The Relationship between Universal Orientation and

Attitudes toward the Outgroup amid Ethno-Religious Violence

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Abstract

In ten years of ethno-religious violence between Christians and Muslims in Jos, Nigeria, more than 3,800 lives have been lost (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The ongoing cycle of violence has resulted in a highly segregated society with little interaction between Christians and Muslims. A mechanism by which stereotypes can be reduced is necessary to prevent further deterioration of the society. The purpose this study was to identify factors that are related to a peaceful ethos, conceptualized as of attitude toward the other religious group, forgiveness, empathy, harmony, and attitude toward violence. Three predictor variables were studied: universal orientation, selectively attending to and emphasizing the similarities between the self and diverse others (Phillips & Ziller, 1997); implicit theory, the implicit belief of whether personality attributes are fixed or can be changed; and intergroup contact. Universal orientation and implicit theory were strong predictors of all peaceful ethos variables. Intergroup contact significantly predicted attitude toward the other religious group and attitude toward violence. Therefore, training in universal orientation and implicit theory may foster peaceful ethos and assist in peacebuilding efforts in Jos and other areas of violent conflict.

Introduction

Jos, Plateau State is in the heart of Nigeria's Middle Belt, the region where the predominantly Muslim North meets the predominantly Christian South. Plateau State is currently one of the main sites of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria (Higazi, 2011). In over ten years of ethno-religious violence, more than 3,800 lives have been lost (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Plateau State experienced its first widespread violent crisis in September 2001 in the state capital of Jos. During six days of destruction and killing, about 1,000 people were killed (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Violent crisis was renewed in Jos in November 2008. Around 700 people were killed and countless houses, churches, mosques, and businesses were destroyed (Ostien, 2009). Another crisis sparked in January 2010 (Higazi, 2011). Bombs later exploded in Jos on Christmas Eve 2010, killing at least 80 individuals and leading to a month of tit-for-tat violence with over 200 fatalities in the month of January 2011 (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Within the past year, violent riots sparked in August 2011 when Christian and Muslim youth clashed over a disputed prayer ground on a Muslim holiday (Obateru, 2011). Suicide bombers from the Boko Haram Islamist militant group also attacked three churches in Jos in early 2012. These bomb attacks lead to immediate reprisal attacks against Muslims (BBC News Africa, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

The factors underlying the conflict in Jos are multifaceted and complex, including elements of ethnicity, politics, and religion (Ostien, 2009). The ethnic component of the conflict is rooted in the concept of indigeneship in the federal constitution of Nigeria whereby *indigenous* tribes are allowed special rights within each state that the *settlers* do not receive (Higazi, 2011). In Plateau State, a large number of individuals from the Hausa and Fulani tribes have resided in Plateau State for many generations, but they are still classified as *settler* according to the federal constitution. Therefore, many of these settlers view the crisis as primarily over injustice and tribal disputes (Korb, 2011) because of the limited rights they have within Plateau State.

The ethnic fights over indigene/settler rights are complicated by the fact that the indigenous tribes are predominantly Christian whereas the settler tribes are predominantly Muslim (Ostien, 2009). Although the roots of the conflict in Jos are predominantly ethnic and political, the violence has taken a strong religious dimension, particularly since the bombs on Christmas Eve 2010. Indeed, most of the grassroots discussion of the conflict centers around the religious component with Christians fearing religious domination by the Muslims (Higazi,

2011). Most of the indigenous Christians tend classify the conflict as primarily religious (Korb, 2011), believing that Muslims are engaging in *jihad* in order to Islamize Nigeria.

This belief of a religiously-based conflict, combined with prejudicial attitudes of the other religion, results in considerable fear and plays a major role in the ongoing conflict (Higazi, 2011). Furthermore, fanatical religious preaching on both sides stir up emotions, increasing anger and hostility between religions. The ongoing cycle of violence has resulted in Jos city being segregated into Muslim and Christian areas with little interaction between individuals of the two religious groups (Y. Pam, personal communication, 4 July 2012). This highly segregated atmosphere has substantially increased mistrust, suspicion and stereotypes between the two religious groups. Therefore, a mechanism by which stereotypes can be reduced is necessary to prevent further deterioration of the society in Jos and to foster reconciliation and a sustainable peace.

