



EASY COURSE FRAMEWORK

MODULE 2.

TPOLOGY OF STEREOTYPES



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Note:

Many specialised terms are used in the modules, so each time a term is used for the first time, the learner will find, its adopted **definition** or **synonym** in the EASY project in a colour' box.



Stereotypes can be closely related to each other and develop into hierarchical systems with broad categories being the general types and specific categories being subtypes. However, by distinguishing certain characteristics of a stereotype, we can assume that these characteristics become a criterion for division, creating typologies. **Based on Module 1, we know that:**

- 1) Stereotypes have **value – emotional**, and **content – negative**, leading to distancing oneself from "others" or **positive**, reinforcing the conviction of belonging to the "we" group;
- 2) Stereotypes are social in nature – they refer to groups with specific **socio-demographic characteristics** ('social class' – economic quality, marital and family status, ethnic-nationality, profession, **gender, age**, etc.);
- 3) Stereotypes may relate to **biological characteristics of people** (distinguished by health status, skin colour, characteristics of physical appearance, etc.);
- 4) Stereotypes are **verbal** (they are articulated in the language system), which quite **often has a visual, symbolic representation**.

1. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES

A **stereotype is always emotionally marked** in some way – either negatively or positively. It is also relatively durable. It is difficult to change the stereotypical perception of a given issue because it is simplifying and, consequently, convenient (Błuszkowski, 2003).

A **positive stereotype** is one in which **positive characteristics are attributed** to all objects or people of a particular category, for example, "all old people are prudent". A **negative stereotype attributes negative characteristics** to all objects or people in a particular category, e.g. "all old people are senile" (Martins & Rodrigues, 2004). Dominant groups meet subordinate group members who comply with the social hierarchy with **positive affection** which prevents subordinate groups from rebellion and demanding social change. Not only negative, but also positive stereotypes take a key role in the rationalization and legitimization of existing social structures (Richters, 2019).

Negative or positive, stereotypical valuing is always linked to a specific characteristic of a social group. Current researchers emphasise that:

1/ in principle, every 'positive' stereotype can have a negative dimension

2/ every stereotype consists of content with different 'valuations', as described by the **Stereotype Content Model (SCM)** (Fiske, 2012).

In the **Stereotype Content Model (SCM)**, the first factor that dimensions people is **'warmth'** (trustworthiness, sociability), which expresses individual and collective intentions from which behaviour can be predicted. The second factor is **'action competence'**, understood as the ability to realise an intention.

Researchers point out (Bodenhausen, Kang, & Peery, 2012 after Fiske, 2018) that perceivers often operate with such stereotypes, which are shared beliefs about the warmth and competence of common groups to which they attribute specific characteristics (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Warmth and competence stereotypes

	Low Competence (Capability, Assertiveness)	High Competence (Capability, Assertiveness)
High Warmth (Friendliness, Trustworthiness)	Common: Elderly, Disabled, Children United States: Italians, Irish Emotions Evoked: Pity, Sympathy	Common: Citizens, Middle Class, Defaults United States: Americans, Canadians, Christians Emotions Evoked: Pride, Admiration
Low Warmth (Friendliness, Trustworthiness)	Common: Poor, Homeless, Immigrants United States: Latinos, Africans, Muslims Emotions Evoked: Disgust, Contempt	Common: Rich, Professional, Technical Experts United States: Asians, Jews, British, Germans Emotions Evoked: Envy, Jealousy

Source: Fiske S.T. (2018), p. 68

The Warmth × Competence space maps basic, recurrent intergroup matrices. The extremes are groups with supposedly **high levels of warmth and competence** that stereotypically trigger feelings of **pride and admiration in perceivers**, and groups with **low levels of warmth and competence** that generate feelings of **contempt and disgust**. The SCM adds ambivalence in two additional intergroup stereotypes: groups perceived as **warm but incompetent**, towards whom people report **pity or sympathy**, which is an ambivalent emotion (sympathy for someone only as long as their status remains lower), and groups stereotypically perceived as **cold but competent**, towards whom people trigger **envy (admire them but feel dislike for them)**, which is also an ambivalent emotion.



2. SOCIO-CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

In principle, **each of the socio-demographic characteristics** is a criterion for dividing society into social groups, becoming at the same time **an anchoring feature of stereotypes**.

A number of theoretical perspectives suggest that **earned income**, usually signalled by dress and social behaviour, **significantly increases the stereotyping of 'social class'** (Kraus et al., 2017). The rich are seen as more competent than the poor, the poor in turn are seen as warmer, a form of social compensation for their lower wealth and status (Durante et al., 2017). Current studies of Connor et al. (2021) found high-income targets to be currently perceived as warmer, and low-income targets to be perceived as less warm, when viewed amid greater inequality. While exploratory, these results suggested the possibility that rather than socially signalled inequality producing ambivalent stereotypes of the rich and poor, it may in fact lead to uniformly positive perceptions of high-income individuals and uniformly negative perceptions of low-income individuals in terms of both competence and warmth.

