

2012

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Tegelaar, Marit, "Intergroup Anxiety, Ethnocentrism, and Willingness to Communicate with Persons Experiencing Homelessness" (2012). *Communication Studies Undergraduate Publications, Presentations and Projects*. Paper 20.

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Intergroup Anxiety, Ethnocentrism, and Willingness to Communicate with Persons Experiencing

Homelessness

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between intergroup anxiety and ethnocentrism on one hand and the willingness to communicate with people experiencing homelessness on the other hand. The study used a convenience sample of 52 participants, a majority within the ages of 18-22. In contrast with the literature, there was no statistical significant correlation between ethnocentrism and intercultural anxiety. It appeared that the participants generally did not have any negative expectations of potential interactions with people experiencing homelessness. Higher levels of ethnocentrism did not produce higher levels of intercultural anxiety. The results did not show the predicted significant negative correlation between ethnocentrism and intercultural willingness to communicate. The hypothesis that intercultural anxiety was negatively correlated with intercultural willingness to communicate was also not supported. The most important finding of this study was that participants who identified with traditionally marginalized groups showed higher levels of willingness to communicate with people experiencing homelessness.

Intergroup Anxiety, Ethnocentrism, and Willingness to Communicate with Persons Experiencing Homelessness

According to the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (n.d.), approximately three million people experience homelessness each year. The declining economy has contributed to an increase in homeless people on the streets and in shelters (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Research on homelessness has focused on the structural causes of homelessness, crime rates among the homeless, homeless youth and mental and physical health issues related to homelessness. Yet, little research has been done on society's perception of people experiencing homelessness and/or the communication patterns between members of the dominant group and people experiencing homelessness.

Aberson & McVean (2008) pointed out the uniqueness of homelessness as a social category. While the boundaries of social categories such as ethnicity and race are fixed, the boundaries of the category of homelessness are permeable. Those of the dominant group may one day experience homelessness, and those currently experiencing homelessness may find housing again.

There appears to be a paradox through which members of the dominant group view people experiencing homelessness. Borchard (2000) explains that society holds two different positions. Either people experiencing homelessness are considered as "deserving of their plight" (p. 1), or as victims of unfortunate social circumstances. Yet, as Aberson and McVean (2008) point out, the dominant group generally holds negative attitudes toward the homeless due to a number of stigmatizing conditions including physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, and criminal involvement.

Barnett, Quackenbush, & Pierce (1997) looked at the perceptions of and attitudes toward the homeless across three age groups: fourth-graders, high school-, and college students. Their sample consisted of 89, 160, and 210 students respectively. Participants filled out a homeless questionnaire that measured their attitudes toward the homeless as well as their perceptions of the causes of

homelessness (bad luck or own fault). They found that students were more likely to attribute homelessness to misfortune than to individual characteristics. Yet, males were more likely to attribute homelessness to personal fault than females. While the researchers found that perceptions and attitudes toward the homeless among these students were generally positive, they found a positive relation between “negative characteristics” and “social maladjustment” attributions and “fear/anger” reactions to a homeless person (p. 2.96). For high school students and college undergraduates only they found a negative relationship between “negative characteristics” attributions and favorable attitudes toward the homeless such as “sympathy/support” and the likelihood of talking to a homeless person. Barnett et al. (1997) thus demonstrated that negative attitudes toward the homeless can have a negative effect on communication. The present study examined the communication patterns of students at a predominantly white university (the in-group or dominant group), and homeless persons (out-group). Specifically, this study investigated the effects of intergroup anxiety and ethnocentrism on students’ reported willingness to communicate with homeless persons.

