

Committee II
Ethnocentrism vs. World Unity:
Impacts on Socialization and
Education

DRAFT - 8/15/88
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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ETHNIC MENTALITY

by

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The Seventeenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Los Angeles, California November 24-27, 1988

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Introduction

Although human mentality is a real fact that, like other facts of the world, politicians and soldiers, preachers and teachers must take into account if they want to influence effectively human behavior, it is still difficult to investigate its nature and functions because it belongs to the subjective, psychological realm of being. To solve issues induced by ethnic mentality does not seem to be more simple either, because ethnic mentality as a phenomenological unit currently involve striking contradictions. Its actual directedness are very different, its importance for the individual currently shows opposite trends, its roles in social progression, in solving of global problems are controversially interpreted, its function in the life of the individual and in the life of the community are differently evaluated and forecasts about its future are as dubious as forecasts about any other human phenomena (Greely 1969, Berque 1981).

This paper is not going to respond to all challenges of these contradictions. Only one aspect, the aspect of the psychology, will be used to get a better understanding of the psychological nature of ethnic mentality and to prove the necessity of a new approach in education.

Modern life cannot alleviate ethnic conflicts neither within the individual nor in the outside world. These two realms exchange reviving impulses, and resuscitate each other.

Therefore, educational interventions - targeting the conditions in the individual, and social conditions in the society - are simultaneously needed to overcome the subjective and objective sources of ethnic conflicts. Education alone cannot abolish the preconditions of ethnic conflicts nor can these conditions be abolished without education.

ETHNIC DETERMINANTS OF MENTALITY

Mentality is a certain directedness of the human mind, a possible aspect to understand the world. Mentality is determined through the *objects* that it refers to, through the *meaning* that these objects imply for it and through its *own capacity* to use all pieces of the world as a language, which convey these meanings. These determinants may have an ethnic character if they are socially produced and are created and used in the life of an ethnic group.

The main carrier of the ethnic meaning is a language, a mother tongue. Verbal language forms a community; first of all from those who use it as a mother language and know the genius of the language. Many ethnic meanings can be mediated only through their natural lingual media. These meanings can only be expressed and heard if the mother tongue is the transmitter.

Beside language, cultural goods, cultural products - knowledge of the history of the ethnic group, beliefs, traditions, life qualities, customs in everyday life, religion, etc. - are important carriers. Meanings are also attributed to and conveyed by the natural environment, by the geographical region, by its climate which evoke the spirit of the fatherland understandable only for those who grew up there.

But what is the mysterious ethnic meaning that so many objects and channels transmit? Ethnic meaning is a psychological reality - images, thoughts, concepts, feelings, imagination - the

spiritual extension of the physical world, elaborated and preserved socially by successive generations of a living community and used as a common guideline how to see the world and how to go beyond the facts. Ethnic meanings evoke a feeling of homeliness and certainty. Environment without these meanings is alien and insecure /Leff 1984/.

Ethnic meanings as a system provide the impression of a harmonic, balanced, uniform character. This impression - the "ethnos", the spirit of the folk, the spirit of the nation - however difficult its objectivation and its explication seems to be, is a measure, which directs spiritual orientation, which makes possible reflections to known and unknown events, and which provides a standard to compare things and to decide whether they belong to this spirituality or if they are alien to it.

Ethnic meanings separated from its carriers, from its natural surroundings comprises a knowledge, a collection of curious, exotic information. This kind of isolated understanding is, however, different from how the native members of the ethnic community grasp and elaborate these meanings: their thinking includes special physiological functions, many types of preparedness to elaborate ethnic meaning to its full extent, also in its personal significance to reinforce the ethnic foundations of the personality. The metaphor "understanding by heart" tries to refer globally to these inner ethnic determinants of mentality.

This readiness and sensitivity of the mind develops like a special "imprinting" in early childhood during socialization.

Their important "fabricators" are adults nurturing the child /Murray, 1988/. They teach the *codes* - words, objects, thoughts, cultural products, actions, etc. - the *meanings* and they shape the *growing mind* of the child to be able to receive the secret ethnic messages. They are agents of the ethnos. The spirit of a folk, the spirit of a nation, and the spirit of a religion are passed on by their activity /Mussen 1983/.

