

Role of anthropology towards a global culture, a culture for coexistence, dialogue, and symbiosis: a theoretical reflection

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Abstract

Anthropology is a systematic and scientific study of humanity with the goal of comprehending the world's vast cultural diversity. Cultural anthropology is hallmarked by the concept of culture itself revealing new possibilities and answers to our cultural challenges in the new millennium. The relevance of this article is conditioned by the need to analyze the cultural factors responsible for almost complete misunderstanding and breakdown among diverse cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic groups. The consequences often lead to a collapse in intercultural communication, and deterioration in intercultural relationships in an increasingly integrated world creating a major challenge globally. This piece deals with how these inappropriate cultural factors can be changed by proving facts that confirm existing, predominantly negative mental images against the out-groups proposing an alternative solution or possibility that would be more culturally appropriate to promote a culture of peace for the sake of restoring stability and harmony worldwide. It argues that certain types of learning, interethnic and intercultural communication, and rapports can remove, and counteract such unjust phenomena and establish a just and participatory society. Finally, it examines cultural relativism, its theoretical strength, its social and ethical usefulness, and its intellectual coherence helpful to prevent growing cultural intolerance globally.

“The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences.”
Ruth F. Benedict

Prologue

Over the last one hundred years and especially during the last fifty years, anthropology has consistently tried to liberate us from many misnomers and fallacies. It has explored the myth of social and cultural superiority with success. It puts the entire human beings on the same pedestal. Thus, anthropology has a critical endeavor and contribution to make in this process. Moreover, anthropology contributes to the formation of an enlightened citizenry free from parochial and narrow feelings. Academics, scholars, and students of anthropology are bound to come across an awesome variety of human societies and cultures with great variations in color, creed, language, dialect, socio-economic and political organizations, and more. This is also the subject matter of social-cultural anthropology. Therefore, we must have a sound and lucid idea of what culture signifies in anthropology. In commonplace usage, a person with good etiquette, manner, skill, and sophistication is normally referred to as ‘cultured.’ Performance of fine arts like dance, drama, and music is commonly referred to as a ‘cultural programme.’ This is a commonsense, layman’s cognition of culture (Hasnain, 2016:17).

However, the anthropological concept of culture is more than that and has always been one of the most important and influential ideas in anthropological thought and inquiry. Perhaps, the best and the most comprehensive and classic definition of culture as it is used in anthropology is the one given by Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, a British anthropologist, regarded as the founder of cultural anthropology, more hundred years ago in his path-breaking work *Primitive Culture* (1871). Tylor’s (1871:1) conception of culture includes the notion that:

...taken in its wide ethnographic sense ... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

In addition to this, Altman and Chemers (1984:3) state that, in their opinion, culture includes all of the following:

...[the] behaviors of a group or society. ...indicate that cognitions, feelings, and behaviors are shared among a group of people in a consensual way. ... these shared beliefs, values, and styles of behavior are passed on to others, especially children, and that the socialization and education of new members of the culture help preserve consensus from one generation to the next.

Put in another way, culture has to do with universal values, intellectuals, and a particular way of life, (Williams, 2006:32), it has to do with long-lived experience in problem-solving (Schein, 2011:314). In this context, in Tylor’s definition, the word “acquired” is very momentous as it emphasizes that culture is learned and not biologically inheritable. It is a complex whole that includes many things. It is a way of life. Thus, Tylor’s definition is considered to be the first scientific endeavor to define culture, which is the central theme of social-cultural anthropology. In the subsequent discourse, this piece, through the lens of anthropology, will examine the issues of major concern in today’s multicultural global world that have emerged within the context of culture and have detrimental consequences on the lives of billions of human beings across the world.

Today, we have entered a new era of a global village (McLuhan, 1962:31), in which we live in interdependence and have interests in common, owing to globalization. Faced with the trend toward a multi-polar world and economic globalization, all cultures must work collaboratively, share responsibilities, perform positive deeds, and contribute to world peace, stability, and human well-being. In our socially and culturally globalized diverse world, growing cultural

exchanges and contacts, and therefore a larger tendency toward cultural diversity, are bringing new opportunities (Zuo'an, 2013).

In this transformation, every person has essentially become a global citizen who must live in a world that has shrunk and become increasingly interconnected. All cultures become localized as a result of this continual process, which also exposes them to global influences. Therefore, in the context of globalization, all cultures are forced to reposition themselves in the diversity of cultures, and because all cultures are interconnected, no culture today is immune to the impact of global forces. Today, the globe has evolved into a melting pot of cultures. In this globalized world, how these diverse cultures engage and interact with one another, and with globalizing forces is crucial to their survival and innovation (Guang, 2007).

Thus, we live in a world today where many different ethnic groups, religions, peoples, and cultures coexist simultaneously. Ethnically homogeneous countries and communities are rather rare exceptions in today's multicultural and polyethnic world. Indeed, the problems of inter-ethnic, inter-faith, and inter-cultural interaction and coexistence are becoming paramount in our time locally as well as globally (Akhmadieva et al., 2020).

However, surprisingly, despite wide advocacy of ideas such as multiculturalism, universalism, cosmopolitanism, globalization, and acceptance of diversity, many communities have remained divided by myriad factors. Economic hardship, ethnic marginalization, denial of political and social rights, and other forms of oppression exist in many parts of the contemporary world, deepening unrest, division, and hatred. Scholars agree that deep rifts exist across cultures all over the world. If these divides are not effectively addressed, they may result in fiery rhetoric, negative feelings, tensions, and even sectarian violence (Moorthy et al., 2021). Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and the like is still having its existence among many cultured and so-called high-class citizenry. Therefore, in everyday life, we all have some issues which somewhere are related to various forms of racism, religious violence, hatred, persecution, and many other forms of viciousness. The major focus of concern in today's world are ethnocentrism, prejudiced and stereotyping behaviors, and discriminatory treatments based on color, creed, ethnicity, nationality, and group-wise. These have become the major issues, to discuss and debate in anthropology today (Fatma, 2015), which will be discussed here.

