THE STUDY OF ETHNOCENTRISM, STEREOTYPE AND PREJUDICE: PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL AND PSYCHO-DYNAMIC THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is briefly to review classic and contemporary contributions to the study of ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice in the field of education and child development. Psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic theories about ethnocentrism, stereotype, and prejudice are reviewed and their relationship with each other is examined. It will also use the concepts of group narcissism, projection, authoritarian personality, frustration-aggression, displacement. The conclusion offers more integrative approach and the resolution of ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice.

Key words: Ethnocentrism, stereotype, prejudice, group narcissism, projection, authoritarian personality, frustration-aggression-displacement.

ETNİK BENCİLLİK, STEROTİP, VE ÖNYARGI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA: PSİKO-ANALİTİK VE PSİKO-DİNAMİK TEORİLER

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, eğitim ve çocuk gelişimi alanlarında etnik bencillik, sterotip ve önyargı konularında klasik ve çağdaş çalışmaları kısa bir şekilde gözden geçirmektir. Etnik bencillik, sterotip ve önyargı konuları ve bu kavramlar arasındaki ilişki psiko-analitik ve psiko-dinamik teorileri ışığında incelenecektir. Ayrıca grup narsisizmi, yansıtma, otoriter kişilik, engelleme-saldırganlık, ve yer değiştirme gibi kavramlar da kullanılacaktır. Sonuç kısmında, bütün bu kavramları birbirine bağlayan ve etnik bencillik, sterotip ve önyargı konularında çözümler ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Etnik bencillik, sterotip, önyargı, grup narsisizmi, yansıtma, otoriter kişilik, engelleme-saldırganlık-yansıtma.

Introduction

There is a widespread tendency for people to favor their own group over another group. This tendency has been variously labeled as ethnocentrism (Sumner, 1906), intergroup bias (Rabbie, 1993), in-group favoritism (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) or in-group /out group differentiation (Rabbie, 1993; Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Dougherty and Pratlzgraff, 1996). It denotes a cultural narrowness in which the 'ethnically centered' individual rigidly accepted those of the in-group while rejecting those of the out-group.

Ethnocentrism has many commonalties with stereotyping, mirroring, prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia, racism, scape-goat theory, and enemy images. For example, stereotypes are belief about the typical characteristics of group members; prejudice refers to negative feeling toward an out-group; and discrimination refers to behavior that disadvantages individuals (Taylor, 1997, 177).

Ethnocentrism can be explained at different 'level of analysis'. At the intergroup level, ethnocentrism has been seen as a result of realistic (instrumental) or symbolic (rela-tional) conflicts between groups. At the individual level, there are psycho-analy-tical and cognitive approaches that attempt to account for in-group cohesion and out-group hostility in terms of intra-individual motives and personality traits (e.g. scape-goat theory, the theory of the authoritarian personality) or that focus mainly on the limitations of the information processing or cognitive capabilities of members in a group (Rabbie, 1993, 86).

The purpose of this research is briefly to review classic and contemporary contribu-tions to the study of ethnocentrism in the field of education and conflict resolution. The paper attempts to explain ethnocen-trism with the help of the psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic approaches in the field of education and conflict resolution. The paper consists of three parts. The first part defines the ethnocentrism and related concepts and briefly discusses the main arguments and theorists. The second part attempts to identify the psycho-analytic foundations of ethnocentrism. This part focuses on the ideas and concepts of the Freudian tradition that are related to ethnocentrism. The main emphasis is on the psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic theories that mostly explain ethnocentrism, inter-group bias, stereotype, and prejudice

with such concepts as externalization, projection, group narcissism, authoritarian personality, and frustration/aggression. The conclusion presents an integrative approach to explain ethnocentrism.

