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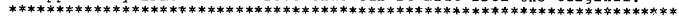                *Teacher Education; Teacher Educators; Teacher
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ABSTRACT
                Authoritarianism is a negative factor in learning as
well as a social problem. If teachers can be trained to counter
authoritarianism, they can begin to break the vicious circle of
people growing up in an authoritarian culture, becoming authoritarian
themselves, and molding their institutions and overall behaviors in
an authoritarian fashion. This study was designed to examine the
effect of a treatment on the authoritarian level of a group of
education students from highly authoritarian societies. Experimental
and control groups of graduate students at the American University of
Beirut were studied to determine specific elements in the
learning-teaching process that would produce greater tolerance among
learners. Such elements would then become primary components in a
regular program of instruction offered to a group of learners to
produce the desired effect. The findings reported confirm that
authoritarianism may be reduced through learning experiences
specially designed for this purpose, but not through general
education. Questions for further study include the permanence of
change in attitude and whether different treatment is required
depending upon the degree of authoritarianism demonstrated. The
findings of the study can be implemented in both preservice and
inservice training programs. (JMF)

EDUCATION FOR TOLERANCE:

AN EXPERIMENT IN COUNTER-AUTHORITARIANISM

by

Nathir G. Sara

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## Problem

Authoritarianism has been a subject of rather intensive
study since World War II.  Eric Fromm (6) saw the authoritarian
person as a refugee from freedom, a person who relies on sub-
missive-dominant relationships as substitutes for the more
genuine and harmonious relationships his more autonomous brother
enjoys.  Jean-Paul Sartre (18) considered antisemitism a mani-
festation of authoritarianism.  A study of authoritarianism and
leadership by Sanford (17) led to the conclusion that authoritarian
persons show preference for directive leadership and tend to re-
ject leaders who show weakness.  Such persons generally act as
willing members of undemocratic groups; they also tend to be
mistrustful and suspicious of others as was revealed by Adorno
and others (1), and later confirmed by Deutch (2) and Halverson
and Shore (7).

The publication of The Authoritarian Personality (1)
triggered a large number of studies.  The California F-Scale
has been used in numerous studies to explore various aspects
of authoritarianism, especially as it relates to education.
Findings of several studies indicate that authoritarianism is
negatively associated with a number of traits that schools

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generally seek to develop. Hass and Lindner (8) found a negative
correlation between dogmatism (a correlary of authoritarianism)
and self-esteem. A study by Eisenman and Cherry (4) and another
by Luck and Gruner (11) established a negative correlation between
authoritarianism and critical thinking ability. Although no corre-
lation was found between authoritarianism and teaching effectiveness
(V̶e̶r̶m̶i̶l̶l̶i̶o̶n̶ ̶1̶9̶6̶6̶ 22), teacher-pupil rapport is negatively related to
teachers' authoritarianism as reported by Leeds (9). The findings
on authoritarianism among camp counselors are practically parallel
(15). Furthermore, authoritarianism and dogma seem to have a
direct bearing on learning per se. According to Vacchiane (21)
dogmatism is involved in the learning process in that it affects
the individual's sensitivity to certain aspects of content.
Ehrlich (3) has established a tendency of non-dogmatic individuals
to learn more of their classroom exposure and to retain their
knowledge significantly longer than do highly dogmatic individuals.
Test anxiety, on the other hand, is positively correlated with
authoritarianism as established by Rebhun (16).

In addition to being a negative factor in learning, autho-
ritarianism is a far reaching social problem. Authoritarian
persons, by definition, are anti-democratic. They have little
tolerance of others and tend to force their "truth" on others.
They are suspicious of others, especially those who hold dif-
ferent views or subscribe to different values. They cannot
function well in group situations except under autocratic rule

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in which case tension and in-group hostility often build up as shown by White and Lippit (23). Authoritarian people are basically incapable of sel government. It is naive to expect guarantees of civil liberties and constitutional government in a country where the average citizen denies his neighbor the very freedom he expects his government to avail him.