Intercultural Willingness to Communicate

Willingness to communicate has been frequently studied in the context of communication patterns between American students and international students at universities in the United States. (Mansson, & Myers, 2011; Yu Lu & Chia-Fang Hsu, 2008; Yang Lin, Rancer, & Trimbilas, 2005). Willingness to communicate has also been studied in the area of public health. (Wright, & Frey, 2008; Wright, Frey, & Sopory, 2007; Smith, Kopfman, Lindsey, Massi, & Morrison, 2004). The present study looked at the relevance of this concept in the context of student’s willingness to interact and attitudes toward interacting with people experiencing homelessness. McCroskey & Richmond (1990, cited in Kassing, 1997) established the construct of willingness to communicate, which they defined as “an individual's tendency to initiate communication in encounters with others, when the individual is completely free to choose whether to communicate” (p. 400). Kassing (1997) adapted McCroskey &

Richmond's construct to explore people's intercultural willingness to communicate, which may not be related to a person's general willingness to communicate with e.g. friends, acquaintances and strangers. He adapted the construct and defined intercultural willingness to communicate as "one's predisposition to initiate intercultural communication encounters" (p. 400). The present study used Kassing's intercultural willingness to communicate scale because of the same concern that McCroskey and Richmond's (1990) construct may not take into account sufficiently the relevance of interpersonal and intercultural differences.

Intergroup Anxiety

Stephan, & Stephan (2000, cited in Corenblum & Stephan, 2001) developed the integrated threat model of prejudice or integrated threat theory, following research on intergroup anxiety. This model, which will be referred to in this paper as ITT, considered the attitudes of in-group members toward out-group members (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). ITT focuses on several variables: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). This study focused on the negative effects of intergroup anxiety on communication. Corenblum & Stephan (2001) define intergroup anxiety as "feelings of discomfort that people experience when anticipating or engaging in intergroup interactions." According to Stephan & Stephan (1995), group members experience this anxiety because they expect to be rejected, embarrassed, or misunderstood.

Gudykunst (1995) supported the idea that intergroup interaction can arouse feelings of anxiety. According to Gudykunst, this anxiety is based on negative expectations. Referring to a study by Turner (1988), Gudykunst (1995) furthermore argues that when anxiety is high, individuals are less motivated to communicate with others. In a comparison between intraethnic and interethnic, Gudykunst found that anxiety was higher in interethnic encounters than in intraethnic encounters.

Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Chatel (1992) developed Terror Management Theory, which incorporates the idea of anxiety in intercultural communication. According to Greenberg et al.

(1992), individuals create a “cultural-anxiety buffer”. When individuals treat their own cultural worldview as reality, but encounter individuals who do not validate their worldview, anxiety is generated. Furthermore, Greenberg et al. point out that people generally respond more positively to those who share their worldviews and responds negatively toward those who deviate from their worldviews.

The concept of intergroup anxiety has been used in a wide range of studies. Vorauer, Main, & O’Connell (1998), studying intergroup relations between White Canadians and Native-Canadians, considered how feelings of anxiety members of the in-group experience when interacting with members of the-outgroup can lead to negative evaluations of out-group members. Corenblum & Stephan (2001) studied intergroup anxiety, along with the other variables of ITT, as it relates to negative intergroup attitudes between Euro Canadians and Native Canadians. Furthermore, Renfro, Stephan, Duran, & Clason (2006), found a positive association between intergroup anxiety and negative attitudes toward the beneficiaries of affirmative action policies.

The present study is not the first to use the concept of intergroup anxiety as it relates to attitudes toward the homeless. Aberson & McVean (2008) found that a reduction in intergroup anxiety was associated with more positive attitudes toward the homeless. They also found that positive interactions or contact with homeless people were related to lower levels of anxiety. Yet, they also noted that anxiety was not a consistent mediator between the relationship between contact (quality and quantity) and attitudes toward the homeless, possibly because participants reported few contact experiences/interactions with homeless people. The authors suggested that “anxiety does not impact evaluations until some minimal level of contact is achieved” (p. 3031).

