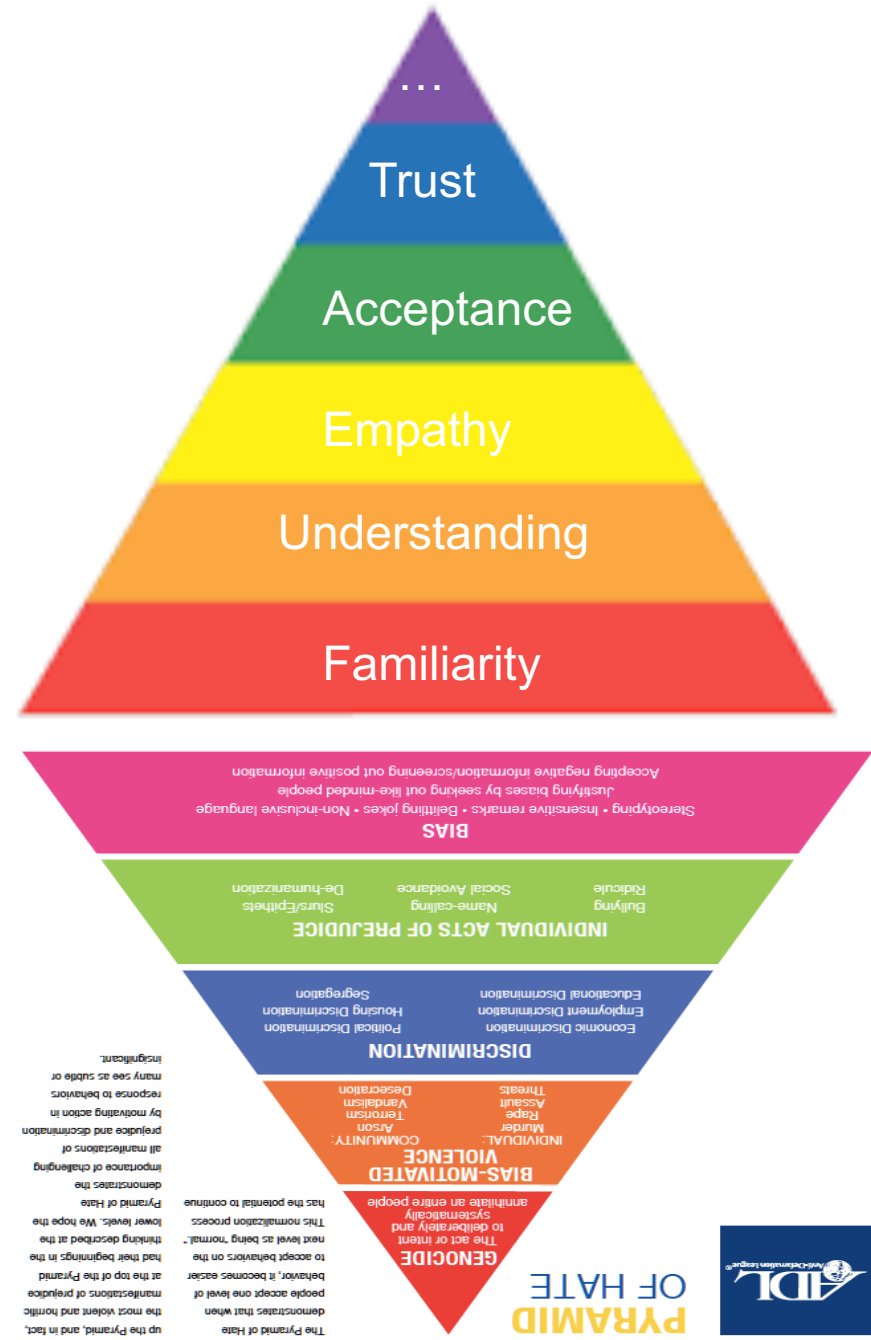
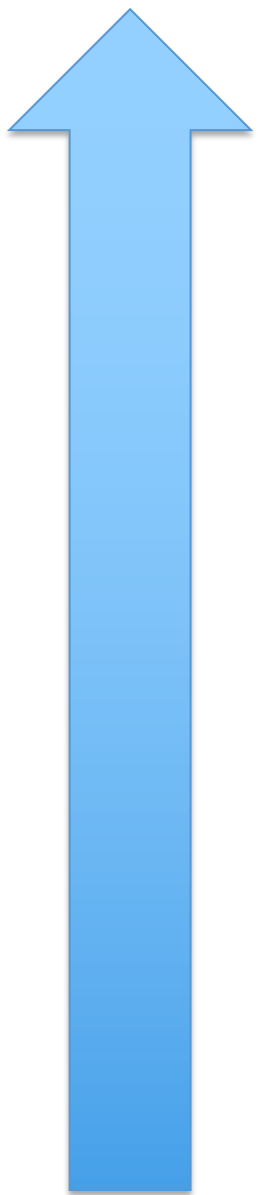