1. The Concept Of The Ethnocentrism

The term ethnocentrism was first used in 1906 by Sumner to describe a cultural narrowness in which the "ethnically centered" individual rigidly accepted those who were culturally alike while just as rigidly rejecting who were culturally different. Ethnocentrism refers to the belief that the in-group is the center of everything and is superior to all out-groups. According to Sumner:

> Ethnocentrism is the technical name for this view things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it… Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders. Each group thinks its own folkways the only right ones, and if it observes that other groups have other folkways, these excite its scorn… ethnocentrism leads a people to exaggerate and intensity everything in their own folkways which is peculiar and which differen-tiates them from others. (Sumner, 1906, 13; Levine and Campbell, 1972 8).

The main study of ethnocentrism in social psychology was carried out by Adorno and his colleagues in classical study, *The Autho-ritarian Personality* (1982). In this study, ethnocentrism referred to "group relations generally; it had to do not only with nume-rous groups toward which the individual has hostile opinions and attitudes but, equally important, with groups toward which he is positively disposed" (Adorno 102). Ethnocentrism was contrasted with

cosmopolitanism and cultural relativism (Forbes, 1985, 22). It had "the general meaning of provincialism or cultural narrowness; it meant a tendency in the individual to be 'ethnically centered', to be rigid in his acceptance of the culturally 'alike' and in his rejection of the 'unlike'" (Rabbie, 1993, 102). Rabbie defined intergroup bias as positive attitudes, stereo-types, and behavior toward members of the in-group and negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discriminatory behavior toward the outgroup. (Ibid, 85).

2. Psycho-Analytical And Psycho-Dynamic Theories

In their study, Levine and Campbell (1972) summarized the psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic theories that make an important contribution to the ethnocentrism.

2.1. Group Narcissism

In Freud's later work, he analyzed the psychic bond that attracts individuals to the group leader and, to the group and its members. By identifying with the group, individuals are able to enhance their own sense of worth. Freud regarded ethnocentrism as a form of narcissism at the group level. To quote from Freud:

> Every time two families become connected by a marriage, each of them thinks itself superior to or of better birth than the other. Of two neighboring towns each is the other's most jealous rival; every little canton looks down upon the others with contempt. Closely related races keep one another at arm's length: the South German cannot endure the North German, the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot, the Spaniard despises the Portuguese. We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, and

Aryan for the Semite, and the white races for the colored. (1921/1922, 33)

In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud stated explicitly that the social function of group narcissism lay in its facilitating the displacement of aggression from in-group to out-group. Thus, in-group love as an expression of self-love becomes associated with out-group hatred:

It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing this instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness 1930, 114-115).

Freud (1921/1922) described ethnocentrism as "the narcissism of minor differences", indicating that meaninglessly small differences may be exaggerated for the purpose of invidious comparison. Self-love of the individual is expressed as antipathies and aversions toward strangers. However, when a group is formed, this intolerance toward others vanishes as the individual equates himself or herself with the other members of the group. According to Freud (1921 / 1922; 1930), the narcissism of minor differences is a convenient and relatively harmless way of satisfying the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion among members of the community is made easier. He noted that communities with adjoining territories, such as Spaniards and Portuguese, English and Scots, and North Germans and South Germans, were engaged constant feuds and in ridiculing each other (Freud, 1930; Fromm, 1973). But his emphasis was on the identification of group members with one another. Levine

and Campbell (1972) suggested that the term ethnocentrism is a relationship of group-centeredness with self-centeredness (103). Ethnocentrism may be a redirected expression of individual narcissism. It provides group members narcissistic gratification. Therefore, groups that provide more narcissistic gratification are more ethnocentric. They pointed out that this narcissistic energy can be for the survival of the group and that individual members will sacrifice their lives for its survival (Ibid, 103).

