

Chapter 9: Cross-categorisation

9.1 Introduction: Multiple Categorisation

Whilst the previous chapter examined stereotype reduction through perspective-taking on the psychological level, we are now focusing on the social level. In the interest of simplicity and to illustrate the mechanisms of stereotyping, we have hitherto mostly identified ingroups and outgroups in terms of a single identity and equivalent perceived category, such as ‘disabled’, ‘Black’ or ‘Western’. However, several of the case studies cited have illustrated how stereotyping may be exacerbated by the interaction of multiple identities—for instance, the Korean woman in the BBC interview (Chapter 2). We also explored the additive combination of stereotypes through multiple social categories that are similarly stereotyped, such as the victimised other being reinforced through a character’s portrayal as old and disabled (Chapter 4). These examples demonstrate that humans are complex amalgamations of multiple identities, and these are made salient through the context, whether through a particular real-life situation or through narrative and audio-visual means in media content.

The next three chapters will illuminate how complex intergroup relations based on multiple categorisation can be configured in documentary representations to reduce the activation of stigmatising stereotypes. They will divide multiple categorisation into three types and corresponding configurations in accordance with social psychology models that explain the reduction of stereotypes and prejudice between groups: cross-categorisation, recategorisation and decategorisation (Crisp and Hewstone, 2006). This chapter will first provide an overview of these types and configurations before elaborating on the first: cross-categorisation.

A useful example that can briefly illustrate all three types before we unpack them is the Danish TV advert [All that We Share](https://www.thenorthalliance.com/our-work/all-that-we-share/) (TV2, 2017)²¹. The ad opens in a large film studio with white rectangles on the floor. A cross-section of Danish people enters, and they are placed into different rectangles based on their appearance. Stereotypical character traits are implied by the voiceover narration that describes each group, such as ‘those we trust’ (female nurses who wear traditional nursing uniforms), the ‘high earners’ (business people in suits) and ‘those we try to avoid’ (urban males wearing typically ‘working-class’ clothes). A producer then begins regrouping the people in a common area outside the boxes by asking a range of questions, such as ‘Who in this room was the class clown?’, ‘Who was bullied before?’, ‘Who was a bully themselves?’ and ‘Who feels lonely?’. Eventually, everybody is brought together as a single group as the voiceover says ‘all of us, who love Denmark’. The advert’s aim of endorsing TV2’s promotion of diversity and inclusivity in Danish culture is effectively achieved through configurations and reconfigurations of different social categories. These are effected by shifting the parameters of categorisation and thus redefining ingroup–outgroup relations.

This encapsulates the spectrum of social categorisation types (Crisp, 2010a), beginning with ‘basic categorisation’, through which clear stereotypes are attached to a single category (e.g. nurses we can trust). This is followed by ‘cross-categorisation’, which encompasses people belonging to at least two different identities (e.g. a nurse who used to be the class clown). This in turn leads to ‘recategorisation’, which highlights common categories that include people who previously belonged to different categories (e.g. nurses, business people and working-class people who had all bullied someone else before). The clip culminates in the most significant recategorisation whereby everyone is identified as Danish, despite their different sub-categories. A further categorisation type would be ‘decategorisation’, through which people are perceived as individuals and no longer as belonging to a particular category. While this is not represented in the ad, which focusses on community building rather than individuation, the camera shows some individuals who have accumulated a variety of categories throughout the ad (e.g. the red-headed nurse who used to be the class clown, who feels lonely and who loves Denmark).

²¹ <https://www.thenorthalliance.com/our-work/all-that-we-share/>

9.2 Multiple Categorisation Configurations

Figures 9.1-9.3 provide an overview of the three multiple categorisation types and their different configurations, the general methodology used to achieve them and their benefits and risks (see also Abrams, 2010; Crisp, 2010a). Like the general stereotype reduction model presented in Chapter 8, the three types and their configurations are based on the premise of parasocial contact, through which an ingroup viewer (blue ovals) encounters a member from an outgroup that requires destigmatisation (green ovals) via media content. Through strategic narrative and audio-visual representations, this encounter is expected to prompt the ingroup viewer's perception of multiple categories in the outgroup character on screen and, correspondingly, multiple categories in the viewer themselves, in a manner that reduces the activation of stigmatising stereotypes.

