Chapter 8
Cultural Responses to Collective Trauma in Different Societies Explains Aspects of Their Identity

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ABSTRACT

Different societies have different ways through which traumatic experiences are handled. This shapes their identity. This chapter will use Eric Berne's psychotherapist transactional analysis theory to emphasize how people relate to one another and establish the extent communications influences human behaviours. The author indicates how the theory underscores societies' and individuals' representations of violent conduct by examining the traumatic experiences of some societies like the Yukpa people and the Jews during and after the Holocaust. Thematic areas will include identity and violence, trauma of war, and group construction of violence, among others. All of these themes are interconnected. Finally, the relevance of this work is to minimize interpersonal and organizational conflicts as well as promote tolerance of divergent views.

INTRODUCTION

This research article is an analytical essay based on Bettina Schmidt & Ingo Schroder's *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict* and Antonius Robben & Marcelo Suarez-Orozco's *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*. In this paper, I

will examine how different societies have different ways through which traumatic experiences are handled. This shapes their identity. In this paper, I will also explore how different societies cope with collective traumatic experiences by using Eric Berne's psychotherapist Transactional Analysis (TA) theory to emphasize how people relate to one another and the extent to which communication influences human behaviours, its impacts on societies and individual's identity formation as well as their representation of violent conducts and actions. Consequently, I will assess the significant impact of the TA theory on traumatic experiences of some societies like the *Yukpa* people in North-western Venezuela; the Argentine's "Dirty - War" period from 1976 to 1983; the Jews during and after the holocaust, the gruesome abuses and torture of the Iraqi prisoners by the American prison guards at Abu Ghraib in 2006 and finally how these widen the chasm between institutions, communities and the perpetuation of violent behaviours before and after conflict. More so, attention will be given to the interpersonal violent behaviours among ethnic groupings such as, the *Dizi* and *Suri* communities in southern Ethiopia; the intergenerational dynamics of violence in the Middle East, and the *Parsis* of India. All of these will be examined under the following themes: Identity and Violence, Psychology of Trauma, Trauma of War, Imagining Violence and Trauma, and Dimensions of Trauma and Violence. In addition, further consideration will be given to Group Construction of Violence, Understanding Trauma, and Memories of Violence. It is significant to note however, that, all of these categorizations are interconnected. This means that any organization, individuals or group of persons with traumatic experiences could or may be influenced to adopt and operate under any or all of these categorizations / traits. Furthermore, analyses will be based on these thematic areas. Finally I will also draw from scholarly sources to critique intellectually while drawing inferences and indicating degrees of similarities and differences associated with trauma, violence and identity in societies. Lastly, I will indicate the relevance of this work to minimizing inter-personal conflicts, management of organizational conflicts, and helping school counsellors to promote tolerance of divergent opinions in order to ensure peaceful co-existence.

IDENTITY AND VIOLENCE

Identity and violence are inseparable in either high or low context cultures (Appiah-Marfo, 2013; Feigenblatt, 2010). Identity issues become pronounced whenever an individual identifies with another through linguistic characteristics, religious affinity, marriage bonds, race, or by belonging to an organization or occupation (Bromell, 2008; Howard, 2000; & Phinney, 1990). Spiegel (2008) describes the essence of traumatic stress as helplessness, which he defines as "a loss of control over one's

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