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THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL AND MEDIA CULTURAL CAPITAL ON ETHNOCENTRISM

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Abstract

As a follow-up of the previous research undertaken by Mark Elchardus and Jessy Siongers, in this paper the authors aimed to test two theories designed to explain the causes of ethnocentrism – deprivation theory and cultural theory. Given that cultural theory proposes that ethnocentrism is a type of cultural work that consists of boundary making arising from the existing social groupings, while deprivation theory claims ethnocentrism to be only a reflection of one's own social position, hypotheses related to connections between family background, type of schooling, cultural capital/cultural tastes and ethnocentrism were proposed. Robustness of the results was checked with liberalism as an alternative criterion variable. The hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression analyses based on data obtained from a sample of 500 students from five secondary schools in Slavonia and Baranja. The measures used in the field survey conducted in schools comprised scales of ethnocentrism, liberalism, general cultural capital and media (television) cultural capital, as well as demographic information relevant for the hypotheses testing. The results tentatively confirmed cultural theory, while deprivation theory was rejected, thus implying usefulness of cultural approach to research on ethnocentrism and similar constructs.

Keywords: cultural capital, ethnocentrism, media, deprivation, cultural taste

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Introduction

The starting point of the paper represented Elchardus and Siongers' (2007) study on competing theories aiming at explaining ethnocentrism.⁵⁰ Namely, they tested four theories – deprivation, social capital, detraditionalization and cultural theory – on a study sample of Dutch pupils. In short, deprivation theory posits that ethnocentrism will follow from the feelings of deprivation based on a low-status social position. Social capital theory hypothesizes that stronger social integration of an individual (more social capital) decreases the likelihood of ethnocentrism, having in mind that ethnocentrism is not a socially acceptable value. Detraditionalization theory hinges on the mass society theory, i.e. it assumes that weaker influence of traditional social institutions (family, religion, etc.) will make an individual more susceptible to radical ideas, such as ethnocentrism. Lastly, according to Elchardus and Siongers (2007), cultural theory posits that ethnocentrism is interwoven with cultural taste and boundary making. In other words, cultural tastes arise from social categorization and boundary making, while ethnocentrism is accepted or rejected in order to integrate different elements of identity. For instance, higher social strata should do the boundary making by expressing highbrow cultural taste and rejecting ethnocentrism as a marginal and socially unacceptable idea. For lower social strata, both lowbrow (popular) taste and ethnocentrism will be a part of boundary making that consists of the rejection of the dominant social values. Thus, embracing ethnocentrism represents just an attempt to build an integrated worldview based on the high-low categorization that permeates various social phenomena. In both cases, cultural taste is embodied as the habitus that directs cultural preferences and practises that are taken for granted, becoming a cultural air that we breathe without awareness (Bourdieu, 1984). Elchardus and Siongers (2007) found that cultural theory is more supported by the data in their study than any of the competing theories. Additionally, their data did support detraditionalization theory to a degree, while social capital and deprivation theory did not fit the data at all.

⁵⁰ In this paper, we employ classic definition of ethnocentrism first used by William G. Sumner in his book *Folkways* (1906). He defined the term as comprising all attitudes and behaviours that assume that our own culture and its values, norms and practises are inherently superior to those of other cultures.

Overall, research generally shows that lower-class individuals are more likely to exhibit various ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors, such as consumer ethnocentrism (Caruana, 1996) or general ethnocentrism (Heydari et al., 2014; Meeusen, de Vroome and Hooghe, 2013; Scheepers, Felling and Peters, 1990). When it comes to other studies that have employed, more implicitly than explicitly, the aforementioned general theoretical framework, we can conclude that they are very scarce. Sloommaeckers and Lievens (2014) found an impact of lifestyles and cultural tastes on homonegativity (i.e. negative attitudes toward homosexuals). Namely, people with higher level of cultural capital (preference for performing arts and cultural heritage, and preference toward cultural eclecticism) expressed lower homonegativity than people with lower cultural capital (people who watch TV exclusively and people who prefer only cinema and libraries), even when controlling socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, religion and education. Kottasz and Bennett (2006) found that both among Hungarian and British arts consumers those with ethnocentric views in the arts field are more likely to be found among lower educated and financially worse-off respondents, even though ethnocentric arts preferences are significantly present in all social strata. Jarness (2015) used symbolic boundary approach (SBA) to study horizontal boundary-drawing within the middle class. Analysis detected two fractions of middle class: cultural and economic, and there is a mutual antagonism between the two. The participants with high cultural and low economic capital see “the rich” as people with aesthetic and moral character imperfections, while participants with low cultural and high economic capital see cultural elite and their cultural consumption as “trying too hard”. Jarness observed that interviewees do not seem to be aware of their own strategies for making symbolic boundaries.