PYRAMID OF HATE



The Pyramid of Hate demonstrates that when people accept one level of behavior, it becomes easier to accept behaviors on the next level as being "normal." This normalization process has the potential to continue

up the Pyramid, and in fact, the most violent and horrific manifestations of prejudice at the top of the Pyramid had their beginnings in the thinking described at the lower levels. We hope the Pyramid of Hate demonstrates the importance of challenging all manifestations of prejudice and discrimination by motivating action in response to behaviors many see as subtle or insignificant.



PYRAMID OF HATE



Vision

A society where

- people live in harmony
- upholding each others' fundamental rights and freedoms
- based on the belief in the inherent worth of every human and a commitment to treat everyone with dignity and
- view differences --that do not violate these fundamental rights-- as richness.

Values, Principles

- **Honesty:** Our goal is better mutual understanding. (Language of presence >> language of the tongue)
- **Humility:** We can all learn from each other. (OO in B. class)
- **Dignity:** We believe in the inherent worth of every person and we are committed to treat them with dignity.
- **Equality:** We hold every human being as equal, not inferior or superior to anybody else.
- **Peace:** We are committed to peace and non-violence.
- **Mutual Respect:** We respect a person's freedom to choose his beliefs, views and lifestyle within the sphere of fundamental human rights and freedoms and treat them with respect.
- **Diversity:** We believe in diversity as richness as long as it respects fundamental human rights and freedoms of others.
- **Empathy:** We believe in the necessity to make an effort to understand and feel other people's ideas, feelings and conditions.
- **Growth Potential:** We believe in the innate human ability to change for the better.
- **Positive Action:** We believe in the virtue of proactive, positive action as opposed to continuously reacting to external developments.

(Islamic) Religious Foundations

- Siyer: Resit Haylamaz kitapları.
 - Efendimiz (asw) bir diyalog insanıydı.
- Eger Allah dileseydi bütün insanları, aynı dine bağlı, tek ümmet yapardı.” (Şurâ, 8; Neml, 93)
- “Rabbin dileseydi yeryüzündekilerin hepsi toptan mutlaka inanırlardı. O halde sen mi insanları mümin oluncaya kadar zorlayacaksın?” (Yunus, 99; Hud, 99)
- Her biriniz için şariat ve bir yol tayin ettik. Eger Allah dileseydi, hepinizi bir tek ümmet yapardı. Fakat O size verdiği farklı şariatlar dairesinde sizi imtihan etmek istediği için ayrı ayrı ümmetler yaptı. Öyleyse durmayın, hayırlı işlerde yarışın. (Maide, 48)
- Herkesin yöneldiği bir yön vardır, haydi öyleyse hep hayırlara koşun, yarışın!... (Bakara, 148)
- Dininizden ötürü sizinle savaşmayan, siz yerinizden yurdundan etmeyen kafirlere gelince, Allah sizi onlara iyilik etmeden, adalet ve insaf gözetmeden menetmez. Çünkü Allah âdil olanları sever. (Mümtahine, 8)
- “Dileyen iman etsin, dileyen kâfir olsun.”(Kehf, 29)
- Medine Vesikası (slide 6 in GYV Diyalog PPT)

