

SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR

Topics

- Introduction
- Cultural influences on individual attitudes, identities and behaviour—culture and cultural norms
 - Origins and definitions of culture
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 - Culture of honour
- Cultural origins of behaviour and cognition—cultural dimensions
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 - Socialization
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- Us and them—how we understand others
 - Social cognition
 - Attribution theories
 - Errors in attribution
 - The development and effect of stereotypes should be addressed with reference to one or more examples
 - Effects of stereotypes
 - Social identity theory
 - Acculturation
- HL only: The influence of globalization on individual behaviour

Introduction

Social psychology in a global context

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected. Electronically, culturally, linguistically—in fact in almost every imaginable way. The process through which this happened over the past 100 years or so is called globalization.

Globalization is seen by some as a threatening force to cultures, languages, religions and ways of life. The radicalization of groups around the world is one of the potential reactions to globalization and perceived westernization. Radical groups often believe that actions such as violent terrorist attacks are the only defence they have against what they perceive as an attack on their way of life and their identity. Groups of people around the world are seemingly willing to engage in extremes of violence to guard against globalization. This dichotomy is often described as nationalism versus globalism.

As people come into contact with greater numbers of more diverse individuals, it is important that we gain an understanding of why others may hold different, and sometimes opposing, views to our own. This exploration should begin with trying to understand others through the established norms under and through which they choose to live—in short, their socialization.

There are several assumptions made by social psychologists that rest at the heart of the field of social psychology. These assumptions are sometimes called principles. For example, it is assumed by social psychologists that people are social animals who have a deep need to foster and nurture social connections with others. It is also assumed that social and cultural groups influence behaviour. A third assumption is that people have a social identity (or identities) as well as a personal identity. Finally, it is assumed that the perspectives and worldviews that people hold are resistant to change.

The individual and the group—social identity theory and stereotyping

Inquiry questions

- What happens when cultures collide?
- Why do some people find it difficult to welcome those fleeing war or persecution?
- What kinds of challenges are faced by refugees or migrants once they arrive in their new culture?
- How do we come to understand others?

What you will learn in this section

- Social cognition
 - Principles of social cognition
- Attribution theories
 - Correspondent inference theory
 - Covariation model
 - Causal schemata model
- Errors in attribution
 - Fundamental attribution error
 - Ultimate attribution error
 - Taylor and Jaggi (1974): ethnocentrism and causal attribution
- The development and effect of stereotypes
 - Social schemas
 - Theories of stereotype formation
 - Self-fulfilling prophecy
 - Stereotype threat
- Social identity theory
 - Tajfel and Turner (1979): theory of inter-group conflict
 - Sherif (1954): realistic conflict theory
- Acculturation: a process of psychological and cultural change as a result of contact and interaction between cultures
 - Why do cultures change?
 - Assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization
- Acculturative stress: biopsychosocial difficulties when adapting to a new cultural context

This section also links to:

- schema theory, thinking and decision-making, biases in thinking and decision-making (cognitive approach to behaviour)
- acculturative stress, obesity (health psychology)
- developmental psychology
- the influence of globalization on individual behaviour.

Social cognition

What is social cognition?

Social cognition is the study of how people understand their social world: their thinking, their actions and the environment in which their behaviour occurs. In order to make sense of the world we are required to engage in three cognitive processes. According to **Baron and Byrne (1997)** we must first *interpret* the information that we

receive about other people by examining it within its social context and giving it meaning alongside our previous knowledge of the person or situation. We must then *analyse* the initial appraisal and modify it accordingly. For example, your first impression of a new teacher may not be favourable but as you become more familiar with the teacher you may adjust your perception of that person and maybe of yourself. Finally, you must be able to *recall* previous knowledge and experiences at the

appropriate time. Our memory plays a crucial role in helping us make sense of our world.

We can all to some extent be considered social psychologists attempting to understand ourselves and others (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). We create our own theories of human behaviour and apply them to those we meet. We are what **Heider (1958)** terms "naive scientists", individuals who try to link observable behaviours to unobservable causes. We interpret the meaning of the behaviour based upon these causes rather than the behaviour itself. More formally, psychologists studying social cognition investigate areas such as impression formation, impression management, attribution and attribution bias, stereotype formation, prejudice and discrimination within the laboratory and in a more naturalistic setting.

The principles of social cognition

Gross (2001) and Fiske and Taylor (1991) claim that when studying social cognition researchers have made a number of assumptions about the thinking person, including the following.

- **People are cognitive misers** (Fiske and Taylor, 1991): humans are limited in their ability and capacity to process information. Accuracy may be sacrificed in favour of making a quick decision.
- **Humans engage in both automatic and controlled thinking:** when faced with a familiar or repetitive situation, such as entering a restaurant, people often rely on automatic thinking processes as this requires less time and effort; however, spontaneous thinking can often result in making mistakes. (links to Tversky and Kahneman, biases in thinking and decision-making.)
- **Humans seek consistency in behaviour:** this is best illustrated by Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. When individuals hold two conflicting thoughts or cognitions they experience a level of discomfort or dissonance. For example, the two thoughts might be: "I like eating cake" and "Cake makes me fat". To reduce or eliminate the discomfort the individuals need to make their behaviour consistent with their cognition by discarding, self-justifying or modifying the inconsistent cognition.
- **Self-esteem guides human behaviour:** people with a high level of self-esteem will often view themselves in a more positive light and this may

improve their performance on cognitive tasks or in social situations. People with low self-esteem can often have a negative view of themselves and, as a result, they underperform on cognitive tasks and lack the motivation to engage in social situations. We will explore this further when discussing the formation of stereotypes and discrimination between ingroups and outgroups.

Attribution theories

At the most basic level, when interpreting the behaviour of others we tend to attribute the cause of the action to **personal (dispositional)** and **situational (external)** factors. We look for consistency, intentionality and the most simple or accessible explanation. This can explain the way in which many stereotypes are formed as we generalize an individual's behaviour to a whole population based on a false or erroneous attribution. Before discussing how attribution errors can contribute to the formation and maintenance of stereotypes, we will first provide some context by exploring attribution theories.

Note: it is important to bear in mind that attribution theory will not be tested in the examination and has been included only to extend understanding of the area of social cognition. Understanding attribution theory will facilitate understanding of errors in attribution discussed later in this section.

Heider's commonsense psychology inspired a number of psychologists to develop their own more structured theories that aimed to make sense of how we interpret the world. These are known as attribution theories.

Correspondent inference theory

Imagine that you wake up late one morning and your usual news programme has already started. The current report is discussing an attack involving a suicide bomber who has killed himself and 30 others in a shopping mall. If your initial thought is that the man is an evil murderer then you have made what **Jones and Davis (1965)** called a correspondent inference. The personality characteristic that you have given this man corresponds to the behaviour itself (murder is evil). Should you have been so quick to judge, though? After all, you missed the beginning of the news report. What if the bomber was forced to wear a suicide vest against his will? Would that have changed the disposition that you attributed to him? Jones and Davis (1965) claim that we will only make a dispositional attribution when we are 100% certain that an action was intentional.

ATL Skills Thinking

Identify two criteria that would be necessary for categorizing a behaviour as intentional.

Jones and Davis (1965) argue that the following factors will affect the likelihood of making dispositional attributions.