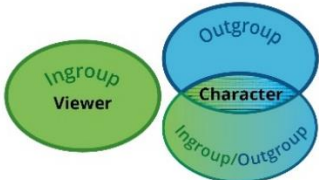
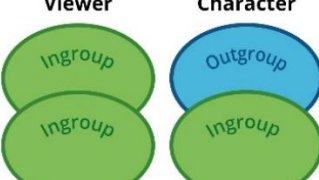
Cross-Categorisation	Configuration	Methodology	Benefits/Risks
	Surprising category combination  Aim: reduce reliance on stereotypical attribution (stereotype inconsistency) Example: viewer is a man and a non-mechanic, character is a female mechanic	combine outgroup category with a further ingroup/outgroup category in a way that thwarts expectations, leading to a surprising and emergent category	Benefits: - positive sense of novelty and uniqueness - facilitates parasocial contact condition of outgroup salience Risks: - can be cognitively taxing - risk of creating new stereotype - high risk of subtyping
	Shared ingroup category  Aim: create positive intergroup evaluation through sense of inclusivity due to sharing a social identity Example: viewer is a young man, character is an old man	- emphasise shared ingroup category - de-emphasise outgroup category or mitigate outgroup category-based stereotype activation - outgroup-ingroup combination can be surprising for additional stereotype reduction	Benefits: - highly configurable - facilitates parasocial contact conditions of equal status, common interests and outgroup salience Risks: - can become too difficult to theorise and predict with more than two crossed categories - risk of subtyping

Figure 9.1: Cross-categorisation

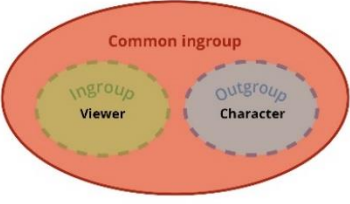
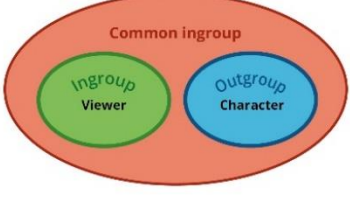
Recategorisation	Configuration	Methodology	Benefits/Risks
	Common ingroup category  Aim: create an inclusive ingroup category that dissolves original ingroup and outgroup categories Example: viewer and character are both British (viewer is incidentally white and character incidentally Black)	- emphasise common, superordinate ingroup category through perception of a common category, common membership or common interests - common ingroup category must not be rejected by ingroup viewer - allow for subordinate outgroup category salience but mitigate stereotype activation through incidentality, which reduces outgroup stereotype activation	Benefits: - can truly mitigate intergroup differences - facilitates parasocial contact conditions of equal status and common interests Risks: - is not easy to dissolve subordinate categories - due to bottom-up stereotyping - high risk of common ingroup being rejected - risk of subtyping
	Dual identity  Aim: create an inclusive ingroup category whilst preserving the original ingroup and outgroup categories Example: viewer is non-Muslim, character is Muslim, both are Germans	- emphasise common, superordinate ingroup category through perception of a common category, common membership or common interests - common ingroup category must not be rejected by ingroup viewer - ingroup viewer must not regard their ingroup as prototypical for the common ingroup (ingroup projection) - common ingroup category must appear complex through being a combination of multiple categories or being heterogeneous - common, superordinate ingroup category and subordinate ingroup/outgroup category must not correlate - emphasise subordinate outgroup category without or with stigmatising stereotypes – if stigmatising stereotypes are used, mitigation strategies are needed	Benefits: - believable and realistic - prevents group identity threat - facilitates parasocial contact conditions of equal status, common interests and outgroup salience Risks: - risk of stereotyping - risk of subtyping