The principal objectives of this research project

The followings are the main aims and objectives of the study;

- To find out the reasons behind individuals from different faiths, racial groups, cultural backgrounds, and ethnicities harboring feelings of animosity against one another.
- To investigate why people who come from a variety of sociocultural backgrounds are unable to communicate with one another as well as with the globalizing forces of recent times, which are essential to their continued survival and to reinventing themselves, and explore how this leads to a collision of cultures.
- To analyze the role that anthropology plays in confronting the emerging challenges of cultural intolerance, humanitarian crisis, and ever-increasing human rights crisis in the globalized, multicultural, and heterogeneous world today.

Research approaches and methodological orientations

The study is both explanatory and exploratory. With the help of standard conventional anthropological and sociological research methods, and techniques data have been gathered. The facts and findings presented here are based on both the primary and secondary sources of

data. As the research relies for the most part on reviewing high-quality secondary sources, numerous reports, web contents, newspapers, magazines, books, edited volumes, and highly ranked peer-reviewed journals' articles of national and international repute have been consulted, analyzed, and compared to uncover the major assertions and arguments relating to the research phenomenon and to support the facts inside. The content analysis method has been adopted as well. The researcher further examines the theoretical frameworks for understanding conflict, inconsistency, and viciousness across the world. The qualitative approach has been employed to develop assumptions and implications, and identify the problems from micro-macro levels. Data analysis has been carried out with the principle of ongoing analysis. The issues have empirically been examined, analyzed, explored, and put the scenario in an organized and systematic manner in the article.

What exactly is the problem?

Today's world is polyethnic and multicultural. Because of the dynamics of globalization, no countries today consist of a single culturally homogeneous group, and no countries are monocultural nation-states. Because different ethnic groups have their own distinct cultures, all countries are cultural mosaics. Furthermore, some countries have a majority group that is far greater than all minorities combined, while others have a high number of minorities. Therefore, how multiple cultures may coexist under a single nation-state is a crucial issue for all countries, which, if not handled decently, can lead to ethnic strife or even national disintegration (Guang, 2007). In addition, Beyers (2017) opines:

This endeavour becomes even more urgent when considering current world events. Globalisation, post-colonialism and growing multi-cultural societies...necessitate an understanding of the relatedness of culture, ethnicity and religion.

In this context, Banban (2018) has rightly observed that there is an abundance of instances of ethnic issues becoming important factors influencing domestic and even international politics. How diverse ethnic groups with diverse cultures may coexist in a multi-ethnic state is a global concern. Therefore, finding the key to peaceful living together in a multi-ethnic state is a major challenge today all over the world.

With the rise of the internet, the creation of new media platforms and social networks has made a drastic alteration in the world societies' function. It becomes a powerful tool for activists for sharing information and campaigns. But it has also increased risks and threats to online space where hate speech, distorted and fabricated news, doctored videos, propaganda, etc. are becoming progressively rampant which are the racists' propaganda intended to target people with a protected characteristic, such as ethnicity, color, creed, nationality, etc. (Gascon, 2012). On the other hand, the victims of these hate crimes do not disclose them because they are under the influence that nothing will change or because they are scared of the consequences. Because the term "hate speech" is understood in a variety of ways across countries, adequate data collection on the issue is extremely challenging. Moreover, it is also hard to monitor as online content is mostly user-generated, aggregated, comes out in various forms, and takes place in the form of private messages or behind security settings. Also, hate speech online cannot be detached from offline manifestations but used as a prism to explore the mechanisms of hate and racism. The real world and the virtual world are not separate from one another; rather, the online world is only a reflection of the same society (Gascon, 2012). Certain bigots', fascists' racists', and their inherent and trained haters' mental attitudes and ideas can be more easily expressed online than in public. When looked at through their victims' eyes and targeted communities, hate speech can be found to violate numerous human rights, for example, liberty and personal security, freedom of religious beliefs and practices, right to

equality, freedom from discrimination, right to life, right of peaceful assembly and association, right to education and right to participate in the cultural life of community among others (Gascon, 2012; Hossain, 2018:3). In addition, the following is also in accordance with Abdullah (2017), which has been cited by Sumbulah and Purnomo (2018:222):

Today's society is prone to conflict, due to the waning feeling and spirit of nationalism, which is marked by the loss of the spirit of togetherness, unity and brotherhood.

Worse, unrestrained prejudices and bigotry promoted by propaganda and fueled by demagogues lead to discrimination, violence, persecution, mob lynching, ethnic cleansing, and, in extreme circumstances, genocide. Discrimination and violence are sometimes preceded by the use of slang language to dehumanize members of certain groups. When we are confronted with a joke that maligns a certain group, we are subjected to peer pressure. It takes more courage for a victim of a marginalized group to object to these jokes and pejorative names such as “evil,” “intruder,” “conspirators,” “sinister,” “apostates,” “infidels,” et cetera to mention a few (Dunn, 1995). The Holocaust, in which the Nazis assassinated six million European Jews, comes to mind as an example of a government-ordered, publicly sanctioned, and systematic plan of mass annihilation. Cambodia was formed by the Khmer Rouge, which began as a military wing of the Communist Party of Kampuchea in the 1960s. The Khmer Rouge, led by dictator Pol Pot, captured Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, on April 17, 1975. The Cambodian government, then known as Democratic Kampuchea, carried out a systematic campaign of mass slaughter between 1975 and 1979, killing an estimated 1.5 to 3 million people (Genocide in Cambodia, 1975-1979). In April 1992, the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence from Yugoslavia. For the first time since the Holocaust, Serbs committed genocide against Muslims, while fights between Croats and Serbs, as well as between Muslims and Croats, took the lives of over a hundred thousand people, as stated by Jones (2010:317). One of the twentieth century's moral low points was the Rwandan genocide, which lasted 100 days from April to July 1994 and killed over 500,000 lives (Matthew, 2016:33). Governments are thought to have slaughtered approximately 170,000,000 people in cold blood, with authoritarian regimes accounting for roughly three-quarters of the total. The Soviet Union was the country that killed the most people (around 62,000,000), followed by China's communist regime (approximately 35,000,000), Nazi Germany (nearly 21,000,000), and Nationalist China (almost 10,000,000) (Rudolph Joseph Rummel, *Power Kills: Genocide and Mass Murder*).

