

Archive 6

We looked at stereotypes of Americans, Chinese, English, Germans, Irish, Italians, Japanese, Jews, and Blacks from 1933 to now. Stereotypes may have changed over the past several decades, but I can't say for certain that overall view of each group is entirely positive. In fact, the idea that one group is called "Blacks" is quite alarming. With that being said, and maybe too philosophically, I can't imagine that stereotypes have really changed all that much is the ones being used in the 1930's are still tropes in the 2020's.

The American stereotype began as industrious and materialistic, then moved to materialistic and intelligent, and now – its important to note that I have provided my own take on stereotypes of the groups for today – is industrial and nationalistic. These have all remained the same, though the political climate of the past years has shown a bright light on nationalism.

Chinese stereotypes were superstitious and sly in 1933. In 1951 they transitioned to family and tradition oriented. I believe they have remained the same today. The first set of stereotypes came at a time of heightened distrust and wartime. Over the decades, however, through constant exposure to Chinese culture and understanding of their views, the stereotypes of the Chinese has grown to be much more positive.

The English have moved in and out of multiple stereotypes. They began as athletic and intelligent, then tradition-loving and reserved, and then intelligent and pleasure-loving. I think these changes, while obviously not negative, show that the English have changed as a people and have remained accessible to the rest of the world.

Germans have maintained the same stereotypes from 1933 until now. They are stereotyped as being scientifically minded and industrious. This is an interesting phenomenon because the stereotypes of Germans seem to ignore the atrocities that have been caused by such stereotypes through the decades. It tells me that, no matter what, Germans have been known for their industrialization and scientific prominence.

Irish stereotypes in 1933 were hostile and quick tempered. This doesn't seem to be very positive, but the hostility changed to religious in 1951. Now the Irish are stereotyped as religious and athletic. The independence the Irish have developed and maintained throughout the years, as well as their culture being celebrated throughout the world, has developed more positive and respected stereotypes.

Italian stereotypes have seen a steady change from somewhat negative to more positive since 1933. From impulsive to religious to family oriented, the only thing that has remained the same is their artistic stereotype. This change could possibly be the result of a better understanding of Italian culture alongside a historically impressive artistic relevance.

In comparison with the Chinese, the Japanese have gone through many changes in their stereotypes. The Japanese were seen in as intelligent and industrious, then deceptive and sly, and now tradition-loving and nationalistic. The stereotypes of the Japanese have gotten much better, especially culturally, and they are much more positive as the rest of the world understands who they are as a collective people.

The Jewish people have steadily been stereotyped as shrewd and changed stereotypically from selfish to intelligent. From observation and personal experience, I have seen Jewish people to be very family-oriented and religious.

Black Americans, to whom I will assume the group is referring, have been stereotyped differently throughout the decades. Unfortunately, however, the same undertones have remained throughout. They have been characterized as superstitious and lazy, and then given a “boost” to musical. I know black Americans to be family-oriented and tradition-loving. The national idea, though, is that their stereotypes have not changed since the 1930’s.

Altogether, stereotypes are not holistic of who or what an entire race, nationality, or culture truly represents. They are generalizations about a group of people, but do not accurately describe the individual qualities of its members. There may very well be a hint of truth to stereotypes, but they should not be used as a baseline when discussing or describing others.