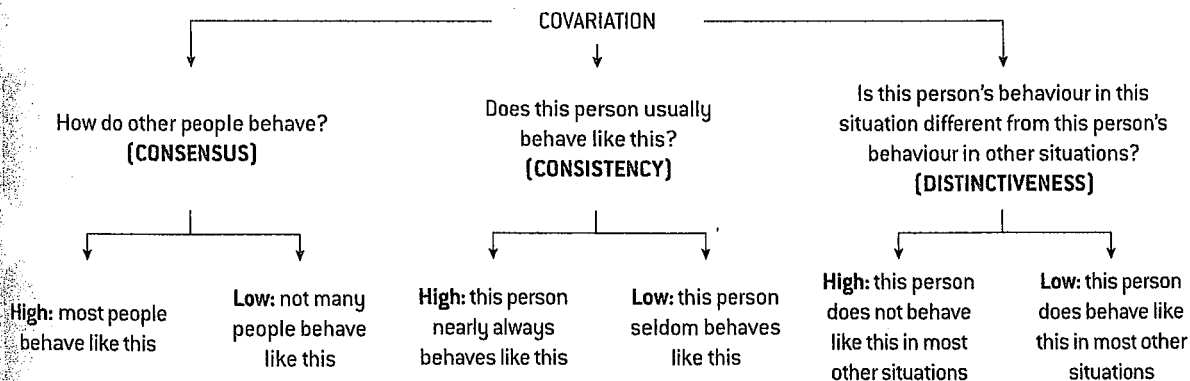
- **Hedonic relevance**—the behaviour positively or negatively affects the person making the attribution.
- **Free choice**—if the person chose to act out of his or her own free will then we are more likely to make a dispositional attribution.
- **Social desirability**—most of us aim to act in ways that are considered socially desirable. As desirable behaviour can be considered the norm, it doesn't tell us very much about a person. Undesirable behaviour, however, can give us a lot more information as it may be unexpected and it may shock us.

The covariation model

A more widely applicable model is the covariation model as it takes both dispositional (internal) and situational (external) factors into account. The covariation model makes use of our prior knowledge of an individual and how the person has acted in similar situations (see Figure 4.11).

Kelley (1967) claims that we utilize three types of information when making attributions.

- **Consensus**—the extent to which other people respond in the same way to a stimulus or situation.
- **Consistency**—the extent to which people respond in the same or similar manner to a given situation.
- **Distinctiveness**—the extent to which the behaviour varies in typical responses to similar stimuli.



▲ Figure 4.11 The covariation model

We attribute high or low value to each type of information and consider the causal relationship by examining a behaviour over time. According to Kelley (1967), we make attributions with a combination of consensus, consistency and distinctiveness information.

This is best illustrated with an example, as attributions about behaviour depend on the extent to which they covary with each of the types of information outlined above. Anders is an IB psychology student seeking help with one of his essays. He approaches his teacher during

his break to seek advice and discuss his concerns about the assignment. If Anders has sought advice during his breaks before then consistency is high, if this is the first time then consistency is low. Consensus is assessed by looking at whether other students also seek help from the teacher. If they do then consensus is high. Finally, does Anders also seek help in mathematics and science, or is it just in psychology? If he seeks help in all subjects then distinctiveness is low and there is nothing out of the ordinary about Anders' behaviour.

ATL skills: Thinking

Consider other combinations of information in this scenario. What would a combination of low consistency, high consensus and high distinctiveness reveal about Anders' behaviour?

Consider the above example. Thinking about Anders' behaviour required engagement in a conscious thought process in order to make a causal attribution. Not all of the information may be available in certain situations. It has been claimed that we are most likely to be exposed to all three types of information when we experience an unexpected or negative event (Baron and Byrne, 1997). The example above also required comparing Anders' behaviour to previous situations and to that of other students. The model is therefore less useful when considering a single or novel event.

Causal schemata model

When we are making causal attributions about people that we do not know, we will not be able to utilize the three types of information outlined in the covariation model (see Figure 4.11). Kelley claimed that in these situations we rely upon our "causal schemata" when making attributions. Causal schemata are our preconceived ideas or theories about the causes of an event or behaviour, based on past or similar experience. As cognitive misers, we tend to generalize a behaviour from one situation into another in order to save time and effort in making sense of it.

Using causal schemata allows quick attributions to be made when there is a lack of relevant information. Causal schemata can, however, reflect the views held by our society and culture at a given point in time. This may influence our own stereotypical views of an individual or group of people and therefore be incorrect. There are many factors that influence the attribution process: the amount of information that we have about an individual, our culture and our desire to cut corners as cognitive misers. It is not surprising, therefore, that our attributions are often biased or erroneous, and one way that psychologists have attempted to study the accuracy of attribution models is to investigate the extent to which individuals conform to any given model.

Errors in attribution**The fundamental attribution error (FAE)**

Think back to the imaginary news report introduced earlier about the suicide bomber. As we all agree that killing innocent civilians in a shopping mall is an evil act, we may be quick to label this attacker an evil man and allocate many negative dispositional qualities or attributions. We have ignored any situational factors that may have led up to and/or caused this terrible event. This error in attribution may lead to a false judgment or stereotype being developed and generalized about an individual or group of people. Errors in attribution can, therefore, be considered one explanation of stereotype formation.

By focusing solely on the dispositional characteristics of this person and ignoring or excluding possible situational (external) factors, we have committed the **fundamental attribution error (FAE)**. The FAE refers to the tendency to overestimate the importance of dispositional factors and underestimate the importance of external or situational factors when attempting to explain the behaviour of others (Ross and Nisbett, 1991). This error has been demonstrated in multiple laboratory experiments that highlight the range of situations in which people may make this error.

Jones and Harris (1967) conducted three experiments in which participants had to try to estimate the "true attitude" of a person in relation to a controversial topic. Participants either read or listened to a speech concerning the rule of Cuba by Fidel Castro. The authors of the speeches had been allocated to either a pro-Castro condition, anti-Castro condition or "free choice" condition. Despite being well aware that authors had been allocated to each condition by the researchers, listeners and readers inferred a correspondence between the author's private views and the anti-Castro views expressed in the speech. This showed how they overestimated the importance of dispositional factors.

Another example of the FAE can be seen in an often-cited study conducted by Ross, Amabile and Steinmetz (1977). Participants played a quiz game and were assigned roles of "questioner" and "contestant". Questioners were allowed to create their own questions, drawing on their own personal knowledge. When asked to rate levels of general knowledge at the end of the study,

participants rated the questioners as having higher levels of general knowledge than the contestants. Both uninvolved observers and the contestants themselves made this dispositional attribution.

Pettigrew (1979) highlights three common elements in these experimental displays of FAE.

- Powerful situational forces were minimized (with the experimenters' instructions and the quiz game format).
- Internal, dispositional characteristics of the salient person (the communicator and the questioner) are magnified.
- Role requirements (being an experimental subject or a quiz contestant) are not fully adjusted for in the final attribution.

Jones and Nisbett (1971) explained the FAE by highlighting that we have different information available to us when we are trying to explain our own behaviour over that of someone else. As we may not know what someone else is thinking, or the person's previous actions in similar scenarios, we focus on what we can see—the person's behaviour. It is clear that we view our own worlds and behaviour differently from that of others; therefore, our attributions reflect this.

Cross-cultural research has, however, made the important discovery that the FAE is not universal (Fletcher and Ward, 1988) and that in cultures such as in India, where family ties are strong and individuals' social position may be controlled, people may in fact be more likely to make situational attributions (Miller, 1984).

The ultimate attribution error (UAE)

"We live in a social environment which is in constant flux. Much of what happens to us is related to the activities of groups to which we do or do not belong; and the changing relations between these groups require constant readjustments of our understanding

of what happens and constant causal attributions about the why and the how of the changing conditions of our life."