Violence of this magnitude can only evolve out of prejudice based on ignorance, rumor, hate speech, demagoguery, propaganda, scapegoating, and misunderstanding about minority groups and other groups who are different from us. While, genocide is the final step in a continuum, prejudice, injustice, and treating particular groups of people unfairly are the first. The second step is the physical segregation of minorities in ghettos, followed by persecution, dehumanization, mocking and calling derogatory names, mob lynching, arbitrary arrests, sending people to jail on false charges, violence is the third step, and finally, genocide, the deliberate and systematic annihilation of a minority group, which is the ultimate expression of human hatred (Dunn, 1995). In this context, Akhmadieva (2020) has stated that in today's modern, pluralistic world, there is a growing need to critically discuss and analyze people's views and positions on the issue of intercultural relations and intercultural communication in order to promote peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures and ethnicities.

Conceptual framework

The relevance of this entry is conditioned by the need to examine the issues of intercultural communication and intercultural interaction as striving for the successful coexistence of

multiple cultures. This interaction can be supportive or antagonistic depending on the level of sensibility and respect people have for other cultures. The twin concepts of anthropology-ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are related to these two types of behaviors. Negative attitudes towards other cultures arise out of ethnocentrism, while positive attitudes are the result of cultural relativism.

What is ethnocentrism and how does it matter?

Ethnocentrism has been a popular concept across a variety of disciplines including anthropology. The concept of ethnocentrism combines the belief that one's own culture is superior and others' culture is inferior. It is a tendency to judge others' cultures in terms of one's own culture. It is a major reason for division among members of different cultures, ethnicities, races, and religious groups in society (Njoroge and Kirori, 2014). People with this mental attitude conceive people in other cultures are less civilized and inferior, as stated by Guang (2007). It is normally defined as a kind of cultural group egocentrism, which involves a belief in the superiority of one's own cultural group, including its values, traditions, norms, beliefs, and practices, and frequently expressing contempt, disdain, hatred, and hostility towards other groups, such as ethnic out-groups, ethnic minorities, or minorities in general (Bizumic, 2015:533).

Besides that, ethnocentrism is an uncritical conviction that one's cultural values are the only valid ones and that these should be relevant everywhere. This usage has been most prominent in anthropological empirical research. Therefore, to understand a culture from an anthropological perspective, one must study it without imposing one's own cultural background on the beliefs, practices, norms, values, rituals, and other characteristics of that culture. If one fails to transcend ethnocentrism, one may perceive other cultures as inferior, immoral, undesirable, barbarous, erroneous, invaluable, strange, unethical, and the like, and also may misunderstand (Bizumic, 2015:535). Ethnocentrism also refers to the belief that one's own way of life, living patterns, behaviors, values, ideologies, and religions as the only positive and reasonable. With this superiority complex, they tend to criticize other groups' cultures, living patterns, behaviors, religious beliefs and practices, thinking patterns, and so forth (Zikargae, 2013). In addition, in the words of Samovar et al. (2010:331):

Every culture, whether consciously or unconsciously, tends to glorify its historical, scientific, economic, and artistic accomplishments, frequently minimizing the achievements of other cultures. In this way, schools in all cultures impart ethnocentrism.

Also, ethnocentrism in the form of religious fundamentalism or cultural conservatism is defensive or opposing, exclusive, retrogressive, and closed-minded, rather than approving, inclusive, progressive, and open-minded, as noted by Guang (2007).

In this context, LeVine and Campbell (1972:357) have pointed out that William Graham Sumner (1840-1910), a classical liberal American social scientist, first use the term ethnocentrism in his book "Folkways" in 1906 to describe those with cultural narrowness, "ethnically centered." Sumner argued that ethnocentrism is not only a characteristic of non-industrial, non-literate societies but also of modern nation-states wherein it is expressed in a subtle and nuanced way. Therefore, Sumner seems to take for granted that attitudes and ideologies that characterize contemporary patriotism and its exaggerated form, nationalism, are unusual expressions of ancient ethnocentrism at the contemporary national state level (Bizumic, 2015:534). To classify the magnitude of this cultural factor, Zikargae (2013) points out:

...ethnocentrism is lower in countries with a strong belief in tolerance of others, harmony with others than in countries with a sense of cultural superiority, respect for tradition. The concept has two

components: (a) an exaggeration of the in-group's position and cultural superiority and (b) criticism of all out-group cultures.

Cultural schemas, cultural blind spots, and cultural ignorance

Cultural schemas are a psychic model for interpreting the world shared by the members of a cultural group acting as social codes to guide individuals' conduct as they strive to fit in and succeed in a particular cultural context. Ethnocentrism is coupled with cultural blind spots. Blind spots occur when we fail to evaluate the differences between our conduct and opinion and those of others' cultural schemas. Different social groups have different cultural schemas, but when we do not appreciate diversity, we are limited to interpreting the world narrowly through our cultural filter. Consequently, any variations are reckoned eccentric, wrong, or inferior. Some people say it is cultural ignorance. Because it often leads to fallacious assumptions about others' conduct based on our norms, values, ideals, and beliefs. Sometimes a dominant cultural group having extreme ethnocentrism may see others' cultures as wrong or immoral, and try to convert, sometimes forcibly, them to their own culture. In addition, persecution and genocide may take place if a group is unwilling to change their ways of living or cultural beliefs and practices. Likewise, those criticizing other ethnic groups' cuisines based on their cultural schemas may lose the ability to appreciate other cultures, leading to cultural bias (Lin and Wang, 2019). They have a dislike towards the out-group products, attire, creativity, etc. which is what Teo et al. (2011: 2808) call "soft" ethnocentrism. They refuse to recognize other ethnic cultures for being not open-minded. Therefore, the door of intercultural communication is shut (Lin and Wang, 2019).

In what ways does religion justify ethnocentrism and jeopardize humanity?