Peaceful Ethos

Communal violence results in feelings of enmity between conflicting groups including fear, mistrust, and hostility, which Bar-Tal (2000) termed a conflictive ethos. Currently, the atmosphere in Jos can clearly be classified as a conflictive ethos. Sustainable peaceful relations between two conflicting parties requires that this conflictive ethos be transformed into a peace ethos. In other words, peaceful coexistence involves not just a cessation of violence, but accompanying changes in attitudes between the groups (Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, & Hagengimana, 2005) and positive attitudes toward peace (Bar-Tal, 2000). This study conceptualized a peaceful ethos by five variables: attitudes toward the other religious group, empathy, forgiveness, hope for a peaceful co-existence, and attitude toward violence.

Attitude toward members of the out-group has three different dimensions: affective, behavioral, and cognitive (Brown, 1995). In the Jos conflict, affective attitude is how one feels toward individuals from the other religious group. The behavioral dimension is the degree to which an individual thinks the two religious groups should separate themselves (negative) as opposed to working together and engage in dialogue (positive). The cognitive dimension of attitude consists of the stereotypical beliefs about individuals from the other religious group. In Jos, one such belief is that all individuals from the other religious group are dishonest. Each of these three dimensions of attitude toward the other religious group were measured in this study.

Empathy is "an affective response that is more appropriate for another's situation than one's own" (Hoffman, 2000, p. 4). Simply, empathy is feeling concern for another individual.

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Oliner and Oliner (1998) found that individuals who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust were empathetic toward the plight of the Jews. The non-rescuers also understood what was happening to the Jews but they had considerably less empathy toward the Jews than the rescuers. Empathy plays a key role in helping individuals overcome cultural norms of stereotypes and prejudice, so it is an important peaceful ethos variable.

Forgiveness consists of letting go of anger and the desire for revenge when one has been wronged (Staub et al., 2005). Forgiveness produces positive emotional benefits for victims. For example, forgiveness is necessary in order for victims of violence to resolve their anger and restore hope in the future (Enright, 2001). In an intractable conflict, forgiveness for the harm done by members of the other group is important for a lasting reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2000).

Violent conflict tends to create a general hopelessness regarding the future. Therefore, hope for a peaceful future is important for individuals who have suffered violence (Lowe, 2011). In Jos, some individuals believe that peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims is not possible. Hope for a harmonious future together with the adversarial group is an important variable to consider in an area of violent conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000).

Finally, violent rhetoric is common in market conversations, social media (Usman, 2012), and in places of worship (McCain, Gaiya, & Korb, 2012). A comment sentiment is, "Since the government has failed to protect us, we must get arms to defend ourselves." Therefore, the belief that vigilante violence is an acceptable response to violence is also an important attitude to measure as a negative dimension of a peace ethos. A peaceful ethos would result in a negative attitude toward personal use of violence.

In order to promote peaceful coexistence in Jos, Nigeria, it is important to identify factors that are related to these key peaceful ethos variables. This study examined four potential predictor variables: universal orientation, implicit theory, contact with the other religious group, and belief about whether the violent conflict is politically motivated or religiously motivated.

Universal Orientation

Stereotyping requires certain foundational cognitive processes (Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998). Allport (1954) believed that one of these cognitive processes is the tendency to categorize individuals based on their differences. Phillips and Ziller (1997) proposed that just as individuals can focus on the differences between human beings, they can also focus on the similarities. When the focus is on similarities, an individual is less likely to categorize people based on differences, less likely to make a negative evaluation of a person from a

different group, and more likely to feel an integration between themselves and others from diverse groups. Thus, Phillips and Ziller identified universal orientation as selectively attending to and emphasizing the similarities between the self and diverse others. Universal orientation has been proposed as a fundamental mechanism by which prejudice towards individuals in the out-group is reduced.

