

Week 2: Ethnocentrism and Nationalism

EDUC 480 - Howard University

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Table of contents

0.1	Introduction	1
0.2	Ethnocentrism	2
0.2.1	Ethnocentrism in Education	3
0.2.2	Nationalism in Curriculum	3

0.1 Introduction

Nationalism is a set of beliefs emphasizing national identity and self-governance. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one’s own culture as superior to others. Both concepts significantly impact education.

ETHNOCENTRISM

Ethnocentrism is the belief that your culture is natural and correct while other people's cultures are incorrect, unnatural, or inferior.

EXPLANATION

Ethnocentric people think the ways they do things is the way things should be done, and every other culture's way of doing things is unsavory or undesirable.

Ethnocentrism can be a contributing factor to prejudice, racism, and xenophobia. In all these instances, you're considering yourself and your culture to be the best compared to all others.

EXAMPLES

- ① Judging other countries' diets
- ② Expecting others to speak English
- ③ Thinking you don't have an accent
- ④ Judging cultural dress
- ⑤ Colonial imperialism
- ⑥ Assimilationism

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Key Concepts

- Nationalism: Emphasis on national identity and self-governance
- Ethnocentrism: Viewing one's culture as superior to others

0.2 Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own culture as superior and to judge other cultures based on the standards of one's own. Here are some examples of ethnocentrism:

1. Judging other countries' diets: Many Americans might find the Peruvian practice of eating guinea pigs disgusting, without considering that it's a normal part of Peruvian cuisine.
2. Expecting others to speak English: English speakers often expect people in other countries to communicate with them in English, even when visiting non-English speaking nations

3. Accents: People often believe they don't have an accent while others do, failing to recognize that everyone has an accent from someone else's perspective
4. Religious celebrations: Attempts to suppress or delegitimize other cultures' religious practices, such as China's efforts to restrict Ramadan celebrations in the Muslim region of Xinjiang
5. Clothing norms: Judging other cultures' traditional dress based on one's own cultural standards of appropriate attire

0.2.1 Ethnocentrism in Education

Ethnocentrism in education can lead to:

- Biased interpretations of cultural differences
- Impact on student belonging
- Impact on classroom dynamics

0.2.2 Nationalism in Curriculum

Nationalism influences education through:

- Shaping of curriculum design and content, often centering those in power
- Promotion of national identity in history and social studies
 - While this may be important at some times, it can be harmful in certain contexts.