It is no accident that dictatorial regimes are so common in many parts of Africa, Asia and South America; authoritarian governments are simply a part of their own authoritarian people. In other words, a military junta attempting overthrow of a legitimate government would find its task rather easy, in fact logical, in a society where people themselves are authoritarian.*

However, there is another side to the coin. It is often argued, even in authoritarian regimes, that education is a major means of preparing a populace for self government. In certain instances (as in Iran, Uganda, Bangladesh, etc.) pronouncements by presidents and other leaders reflect, at least at the verbal level, an aspiration for achievement of the democratic ideal. Graduate students from a number of countries in Asia and Africa studying at the American University of Beirut seem to be highly committed to principles of constitutional government, civil liberties, and tolerance to diversity of beliefs. Yet, the same

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*Prothro and Malikian (15) report newspaper headlines in Lebanon (in 1952) calling for a dictatorial government to take over to save the country. Many other examples can be found in several other countries today.

leaders who verbally favour a constitutional form of government often rule not by consent of their people but by the power of arms; the same graduate students who defend civil liberties-- verbally -- and seem to aspire to democratic rule are themselves highly authoritarian individuals as evidenced by studies such as those by Prothro and Melikian (15) and Papastavrou (13).

The problem, therefore, is not simply what people aspire to achieve-- India, for example, has always aspired to achieve a measure of economic affluence yet she has not conquered the threat of starvation. Rather, the problem is how to break the vicious circle of people growing up in an authoritarian culture, becoming authoriatarian themselves and molding their institutions and overall behaviors in an authoritarian fashion. How can an authoritarian teacher, for example, teach in any style other than that of authoritarian teachers?

In attempting to answer the above question, one must first give up thinking in terms of absolutes. An authoritarian culture will not change overnight: personality of the individual is not readily receptive to basic change. However, some modification can be affected as a result of certain influences. The school can provide such influences and the channel must be the teacher himself. If teachers can be trained to counter authoritarianism, their task then would be to break the vicious circle. They would introduce the force needed to counter a basic cultural influence.

## Purpose

This study was designed to examine, in an exploratory fashion, the effect of a treatment on the authoritarian level of a group of education students from highly authoritarian societies. The first part of the study aimed at determining specific elements in the learning-teaching process that would produce greater tolerance among learners. Such elements would become primary components in a regular program of instruction offered to a group of learners to produce the desired effect.

The second part of the study aimed at measuring the degree of success, if any, that the experiment might achieve.

## Procedures

1. Subjects: The sample consisted of two groups of graduate students enrolled in education courses at the American University of Beirut (Beirut, Lebanon). The first group -- the experimental group -- was made up of 35 students who enrolled in a course on instructional supervision during 1971-72 (19 students) and 1972-73 (16 students). The control group consisted of 46 students who were enrolled in four other graduate courses taught by the same instructor during the same period: 1971-72 and 1972-73. Where a student was enrolled in the course on supervision and any of the other courses, he was included only in the experimental group. Naturally, duplicates were screened out so that subjects were counted only once.

In both groups the subjects were greatly diverse in national background. In approximately similar ratios the two groups were composed of students from Arab Countries and Bangladesh, Cyprus, Iran, Pakistan and the United States. The experimental group included one student from Britain as well.

2. Instrument: The 19-item condensed F-Scale (See Appendix I) which is part of the original 22-item California F-Scale developed by Adorno et al (1) was used in this study. The scale was modified and established valid in the Middle East by Prothro and Melikian (15), and also by Papastavrou(13). Melikian (12) established a reliability coefficient of 0.65 for Arab students, and Papastavrou(13) computed a reliability coefficient of 0.86 for Greek Cypriot subjects.

The instrument consists of statements of opinion with which a subject may agree or disagree. Instructions request respondents to state their positions on each statement by marking one of four categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Using a numerical value of 1 to 4, the scale renders a total score ranging between 19 and 76.

A pre-test was given the experimental group and the control group during the first week of the semester. A post-test was administered to both groups at the end of the semester. The purpose of testing was explained to the subjects as an attempt to establish norms for the Middle East in regard to certain beliefs and opinions.