Racism can be found in children as young as five years old (Levy, Rosenthal, & Herrera-Alcazar, 2010). However, young children have more negative attitudes toward individuals of ethnic out-groups than older children (Doyle & Aboud (1995). The ability to perceive similarities between individuals of other races, or universal orientation, has been proposed as a mechanism by which children become less biased over time. For example, Black-Gutman and Hickson (1996) found that universal orientation was related to greater racial tolerance among children.

Amongst adults, those high in universal orientation are just as accepting of individuals from ethnic out-groups as they are of individuals from the ethnic in-group. On the other hand, those low in universal orientation are less accepting of individuals from an ethnic out-group (Phillips & Ziller, 1997). In the conflict zone of Bosnia-Herzegovina, universal orientation was found to be positively related to cross-ethnic contact, interethnic hope, intergroup attitudes, intergroup friendship, and motivation to become involved in peacebuilding intentions amongst secondary school students (Lowe, 2011).

Therefore, this study was interested in the relationship between universal orientation and a peaceful ethos in the conflict zone of Jos, Nigeria. However, whereas other studies focused on the relationship between universal orientation and attitudes towards individuals from diverse ethnic groups, this study will examine the relationship between universal orientation and attitudes towards individuals from another religious group.

<div align="center">Implicit Theory</div>

Another mechanism by which a peaceful ethos may be fostered is through an individual's implicit theory of human personality. Similar to universal orientation, the concept of implicit theory assumes that stereotyping requires certain foundational cognitive processes, and individuals vary in the degree to which they engage in these processes. However, here the cognitive process is the implicit belief of whether personality attributes are fixed or can be changed (Levy et al., 1998). An individual who holds an entity theory of human personality believes that human traits are fixed and cannot be changed. Because stereotyping is essentially attributing a fixed set of traits to all individuals within a group, those who hold an entity theory should strongly endorse stereotypes. In contrast, an

incremental theory of human personality is the belief that human traits are malleable. An incremental theorist has a more dynamic understanding of human behavior, focusing more on how a person's needs, goals, and experiences influence their behavior (Levy, 1999). Thus, incremental theorists should not endorse stereotypical traits of a different group.

Levy and colleagues (1998) found that, as predicted, entity theorists made more trait judgments of behavior than incremental theorists entity. They furthermore found that entity theorists made more stereotypical judgments of ethnic groups than those with incremental theories. In other words, whereas entity theorists tended to judge behavior based on fixed traits of the individual, incremental theorists tended to consider how the situation might have influenced the behavior.

In other words, if an entity theorist observes Sam doing a bad action, then that person will assume that Sam's bad behavior is the result of his bad personality traits. Thus, Sam cheats on his exam because he is a bad person. However, the incremental theorist will consider the situation to try to identify factors that might have caused the behavior. For example, the incremental theorist might decide that Sam cheated on his exam because the exam questions did not reflect the content taught in class.

Furthermore, entity theorists remember stereotype-consistent information more than stereotype-inconsistent information, while the reverse holds true for incremental theorists (Plaks, Stroessner, Dweck, & Sherman, 2001). In this study, participants were presented with information that either was consistent with a stereotype (such as a priest being helpful to a stranger) or inconsistent with a stereotype (such as a priest cutting in a queue). Across four studies, the entity theorists remembered the stereotype-consistent information more, whereas the incremental theorists either remembered more stereotype-inconsistent information or had no difference between stereotype consistent and inconsistent information. Thus, entity theorists tend to resist evidence that is contrary to their stereotypes through selective attention. On the other hand, incremental theorists appear to be more willing to consider information that is contrary to a stereotype, which helps them develop a dynamic, context-sensitive understanding of an individual.

Again, most of the studies have examined the relationship between implicit theory and stereotypes toward ethnic groups whereas few studies have examined the relationship between incremental theory and stereotypes formed against members of a different religious group. Furthermore, no research has examined how incremental theory may relate to other peaceful ethos variables such as empathy, forgiveness, hope, and attitude toward violence.

