

Stereotypes exist  
because they are  
grounded in truth



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Waseem November 18, 2011. Stereotypes exist because they are grounded in truth. Why hasn't anyone ever seen a "white crow" flying under a "yellow sky"? Why hasn't someone ever experienced a "really hot" winter season? Indeed why hasn't my best friend yet told me, how she was once a popular Hollywood star? Clearly, because there lies no truth in the statements that I have put forward.

One cannot see a white crow, when the entire species is black; one cannot sweat when there is freezing cold; and, one cannot call oneself a rock star just because one wants to. There has to be fire somewhere if there is smoke; there has to be a foundation laid to raise a building; and, there has to be some reality, a tint of truth, behind something that is being said. After a thorough research and a reevaluation of all pre-held ideas and beliefs, I assent with the statement: stereotypes exist because they are grounded in truth.

Although some may argue stereotypes to be over generalizations and exaggerations; however I retract their claim, and believe that stereotypes of Muslims being terrorists, Asians being intellectual, teenagers being difficult to handle and many others, generate, evolve and then survive, only because they spring from truth. Indeed, anything that is originally "true" and "prevalent", becomes an 'empirical generalization'. But, when anyone disagrees with this generalization, it becomes a stereotype. However it cannot be denied that stereotypes are given to a class of people based on some practical (actual) experience or action.

Stereotypes may not always apply to the majority of a class of people, nevertheless they are unique to that class of people because of the frequency of their exhibit even if it is by a small number of people. Exploring the stereotype of "Muslims being terrorists" might help me clarify myself. A group of people with turbans and long beards, in an earlier time did call themselves Muslims and waged an open war against the "West" and "westernization" in general. In this "war" they killed thousands of innocent people in numerous incidences.

The most popular one's being the terrorist attack at the world trade centre at nine eleven in the United States of America, the seventh July suicide bombing in London, and the numerous suicide bombings and hijacks that are prevalent in Pakistan till today. Indeed, all these have actually been proven to be caused by Muslim radicals. Moreover, several "Madrassas" [religious centers] have been found where young people are being trained for suicide bombing through brainwashing techniques and other methods under supervision of "al-Qaeda" which is an organization run by so called "Muslim Fundamentalists" .

Though, not all Muslims are terrorists and their religion does not actually allow such inhumane acts, however a large "Muslim group" has been involved in the spread of violence since very long (past thirty years). So, it cannot be denied that the stereotype of Muslim terrorism did stem from very true basis and is not based merely on false accusations. Similarly, another very interesting stereotype is: Asians are generally brainier than other social groups.

Several socioeconomic statistics and demographics reveal that the Asians 'actually' have a very high intelligent quotient (IQ level) relative to other ethnic classes (Makino). For instance, a team of Austrian researchers conducted a survey on different sources to deduce average results for IQs of the populations of several different countries. Asian countries dominated almost all the top positions with Hong Kong being number one, followed by South Korea, Japan and then Singapore. Not only this, Asians also continue to score the highest in quizzes and interviews on general knowledge.

Even the top grades in global examinations are also held by them. Quite explicitly, the facts delineated above prove the "Asian stereotype" to evolve from very true origins; hence this substantiates my claim that stereotypes exist because they are grounded in truth. Saying that all the Asians are more intelligent than all the Americans or Australians would be absurd. As one or more particular Asian can of course be less smart than one or more particular American or Australian; however, judging through the majority of populace, Asians are brainier.

This stereotype too, originated and survived because it was based on truth. Saying that it originated from nowhere and that there is no factual evidence to support is quite off the wall. Another common but heavily opposed stereotype: teenagers are dangerous and difficult to manage-like the many others, originates from truth. A research held at the Oxtoby research centre in Kentucky, USA proved that as any individual approaches puberty, the gradual transition from childhood to adolescence and then to adulthood results in increased sensitivity especially in the age group from thirteen to nineteen.

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Thus there is a higher crime rate, greater chances of drug abuse and other such harmful activities when through this age. Though not all teens are completely unmanageable, and not all eventually turn into gangsters or wanted criminals, however several cases of terrifying incidences such as the felony assault of a Cortland man by two teens (Albert), a higher percentage of teens addicted to drugs and countless other examples portray the truth in the stereotype that is made regarding them. Indeed, once again it can be safely concluded that the stereotype grounded from truth as factual and reliable evidence is there to support it.

Now, a simple example might help me add some more grains to my side and hence convince the reader to a greater extent. Saffron, a very dear friend of mine, tops all exams. Her course mates call her a nerd. Saffron accuses them of stereotyping her wrongly, despite stating and accepting that she spends all the weeks locked up with books, and gives her studies the top priorities. She fails to realize the subtle grounds that she herself provides people for making generalizations and hence stereotyping her. Reasonably, I wouldn't be able to deny what her friends say.

As obviously, it isn't easy to hit a hundred percent on every assignment and quiz and a four on four grade point average in three consecutive semesters (the ones gone by so far). One has to be a nerd to achieve that. This illustration hence bolsters my stand of stereotypes being actually grounded in truth. Indeed it makes me agree with the position I hold to a more confident extent. Nevertheless, in many cases negative stereotypes are just made because a very small or relatively small proportion of the people are linked to it. For example the black population is in millions and only a small, <https://assignbuster.com/stereotypes-exist-because-they-are-grounded-in-truth/>

perhaps 0. % of them are involved in documented crime cases leading to stereotype that blacks are muggers. This might seem unfair, however, again, in most theft and robbery crimes in the US, the culprit is usually a black male. Moreover, some people refer to the possibility that a particular stereotype arose because of the media (print or visual); but I argue that such portrayal by the media cannot be entirely fictional. There has to be some truth in something that is being said so generally. Indeed, all the examples that I have put forward earlier are actually meant to illustrate this. So always, I believe rumors to be ten percent true.

Fairly enough and as already mentioned, I accept that stereotypes can be overgeneralizations and oversimplifications. They might not provide any individualistic basis of judgement. However, they exist because they have been publically witnessed frequently and can be supported by reliable facts . Hence, are always grounded in truth. Last but not the least, it is we who are used to whining and hence fail to accept negative stereotypes ascribed to ourselves. Interestingly positive stereotypes also exist but are usually not subjected to rigorous controversies, as human mind finds it easy to absorb them.

For instance, Arabs would never mind the stereotype that they are hospitable. However they would strongly oppose it if it was said that most of al-Qaeda terrorists have an Arabic descent. Though both the stereotypes are based on logical information in hand, the Arabs would deny the latter one as being fabricated. Negative stereotypes are publically frowned upon and impulsively dismissed as false. Positive stereotypes, on the contrary, are

easily accepted, although they are factually not much different from the negative ones. Whatsoever the opinions may be, all that is true remains true.

It cannot be changed or denied. Indeed, after writing this piece, I believe even more strongly that "stereotypes exist because they are grounded in truth". (1404 words) WORKS CITED Makino, Mariko, "Asian nation demographics" Web. (november13, 2011) . Zeslow Jefferey, "Stereotypes Today" Web. (November 12, 2011) < <http://socyberty.com/issues/stereotypes-today/>> Albert Henry, "Police Teens Attack". Web (November 14, 2011)