TYPES OF ETHNIC MENTALITY

As we have seen ethnic mentality is a special faculty of the human mind to receive, to elaborate and to send ethnic messages and to maintain the "ethnos" of a community by this communication. Ethnic mentality may be typified according to four dimensions: *a/ degree of ethnic awareness, b/ the importance of ethnic features for the individual, c/ homogeneity of the accepted ethnic features, and d/ feelings towards other ethnic groups.*

The starting point of this typology is the aspect of consciousness. Some individuals are aware of the ethnic character of their own mentality and notice ethnic signs in the mentality of other people /Type 1./. Others believe that their own mentality is the only existing mentality: they consider their peculiarities are due to individual and not ethnic differences

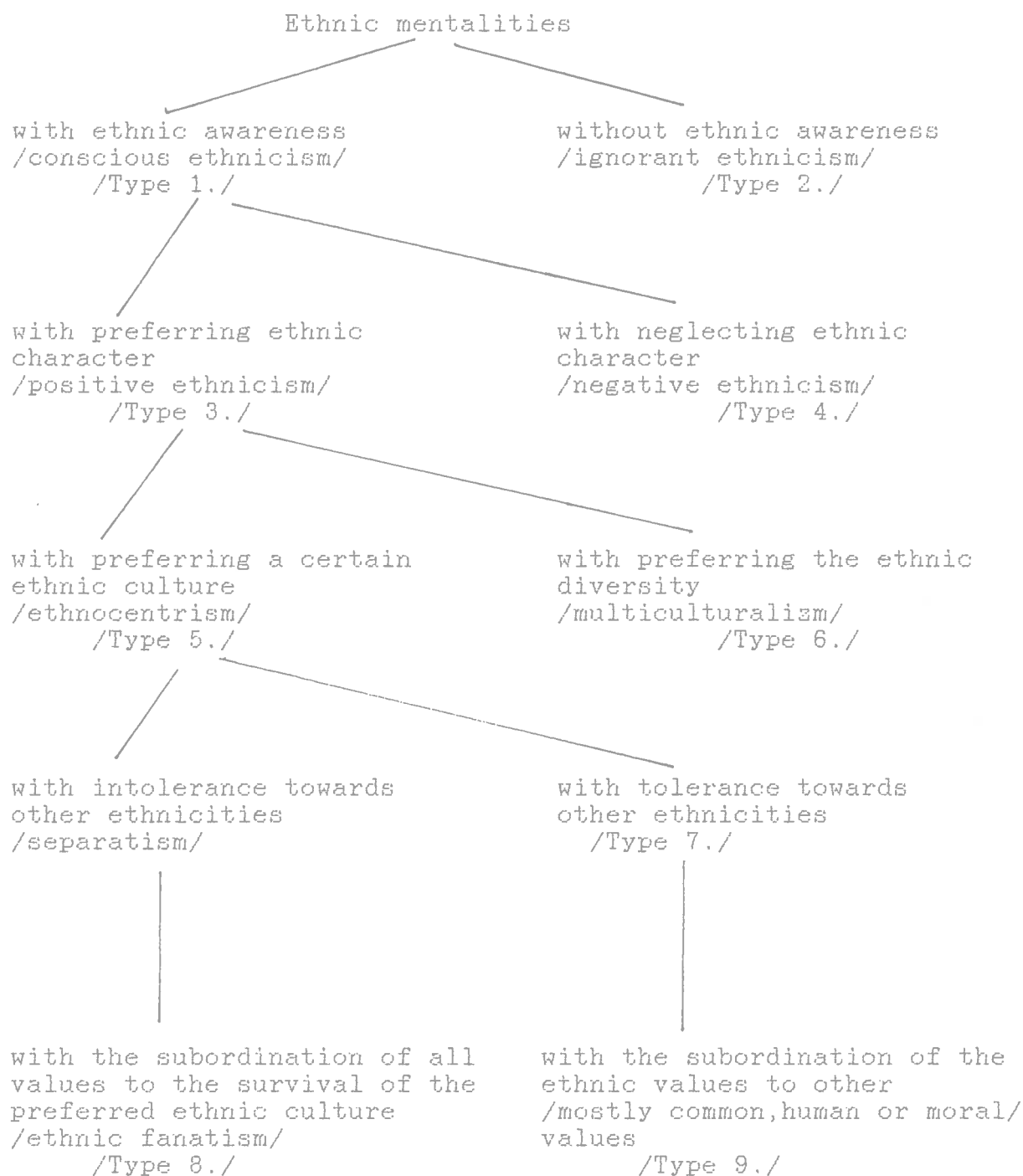
and do not notice the ethnic signs in the mentality of other people /Type 2./. Among those who have ethnic awareness, one group consider the ethnic character as an important trait /Type 3./. While the other group neglect its importance /Type 4./. The mentality of the first group may be called "*positive ethnicism*" because this mentality can accept any ethnic spirit and prefers ethnicity in general in contrast to the deethnicisation tendencies in modern life.