Intergroup Contact

In 1954, Allport formulated the contact hypothesis that stated that positive contact between individuals of outgroups reduces prejudice. A meta-analysis of 515 studies that have examined the contact hypothesis over sixty years provides convincing evidence for the validity of the contact hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). When a person interacts with those in an out-group, they develop more positive attitudes toward the individuals they interact with, more positive attitudes toward the entire out-group, and even more positive attitudes toward other out-groups that were not represented in the interaction. Whereas most of the research supporting the contact hypothesis focuses on individuals of different ethnic groups, the contact hypothesis has also found support between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon (Henry & Hardin, 2006). Therefore, Pettigrew and Tropp conclude that intergroup contact is a practical way of improving intergroup relations.

Interaction with individuals from the out-group may help improve attitudes for three reasons (Pettigrew, 1998). First, interacting with out-group members helps one learn about the out-group. For example, if a stereotype is that all members of an out-group are terrorists, then interacting with a friendly member of that out-group can help the individual learn that their belief is mistaken. Second, a pleasant interaction can lead to positive emotions toward that out-group. Third, the interaction can help one re-assess their in-group, and understand that the in-group customs and beliefs may not be the only customs and beliefs that are acceptable.

Because the contact hypothesis has such widespread support in improving intergroup attitudes, intergroup contact was included in this study as a basis for comparing the impact of universal orientation and implicit theory on peaceful ethos.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that are related to peaceful ethos amid a violent conflict. As such, the key dependent variables included attitudes toward individuals from the other religious group in terms of affect, behavior, and cognition. Further peaceful ethos variables included empathy, forgiveness, hope for a harmonious future, and attitude toward violence. Four predictor variables were studied. The possible predictor variables included universal orientation, implicit theory, the degree of contact with individuals from the other religion, and belief about the cause of conflict in Jos as being primarily religious or political.

<center>Methods</center>

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of students at the University of Jos. The students attended the educational psychology course that is required of all second-year education students. A total of 203 students participated (53% male, 47% female). The average age of the participants was 24.8 years. The majority of the participants were Christian (89%), followed my Muslim (8%)[1], and other (3%).

Only 43% of the sample reported as being an indigene of Plateau State. However, 57% of the participants reported attending secondary school in Plateau State. Furthermore, the university is located in a "border area" of Jos, close to the areas where violence tends to erupt. The academic year in which the data was collected experienced a number of interruptions due to violence, including one incident where a few students were rumored to have been killed near the student hostels. Therefore, virtually all of the students who participated in this study should have directly experienced the violent conflict. Indeed, 75% of the participants indicated being personally affected by the crisis, ranging from having a relative or friend killed (30%), a relative or friend injured (39%), they had personally been injured (1%), they had to flee from violence (23%), or their place of worship was either damaged (17%) or entirely destroyed (15%).

Instrument

Participants completed a questionnaire to measure the ten variables of interest. All variables except intergroup contact were measured on a 7-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Attitudes toward the other religion was measured by three variables. Affect was measured by the four items on the Affection subsection of Allophilia scale developed by Pittinsky, Rosenthal, and Montoya (2011). The Affection scale measures positive affective evaluations of outgroup members. For example, one item was, "I respect people from the other religion." Five items measured behavior, the degree to which an individual thinks the two religious groups should separate themselves (negative) versus engage in more dialogue (positive). For example, two items included, "Christians and Muslims should dialogue more" (positive) and "The two religions need to separate from each other as much as possible" (negative). This scale had two positive items and three negative items. Cognition was

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[1] The difference between Christian and Muslim students is reflective of the enrolment in the Faculty of Education at the University of Jos in general. Though the city at large is more equally divided between Christians and Muslims, the university is predominantly Christian. The university itself is a federal university.

measured by stereotypes about individuals from the other religious group, such as "All people from the other religion are violent." Cognition was measured by five items, two positive and three negative. Both behavior and cognition items were developed by the researcher based on sentiments within the context.

