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The Psychology of Intergroup Prejudice as a Natural Phenomenon



Carlos Navarrete 于 1996 年在加州大学圣塔芭芭拉分校获得历史学学士学位,于 1999 年在加州州立大学获得生物人类学硕士学位,之后师从加州大学洛杉矶分校人类学系教授 Daniel Fessler,于 2004 年获得该校生物人类学博士学位。博士毕业之后的两年,Navarrete 继续留在加州大学洛杉矶分校心理系做博士后工作。在 2006 年,他转去哈佛大学心理系做第二阶段的博士后工作。2007 年,Navarrete 受聘于密歇根州立大学心理系担任助理教授,讲授的课程主要包括进化心理学、偏见和歧视、社会心理学等。

Navarrete 运用进化论的思想指导研究工作,他的研究涉及群际关系、道德哲学、虚拟现实世界的判断、社会态度等问题。最早在大学阶段,他对道德研究非常感兴趣,最后的毕业论文题目就是《道德的进化》。到了研究生阶段,Navarrete 通过对分子和形态学的数据分析,研究新大陆猴的进化史,以此为题完成了硕士论文,并在 1999 年的第 70 届西南人类学协会年会上做了相同主题的报告。在 1999 年到 2004 年的博士就读期间,Navarrete 着手研究结盟心理学 (Coalitional Psychology),重点是群际关系,即不同种族之间的关系。

近年来,Navarrete 的研究主要集中在三个方面:(1) 恐惧、攻击和种族敌意。Navarrete 等人认为,在存在群际威胁的情况下,男性和女性会存在神经生理上的差异,而且会表现出不同的心理反应。他们从进化的角度研究了怀孕、疾病防御、种族中心以及群际偏见之间的关系。比如,他在 2006 年发表的研究中发现怀孕前 3 个月的女性对同种族个体具有较强的偏好;此外,在存在疾病威胁的情况下,个体也表现出更强的种族中心主义。(2) 虚拟现实世界的道德判断和行为。道德问题常常涉及食物、性和死亡。以往的研究因为伦理问题往往采用现实生活的行为或者假设的情境。近期兴起使用沉浸式现实环境技术 (immersive

virtual environment technology, IVET),即虚拟现实技术,在人造 3D 的环境中研究道德判断和行为。这和真实场景更相近,但又不存在持续的心理压力。Navarrete 目前的主要工作之一就是借用以往道德研究的实验范式进行虚拟现实的研究。(3) 生活史、折扣(temporal discounting)和少数族群(minority)的低成就问题。对于少数族群的低成就的现象有着不同的解释,一种社会文化论的观点认为,地位较低的少数族群的行为源于一种对社会主流规范的逆反原则,容易从事自我伤害式的阻碍社会流动性的行为。相反,理性行为的观点则认为,这些人基于生活预期来追求目标,同时根据目标采取理性的行为策略。也就是说,退学、不储蓄、早婚早育等行为更可能是对未来的不确定性和未来折扣的策略性反应。Navarrete 试图将两种观点有机地结合起来解释少数族群低成就的问题。

本书的如下章节中,Navarrete 讲述他和同事如何从进化心理学的角度立论,巧妙地采用了多种不同的实验方法研究种族敌意和族群偏见方面的一系列问题。

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The Psychology of Intergroup Prejudice as a Natural Phenomenon

Carlos David Navarrete^①

I consider myself a scientist who adopts a natural science perspective on human social phenomena. As such, believe that the study of the psychological systems that generate social phenomena should be seen as part of the natural world. Along this philosophical thread, I'm interested in describing how the mind works with respect to several broad themes, one of which is to investigate how it is that humans can be seemingly fair and just, yet at the same time be so tribal. My work is framed by a consideration of how challenges such as avoiding disease, pursuing collective action, and competing for mates may be relevant to the emergence of psychological mechanisms that produce within-group cooperation and between-group conflict. My research enterprise explores the decision rules that connect these processes, and how such rules may be represented in the human mind as normative beliefs, "gut" feelings, or moral intuitions.