Religious myths teach that the world's origin is within one's own group. Other religious ideas, such as God's "chosen people," explicitly use religion to enforce ethnocentric thinking. Being extremely ethnocentric, many cultural groups have also called upon God during violent religious conflicts with another group and to instigate minority groups. A body of literary studies analyzes links between ethnocentrism and religiosity at the individual level, indicating that ethnocentric individuals are more likely to be religious. Another study has shown that ethnocentric individuals are religious, tend to frequently practice religion, and find religion to be pivotal in their lives. Consequently, beliefs in the superiority of own religious group, a sense of intra-group cohesion, or rejection of other religious group members are related to the popular culture of one's own religious group, but not ethnicity (Bizumic, 2015:537).

Furthermore, ethnocentrism also hampers the ethos of humanity in myriad ways. It leads to an almost complete misunderstanding of the values, intentions, and actions of others, hinders our perception of the customs of other people, and also it leads to a rejection of the richness and cognition of other cultures. Exaggerating group differences bring about negative affective reactions to out-groups such as distrust, contempt, hostility, and hatred leading to intolerance of other cultures and is used to justify the mistreatment of others, usually the underprivileged and defenseless minority groups. Thereby, turning attempts at intercultural communication into serious miscommunications impeding interconnection, and inter-relationships, and blocking the exchange of ideas, information, and skills among people from different cultures (Zikargae, 2013).

Prejudice and stereotyping: two instances of the mental blunders we often make

Social psychology has endeavored to the exploration of diverse social representations in the form of beliefs and attitudes, which serve to characterize social categories of individuals within the context of inter-group relations. One outcome of this endeavor has been an extensive study of twin social representations- prejudice and stereotype (Bar-Tal, 1989:169). Being able to promptly categorize information allows us to react promptly, but it also leads to mistakes. Prejudice and stereotyping are just two examples of our mental mistakes resulting from our tendency to promptly categorize information in the world around us. In this context, to make this concept rather clear, Wolfe and Spencer (1996) have stated that prejudice is treated as a manifestation of pathology. For instance, the frustration-aggression hypothesis considered prejudice to be an outcome of scapegoating, and the authoritarian personality theory posited that a severe childhood upbringing could result in a rigid, authoritarian adult prejudiced against anyone distinct from the self. We tend to categorize people into social groups and locate ourselves within a category. We then evaluate the worth or value of our social identities mainly by comparing our group with other groups. Prejudice and stereotyping are biases that work together to make and maintain inequality, enmity, contempt, and hatred. Many contemporary social and cultural issues are rooted in stereotypes and prejudices; thus, research in this domain has principally focused on the antecedents and consequences of prejudice and stereotype as well as the means to mitigate the reliance on these phenomena when making judgments.

The study of prejudice is one of the few issues that continue to spark vigorous discourse in diverse fields of study including anthropology. Anthropologists seek to understand the cultural context. Why do some people hold negative beliefs about certain groups? How do such beliefs develop throughout the life-cycle? Why do these views manifest in political opinions and behavior? To what extent and in what ways do political entrepreneurs make and manipulate out-group prejudices? What is the role of the State in forming and maintaining group hierarchies and ideologies of group difference? Under what conditions do these ideologies lead to hatred, hostility, and violence? (Green and Seher, 2003). To find the answers, we have to critically understand the concept, its origin, nature, extent, manifestations, and problems.

Our social groups make us who we are. Social groups reckon ethnicity, nationality, social class, profession, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, and the like. Although we have similarities among the groups, we also have many differences. Such differences may be difficult for some to recognize. As a result, it may lead to prejudice towards people who are different. As Abraham (2009:135) opines:

Literally, prejudice means 'prejudgement,' which is an opinion in favour of, or against, something or someone. Sociologically speaking, however, prejudice means negative judgement or bias against a group. Members of a group may have highly negative opinions about members of another group.

Moreover, conventionally prejudice is defined as hostility toward groups predicated on overgeneralized, false, simplistic, and unconscious beliefs, as stated by Allport (1954:9). Prejudices are profoundly held negative perceptions related to a particular group. Where stereotypes may be free from value and evaluation, e.g., "people from Latin America are Catholics," prejudices are loaded with perceptions about what is moral and immoral, what is good and what is bad, e.g., "my religion is the only true one, and my God is the only true God," in the words of Mai (2015:7).

Developing a prejudiced mindset through exposure to misinformation

Prejudice continues in society due to social learning and adapting to social rules. Children learn prejudiced attitudes and beliefs from their parents, peers, teachers, neighbors, relatives, mainstream and social media, and other sources in society through the processes of socialization and enculturation. The factor contributing to prejudice is inter-group inequality as well. When groups are of unequal status, power, and privilege in the same society, and especially when one group has a dominant position in comparison to another, research has shown that the members of the dominant group frequently derogate members of the subordinate group and stereotype them as incompetent (Cohrs and Duckitt, 2012:5).

However, the unanswered questions are many, but none is more important than the issue of whether and to what extent the political elites make and mobilize prejudices to encourage activities ranging from petty discrimination to genocide, as remarked by Green and Seher (2003).

Humiliating and degrading human beings

Just as a school bully can maintain his power over a weak student by pure physical frightening, a minority group may be victimized by a more powerful majority that is inconsiderate of the requisites and aspirations of that minority (Dunn, 1995). In the words of Abraham (2009:135):

A minority is a group of people subjected to prejudice and discrimination in a given society. Sociologically speaking, minority groups are not necessarily numerically small groups; they are simply victims of differential and unequal treatment.

In addition to this, Scott and Marshall (2009:476) state in the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology:

Since the 1930s this term has been applied to social groups that are oppressed or stigmatized on the basis of racial, ethnic, biological, or other characteristics. Louis Wirth, for example, defines a minority group as 'a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.' However, seen in these terms, a minority group could in fact constitute a numerical majority in any society—for example the Blacks in South Africa. It might be more useful, therefore, to distinguish between groups which are actually a minority in numbers and those which are marginal in terms of their access to power.