Empathy was measured by four items developed by the researcher reflecting the degree to which an individual has considered the causes and impacts of the violence from the perspective of the other religion. For example, an item related to the cause of the violence was, "Some people from the other religion think that our people caused crisis." An example item related to the impact of the violence was, "People from the other religion have been hurt by crisis as much as my people have."

Four items were included in the questionnaire to measure forgiveness. These items were selected from the Orientation to the Other (Readiness to Reconcile) scale that was developed for victims from the Rwandan genocide (Staub et al., 2005). The original scale consisted of 45 items. Four of these items were selected to reflect the degree to which an individual has forgiven the other group, and the referent in the item was changed to "people from the other religion." A sample item was, "I forgive the people from the other religion for what they've done during crisis."

Hope for a harmonious future was based off of other items from the Orientation to the Other (Readiness to Reconcile) scale (Staub et al., 2005). Five items were developed for this scale such as, "There can be a better future with Christians and Muslims living together in harmony."

Attitude toward violence was assessed using four items developed by the researcher. The items were developed based off of common statements heard in public conversations, such as "Since the government has failed to protect us, we must get arms to defend ourselves." A negative item was, "I support personal self-defence but not aggressively using violence against other religion."

Universal orientation was measured by four items taken from the 20-item Universal Orientation Scale developed by Phillips & Ziller (1997). Items were selected because they were general in nature and reflected the Nigerian context. For example, one item was, "I tend to value similarities over differences when I meet someone."

Items to measure implicit theory were based off of the implicit theory of morality measure (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). However, the five items for this measure were specifically written to focus on whether individuals had incremental or entity theories of

violence. For example, a positive item was " Bad people can change if given the proper support." A negative item was, "People who are violent cannot be changed."

For intergroup contact, participants were asked to rate how much contact they had with individuals from the other religious groups in seven contexts (5=Every day, 4=About once a week, 3=About once a month, 2=About once a year, 1=Never). The seven contexts included greeting, sharing meals, business transactions, spending leisure time, working, studying, and spending time with friends.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate the most important cause of the crises in Plateau state by circling one of the following: religion, tribal competition, politics, economics, and injustice.

Procedure

Four different questionnaires, one of which was the questionnaire for this study, were randomly distributed as course credit to the 850 students enrolled in the educational psychology core course. At the end of a class session, the instructor gave directions for the questionnaires and class representatives distributed the questionnaires to the students. Confidentiality was assured both verbally by the lecturer and in writing in the questionnaire instructions. The questionnaires were returned by the students to the instructor within three weeks. Participants completed the questionnaire in February 2012, just a few weeks before the first suicide bombing of churches by Boko Haram.

Results

The means and standard deviations for the peaceful ethos variables and the three continuous predictor variables are presented in Table 1 and the correlation matrix is in Table 2.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Peaceful

Ethos and Predictor Variables

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Peaceful Ethos		
Attitude toward Other Religious Group		
Affect	5.42	1.29
Behavior	5.46	1.20
Cognition	4.92	1.21
Forgiveness	5.62	1.11
Empathy	4.79	1.26
Harmony	5.99	1.12
Attitude to Violence[1]	2.94	1.19
Predictor Variables		
Universal Orientation	5.06	1.06
Implicit Theory	5.62	1.06
Intergroup Contact[2]	3.73	0.94

Note. On a scale from 1 Strongly Disagree to 7 Strongly

Agree.

[1] A high score on attitude toward violence indicates a

positive attitude toward the use of violence. Thus, a low

score on this variable represents a peaceful ethos.

[2] Intergroup contact is on a scale from 1 Never to 5

Daily.

