

Differences and contact across cultures: A brief overview of a social psychological perspective

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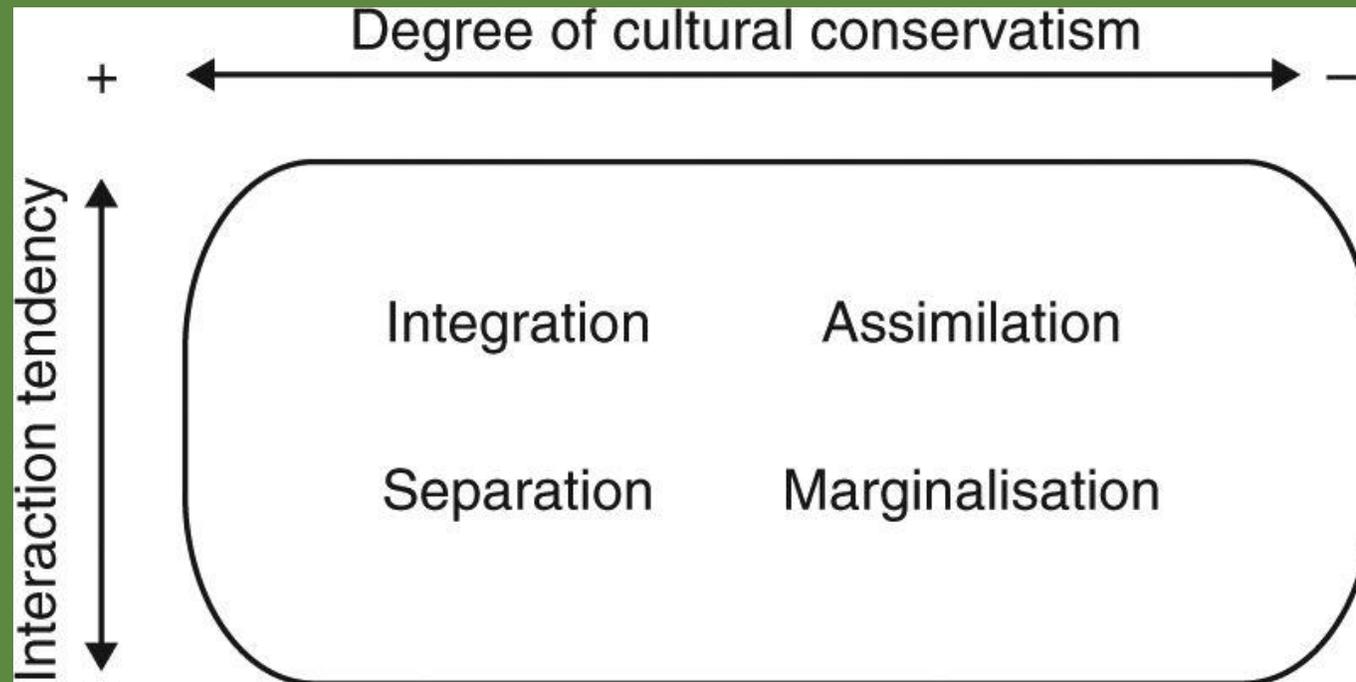
Social Psychologist

Acculturation

- The starting point is coexistence between different cultural groups in the same physical and social space (López-Rodríguez et al., 2013)
- It is the result of the multiple changes which take place when different cultural groups come into continuous contact, with changes in the original cultural patterns of both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

Acculturation orientations (Berry, 1990)

The willingness to interact with culturally different individuals*
vs. the inclination to retain the own cultural identity



* Or 'culture adoption' (i.e., the wish to adopt cultural practices of the other group) according to Bourhis' et al. (1997) perspective

Cultural differences

- Cross-cultural research in its essence focuses on constants and variables. In other words, it represents a quest for universality and variability, and the underpinnings of each, i.e.:
 - Why do we differ in certain aspects?
 - Why are we relatively the same in others?
- A cross-cultural focus encompasses ***functional equivalence*** (Hui & Triandis, 1985)
 - Behaviors that have similar precursors, consequences, and correlates tend to be considered *functionally equivalent*.
 - Research does not focus on the same behavior displayed in different cultures, but rather on different behaviours that serve roughly the same function in different cultures