Although more people than in the past are delaying **marriage** or choosing not to marry at all, marriage is still seen in many countries as a normative developmental stage, which **leads to the maintenance of certain stereotypes**. Many studies have shown that single people, especially those who are not in a romantic relationship, are perceived as less responsible, less mature, and less well-adjusted than married people (Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Taylor, 2008). Based on these stereotypes, it might be expected that single people are perceived as less committed to their work and less likely to succeed as employees compared to married people, and thus might be discriminated against in employment decisions. On the other hand, as DePaulo (2006) points out, some anecdotal evidence suggests that people expect single people to be able and willing to work longer hours than married people because single people may have fewer commitments outside of work, which may lead to favouring singles in employment decisions.

Gender and parental role stereotypes are also associated with marital status. Traditional perceptions of marriage as involving greater social responsibility for women outside the workplace (e.g. Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon, 2009) may foster perceptions of **married women** as less suitable for employment compared to **single women**. In particular, expectations of motherhood may create a bias in perceptions of married women's employability. Research suggests that employers discriminate against **mothers** who receive lower salaries than women without children (Anderson, Binder, & Krause, 2003), even in countries with generally high levels of gender equality such as Norway (Hardoy & Schone, 2008). Women with children are judged to be less competent and committed to their work than women without children, employers are less likely to respond to applications from women with children than **women without children**, and moreover, having children



is not considered at all for men (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007). Although research has shown that work and family can be mutually beneficial (Casper et al., 2018), most companies still hold the belief that family issues often undermine individuals' ability to perform at work. This belief is based on the notion of the 'work dedication schema', which represents the traditional assumption that employees should give priority to their work over other life pursuits (Bourdeau et al., 2018).

Ethnic stereotypes tend to be **related to nationality**, relate to **generalised judgements of morality and competence**, and differ depending on whether they occur as in-group or out-group stereotypes. The results of Phalet and Pope's (1997) study revealed, among other things, 1/ an entirely negative stereotype of the 'sinner' concerning Gypsy and Turkish minorities, Belarusians as seen by Poles, Russians as seen by Central European countries and an auto stereotype of Bulgaria, 2/ the ambiguous stereotype of the 'sinful winner' involving German and Jewish minorities, Germans and Italians (except Belarusians) and the auto stereotypes of Poland, Russia and Hungary, 3/ the completely positive stereotype of the virtuous winner involving the English, Italians and the auto stereotypes of the Czech Republic and Belarus. The current studies provide empirical evidence of the changing nature of ethnic stereotyping. In a study of Dutch media (Kroon, Trilling, Raats, 2021), commonly accepted dimensions of the **content of ethnic stereotypes-attributes of low status and high risk-are revealed**, but the researchers emphasise that they are not a true reflection of what actually happens in society. Other studies have revealed that people **perceive 'ethnicity'** (and the traits stereotypically attributed to it) **as the result of genetic conditioning** (Schmalor, Cheung, Heine, 2021).

While it is well known that **stereotypes of professions (occupations)** still operate significantly, it must be acknowledged that research on the stereotypical content of occupations is still in its infancy. Research by Fiske and Dupree (2014) revealed that individual occupations are perceived along the dimension of warmth/competence and can differentiate occupational categories, moreover they are linked to social structure (social status/competitiveness). Research by He et al. (2019) found that in the labour market, 'warm' women but less competent than men are more represented in 'caring' occupations, while, for example, Asians who are stereotypically perceived as highly competent but not 'warm' were more represented in 'technological' occupations. Strinić, Carlsson and Agerström (2022) research confirmed that **warmth and competence still seem to be the basic stereotype content** that working professionals associate with popular occupations in the labour market and that **social stereotypes and occupational stereotypes interact** to cause discrimination in the labour market.

Regarding the Greek case, gender stereotyping of women as managers seems to persist in Greek culture, and may explain, at least partially, the well-documented fact that women are still under-represented in the Greek business community. Women who aspire to managerial careers in corporate Greece are likely to face intense attitudinal barriers. According to study results, male employees are found to hold



relatively negative stereotypic attitudes, compared to their female counterparts. More importantly, gender was by far the most influential factor, among personal and organizational traits, in accounting for the difference in attitudes is in agreement with the gender-centred perspective (Mihail, 2006).