Hizmet Movement Foundations

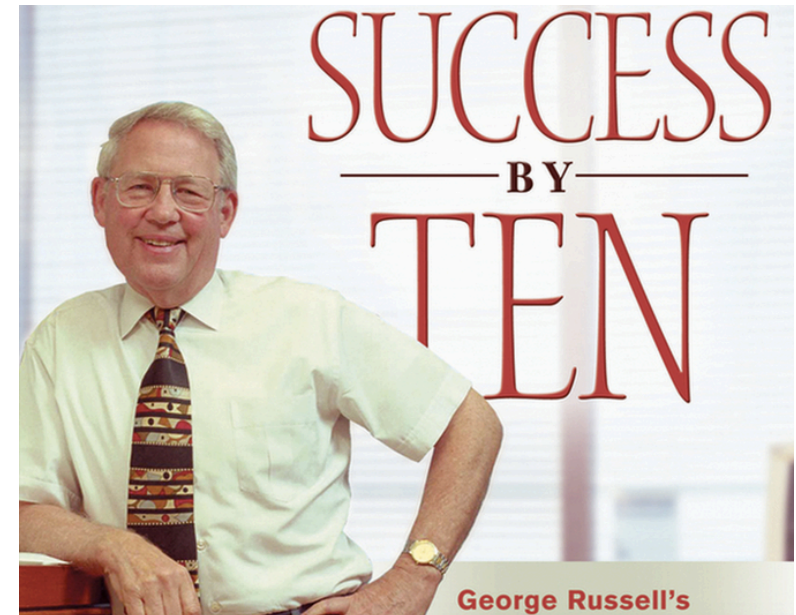
- BSN: Ahir zamanda Muslumanlarla Ehl-i Kitabın diyalog ve isbirligi.
- “Dini duyguların köpürmesi, mahalli kültürlerin dirilecek olması küreselleşmenin handikaplarındandır. Bu da zamanla küçük-büyük çatışma zeminini doguracaktır. Bunu engelleyecek tek şey diyalogdur.” (F.G.)
- Küreselleşen dünyada milli çizgiler silinecek derler. Hayır daha da güçlenecek. Aynı şekilde dini duygular da. Bu da zamanla küçük-büyük çatışma zeminini doguracaktır. Bunu engelleyecek tek şey diyalogdur. (F.G.)
- İnsanları birleştirmek adına harç, tutkal olduğumuzu unutmamak lazım. Gelecek adına köprüler kuruyoruz. Farklılıklarımızı koruyarak birlikte yaşama kültürü oluşturmaya çalışıyoruz.
- Vicdanınız bütün insanlığı içine alacak şekilde geniş olmalı. Hiç kimse sizden endişe duymamalı. Habil’e bayılıyorum ben. Kardeşine, bana beni öldürmek için el uzatsan bile ben sana el uzatmayacağım diyor. Halbuki “mukabele-i bi’l misil” var.
- Hakiki Müslüman kendi değerleri uğruna başkalarını iten değil, bağına zıkkım saplansa bile köprüler tesis edendir.

Humanitarian Foundations

- Increasing racism, xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, Islamophobia,... Partly due to globalization, partly due to domestic economic problems, urge us to build relationships, bridges of trust, defend against hate-mongers.
- Common concerns force us to overcome differences and collaborate to solve them: Ignorance, fear, bigotry, violent conflicts, poverty, fast spreading diseases, drug abuse, human trafficking, ...

Scientific Foundations: Lessons from One Nation Foundation

- Funded by George Russell,
directed by Henry Izumizaki
 - Goal: To prevent another “100-year war”
- 2006-2010: Traditional approach
 - 2010: Poll results

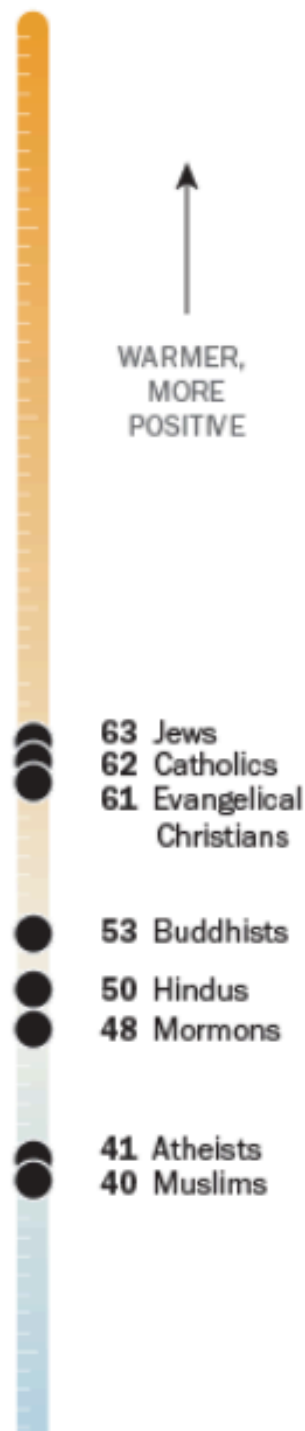


U.S. Public Has Warmest Feelings for Jews, Catholics and Evangelicals

Respondents in a Pew Research Center poll were asked:

"We'd like to get your feelings toward a number of groups on a 'feeling thermometer.' A rating of 0 degrees means you feel as cold and negative as possible. A rating of 100 degrees means you feel as warm and positive as possible. You would rate the group at 50 degrees if you don't feel particularly positive or negative toward the group."

