

## Discrimination, Prejudice and Stereotypes in Peruvian Context

Case Study

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### Abstract

This paper presents a critical and descriptive analysis about the concepts of discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes in Peruvian context; illustrating cognitive, affective and behavioral explicit or hidden manifestations. All of them, focused on maximizing the pseudo-self-esteem of a group, minimizing the critical analysis about a collective, concurring in generalizations to strengthen the pseudo-self-esteem of the members of the endogroup, giving way to a collective narcissism. Finally, it concludes by considering imperative elements for the construction of socio-cultural scenarios in which diversity is assumed with a tolerant and normal approach.

**Keywords:** Discrimination; Prejudice; Stereotypes; Intolerance; Peru.

### Discriminación, prejuicios y estereotipos en contextos peruanos

El siguiente trabajo presenta un análisis crítico y descriptivo acerca de los conceptos de discriminación, prejuicios y estereotipos en contextos peruanos; ilustrándose en manifestaciones cognitivas, afectivas y conductuales de forma explícita o encubierta. Todas ellas, centradas en maximizar las diferencias de un grupo, minimizando el análisis crítico respecto a un colectivo, concurriendo en generalizaciones con el fin de fortalecer consciente o inconscientemente el pseudo-autoestima de los miembros del endogrupo, dando paso a un narcisismo colectivo. Finalmente, se concluye considerando elementos perentorios para la construcción de escenarios socioculturales en los que la diversidad sea asumida con bajo un enfoque de tolerancia y normalidad.

Palabras clave: Discriminación, prejuicios, estereotipos, intolerancia, Perú

### Discriminação, preconceitos e estereótipos em contextos peruanos

O seguinte trabalho apresenta uma análise crítica e descritiva sobre os conceitos de discriminação, preconceitos e estereótipos em contextos peruanos; ilustrando-se em manifestações cogniti-

vas, afetivas e comportamentais de forma explícita ou encoberta. Todas elas, centradas em maximizar as diferenças de um grupo, minimizando a análise crítica em relação a um coletivo, concorrendo em generalizações com o objetivo de fortalecer consciente ou inconscientemente o pseudo-auto-estima dos membros do endogrupo, dando lugar a um narcisismo coletivo. Finalmente, conclui-se considerando elementos peremptórios para a construção de cenários socioculturais nos quais a diversidade seja assumida sob uma abordagem de tolerância e normalidade.

Palavras-chave: Discriminação, preconceitos, estereótipos, intolerância, Peru

### Discrimination, préjugés et stéréotypes dans les contextes péruviens

Le document suivant présente une analyse critique et descriptive des concepts de discrimination, de préjugés et de stéréotypes dans les contextes péruviens, illustrés par des manifestations cognitives, affectives et comportementales de manière explicite ou déguisée. Toutes, visant à maximiser les différences d'un groupe, en minimisant l'analyse critique vis-à-vis d'un collectif, en concourant à des généralisations afin de renforcer consciemment ou inconsciemment la pseudo-estime de soi des membres de l'endogroupe, faisant place à un narcissisme collectif. Enfin, on conclut en considérant des éléments péremptoirs pour la construction de scé-

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narios socioculturels dans lesquels la diversité est assumée selon une approche de tolérance et de normalité.

Mots clés: Discrimination, préjugés, stéréotypes, intolérance, Pérou

Prejudices and stereotypes are the basis of discriminatory acts, which can have harmful consequences for coexistence. It even configured itself as an absurd motive for using violence and aggression against other human beings. (Garrido; Azpilicueta, 2016). Prejudice can be understood as a negative attitude towards a social group or towards a person perceived as a member of that group (Haddock, Zanna, 1993). In most cases, this happens without having direct experiences. Nonetheless, it can occur insufficient knowledge, leading to a preconceived judgment of a person without even knowing him or her. (El Globo, 2005).

Its origin, usually cultural and acquired through a wide range of social flows such as the media, is usually configured by the following components: cognitive, affective and behavioral, which are interrelated and can be expressed in different magnitudes. They guide our way of thinking, feeling and acting. This makes it impossible to reflect critically on a group of people, reaching out when inadequate information is offered, supporting negative evaluations and justifying discriminatory tendencies (Martínez, 2003). In any case, they significantly influence the formation of stereotypes.