Often, minorities are the subject of jokes which poke fun at the target's religion, race, and ethnic origin relying on stereotypes. Minority institutions e.g., properties, resources, houses, shops, places of worship, cemeteries, schools, etc. have been the target of hooliganism, vandalism, arson, and desecration. Although the damages all over are uncountable, in some instances are the African-Americans who have been the victims of lynching and lashings in the South and elsewhere in the United States. Pogroms, or random acts of violence intended at Jews, resulted in the killing of thousands of Jews in Eastern Europe. During WW II, Japanese-Americans were interned in internment camps, while Native Americans had their land seized in violation of treaties, were victims of government-sponsored atrocities, and were placed on the verge of extinction. Adolf Hitler's dream of annihilating European Jewry became a reality. Six million Jews were killed as a result of the Holocaust. The Armenian genocide and the murder of millions of Cambodians by Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge are two more examples of genocides as well (Dunn, 1995).

Playing the blame game and scapegoating vulnerable minority groups

A scapegoat is a term used to describe a group of people who have been blamed for something they aren't responsible for. When the scapegoat is killed, everyone feels the issue has been solved since they have eliminated the root of the problem. When anger, hatred, and hostility rise, society gets unstable, and people turn to violence as a way to relieve their stress. The majority is easily persuaded of the negative features of a minority with whom they have no direct interaction. This is the time at which a group is picked out and assigned sole accountability for all the evils. We relish playing the blame game and holding someone or a group accountable for our problems. It is also rather common to blame others for our own mistakes, especially those who are powerless and not in a position to defend themselves against such charges. Also, during the country's economic collapse, nationalists frequently blame marginalized, helpless, and subordinated minorities for their economic distresses, and they are quickly labeled as 'job stealers.' Unemployment, inflation, poverty, food shortages, epidemics, crimes, corruption, a loss of prestige and confidence, managerial failure, and other factors can all contribute to frustration. Country leaders are skilled enough at diverting public attention to an 'ideal opponent' elsewhere. As they can't attack the system as a whole, instead, they may lash out at a more specific target, preferably a marginalized minority group. By stigmatizing them with negative prejudice, we are led to believe that they are troublemakers who deserve to be punished. Many awful incidents of scapegoating may be found throughout history, at all levels of society. We have heard of Pandora opening the jar of trouble in Greek mythology; Eve insisted on Adam eating the forbidden fruit, thus we still bear the original sin; Jews in Nazi Germany, and so on (Dunn, 1995; Mai, 2015:10).

How exactly do demagogues fan the flames of hatred towards marginalized minorities?

Prejudice has been passed down the generations as a result of the enculturation and socialization processes. Charismatic leaders who exploit latent animosity for their political goals frequently inflame feelings of hatred against the defenseless marginal minorities by the members of the majority. These kinds of leaders are called Demagogues. To achieve their objectives, demagogues rely primarily on propaganda, wrong information, doctored video snippets without full context, and concocted and fabricated news. People prefer to believe that there is a simple answer to their issues, hence many demagogues have been effective (Dunn, 1995). In addition, the literary study of ethnic violence and the social psychology of prejudice have crucial forces. Studies on ethnic violence yield gripping accounts of how ordinary politics sidles into the extraordinary-how through a series of little steps regimes embark on campaigns of a routinized mass massacre. These accounts propose many provoking hypotheses about how the demonization of out-groups allows demagogues to consolidate power against their in-group competitors and how historical memories are manufactured based on fallacies, fabrication, concoction, distorted and fake data, and made salient by political entrepreneurs (Green and Seher, 2003).

In what ways does propaganda fuel ethnic violence?

One of the key messages in the propaganda campaigns utilized in Nazi Germany, Serbia, and Rwanda is that the enemy must be destroyed before they destroy those native to the country (Green and Seher, 2003). In this context, propaganda may serve to remind citizens not only of what the State wants of them but also of the State's firmness of purpose to let no one stand in its path. Ultimately, people take part in ethnic violence in anticipation of taking out resources

from the victims. Plunder and rape are continual themes in the case of Serbian and Rwandan massacres (Glenny, 1996:203; Gourevitch, 1998:114; Green and Seher, 2003). In essence, the phenomenon of ethnic violence and the politics inside which it takes place seem to call for an assessment of how the State enjoins the support and involvement of the public. Thus far basic questions about the public's motivation and the State's role in bringing up public support remain unanswered, as said by Green and Seher (2003).

Structural and institutionalized discrimination against underprivileged minority groups

Prejudice is deeply established in our social structures through institutional norms, working processes, laws, government aims, and corporate and other big units. Institutions assist the dominants to control the subordinates since institutions have the power to represent any group as inferior, and deserving of unfavorable judgments and treatment (Mai, 2015:11). Moreover, due to discrimination in some circumstances, the civil and criminal justice systems have not been equally applied to all. According to studies, African-Americans convicted of first-degree murder are more likely than whites to face the death penalty. When political borders are set, a technique known as gerrymandering is commonly used to ensure that other groups and minorities are underrepresented in municipal councils, state legislatures, and the United States Congress (Dunn, 1995).

Meanwhile, in addition to this, one more common kind of institutionalized discrimination occurs during the recruitment process, for instance, when job applicants' names, color, race, religion, and ethnicity are impacted subconsciously by their names, color, race, religion, and ethnicity, as observed by Mai (2015:11).

Besides prejudice, another vital concept in the contemporary cultural analysis is the stereotype. Especially in the field of communication, the effects and processes of stereotyping have long been of concern. Hence, it is essential to understand stereotypes as an element of broad cultural processes and practices. Stereotypes usually narrow our cognition, normally jeopardize intercultural communication, and undertake a negative tone, in accordance with Zikargae (2013). Because they are made up of bits and pieces of information that we accumulate and use to make sense of what continues around us. It can be challenging not to stereotype in contemporary times. Stereotypes can have a potentially damaging effect on interethnic, interfaith, intercultural relationships, and intercultural communication in a global society today.

Stereotypes are applied to all members of a group. They can lead to faulty beliefs that result in both prejudice and discrimination. As Gannon (2004:16) defines this element:

...it represents a distorted view or mental picture of groups and their supposed characteristics, on the basis of which we tend to evaluate individuals from each other.