Table 2. Intercorrelations Between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Affect									
2. Behavior	.563								
3. Cognition	.388	.491							
4. Forgiveness	.512	.351	.228						
5. Empathy	.387	.305	.238	.339					
6. Harmony	.671	.669	.439	.541	.388				
7. Violence	-.329	-.405	-.270	-.214	-.195	-.327			
8. Universal	.365	.223	.138	.371	.270	.411	-.113		
9. Implicit	.452	.461	.361	.385	.236	.537	-.193	.203	
10. Contact	.278	.285	.274	.063	.068	.146	-.221	-.058	.091

The first analysis examined whether peaceful ethos was influenced by belief of the cause of conflict. A majority of the respondents believed the primary cause of the conflict was religious (63%), followed by politics (30%), injustice (4%), tribal competition (4%), and economics (1%). However, only 20% of the Muslims believed that religion was the primary cause of the conflict, which is significantly different from the 67% of the Christians who believed religion to be the primary cause ($z = 3.66$, $p<.001$).

Because very few participants indicated that the causes of the conflict were injustice, tribal competition, or economics, these individuals were removed from the following analysis. Instead, a comparison was made between those who believed that the primary cause of the crisis was religious (n=121) verses political (n=57) on the seven peaceful ethos variables. A t-test was conducted with the Bonferroni correction to control for Type I error rates. Consequently, the significance level was adjusted to be $\alpha <.00625$.

Table 3. Effect of Belief of Cause of Conflict on Peaceful Ethos

	Religion	Politics	t	df	p
Attitude toward Other Religious Group					
Affect	5.29 (1.28)	5.44 (1.39)	0.69	176	.491
Behavior	5.23 (1.27)	5.61 (1.05)	1.94	176	.054
Cognition	4.70 (1.31)	5.06 (0.94)	1.86	176	.065
Forgiveness	5.64 (1.04)	5.53 (1.28)	0.58	176	.563
Empathy	4.74 (1.30)	4.97 (1.14)	-0.84	176	.402
Harmony	5.90 (1.09)	6.00 (1.32)	-0.53	176	.597
Violence	3.20 (1.20)	2.51 (0.93)	3.78	176	.0002*

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

As can be seen in Table 3, the only significant effect of belief of cause of conflict was on attitude toward violence. Those who believed that the primary cause of the conflict was religion had a more positive attitude toward using violence than those who believed the crisis was predominantly caused by politics.[2] However, there were no further effects of belief of cause of conflict on peaceful ethos variables.

Next, a multiple regression analysis examined the relationship between the three continuous predictor variables of universal orientation, implicit theories, and intergroup contact on attitudes towards individuals from the other religious group.

Table 4. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Attitude Toward the Other Religious Group.

	β			
	Universal Orientation	Implicit Theory	Intergroup Contact	R^2
Affect	.306	.366	.262	.350
Behavior	.155	.406	.257	.295
Cognition	.488	.375	.197	.494

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[2] The variance in attitude toward violence was significantly different between those who believed the crisis was caused by religion versus politics ($F(120,56) = 1.55$, p=.034) with the religious beliefs having significantly more variance than politics. However, the *t*-test assuming unequal variances was still significant ($t(134.18) = 4.11$, p<.0001).

The regression equations for all three dimensions of attitude toward the other religious group were significant (F(199,3) = 35.73, p<.0001 for affect; F(199,3) = 27.76, p<.0001 for behavior; and F(199,3) = 64.75, p<.0001 for cognition). Implicit theory had the largest standardized regression coefficient for affect and behavior, whereas universal orientation had the largest standardized regression coefficient for cognition. Intergroup contact had the lowest standardized regression coefficient for both affect and cognition.

Another multiple regression analysis was performed on the four additional peace ethos variables. The results are presented in Table 5. Again, the regression equations were significant for all three peaceful ethos variables (F(3,199) = 20.99, p<.0001 for forgiveness; F(3,199) = 8.32, p<.0001 for empathy; F(3,199) = 33.84, p<.0001 for harmony; and F(3,199) = 6.37, p<.001 for attitude toward violence). Both universal orientation and implicit theory had the largest standardized regression coefficients for forgiveness, empathy, and harmony whereas intergroup contact had the lowest standardized regression coefficient. However, intergroup contact had the largest standardized regression coefficient for attitude toward violence.