It is very often the case that a stereotype is directly related to the profession and its image, librarians being an example. A positive public image is vital for professionals in any profession. Therefore, the profession of librarianship is no exception. Wanting to focus on the current image of the male librarian, we conclude that the male librarian does not want to be seen as having elements of the female stereotype (Katsiki, Tsoli, 2016).

It seems that **religion** in the current world is no longer a common source of stereotypes. However, ongoing research shows their occurrence when mixing socio-demographic characteristics of social groups, especially, if religion is one of the attributes of 'person' in 'special' situation.

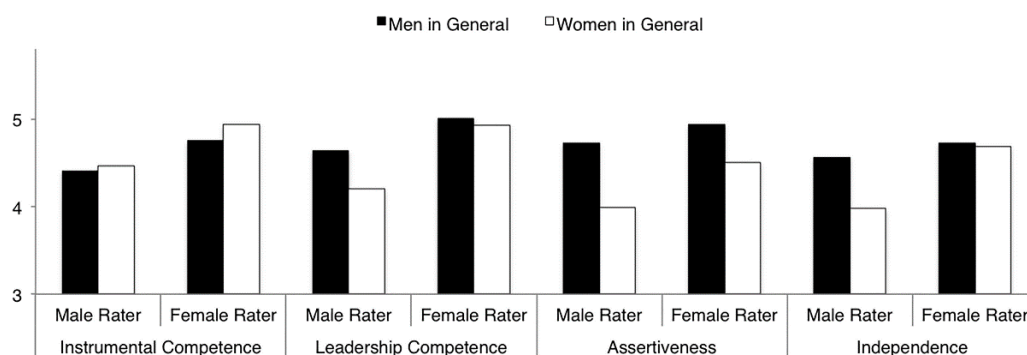
Some studies have shown that **religiously mixed couples may face social discrimination**, especially from their families, who react to mixed marriage as a source of risk to national identity and social cohesion (Koelet and de Valk, 2016; Rodríguez-García et al, 2016). Research on mixed relationships in six different countries in North America and Europe (Canada, the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands), suggests that religion, and 'specifically the unique position of Islam' (Alba and Foner, 2015: 40) emerge as the most significant factors of social division in Europe. A study in Spain found that 'family rejection is based on negative stereotypes and prejudices related to a partner's background, religion (especially Islam), gender or social class (and often intersecting) (Rodríguez-García et al, 2016: 539). Research conducted on **stereotyping by followers of specific religions** in the workplace reveals that Christians tend to link perceived discrimination to personal piety or taking a moral stand in the workplace. Muslims, Jews, and non-religious people tend to link discrimination to group stereotyping and describe feeling seen as religiously alien or different (Schneider et al., 2022).

Stereotypes lead to the creation of attitudes that unconsciously influence thought and action. They are cognitive shortcuts that allow the individual to process a multitude of new information based on a set of formal characteristics. Although they refer to the characteristics of a group and therefore function in an abstract and often simplistic way, they are often misleadingly and erroneously applied to individual attitudes and to ethnic and cultural minorities (Ksenofontos, Chatzisoliriou, 2014).

Although we see many changes in social reality, **gender and age seem to be the most persistent stereotypes.**

Gender is still stereotypically associated with certain characteristics of its representatives, as illustrated in the figure below. On the one hand, the results indicate that, despite social change, many aspects of traditional gender stereotypes persist. Both men and women perceived 1/ men in general as more assertive than women, 2/ women in general as more concerned about others, sociable and emotionally sensitive than men in general, which corresponds to the self-reports made in the study. On the other hand, the results show significant deviations from traditional views-unlike men, women 'do not feel' less competent in terms of leadership (Hentschel, Heilman, Peus, 2019).

FIGURE 2. Ratings of agency dimensions (instrumental competence, leadership competence, assertiveness, independence) of men in general and women in general by male and female raters



Source: Hentschel T, Heilman ME and Peus CV (2019)

The **strength and persistence of gender stereotypes** continues to characterise the choices made by young genders. Girls continue to be less interested than boys in computer science and engineering, regardless of other characteristics of the groups to which they belong (Master, Meltzoff, Cheryan, 2021).



Greece is one of the few countries where some of the female physical education and sport science university students (depending on the institution enrolled) are still educated in single-gender classes, separated from their male counterparts. This separation is based on gender stereotypes and dominant biological beliefs that women are biologically inferior to men and thus they would not be able to keep up in mixed-gender sports classes. Chroni (2006) argued that being educated in this context, male and female coaches and physical education teachers reproduce the same gender stereotypes when working in sports clubs or schools. Thus, the gender stereotypes in the Greek sport fields and schools are reinforced by institutions and reproduced by both men and women coaches and physical educators (Kavoura, et al, 2014).