Results at right show total mean ratings of each religious group



Among all Dem./
leaning Democrat

Among all Rep./
leaning Republican

↑
WARMER,
MORE
POSITIVE

Jews 62
Catholics 61
Buddhists 57
Hindus 54
Evangelical
Christians 53
Muslims 47
Atheists 46
Mormons 44

71 Evangelical
Christians
67 Jews
66 Catholics

52 Mormons
49 Buddhists
47 Hindus

34 Atheists
33 Muslims

2011: CAP Report on fear-mongers

**Personal Familiarity With
Group Members Linked
With More Positive Views**

*Mean Thermometer Ratings
(0=coldest, most negative;
100=warmest, most positive)*

<i>Mean rating given to...</i>	Total	<i>Know Anyone From Group?</i>	
		Yes	No
Jews	63	69	55
Catholics	62	64	47
Evangelicals	61	65	49
Buddhists	53	70	48
Hindus	50	63	47
Mormons	48	53	44
Atheists	41	50	29
Muslims	40	49	35

American Trends Panel (wave 4). Survey
conducted May 30-June 30, 2014. REL3a-h.
Based on all respondents (including those
who belong to the group in question).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Pew
Research
(2014)**

Knowing someone from a religious
group is linked with having relatively
more positive views of that group.

30,000 Families
(2017)

A Conversation with Dr. Ingrid Mattson

ResearchChannel, Pennsylvania State Univ. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXzPV2G5PFg>



A Conversation with Ingrid Mattson



Americans do not want to have a Muslim neighbor but Americans with a Muslim neighbor have the most positive perception of Muslims.

Scientific Foundations



Source: “Your Racist Brain: The Neuroscience of Conditioned Racism” by Manie Bosman

Topics: Social needs, in-group/out-group perception, perceived threat to social needs, stereotypes, threat-response, re-training.

1. Our brains are constantly gauging whether people are “friends” or “foes”
2. Anyone perceived different from friends/in-group triggers a threat response, putting the nervous system in fight-or-flight mode.
3. We have less empathy for “others” vs. “us”
4. Our brains are predisposed to fear those who are different.
5. Some fear conditioning is learnt through personal experience or through social learning.
6. Rewiring the brain is possible.
7. Reframing to disassociate with fear element is necessary.
8. **Personal interaction with people from other groups can be a powerful ‘rewiring’ experience.**

Pitfalls

- Confusion/inconsistency about goals, principles
- Seeing dialogue as a venue for Proselytization
- Seeing dialogue as a means for the Unification of diverse religions, ideologies, worldviews.
- Seeing dialogue as a Debate to win.
- Coming to dialogue with an inner belief in superiority (or inferiority)
- One way communication
- Subconscious biases, prejudices
- Misreading of one's religious tradition (GYV slide 7)

History of Dialogue in the U.S.

- 1990s replicating Turkish practice
- Early 2000s institutionalized dialogue
- Late 2000s from interfaith dialogue to broader dialogue
- 2010 onwards: lack of community engagement
- 2018 onwards dialogue and civic engagement

Resources

- Dialogue Society Booklets
- Resit Haylamaz videos and books

APPENDIX: Scientific Foundations (*)

- Human brain has five distinctive social needs *status*, *certainty*, *autonomy*, **relatedness** and *fairness*).
- Our brains perceive a 'threat' to any of these five social needs, the *amygdala* (a small almond-shaped structure, which plays an important role in emotional learning and memory) sends impulses to the [hypothalamus](#), which then activates the [sympathetic nervous system](#), which in turn triggers the nervous system to go into an automated '[fight-or-flight](#)' mode.
- Perceived threats in the social environment – when your status, need for certainty, autonomy, relatedness or sense of fairness is compromised – activate the same automated 'disengage' (fight or flight/ avoid/ withdraw/ danger) neural circuitry in your brain as when you face a physical threat such as a fearsome predator or armed robber.³
- In the context of interaction between different races the brain's need for [relatedness](#) (our need to feel safe with 'our own' people – our 'ingroup' – and to feel that we are included in that group) is of particular importance.
- As part of the process to assess our relatedness in any given situation, our brains are constantly gauging whether people – strangers in particular – are 'friends' or 'foes'. Anyone **perceived to be different** from those my brain (the *amygdala*) perceives as 'friends' or belonging to my 'ingroup', automatically triggers a threat response.
- The results of two studies, published as early as 2000, confirmed that perceived racial differences could be enough to trigger such a response. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) the researchers established that our amygdala becomes more activated (indicating early stages of threat-response) when we see someone from another race than when we see someone from our own race group.



