

Ethnocentrism: definition, examples, pros and cons

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Ethnocentrism

Within culture there are two ways to look at other culture something called ethnocentrism and other cultural relativism. Ethnocentrism refers to judging another ethnic cultural group or individuals by the values and standards of one's own culture. William Graham Sumner first encountered this term in his book entitled Folkways.

Ethnocentric individuals judge other groups concerned with their language, customs, behaviour and religion. These four things are the basement of judging a group of people or individuals in this current world. Usually it is a natural proclivity of human psychology to present a particular ethnicity's cultural identity to others though it has so many negative connotations along with some positivity.

According to William Graham Sumner, views of the things in which ones own group is the center of everything and all other are scaled and rated with reference to it. Now if we elaborate this definition given by William G Sumner we can find two different groups.

- In group
- Out group

When a particular ethnic group or individual observe or judge another group of people there always work ethnocentrism. Here the first group who judge other is called in group on the other side who are being judged called out group. In first group the leading one who are always subjective cause they put themselves in the center of everything that means giving the most

priority to their own people. Here subjectivism works very much among these people or group.

The second thing is the out groups are scaled and rated with some pre-conceptual things like in groups Language, culture, behaviour, practices and religions. So an ethnocentric person can't imagine that there are anything other than his culture to pursue. According to Horton & Hunt, Every culture considers itself superior to other culture is called ethnocentrism. From this second definition we get some crucial things to discuss which affects an individual or community to be ethnocentric. These are given below

- The superior complexity (of self)
- The inferiority (highly alienated or most inferior form)
- Irrational thoughts

Here in the superior complexity of an ethnic group or individual rides the world of power because they think themselves or their culture is the best and other cultural people or groups are inferior to them. The so called superior group always thought some irrational things that other culture are backward and not up to the mark.

Psychoanalysis of the Superior Complexity

According to psychoanalyst Alfred Adler contemporary of Sigmund Freud, here individual psychology works. Individual psychology is a psycho-dynamic theory of the superior complexity, inferiority and courage. In Alfred's individual psychology there are four types of people ruling is one of them this kind of people are highly energetic and always try to lead and hovers other by their superiority. When we call some one ethnocentric they are the

ruling type of people cause somehow they think themselves as a superior being and their culture also. This ethnocentric thought often conducted by white, wealthy, western men and focused on people of colour, foreign indigenous population and lower economic class whom they call inferior being in terms of personality and culture.

Examples of Ethnocentrism

European Imperialism

It is one of the biggest example of ethnocentrism. After colonization Europeans started to control over Africa and the Asia. They thought themselves as superior cause they have modern technology. On the contrary African's and the Asians are primitive because they depend on hunting and farming. So the Europeans wanted to civilize those primitive colony and develop them with modern technology. It's totally an ethnocentric idea. They always wanted to rule over those colonies. We can get a better idea of imperialism if we read the poem of British poet Rudyard Kipling "The white man's burden"

Nazi Germany

Another suitable example of ethnocentrism is Nazi Germany. Adolf Hitler thought that Aryan race is the most superior race cause they they have power and jews are inferior so they doesn't deserve to live in the world. This egocentric thought of Hitler had given birth of bloody world war 2. Here Hitler thought his community the most powerful and others are inferior. This is absolutely ethnocentrism.

Tribal cultures are Backward and Barbaric

We often think that tribals are very peculiar and their cultural values too because they are primitive. Their food habits, dresses and religion is peculiar. But they have some uniqueness in their cultures and values.

The Mandate of Heaven

It's a Confucius philosophy of Chinese. They believe that they had divine power and heaven has the mandate to choose the ruler by virtue. This ethnocentric thought gives themselves courage to heavy rule over the citizens and conquer the world.

Ethnocentrism in Our Country

The concept of our country was built from 1940's "Lahore Resolution" according to this we are divided. This Lahore resolution & Division is the big example of ethnocentrism for us. Muhammad Ali Jinnah proposed Lahore resolution theory towards Indian government mentioned that Indian Muslims are not being treated like Indian Hindus they didn't get their basic rights like others so they need to get that for this partition is needed between India and Pakistan. This proposition was an ethnocentric idea.

Advantages and Disadvantages of ethnocentrism**Positive Effects**

- It increases social solidarity
- Cooperation becomes stronger among the people of an ethnic community.
- An individual do all the things for the betterment of one's own group members by creating sense of belonging among them.

- It promotes patriotism
- Enhance cast

Negative Effects

- It hinders cultural assimilation
- Creates tight boundaries among various social groups
- Prejudice to each other creates conflicts and tension among groups
- It limits an individual in a social group
- Unity and integration become weaker in society