(Tajfel, 1969)

There is a plethora of research on attribution theory and errors on an individual level, but a limited amount concerning attribution on the intergroup level. Pettigrew's (1979) **ultimate attribution error (UAE)** is considered an extension of the FAE (Heider, 1958; Ross, 1977) involving the tendency to underestimate situational factors and overestimate personal factors as causes of a behaviour at a group level. Pettigrew claimed that the UAE served as to defend a negative stereotype of a perceived outgroup by attributing negative attributions for the behaviour of outgroup members. The UAE may therefore serve as a more appropriate account for how stereotypes are formed and maintained at an intergroup level where contact is less frequent and the stereotypes are often negative. When an outgroup member is seen to perform a negative act that is consistent with the observers' negative view, there is an increased tendency to attribute internal or dispositional attributions—and so maintain or reinforce the negative stereotype. A problem arises when an outgroup member is seen acting in a positive manner that doesn't conform to the existing negative stereotype (Hewstone, 1990). Pettigrew claimed that in these cases the positive acts are considered to be exceptions to the norm or a product of luck or chance. Subsequently, the negative stereotype is maintained.

Pettigrew claimed that prejudiced individuals are most likely to make this error, and increasingly so when they are aware of their own group's behaviours. Groups that have negative histories or conflict with each other are more likely to display the UAE. This seems observable in the daily news when we observe intergroup conflicts between Arabs and Israelis, Indians and Pakistanis in Kashmir or race relations in the USA.

Research in focus: (Taylor and Jaggi, 1974)

Taylor and Jaggi (1974) conducted the first study on inter-group casual attribution, using Hindu people in southern India. There is a history of conflict between the Hindu and Muslim population in the area, which provided the inter-group context for the research.

The researchers formed these hypotheses.

- Hindu participants would attribute positive behaviours of the ingroup to internal factors and attribute positive behaviours of the outgroups to external factors.

Research in focus (continued)

- Hindu participants would attribute positive behaviours of the ingroup to external factors and attribute negative behaviours of the outgroup to internal factors.

In stage 1 of the study, participants were asked to give an initial rating for the concept "Hindu" (self-judgment) and "Muslim" on 12 evaluative characteristics. They then read 16 one-paragraph descriptions.

In stage 2, participants imagined a story in which they were in either socially desirable or socially undesirable situations with either another Hindu (ingroup) or Muslim (outgroup). Participants had to then explain the behaviour of the individual from a choice of an internal (dispositional) or external (situational) attribution.

In all cases, Hindu participants were increasingly likely to attribute positive behaviours associated to their ingroup to internal factors than they were to attribute socially undesirable behaviour to internal factors. However, when participants were rating the behaviour of the outgroup they attributed socially desirable behaviour to internal factors 50% of the time.

The researchers concluded that there were great differences in how causal attributions were made between groups. Internal attribution for socially desirable behaviours was higher for ingroup actors in the stories. For socially undesirable behaviour, internal attribution was lower for ingroup actors than for outgroup actors in the stories.

Discussion

The results from Taylor and Jaggi (1974) seem to be closely related to Tajfel's social identity theory and the self-serving bias whereby achieving and maintaining self-esteem is very important.

Do you think UAE can be understood as a group-based self-serving bias? What makes you think that?

Duncan (1976) conducted what is considered a more ecologically valid study. White American college students viewed a video recording of a violent interaction where one participant pushed the other. The researchers manipulated the race of the "protagonist" and the "victim". Participants were required to attribute the violent behaviour to either: (1) situational factors, (2) dispositional factors, (3) related specifically to the topic under discussion or (4) a combination of all these factors. Results highlighted a strong inter-group effect.

When the protagonist was black his behaviour was attributed more to dispositional factors than was the case for a white protagonist. The conclusion was that in the black protagonist condition more dispositional than situational attributions were made. The reverse was true in the white protagonist condition. The results therefore provide limited support for the UEA.

Hewstone (1990) reviews 19 articles on the UAE and claims that, while there is some support for the claims made by Pettigrew, the evidence is in fact limited. Hewstone therefore prefers to label the UAE as an "inter-group attributional bias".

The work on the ultimate attribution error has been heavily influenced by the research of Heider, Ross and Tajfel. Later in this unit Tajfel's research will be discussed in more depth.

ATL skills: Research

Locate the following articles. These are often cited and given details of what is considered classic research in the field of impression formation and implicit personality theory.

- Asch, SE. 1946. "Forming impressions of personality". *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology*. Vol 41. Pp 258-290.
- Kelley, HH. 1950. "The warm-cold variable in first impressions of people". *Journal of Personality*. Vol 18. Pp 431-439.
- Luchin, AS. 1957. "Primacy-recency in impression formation" in C. Hovland (ed.) *The Order of Presentation in Persuasion*. New Haven, Connecticut, USA. Yale University Press.

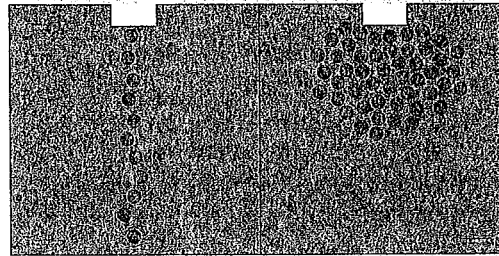
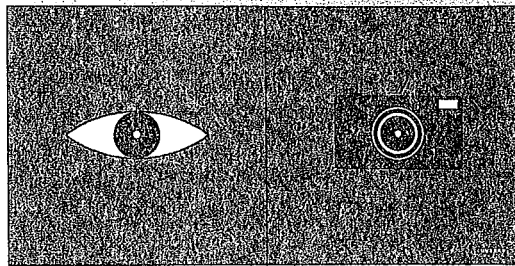
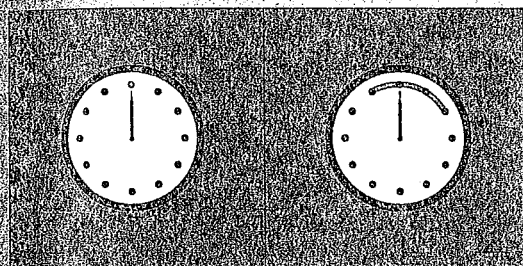
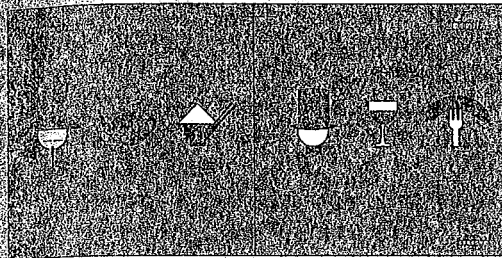
What are the main conclusions of this research?

How does this research develop our understanding of the individual and the group?

Stereotypes

Art Skills: Thinking

Look at the following infographics created by the Chinese designer Yang Liu. She is attempting to convey the differences between eastern (Chinese) and western (German) culture using simple images.



How do you think the artist developed the views of eastern and western cultures that inspired these images?

Some people find these images offensive or upsetting. Why do you think this is?

So, where do these stereotypes come from and why do we use them? After all, it is clear that social stereotypes are grossly over-simplified and generalized abstractions that people share about their own group and another group (Oakes, Haslam and Turner 1994; Hogg and Vaughan, 1995).

Discussion

Do you agree with Yang Liu's interpretation of these eastern and western cultures? What makes you say that? Discuss your views with a partner.

The term "stereotype" was first used in a psychological sense by Lippmann (1922) who defined stereotypes as "little pictures in our heads that help us interpret what we see". Aronson (2008) claims that when we stereotype we allow these pictures to dominate our thinking, causing us to assign identical characteristics to any person in a group, regardless of the variation among members of that group.

We all have images in our heads or cultural stereotypes of people that we think encapsulates their cultural identity and therefore individual behaviour. For example, if I asked you to imagine and draw a Frenchman, you may picture something like the image opposite, despite never having seen a Frenchman wearing this outfit.