(*) Source: "Your Racist Brain: The Neuroscience of Conditioned Racism" article by Manie Bosman

Stronger Empathy Response for “friends” vs. “strangers”

Perceived group relatedness – and race in particular – can play a role in determining how much empathy we feel when seeing someone in pain.

Peking University Study

Researchers from Peking University in China used fMRI to observe activity in the brains of Caucasian and Chinese subjects while they watched video clips of individual faces either being pricked with a needle or being touched with an ear bud. They found that the brains of both the Caucasian and Chinese subjects triggered a much stronger empathy-reaction when watching someone of their own race group suffer pain than when seeing someone from a different race group being pricked in the face. A follow-up study showed that our brains trigger a stronger empathy-response for those whom we regard as friends than for strangers – to the extent that different areas of the brain are activated depending whether we’re seeing a friend or stranger suffer pain.

Not only race: Less or no empathy for supporters of “other” soccer team



University of Zurich researchers found that when witnessing members of their own group suffer, the anterior insula of fans of a soccer team became activated showing concern and empathy – and they then offered to help even if it was going to be at their own expense. However, when witnessing supporters of the rival team suffer, the subjects’ brains showed no or little signs of automated empathy.

(Source: Your Racist Brain article)

Negative Racial Stereotyping is Learnt

Matt Lieberman and a team of researchers from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) used fMRI to monitor brain activity in groups of African-American and Caucasian-American subjects in response to race. As part of this study the subjects were shown pictures of African-American and Caucasian-American individuals. As could be expected, there was greater amygdala activity in the brains of Caucasian-American subjects when they looked at pictures of African-Americans than when they looked at pictures of Caucasian-Americans. Surprisingly though, Lieberman and his team found that the brains of their African-American subjects also responded with significant amygdala activity when looking at pictures of people from their own group. So why do the brains of both groups flag African-Americans as a possible 'threat'?

Lieberman explains:

“The present study suggests that the amygdala activity typically associated with race-related processing may be a reflection of culturally learned negative associations regarding African-American individuals”.

If participants of both racial groups responded stronger to faces of the 'other' group than to their own, it could have been argued that it was simply a reaction to the novelty or strangeness of seeing a face unlike those with which they interact with on a daily basis. Some might even have pushed the point and suggested that we are genetically hardwired to mistrust other races. However, this study strongly suggests that the strong amygdala response when looking at African-American faces is at least to some extent a conditioned reaction – a learnt response. The fact that participants of both race groups perceived African-American faces as possible threats probably reflect their shared negative stereotype of African-Americans.

While there is something profoundly sad in discovering that negative racial stereotyping (which often manifests as racism) can even occur between members of the same race, it also offers a glimmer of hope. **If this is learnt or conditioned behaviour, surely it can be unlearnt?**

Fear is the Major Underlying Driving Force for Conditioned Racism

It is often said that no child is born a racist, but research indicates that they catch up pretty soon. Some studies have shown that even children as young as three years of age prefer their own racial group and would discriminate against children of a different racial group. Another study found that around the age of five children become aware of racial stereotyping and that negative stereotyping about their own race can impair their academic performance. So why is the human brain so susceptible to negative labeling of racial groups other than our own?

A growing volume of research results are pointing towards fear as the major underlying driving force for conditioned racism. Some researchers have suggested that humans are born with a genetic 'preparedness' to learn to fear individuals from different social groups (as defined by race). Neuroscientists *Elizabeth Phelps and Andreas Ollson* from *New York University* have done extensive research on the neuroscience of racism, and they propose that "millennia of natural selection and a lifetime of social learning may predispose humans to fear those who seem different from them". While the role of genetics has not been clarified, social learning, and learning to fear those from 'other' social groups in particular, seems key to conditioned racism.

How Does Fear Conditioning Happen?