I'm pretty convinced that as a psychological trait, racism is not an evolved adaptation. For traits to be considered adaptations, they must have conferred some functional benefit throughout the evolutionary history of the organism long enough to be shaped by natural selection. This is not likely to have been the case with racism, since humans have only recently (in evolutionary terms) been recurrently exposed to individuals belonging to races other than one's own (Stringer & McKie, 1997). Thus, it is unlikely that natural selection shaped the human mind to produce a psychological system whose function is to promote racially biased cognition, attitudes,

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and behaviors. More plausibly, the mind generates biased mental representations of the one's social groups in relations to others, and as a result, this nativist "groupism" produces racial prejudice as an epiphenomenon. These biased mental representations emerge from a psychological system shaped by natural selection to allow people to adaptively manage social relationships along the lines of kinship, reciprocity, coordination, and shared norms—but not race.

So does this mean that understanding the psychology of racism precludes an evolutionary analysis of its origins and maintenance? No, it does not, as the scope of evolutionary approaches to human psychology is not limited to investigations of features of the mind that can plausibly be described as evolved adaptations, but also includes the study of traits that might be considered psychological by-products of adaptations. As such, racism conceptualized as a psychological construct may be fruitfully investigated from a perspective that considers the adaptive problems that recurred over evolutionary history to frame testable hypotheses regarding human cognition, attitudes, emotion, and behavior (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). A key component of this *adaptationist* approach is the consideration that psychological systems underlying how people think about themselves and others are "for" functional ends—that is, they exist to solve some problems of social life. Some problems may have been specific to our evolutionary past (e. g. foraging for food), but much of the problems of our evolutionary past are still relevant today (e. g. finding mates, making friends and avoiding danger). Although some such problems reflect unique challenges faced by humans, such as acquiring language, my research has primarily addressed those adaptive problems that apply more broadly across species, and including guarding one's ability to choose one's own mates, avoiding vectors of infectious disease, managing conflict with rivals (by avoiding or defeating them), and acquiring or maintaining access to resources. As one might imagine, functional solutions to each of these separate problems may require different strategies depending on an individual's strengths and weaknesses, as well as one's gender.

A research program that investigates hypotheses regarding the workings of the psychology of racial or ethnic prejudice can be enriched by a consideration of the kinds of challenges people face when interacting with individuals from a social group other than one's own (hereafter referred as outgroups). A key point of understanding is the acknowledgment that intergroup bias is a complex phenomenon deeply rooted in our evolutionary history and likely has served functional outcomes for the agents of

prejudice and discrimination. That is, biased thoughts and feelings against outgroups reflect, at some level, a behavioral strategy that increased the biological fitness of men and women who harbored such prejudices.

Individual Differences and Prejudice

Along these lines, I investigate the notion that the psychology underlying prejudice against outgroups may be fundamentally different between men and women. Specifically, my approach includes a consideration of the problems associated with coping with outgroup men, and how such problems relate to the perceiver's functional, gender-specific psychology. I argue that, since the maintenance of a woman's reproductive choice is so biologically fundamental, perceived threats of coercion or control by unfamiliar men may be an important feature of how women react to outgroup targets. And, because same-gender competition is most intense among men (Daly & Wilson, 1988), reactions toward outgroup targets are expected to be characterized by aggression and dominance striving. This perspective generates the expectation that both men and women should be more prejudiced against outgroup men relative to outgroup women. However, the differences in the psychological traits, states, and behavioral profiles follow along the lines of aggressive dominance for men, and fearful avoidance for women.

Fear Extinction to Outgroup Targets. Building on the observation that learned fear is less readily extinguished to natural hazards (e.g., predators) compared to non-natural hazards (e.g., electrical cords), I have shown that fear conditioned toward male exemplars of a racial outgroup is resistant to extinction in contrast to responses conditioned toward female exemplars of a racial outgroup, or ingroup males and females, all of which are readily extinguished (Navarrete, Olsson, Ho, Mendes, Thomsen, & Sidanius, 2009).

Consistent with this perspective, biased extinction is related to individual difference variables that vary between the sexes. Whereas fearfulness predicts the effect among women participants, the effect is predicted by the fusion of aggression and social dominance for men (Navarrete, McDonald, Molina, & Sidanius, 2010). My lab is currently conducting conditioning experiments that explore the boundary conditions of these findings using groups defined by minimally constructed social categories ("minimal groups"). Preliminary analyses of a recently completed experiment suggests that these effects are not limited to intergroup contexts defined by racial distinc-

tions, and may even be found in a minimal group paradigm, particularly among men.