The stereotype is a reduced ideation, simplified and shared by a group of individuals, derived in many cases from a social reality that is characterized by the presence of cognitive biases, causing an illusory correlation between variables with little or no association (Garrido; Azpilicueta, 2016). Likewise, some authors state that people with low self-esteem have a greater predisposition to express prejudices and stereotypes of people, in a wrong attempt to raise their self-esteem (Pascale, 2010).

However, unlike what you might have thought, prejudice does not necessarily translate into expressions of hatred or hostility, yet in less explicit manifestations, which may include rejection, insecurity, fear or avoidance of intergroup contact (Angosto; Martínez, 2004). Eventhough, people's prejudiced attitudes have not changed, but they are not directly express because it is not socially desirable to do so. This generates falsehood in people's manifestations (Montes, 2008), leading to a hidden racism.

Regarding racism, psychological principles per se are not sufficient to explain the rise of racist attitudes, since this phenomenon includes historical, economic and political components. (Pascale, 2010). The generation of behaviors consisting of marginalizing or excluding people from another group because of assumption of prejudices and stereotypes assumed (Garrido; Azpilicueta, 2016). This results in: insults, exclusion, discrimination and cases of violence (Zack, 2002).

Discrimination dates back to colonial times (dominance of the white race) reaching its peak during the to anti-Semitic ideologies (Nazi ideology) (Montes, 2008). Currently, its expression has been transformed and adapted by the changes of our society, coming into play components such as pressure and social desirability. When restricting their manifestation, they merely generate a hypocritical and opportunistic conception of discrimination.

Moreover, into racism it is of interest how the term "race" is not properly a scientifically valid construct, the use of this concept is safeguarded in its naturalization capacity as a category to classify people (Augoustinos, 2009). The racism of our days is undercover, hidden under new forms of linguistic expression, beliefs and attitudes. Since in the era of political correctness racism is not well conceived, it adapts and remains present without being confrontational (Pascale, 2010).

Unlike traditional racism, which is characterized by open manifestations of discrimination due to differences in skin colour, perception on of the group as a threat and avoidance of contact with its members is undercover, aversive racism seeks to justify itself by using other factors than race itself, such as covert behaviors and beliefs that put the other in a lower category. From its part, neo-racism is made up of indirect components that are acceptable by the new social norms (Montes, 2008), as is the case of "I am not racist, but I would prefer that my child does not marry a person of color", which only covers that racism.

On the other hand, sexism is an attitude directed towards people by virtue of their membership in groups based on biological sex (Expósito, Moya & Glick, 1998), it has a classical and a modern form.

Thus, traditional sexism focuses on a prejudiced attitude that sits on the false assumption of women's inferiority, which conforms according to Montes has three beliefs: Dominant paternalism, gender differentiation (role assignment) and heterosexual hostility (as a response to a woman's supposed sexual power, making her dangerous and able to manipulate the man). On the other hand, neo-sexism is characterized by covert discrimination against women. At this point we can find benevolent sexism, which is even more subtle and indirect. It is composed, according to this same author, of three basic components: Protective paternalism (men must protect and carefor women), complementary gender differentiation (women complement men) and heterosexual intimacy (women are necessary for the consolidation of heterosexual relationships). However, these types of sexism are based on biological and social conditions, in which man has a dominating role and provider, while the woman takesreproductive and parenting tasks. Under this perspective, only the sexual aspect could grant a certain type of "power" to the woman, because the satisfaction of a man's sexual needs would depend on it.

In the Peruvian context, stereotypes and prejudices seem to be close to the power relations established in our society. In this way, we find the existence of groups of high and low status, whose situation is perceived by their possibilities of access to power (Espinoza et al, 2007), generating exclusionary practices exercised by the most empowering groups.