Ethnocentrism

This study used a second independent variable, ethnocentrism, beside the intergroup anxiety variable. Arasaratnam & Banerjee (2007) define ethnocentrism as “a way of seeing one’s own culture as

central to all others and evaluating other cultures based on one's own values (p. 305). Arasaratnam & Banerjee (2007) draw an interesting parallel between ethnocentrism and intercultural anxiety. They use Gudykunst's (2002) finding that "the ability to manage the anxiety related to participating in intercultural interactions, in which uncertainty is inherent, is essential for effective communication" (p. 305) to support the idea that ineffective communication between different cultural groups may be due to ethnocentrism. The present study measured the levels of ethnocentrism of college students at a private, Catholic university. Studying ethnocentrism in this context is worthwhile because students at this university represent a rather homogenous group with by and large the same values. Furthermore, students generally represent the middle- and upper-class. It is plausible that these students believe that they have different values and views than do homeless people and may consider their values superior to the values of homeless people.

Prejudice

To create a more comprehensive picture of the factors that contribute to a person's willingness to communicate intercultural, it is worthwhile to discuss the impact of prejudice. Binder, Brown, Zagefka, Funke, Kessler, Mummendey, Maquil, Demoulin, & Leyens (2009) defined prejudice as "negative beliefs, emotions, or behavioral intentions regarding another person based on that person's membership in a social group" (p. 844). In their study on implicit and explicit ethnocentrism, Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji (2004) distinguish between ethnocentrism and prejudice by pointing out that prejudice involves "negative evaluation of and hostility toward a social group", while ethnocentrism "includes the tendency to form and maintain negative evaluations and hostility toward multiple groups that are not one's own." A study by Cunningham et al. (2004) also linked ethnocentrism to prejudice by citing a variety of studies that found "consistently high correlations between prejudices toward various out-groups" (p. 1333). Furthermore, Cunningham et al. (2004) cited research in psychology (e.g. Block & Block, 1951) that found that those who are high in ethnocentrism generally reach judgments

about others quickly and are unlikely to change these judgments. Cunningham et al. (2004) found statistically significant correlations which suggest that prejudice is “ethnocentrically organized” (p. 1338).

Rationale

Stephan & Stephan’s (1985) research supports a relationship between intercultural anxiety and ethnocentrism and thus provides a rationale to study both concepts in relation to the present study’s dependent variable: intercultural willingness to communicate. They found that anxiety is more likely to occur when a person is high in ethnocentrism. People who are more culturally relative and thus less ethnocentric are better at understanding and predicting behavior and are less likely to experience uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with people from a different group (Gudykunst 2004, cited in Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

There is also plenty of evidence to suggest a relationship between intercultural anxiety and prejudice, which may be correlated with ethnocentrism. A study on intergroup prejudice between minority and majority groups in Europe found that contact between the groups reduced prejudice, but that this effect was mediated by intergroup anxiety (Binder et al. 2009). Wilder & Shapiro (1989) also pointed toward a relationship between intergroup anxiety and prejudice. They explained that when members of the in-group experience anxiety, they “may fill the void by relying on their expectations of how the out-group members should behave (Schank & Abelson, 1977; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, quoted in Wilder & Shapiro, 1989). Furthermore, they touched on previous research that found that feelings of anxiety can prevent us from learning new information that may challenge our attitudes (Detterman, 1975, quoted in Wilder & Shapiro, 1989). They also point out that “encoding positive information is easier when one is in a positive mood than in a negative mood. Therefore, positive acts by a member of a hostile out-group may have less impact on an anxious perceiver because the latter’s negative mood

matches the negative behavior of the majority better than the favorable behavior of the positive member” (p. 61).

Britt, Boniecki, Vescio, Biernat, & Brown (1996) adapted Stephan & Stephan’s (1985) measure of intergroup anxiety but adjusted it to measure intergroup anxiety towards African Americans (IATAA). They studied the effect of intergroup anxiety on measures of prejudice. Britt et al. (1996) conducted three studies, with respectively 631, 418, 1,158 European-Americans from different universities. They found a statistically significant correlation between intergroup anxiety and anti-Black attitudes, which they said suggests that “individuals who feel more anxious around African-Americans also possess more negative views toward the ethnic group” (p. 1182). They also pointed out that one must look critically at this relationship, for feelings of anxiety may be due to discomfort, rather than negative feelings toward the out-group.