Race Bias and Conception Risk across the Menstrual Cycle. In accord with the perspective described above, there is reason to expect that male-targeted outgroup negativity may be strongest for women when the costs of coercion are greatest—namely, during the fertile phase of the menstrual cycle when conception risk is high. I have found that increased conception risk is positively associated with several implicit and explicit measures of anti-Black race prejudice (Navarrete, Fessler, Santos Fleischman, & Geyer, 2009). I also find that race bias rises as a function of perceived vulnerability to sexual coercion, and that prejudice is most strongly predicted by the interaction of both perceived vulnerability to coercion and conception risk.

In an example of how such work can be meaningfully applied to real-world outcomes, my collaborators have explored the interactive nature of gender, race categorization, and conception risk across the menstrual cycle as predictors of voting preferences in the November 2008 Presidential Election. Using a broad sample of American voters, we show that, because Barack Obama violates stereotypes held about Black men, most people may non-consciously perceive him as more “White” than “Black.” Importantly, this perceptual bias predicts voting preferences among women as a function of conception risk. That is, women’s voting preference for Obama increased when they perceived him as “White” *and* fertility was high. However, high fertility led to *decreased* support for him when they perceived him as “Black” (Navarrete, Mott, Cesario, McDonald, & Sapolsky, 2010).

Current and Future Research: Morality

While the processes of appraisal, affective response, and decision-making that make up prejudice and discrimination contain features unique to the intergroup context, at an elementary level, similar processes likely contribute to behavior in within-group contexts as well. Importantly, both in Eastern and Western philosophical traditions and in the moral systems of diverse cultures, group norms constitute the starting point for social cognition including the kind of processes relevant to moral judgment, with intergroup relations adding complexity to the premises and principles established therein. In a complementary line of research, I deploy the powerful new tools provided by virtual reality technology to explore the factors shaping moral judgments and actions. The method allows for the study of the mind/body processes that affect judgments and behavior in “life and death” dilemmas as they develop in real time. Such

investigations are ethically and practically infeasible using conventional laboratory or field research methods.

Many philosophers consider it morally permissible to impersonally cause the death of a person for the greater good, as in the classic “trolley dilemma.” But in scenarios where saving many lives requires one person to be killed “up close and personal,” most judge such utilitarian killing as morally wrong. Although the outcomes of each dilemma are identical in terms of lives saved or lost, pure moral absolutes such as “killing is wrong” or pure utilitarian calculations of “maximizing the overall good” cannot explain the intuition that one is morally permissible while the other is not. So how could the intuitions of philosophers be so disjointed when the outcomes of such dilemmas are so identical?

Although psychologists in recent years have made progress in exploring how judgments of right and wrong are psychologically mediated by moral emotions, little is known about whether those processes that lead to abstract moral judgments and those that lead to real-world harmful actions are, in fact, identical. Furthermore, little is known as to what kinds of situations might people be willing to behave in a utilitarian manner even when harming another to do so is “personal.” Might intergroup contexts moderate this persona/impersonal distinction?

My lab has begun a series of experiments in which these questions are more addressed in moral dilemmas presented as behavioral experiments in 3D virtual environments. We seek to (a) uncover why moral philosophers and laypersons alike often make seemingly inconsistent moral judgments; (b) assess precisely which features of the structure of moral dilemmas are relevant to people’s judgments, (c) explore how such features are mediated by neurophysiological activity expressed as autonomic nervous system responses, (d) explore the extent to which people are conscious to the principles underlying their actions; and (e) investigate the extent to which the group and gender categorization of the research subjects or the victims in the simulations make a difference in people’s moral judgments and actions. To build on the conceptual advances provided by previous philosophical and psychological analyses, virtual simulations of well-known philosophical thought experiments are adopted, where the participant must decide whether to take the life of one person to save many—complete with the feedback that real-world emergencies might have, such as the graphic sounds and sights of people in distress (for a demo see www.cdnresearch.net/vr). The results of the first behavioral experiment simulating the classic “trolley problem”

in a virtual environment reveal that a large majority of participants act as “moral utilitarians,” having either (a) acted to cause the death of one individual in order to save the lives of five others, or (b) abstained from action when doing so would have caused five deaths compared to one. Autonomic arousal was greater when the utilitarian outcome required action, and increased arousal was associated with a decreased likelihood of utilitarian behavior. Interestingly, no effects of personality, race, or social class factors were found. Our findings reveal that, at least in one classic dilemma, moral judgment and behavior converge, a pattern that is independent of group membership. These findings suggest that when reasoning at an abstract level in domains not amenable to culturally rehearsed responses, people can think quite independently regardless of their own tribal biases.