The mentality of the second group - the "*negative ethnicism*" - is neutral towards any kind of ethnic culture, prefers cultural goods without intensive ethnic character and also general human culture bridging together the particular ethnic cultures. The first group with positive ethnicism may be divided into two types: the "*ethnocentric mentality*" prefers a certain /mostly its own/ ethnic culture /Type 5./, while the "*multicultural mentality*" prefers and can deal with more /Type 6./.

The excessiveness of the ethnocentrism in the above mentioned types of mentality may be different /Heaven et al. 1985/. The mildest ethnocentrism tolerates other ethnicities, feels the equality between ethnic cultures and is able to subordinate their own values to other common values /Type 9./.

Excessive ethnocentrism does not tolerate other ethnicities the scale ranges from encapsulating separatism to hostile, aggressive manifestations, against other ethnicities /Type 7./, and do not tolerate any values at all except the maintenance and survival of their own ethnic spirituality /ethnic fanaticism Type 8./. Ethnic fanaticism is based on uncritical enthusiasm for one's

own ethnic values and on a blind hatred of the values of one or more ethnic culture. All values, even one's own life, can be sacrificed for the ethnic spirituality.



ETHNIC ATTITUDES

Ethnic attitudes are mostly investigated among those psychological functions which are essential in ethnic mentality. There is an extensive literature in sociology and in socialpsychology dealing with ethnic prejudices, stereotypes, attitudes, opinions and with similar phenomena /Allport 1958, Aronson 1984/. Although there is no consensus in the phenomenological definition, in the reliable methodical approach, in the inner structure and function of the investigated issues, the concept of the attitude seems to comprise all common and essential components of the phenomena studied on this topic.

The attitude includes three different psychological responses to an object:

a/ an inner *driving force* which release and motivate a specific behavior towards this object

b/ *an emotional reaction* to this object and

c/ a *stereotype* which gives rational explanation about the emotion and the behavior /McGoldrick, Rohrbaugh 1987/.

In the case of ethnic attitude, the object may be race, the ethnic group, the folk, the nation, the country, the religion, a characteristic ethnic feature, etc /McGuire 1985/.

Considering mainly the direction of the emotional reaction, more types of ethnical attitudes can be described.

1/ *Positive attitudes towards one's own ethnic group.* These attitudes are characterized by love and attraction toward the members of one's own ethnic group and by the feeling of sameness with them. The ethnic group becomes a reference group for the individual. He will follow the ideals, values and behavior standards of the group. Language, culture, value orientation are taken over from the ethnic group. The time perspective of the individual - his past and future - are embodied in the history of the ethnic group. Psychological properties, highly evaluated by the ethnic group become core elements of personal ~~of personal~~ identity. Altruism and solidarity are manifested towards the ethnic group members. This kind of Ethnocentrism is incompatible with Individualism. /Mentality Type 5./.