Table 5. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Peaceful Ethos.

| | β | | | |
	Universal Orientation	Implicit Theory	Intergroup Contact	R^2
Forgiveness	.310	.317	.052	.240
Empathy	.247	.182	.065	.111
Harmony	.325	.460	.123	.398
Violence	-.093	-.156	-.213	.088

The proportion of variance accounted for in attitude toward violence was quite low. Because belief of cause of conflict had a significant effect on attitude toward violence, another multiple regression equation was calculated with those 178 individuals who ticked either religion or politics as the primary cause of the conflict. Belief of cause of crisis was entered as a dummy variable with religion as 1 and politics as 0. The new regression equation was significant (F(4,173) = 8.68, p<.0001). The proportion of variance accounted for increased to .167, a significant increase (F(1,173) = 16.41, p<.0001). Belief of cause of

conflict had the largest standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .248$), whereas the other standardized regression coefficients remained similar to the previous regression equation ($\beta = -.078, -.184, -.204$ for universal orientation, implicit theory, and intergroup contact respectively).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that are related to a peaceful ethos among Christians and Muslims in Jos, Nigeria. As such, seven variables relating to a peaceful ethos were identified: affect toward the other religious group, behavior toward the other religious group, cognitions about the other religious group, forgiveness, empathy, hope for a harmonious future, and attitude toward violence. This study found that universal orientation and implicit theory were the two strongest contributors to the peaceful ethos variables. However, there were two exceptions. Intergroup contact and belief of cause of conflict had stronger relationships with attitude toward violence. For behavior toward the other religious group, implicit theory made the strongest contribution, followed by intergroup contact.

Since both universal orientation and implicit theory had strong relationships with a peaceful ethos, these two variables may be effective tools that can be used to promote the peaceful ethos that is necessary for a sustainable peace in Jos. Indeed, both constructs have been effectively manipulated through simple trainings.

Universal orientation has been effectively taught to children as young as nine years old. To reduce categorization of individuals by race, Jones and Foley (2003) gave a ten minute PowerPoint presentation to pupils in primary four. The presentation included three topics: the common ancestry of human beings from all races (anthropology), the fact that differences in physical appearance do not reflect internal differences (biology), and the accomplishments of the ethnically diverse population within the United States (sociology). A control group read a picture book. Afterwards, children who participated in the presentation focused significantly less on the differences between racial groups than children in the control group. Another study by Aboud and Fenwick (1999) found that high-prejudice children in primary five who were trained to focus on internal similarities between ethnic groups showed a subsequent decrease in prejudice.

Universal orientation has been effectively incorporated into a peace education program in Bosnia-Herzegovina by helping students to focus on similarities between the conflicting groups. This peace education program has transformed the worldviews of students and improved intergroup relationships between students and teachers both within and between schools (Clarke-Habibi, 2011).

Previous research has demonstrated that implicit theory can also be easily modified, simply by having individuals read a short article supporting an incremental theory. Levy and colleagues (1998) asked university students to read a brief "scientific" article supporting either an entity or incremental theory of human personality. The article significantly changed participants' implicit theory. The treatment also significantly affected students' endorsement of stereotypes whereby those who read the article supporting an incremental theory endorsed stereotypes significantly less than those who read the article supporting an entity theory.

Therefore, since both universal orientation and implicit theory can be easily modified, peacebuilding programs in Jos should incorporate these elements into their training. The trainings should include information on the similarities between Christians and Muslims. Furthermore, an incremental theory of human personality should also be highlighted, whereby individuals' behavior is considerably influenced by situational factors. Furthermore, evidence that violent individuals can change should also be provided in the programs (see Pam & Korb, 2011).