Ties to Past Research

My work has quite broadly investigated how various threats influence cognition, perception, attitudes, and physiological responses in intergroup contexts. As described above, I adopt an adaptationist framework for understanding how people cope with and react to threats, depending on the nature of each challenge. In my earlier work with my graduate advisor Dan Fessler, we studied how evolved psychological systems operated on culturally specific information, such as ideological beliefs, to produce biases in adherence to normative beliefs. Because normative beliefs are important markers for group affiliation, and also provide important information for flexibly adapting to the environment, people are motivated to enact ingroup norms in times of uncertainty or threat. To the extent that ingroup norms include negative or derogatory beliefs and attitudes about members of social outgroups, such threats can have the effect of increasing intergroup bias, at least for some people.

Across six published studies, my collaborators and I have demonstrated that, among American undergraduates and rural Costa Ricans, the difference in favorability ratings between ingroup and outgroup targets increases as a function of mortality salience, resource theft, and social isolation (Navarrete, 2005; Navarrete, Kurzban, Fessler, & Kirkpatrick, 2004). Two additional published studies support the notion that ethnocentric bias increases as a function of the need to seek social support during times when disease threat looms (Navarrete & Fessler, 2006). In yet another study, we find that pregnant women show greater pro-American bias than non-pregnant women, and that women in the first trimester of pregnancy, being more susceptible to

disease, are more biased than women in the second and third trimesters (Navarrete, Fessler, & Eng, 2007)

In my early graduate training, I was fortunate to have collaborated on various projects of relevance to my current work, including investigations of power, reciprocity and coalitional behavior among primates with UCLA researchers Joe Manson, Susan Perry and Joan Silk (Manson, Navarrete, Silk, & Perry, 2004) and life history investment patterns in pregnancy among chimpanzees with Dan Fessler (Fessler & Navarrete, 2005). Also of relevance is my current work are my collaborations exploring how the emotion of disgust is related to moralistic taboos, disease avoidance, group norms, sexuality, and moral judgment (Fessler & Navarrete, 2003a; 2003b). These experiences in primatological and anthropological approaches have proven invaluable to me in conceptually rooting my current explorations of the psychology of prejudice into a broad, integrative theoretical framework.

Overview and Future Directions

While many evolutionary social scientists advance theoretical tools that hold the promise of illuminating important phenomena in a variety of disciplines, their empirical work too often lacks a thorough mechanistic understanding of how the relevant behavioral outcomes are produced. A more integrative, adaptationist approach that rigorously incorporates principles of natural and sexual selection in the framing of psychological questions, yet is open to describing psychological systems as composed of adaptively flexible information-processing devices is key to the integration of evolutionary approaches and socio-cultural approaches to social science problems. In this regard, psychology is indispensable as a bridge between the natural and social sciences, since its emphasis on describing mechanistic processes that underlie behavioral outcomes is one of the discipline's great strengths. In my work, I seek to contribute to the interface between social psychology and related disciplines by employing theories, principles and concepts that can be applied across the behavioral sciences, while using multiple methods of inquiry ranging from electronic questionnaires, content analyses, latency response tasks, perceptual bias tests, physiological measurements, virtual reality technology, and behavioral observations.

The natural science model for integrating theory and research is a crucial component of bringing psychology and other social science disciplines into the fold of the true scientific enterprise. This should be true not just with respect to conceptual is-

sues relevant to evolutionary theory, but in the practical aspects of how we conduct our research as scientists. Such aspects include the collaborative nature of the best research programs in the natural sciences (including their transnational scope), the study of particular research questions in depth without jumping from topic-to-topic too quickly before a clear understanding of the relevant mechanisms are fleshed out, and the importance of replicating one's findings before making bold claims. With these admonishments to myself in mind, I hope to further expand my studies with researchers in the areas of social neuroscience and behavioral game theory in order to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay between the psychological systems underlying intergroup bias and moral judgment.

It's a good time to be an evolutionary psychologist, because it's a good time to be a natural scientist that studies social phenomena.