Stereotyping is frequently based on assumptions. In addition, Sue and Sue (1990:47) define stereotype as a "...rigid preconception we hold about all people who are members of a particular group." People may have very little evidence about a certain group to which an individual may belong. In the words of Samovar and Porter (1997:280), a stereotype is "...the perceptions or beliefs we hold about groups or individuals based on our previously formed opinions or attitudes." Another scholar (Samovar et al., 2010:170) defines stereotype as "a complex form of categorization." When the information is ambiguous and limited, our brain reacts to the wrong conclusion. Moreover, Psychologists have attempted to provide an explanation for stereotyping along these lines, as pointed out by Jandt (2001:40), "...mistakes our brains make in the perception of illusions." In the most general sense, it refers to "...any summary generalization that obscures the differences within a group," in the words of Cushner

and Brislin (1996:58). As the definitions suggest, stereotypes do not develop all of a sudden but are formed over a period of time by our culture.

Oversimplifying a category and distorting the whole picture

When a stereotype is negative, it frequently leads to discrimination and persecution. We run the risk of making incorrect statements about a single person and the entire group. Only a few isolated actions have the power to unfairly turn broad characteristics that apply to all members. Thus, in the process of oversimplifying a category, we frequently distort the whole picture. For instance, if we are strolling through a park late at night and come across three senior citizens wearing fur coats and walking with canes, we may not feel threatened in the same way as we might if we came across three high adolescent boys wearing leather jackets. These generalizations are based on our personal experiences, as well as those we've read about in books, novels, and magazines, as well as those we've seen in movies or television shows, social media posts, digital social networking means, and those shared with us by friends and family members. We learn that a person or a group has particular traits in this way. We frequently hold exaggerated prejudices about people who belong to groups with which we have never had firsthand interaction (Mai, 2015:4).

Agencies that are accountable for the propagation of stereotypes and the improper pigeonholing of outgroup vulnerable minorities

The agents of stereotypes are the socialization and enculturation process provided by the mass media, social networking means, and comprehensibly propagated through a variety of media forms like ads, movies, cartoons, comic strips, newspapers, TV sitcoms, and soap operas, etc., as stated by Zikargae (2013). Ironically, stereotypes are also developed out of fear of persons from marginalized minority groups (Dunn, 1995). The danger of making all-embracing categories has been worsened by media and social networks. Numerous stereotypes promoted by mass media are exaggerated and based on mere half-truths. The incredible network of media is partially accountable for creating a distorted picture of many cultures and co-cultures, either extensively pigeonholing people or centering on irregular traits and turning them into typical trademarks (Mai, 2015:4).

We are taught to instinctively identify a person's opinion with a perception we have built up in our minds over time, or with representations we see in various forms of media. Stereotyping is widely accepted as a normal human survival mechanism, a generalization based on limited interaction, information, and experience with a person, group, co-culture, and situation (Zikargae, 2013). It is the product of our cognitive dissonance, and it encourages societal antagonism, racial intolerance, and judicial injustice, as well as providing platforms for blaming others, especially minority group members. Even if our knowledge of others is only a grain of truth or half-truth, we are all guilty of putting people in a box (Mai, 2015:7).

A person's cultural background tells us nothing about their personality. When we use stereotypes to deny people, their identities, we are denying this person's sense of self and personhood, which is unique and special, and we are aggravating the problem. We do this solely to satisfy our mental comfort. We tend to gather incorrect and misleading information when we watch several biased media portrayals with hidden propaganda, for example, some Canadians are seen as arrogant, so Canadians are arrogant, and being arrogant is a typical Canadian value; some black people are seen to commit crimes, so all black people are criminals, and being a criminal is a typical black cultural trait; some Muslims are depicted as terrorists, so all Muslims are terrorists, and being a terrorist is a typical Islamic way, and so on (Mai, 2015:4).

Self-fulfilling prophecy, and pygmalion effect

A self-fulfilling prophecy is a well-known phenomenon in the field of sociology and psychology. It was first discovered and coined by Robert K. Merton, an American sociologist who is considered a founding father of modern sociology, in 1948. A self-fulfilling prophecy is when we have extreme stereotypes about a person and treat her/him according to those beliefs. Such treatment can influence the person to act by our expectations, thus confirming our stereotypic beliefs. As Merton (1968:477) defines it:

The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true.

In the job interview example, the interviewers may not have noticed that the interviewee was enlightened, friendly, and engaging and provided correct knowledgeable responses to the interview questions at the outset of the interview. Instead, the interviewers focused on the interviewee in the latter part of the interview, after the interviewee change her/his behavior to match the interviewers' negative behavior. In the words of Jussim (1986):

In general, the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy refers to situations in which one person's expectations about a second person lead the second person to act in ways that confirm the first person's original expectation.

On the other hand, the Pygmalion effect is a type of other-imposed self-fulfilling prophecy. It is the way we treat somebody that has a direct impact on how that person acts. If another person believes something will take place, they may consciously or unconsciously make it take place through their actions or inaction.

Media's role in propagating prejudice and stereotyping in society

The media play a decisive role in institutional support of prejudice and discrimination. When reporters show reality through their own eyes, are not free of prejudice and stereotyping. Mostly, newspapers tend to identify the religious, racial, and ethnic background of a suspect who belongs to a minority or scapegoat group such as religious or ethnic minorities. Simultaneously, they ignore the wrong-doer's background when this person belongs to a dominant culture or majority group. As a result, such selective exposure doubtlessly creates a distorted picture of non-dominant minority groups in the larger society (Mai, 2015:11). Systematically, they are depicted as culprits but appear very rarely as innocents in other news genres. Exposure to such stereotypes against a minority or scapegoat group often influences viewers and readers to support policy measures directed against these people leading to discrimination against them, often subtle, sometimes physical violence. Another form of contemporary discrimination in media is hate sites on the internet through many social networking means. This phenomenon contributes to the discrimination of these non-dominant groups of people, and also, ironically, to a feeling of insecurity and danger among the dominant majority. Such stereotyping in the media can constitute hate speech that contributes to, if not unleash, ethnic cleansing, pogrom, armed conflict, and even genocide (Flückiger, 2006:3). Hate propaganda can be characterized by portraying minority groups as naturally barbaric, radical, and violent, by generalizations of homogenous cultures, and by the illusion of scientific proof. Although the vast majority of people belonging to radical groups on the internet are youths, studies show that people participating in this extreme-right hate speech are no more likely to be less educated and unemployed, as stated by Gascon (2012:14).

