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English 101- Composition & Rhetoric

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Hispanic IAT

Most people are taught the virtue of honesty, but are they always honest with their thoughts? The Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a tool designed to uncover people's beliefs or attitudes, including preferences and stereotypes related to skin color, age, or religion. There is mounting evidence suggesting that we are not as in control of our judgments and behaviors as we might think. Unconscious or 'automatic' psychological and behavioral processes are those of which we tend to be unaware, occurring without our intention or consent, yet influencing us daily in profound ways (Bargh, J.A., 2007). In this context, globalization has had a significant impact on how we think about concepts that may be unfamiliar or different from our own.

In the United States, many people associate being Hispanic with lower education levels and limited knowledge. Furthermore, the similarities in physical traits make it challenging to distinguish European immigrants from White Americans. As a result, individuals might hold more favorable views toward immigrants who are seen as non-Hispanic White or European compared to those perceived as Latinos. However, it is essential to also consider factors like personal interactions and ingroup-outgroup distinctions when studying intergroup attitudes (Dovidio, Love, Schellhaas, & Hewstone, 2017).

To explore this idea, I decided to conduct the Harvard IAT on my sister, who was educated in both high school and college in the United States, and my mother, who was educated in Colombia. The purpose of the test was to explore how two generations one raised in the United States and the other in Colombia think about and associate Hispanic Americans compared to European Americans.

In my experiment, I asked my mom and sister about their perceptions of Hispanic and European Americans. The objective was to understand how two generations of my family, one exposed to American culture and the other shaped by Colombian values, perceive a group of people they may not have encountered directly. I chose this topic because it intrigued me, especially in the context of the ongoing immigration debate in the United States. Though both participants share Hispanic roots, my research aimed to examine how my sister's mentality has shifted since we moved to America, and how her opinions have evolved compared to those of my mother, who was educated in Colombia.

This topic stood out to me after conducting research, and I must admit that the immigration situation in the United States motivated me to explore it further. I was particularly interested in how my sister's perspective might differ from my mother's, given the generational and geographical differences in their educational experiences and cultural environments. Through this comparison, I hope to shed light on how globalization and exposure to new cultural norms can influence perceptions of ethnicity and nationality.

Upon conducting the test, I discovered that my sister prefers Hispanic Americans over European Americans. After discussing this further, she mentioned that she had not met anyone from Europe yet, which could explain her preference for Hispanic Americans. This finding

shows that she is more likely to identify with Hispanic Americans over Europeans, possibly because of the cultural ties and experiences she shares with them.

In contrast, my mom's test results were more neutral. She could not decide and thought about both Hispanic Americans and European Americans in the same way. I found it surprising that my mother, who speaks very little English and often struggles to communicate clearly, would have such a neutral perspective. This result stands in contrast to many studies, which suggest that Latino individuals tend to prefer people from different cultures over those from their own.

Furthermore, my research indicated that Americans and non-Americans often show a preference for European migrants over Hispanic migrants. This trend opens a broader debate about how humans perceive the unknown as "bad" or "other." This judgmental attitude is influenced by a lack of familiarity and an ingrained perception that anything foreign or unfamiliar is not good for society. Additionally, factors like speaking fluent English or looking more like a White American can make a person more "perceptible" or acceptable in society, while individuals with different skin tones or poor language skills are often seen as less deserving or less valued.

This comparison of perceptions between my mother and sister highlights how globalization and personal experiences can shape our attitudes toward ethnicity and nationality. While my sister, influenced by her upbringing in the United States, leans toward identifying with Hispanic Americans, my mother, shaped by Colombian values, holds a more neutral stance. These generational differences demonstrate how cultural exposure can affect the way we view others and how the world around us influences our understanding of ethnicity and nationality.

Category	Latinos in the USA	Europeans in the USA
Stereotypical Perceptions	Often perceived as hardworking but sometimes linked to low-wage jobs or immigration issues	Often perceived as highly educated or privileged
Language Bias	Spanish accents may be associated with lower status or foreignness	European accents (e.g., British, French) often perceived as sophisticated or elite
Socioeconomic Assumptions	Sometimes assumed to have lower income or education levels	More often assumed to be middle or upper class
Cultural Bias	Latino culture is sometimes exoticized but also stereotyped as less "American"	European heritage is often seen as foundational to American culture
Implicit Favorability	May face more negative biases in job hiring, law enforcement, and media representation	Generally perceived with less bias in professional and social settings
Representation in Media	Often underrepresented or shown in stereotypical roles (e.g., service workers, criminals)	More likely to be portrayed in diverse and prestigious roles
Immigration Attitudes	Latino immigrants may face stronger anti-immigration sentiment	European immigrants are less often associated with immigration debates

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