Given the above, in the current study we made an effort to employ the aforementioned theoretical framework and to test two of the competing hypotheses regarding ethnocentrism. For that purpose, we used the data from a survey study which comprised some of the measurements needed for the discussion of our research questions. We decided to include two different types of cultural capital. The first one is the usual distinction between highbrow and lowbrow, or between high and popular culture. This distinction mainly relates to aesthetic preferences in the field of arts. However, in our study, media cultural capital in the form of television viewing

preferences is included as well. Even though television is probably less and less important for younger generations given the possibilities of meeting information and cultural interests on the Internet (Van Steen, Vlegels and Lievens, 2015), its importance might still be present. In addition, the so-called functional equivalence thesis, which argues that the Internet will replace those activities that fulfill the same needs that the Internet can now fulfill, is not yet proven (Robinson and Martin, 2009). And finally, the structure and content of television viewing is much easier to define and measure in comparison to the Internet habits and their measurement. Furthermore, Bennet (2006) showed that there is a strong distinction between genres of high and low legitimacy in television broadcasting field, and that those genres are connected to social stratification variables, such as occupation and level of education. Namely, Bennet demonstrated that genres of low legitimacy, such as soap operas and quizzes, are more often preferred by lower classes, whilst genres of higher legitimacy, such as news reports, arts programmes and documentaries, are more often preferred by more educated television viewers and by those belonging to higher occupational categories. As for the other research, Lizardo and Skiles (2009) confirmed that television broadcasting space is stratified along class lines, even though the stratification is contingent upon the specificities of public and private television systems in different countries, i.e. it depends on the level of commercialization of the television programming. A significant portion of research studies (e.g. Friedman and Kuipers, 2013; Friedman, 2011) revealed that differences in cultural capital are highly operative in the field of television comedy. On the other hand, Gayo-Cal, Savage i Warde (2006) found higher level of cultural omnivorousness among higher social classes, given that they showed higher level of tolerance towards popular television forms.

Research Questions, Methods and Sampling

Based on the above-mentioned theoretical reasons, the following two research questions were posed in the current study:

RQ 1: Which of the competing hypotheses/theories, cultural theory or deprivation theory, can better explain ethnocentrism?

RQ 2: Within the framework of cultural theory, is there a difference between the strength and direction of influence of classical cultural capital (highbrow culture vs. popular culture preference) and cultural capital acquired through the media (television)?

As already noted, we used a part of the data from the research project “Cultural Capital and Educational Outcomes”, conducted in 2014 and funded by Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. Total of 500 students participated in the survey. Among them, 152 students attended grammar schools, 220 students technical and related schools, 93 students industrial and crafts (vocational) schools, and 35 students came from arts schools. All other sample details can be found in Pavić and Đukić (2016).

Highbrow culture preference was measured with five-item scale (Mean = 14.60; SD = 4.45; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.73), whereas popular culture preference scale was measured with three-item scale (Mean = 10.05; SD = 2.72; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.71). In both scales, the respondents indicated their preference for various cultural activities on a 1-5-point scale. A sample item comprising highbrow cultural preference scale is as follows: *I like visiting museums and galleries*, whereas a sample item for popular culture preference scale is as follows: *Popular music is much better than classical music*. Here we must note that the preference and not the actual behaviors was measured, since we had assumed that the low level of cultural activities in some of the areas where the survey had been conducted would act as a barrier of the intended cultural consumption for some of the secondary school students.

Items related to television consumption were factor-analysed with principal component analysis (Kaiser normalisation, varimax rotation of the initial solution). Four factors were obtained – (1) preference for highbrow content (documentaries, arts and culture shows), (2) preference for films and television series, (3) preference for drama shows (domestic and foreign) and (4) preference for information broadcasting (news and sports). All details regarding the factor analysis can be found in Pavić and Đukić (2014). Items that were heavily loaded on the factor/dimension were summed up in order to obtain a measurement scale of the aforementioned constructs.

Items related to attitudes towards ethnocentrism were also factor-analysed in a similar vein. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy amounted to 0.68, while Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically

significant, thus confirming that the items were suitable for a factor analysis. Two dimensions were extracted, with a total of 35.13% of variance explained. Rotated factor matrix with item loadings is shown in Table 1 below. As can be concluded, the first, three-item, dimension pertains to ethnocentrism (Mean = 7.92; SD = 2.67; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.61), while the content of the second, four-item, encompasses liberalism (Mean = 15.53; SD = 2.71; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.63).