3. Processing of Data: The following steps were followed:

a. A total score was computed for each subject.

   b.  Four sets of data were thus obtained: a pre- and post-
       test for each of the two groups.

   c.  The mean difference (gain) for each group was computed.

   d.  The method of pooling variances was followed (20):

$$\text{Pooled } s^2 = \frac{\sum d_1{}^2 + \sum d_2{}^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}$$

$$\text{Then: } S_{\bar{D}_1 - \bar{D}_2} = \sqrt{S^2 \left(\frac{n_1 + n_2}{n_1 n_2}\right)}$$

Where:  $\sum d_1{}^2$   is the sum of squares of the gain in
                the experimental group,

        $\sum d_2{}^2$   is the sum of squares of the gain in
                the control group,

        $n_1$   is number of subjects in the experimen-
                tal goup,

        $n_2$   is number of subjects in the control
                group,

        $S_{\bar{D}_1 - \bar{D}_2}$   is the standard deviation of the mean
                difference in gain.

   e.  The t test was used to determine if gain in the experimental
       group was significant, as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}_1 - \bar{D}_2}{S_{\bar{D}_1 - \bar{D}_2}}$$

4.  Experimental Treatment: The rationale developed for this experi-

ment was very simple: to involve the experimental group in anti-

authoritarian experiences and to do so consistently for a whole

semester.  Shuch experiences would serve as "anti-toxins" and would

reduce the subjects' tendencies for dogma, inflexibility of belief,

and preference for authority over reason and group processes.

A basic element in the approach used in this study recog-
nized the essential importance of both dimensions of classroom
operations: the content (curriculum) and the process (method) of
teaching. The troublesome part here was in developing content to
'unter authoritarianism without appearing to do so. The purpose
for this was to avoid any bias -- in an experimental sense -- which
might result from topics dealing directly with authoritarianism.
Modifications in the process of teaching were more easily designed:
the instructor consciously attempted to embody the spirit of counter-
authoritarianism.

Content of a new course titled "Seminar in Instructional
Supervision" was structured to serve the purpose of this study.
A course outline was prepared so as to deal with various aspects
of supervision and at the same time to endeavor to establish a
philosophy based on tolerance and mutual acceptance. The course
outline listed several topics, or units of study, starting with a
review of the history of supervision (noting the shift from inspec-
tion to a more human-relations-cum-scientific approach). Other units
introduced systems theory and concepts of group dynamics, and
presented a review of research on teaching. The focal point of
the course was a unit dealing with the process of instructional
supervision itself. This unit aimed at development of a rationale
for supervision, preparation of a supervisory plan for each teacher
or group of teachers, etiquette of classroom visitation, specific

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techniques of making objective observations and collecting data
on classroom behavior, and the post-visitation conference with
the teacher.  Among the techniques of data collection and analysis
emphasized in the course was the Flanders' Verbal Interaction
Analysis System (5).  This system is used by teachers and super-
visors to assess several aspects of teacher-student and student-
student verbal interaction.  Having noted the dominance of what
Flanders calls "direct teaching" in several of the countries of
the region, the instructor emphasized differences between direct
and indirect teachers and stimulated an extensive review of the
literature on the effects of both approaches to teaching.  The
course employed simulation and role playing and ended in a practi-
cum during which students engaged in the actual process of super-
vision as they visited teachers in neighboring schools for the
purpose of observation.

The role of the instructor was carefully structured.
Students were given the course outline and invited to select
topics on which they would prepare reports mostly in groups.  The
instructor's role was limited to a few basic lectures, coordination
of class activities, questioning and presenting summaries of material
reported by students.  Classroom work was the responsibility of all.
The group was given one basic guideline: that the highest form of
learning takes place when the learner is actively involved and
when he is able to receive information from different sources,
sythesize it and integrate that which he accepts into his own

fund of knowledge. What he learns becomes his, but does not
necessarily represent a final and irrevocable truth.

The contents and process were thus integrated to create
an open climate and to offer opportunities for students to inter-
act with each other, with the instructor and, most important of
all, with their own private beliefs and values. An example is
offered to illustrate. The group was receiving a report on
supervisory visits to the classroom when the issue was raised
as to whether to make announced or unannounced visits. The
rationale for the first position was seen by its advocates as
emphasizing respect for the teacher, showing trust in him and
enabling him to plan his work according to the purpose(s) of the
supervisory visit. Supporters of the other position advocating
unannounced visits presented a different rationale. They believed
that unannounced visits "kept teachers on their toes," and that
they were the best means available to the supervisor to get a real
picture of what actually went on in the classroom. During the
discussion that followed students started to see a relationship
between the two sides of the issue, their experiences as teachers,
their assumptions about human nature, and concepts they were
encountering in their readings such as "clinical supervision" and
"shared decision-making." Discussion also extended to topics
dealing with the structure of society and patterns of control,
and with the overall relationship of government and governed,
parents and children, and teachers and learners.