Prejudices and stereotypes leading to discrimination

When people act on their prejudiced attitudes towards a group of people, this behavior is called discrimination. It is a negative action toward an individual owing to one's membership in a specific group. As Abraham (2009:135) states:

Discrimination is a form of behavior that entails unequal treatment by means of which one group prevents another group's access to opportunities.

Hence, discriminating in its widest sense is one of the most basic and permeating processes of human activity. To discriminate means to make a difference in treatment on a categorical basis, normally, totally ignoring individual merits or properties. The concept of social discrimination is inextricably attached to the ideas of justice and equality; the denial of equal treatment measures the denial of equal rights in the given society, as noted by Graumann and Wintermantel (1989:183). When we meet strangers, at first, we simultaneously think about their race, religion, gender, and age ignoring whether they are smiling, their eyes are friendly, their personality, the type of clothes they are wearing, and so on. Why are these secondary aspects of an unfamiliar person so important? Because it helps us to form a first impression of a stranger, the social categories of race, religion, gender, and age that provide ample information about an individual based on our stereotypes.

Moreover, in this context, Dunn (1995) has remarked that when we judge people and groups based on our prejudices and stereotypes, we treat them differently, thus, we are engaging in discrimination. This discrimination can take numerous forms. We may create subtle or explicit pressures which will discourage persons of certain minority groups from living in a majority-dominated neighborhood. Also, minorities have been victimized by discrimination in employment, opportunities, education, and social services, and are often excluded from high-echelon positions in the business world. Besides that, in the words of Graumann and Wintermantel (1989:184):

...members of a majority group may try to avoid close or personal contact with members of the minority, refuse to communicate with them directly or, if they have to deal with them, deny them equal standing and the right to reciprocate. Mainly this strategy of keeping others at a social distance or on a lower social stratum merely because of their group membership comprises a variety of discriminatory behaviors...

One more factor that triggers prejudice is resources justifying discrimination against other groups as it helps to maintain their own economic advantages (Mai, 2015:9).

Therefore, the summative results of the above consequences often lead to a collapse in communication and a worsening in relationships among diverse cultural groups inhabiting the multicultural polyethnic global world in this postmodern era.

Cultural relativism: an effective intellectual tool for uprooting the cultural domination

Anthropology has contributed two vital concepts: one is ethnocentrism, and the other, is cultural relativism. Both the concepts can be placed as polar ends of a continuum, each reflecting a distinctive approach, either exclusive or inclusive; a different mindset either broad or narrow to differences and a mental attitude and conduct that is either sensible or insensible to another culture. Within this context, Lin and Wang (2019:28) have observed that ethnocentric individuals have a very low level of intercultural competency.

On the contrary, to be culturally relativistic, there is a need for intercultural competency to ease intercultural communication. Cultural Relativism, as a non-normative ethical doctrine, has gained more attention in contemporary times for its celebration of pluralism in the sphere of customs and values. It is, indeed, reckoned to be an effective intellectual tool for uprooting

the domination of one culture by another, and, in effect, it boosts the virtue of tolerance (Eshetu, 2017). Cultural Relativism, a doctrine originating in American cultural anthropology by Franz U. Boas, an American anthropologist, is a central tenet of anthropology. It admits the meaningfulness of cultural behaviors for those who practice them assuming that no culture is better than any other, as stated by Zechenter (1997).

This entry will now examine the concept of cultural relativism, its theoretical strength, its social, cultural, moral, and ethical utility, and its intellectual coherence in today's globalized multicultural polyethnic world.

The motive behind the genesis of cultural relativism

Culture is flexible and has helped mankind adapt and endure in almost every socio-ecological environment on the planet. To respond to the survival challenges of their shared environment, groups of people acquire distinct patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Recognizing the adaptive quality of culture supports cultural relativism. Since every culture has succeeded as a system for human survival from an evolutionary point of view, no culture can be judged as superior to another and cultural features can only be comprehended in terms of their role in the complete system. The teaching of cultural relativism encourages respect for different cultural values, beliefs, and practices of different groups. At the same time, it also discourages seeing cultural variations as bizarre, offensive, immoral, non-ethical, or deficient when we see them in terms of their own cultural context. It does not extend to endorsing the moral legitimacy of any cultural practices. Within this parameter, Guang (2007) has observed that cultural relativism acknowledges the relative values of diverse cultures and gives priority to understanding other cultures. In today's globalized world affairs, cultural relativism is both an intellectual trend and a more or less institutionalized practice.

Cultural relativism is considered to be a hallmark of modern anthropological thought. Being a theory, it asserts that there is no absolute truth, be it ethical, moral, or cultural, and that there is no meaningful way to judge different cultures because all judgments are ethnocentric, as noted by Zechenter (1997). In the words of Guang (2007):

Cultural relativism seems, in this context, to be a preferable alternative to ethnocentrism. Ideally, in a condition of cultural relativism, all existing cultures are equally recognized, each culture has its relatively independent position about other cultures, and therefore there is no reason for conflicts among people from different cultures.

Thus, cultural relativism counters ethnocentrism by promoting the understanding of the cultural practices of other cultures as well as a respect for cultural differences. Nevertheless, cultural respect through tolerance is not adequate; understanding the out-group members' values, beliefs, behaviors, thinking, feelings, and so forth through their cultural contexts is also indispensable (Lin and Wang, 2019).

In what ways does the concept of cultural relativism foster civility?