*Table 1. Factor analysis of items related to ethnocentrism and liberalism
Note: Only factor loadings higher than 0.3 are shown.*

Item	Ethnocentrism	Liberalism
National minorities are overprotected in our society	0.66	
There are better and worse nations/cultures	0.65	
You can very rarely learn something good from members of other nations and religions	0.44	
Majority should not determine how minority lives		0.53
All persons should freely choose their lifestyles		0.81
Liberal democracy is the best political system		0.41
I respect the opinions of others even if I do not agree with them		0.45

Results

In order to test the aforementioned research questions, series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. First, ethnocentrism was entered as the criterion variable. In the first model, only demographic variables – GPA, gender, father’s education, and school type. In the second model, variables related to cultural tastes were entered into regression. Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.83, thus showing no presence of auto-regression. The residuals were normally distributed with no apparent signs of heteroscedascity.

The data from Model 1 shows that gender is significantly associated with ethnocentrism, i.e. that male students have 0.58 points higher results than female students. GPA is not significantly associated with ethnocentrism, and the same goes for father’s education, when all other variables are entered into the model. However, we should add here that father’s education

is negatively correlated with ethnocentrism when school type is not entered into the regression model. And finally, school type is significantly associated with ethnocentrism. Namely, students from art schools have on average 1.71 points lower results on the ethnocentrism scale when compared to students from industrial and crafts schools (the reference group), whereas this difference amounts to 1.42 points for students from grammar schools and 0.74 points for students from technical and related schools (Table 2).

Table 2. Hierarchical regression with ethnocentrism as the criterion variable

*Notes: * $p \leq 0,05$; ** $p \leq 0,01$; *** Elementary school was the reference category; **** Industrial and crafts schools were the reference category*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Intercept	8.39	-	8.00	-
Gender	0.58*	0.11*	0.37	0.07
GPA	0.04	0.01	0.14	0.04
Father's education***				
University	-0.56	-0.09	-0.42	-0.07
Secondary school	-0.71	-0.13	-0.67	-0.12
School type****				
Technical and related schools	-0.74*	-0.14*	-0.53	-0.10
Grammar school	-1.42**	-0.25**	-0.95*	-0.17*
Art school	-1.71**	-0.17**	-1.00	-0.10
Preference for highbrow culture			-0.08*	-0.13*
Preference for popular culture			0.07	0.08
Highbrow TV content			-0.02	-0.02
Films and TV series			-0,08	-0,07
Drama TV shows			0.04	0.04
Information TV broadcasting			0.18**	0.13**
	R=0.27 R2=0.07 Adjusted R2=0.07		R=0.34 R2=0.11 Adjusted R2=0.09 $\Delta R2=0.04^{**}$	

However, when cultural taste variables are entered into the model, regression coefficients for school types significantly drop and stay statistically significant only in the case of grammar schools. Among the cultural taste variables, preference for highbrow culture and preference for information TV broadcasting are significantly associated with ethnocentrism, albeit in different directions. To be precise, one-point increase on the preference for highbrow culture scale decreases ethnocentrism by 0.08 points, while one-point increase on the information TV broadcasting preference increases ethnocentrism by 0.18 points.

In order to check the robustness of the finding, a hierarchical regression with liberalism as the criterion variable was conducted. In this case as well, in the first model there are only demographic variables – GPA, gender, father’s education, and school type. In the second model, variables related to cultural tastes were entered into regression. Durbin-Watson statistic equaled 1.92, thus showing no presence of auto-regression. The residuals were normally distributed here as well, with no apparent signs of heteroscedascity.

The results point to the same conclusions as the ones with ethnocentrism as the criterion variables. Namely, male gender is associated with lower liberalism (the difference is 0.65 points on average), which is also the case for school type. Grammar school students have on average 1.27 points higher result on the liberalism scale than the students of industrial and crafts schools, while the same goes for the students of technical and related schools (1.09 points difference).

However, there are a couple of possible caveats that should be mentioned. First, in this case the impact of father’s education remains significant in both models, with students with father with elementary school education having higher results on the liberalism scale than those with fathers with completed secondary education. Second, in addition to the preference for highbrow culture, film and TV series preference is associated with higher liberalism, which is slightly different when compared to the model with ethnocentrism as the criterion variable, where this role was taken by information TV broadcasting.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression with liberalism as the criterion variable
*Notes: * p≤0,05; ** p≤0,01; *** Elementary school was the reference category; **** Industrial and crafts schools were the reference category*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	β	B	β
Intercept	8.39	-	8.00	-
Gender	-0.65**	-0.13**	-0.36	-0.07
GPA	0.01	0.00	-0.09	-0.02
Father's education***				
University	-0.92	-0.14	-0.85	-0.14
Secondary school	-1.02*	-0.19*	-0.98*	-0.18*
School type****				
Technical and related schools	1.09**	0.21**	0.89**	0.17**
Grammar school	1.27**	0.23**	0.80*	0.14*
Art school	0.65	0.07	0.12	0.01
Preference for highbrow culture			0.09***	0.15*
Preference for popular culture			-0.03	-0.04
Highbrow TV content			0.08	0.06
Films and TV series			0.21**	0.19**
Drama TVshows			0.05	0.06
Information TV broadcasting			-0.06	-0.05
	R=0.23 R2=0.06 Adjusted R2=0.05		R=0.37 R2=0.14 Adjusted R2=0.11 ΔR2=0.08**	