▲ Figure 4.12 A common stereotype of a Frenchman

The fact is that stereotyping is inevitable and should not necessarily be considered a bad thing. We learn to assign characteristics to other groups from a very young age as it helps us to organize and make sense of the world around us. (See schema theory in Unit 3 on the cognitive approach to behaviour for more on this.)

Assigning stereotypes often takes place unconsciously and automatically. We place people into categories based upon our previous experiences with similar people using our existing **schemas**. Jean Piaget pioneered research in childhood development of schemas.

Using our schemas can allow us to respond to novel or unexpected situations more quickly. More commonly however, we consider stereotyping to be a negative process as it can cause us to ignore differences between individual members of a group, and can lead to biased or unfair treatment in the form of prejudice and discrimination.

In 2016, Donald Trump famously referred to a negative stereotype of Mexican people as part of his political campaign. See <http://time.com/4473972/donald-trump-mexico-meeting-insult/> for some of Trump's comments. Similarly, the UK's Brexit campaign portrayed a negative impression of many immigrants and refugees, linking them to loss of

jobs and a threat to national identity. As a result, the world was exposed to a very negative view of these specific demographics, which in turn resulted in an increase in reported hate crimes and overt prejudice.

This highlights that our schemas can be affected and subsequently updated by exposure to new first-hand personal experiences and information gathered from watching the news, movies and television shows. For example, popular television shows such as *Homeland* and *House of Cards* expose us to a very stereotypical view of Islam. This type of influence highlights the important role of **gatekeepers** in schema formation. Having recently been exposed to a new or alternative experience, your newly updated schema will be more easily accessible than those that have not been accessed for a while. **Accessibility** refers to the ease with which you can use your schema due to the fact that the memories have been retrieved recently. Schemas that relate to repeated personal experience, those that relate to a current goal or those that have recently been primed are all likely to be easily accessible. **Priming** refers to the process by which your recent personal experience increases the accessibility of a schema. For example, watching Donald Trump talk about Mexicans is likely to increase your accessibility to your own schema about Mexican people.

ATL skills: Research

Joel Parés, a former US Marine who became a photographer, created a series of photographs to present us with characters symbolic of the prejudices suffered by various groups based on their ethnicity, socio-economic status or sexual preference.

Do these images challenge your existing stereotypes? What makes you say that?



Parés told *RetaPixel*:

Many of us judge incorrectly by someone's ethnicity, by their profession, and by their sexual interest. The purpose of this series is to open our eyes and make us think twice before judging someone, because we all judge. Even if we try not to.

Where do stereotypes come from?

One idea about where stereotypes originate is the **grain of truth hypothesis**. Think back to the infographics by Yang Liu that you saw earlier. Whether you agreed with them or not is likely to have been affected by your own personal experience. For example, you may have accessed a memory of a holiday when you saw a Chinese tourist taking lots of pictures, or a German drinking beer, and this will have influenced your viewpoint. If you shared your view of these images with one of your friends, you will have shaped their view of a group of people by sharing your personal experiences with them. The discussion and subsequent stereotype therefore started with a small "grain of truth" (Allport, 1954). By communicating your experiences, you may have in essence helped to create and spread a new stereotype. The reality is, however, that a single experience of one person from a particular demographic is not enough to make a sweeping generalization to the entire group. We still do it, though. Trump may have met one Mexican drug dealer (although that is unlikely), but he cannot and should not generalize to a large population.

Another factor is the formation of **illusory correlations**. It is common for people to see two variables as related when they are not. This is known as an illusory correlation. Common examples of illusory correlations include:

- a student believing that all Asians are good at mathematics because he sits next to a very able Asian mathematics student
- a woman believing that all pit bull dogs are dangerous because she has read one article on an aggressive pit bull
- a footballer putting his left boot on first before every match because he scored a goal the first time he did this.

Illusory correlations are relevant to stereotyping because group stereotypes can become viewed as perceived correlations between the group and a trait and/or behaviour—the correlations are illusory because they are falsely being understood as actual correlations.

For example, an individual may perceive a minority group as more likely to engage in a negative behaviour than a majority group,

and therefore implicitly perceive a correlation between that individual's group membership and behaviour. It has been discovered that when we view another group's behaviour we pay attention to the most distinctive form of information. This is likely to be because this is the information that is most accessible to us and will therefore be the most likely form of information to influence the illusory correlation. We are rarely exposed to behaviours that do not conform to our society's norms or expectations and so it is not surprising that when we do experience a negative behaviour, we may associate it with a minority group. This may result in an unfairly negative stereotype of a minority group being formed. For example, a white boy may see a black boy screaming and shouting in public and correlate this violent verbal behaviour to the shouting boy's ethnicity. The white boy may then generalize this behaviour to the group and create the stereotype that all black people are violent.

A classic study conducted by **Hamilton and Gifford (1976)** researched how our expectations of events can distort how we process the information. Participants had to read descriptions of various people from two imaginary groups: group A and group B. Group A was considerably larger than group B. The readings contained descriptions of the individual's group membership and a specific behaviour. The behaviours were either helpful or harmful. For example, a teacher called John, a member of group B, screams at his students. Nick, a member of group A, helps at his local church. When asked to give their impressions of a typical group member, participants considered the behaviour of group B members (the minority) to be considerably less desirable than members of group A. There was no actual correlation between group membership and desirability and so participants were making an illusory correlation.

Schaller (1991) conducted a similar experiment with 141 US university students. Participants were told that the experiment was investigating how people perceive information about others. They again read sentences about members of two distinct groups, groups A and B. They were informed that there were fewer members of group B and so they would be reading fewer descriptions of group B members. Participants were then assigned group membership to either group A or group B. There was a control condition

where no group membership was assigned. Participants were asked to read individual statements that contained information about the group membership of an individual and a specific desirable or undesirable behaviour. After reading all the statements, they were given questionnaires to answer that would assess the extent to which they perceived a relationship between group membership and behaviour. The findings clearly supported the hypothesis that being placed into a group would influence the processing of information and that participants would display positive discrimination in favour of their own ingroup. This social categorization effect is central to the understanding of social identity theory and can help explain how we form stereotypes and discriminate against others.

Social cognitive theory provides an explanation for the formation of stereotypes as a learned

behaviour. This theory also relies upon gatekeeper theory to explain from whom the stereotype formation is learned.

Effects of stereotypes

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Schemas and stereotypes can cause people to change the way that they think about themselves and influence their behaviour. In some instances people can unconsciously change their behaviour, causing the schema to become true. This is called the self-fulfilling prophecy. People have a perception about how others will behave and as such treat them differently. The way in which they treat individuals causes those individuals to change their behaviour in such a way that the original expectation becomes true.

Exercise

We all hold implicit associations about different topics and social groups. These associations may be positive or negative. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is now a common measure for assessing an individual's implicit associations. It includes tests focusing on race, gender, sexuality, weight and more.



Project Implicit®

If you are curious about your own implicit biases, follow this link and take a test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Be aware that you may not agree with the findings.



Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) conducted a classic study that demonstrated the self-fulfilling prophecy. Teachers in an elementary school were told by researchers that certain students were likely to be "growth spurters" or academic "bloomers" in the next academic year based upon results of an academic test. The test did not actually exist and the students predicted to be "bloomers" were chosen at random. Any difference between students was therefore in how they were now perceived by their teachers. The researchers observed the classroom dynamics throughout the year and at the end of the year the students were given an IQ test. Students that were labelled as "bloomers" demonstrated an increase in IQ,

gaining higher scores than their peers. It appears that the teachers' perceptions of the students' ability affected the way that the teachers interacted with the students, making the predictions of students' ability become true. Later studies have discovered that teachers create a warmer learning environment for "bloomers", allowing them more time to answer questions. They also give "bloomers" more and better feedback on their completed assignments (Brophy, 1983; Snyder, 1984).