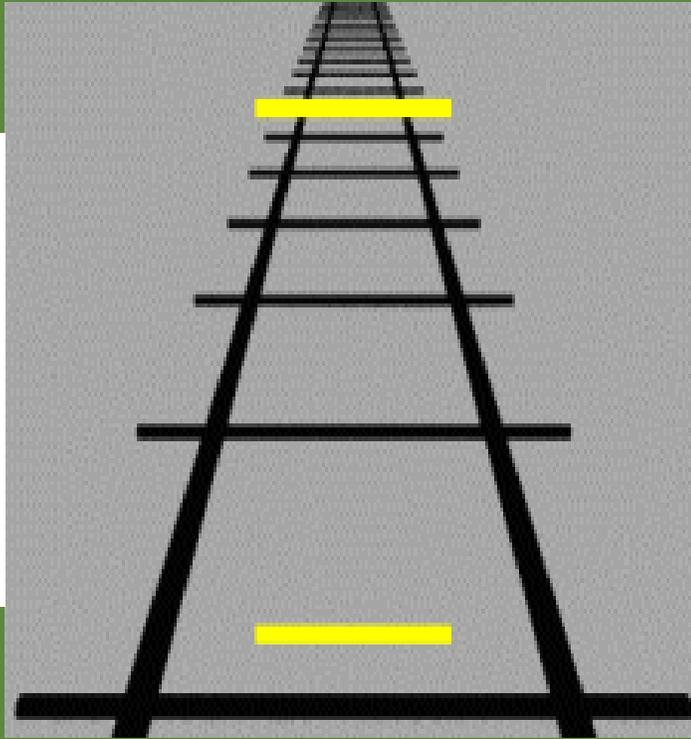
A pragmatic approach to the emergence of cultures

Berry's (1976; 2001) Ecocultural Model

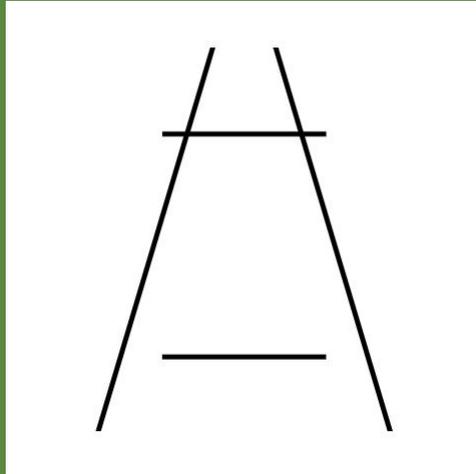
- The **context** (ecological & sociopolitical variables) affects **psychological variables** and **overt behaviour** via mediating processes of **biological and cultural adaptation**
 - The context focuses on climate, the economy, education, mass media (from telephones, to TVs to computers and access to the internet), and population statistics (e.g. volume, birth rates, etc.), among other variables

Ecological elements affect perception

An example: The **Ponzo Illusion** (e.g. Brislin and Keating, 1976)



Participants from urban areas were more susceptible to the illusion than participants from rural areas (*explained perhaps by a difference in exposure to railroad tracks*)



From ecological to socio-political influences

- An example: The occurrence of murder
 - *Ecological influences*: Positive correlation between **climate** (hot vs. cold) and harboring hostility, perceptions of **aggression** in the social environment, physiological arousal, and decreased experience of positive emotions (Robbins, DeWalt & Pelto, 1972; Anderson, Deuser & DeNeve, 1995)
 - *Socio-political influences*: Positive correlation between the occurrence of **murder** and **stress** (operationalized as the rate of inflation) and **lack of social support** systems (operationalized as the ration of marriages to divorces) (Landau, 1984)
 - *Cultural heritage*: Increased instances of murder in countries with a **history of war** (Archer & Gartner, 1984), with a **normalised practice of violence** for population control purposes (e.g. Black slaves in the USA) (Cohen, 1996), and a corresponding **legal framework** (e.g. legal gun ownership in the USA - Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004)

Cultural pluralism within group power dynamics

- Assumptions of tolerance on the part of the majority and a willingness to learn on the part of the minority (Kallen, 1956; Goertzel, 1975)
- Acculturation orientations held by dominant host (majority) members can influence the orientations adopted by immigrant (minority) group members (Interactive Acculturation Model – Bourhis et al., 1997)
 - These range from integrationism to exclusionism, and
 - They are applied based on each minority group's subjective significance to the majority (e.g. 'valued/devalued' immigrants), or
 - 'Generic' acculturation orientations, portraying all immigrants as members of one homogeneous outgroup of 'newcomers' (outgroup homogeneity).