Finally, previous research has established links between ethnocentrism and anxiety, the independent variables, and intercultural willingness to communicate, the dependent variable. Lin & Rancer (2003) found that one’s level of ethnocentrism and “intercultural communication apprehension”, a concept developed by Gudykunst who also elaborated on Stephan & Stephan’s (1985) research on intercultural anxiety, is correlated with one’s willingness to communicate intercultural. Roach & Olaniran (2001) performed a study on the relationship between international teaching assistants’ levels of intercultural anxiety or communication apprehension and willingness to communicate. They found that intercultural anxiety/apprehension was negatively correlated with willingness to communicate. Unlike the present study, their study did not take into account the participants’ level of ethnocentrism.

This paper thus argues that intercultural anxiety, ethnocentrism (and prejudice inferred from one’s level of ethnocentrism) influence one’s willingness to communicate with members of different cultural groups. The previously mentioned studies point towards a relationship between these independent and dependent variables. No original research has been conducted to apply these variables

to a study of communication patterns between middle and upper-class students and members of the homeless community. Because of this gap in the research, I am proposing the following hypotheses to examine the relationship between intergroup anxiety and ethnocentrism/prejudice and the impact of these variables on student's reported willingness to communicate with homeless people.

H1: Ethnocentrism is positively correlated with intergroup anxiety.

H2: Ethnocentrism is negatively correlated with cultural willingness to communicate.

H3: Intergroup anxiety is negatively correlated with intercultural willingness to communicate.

H4: Women are more willing to communicate interculturally than men.

H5: Women indicate lower levels of intergroup anxiety than men.

In addition, the following research questions were asked of the data:

R1: Do those who identify as being part of a traditionally marginalized group indicate higher levels of intercultural willingness to communicate than those who did not?

R2: Is country of origin (America/Europe) a factor in one's self-reported levels of ethnocentrism?

R3: Is country of origin a factor in one's self-reported levels of intercultural willingness to communicate?

R4: Do those who identify as lower-class indicate higher levels of intercultural willingness to communicate than those who identified as middle- or upper-class?

Method

Measures

Intergroup anxiety. The intergroup anxiety measure is based on Stephan & Stephan's (1992) intercultural anxiety scale. The questions concern feelings when interacting with members of the out-group. The scale, originally used to measure the anxiety European-Americans experience when interacting with African-American adolescents, was adapted to measure the feelings members of the in-

group experience when interacting with homeless people. Stephan & Stephan found (1992) acceptable reliability coefficients for both their before and after measures of intercultural anxiety (Cronbach's alpha .79 and .87).

A reliability test of the present study's adaptation of the Stephan & Stephan (1992) scale was conducted. The reliability test produced a Cronbach's alpha of .74. This number is similar to the Cronbach's Alpha that Stephan & Stpehan (1992) found for their "pre-port measure" of intercultural anxiety (.79). The intercultural anxiety scale was created by adding up the scores for each question with possible answers ranging from 1 (low anxiety) through 10 (high anxiety). The maximum score for all 15 questions is then 150. Participants indicated a mean intercultural anxiety score of 88 (standard deviation 13.9). The lowest score reported was 54 and the highest score reported was 114. On average, then, participants indicated moderate levels of intercultural anxiety.

Ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism was measured using Neulip & McCroskey's (1997) Ethnocentrism Scale consisting of 24 items of which 15 are scored. The measure uses a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5. Neulip (2002) did a reliability check of McCroskey's measure and found that the scale accurately measures ethnocentrism (Cronbach's alpha = .87, M = 2.22, SD = 4.5). For the present study, a reliability test of the 24-item ethnocentrism scale adopted from Neulip & McCroskey's (1997) was conducted. One item ("Lifestyles in other cultures are just as valid as those in my culture") was dropped to improve reliability, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .76. Reliability was lower than expected. Neulip & McCroskey (1997) found a Cronbach's alpha of .87. All but 3 participants answered each of the questions measuring ethnocentrism. An ethnocentrism variable was computed as a sum of the 24 items, in accordance with the method used by Neulip & McCroskey (1997). Some of the items were reversed prior to analysis. According to the authors, scores greater than 80 indicate high levels of ethnocentrism and scores below 50 indicate low levels of ethnocentrism. The mean score for all participants was 63, which suggests that on average, participants indicate moderate levels of ethnocentrism. The minimum