Diverse cultures have diverse moral codes. What is thought right within one culture may be abhorrent to the members of another culture, and vice versa. Conceptions of right and wrong differ from culture to culture. If we assume that our ideas of right and wrong will be shared by all people at all times, we are simply naive. Cultural relativism challenges our ordinary belief in the objectivity and universality of moral truth. It encourages nonjudgmental respect for difference. By doing this people will improve their interactions. When people will feel respected, they will be more probable to reciprocate the favorable sentiment. Respect as civility is just about treating others with courtesy, politeness, and concern. Civility implies respecting the humanity of diverse others showing positive respect for others as equals. There

is no reason for us to believe that our way is the only or best one, and it is simply arrogance for us to judge the behavior of other people. We should rather adopt an attitude of tolerance towards the beliefs and practices of other cultures in a world where diversity of culture and customs is evident.

In our complex, interconnected, and heterogeneous global community, what role does cultural relativism play?

Due to globalization and internationalization, interactions among different cultures have become progressively very frequent, leading to an assemblage of diverse cultures. To understand different ethnic groups in this present time, there is an urgent necessity for intercultural communication to facilitate positive communication between different races, religions, and cultures. In this sense, since multiculturalism is sometimes used as a synonym for ethnic pluralism, it is essential that we comprehend and implement the concept of cultural relativism. Multiculturalism is also known as a salad bowl and cultural mosaic denoting the integration of different cultures. The idea of multiculturalism or cultural relativism takes a firm stand that all different cultures have equal rights declaring no one is more foremost or inferior (Lin and Wang, 2019). In addition, Grishaeva (2012) notes:

The concept of “multiculturalism” being treated as a group of ideas and actions of different social entities (statutory bodies, for instance) aiming at equal development of diverse cultures, bridging different groups of population in many social spheres, equal opportunities for being employed and provided with educational options is connected with the concept of “tolerance.” ...Multiculturalism as a whole presumes that individuals and groups are entirely incorporated into a society without neither losing their national or any other identity nor being restricted in their rights. Multiculturalism is a conceptual foundation of non-conflict coexistence of multiple heterogeneous cultural groups in one environment.

Thus, multiculturalism is fashioned to provide a social space for the coexistence of diverse cultures within a society, nation-state, and the world. It functions inside the framework of liberal democracy. By providing a social space for different cultures to express themselves as well as to coexist, liberal democracy reconfirms its own legitimacy among people belonging to different cultures. One of the central dogmas of liberal democracy is the freedom of belief, which in practice would lead to the acknowledgment of the relative values of different cultures, hence multiculturalism. In this sense, the very spirit of multiculturalism is useful for liberal democracy to prevent cultural differences in society from growing into national disintegration (Guang, 2007).

Takeaways: what can you do?

Accept and embrace who you are at all times. Some narrow-minded people may try to criticize and discriminate against you because of your cultural identity and ethnic heritage. Never be afraid to be yourself. Do not allow racists’ ideas to ostracise you from society, as they so desperately desire. They try to segregate members of marginalized minority groups. As a result, by removing yourself from the issue, you are allowing them to win. Accept individuals of all faiths, races, ethnicities, and cultures, and encourage your friends and family to do the same. However, we have the option of not acting on these malicious circumstances and, even better, of correcting our own behavior and changing our natural tendency. Furthermore, we need to realize that if we treat others differently because of stereotypes and prejudices, we are not behaving sensibly or honestly. Every person on the planet needs to be recognized as a dignified human being. People must be educated on the advocacy of anthropological concept-cultural relativism, its roles, and doctrines that there are no universal moral absolutes to judge

people's choices and that it is required not to criticize other people's cultural and religious symbols, beliefs, and practices. People of different cultures must recognize, respect, and understand the diverse lives of others. Such intercultural understanding, sensitivity, and relationships will not only open up new vistas but also will reveal great possibilities. However, in today's world, cultural relativism is a crucial tool for understanding socio-cultural reality. Such a perspective is also necessary for becoming a global citizen who is able to transcend their own racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, and socio-political reality and identify with human beings all over the world at all levels of human need, and who have strong faith in one human race, and in one global village that knows no boundaries. Considering all these phenomena from an anthropological perspective will help us cherish a vibrant cultural environment.

Conclusion: becoming anthropological

In a world that is so speedily changing and becoming more integrated and interconnected, it is pivotal to be sensible and aware of our mindset and tendency to make mistakes. Throughout this piece, an attempt had been made to shed light on several significant concerns that exist across the world in various forms and dimensions where common people are oppressed, persecuted, suppressed, mistreated, discriminated against, and marginalized while having no faults of their own. Human beings do not determine race, creeds, colors, or cultures, but are hated based on these trivial grounds. Societal and cultural factors such as socialization and enculturation patterns from childhood onwards, as well as social representations of rivalry, menace, and inequality in society, affect these personal traits. Prejudices that are constantly reinforced make equality and justice difficult to achieve. As a result, society would become more intolerant and ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism, in its most severe form, is a very toxic phenomenon that has the potential to disrupt the realm of intercultural relations and communication. People who believe in cultural superiority and racial supremacy may prefer to criticize other cultures based on their own cultural ideals, which makes them ethnocentric. Therefore, we must learn to judge other cultures in terms of the culture of those people that, as a result, will make us cultural relativists.

Countering prejudice, stereotype, hatred, and intolerance has become absolutely essential to stand up and speak out against injustice, discrimination, and institutional bigotry that have served as precursors to persecution, violence, and even genocide, pogrom, ethnic cleansing, and state-sponsored massacres. These inappropriate cultural phenomena have all been widely used to promote the socio-economic and political interests of one group in society at the expense of others, especially sociological minorities. These aspects are interconnected and can only be understood as a whole. These are obstructing development and community collaboration. Understanding the causes, adverse consequences, magnitudes, and natures of ethnocentrism, prejudice, stereotyping, demagoguery, propaganda, extremism, and discrimination is the first step in combating and countering these destructive practices in a rapidly globalizing heterogeneous world. Moreover, in almost every country worldwide, there are ineffective institutional responses to intolerance, hatred, and fascism. To confront such evils, it is urgent that many possible forms of intervention must be explored, as well as tactics, synergies, and hard-hitting action plans must be developed and implemented in the shortest period possible.

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