

# We Are the Greatest!: East African Ethnocentrism

Marilynn B. Brewer and Donald T. Campbell

*Ethnocentrism and Intergroup Attitudes: East African Evidence. Cross-cultural Research and Methodology Series, Vol. 2.* New York: Sage, 1976. Pp. 218. \$15.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. SHWEDER

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of Nairobi from 1972-73. Shweder received the 1971 Honorable Mention in the Stirling Award Competition in Culture and Personality Studies of the American Anthropological Association. His primary research interests include the anthropology of thought, culture and personality, culture theory, and cross-cultural child development.

WITH the following remark, Brewer and Campbell anticipate my uneasiness with *Ethnocentrism and Intergroup Attitudes*, but don't quite identify its proper source: "... the reader who has borne with us thus far may well feel an acute need for a summary of findings at a level of abstraction that ignores variations in sampling and unit of analysis" (p. 141). A few readers may well despair of the punctilio of methodology in this book. I did not. The real trouble lies elsewhere.

The goal of the book is to examine the empirical relationships among the components of the "ethnocentrism" concept (e.g., exaggerated ingroup regard, heightened outgroup hostility) in a setting where the "conditions of social authority and family structure" (p. 19) differ from our own. The volume is an analysis of questionnaire data collected from 50 members of each of 30 ethnic (tribal) groups in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Interviewees volunteered ethnic trait attributions (e.g., The \_\_\_ are "sexually loose"), and answered questions about intergroup social distance (e.g., "Would you willingly share a meal with a \_\_\_?") and personal liking.

The study is an exercise in hypothesis testing. The data are correlational. The predictions of various social science

theories are pitted against the interview data and each other. How does physical proximity relate to intergroup hostility? Reference group theory says "X." Frustration-aggression theory says "Y." What do our data say?

The authors are methodological virtuosos. Problems of measurement and analysis receive candid and thorough attention. They are, in fact, center stage. There are a few memorable findings (and nonfindings) in the volume. For example, ingroups think they're the greatest and view themselves (but not others) as friendly and honest; ingroup achievement is unrelated to ingroup self-regard but the perceived achievement of outgroups is modestly related to intergroup attraction. One also learns from a factor analysis of intergroup perceptions that in East Africa black is *not* beautiful (which is perhaps not surprising), and bravery is not admired; bravery associates with "dirt" and "disobedience" (which definitely is surprising and is not explained by the authors). Fortunately the volume is short (146 pages plus data appendices), so the reader does not quite run out of energy. Unfortunately, there are other, more unsettling, matters to worry about than those readers who may get lost in analytical detail.

BREWER and Campbell make a thoughtful and diligent effort to apply general social science principles to a topic of some importance, yet the enterprise flounders. There seems to be very little one can say in general about ethnocentrism; it all seems to depend. The book abounds in speculative qualifications like "the relationship between attraction for an outgroup and its level of socio-economic advancement [about which we are offered the predictions of three theories] may vary considerably depending on whether the outgroup's success is perceived as a model or as a threat to the ingroup's way of life" (p. 64) and "... the relationship between ethnocentricity and ingroup advancement in this area [about which we are offered the predictions of four theories] may be mediated by differential effects of urbanization on intergroup relations" (p. 87). Moreover none of the diverse

theoretical approaches (reference group theory, etc.) is consistently impressive in its predictive accuracy. One almost wonders whether folk predictions would do any worse! Brewer and Campbell, two articulate advocates of hypothesis test-

ing and the search for universal generalizations, may have unwittingly made a case for contextualism and emic studies. Don't despair, however. There is always the appeal to the limitations of the data!

17). Psychologists may be particularly interested in their role as seen by Newland, "... the psychologist has to identify the trait that is focal to the gifted's playing the roles society says are necessary, has to work out ways to measure that trait, and then has to decide how much of it is needed" (p. 19). Although it is not referred to in the text, all of this presumably is carried out under the legal ground rules of affirmative action. Lotsa luck!

## Fertilizing the Tall Poppies

T. Ernest Newland

*The Gifted in Socioeducational Perspective.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976. Pp. x + 406. \$14.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD E. RIPPLE

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THIS is a thoughtful and informative book treating the social, psychological, and educational aspects of the "gifted." It is representative of a renewed interest in the gifted—an interestingly paradoxical development in light of the recent movement toward sexual,

ethnic, and other forms of egalitarianism in society.

As might be expected, Newland takes a strong advocacy position, perhaps an aristocratic one, in regard to the educational development of giftedness. The basic arguments woven thematically throughout the book are: (1) the gifted have special needs for self-actualization, (2) society has special needs for their contributions, and, therefore, (3) special educational provisions and considerations should be made for them.

After an introductory chapter singling out the gifted as an area of concern, Newland generates a definition in chapter 2 emerging from the interaction of social, psychological, and educational factors. He does not bandy about. An interesting analysis yields his conclusion that from a societal point of view five percent of the working population needs to operate occupationally at a high conceptual level. An arbitrary three percent "slippage" factor is added, leading him to regard 8% of the population as essential to carrying out society's high-level responsibilities. This is then applied to the normal Binet-type IQ distribution and, lo, the gifted of social concern are those who score above 120 to 125 Binet-type IQs. Newland's conclusion regarding education follows, "... the schools are obligated to regard roughly the top eight percent of the generalized school population as needing to be educated such that they can assume major social responsibility as adults" (p.

THE next nine chapters of the book run the gamut of social, psychological, philosophical, educational, administrative, and instructional considerations, with one chapter devoted to rural and compensatory aspects. A chapter on research and a summary chapter follow, and the book is complete with a chapter on "Topics for Consideration" and two fascinatingly interesting case history appendices.

Chapter 14, a very brief chapter on "Topics for Consideration," might profitably be read first to take up Newland's challenge for a critical reading of the book. Reading it may temper the influence of the advocacy posture taken.

Special merit is accorded to chapter 8, "Administrative Concerns," particularly in its treatment of cost factors. It is an excellent chapter, bravely confronted and reflecting Newland's wide-ranging administrative experience and acumen. Its realistic qualities in terms of the economic crises facing education and the schools today is wisely left to the reader's critical judgment.

The chapter on research is not a review of research on the gifted. Instead, it is written for the consumer of research findings, culminating in a discussion of proposed consumer's criteria. The chapter seemed strangely out of place by its appearance in the book. On the other hand, the chapter on rural and compensatory aspects is a welcomed addition to treatment of the gifted, pointing out, among other things, that of the some 15,000,000 public school children who live in rural areas, 500,000 to 750,000 of them are gifted (by Newland's definition).

Newland's long experience in this field shines through in a delightful, easily