2/ *Negative attitudes towards other ethnic groups and cultures.* The individual feels that his own ethnic group and he himself are different from other ethnic groups and their members. Everyday life, customs, traditions, mentality and morality of another group bother, irritate and disturb him because he feels that they are "alien" to his own identity.

This feeling of difference may encourage him to keep distance, or to manifest militant, intolerant, and ^gagressive behavior. The spiritual products of other ethnic groups will become the first targets of these negative emotions. Cultural and material goods will also become targets; and in case of strong ethnic hate, the members of other ethnic groups will be physically attacked. While Ethnocentrism towards one's own group releases constructive forces, and leads to cooperation; these

negative attitudes towards "alien" ethnicity leads to destructivity /Mentality Type 7 and 8./.

3/ *Ethnocentrism as a defensive attitude.* Rapid technical development and the technical-electronical revolution are inducing social and cultural changes everywhere in the world. Ethnic groups differ as to what extent they can realize this technical development within their own ethnic group and as to what extent they need to take over the results of the technical development produced by other countries and by other ethnic groups. Since technical changes are the main organizing force of all other changes in the lives and cultures of all contemporary ethnic groups, from this aspect, we should not just speak about highly or underdeveloped countries and nations but about highly or underdeveloped ethnic cultures as well. Technical development, industrialization and urbanization transform the traditional life of ethnic groups, significantly lessen the ethnic differences, make the traditional ethnic culture dysfunctional, and establish uniform world culture without ethnic features, without ethnic diversity on a uniform technical-industrial, productional basis. The weakening and loss of the ancient folk culture, and that of the ethnic roots are mostly regarded as unfavorable changes. The weakening or loss of ethnic identity cannot be compensated for the many advantages of modern life. Based on these considerations, Ethnocentrism as a defensive attitude can be manifested in two ways: partly against Technocentrism, and against Modernization in general, and partly against new life qualities associated with exporting of high technology, and thus anything connected to ethnical traditions becomes old fashioned

/Ziemilski 1981/. In this sense Ethnocentrism means a nostalgic defense of the ancient, the traditional and the uncomplicated against modernization /Mentality Type 3. and 5./.

4/ *Positive attitudes towards certain ethnic groups and cultures.* The modern man who has weakened or lost his ethnic identity and now in this state, feels he is lacking something, is often attracted to still existing, vital and coherent ethnic groups and cultures. Modern adolescents cannot always find attractive identification models among adults of modern societies because the adults have weakened, contourless ethnic identities. Therefore adolescents often turn to ancient cultures and try to find their ethnic identities there. The social identity of modern man has only a practical, pragmatical function; it can only have a transient character in the changing world, it cannot have a time perspective, a past and a future. Social identity is an indispensable instrument of appropriate social integration, however, it is very often no more than this. Ethnic identity seems to be firmer, deeper, and more durable for adolescents, who are looking for stable features in order to create their own identities.

Unlike adolescents, the way of life and the culture of ancient ethnic groups are not attractive to many people in their totality, but only in certain elements /Eastern ^{meditation} ~~mediation~~ practices, African arts etc./, and most people are only interested in ethnic features if they are rarities or curiosities. Positive attitudes range from the ethnic attractiveness of the advertisements of travel offices, through

the selective acceptance of some ethnic elements, to the desire of the full integration into the entire life of the ethnic group /Mentality Type 5./.

5/ *Positive attitude towards ethnic diversity in general: Multiculturalism.* According to this view, the particular values of each ethnic culture do not neutralize but complete one another. More values are manifested in the diversity and totality of the uniqueness of the ethnic cultures, in the many possible ethnic varieties of human life, than in a single ethnic culture alone. Multiculturalism is a general acceptance of values represented in different ethnic cultures /Mentality Type 6./.

THE CORE OF MENTALITY: THE ETHNIC IDENTITY

Like attitudes, *identity* is an essential component of all kind of mentality as well. The scientific concept of identity emerged in modern psychology at the beginning of this century. The main contributions to it have been derived from the pioneer work of the psychoanalysis and later from the different cognitive theories of personality development. Modern procedures in the psychotherapy and in the counselling enriched its theoretical approaches. This growing richness makes some simplification unavoidable if we want to outline its structure and function in connection with the ethnic mentality.