When looking at this research we must consider what happens if we apply a label to a group of people on the societal level. If we consider women less able at mathematics or African Americans

less able at science it may affect their future life chances. Few opportunities in these areas may be offered to them and this may affect future job prospects and earning potential. With fewer women and African Americans pursuing jobs in the areas utilizing these skills, the label may be seen to carry some level of credibility, in this way reinforcing the label and creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

See video

Watch this TED Talk by Thandie Newton: "Embracing otherness, embracing myself":

https://www.ted.com/talks/thandie_newton_embracing_otherness_embracing_myself



Stereotype threat

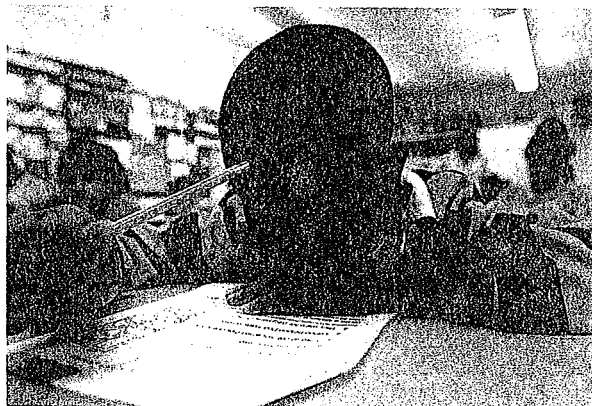
Statistics have shown that there is a difference in the academic test performance between different groups of people. This has led to some common stereotypes. Two common stereotypes have been the subject of much research and discussion—the stereotypes that Anglo-Americans tend to outperform African Americans on academic testing; and the commonly held stereotype that women are less able than men at mathematics. These stereotypes were studied in relation to what Steele, Spencer and Aronson (2002) call **stereotype threat**.

Stereotype threat refers to the anxiety and apprehension experienced by an individual or members of a particular group when they believe that their behaviour in a specific situation may confirm and reinforce an existing negative group stereotype. There are many explanations as to why someone may underperform on a mathematics or science test, such as fatigue or lack of resources, but Steele and his colleagues claim that group stereotypes cause an individual to re-evaluate his or her behaviour in relation to the stereotype, often leading to underperformance. The researchers argue that our social identities—old, young, male, female, white man, female teacher, and so on—become more significant when we are in specific situations.

In turn, our social identity may affect the factors that we have to deal with in specific situations. Steele and his colleagues call these factors identity contingencies. They claim that identity contingencies are the circumstances that we must deal with in order to get the desired outcomes from a situation.

For example, a woman about to sit a mathematics test may be aware of the commonly held negative stereotype of the link between women and poor mathematics performance. In turn, the anxiety that she feels as a result of this stereotype may affect her subsequent performance on the test. This may manifest itself in a variety of ways, including poor concentration and increased heart rate, which will result in inferior performance.

Steele and Aronson (1995) studied the effect of stereotype threat on the intellectual test performance of African-American students. The researchers hypothesized that when African-American students sit an academic test they face the threat of confirming or being judged by a negative societal stereotype. This suspicion causes a fear of confirming the stereotype, with the result that students self-evaluate and underperform in academic situations.



The procedure involved administering a 30-minute test with items taken from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The test was of sufficient difficulty to stretch participants and cause frustration.

There were three experimental conditions.

- **Condition 1—the stereotype threat condition:** in this condition the test was described as being a measure of intellectual ability. This would cause the negative racial stereotype to become relevant to the black participants and establish stereotype threat.

- Condition 2—the **non-stereotype threat condition**: the test was merely described as a problem-solving task that was unrelated to intellectual ability. This should have not established any stereotype threat.
- Condition 3—the **challenge condition**: this was a second non-diagnostic condition. It described the difficult test as posing a challenge in the hope of raising motivation for the task.

It was predicted that white students would outperform black students on the diagnostic condition but not on the two non-diagnostic

conditions. Results showed that black students in the diagnostic condition performed significantly worse than black participants in either of the two non-diagnostic conditions, as well as significantly worse than white participants in the diagnostic condition.

This experiment was seen by the researchers as evidence of stereotype threat and sits alongside over 300 studies that demonstrate the effect of stereotype threat on test performance (Aronson, 2010; Steele, 2010; cited in Aronson *et al*, 2014).

ATL skills: Research and thinking

As we have seen, Steele and Aronson (1995) investigated the effect of stereotype threat on academic performance when it links to negative racial stereotypes. To add to your learning, read this article by Claude Steele on stereotype threat and academic performance:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/08/thin-ice-stereotype-threat-and-black-college-students/304663/>

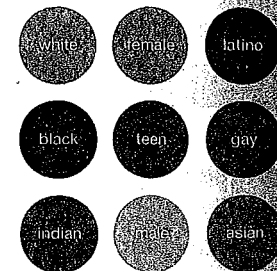
For further reading, turn to Claude Steele's book: *Whistling Vivaldi* (2010) published by W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

Another key area of focus has been the investigation of stereotype threat on female performance in mathematic tests. Find the following study on this topic:

Spencer, S.J., Steele, C.M. and Quinn, D. 1999. "Stereotype threat and women's math performance". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol 35. Pp 4–28.

Summarize this study.

How does this study contribute to our understanding of stereotype threat on academic performance?



whistling vivaldi

how stereotypes affect us
and what we can do

CLAUDE M. STEELE

*This is an intellectual odyssey of the first order—a true tour de force.
—WILLIAM G. BOWEN

Discussion

Discuss with a partner the use of the experimental method in developing our understanding of stereotypes and stereotype threat.

See video

As related viewing, watch Paul Bloom's TED Talk "Can prejudice ever be a good thing?"

https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_bloom_can_prejudice_ever_be_a_good_thing



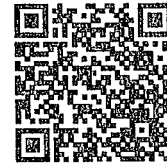
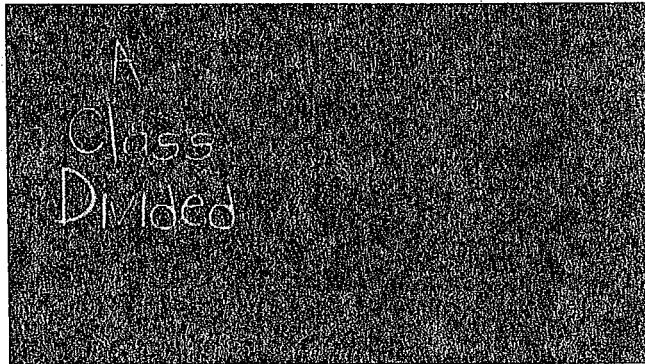
Case study: Jane Elliott — "A class divided"

After the assassination of Martin Luther King Junior in 1968, a third-grade teacher in Iowa called Jane Elliott decided that she wanted to teach her students some important lessons on prejudice and discrimination. In order to do this she divided her class into groups based upon eye colour. Brown-eyed or blue-eyed students were clearly labelled by wearing collars around their necks. On the first day, she told the blue-eyed students that they were more well behaved and more intelligent than the brown-eyed students (and so gave them a positive stereotype). She offered them preferential treatment by allowing them to sit at the front of the class and to have first choice of materials and resources in lessons. The brown-eyed students suffered a great blow to their self-esteem. They became withdrawn and turned to each other for support.



On the second day, she reversed the assigned labels and offered the preferential treatment to the brown-eyed students. The brown-eyed students now became more engaged in class and even improved their performance on classroom activities. This simple experiment seems to highlight the importance of children's social identity and social contingencies within the classroom upon their academic ability.

See video



<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/class-divided/>

Social identity theory

In 1979, Tajfel and Turner proposed a theory of inter-group conflict. Social identity theory has since become a prominent theory in social psychology and increased our understanding of social phenomena such as social identity, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. It is important to note that although a key part of the theory focuses on social categorization (membership to

social groups), self-categorization theory was later developed as an extension of this earlier work.