score was 49, whereas the maximum score was 76. This means that none of the participants indicated high levels of ethnocentrism as defined by Neuliep & McCroskey (1997). The standard deviation was 6.7.

Intercultural willingness to communicate. Intercultural willingness to communicate was measured using Kassing's (1997) scale (Cronbach's alpha = .91). The measure consists of 5 items, each proposing a situation. Participants are asked to indicate the percentage of time they would choose to interact were they to encounter this situation. The scale was adjusted to measure willingness to communicate with members from a different social class instead of homeless people explicitly, to not give away the purpose and research question of the study. A reliability test of the adjusted version of Kassing's (1997) scale was conducted, which resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of .85. Kassing (1997) found a Cronbach's Alpha of .91, however a Cronbach's Alpha of .85 also indicates good reliability. The mean intercultural willingness to communicate score was 277. It must be noted that Kassing (1997) used a 6-item scale instead of a 5-item scale, as was used for the purpose of this study. The maximum score for the present study was 475, whereas the maximum score in Kassing's study was 600. He argued that scores under 300, or 250 for a 5-item scale, indicate a general unwillingness to communicate. Scores over 250, or 300 for the present study indicate a slight willingness to communicate interculturally. Scores above 400 (333) and 500 (417) indicate moderate and high willingness to communicate interculturally respectively. These statistics indicate that participants on average are somewhat neutral about their willingness to communicate with people experiencing homelessness.

Procedures

The survey was created using online survey software and was distributed by posting a link to the survey on the researcher's social media site's page. Emails containing the link to the survey were also sent out to undergraduate students at a small comprehensive Masters University in the Pacific Northwestern United States.

Participants

This study thus used a convenience sample. A total of 52 people participated in the survey. The majority of participants were female (N=36), compared to 10 male participants. 6 people did not indicate their sex. The youngest participant was 15 years old. The majority of participants (approximately three quarters) were between the ages of 18-22. Two-thirds of the participants (N=30) indicated the United States or Mexico as their country of origin. All represented countries (including Germany, Norway, Romania, and Ukraine) in Europe were grouped together and made up one-third (N=15) of the sample. The United States and Mexico were grouped together for practical purposes but also because residents of both countries have relatively little contact with people from other countries due to geographic factors whereas there is a lot of travel across borders in Europe. The rationale behind this decision was that geographic characteristics may account for group differences in ethnocentrism, intercultural anxiety, and intercultural willingness to communicate. 84 percent (N=39) of the sample identified themselves as middle class (either upper-middle class or lower-middle class). 11.5 percent (N=6) identified themselves as lower-upper class and only 1 person identified him or herself as lower class.

Results

Hypothesis One predicted that ethnocentrism would be positively correlated with intergroup anxiety. Bivariate correlations tests were run to test Hypothesis One. Despite Stephan & Stephan (1985) finding that anxiety is more likely to occur when a person is high in ethnocentrism, the relationship between ethnocentrism and intergroup anxiety was insignificant ($r = .184, p = .249$). The relationship was in the expected positive direction however, which suggests that a study using a larger sample perhaps might find that one's level of ethnocentrism is predictive of one's level of intercultural anxiety.

Hypothesis Two predicted that ethnocentrism would be negatively correlated with intercultural willingness to communicate. While the bivariate correlation test showed that the relationship between

these two variables was in the expected negative direction, the relationship was insignificant ($p = .231$). It appears that higher levels of ethnocentrism are not predictive of one's intercultural willingness to communicate. In the present study, one's level of ethnocentrism was not a satisfactory explanation for one's willingness to communicate with people experiencing homelessness.