This categorization, basically divided in: endogroup (us) and exogroup (others), as mentioned by Espinoza, this contributes to the identification of certain social groups and consolidates the formation of endogroup, which is based on the preference for those people with whom the same social category is shared. Thus, this social identification tends to have a protective effect on personal self-esteem by preventing the increase of individual vulnerability (Hansen; Sassenberg, 2006). This is why mechanisms for differentiation and exclusion of members of the exogroup are activated

in response to the protection of their identity.

Hence, "choleo" has become a form of discrimination that integrates ethnic and racial aspects as linguistic factors and origin and sociocultural aspects, such as education and culture (Cosamalón, 1993; Twanama, 1992, citado por Espinosa et al, 2007). Triggering a negative judgement towards the "andino", coming in subjects to deny these traits and latch on the white or western, in the desire to self-identify with the characteristics of the dominant groups. Therefore, it is no surprise that much of the Peruvian population assumes to be a half-breed with middle-class socioeconomic characteristics.

It is necessary to mention that stereotypes about the various social categories do not always have a negative connotation. However, they define a hierarchical distance between the groups, since they consider these less advantaged subjects as guilty of the shortcomings of the national group (Espinosa et al, 2007).

In 2007, Espinosa conducted a research with a sample of 81 participants, with the aim of analyzing the dynamics of intergroup relations in Peru, finding that the institutionalization of exclusion practices emerges as a mechanism to preserve the power of dominant groups. Likewise, when exhibiting two images, a white girl and another with andean features, people reported feeling joy in this first and sadness in the other.

That explains the endogroup favoritism and the effect of the homogenization of the external group. For example, in our country the disruptive behaviors committed by people of Venezuelan nationality will be remembered more easily than those committed by Peruvians, getting to establish an illusory correlation between crime and the nationality of people. Also, one way to maintain their self-esteem is to compare the actions between endogroup and the exogroup in aspects that result in a favorable evaluation for the former.

Note then that sociological phenomena such as immigration involve changes in social reality. Thus, the diversity of cultures can awake multiple attitudes such as fear, rejection, indignation or even acceptance and solidarity. In any case, it must be accepted that our society is increasingly multicultural.

We understand multiculturalism as the convergence of two or more ethnic groups that coexist in the same society. Then, aspects such as the confrontation between cultures or the so-called "cultural shock" are unavoidable, which reflect the complexity of sociocultural groups, there the collectives reinforce their identity on the basis of their differences with other communities (Martínez, 2003).

Alternatively, interculturalism aims to overcome the mere coincidence of cultures, emphasize the interaction between groups with components that include exchange, reciprocity, openness, flexibility, among others (Martínez, 2003), in the search to harmonize differences so that coexistence far from a social problem is a source of common wealth.

In this matter, within the measures that foster coexistence and reinforce the harmony of differences, we find empathy, as a tool that favors the reduction of negative emotions associated with members of an exogroup, this happens even acting as a mitigating

factor for positions of social dominance. Like so, by promoting a more empathetic society, a better appreciation of pluralism and cultural differences is generated.

However, combating prejudices and stereotypes is not an easy task, racist and xenophobic people are constituted based on antipathy and aversion to the distinctiveness, covering up narcissistic components that tend to attribute the good to ourselves, while consciously or unconsciously locating the bad in others.

This struggle tends to become even more acute with: expressions charged with nuances of difficult identification and acts of exclusion that are based on a set of shared social perceptions, becoming invisible and unavoidable for its victims (Morales, 2003).

## Conclusion

It is imperative to consider that all human beings, just because of their humanity, deserve respect and dignity, regardless of our differences. We are all different and we have the right to be different, is basically the essence that we have as human beings.

The categorizations are not rational, they prevent the relations between human beings from being framed within respect, generating false cultural perceptions that lead to categorize an individual in a gross and simplistic category. Thus, our minds (expectations, perceptions, memories, emotions and thoughts) must necessarily record a strict "cultural diet" (Del Rio y del Rio, 2008), based on tolerance and normalization of diversity.

It is not possible to distinguish someone good from someone bad by the social, economic, sexual, race, religion or nationality that they have. There are only good and bad people, no other difference exists.

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