It is understandable that people who have been victims of racial abuse or violence could feel a rational and conscious fear for members of the race group that caused them harm. Even long after counseling and healing conditioned fear responses could still linger in their neural circuitry. However, many who have never had such a traumatic experience pick up on this fear through a process called “**fear conditioning**”. In the social environment fear conditioning happens when a negative stimulus (e.g. being robbed) somehow becomes associated with a neutral stimulus (e.g. a male of another race) or even a neutral situation (e.g. a deserted public park). In other words, the brain could learn to associate a man from the ‘other’ race with the threat of crime, and then automatically respond to men of that race as it would respond to an actual crime.

How does racial fear conditioning happen? Probably in a million different ways. In some cases it is the result of personally experiencing real or perceived threats involving individuals or groups from other races. However I suspect that for the majority of us racial fear conditioning is something that happens during what Phelps and Ollson calls a “lifetime of social learning”. We learn to mistrust and fear ‘others’ as we are continuously exposed to negative images, stories, stereotypes, archetypes, and memes of ‘them’. An Iraqi child listening to his father talk about American soldiers performing a house-to-house search... watching television footage of civil war violence somewhere in Africa...seeing the mug shot of a wanted rapist in the newspaper.... In our inter-connected world negative racial conditioning and reinforcement can happen in a nearly limitless number of ways. Not least of these is the news and entertainment media which, even though it proposes not to do so, often continues to form and reinforce these racial perceptions.

Fear Conditioning through Images in Media

-- Good Morning America anecdote



Two Underpinning Factors of Conditioned Racism

- The one is the human brain's predisposition to label and treat any perceived out-group member as a threat, which is why someone from a different race can trigger an automated threat response even if it is completely unwarranted.
- The second is that this racial predisposition can be amplified and reinforced by fear conditioning, which is a socially learnt process.

Rewiring is Possible

Rewiring is Possible. Over the last few years studies in neuroscience have shown that the old belief that learning only occurs up to a certain age, after which the human brain cannot change, is an absolute fallacy. In fact, our brains can change and adapt throughout our lives. This phenomena – known as neuroplasticity – allows the brain's neurons (nerve cells) to continuously adapt and adjust to form new neural pathways as a result of learning, changes in behaviour and changes in our environment. In other words, while the neural responses underlying a tendency to racist behaviour might be automated, these neurological pathways can and should be changed.

Reframing is Necessary

Reframing is Necessary. Research have shown that fear responses to dangerous stimuli (predators, snakes, spiders) are much harder to unlearn than fear responses triggered by 'neutral' stimuli (butterflies, birds). If we rationally believe the object of our fear poses a real threat, it will be near impossible to undo the automated threat-response in our brain when facing this object. The implication is that if you are really serious about adjusting the conditioned racist response in your own brain, you need to change the way you think and talk about other races. Does someone pose a realistic threat just because they are different? If not, start to intentionally reframe the mental pictures you hold of them (including the terms you use to refer to them) to confirm that they are 'neutral' and not dangerous. As parents and leaders we also have the responsibility to reframe racial images and perceptions for our children and those we lead.

Exposure is Critical

While our brains seem eager to assign negative ‘labels’ based on appearance or background, several studies and real life experience shows that that this could be modified – probably most effectively through individual exposure. Our conditioned fear response can be countered and even reversed through close, positive interracial contact. Here’s how Phelps and Ollson puts it:

“For now, our finding that close, intergroup contact may reduce this (racial) bias suggests that individual experiences can play a moderating role. Millennia of natural selection and a lifetime of social learning may predispose humans to fear those who seem different from them; however, **developing relationships with these ‘different’ others may be one factor that weakens this otherwise strong predisposition.**”

Personal interacting with people from other race groups can be a powerful ‘rewiring’ experience. I’ve seen firsthand what a difference it makes when people from different races (or other divides) get the opportunity to experience each other as human beings who share similar joys and challenges in terms of family, aspirations, concerns, needs and other aspects of our lives. Opportunities for this type of exposure don’t automatically happen in the work environment, so leaders should be deliberate in creating and facilitating them. Leaders should also be deliberate in establishing cultures of trust, as inter-personal trust can be a powerful force to fuse diversity into constructive synergy.

Conclusion

The human race has come a long way from when our survival depended on being accepted in the tribe and our senses kept us alive by identifying the rustle in the bush as a threat even before we knew it was a saber-toothed cat. In a relatively short time the world in which we live has become an inter-connected and dynamic space where our ability to collaborate rather than to compete is crucial for success. One of the key leadership skills at this time is to find ways to **facilitate safe connections between people**. Dealing with diversity – racial diversity in particular – is a crucial part of that skill set.