The Intergroup Contact hypothesis

- Favorable conditions of contact between groups tend to reduce prejudice and discriminatory behavior (Hewstone & Brown, 1986)
- The main contact conditions that can lead to integrative acculturation are (Pettigrew, 1997):
 - Equal status between the groups engaging in contact
 - Shared goals by both groups
 - Absence of competition for scarce resources between groups
 - Authority sanction in favor of interethnic contact

Acculturation through positive contact within group power dynamics

- Acculturation in the cultural majority's terms
 - Research (LaFromboise et al., 1993) indicates that integrative acculturation through participation in cross-cultural contact pre-supposes that minorities:
 - Are well-versed in the beliefs and values of the dominant (host) culture
 - Display sensitivity to the dominant culture
 - Are fluent in the language of the dominant culture
 - Demonstrate behavior considered proper within the dominant culture
 - Have established social relations within the dominant culture
 - Have an ability to navigate institutional structures of the dominant culture

Acculturation through positive contact within group power dynamics

- Acculturation in the cultural majority's terms
 - Research also suggests that:
 - Immigrants' endorsement of acculturation orientations in favor of maintenance of their own culture can be influenced by the extent to which they feel accepted or discriminated against by members of the dominant (host) culture (Moghaddam & Taylor, 1987)
 - A perception that majority members desire intergroup contact is associated with a greater desire for majority-minority contact among minority participants (e.g. Zagefka et al., 2011)

Acculturation through positive contact within group power dynamics

- Acculturation in the cultural majority's terms
 - Research also suggests that:
 - Majority members display the most positive responses when they perceive minority groups to desire to have contact with the majority group (assimilation and integration), and more negative responses when they perceive them to desire little contact with the majority (separation and marginalization) (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998)
 - Systemic expression of acceptance of cultural minorities displayed within the dominant (host) culture is typically conducive to integrative acculturation (Berry, 2011)

Stereotype Content (Fiske et al., 1999)

- Stereotypes of social groups can be distilled to 2 basic dimensions:
 - Warmth
 - Competence
- Warmth is operationalized as the **perceived competitiveness/threat** the outgroup represents towards the ingroup, whereas competence is operationalized as the outgroup's **perceived status** (relative to the ingroup's status)

Stereotype Content (Fiske et al., 1999)

- Intergroup threat refers to the perception of an outgroup's actions, beliefs or characteristics as challenges to the goals or well-being of an ingroup (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006)
- Threats might be *realistic* (related to power, resources and general welfare of the groups) or *symbolic* (related to religion, values, and worldviews of the groups) (Stephan et al., 2002)

Stereotype Content (Fiske et al., 1999)