Identity is a unique psychological system with an unconscious and ~~and~~ a conscious pole. The unconscious pole was studied and disclosed mainly by psychoanalysis while the conscious pole ~~has~~ became the domain of the cognitivistic approaches. Identity is a result of the identification which is a psychological process embodied in personal development. The objects of identification are family members, interpersonal relationships, social behavior, cultural goods etc. The *identification* is a self-definitory process by which the individual outlines his own psychological existence through an active /partly unconscious, partly conscious/ interchange with objects of the outer world and builds up an inner model from these objects. This model is called identity because the individual feels that he and the model are fully the same. This model belongs to the environment because its constituents are environmental phenomena but at the same time it belongs to the individual as well because it is a /unconscious-conscious/ personal construction, an objectivation of the personal existence. If identity is constructed from environmental phenomena, then the environment sets options for this construction. The elaboration of the environmental effects, the identification is, however, an active progress regulated by inner psychological mechanisms /Bandura 1971/.

The first and basic identification period is unconscious and takes place in very early childhood. Psychoanalysts say that this identification is based on primary need, on a biological founded instructive /libido/ which is common in ^{every} human being. This need can be fulfilled mostly in the family through the

emotional contact with the mother and other family members. Therefore the unconscious part of the identity is shaped through the early experiences in the family. According to psychoanalysis, this early identity regulates the further - mostly conscious - part of the identification and creates meanings with reference to the primary need, to the "libido" and to the early experiences.

Because the early identification is determined by the same biological founded drive in every individual, these meanings are equal but its symbolic carriers may be different in individuals. Ethnic culture comprises those symbolic transmitters which each member of the ethnic group can use and understand. Ethnic cultures use different expressions to communicate the libido-related general human meanings. From the point of view of the *ethnic identity*, the conscious identification processes are more important than the unconscious one's /Young 1971, Chun 1983, Ramirez 1984, Shouval et al. 1984 /. The environment provides different aspects bodily and personality traits /strong, clever, blind etc./, social categories /adult, Italian, violinist etc./, moral features /honest, right etc./ for the conscious identifications. Among social aspects, gender, family, ethnic group, social class, nation, religion, general features, etc. make possible the cognitive categorization of the belonging to a group /Juhász 1983, Matthews 1983/. The growing child changes these aspects during his development. The mother tongue, the emotional preparednesses to deal with ethnic messages are built in very early in the identity. The name of the ethnic group helps later to signify all these ethnic experiences and the ethnic identity. The aspects of the conscious self- definition are not

equally important for an individual. Thus, the conscious identity may be lacking in the identity of some individuals /Mentality type 2./, it may be unimportant for others /Mentality type 4/, but it may be in the core of the identity as well /Mentality types 5-9. /. The structure of identity represents a hierarchical arrangement of aspects constituting an identity of an individual in the center with those aspects which are vital, essential /core-identity/ and in the periphery with the aspects which are not very important for the individual.

The content of the core-identity has vital significance for the individual. The marginal contents may be slowly changed but the content of core-identity, once it has been cristallized and fixed, is hard to modify. This constancy ensures the feeling of continuity and integrity of the psychological existence of the person.

The core-identity has more basic functions: a, its contents give objective references to locate the "self" in the social world outside /*descriptive function* /; b, its contents serve as ideals, values, standards and regulate the behavior and life carrier /*orienting function*/; c, it mobilizes forces to maintain the feelings of its sameness with the "ego" and to strengthen and defend the idealization of its content /*self preserving function*/.

The basic function of the core-identity are activated continuously by life events. The environmental changes may correspond with but also may deviate from the core-identity of the individual. A prolonged deviation may disturb the identity

functions, an unbalanced functioning may arise and this conflict can lead to identity crises or to threatened identity /Weinreich 1983/.

