

# Egotistical self-worth spurs racism and homophobia: study

Authentic pride associated with pro-social effects, while hubristic pride linked to hostility toward others, UBC researchers find

By Derek Abma, Postmedia News

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Are you proud of yourself? If so, you might be either less - or more - likely to be racist or homophobic, according to a new study.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia's department of psychology found those with "authentic pride" - derived from things such as hard work and achievement - show less of a tendency to discriminate against those different from them.

On the other hand, those with what's categorized as "hubristic pride" - a more egotistical and arrogant type of emotion - were found more likely to display prejudice against others.

Jessica Tracy, a psychology professor who co-authored the study, said authentic pride "has all these beneficial, pro-social effects. People become nicer, essentially. They're more co-operative. They're more generous towards others. They're more agreeable."

She added: "When you feel [authentic pride], because you genuinely feel a sense of 'Hey, I'm working hard, I'm doing great,' you can actually afford to think about others. ... There's no insecurity there."

On hubristic pride, Tracy said: "It's really a kind of anti-social emotion. This is the pride that is essentially arrogance, conceitedness. ... They really feel superior to the people around them. They're kind of hostile."

One part of this multi-faceted study involved questioning more than 2,000 undergraduate students at a university in Northern California. They were assessed for how much they identified with feelings such as accomplishment or confidence (authentic pride) versus sentiments like arrogance and smugness (hubristic pride).

A separate questionnaire found a correlation between the extent to which subjects felt hubristic pride and harboured negative feelings toward African-Americans, and the opposite trend was found with those with a greater degree of authentic pride. African-Americans were not part of this sample group.

Three other experiments used smaller samples of students in Canada and the U.S., and induced subjects into feeling pride in either an authentic or hubristic way by recalling certain

types of memories. In one test, a neutral group was included to establish a baseline.

A follow-up questionnaire found those induced into a state of hubris-tic pride were more likely to feel negative about Asians in one experiment, and homosexuals in another, and less empathy toward Asians in the third trial. Those made to feel authentic pride were more likely to be at the opposite end of the scale on all three tests.

People belonging to the groups for which discrimination was tested against - Asians and homosexuals - were not included in the relevant samples.

Tracy said the results of her study could have implications for those holding positions of power, who are likely to feel at least one of these types of pride.

In terms of how a person can detect such things - for instance if they are voting in an election - Tracy said: "It's not as hard as you think."

She said U.S. President Barack Obama comes across as someone with authentic pride. "He clearly feels pride, feels really good about himself, is proud of what he's done, but manages to also acknowledge always the role of others in his successes, maintains some sort humility, is sort of a likable, pro-social guy."