

identification and out-group hostility (Hebl & Madera, 2010).

Due to the process of enculturation, ethnocentrism is a transgenerational problem. Ethnocentric stereotypes and attitudes can be nurtured and reinforced from various sources over the years. The ethnocentric stereotypes may be passed down from generation to generation through the process of socialization. Those individuals who do not communicate, or have contact with other groups, may not understand and appreciate cultural differences. Members of a social or cultural in-group can, and are more likely to, develop a feeling of self-centeredness that is characterized by the sense of group moral superiority and negativity for outsiders (Brewer, 2007).

As a result of the universal process of enculturation, individuals or groups will be prone to evaluate and judge the world through the lens of their own culture. Likewise, ethnocentrism will shape the views of individuals who identify themselves as a member or product of the same culture and ethnicity. Loyalty toward, and preference for, one's own culture, in comparison to others, can have a positive impact on individuals valuing their cultural heritage and promoting their cultural values. However, oftentimes, individuals use their own cultural standards to judge others' behaviors, customs, beliefs, and attitudes (Hebl & Madera, 2010). When individuals make assumptions about other people's backgrounds and strongly believe that the standards, norms, and values within their own culture are the only acceptable norms, and must be adopted universally, this can lead to social conflict.

Ethnocentrism poses a challenge in society for those who are promoting understanding of, and appreciation for, cultural differences. Ethnocentrism creates walls of separation and misunderstanding among various groups, and it hinders cooperation. Ethnocentrism influences people to resist learning how people from various backgrounds, including those of different ethnicity and culture, see the world and why they behave as they do. However, the understanding of the phenomenon of ethnocentrism itself can begin to alleviate cultural prejudice, as one recognizes the social and psychological dynamics at work that reinforce "us versus them" thinking. The conceptualization of

ethnicity itself, among scholars, has moved from a rather primordial, biologically based perspective to a more constructionist view, in which there is growing recognition that ethnic categories are not fixed and bounded but rather fluid and evolving (Banks, 1996; Jenkins, 1997; Waters, 1990). This understanding, too, can contribute to a greater willingness to reject ethnocentric tendencies.

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ETHNOCENTRISM

Ethnocentrism manifests in biased judgment of other cultures solely based on the values and norms of one's own culture. *Ethnocentrism* is defined as "assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (Bennett & Bennett, 2004), as much as it is also the failure to comprehend others' cultures. As such, ethnocentrism is related to

a lack of tolerance for others' cultures, values, and behaviors.

Ethnocentrism can be found wherever cultural pluralism may be found. Cultural pluralism exists when minority cultures are present within a context of a larger dominant culture. In a culturally plural environment, minority or enclave cultures are permitted to exist provided that they do not violate the major culture of the dominant group.

Although it may seem ordinary for a person to discern the world based on one's own cultural norm, ethnocentrism carries a negative connotation because of its destructive potential to lead to negative bias, judgment, and treatment of others different from oneself. For example, Kevin—who is from America—is horrified to discover that Lily—who is from China—has tried dog meat and is not opposed to dog meat consumption. Kevin asks Lily how she could even fathom doing such a morally vile thing and call herself a good person. Kevin fails to realize that it may be perfectly normal in Chinese culture for humans to breed for and consume dog meat, just as Americans do with cows and pigs. Kevin should not judge Lily or her culture to be morally inferior to his, as morality and norm are relative notions that vary from culture to culture.

Possible Origin of Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism might have originated in order to avoid disease that could be contaminated from out-groups. An extensive quantitative review (i.e., meta-analysis) study (Terrizzi, Shook, & McDaniel, 2013) found that individuals who fear contamination or are sensitive to disgust tend to adhere more to socially conservative beliefs. The psychological mechanisms that promote fear of contamination, sensitivity to disgust, and disease avoidance—called *the behavioral immune system strategies*—are related to socially conservative beliefs, such as right-wing authoritarian, social dominance orientation, religious conservatism, collectivism, and ethnocentrism (Terrizzi et al., 2013). This indicates that socially conservative values may have functioned as evolutionary disease-avoidance strategy, promoting social exclusivity, tradition, and avoidance of out-group members (e.g., other races) who had been historically perceived as a source of contamination. The behavioral immune system strategies

may regulate social relationships by fostering value systems that protect individuals from out-group members who may pose a disease threat.

In addition to the threat of contamination, individuals may also adhere to socially conservative values because out-group members have posed a threat in terms of predation and competition for limited resources. Further, beyond protecting individuals from these potential out-group threats such as predation, disease threat, and competition for resources, social conservatism may have developed as a means for encouraging in-group cohesion and group functioning and for deterring defection by in-group members (Terrizzi et al., 2013). The behavioral immune system strategies may have led to socially conservative value systems in order to encourage in-group's prejudice and avoidance of the out-group (Terrizzi et al., 2013).