The crisis of the ethnic defined core-identity is a mass-phenomena of modern life. The emergence of new attractive goals and values and the modern life qualities are strong challenges to preserve or to give up the ethnic identity. If the integrative forces of the ethnic identity are weak or the modern challenges are strong, then the ethnic identity loses his stability and its pregnancy decreases /McGoldrick et. al.1982/. In the state of crises the ethnic identity will diffuse, it will lose its regulative forces, personality will become contourless, mental health endangered and behavior deviant /Sydiaha 1984/. Losing identity, life becomes meaningless, worthless and in an excessive state of crisis all these may lead to self hate, and finally suicide /Lewin 1984, Breakwell 1983, Fransella 1983/.

In the multiethnic world and in a multiethnic society where different ethnic communities are living together the other ethnic group may also provoke the ethnic identity and induce an identity crises as well. In this context, however, the identity crises has another course and another output. In this case the source of the threat is clearly defined while in case of overall modernization the nature of the enemy is undefinable. The majority ethnic group may exert direct or indirect social pressure - often through the "melting pot school", through lingual discrimination, through hostile prejudices etc. on members of the minority ethnic group to leave their own group and

to assimilate into the greater ethnic group. The legally accepted social identity /social roles, social behavior/ in a multiethnic society is ethnic usually not neutral /Hogan 1983/. In it prevails the ethnic features of the majority ethnic group. Therefore to get integrated legally in the society, the members of ethnic minorities should accept a social identity which is alien, not compatible with their ethnic identity. The permanent contradiction between social and ethnic identity and the other kinds of provocation issued by a hostile ethnic group creates a threatened ethnic identity. The threatened ethnic identity may deepen the ethnocentrism, may mobilize the cohesive forces in the own ethnic group, may induce ethnic solidarity and fanaticism. No other circumstance may so effectively increase the cohesion and the cooperation within an ethnic group as the intergroup ethnic conflict, the threatening of the ethnic identity.

The target of ethnic threatening is often not directly the ethnic identity but the well being, the job, the occupational and social carrier, the future of the individual. If the limitation of the life condition is, however, related to all members of the ethnic group, the ethnic group attributes the limitations to its ethnicity and individuals feel them as consequences of their ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity is a part of the spiritual existence of the individual. If ethnic features become directly the targets of the threat then the individual has to defend his own psychological existence. This sometimes very cruel psychological war and the strong involvement of its soldiers suggest that the maintenance

of the core-identity, the survival of the spiritual existence may become extraordinarily important, common goals of human beings.

FLUCTUATION OF THE ETHNIC AWARENESS

Currently we can observe both the revival and the decay of ethnic mentality /Belote, Belote 1984/. Some analysis suggest that the trend of decay is a natural consequence of modernization, of spreading technical development, of urbanization and of migration. The trend of revival, the growing pregnancy of ethnic awareness are frequently considered as a regression, a turning back to the past and an abandonment of the future.

This fluctuation of ethnic awareness may have three different sources: one is inside, in the individual, and the other two are outside, in the environment. The development within the individual and the development within the society run parallel, influence deeply each other but have their own independent, intrinsic sources as well. The changes of the technical revolution, of industrial and agricultural production and the emergence of the "new" in the man-made technical world is very rapid. Their impact on the man-made institutions, which have to organize and regulate human behavior on a formal level can, however, only induce slower changes. The transformation

within the subject follow these environmental changes and are therefore the slowest. The difference between the speed of the transformations of these three spheres never was so great as in our age. This discrepancy causes an asynchrony between these spheres.

People can use machines at their workplace and electronic instruments at home which are the newest, top achievements of the age. But they can work in such an organization which had been developed perhaps hundreds of years ago and they can follow ideas and customs in their private lives which are even older.

I think that the asynchrony of these three basic life spheres may be the main cause of the fluctuation in the ethnic awareness.