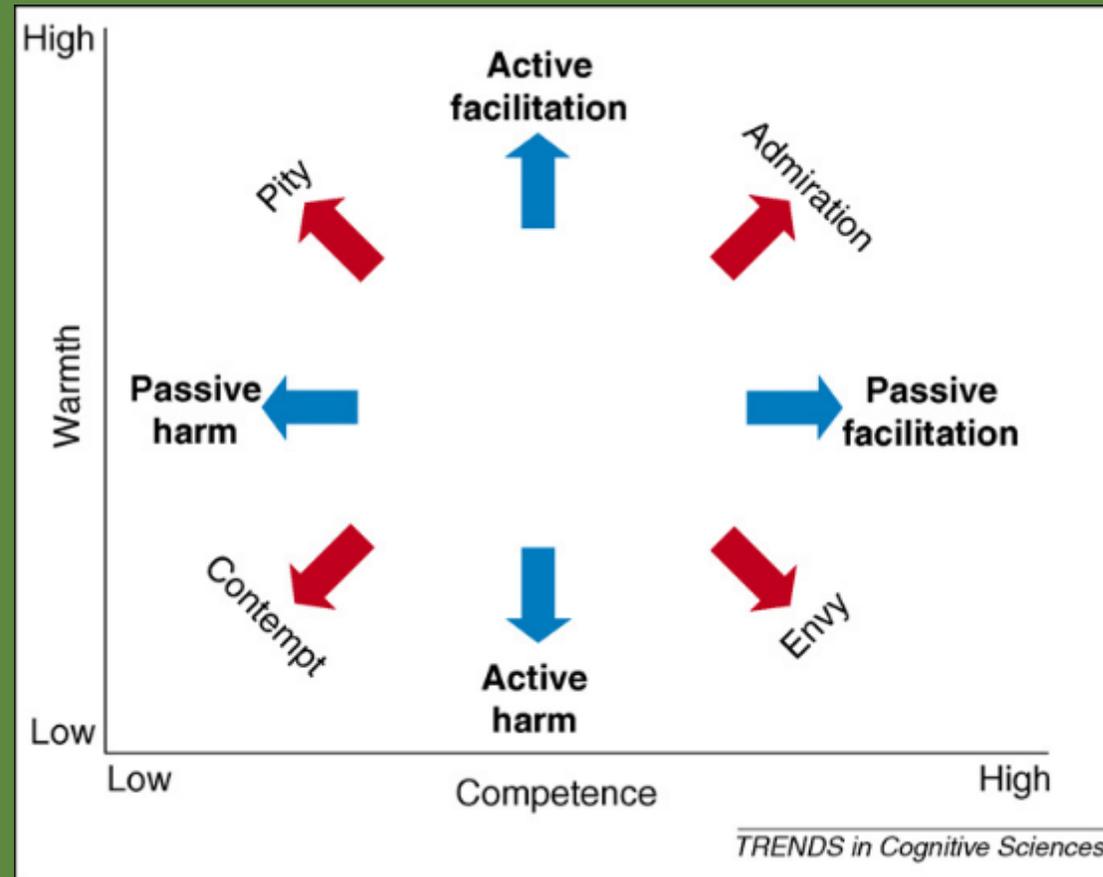
- Ambivalent stereotypes

- High competence / Low warmth

- ☐ Envy

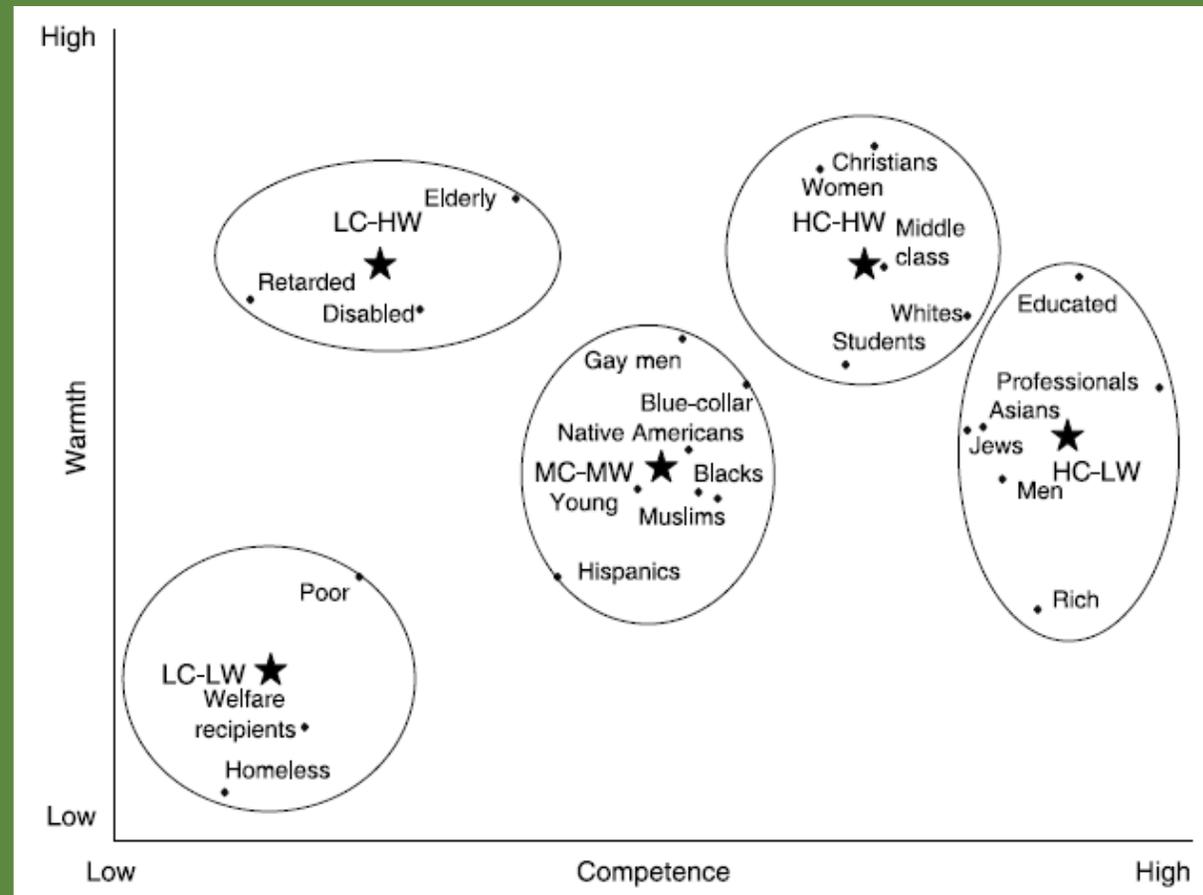
- High warmth / Low competence

- ☐ Pity/Paternalism



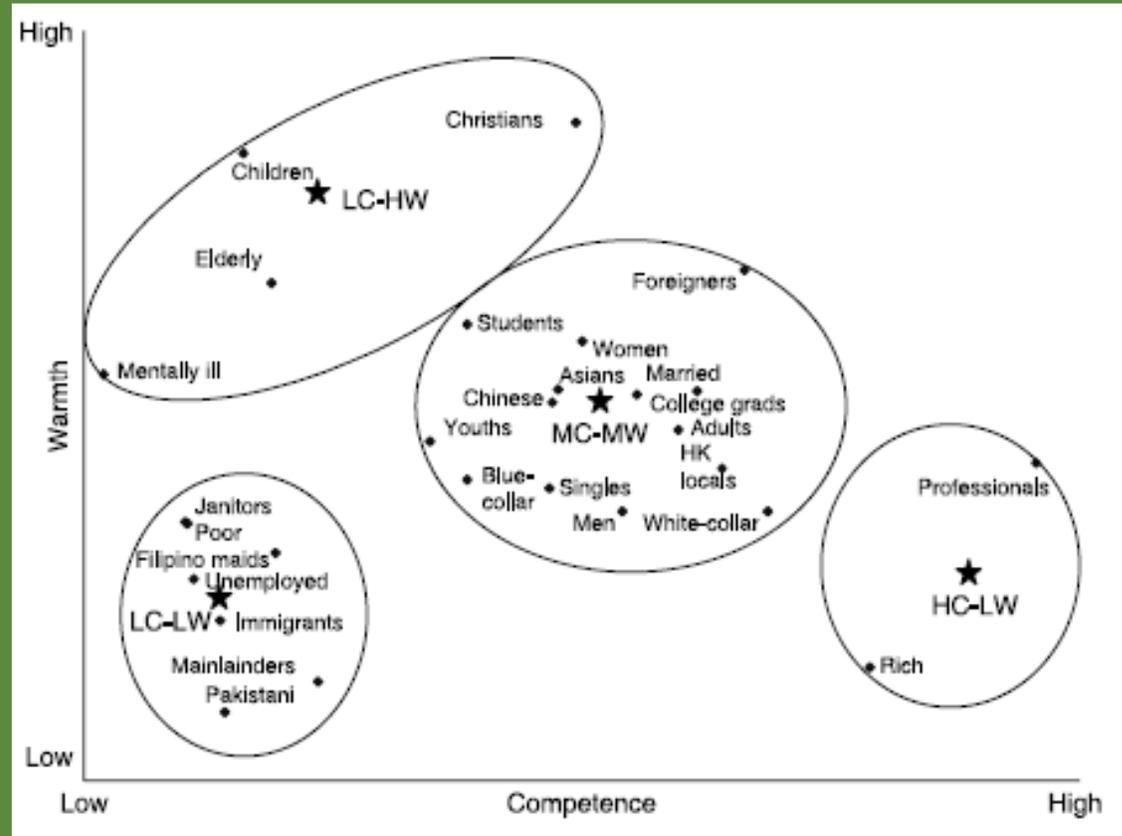
Source: Fiske, S. T., Xu, J., Cuddy, A., & Glick, P. (1999). (Dis)respecting versus (dis)liking: Status and interdependence predict ambivalent stereotypes of competence and warmth. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, 473–491.

Stereotype Content in the USA (Cuddy et al., 2009)



