

Biases against other cultures

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Life places us in a complex web of relationships with other people. Like what Marilynn Brewer, at one point in her article, said of this natural phenomenon, our humanness arises out of these relationships in the course of social interaction. Moreover, our humanness must be sustained through social interaction, and fairly constantly so.

Group boundaries are not physical barriers, but rather discontinuities in the flow of social interaction. To one degree or another, a group's boundaries encapsulate people in a social membrane so that the focus and flow of their actions are internally contained. Some boundaries are based on territorial location, such as neighborhoods, communities, and nation-states. Others rest on social distinctions, such as ethnic group or religious, political, occupational, language, kin, and socio-economic class memberships.

When applied to interpersonal and intercultural setting, this social interaction generally generates prejudicial relationships among the several groups.

Primarily, I was having a sense that my cultural group is superior to members of the culturally different groups, a feeling that the culturally different groups members are by nature different and alien, a sense that we have a proprietary claim to privilege, power, and prestige, and even a fear and suspicion that members of the culturally different groups have design on our benefits. In this respect, prejudice frequently reflects a sense of group membership or position.

Indeed, it is not only the groups to which we immediately belong that have a powerful influence upon us. Often the same holds true for groups to which we do not belong. Indeed, in daily conversation, I recognize the distinction

between my cultural group and those of others' in our use of the personal pronouns we and they.

For instance, because my friend and I have been comrades for quite a long time, we tend to mutually agree on many things including our perceptions towards religious matters. This is apart from the fact that we are both Christians.

We also believe that Muslims have bias against women. As we reviewed some ins and outs, we reckon how the Qur'an gave women protection than traditional Arab law but did not ever have equality with men. Whereas Muslim men could be family-oriented, it only differs with Christians in that they are such in every family they have among many others. They could be protective of their families as the Qur'an only permits polygamy when the man is responsible enough to fulfill his responsibilities.

But my friend and I believe Muslims and Christians, men or women, are educated. A number of Muslim women, particularly in the upper classes, are well educated and become known as artists, writers, and supporters of the arts. Nonetheless, we believe they are still sexist from a spiritual point of view as the Qur'an states that "men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other." This makes their sect patriarchal in nature as much as Christians' is.

Because of these biases, sometimes I tend to prevent outsiders from entering our group's sphere, and they keep insiders within that sphere so they do not entertain rival possibilities for social interaction. At times we experience feelings of indifference, disgust, competition, and even outright

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conflict when we think about or have dealings with other cultural groups' members. Such social differentiation may have these grounds for conflict between us and the other culturally different groups: moral superiority, perceived threat, common goals, common values and social comparison, and power politics. Conflict intensifies ethnocentric sentiments and may lead to inter-group strife.

Since we would like to view ourselves as being members in good standing within a certain group, or we aspire to such membership, we take on the group's norms and values. We cultivate its lifestyles, political attitudes, musical tastes, food preferences, sexual practices, and drug-using behaviors.

We establish for ourselves a comparison point against which we judge and evaluate our physical attractiveness, intelligence, health, ranking, and standard of living. This makes my ethnocentric view quite negative rendering people to take on social units with which we compare ourselves to emphasize the differences between ourselves and others. For the most part, the attitudes people evolve toward out-groups tend to reflect their perceptions of the relationships they have with the groups.

Where the relations between two groups are viewed as competitive, negative attitudes (like prejudice) will be generated toward the out-group. Still, whereas competition had heightened awareness of group boundaries, the pursuit of common goals led to a lessening of out-group hostilities and the lowering of intergroup barriers to cooperation.

Upon making substantial research myself, I learned that to avoid direct conflict between my primary group and the other cultural groups, we are <https://assignbuster.com/biases-against-other-cultures/>

introduced to the concept of “concentric loyalties.” When our membership group does not match our reference group, we may experience feelings of relative deprivation or discontent associated with the gap between what we have and what we believe we should have. Feelings of relative deprivation often contribute to social alienation and provide fertile conditions for collective behavior and revolutionary social movements. The concentric loyalties then may also contain clues to processes of social change especially a perception change towards inter-group phenomenon.

On a personal note, we can only manage the dynamics of the Christian-Muslim differences by employing effective learning strategies to resolve conflict among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ. In the school setting, for instance, there could be training sessions and group discussions to understand the historical distrust affecting present-day interactions. If my friend and I have good neighbors among Muslims, others may not do as they could be misjudging others' action based on their learned expectations.

Reference

Brewer, Marilyn. (1999). “The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?” *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 5, No. 3.