As social identity theorists, Tajfel and Turner acknowledge the existence of two different types of self. Our **social identity**, which is of most relevance here, refers to the self in terms of our group membership such as our gender or ethnicity. Our **personal identity** refers to our self on a more individual, private and interpersonal level.

Elements of your personal identity may only be known by a loved one, or even only to yourself. It is possible to have multiple social and personal identities as we are all members of multiple social groups and are involved in many interpersonal relationships (Hogg and Vaughan, 2014).

Social identity theory is based upon the following three assumptions.

- Individuals strive to maintain or enhance their **self-esteem**. This will support having a positive **self-concept**.
- Membership to social groups can have both positive and negative associations. An individual's identity will therefore be viewed in light of the collective value or **salience** of the groups to which the person belongs.
- An individual will assess the value of his or her own **ingroup (us)** membership via a process of **social comparison** with an **out-group (them)**. When an individual perceives his or her ingroup more favourably than the outgroup this will result in more value being placed upon membership to the ingroup and a more positive social identity.

When individuals are unhappy with their group membership they may seek to leave the existing group and move to another with a more positive group identity. This factor is known as **permeability**, the ability to move between groups due to flexibility of group boundaries. Alternatively, when individuals must remain within their group as the group boundaries are **impermeable**, they may try to make their existing group appear more positive by displaying favouritism towards the ingroup. This will serve to increase their self-esteem and may result in discrimination against the outgroup.

Tajfel *et al* (1971) aimed to demonstrate that when individuals are allocated to groups based upon minimal characteristics—merely belonging to an ingroup or an outgroup—it is possible to create discrimination despite there being no existing prejudice. The study involved 64 boys, between 14 and 15 years old, from a school in Bristol, UK. They were allocated to groups based upon minimal characteristics; that is, they were assigned to groups based upon arbitrary and minimal criteria.

In the first study, boys were placed into groups based upon their estimates of the number of dots on a screen in a visual judgment task. They were then placed into groups labelled “overestimator” or “underestimator” based upon their estimates in the task. The allocation to the groups was in fact arbitrary and was designed to categorize the boys.

The boys were then told that they were going to be involved in a task that involved giving rewards and penalties to others in the form of real money. The boys would not know the identities of those to whom they allocated these rewards or penalties and none of their decisions would benefit or punish themselves. At the end of the experiment each boy would receive the amount that he had been awarded, although this was an insignificant amount (around 50p).

The boys were placed into cubicles and were given specially designed booklets that contained matrices like the one shown at the top of Table 4.7. Participants were required to circle one column and told that this would equate to rewarding or penalizing another participant. The booklet contained matrices that enabled ingroup choices, outgroup choices or intergroup choices.

For study 1														
Underestimator	-20	-17	-14	-11	-8	-5	-2	1	2	3	4	5	7	
Overestimator	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	-2	-5	-8	-11	-14	-17	-20
For study 2														
	Booklet for group preferring artist Klee													
These numbers are rewards for boy no. 70 from the Klee group	26	24	22	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	
These numbers are rewards for boy no. 20 of the Kandinsky group	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	

▲ Table 4.7 Example matrices

The findings from the first study highlighted that when the boys were required to make an intergroup choice (that is, either allocate rewards or penalties to one of their own group or a member of the outgroup) they displayed ingroup favouritism and allocated more rewards to members of their own group. When faced with allocating rewards or penalties to two members of the same group, ingroup or outgroup, the boys opted for a decision that would ensure maximum fairness. These results support the claims made by Tajfel that discrimination can be created by merely being allocated to a group. In short, when we are aware that an outgroup exists we will discriminate in favour of the ingroup.

In the second study, a different group of boys were arbitrarily categorized into groups based upon artistic preference. These participants were shown pictures of paintings by the artists Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky.

The second study was similar to the first, in that the boys would allocate rewards and penalties to other participants. The matrices in the second

study were slightly different, though (see Table 4.7). In this study the matrices encouraged the boys to make one of three decisions.

- **Maximum joint profit:** boys could allocate the largest amount to both boys in the matrix.
- **Maximum ingroup profit:** boys could allocate the largest amount to members of their ingroup.
- **Maximum difference:** this decision maximized the amount given to the boys in their ingroup and minimized the amount given to members of the outgroup.

In the second study the findings showed that the boys would rather maximize the difference in the scores allocated between the ingroup and the outgroup, even at the expense of gaining a higher score and obtaining more money. When making a decision concerning two members of the ingroup, boys would opt for a choice of maximum fairness, demonstrating clear ingroup favouritism. This study highlights that discrimination can take place even when no previous prejudice or competition exists.

ATL skills: Research and thinking

Social identity theory provides one explanation of intergroup behaviour and discrimination. Moshe Sherif (1954) provided an alternative explanation in the form of **realistic conflict theory**.

Using your research skills, locate articles that summarize the main assumptions of realistic conflict theory.

Contrast realistic conflict theory with social identity theory.

For a detailed summary of both theories you may want to consult the original publication by Tajfel and Turner. You can find it here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ya7ssaws>

In 2001, researchers Alex Haslam and Steve Reicher conducted the BBC Prison Study which examined how people respond to being placed into groups of unequal power, either prison guards or prisoners.

Explore the study website: <http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/index.php>

To what extent can the research findings be explained by:

- social identity theory
- realistic conflict theory?



Discussion

Take the points you identified when contrasting realistic conflict theory with social identity theory. Discuss your findings with a partner.

Acculturation

Why do cultures change?

Cultures are not static. They change over time, just as people change. They can change as a result of modernization, affluence, migration, education and a myriad of other reasons. Acculturation is one type of cultural change. **Acculturation** is a process of psychological and cultural change as a result of contact and interaction between cultures. This can result in change to all (or both) cultures not only the non-dominant culture (Berry, 2008). It is also important to note that change is both psychological (individual) and cultural (social); it affects individuals and society at large. Acculturation is often discussed as a process that takes place between dominant and non-dominant cultures.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that accelerating globalization is driving acculturation. The total number of international migrants (people living in a different country from the one in which they were born) reached 244 million in 2015. That represents a 40% increase from 2000 and includes 20 million refugees (United Nations, 2016). Interestingly, this *does not* mean that we are headed toward a single homogenized global culture. Contact with other cultures may be inevitable but the responses to contact range from total acceptance to total rejection.

Examples of resistance cultures that have survived and maintained their cultural identity are everywhere. First Nations (or Aboriginal) cultures in Canada, the USA, Australia and elsewhere have survived centuries of contact with other cultures. This contact was not always peaceful. Many First Nations cultures have been subjected to forced assimilation policies such as the introduction of residential schools which were designed to “kill the Indian and save the man”. At these government-run or church-run schools, First Nations children were removed from their families, punished for speaking their native languages and forced to adopt European ways of life. Despite this, and over a century of contact with more dominant cultures, many distinct and vibrant First Nations cultures exist around the world. Indeed, many of these cultures are currently experiencing a resurgence, perhaps working in the opposite direction of assimilation as more and more First Nations youths are exposed to, and proud of, their cultural past. These are

examples of cultural resistance and revitalization in the face of cultural domination.