Common stereotypes associate high intellectual ability (brilliance, genius, etc.) more with men than with women, which discourages women from pursuing prestigious careers; that is, women are underrepresented in fields whose members value brilliance (e.g. physics and philosophy). Research reveals that these stereotypes are endorsed by children as young as 6 years old and influence their interests. In particular, 6-year-old girls are less likely than boys to believe that members of their gender are 'really, really smart'. Also, at the age of six, girls start to avoid activities that are said to be for children who are 'really, really smart' (Bian et al., 2017).

Sexism - gender inequality - has been expressed throughout time and continues to exist in most societies to this day, having ideological or sometimes even institutional legitimacy. Biological differences between the sexes have been used to justify and interpret inequality as genetically determined and, consequently, to infuse and indicate the social functionality of individuals according to gender. However, as long as inequality is reducible to human nature, it should be considered deterministically acceptable and consequently, any struggle for social change should be considered futile (Maltezou & Koulaousides, 2020).

The most common stereotypical perception, which includes undesirable characteristics, is that **older adults** are weak and frail and have reduced physical and cognitive abilities, while the perception that they are unable to cultivate new skills is equally common. More specifically, undesirable characteristics are also attributed to workers over fifty-five, such as low productivity, creativity and energy, lack of IT skills, lack of cautiousness, lack of adaptability, rigidity, and resistance to change (Chaikalis-Petrtsis, 2018).

Older adults perceive a **strong link between ill health and ageing**, which is systematically reinforced by comparisons with idealised images of strength and beauty of younger people presented in the media. However, these comparisons between younger and older people can become an opportunity to passively harm the latter, as by internalising stereotypes, older adults may perform everyday activities less well



than they could in reality, and thus may show and believe that they depend on the help of others more than is actually necessary (Chaikalis-Petritsis, 2018).

Considering **health status as a stereotyping factor**, it is worth noting (despite the lack of significant research findings) that various mental illnesses give rise to biases (schizophrenia, depression, anxiety), as do HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. It is not known whether the source of stereotyping is the 'fear' of the health of the illness, or whether socioeconomic status, resulting from the illness may be criteria for prejudice and bias.

3. LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF STEREOTYPES

All types of stereotypes have **linguistic representations**, many of which are further represented by visuals, present in literature, film scenes, advertisements, and the media in general.

The results of a study by US researchers (Charlesworth et al., 2021), using more than 65 million words to quantify the presence and magnitude of hundreds of gender stereotypes in adult and children's language, proved the links between gender (masculine and female) with well-studied homework attributes, art - science, mathematics - reading and good - bad, as well as with hundreds of occupational attributes and labels. These findings highlight that **gender stereotypes, expressed subtly through patterns of co-occurrence of words in language**, are deeply embedded in the social ether. These results can be seen as empirical evidence that **stereotypes are collective representations that are strongly present in our language** and have the potential to shape how society thinks about and treats social groups.

A similar study was carried out by Ng (2021), using a 1.1 billion-word database consisting of the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English - including genres such as spoken TV, fiction, magazines, newspapers - to provide a comprehensive look at ageism in the UK and the US. A key finding from the results is consistent, though worrying: **negative descriptions of older adults outnumber positive ones by a factor of six**. Negative descriptions tend to be physical, while positive descriptions tend to be behavioural. Ageism is highest in magazines, followed by spoken genres, newspapers, and fiction. The findings highlight the need for greater public awareness of

ageism and provide a basis for the development of targeted social campaigns to combat ageism - one of the most damaging threats of our generation.

As one of the most widespread stereotypes, the **gender stereotype includes expectations of certain colours** associated with different genders. In Western culture, girls are often dressed in pink and boys in blue. These gender associations with colour can extend from childhood into adulthood.

Gender-related colours function as symbols realised in gender stereotypes. A colourful gender-related symbol is an important tool for people to assess a person's gender in a time- and energy-saving way (Li et al., 2021). Moreover, colourful gender-related symbols can reinforce gender-stereotyped thinking and behaviour. For example, several studies have shown that gender-related colours (i.e. pink vs. blue) can activate participants' stereotypical thinking, leading them to behave more in line with gender stereotypes (Cunningham and Macrae, 2011; Yeung and Wong, 2018).



Source: <https://www.issuesonline.co.uk/articles/gender-stereotyping>

Colour is unfortunately not the only dimension of gender and age stereotypes. **Outside, facial expressions and the background of the image portrayed** (e.g. in the media, book illustrations) also **carry stereotyping**.



Summary

Numerous studies confirm that the types of stereotypes originate from the characteristics that individual people have when forming social groups. These characteristics are most often associated with each other (e.g. gender and profession, sex and social role, age and competence, age, and health, etc.) causing, on the one hand ease of 'movement' in the social world, and on the other hand, prejudices, based on which discrimination occurs.

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