Religious Individuals' Ethnocentrism

Religious people are expected to be accepting of others. However, a meta-analysis study (Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010) found that strong religious in-group identity is associated with putting down racial out-groups. This indicates that highly religious individuals tend to express more racial prejudice than nonreligious individuals (Hall et al., 2010). This difference may be attributed to the idea that religious individuals might treat other races as out-groups because religion is practiced mostly within race; Martin Luther King Jr. once stated that Sunday is the most segregated day in America.

Religious people are taught to accept others, but their humanitarianism is expressed mostly toward in-group members. Even intrinsically religious individuals—those who are committed to religion as an end in itself—express tolerance in *direct* measures of racism yet not in *indirect* measures of racism, such as choosing to engage in interracial interactions that implies covert prejudice (Hall et al., 2010). Because training in a religious in-group identity may promote ethnocentrism, religious groups may increase ethnocentrism by differentiating themselves from nonbelievers through identifying nonbelievers with moral inferiority (Hall et al., 2010).

Agnostic individuals who question religion, do not participate in organized religion, or do not have a strong belief in God are more racially tolerant

than religious individuals. In addition, women tend to have stronger benevolent values that promote religiosity and show stronger tolerance toward out-group members than men do (Hall et al., 2010).

Individuals who are religious for reasons of social conformity and tradition tend to show intolerance of other races; this indicates that religious racism is beget from notions of social conformity and tradition upkeep. Such individuals are more likely to accept established racial divisions in society. Conservative and conventional life values promoting both religiosity and racism show consistency across different cultures and different religions, such as Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and others (Hall et al., 2010).

Differences in Ethnocentrism within Religious Individuals

Another meta-analysis study divided *Christians* into two categories (McCleary, Quillivan, Foster, & Williams, 2011): fundamentalist Christians and religious questers. *Fundamentalist Christians* are those who claim that the Bible holds the one ultimate, absolute truth about God and human life that must be defended against skeptics' attacks at any costs. In contrast, *religious questers* search for and embrace a continuing reevaluation of religious truth that is complex and tentative; while leaving open the possibility of absolute truth, they express skepticism about the absolute claims of the Bible (McCleary et al., 2011).

Authoritarian individuals submit to authorities, aggress against those inclined to challenge authorities, and embrace societal standards established by authorities. McCleary et al. (2011) found religious fundamentalism is most strongly associated with authoritarianism, indicating both fundamentalist Christians and authoritarian individuals believe in absolute truth and unquestioned submission. In contrast, a strongly negative relationship between religious quest and authoritarianism indicates that religious questers do not share the same belief with authoritarian individuals (McCleary et al., 2011).

A strongly positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and ethnocentrism may indicate that fundamentalist Christians' absolute religious truth is based on the same belief as ethnocentric individuals' good versus bad dichotomy. This might

be because ethnocentric individuals see the world based on in-group versus out-group (McCleary et al., 2011).

A positive relationship between religious fundamentalism and militarism indicates fundamentalist Christians' advocacy of military power in forging change in other societies. There was no study in the meta-analyses that investigated the relationship between religious quest and ethnocentrism or between religious quest and militarism (McCleary et al., 2011).

The relationship between religious fundamentalism and homophobia is stronger than the relationships between religious fundamentalism and other kinds of prejudice against communists, women, and people of color; this may indicate fundamentalist Christians' fear or discrimination against out-groups, especially homophobia. In contrast, the negative or no relationships between religious quest and prejudice indicate religious questers' tolerance of out-groups. The findings that fundamentalist Christians tend to hold in-group versus out-group (e.g., us versus them) mentality, with prejudice against groups whose ethnicity, values, or sexual orientations deviated from fundamentalist norms, whereas that religious questers tend not to hold that mentality, might suggest that not all religious individuals are more ethnocentric than agnostic individuals.

Possible Commonality between Ethnocentric Individuals and Individuals with Militaristic Mentality

In addition to religious individuals' tendency toward ethnocentrism, individuals who have a militaristic mentality also have the tendency toward ethnocentrism. Another meta-analysis (McCleary & Williams, 2009) study found a positive relationship between militarism and personality traits such as (a) punitiveness, (b) authoritarianism, (c) dominance–power, (d) masculinity, and (e) ethnocentrism (in this order of correlation strengths).

A strong positive relationship between militarism and punitiveness indicates that individuals with militaristic mentality tend to emphasize strict and harsh discipline such as capital, corporal, or severe punishment, even torture, in order to restrict crime and to produce submission, especially from

its enemies such as prisoners and enemy combatants (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

A strong positive relationship between militarism and authoritarianism indicates that individuals with militaristic mentality tend to accept one directional communication and hierarchical social relationships—power, authority, submission—and they tend to emphasize fixed rules and wariness to trust others (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

A strong positive relationship between militarism and social dominance and power indicates that individuals with militaristic mentality tend to accept inequality between social groups (i.e., their in-group should control out-groups) and masculinity (i.e., males' desire to rule the community and politics, and to have the final authority on decisions; and tend to emphasize status and power such as prestige, respect from others, and accumulation of wealth and social control) (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

A positive relationship between militarism and masculinity indicates that individuals with militaristic mentality tend to accept traditional male roles and characteristics such as respect, admiration, competitiveness, aggressiveness, dominance, and being the breadwinner (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

A positive relationship between militarism and ethnocentrism indicates that individuals with militaristic mentality tend to believe that their in-group members are intellectually, emotionally, and morally superior and preferable to other races (McCleary & Williams, 2009).