Similarly, Volkan (1985, 1988) used this term to explain "the need for enemies and allies" (100). He claimed that there is a need of a psychological gap between us and our enemy (us versus them). Because of the need of enemy and allies, people tend to exaggerate the minor differences between groups and to emphasize minor similarities within groups. Unlike Freud, Volkan claimed that under certain stressful conditions investment in minor differences by emotionally bonded large groups in conflict may incline to aggression. (1997, 109). For example, color has psychological implications in conflict situations. In Northern Ireland conflict, Catholic villages distinguished themselves from Protestant ones by a subtle color code to which every member of the village adheres: The Catholic painted their front doors and gates green; whereas, The Protestants painted theirs blue. There is no direct correspondence between the two colors and the two religions; the colors are simply unalterable minor differences that separate the two groups and that each group preserves under the influence of tradition. In India, the traditional Hindu saffron and Muslim green cannot be used interchangeably (1997, 110).

2.2. Projection

Projection is the attribution to others of unacceptable impulses or fantasies within one's self. Characteristic of this approach is Ackerman and Jahoda's (1950) dictum concerning anti-Semitism, "The Jew is a living inkblot" (146). This approach argued that stereotypes of out-groups are simply fantasies wholly derived from the unconscious needs of in-group members with no correspondence to the objective attributes of out-groups. Erikson (1964) argued that "identity formation involves a continuous conflict with powerful negative identity elements: what we know or fear or are told we are but try not to be or not to see; and what we consequently see in exaggeration in others. In times of aggravated crises all this can arouse in man a murderous hate of all kinds of 'otherness' in strangers and in himself." (qtd. van der Dennen, 1986).

Deutsch (1990, 1991) suggested a link between the concept of "splitting" in object relations theory, and the tendency to view human groups as either good or bad. The infant/child has a need to split the caregiver into the good mother, as distinct from the bad mother, and the corresponding tendency to split the self into the good-me and the bad-me. It can be found in the adult's need to identify enemies in the world to serve as the focus for negative affect. The object relations model has seen the origins of intergroup conflict not in the displacement of aggression impulses, but as an external projection of the self's need to keep the good-self distinct from the bad-self (Deutsch, 1990, 1991).

This analysis is similar to Volkan's concept of the *suitable targets of externalization (STEs)* (reservoirs of images) in which a child externalizes unintegrated good/bad images of himself and others into what might call *targets* or *reservoirs* (Volkan, 1985, 1988, 1991; Barash, 1991). STEs are determined either by culture (familiar objects of a child's environment, or shown to the children by parents and other adults. STEs

are initially mostly inanimate and non-human objects such as flags, songs, ethnic food, places of worship, religious icons, memorials, certain animals (Ross, 1995), but also are people, and groups of people (Volkan, 1985, 1988).

- People who are positive STEs, i.e. reservoirs of unintegrated good representations, are seen as allies, friends, leaders, etc.

- On the other hand, people who are negative STEs, i.e.reservoirs of unintegrated bad representations are regarded as enemies.

In short, these theories hold that these undesirable characteristics are turn up attributed to an out-group (projection) which then serves as a rationalization for violence against the out-group (aggression displacement).

2.3. Authoritarian Personality

The single largest body of research on prejudice emanates from work on the Authoritarian Personality (Adorno, 1982) derived largely from psycho-analytical theory. However, it is not independent of self-esteem, frustration-aggression and cognitive theories (Levine and Campbell, 1972, 148; Campbell, 1965). It has focused on individual differences and predicts that guilt over ambivalent attitudes toward parents is resolved by idealizing authority figures and directing hostile feelings away from parents and toward out-groups. Although the mechanism for out-group hostility lies in guilt over ambivalence, its consequences are manifested through effects on cognitive processes, with sharp category boundaries.