See video

Watch this related TED Talk on pop culture in the Arab world:

https://www.ted.com/talks/shereen_el_feki_pop_culture_in_the_arab_world



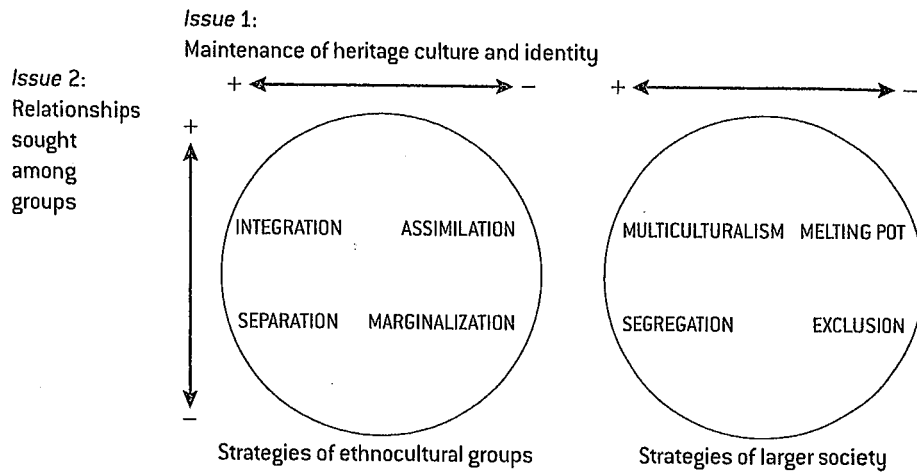
Acculturation studies

Studies into acculturation are most interested in how cultures change as a result of migration and the resulting contact with other cultures. As a result of globalization, closing yourself off from contact with members outside your cultural group is no longer a viable option. It has become more important to study the strategies of dealing with acculturation rather than the willingness (or not) to accept change within your culture. In short, the world has become far too interrelated for cultural isolation. **Berry (2008)** argues that individuals can adopt four strategies for cultural change.

- **Assimilation:** when individuals are open to change and are unconcerned about any loss of their original culture. In this strategy, individuals openly seek interaction with cultures other than their own and are willing to adjust their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs.
- **Integration:** when individuals want to hold onto traditional values and beliefs but at the same time desire daily interactions with other cultures. This option can only be pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and accommodating toward cultural change.
- **Separation:** when individuals value their original culture and are averse to losing touch with the values and traditions of their past. These individuals actively seek to avoid contact with other cultures.
- **Marginalization:** when individuals have little interest in maintaining their original culture but at the same time little interest in opening relations with other cultures.

The preferred strategy depends upon whether or not you are a member of the dominant or minority culture and what the cultural values are among both cultures. For example, assimilation is often sought by dominant groups reluctant to change and will result in a "melting pot" (for example, the US attitude towards immigration); when separation is forced, it is called segregation (for example, apartheid

South Africa). Multiculturalism is the result of an openness on the part of all cultures widely accepting of diversity (for example, the official immigration policy in Canada). Marginalization is the result of individual decisions to remain isolated and of social policies that limit or at least discourage cultural contributions from minority groups. Figure 4.13 illustrates Berry's (2008) research.



▲ Figure 4.13 Values of intercultural studies in ethnocultural groups and in the larger society

Source: Berry (2008)

How are acculturation studies designed?

Acculturation is a process that happens over time at both a group cultural level and at an individual level. It is therefore important that longitudinal studies take place that look at change over time. In addition, studies should look at changes in both (or all) cultures, not just the non-dominant one. Studies should also look at changes in individual psychology as well as changes in greater society (culture). Research often employs questionnaires and surveys so findings are often reliant on self-reported data. Finally, as with any psychological research, attaining results from multiple samples in multiple societies is very important. Findings from only one or two cultures is insufficient in explaining acculturation and its impact on identities, attitudes and beliefs.

ATL skills: Thinking and research

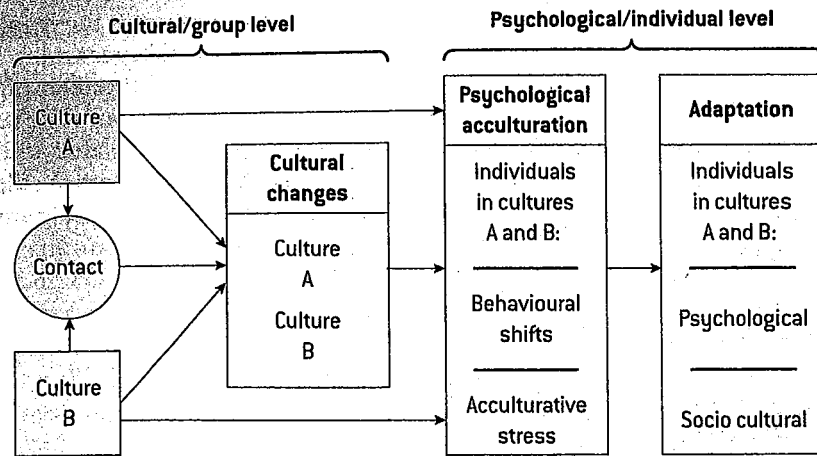
Do you think the findings of acculturation studies are valid, considering they are the product of self-assessment? What makes you say that?

What changes would you propose to the research methodology of acculturation studies to make them less reliant on self-reporting?

How does acculturation impact behaviour?

Acculturation happens through contact and exchange between cultures. Communication is a very important determinant of acculturation. Strong communication and involvement on the part of immigrants with their original culture can help the acculturation process in the beginning (social support from the original culture before it is available from the new culture may be important here). Over the long term though, strong communication and involvement with original cultural groups may retard acculturation as this prevents effective communication and involvement with the new, adopted culture (Lakey, 2003).

When examining the impact of acculturation on behaviour, a significant limitation appears. First, most migration occurs from poorer, less-developed countries to richer, more-developed countries. As a result, research is biased toward a study of acculturation in one direction. There is very little opportunity to study the effects of acculturation in the other direction; that is, from rich countries to poorer ones. Acculturation studies look mostly at the movement of peoples from more traditionalist, poorer cultures to more liberal and richer cultures. This makes generalization problematic.



▲ Figure 4.14 A general framework for understanding acculturation

Source: Berry (2005)

The health behaviour of migrants has been extensively studied. Two main effects have been noticed. The **healthy migrant effect** refers to the concept that recent migrants tend to be healthier than their native born counterparts. The second effect, **the negative acculturation effect**, refers to the apparent diminishing difference between migrants and their native born counterparts over time. That is, the healthy migrant effect diminishes with great acculturation into unhealthy host country habits. The healthy migrant effect has not been theoretically founded and seems to run counter to the well-established connection between low socio-economic status and poor health. It has been largely explained by the fact that most host countries select for healthy migrants and that the food environments of migrant origin cultures are often healthier than those of first-world receiving cultures. (see "Clinical bias in diagnosis and the role of culture in treatment" in Unit 5 on abnormal psychology)

ATL skills: Thinking and research

A lot of research in psychology is accused of being W-E-I-R-D (Western, Educated, from Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic countries). As a result, much psychological research is done in a very particular context that may bias findings. Acculturation studies are no exception.

Do you think the healthy immigrant effect and the negative acculturation effect may be two examples of this type of bias? What makes you say that?

Shah *et al.* (2015) found a positive association between obesity and acculturation among 1,375

mainly South Asian (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) male migrant workers in the UAE.

Participants completed a health and lifestyle questionnaire between January and June 2012. Over half of those surveyed had lived in the UAE for more than six years and the most common occupations were drivers (23%), labourers and agricultural workers (17% each) and construction workers (12.5%). Findings showed that these migrant workers in the UAE had significantly higher body mass index (BMI) than men of the same age in their cultures of origin. The longer the migrants stay in the UAE, the greater the difference between their BMI and that of men in their culture of origin. The mean BMI among participants was higher than for working men aged 20–59 years in India (31.5 kg/m² versus 23.1 kg/m²) and Bangladesh (26.2 kg/m² versus 19.7 kg/m²). Prevalence of being overweight and of obesity in male Pakistani migrants was more than double than for Pakistani men in their origin culture. In addition, the prevalence of obesity and being overweight in the study sample (63.4%) was also higher than in Emirati men (58.6%). These findings seem to show that acculturation may contribute to obesity and being overweight.