The positive relationships between militarism and a variety of personality traits including ethnocentrism indicate that individuals who have militaristic mentality tend to see the world in a simplistic way; that is, looking at people, problems, and solutions in one single term (McCleary & Williams, 2009). This might be because they are confused by complexity and thus prefer simplicity to complexity. Thus, they advocate one single solution for very complex problems; for example, they believe that the country will be safe by a strong military, and thus the most important institution in society is military because it is the ultimate guarantor of freedom and safety (McCleary & Williams, 2009). This might also indicate that ethnocentric individuals

also tend to see the world in a simplistic way, either *we* or *they*.

Implications

The need for cultural tolerance is becoming increasingly important in this world, as groups and individuals of many disparate backgrounds must cooperate as a global community in order to overcome global issues such as politics, wars, and climate change. Communities should encourage multicultural consciousness by educating people to be aware and sensitive of others' disparate cultures. Sensitivity and appreciation of other cultures and multiculturalism could play a large, beneficial role in reducing ethnocentric mind-sets. Dong, Day, and Collaco (2008) found that emphasizing and increasing education of intercultural communication sensitivity and multiculturalism specifically might help to overcome ethnocentrism. Overcoming oneself of all ethnocentrism is difficult and demands continuous, conscious effort. There is still a need for more longitudinal empirical studies that examine the specific factors that help reduce ethnocentrism.

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EUROCENTRISM

Eurocentrism and the Social Construction of Race

Eurocentrism is a paradigm rooted in global colonization and capitalism that privileges a European way of knowing and being. It is a set of doctrines and ethical positions that derive from a European context (Wallerstein, 2006) and are presented as neutral, scientific, and universal. In its development, eurocentrism led to an ideological and tangible reordering of the world through ways of knowing that substantiated Western dominance. The development of eurocentrism is marked by the interrelated processes of a) the legitimation of particular peoples and knowledge and the simultaneous illegitimation of other peoples and knowledge, b) the establishment of the global control of labor via colonization and imperialism, and c) the social construction of the idea of “race” (Wallerstein, 2006). Eurocentrism constructed a sense of time and progress that represented the West as the present and the future and the rest of the world as the undeveloped and antiquated past (Tibebu, 2011).

The idea that Europeans were predisposed to racial prejudice prior to the slave trade is contested among scholars. The dissenting argument is that a racist ideology *developed* to accompany and to rationalize the enslavement of Africans and Southeast Asians as the enslavement of Europeans declined (Frederickson, 2002; Wolf, 1982/1997). Therefore, a global racist ideology resulted from the necessity to maintain control of production and

labor in a developing capitalist system, particularly in the realms of European industry and plantation. Though capitalism did not form all of the distinctions of race, the process of labor organization, under capitalism, imparted racial distinctions and the establishment of an ideology of European superiority within the system of colonial rule. This colonial system expanded across the globe via wealth derived from production, the expansion of armed forces to enforce colonization and enslavement, and transcontinental alliances formed among European fortune seekers. Colonizers used several strategies to establish and maintain power. Dehumanization was a strategy that Frantz Fanon (1963) equated to turning the colonized into an animal through the use of language to describe their physical, moral, and behavioral characteristics as barbaric and animalistic. These strategies established and reinforced the relationship between the alleged cultural and intellectual inferiority of the colonized and the supremacy of European beliefs, values, and customs—the binary of the European and “Other.”

Scholars’ assertions regarding the temporal location of the concept of “race” vary greatly. For example, David Goldberg (2006) argued that the sixteenth century marks the rise of race consciousness while George Frederickson (2002) identified fifteenth-century persecution of New Christians and Christian attitudes toward Jews in Medieval Europe, based on the idea of purity of blood. Most scholars agree, however, that the fundamental aspects of modern racism are rooted not in the medieval period, but in the modern period (Frederickson, 2002; Winant, 2001). Nevertheless, it is crucial to consider that racially defined discourses existed long before a clear and so-called scientific concept of “race” was constructed to identify and rank groups of human beings.

Studies have demonstrated that it was in the latter part of the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment period and the rise of modernity, that the idea of “race”—based on discrete and observable phenotypical traits—came into being (Dussel, 1993; Roberts, 2011). During a time when Europe constituted itself as a cohesive entity by exploring, conquering, and colonizing an “Other,” it created an image of itself in superior opposition to the “Other.” Philosophers of the day, such as Kant, believed that