Intergroup contact between religious groups also made meaningful contributions to many of the peaceful ethos variables, although to a lesser extent than universal orientation and implicit theory. Intergroup contact had a moderate negative relationship with attitude toward violence whereby those who interacted more with the other religious group advocated violence less. Violent conflicts in other areas of the world have provided evidence that dehumanization of the out-group is necessary for negative stereotypes to descend to the belief that the out-group needs to be eliminated through violence (Beck, 1999). Perhaps intergroup contact plays a key role in preventing this dehumanization process from occurring.

Therefore, intergroup contact should be encouraged in Jos in order to decrease positive attitudes toward violence and improve attitudes toward the other religious group. However, not all intergroup contact can be beneficial (Butz & Plant, 2011). Many individuals make a concerted effort to avoid intergroup contact and are filled with anxiety when intergroup contact occurs. Therefore, to encourage positive intergroup contact, participants may need to first undergo training in universal orientation and implicit theory. Facilitators can prime participants to focus on similarities between themselves and the individuals from the out-group before the intergroup contact occurs. Additionally, training can help participants understand that behavior is considerably influenced by contextual factors, and that even violent individuals can change. This brief training may improve the quality of the intergroup contact, making the contact more constructive and result in greater improvements in a peaceful ethos.

Furthermore, it was found that those who believe that religion is the primary cause of the conflict in Jos advocate the use of violence more than those who believe that politics is the primary cause of the conflict. Selengut (2008) proposed that religion generates strong convictions among its adherents, who oftentimes believe that those who oppose such beliefs are enemies of God who must be brought to the truth either through persuasion or force. Thus, religion can foster a "sacred fury" to champion God's will and oppose one's religious enemies, violently if necessary. In Jos, Tapkida agrees that religion can be a powerful tool to motivate individuals to violence because religion "deals with the heart of the person…and if it is your heart, it is a total commitment of yourself" (G. Tapkida, personal communication, 13 May 2011).

However, Tapkida believes that this commitment to religion can also be used positively to transform individuals from religious fundamentalists into religious peacemakers. He cited the example of a young woman who was an Islamic fundamentalist, but after inter-faith peace training, looked into Islam and found resources and values that fostered peace. Therefore, he believes that religious values can be used to foster a peaceful ethos amongst religious adherents and that religious adherents can be just as committed to being peacemakers in violent conflicts as they are in their sacred fury. Referring to a commitment to be a peacemaker, Tapkida said, "When you get them to believe in what you are doing, they will be more than ready to die for it because they believe that they are working for God" (G. Tapkida, personal communication, 13 May 2011).

Indeed, careful examination of the conflict in Jos shows that religion is only secondary to the larger conflict that centers around the indigene settler issue (Ostien, 2009). Therefore, peace training should highlight these political roots of the conflict in order to counter a common misunderstanding, particularly among Christians, that the conflict is predominantly religious.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

A large majority of the participants in this study were Christian, which biases the results toward one side of the conflict in Jos. Furthermore, university-educated individuals are also a minority in the Jos metropolis. Therefore, additional research is needed to replicate this study amongst the Muslim community, and among individuals who have not received a university education.

This research study provided preliminary evidence that universal orientation and implicit theories may be effective tools in fostering a peaceful ethos. However, this study is only correlational in nature. Additional research is needed to determine whether a causal link

can be made by manipulating universal orientation and implicit theory to determine whether a subsequent change occurs in peaceful ethos. Furthermore, research should also determine whether training in universal orientation and implicit theory before intergroup contact enables that contact to be more effective in improving peaceful ethos.

Conclusion

Universal orientation and implicit theory are both strongly related to a peaceful ethos amongst university students residing in the conflict zone of Jos, Nigeria. Furthermore, intergroup contact is also related to a peaceful ethos. These findings provide a good foundation about what topics may be beneficial to cover in peace training programs in order to foster a peaceful ethos amongst those living in a conflict zone. As no peace agreement has been settled in Jos, the best hope for a sustainable peace is to foster a peaceful ethos in the society. Universal orientation, implicit theory, and intergroup contact are three mechanisms by which this peaceful ethos may be fostered.

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