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, our study tentatively confirms the value of “homology” arguments (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010) which point to the overlap between social and cultural stratification. In other words, cultural consumption represents an element of social stratification since social classes differ in their cultural tastes and behavior, and this difference is not neutral in terms of social power and existing social hierarchies. Our study represents a type of validation of the aforementioned arguments through the

employment of cultural capital theory in a seemingly distinct domain such as ethnocentrism research and theories. It seems that both ethnocentrism and cultural tastes represent a coherent pattern of class-related values and behaviors with origins in the fundamental class divisions that are reproduced in the cultural domain. However, a word of caution is warranted here since our data cannot clearly distinguish between the two competing theories – aforementioned cultural capital theory and omnivore-univore theory developed by Richard Peterson and his associates (Peterson, 2005; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Simkus, 1992;). Namely, omnivore-univore theory posits that cultural consumption is related to social stratification, but in a little more complex way than cultural capital theory would suggest. In other words, higher classes are omnivorous in their cultural tastes, consuming both highbrow and lowbrow culture, whereas lower classes tend to consume only lowbrow culture. It is reasonable to assume that univore cultural taste is connected to more rigid systems of cultural classification, even though the reasons behind this assumption are very complex and probably not uniform by being related to cultural differences (Sokolov and Sokolova, 2019). Therefore, it can also be hypothesized that univore taste would be correlated with ethnocentrism as a symptom of the aforementioned cultural rigidity in the domain of out-group relations. Here we can note that our results demonstrate that popular culture preference is not connected neither to ethnocentrism nor liberalism, which is quite consistent with hypothesized connection between omnivorous cultural tastes and lower ethnocentrism. Cultural capital theory would suggest that both highbrow and lowbrow tastes are related to ethnocentrism, but that was not the case in our study. Thus, we can conclude that our study does confirm stratified nature of cultural consumption and its implication on other social phenomena, such as ethnocentrism, but cannot decide between different mechanisms that connect these phenomena, since this goes beyond of the scope of our hypotheses and the data analysis plan.

In case of ethnocentrism as a criterion variable, our results fully confirm the results from Elchardus and Siongers (2007). That is, culture theory is confirmed in the current study as well, bearing in mind that both the impact of father's education and, especially, school type become much weaker when cultural taste variables enter the picture. The results can be interpreted within the framework of the so-called symbolic society

(Elchardus, 2009). Namely, Elchardus emphasizes that symbolic society seemingly allows individuals to freely choose their values, tastes and lifestyles. However, different latent social processes and pressures direct individuals into patterned choices which are connected either to their origin or destination classes. In this way, older theories of class society can be joined together with theories that posit pervasiveness of postmodern (late modern) individualism. The growing reflexivity of identity (Giddens, 1991) and individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) within the network society (Castells, 1996) does not imply that all choices are equally probable and that the choices are not patterned by social forces that might not be visible to an individual. The homology between social class and cultural tastes might be weakening, but it still might impact everyday choices in cultural fields in various subtle ways.

The study results also indicate that the “destination hypothesis” regarding the connection between social mobility and cultural taste has more merits than the “origin hypothesis” (Daenekindt and Roose, 2013). It seems that the connection with the father’s education (original class position) ceases to exert an effect on ethnocentrism after the school type (destination class position) had been taken into account. In other words, the correlation between father’s education and ethnocentrism, which is negative, can be fully explained by the fact that children with lower class social background more often attend vocational schools, i.e. schools with lower academic status. Therefore, boundary making that forms a part of primary socialization within family does not have an independent influence on ethnocentrism, while secondary socialization taking place in school does have such an effect. However, here we should also note that generational differentiation effects (Lizardo and Skiles, 2015) in the cultural field limit our conclusions on this specific case, i.e. we are not able to reliably generalize beyond the scope of our sample comprising only the youth.

As a major limitation of the current study, we should acknowledge a very crude nature of our measurement of social class. Namely, we measured only the father’s education as an indicator of social class, even though it can be argued (for instance, see Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010, 18-21) that social class should be clearly distinguished from social status, and from education and income as related but still different dimensions of social positions. As Chan and Goldthorpe (2010) argue, social class is based upon labour market conditions, social status upon honour and esteem, while

education and income can be conceived as supplementary variables whose impact should be tested against social class and social status impacts. In other words, the causal paths of all these social position measurements could be quite distinct and they cannot be used as mutually exchangeable. Therefore, it is advisable that in the future research all these distinct dimensions of social stratification should be examined separately, both empirically and theoretically.

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