The basic trend in this fluctuation is decay; because the ethnically neutralized technical-electronic revolution starves the ethnic features of the two other life spheres. Majority groups may add their own repression effects to this starvation and to quicken the decay by this. Apart from this trend the technical-electronic revolution may, however, cause not only the decay but also the revival of ethnic mentality as well. Rapid economic growth in some Asiatic countries prove that the technical-electronical revolution and the ethnic revival may mutually induce one another. Some flexible ethnic communities with a traditional family-based social structure and work organization, and with a traditional value orientation can faster develop high technology than many modern countries with younger traditions. The impact of modernization on the actual state and

on the future of an ethnic community does not purely depend on the size of the asynchronity but on the openness and on the coping capacity of the ethnic community /Shavit 1984/. Some ethnic culture may simultaneously promote the technical development and the revival of ethnic awareness. Ethnic revival usually does not emerge out of a friendly interaction between technical development and ethnic tradition. The main source of the revival is the resistance either against modernization, or against the assimilating effects of another ethnic culture, or against an aggressive* threat of the ethnic identity. Worsening life circumstances often induce the revival of the ethnic awareness as well.

MODIFICATION OF THE UNWANTED EFFECTS OF ETHNIC MENTALITY.

Social desirability. If education is to eliminate the unwanted effects of ethnic mentality or simply to lessen them then educational ideology must define the target: what is a good and what is a bad ethnicism and what is the criteria by which a decision can be made. Earlier we tried to prove: usually it is not the ethnic mentality that is good or bad but its impacts.

The same ethnic behavior may be progressive in one country and regressive in another, it may have been useful yesterday and

may be dysfunctional tomorrow.

Segregation, separation, discrimination, rejection, intolerance, militant behavior, terrorism and war, are unwanted events but in spite of this, ethnic mentality can accept these events as just and moral acts. Ethnic mentality may convert terrorism into heroism, may legalize criminality and label something as deviant which is in another ethnic group natural /Empey 1982, Moore 1984, Murphy 1984, Peterson, Hogan 1984/. There is no such criteria which would be generally valid in the evaluation of ethnic behavior. The quality of ethnic behavior may be only judged in the concrete context of one's own ethnic group and culture. This relativity makes uncertain what education and schools should do to eliminate ethnic conflicts and develop ethnic cooperation.

One way to overcome this ethnic relativism is to put in the foreground the common moral standards of the ethnic cultures.

All ethnic cultures develop moral standards to regulate life and develop a social and psychological mechanism to eliminate interpersonal conflict as well /Stoker, Meadow 1984/. The within-group conflict solving mechanisms always include friendly, peaceful solutions too. All ethnic cultures are prepared to deal with and to lessen the inter-individual conflicts and hostility. In these mechanisms many common elements - self constrain, altruism, tolerance, acceptance of a higher will etc. - may be found which should be mobilized in a comprehensive ethnic education. Mutual interethnic understanding may be based on conflict-solving training within one's own ethnic group. Only those individuals will be prepared to manage intergroup ethnic

conflicts, who were able to manage interpersonal conflicts in their own group.

General human characteristics are parts in many ethnic cultures. These may be elaborated and comprised into a supraethnic human identity. This identity comprises features which belong to human beings only and which are common to all humans. Philosophical explanations on a high level and simple everyday wisdom as well, can lead to rational acceptance of this attitude. Anyone can recognize and accept the fact that other people are also human beings, independent from the country, nation, or ethnic group they belong to, and independent of whether they are my friend or enemy. All individuals may achieve the simple insight of the sameness of all human beings.

Most interpersonal attitudes originate from the real or supposed interindividual and intergroup differences, and their function is to justify and maintain these differences. Mentality must rise above these attitudes to be able and to be mature enough to recognize the basic human sameness. There are several ways to reach this higher mentality. It can be achieved through mutual human empathy, or biological and anthropological argumentation. It can also be obtained from the elaboration of general, mostly permanent moral values. Education should achieve such social desirability which rests upon these values.

Formation of the multiethnic mentality. Today more and more people live in a world where agents of different ethnic cultures are acting at the same time /De Vos 1983/. The main agents are migration, growing tourism and mass communication. More and more

people live in a multiethnic society and mainly through mass communication even more people live in a spiritually extended multiethnic world. The exchange of the ethnic cultures was never as intensive as today.