Hypothesis Three predicted that intercultural anxiety would be negatively correlated with intercultural willingness to communicate. The bivariate correlation test again showed a relationship in the expected negative direction, but was insignificant ($p = .244$). Higher levels of intercultural anxiety were not predictive of intercultural willingness to communicate. Intercultural anxiety was not a factor in the participants' willingness to communicate with people experiencing homelessness.

Hypothesis Four predicted that women would report to be more willing to communicate interculturally than men. An independent samples t-test was run to test Hypothesis Four. The results showed no significant differences in intercultural willingness between men ($M=243.8$, $SD=104.9$) and women ($M= 274$, $SD=107.1$); $t(43)=-.79$, $p=.434$). Hypothesis Four was thus rejected.

Hypothesis Five predicted that women would indicate lower levels of intergroup anxiety than men. An independent samples t-test was run to test this hypothesis. The results did show a significant difference in men's ($M=78.9$, $SD=15.1$) and women's ($M=91.21$, $SD=12.5$) reported levels of intercultural anxiety; $t(42)=-2.61$, $p= .012$. These results disproved the fifth hypothesis and showed the exact opposite relationship.

Research Question One asked whether those who identify as being part of a traditionally marginalized group would indicate higher levels of intercultural willingness to communicate than those who did not. An independent samples t-test was run to analyze the difference in intercultural willingness to communicate between those who identify with a traditionally marginalized group (rooted in for example ethnicity, race, or sexuality) and those who do not identify with a traditionally marginalized

group. The independent samples t-test showed a significant ($t(43)=2.21, p=.032$) difference between the groups in intercultural willingness to communicate. Those who identified with a traditionally marginalized group reported higher levels of intercultural willingness to communicate ($M=334.4, SD=89.9$), than those who answered they do not belong to a marginalized group ($M=250.5, SD=104.2$). This result suggests that those who know what it is like to be part of a marginalized group and to be a member of the out-group, are more willing to communicate with people from other marginalized groups, including people experiencing homelessness.

Research Question Two sought whether one's country of origin (America/Europe) was a factor in one's self-reported levels of ethnocentrism and intercultural willingness to communicate? An independent samples t-test was run and showed a significant difference in self-reported levels of ethnocentrism between those who had selected the United States or Mexico as their country of origin ($M=61.7, SD=6.0$) and those who had indicated a country in Europe as their country of origin ($M=66.6, SD=7.3$); $t(40)=-2.31, p=.026$. While one may expect that Europeans exhibit lower levels of ethnocentrism because of the large European border-free zones, the European participants in the present study indicated higher levels of ethnocentrism ($\bar{x} = 66.6$) than the American/Mexican participants ($\bar{x} = 61.7$). There was no significant difference between intercultural willingness to communicate between those who selected the United States or Mexico as their country of origin ($M=260.2, SD=108.7$) and those who selected a country in Europe as their country of origin ($M=277.7, SD=105.8$); $t(42)=-.50, p=.618$.

Research Question Three explored whether those who identify as lower-class would indicate higher levels of intercultural willingness to communicate than those who identified as middle- or upper-class? A One-Way Anova test did not show significant ($F(3,41)= 1.61, p = .203$) class differences in the participants' intercultural willingness to communicate. The result may be due to the lack of people who indicated to identify with any of the upper-class categories and the fact that only one person indicated

to identify as lower-class. Even when the categories of “upper” and “lower” for each class (upper, middle, and lower) were taken together, the result was insignificant.

Discussion

The results indicate no statistically significant correlation between ethnocentrism and intercultural anxiety. This result, while in the expected positive direction, was somewhat unexpected because of a previously supported relationship between the two variables, including the finding by Stephan and Stephan (1985) that high levels of ethnocentrism lead to high levels of intercultural anxiety. These relatively low and moderate levels of ethnocentrism reported by the participants matched the relatively low and moderate levels of intercultural anxiety that they reported. It appears that the participants generally do not have negative expectations of interactions with people from different groups. The lack of variability in the responses may have contributed to this insignificant result. Nevertheless, we cannot confirm Gudykunst's (2004) hypothesis that people less ethnocentric are better at understanding and predicting behavior and are less likely to experience uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with people from a different group, in this case homeless people, on the basis of this study's findings.