The Authoritarian Personality has begun as a study of anti-Semitism in which an attitude scale is constructed to measure prejudice towards Jews on a number of dimensions including the threatening character of Jews, their seclusiveness, and their offensive nature. These various compo-

nents of anti-Semitism show strong relationships with each other, culminating in the development of a unitary Anti-Semitism Scale. The broader study of out-group attitudes followed with the construction of the Ethnocentrism Scale, which included items on a number of racial and ethnic minority groups as well as items measuring in-group loyalty and glorification of the "American way." Item-total correlations, correlations among sub-scales, and correlations with the Anti-Semitism Scale all supported the concept of ethnocentrism; that is, respondents shows a general acceptance or rejection of a variety of out-groups and those who rejected out-groups tends to glorify and be loyal to the white Protestant-American in-group (Allport, 1954; Adorno, 1982). For the authors, the explanation of this phenomenon has laid in the personality dynamics of the ethnocentric individual (Fisher, 1990, 23). They hypothesized that early in a child' life, the parent who is overconcerned about social status and proper behavior use harsh autocratic discipline to rear socially acceptable children. Ethnocentric individuals suppress their hostilities toward their parents and project this aggression into powerless minority groups, such as Jews and blacks. Through displacement, the aggression is redirected toward out-groups in the form of antagonism and hostility. Like Freudian tradition, they emphasized on the respondents' childhood experiences and relationships with parents. The repression of aggressive tendencies against parents is seen as part of a general tendency to repress unacceptable tendencies and impulses in the self, such as fear, weakness, passivity, and sex impulses (Adorno, 1982 474). Through externalization, much of what cannot be accepted as part of one's own ego is externalized, with the result that "it is not oneself but others that are seen as hostile and threatening" (474).

2.4. Frustration - Aggression - Displacement Theory

The frustration-aggression principle is based on Freud's first theory of aggression, and was deemed a powerful explanation for a variety of social behaviors. Although the theory was suggested by McDougall, Freud and others, the main theory was developed by John Dollard and his colleagues at Yale University. Basically, the theory assumed that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and that frustration always leads to some form of aggression. For this theory, ethnocentrism and prejudice is a result of universal intrapsychic processes such as scapegoating. The concept of the "scapegoat" that is related to the frustration-aggression model help us to understand the ethnocentrism from the psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic approaches. According to the scapegoat theory, prejudice or aggression toward members of the out-group is the result of a displacement of aggression from a powerful frustrator to a powerless minority group. In the Bible (20-22), it is described that hands are placed on the head of a live goat, transgressions and sins of Israelites are transferred to the goat, and the goat is sent into the wilderness (Rothbart and Lewis, 1994, 359). The scapegoat theory simply assumes that members of minority group serve as targets of such "displaced aggression" that is directly influenced by Freud. This displacement is rationalized by blaming the minority for the frustration or by attributing negative attributes to the minority (Stroebe and Insko, 1989 18). Like Freud, Dollard et.al. asserted that the more similar the out-group, the less likely it is to be selected as the target of aggression (qtd. Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994, 28). The scapegoating of Jews in Nazi Germany was due to the displacement of aggression toward them.

3. Conclusion

It should have become evident that there is no single approach that satisfactorily addresses the issue of ethnocentrism and related concepts. Freud's psycho-analytical approach about group processes has a number of important implications for ethnocentrism. The most important one is that hostility toward out-groups is one inevitable outcome of in-group cohesion. Second, it assumes that hostility need not to be displaced into out-groups, but can be channeled through more constructive paths, such as competitive sports. However, its irrationalist and reductionist account of conflict cause a pessimistic conclusion about conflict.

The Authoritarian Personality has been criticized on several grounds for its interpretation of ethnocentrism. First, the study of Adorno, et.al. (1982) suffered from numerous methodological weaknesses which raise the doubt about the validity of many of their main findings (qtd. Fisher, 1990, 23). In the conceptual level, the theory of authoritarian personality is restricted to the authoritarianism of the right and disregards authoritarianism connected with other political belief systems (Stroebe and Insko, 1989, 18). Nonetheless, one contribution of this study makes us to realize that some pathological or unrealistic factors play a role in the birth of ethnocentrism. Third, the scapegoat theory and the authoritarian personality offerred at best a partial explanation of ethnocentrism. While they accounted for variations in ethnocentrism within a given culture or region, they failed to explain differences in levels of ethnocentrism between different cultures or regions. Furthermore, they cannot really have explained why different groups become targets of ethnocentrism or the specific content of belief systems developed by ethnocentric individuals.