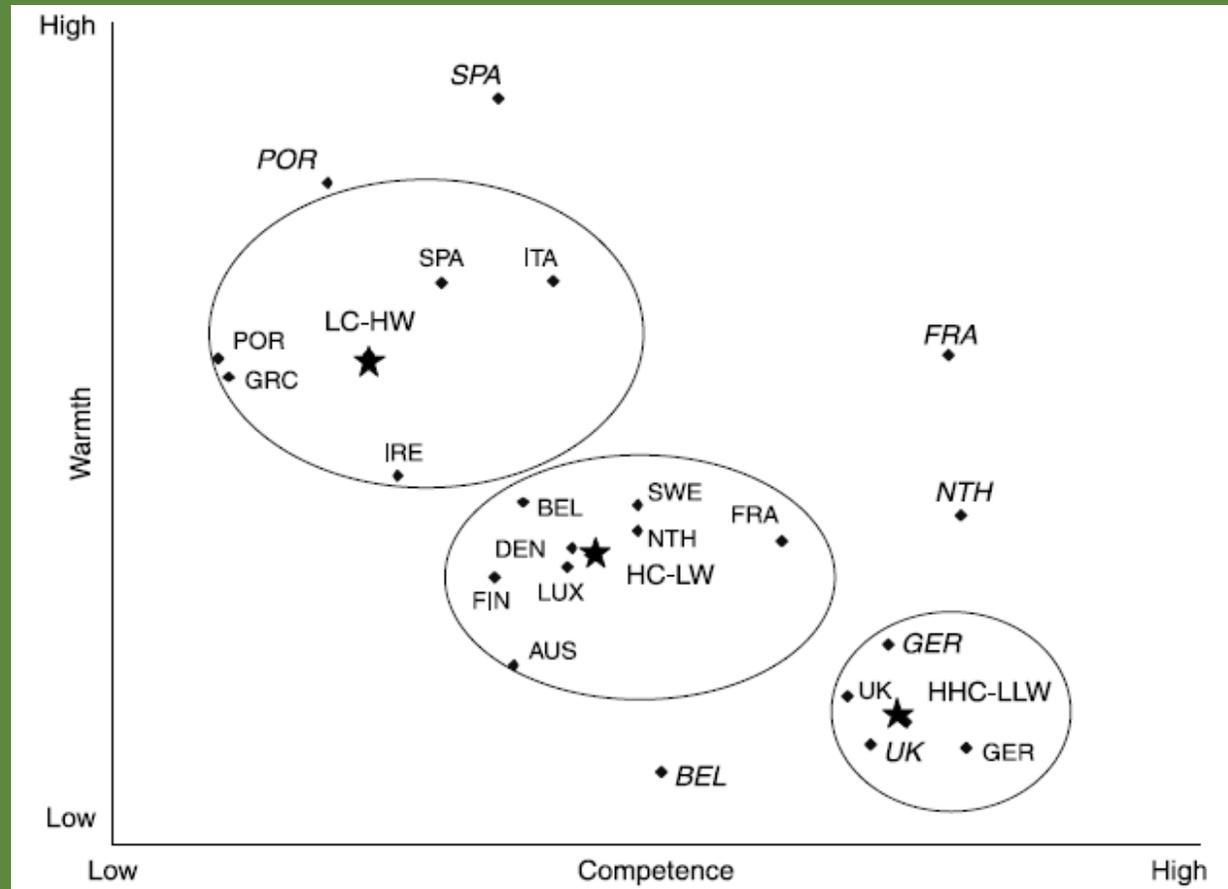
Source: Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., Kwan, S., Glick, P., Demoulin, S., Leyens, J. P., ... Ziegler, R. (2009). Stereotype content model across cultures: Towards universal similarities and some differences. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(1), 1-33.

Stereotype Content in Hong Kong (Cuddy et al., 2009)



Source: Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., Kwan, S., Glick, P., Demoulin, S., Leyens, J. P., ... Ziegler, R. (2009). Stereotype content model across cultures: Towards universal similarities and some differences. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(1), 1-33.

Stereotype Content among EU cultures (Cuddy et al., 2009)



Source: Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., Kwan, S., Glick, P., Demoulin, S., Leyens, J. P., ... Ziegler, R. (2009). Stereotype content model across cultures: Towards universal similarities and some differences. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(1), 1-33.

Acculturation and Stereotype Content

- According to research in the Netherlands (van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012), minority groups who were perceived as less different by majority members were:
 - seen as less threatening, warmer and more competent
 - were preferred to adopt the host culture less and preserve their own culture more
 - but were perceived to adopt the host culture more and preserve their own culture less
- Research in Spain (López-Rodríguez et al., 2013) shows that:
 - a perception that immigrants are adopting the host culture renders stereotypes about them more positive, whereas the effects of perceived own culture maintenance are much weaker
 - positive stereotypes influence perceived threat, reducing both realistic and symbolic threat from immigrants when they are perceived as 'highly moral, sociable and competent'
 - perceived threat increases the majority's preference for host culture adoption, and to reduces its preference for original culture maintenance.