The literature review also suggested that it is possible to infer one's likelihood to be prejudiced from one's reported level of ethnocentrism. Previous studies found that high levels of intercultural anxiety are correlated with negative attitudes. The present study's insignificant relationship between ethnocentrism and intercultural anxiety either suggests that there is no relationship between prejudice and intercultural anxiety, or that we cannot infer prejudice from ethnocentrism. It is possible that a separate measure of prejudice in addition to a measure of ethnocentrism would have produced a significant result. Another explanation is that ethnocentrism and prejudice are not intrinsically related to one another.

Despite Lin & Rancer's (1997) finding that there is a negative correlation between ethnocentrism and intercultural willingness to communicate, the result of this study, while in the expected negative direction, does not support this finding. Again, the insignificant result may be due to a lack of variability in the responses, since the vast majority of participants indicated moderate levels of ethnocentrism and a neutral stance toward their willingness to communicate interculturally. It may be argued that this result is due to the fact that there are few differences in values between people from different social classes and that one's level of ethnocentrism doesn't apply to one's attitude of homeless people. Nevertheless, the fact that there are few differences between the values of the two groups does not mean that the dominant group does not perceive that they have different values than homeless people.

Despite Roach & Olaniran's (2001) finding that intercultural anxiety (or "apprehension") was negatively correlated with intercultural willingness to communicate, the present study did not support this finding. Again, the result may be due to the homogenous nature of the participants' answers. Also, if we infer that those who are more willing to communicate interculturally have more positive attitudes toward the out-group than those who are less willing to communicate interculturally, the present study's findings are similar to the findings of Aberson and McVean (2008) who also found that anxiety is not consistently predictive of people's attitudes toward other groups.

While it was expected that there would be gender differences in intercultural anxiety, the results were in the opposite direction. It was expected that women would indicate lower levels of anxiety than men, but the present study showed that women reported higher levels of anxiety than men. Previous studies had indicated that females have more positive attitudes toward the homeless than men. Based on these findings, I proposed that females would also be less anxious than men. It appears that we cannot infer from these previous studies' results that intercultural attitudes are related

to intercultural anxiety. The fact that there was no statistically significant gender difference in willingness to communicate the homeless supports this.

Even though the hypotheses could not be confirmed, the study did yield an interesting finding. Those who identified as being part of a traditionally marginalized group were more willing to communicate with people experiencing homelessness. This finding is consistent with Standpoint Theory. Wood (2005), who applied Standpoint Theory to the feminist movement, argued that “members of privileged groups have a vested interest in not seeing oppression and inequity that accompany and [...] makes possible their privilege” (p. 62) and that members of the subordinate group are more likely to be aware of their position in society as well as other people’s position in society and are more likely to be aware of the oppression of other marginalized groups.

If the present study were to be replicated, it would be useful to use a random sampling method and to survey a larger pool of participants. The participants in the present study represented a very homogenous group. Only one participant identified him/herself as lower-class, which is a limitation of this study. Future research should also make efforts to study the effects of prejudice on intercultural willingness to communicate and not infer one’s level of prejudice from one’s level of ethnocentrism. Furthermore, questions specifically tailored toward attitudes toward people experiencing homelessness may produce results that offer more insight into the attributes that people ascribe to homeless experiencing homelessness.

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Appendix

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Intercultural Willingness to Communicate (1-500)	277	108	33	475
Ethnocentrism	63	6.7	49	76
Intercultural Anxiety	88	13.90	54	114
Sex (1=male)	1.78	.42	1	2
Social class (1=lower-lower , 6 = upper-upper)	3.26	.77	2	6
Marginalized (1=yes, 2=no)	1.78	.42	1	2