We have considered four main theories of psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic approaches to explain the concept of ethno-centrism. Each of these broad theoretical approaches points to different factors as causes of ethnocentrism. There is some truth in all of them. Psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic theories mostly focus on the foundations and roots of ethnocentrism. We should point out that ethnocentrism is also based on emotion, cultural ideology, collective action, and institutional policy.

Because different theories have different assumptions, premises, or axioms, they have different resolutions for ethnocentrism. Theorists who have assumed that inter-group conflicts stem from biologically based dispositions common to the human species or universal conditions of human life believe that aggressive and ethnocentric tendencies cannot be eliminated as a major factor in group behaviors. Those who have assumed inter-group conflicts are patterns of group behavior, developed and retained for its adaptive value in the course of man's sociocultural evolution believed that it should disappear under environmental conditions in which it is maladaptive. The cognitive approaches suggested that inter-group boundaries de-emphasized and the common interests of both groups are promoted, so that the exaggeration of within-group similarities and between-group differences are minimized. Such factors, include superordinate goals, cross-cutting group membership, and a history of successful, cooperative intergroup relations help us emphasize the uniqueness of individual out-group members and/or reduce of the clarity of inter-group boundaries in order to decreases in-group bias and discrimination. However, there is no definite empirical solution whether ethnocentric behavior is primarily disruptive or adaptive.

Even the many proponents of the cognitive approach rejected the idea that ethnocentrism and stereotypes could be explained as solely due to biases in cognitive functioning:

> Any particular of stereotyping or prejudice, such as racism, is in all likelihood multiply determined by cognitive, motivational, and social learning processes, whose effects combine in a given social context to produce specific judgmental and behavioral manifestations. Therefore, any attempt to understand such phenomena as a product of one process alone is probably misguided (Hamilton and Troiler, 1986, 153).

Therefore, we must accept that we need to develop the multiprocess theory of stereotyping and ethnocentrism. For example, many stereotypes seem to be widely culturally shared categories that transcend the individual. Thus, we need to include the culture to study in-group favoritism and/or out-group rejection. Similarly, the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1985; Turner, 1987, 1997) offered an explanation of the processes involved in in-group favoritism and out-group derogation that is both cognitive and motivational by emphasizing the processes of self-categorization and the need for a positive identity.

The contributions of conflict resolution theories and practices in the study of ethnocentrism showed us that there is a need to understand and deal with violent ethnic conflict (Rupesnighe, 1987), protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990), or deep-rooted conflict (Burton, 1987). Apart from all other disciplines, conflict resolution field mostly provides great contributions in the area of practice. It is essential that most conflict scholars/ practitioners have aimed to reduce and eliminate ethnocentric tendencies and behaviors during the de-

escalation, institutionalization, and regulation of conflict. For example, C.E. Osgood's "gradual reduction in tension" (GRIT) is a strategy to reduce negative enemy images and build up trust between adversaries. Similarly, track-two diplomacy has attempted to promote intergroup understanding and friendship from the bottom-up rather than top-down. Also, problem-solving workshops approach has allowed the participants to gain insights into the perspective of the other party, to create a new climate between the adversaries, to discover their common needs and values, to establish informal networks, and to widen their agendas towards a mutually acceptable solution (Azar, 1990; Kelman, 1986).

This paper has summarized psycho-analytical and psycho-dynamic theoretical works on ethnocentrism in inter-group relations. Four theories about ethnocentrism are reviewed and their relationship with each other is examined. To date, these approaches and related theories have contributed a great deal toward understanding inter-group conflicts, more generally and ethnocentrism in particular. Nevertheless, they need to be developed further in the context of more macro theories if we want to achieve a more complete understanding of these complex topics. It is our idea that development of social cognition theories is the most promising direction to take in this regard. In addition, the issues of memory, emotions, and situation need to be addressed.

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