Mass communication provides an opportunity to get concrete impressions of how people who belong to different ethnic groups and to different nations live and think. The influence of mass communication in the widening of the ethnic horizons of people is enormous. The information conveyed through the mass media are, however, different from the private experiences of the viewers and listeners. Private experiences can be obtained through active interaction with ethnically different people in concrete life situations. Interaction is always a mutual activity; inducing and getting impressions. Observation and listening are, on the other hand, a passive form to get information: a guided tour in an exotic world where the participants cannot interact personally with ethnically different people. Because of the guided character, which means a preselection and preinterpretation of information shown, mass communication has a great responsibility in the formation of this multiethnic spiritual world. The common mentality in public opinion is shaped mainly by the media of mass communication. This mentality influences the socialization of the child more strongly than school education. If its open or latent messages counteracts with the effect, of school, then the school has, to a greater degree, lost its efficiency.

In this very complex ethnic environment began the formation of the multicultural mentality of the individual /Kozma 1988/.

The course of its formation may be characterized by three steps. At the first stage, the individual can accept his own ethnic culture only. At the second stage, he can accept the ethnic culture of others as well. At the third stage, he can accept ethnicism in general, independent from any specific ethnic culture.

Information about the long term history of one's own ethnic culture may effectively contribute to the formation of a multiethnic mentality. The spirit of the folk, of the nation is never a closed system, but is continuously changing. During these changes many components of other ethnic cultures are assimilated into the ethnic culture of the individual. This cultural assimilation is a natural process. The main "melting pot" is the history, which forms from different cultural elements a unique, homogeneous ethnic culture. The sources and origin of ethnic culture are always multiethnic. The multicultural character of a culture is a real but mostly latent feature of all ethnic cultures. By disclosing the historical development and the composed character of one's own ethnicity, education may lead to a better understanding of other ethnicities and lay down a base for a modern multicultural education. If the multicultural mentality has developed it may become, like history, a "melting pot" capable of absorbing any ethnicism.

What can schools do to promote the formation of a modern multicultural mentality?

1./ School curricula should consider all ethnic experiences of pupils based either on personal interactions or information

obtained from the mass media irregardless of the experiences being socially desirable or undesirable. Prejudices, attitudes and stereotypes existing in public opinion should also not be ignored.

2./ Schools should stimulate the interest of other ethnic groups, other nations and cultures.

3./ Schools should provide conditions for students to live together with members of other ethnic cultures to appreciate, to experience and to test their attractive customs.

4./ Schools should create work situations where tasks may be solved only through cooperation of pupils from different ethnic groups /Deutsch 1949, Sherif, Sherif 1956/.

5./ Schools should confront concrete personal experiences with the prejudices, attitudes and stereotypes existing in public opinion. Through cognitive and emotional elaboration a favorable, tolerant look must be developed.

6./ Schools should promote the realization of common moral standards of the individual ethnic cultures, and a realization of general values.

Summary

Mentality is a certain directedness of the human mind, a possible aspect to understand the world. Ethnic mentality comprises those features of mentality, which are created and used by an ethnic group to the meaningful interpretation of life and human behavior.

Ethnic mentality may be typified according to four dimensions: a/ degree of ethnic awareness, b/ the importance of ethnic features for the individual, c/ homogeneity of the accepted ethnic features, and d/ feelings toward other ethnic groups.

Directedness of ethnic mentality may be characterized by attitudes / positive attitudes toward one's own ethnic group, negative attitudes toward other ethnic groups and cultures, ethnocentrism as a defensive attitude, positive attitudes toward certain ethnic groups and cultures, positive attitude toward ethnic diversity in general / and by ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is an energy source and the bases of ethnic mentality. The awareness of ethnic mentality fluctuates. Views about the usefulness of a highly conscious ethnic mentality are controversial. This mentality may promote some trends of social progression, the creation of a tradition-full life, the maintenance of mental health, but it also may hinder other trends of progression, induce a rigid, empty ritualization of life and endanger mental health.

Today, our personal environment is gradually including more

and more effects of different cultures and therefore, the ideal form of ethnic mentality should be a multiethnic mentality. Centers of learning have responsibilities and opportunities, as well, to implement an effective multicultural education.

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