Delavario *et al.* (2013) found that there was a relationship between acculturation and obesity among Hispanic migrants in the USA. A literature review of nine studies conducted on migrants to the USA from eight different cultures of origin have found mixed results between men and women. Six studies found a positive association between higher acculturation and BMI, while th-

found that higher acculturation was associated with lower BMI mainly among women. The increase in BMI among men may be because migrants are moving into a culture that promotes unhealthy weight gain more than their culture of origin. Contrary findings for women have been explained by the western ideal of a slim female body and a resultant higher emphasis placed on physical activity and fitness, which would counter the positive association between acculturation and obesity.

Another study, also undertaken in the USA, supports the relationship between acculturation and obesity. This research looked at what researchers call unhealthy assimilation among Asian migrants. Unhealthy assimilation refers to convergence of the health of migrants to a less healthy new-culture standard. Ishizawa and Jones (2016) did find that second- and third-generation migrants had a higher likelihood of obesity than first-generation migrants or individuals from their origin culture, but the researchers did identify moderating factors. They found that neighbourhoods with a high migrant density and those households that retained their original language acted as buffers against obesity (**Ishizawa and Jones, 2016**).

Length of stay has been found to be a contributing factor to obesity in a study of migrants in Portugal conducted by **Da Costa, Dias and Martins (2017)**. A study of over 31,000 people (of whom 4.6% were migrants) was conducted between 2007 and 2008. Findings showed that the prevalence of overweight was higher for native Portuguese than new migrants but that length of residence of migrants (more than 15 years) was positively associated with prevalence of overweight (Da Costa, Dias and Martins, 2017). In this case, it seems that the acculturative process included a change in diet or lifestyle that caused the migrants to mirror the obesity and overweight prevalence rates of native Portuguese.

There are other researchers who challenge the assumption that acculturation and obesity are necessarily correlated. These researchers imply that it is not the acculturative process itself that results in obesity but the culture to which one is acculturating that matters. A study of over 3,100 Spanish adolescents conducted by **Esteban-Gonzalo et al (2015)** found no significant difference in overweight risk between Spanish and

immigrant adolescents. Findings did show that short-term immigrants (with less than six years' residence) had a higher overweight risk than longer-term immigrants and native Spanish people, but that the difference disappeared within six years.

Acculturative stress

Acculturation can be stressful. Obesity, substance abuse and cardiovascular disease are correlated with heightened levels of chronic stress (see Unit 6 on health psychology). Acculturative stress can be defined as biopsychosocial difficulties when adapting to a new cultural context. The term has been used as a synonym for culture shock and psychic shock. Another way to think of it is as the stress experienced by people who are coping with conflicting cultural norms (Sullivan, 2009).

Many people experience acculturation without the associated stress. Protective factors and determinants of acculturative stress include (but are not limited to) affluence, social support and the degree of similarity or difference in cultural contexts. These mirror the protective factors and risk factors of stress discussed in Unit 6 on health psychology.

Acculturative stress can arise when there is conflict between the various acculturation strategies and it can be a difficult challenge to individuals interacting with multiple cultures. This issue can become very problematic when members of the same non-dominant group have conflicting opinions on acculturative strategies. An example of this can be found with the Shafia so called "honour killings" in Canada outlined in "Psychology in real life" below.

According to Berry (2005), integration strategies result in the lowest levels of stress. This may be because individuals are not required to give up social identification with their original culture when they adopt and adapt some identification with their new culture. Assimilation and separation result in intermediate levels of stress while marginalization results in the highest levels of acculturative stress. If we examine these results using social identity theory, it seems that the more connected an individual feels to a group (whether that is the new culture, the old one or both), the less stress is experienced. This may be due to the protective factor of social support—those with connections to both cultures will have access to more social support than others.

Migration and acculturation have also been found to have an impact on mental health in children and adolescents. Batista-Pinto Wiese (2010) argues that migration and acculturative stress can have severe implications for young children and adolescents because migration can be understood

as a life trauma. She points out that younger children can develop insecure, ambivalent or disorganized attachment while adolescents may show increased aggressive behaviour along with anxiety and depressive behaviour related to acculturation.

Discussion

Read "Psychology in real life" below, then answer these questions.

- Do you think acculturative stress played a role in the deaths of the Shafia girls?
- Why do you think it was difficult for these girls' parents to adapt to the cultural norms of life in Canada?
- To what extent should cultures be accepting and understanding of the norms and values of immigrants?
- Do you believe that immigrants and refugees should assimilate to the culture of their new homes?

Psychology in real life

Globalization has resulted in the mixing of cultures around the world. These cultures often hold conflicting values and in some cases these conflicts can have serious consequences. Take, for instance, the example of honour killing. Honour killing is not condoned by any major religion nor any nation state but some subcultures of conservative, traditional people believe honour killing is an acceptable, often necessary social practice.

An honour (or shame) killing is the murder of a family member due to the perpetrators' belief that the victim brought shame on the family or community and that the only way to erase the shame is to kill the victim. Honour killing is different from other forms of domestic violence for three reasons: honour killings are planned in advance, they can include multiple family members planning and committing the murder, and perpetrators often do not face negative stigma in their families or communities (Government of Canada, 2016).

In January 2012, three daughters and a first wife of Mohammed Shafia were found dead at the bottom of a canal in Kingston, Canada. In the coming months, it became clear that the Shafia family had killed the three girls and the woman the girls knew as their aunt, for shaming the family. It would seem that the Shafia daughters' desired acculturative strategy was at odds with their parents' strategy.

The girls were caught between a conservative, traditional culture and a liberal, modern one. Their punishment for choosing the latter was death.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert Maranger presided over this case, which shocked the nation. Four family members were dead with three family members guilty of their murder. Michael Friscolanti tells the whole story of what happened.

"The evidence, utterly heartbreaking, left no real doubt about the truth. Before they died, the Shafia sisters were caught in the ultimate culture clash, living in Canada but not allowed to be Canadian. They were expected to behave like good Muslim daughters, to wear the hijab and marry a fellow Afghan. And when they rebelled against their father's "traditions" and "customs"—covertly at first, then for all the community to see—the shame became too much to bear. Only a mass execution (staged to look like a foolish wrong turn) could wash away the stain of their secret boyfriends and revealing clothes."

(Friscolanti, 2017): <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/inside-the-shafia-killings-that-shocked-a-nation/>

If you are studying the HL extension, "The influence of globalization on individual behaviour", see "How globalization influences individual behaviour" for more information. You may wish to review the section "Origins of violence" in Unit 6 on human relationships if you are studying that option.

Take the perspective of one of the murdered Shafia girls before this tragedy. Write a letter to your parents explaining how you feel about being split between two cultures. What are your motivations for acting the way you do?

Now take the perspective of one of the Shafia parents or the brother. Write a letter to one of your daughters (or sisters) explaining why you feel the way you do about how the person is acting. What reasons might your daughter (or sister) give for her emotions?

Studies into the psychological effects of acculturation are themselves culturally dependent. It is not necessarily the process of acculturation itself that is the cause of certain behaviour but the interplay of the cultures in contact that determine behaviour. In this sense, obesity may not be a result of acculturation. Instead it may be the result of the acculturation of non-western and western, industrialized cultures. The latter are often

characterized by poor food environments with cheap foods weak in nutrients and high in added sugars and fats, along with sedentary lifestyles (as described in Unit 6 on health psychology). In order to understand acculturation, you must first understand the nature of the cultures in play. Only then will you be able to understand how the elements of those cultures have intermingled in their own unique acculturative process.