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The control group, made up of students enrolled in other
courses taught by the same instructor during the same period,
received no deliberate treatment. The contents of these
courses were educational administration, curriculum development,
and educational research. The material dealt with was the conven-
tional graduate textbook type of content. The role of the instru-
tor was deliberately controlled so as to conform to the more formal
role of lecturer, discussion leader and evaluator. There were some
problems, however. A few of the subjects were enrolled in both the
course on supervision and one of the other courses. On one occasion,
for example, one of them questioned the difference in the approaches
used by the instructor in the two courses. He pointed out that the
instructor was "indirect" in his approach in the former but he was
"direct" in the latter, referring to Flanders' two types of teaching.
It was explained to him that if that were true, it was simply because
contents of the latter course were such that they perhaps required
greater direction by the teacher.

Results

The design used in this study called for measuring the gain
(negative gain in this case representing lower post-test scores )
observed in the two groups. As outlined in the section dealing
with procedures the t test was used to determine whetehr the

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experimental grou    iffered significantly from the control group
in its gain on the F-Scale.  Below are the findings:

1.  Botn grcuos were highly authoritarian.  The means on the pre-
    tests, for example, were 51.0 and 51.2, and the ranges were
    32-70 and 32-65 for the experimental and control groups ,
    respectively.  Taking into consideration the fact that the
    instrument yields a minimum score of 19 and a maximum score
    of 76, it becomes obvious that the scores obtained by the
    subjects of this study are high indeed.

Table I

MEANS AND RANGES OF SCORES

OBTAINED BY TWO GROUPS

| | N | Means | | Ranges | |
| | | Pre-test | Post-test | Pre-test | Post-test |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Experimental | 35 | 51.0 | 46.9 | 32-70 | 33-63 |
| Control | 46 | 51.2 | 50.0 | 32-65 | 31-60 |

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Table 2

GAIN, POOLED $S^2$ AND t

FOR TWO GROUPS

| | N | $\bar{D}$ | $\sum d^2$ | Pooled $S^2$ | $S_{\bar{D}_1 - \bar{D}_2}$ | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental | 35 | -4.03 | 499 | | | |
| | | | | 20.5 | 1.81 | 2.802[*] |
| Control | 46 | -1.26 | 1,119 | | | |

[*]Significant at 0.01 with 79 df.

2. Table 2 shows the basic statistics arrived at by the method of
pooling variances. The difference in gain achieved by the two
groups is significant: $P < 0.01$. A significant reduction of
authoritarianism is observed in the experimental group and can
be attributed to the treatment.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings reported above confirm that authoritarianism
may be reduced through learning experiences specially designed for
this purpose. This finding is consistent with results of a study
by Levinson and Shermerhorn (10) who report reduction of authorita-
rianism among participants in an intergroup relations workshop.

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It must be noted that both the workshop and the present study speci-
fically aimed at reducing authoritarianism. However, the literature
is not altogether clear on this issue. Two studies have been iden-
tified in which reduction of authoritarianism was a function of general
learning; that is, the learning experiences provided were not speci-
fically designed to counter authoritarianism. According to a longi-
tudinal study by Plant (14), authoritarianism decreases regularly as
a function of college attendance. Consistent with that is a finding
by Scarr (19) that authoritarianism declined among students who enrolled
in a course in human development.

. . . ver, implications of the two studies referred to are dif-
ferent: one of them was longitudinal while the other was limited to
effects of learning over a short period of one semester.

