

REVIEW OF NATIONALITY STEREOTYPES

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There are experimental ways of investigating stereotypes. One of the most obvious is to ask a group of people what traits characterize the Germans, the Italians, the Americans and so forth. Results of such studies on the whole agree fairly well with what might have been expected. There is considerable agreement between different people in any nation regarding the most characteristic traits of other nations. There is even agreement between different nations: for instance, the Americans and English agree with respect to other groups, and even, though less markedly, themselves. The Germans, for instance, are regarded as scientifically minded and industrious by the English and Americans alike. They are also considered solid, intelligent, mathematical, extremely nationalistic, efficient and musical by the Americans, and arrogant, aggressive and over-nationalistic by the English. The Italians are regarded as artistic, impulsive, passionate, musical, religious, talkative, revengeful, lazy and unreliable by both.

The Jews are believed to be shrewd, industrious, intelligent, loyal to family, grasping, ambitious, persistent and they very religious. The Chinese, as one would have expected, are looked upon with more favour by the English, who consider them industrious, courteous, meditative, intelligent and loyal to their families, than by the Americans, who consider them sly, conservative, ignorant and deceitful. The French, needless to say, are sophisticated, talkative, artistic, passionate and witty, whereas the Russians are industrious, tough, suspicious, brave and progressive. The English consider themselves sportsmanlike, reserved, tradition-loving, conventional and intelligent; astonishingly enough, the Americans agree, adding, however, that the English are also sophisticated, courteous, honest, industrious, extremely nationalistic, and, we hardly dare put this down humorless! The English agree that Americans are materialistic and pleasure-loving.

The close agreement found in English and American groups is probably due to the fact that these stereotypes derive from books, films and other cultural media shared by both groups. It is unlikely that a comparison between stereotypes held by the Spaniards, Turks or Russians would show much agreement with those given here.

The National Character exists. It is not a myth, it's a reality. But the National Character doesn't describe the character of every person; it describes the character of people of the nation in general. Every person has its own character, but according to the person's belonging to some nation many traits of character are similar and these features may be explained as the national character.

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