The present study is different from all others cited above in
that most of the subjects were highly authoritarian; the majority were
members of Asian and African societies which are highly authoritarian--
as pointed out by Prothro and Melikian (15) and Papastavrou (13), and
also as reflected by the F-scores of the subjects themselves reported
in Table I above. Since the control group did not show reduction of
authoritarianism, it may be concluded that general education as such
does not have a noticeable effect in promoting tolerance among highly
authoritarian subjects; at least no short-term results were observed
in this study. This, of course, is a confirmation of the popular
belief among educators that schools generally serve more as inst-
ruments of cultural transmission and perpetuation than as agents

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of change. It appears, then, that at least in highly authoritarian cultures, reduction of authoritarianism cannot be achieved as a by-product of general learning, and that deliberate and concentrated effort and special programs are needed to affect the desired change. An issue arises here: do highly authoritarian subjects (e.g.Asians and Africans) require a treatment that is different from that needed to reduce authoritarianism among their more tolerant counterparts (e.g. Americans)? In other words, is the difference merely quantitative or is it qualitative as well?

A second issue is concerned with the permanence of change evidenced in the experimental group. Authoritarianism, like other personality traits is deeply-rooted. The fact that it can be changed does not preclude the tendency of subjects to revert to earlier behavior as psychotherapists know only too well. It was not within the scope of the present study to examine this question, but a safe prediction would be that reinforcement of the initial treatment be required to maintain the changed status. If a school sets reduction of authoritarianism as one of its goals, more than a single treatment would probably be need to make that change more lasting. Further research can shed light on this issue.

The findings of this study add greater importance to teacher education in authoritarin cultures. The objective of democratizing society through education is proven feasible; the means of achieving it are available and can be improved with further research and experimentation.                        17

A new dimension may enter the process of training teachers. Modified curricula and methods are needed so as to produce a new generation of teachers who are less authoritarian than their predecessors and who, in their turn, may serve as counter-authoritarian agents. But limiting the suggested change to pre-service education of teachers may not be sufficient. Upon entering the teaching profession new teachers may be absorbed by an already established system with its authoritarian mode of operation and patterns of interaction, and they may revert to earlier authoritarian patterns. In order to minimize this danger older teachers and administrators should be subjected to similar counter-authoritarian influences, In-service education programs may be developed containing in both content and process the elements of counter-authoritarian influence. The outcome would be slow and gradual, but with effort and determination it can be achieved.

APPENDIX I

Here are some statements of opinion with which some people agree and others disagree. Indicate your agreement or disagreement with every one of the following statements as follows:

    Circle SD  if you Strongly Disagree with the statement.

    Circle D  if you Disagree even a little with the statement.

    Circle A  if you Agree even a little with the statement.

    Circle SA  if you Strongly Agree with the statement.

1. Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should have.     SD  D  A  SA

2. No weakness or difficulty can hold us back if we have enough will power     SD  D  A  SA

3. Science has its place, but there are many important things that can never possibly be understood by the human mind.     SD  D  A  SA

4. Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict.     SD  D  A  SA

5. Every person should have complete faith in some supernatural power whose decisions he obeys without questions.     SD  D  A  SA

6. When a person has a problem or worry, it is best for him not to think about it, but to keep busy with more cheerful things.     SD  D  A  SA

7. What the youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for family and country.     SD  D  A  SA

8. An insult to our honor should always be punished.     SD  D  A  SA

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9. Nowadays when so many kinds of people
   move around and mix together so much,
   a person has to protect himself especially      SD   D   A   SA
   carefully against catching an infection or
   disease from them

10. What my country needs most, more than laws
    and political programs, is a few courages,
    tireless, devoted leaders in whom the           SD   D   A   SA
    people can put their faith.

11. Sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on
    children, deserve more than mere impri-          SD   D   A   SA
    sonment: such criminals ought to be
    publicly whipped or worse.

12. People can be divided into two distinct
    classes: the weak and the strong.                SD   D   A   SA

13. There is hardly anything lower than a
    person who does not feel a great love,           SD   D   A   SA
    gratitude, and respect for his parents.

14. Nowadays more people are prying into
    matters that should remain personal              SD   D   A   SA
    and private.

15. Most of our social problems would be
    solved if we could somehow get rid of            SD   D   A   SA
    the immoral, crooked, and feeble-
    minded people.

16. If people would talk less and work more,
    everybody would be better off.                   SD   D   A   SA

17. Most people don't realize how much our
    lives are controlled by plots hatched           SD   D   A   SA
    in secret places.

18. Homosexuals are hardly better than
    criminals and ought to be severely              SD   D   A   SA
    punished.

19. No sane, normal decent person could
    ever think of hurting a close friend            SD   D   A   SA
    or relative.

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