Figure 9.2: Recategorisation

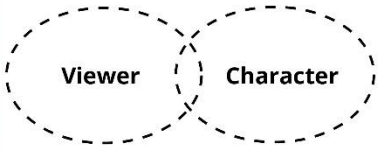
Decategorisation	Configuration	Methodology	Benefits
	Multiple categories to achieve individuation  Aim: prevent categorisation and thus stereotype activation, and evoke a sense of personal connection (perspective-taking) Example: viewer and character are both individual people with a variety of overlapping social identities and character traits	- render outgroup character unique through differentiation by combining at least five social categories that are conceptually unrelated, by making character ambiguous, or by contrasting multiple outgroup characters - evoke personal connection between viewer and character through self-other comparison (perspective-taking) and/or self-disclosure	Benefits: - strong reduction of stereotype activation - facilitates parasocial contact conditions of common interests and outgroup salience Risks: - difficult to achieve in short media content - very high risk of subtyping

Figure 9.3: Decategorisation

Each type and configuration will be discussed in detail in the following chapters; here, I shall provide a general overview. Cross-categorisation has two configurations (Figure 9.1): ‘surprising category combination’ involves the unexpected combination of an outgroup category with another group (whether ingroup or outgroup) category. The aim is that the ingroup viewer will perceive a new, emergent category that mitigates reliance on the stereotypes associated with either of the two group categories. For instance, if the goal is to reduce the stereotype that women have inferior physical strength and technical capabilities to those of men, the inclusion of a character who is a female mechanic may reduce stereotype activation in male viewers. Meanwhile, the ‘shared ingroup category’ configuration adds to the outgroup category a further ingroup category that is shared with the ingroup viewer. This can foster the viewer’s sense of inclusion, prompting them to evaluate the character positively because of their shared social identity. Where the goal is to reduce the stigma of old age, an elderly, male character’s representation may make his gender salient by emphasising his typically masculine traits and de-emphasising his age-related traits. This may generate a positive and inclusive evaluation and reduce the activation of ageist stereotypes in young, male viewers. If this category combination is surprising, it would further contribute to stereotype reduction. As an example, we may consider an elderly character, who is also a proficient social media user, and a young viewer, who equally is a proficient social media user.

The recategorisation type (Figure 9.2) has also two configurations: for the ‘common ingroup category’ the aim is to create a new, superordinate and common ingroup category that is inclusive and dissolves the original ingroup and outgroup categories, thus mitigating stereotype activation. For instance, a documentary addresses anti-Black racism in the UK by representing a Black, British outgroup character to a white, British ingroup viewer. The representation would emphasise their shared Britishness as a superordinate category while de-emphasising their subordinate groups by making their ethnicity incidental. By contrast, the second configuration of ‘dual identity’ emphasises a new, superordinate and common ingroup category while simultaneously preserving the two subordinate groups. This can reduce the activation of stereotype activation, foster positive and inclusive evaluations and prevent ingroup identity threat. In seeking to reduce Islamophobia in Germany, for example, one strategy might be to represent a German, Muslim character through an equal salience of both categories, thus creating a common ingroup category with German, non-Muslim ingroup viewers, while preserving the character’s Muslim identity and, correspondingly, preserving the viewer’s non-Muslim identity.

Finally, decategorisation (Figure 9.3) works by amalgamating multiple categories and corresponding character traits to the extent that the character becomes individuated. Thus, the viewer has a sense of a personalised connection with the character, and any categorisation of the character and viewer themselves is inhibited. This can have a significantly positive result on inhibiting *any* kind of stereotype activation, since stereotypes are category-based. Moreover, since personalisation is a significant aspect of decategorisation, social distance can also be mitigated. In this sense, decategorisation intersects with perspective-taking, discussed in the previous chapter.

In terms of the parasocial contact conditions set out in the previous chapter, the configurations of 'shared ingroup category', 'common ingroup category' and 'dual identity' facilitate the conditions of common interests and equal status through the sharing of one (or more) social identities. This also involves the sharing of group norms, which include moral norms. Thus, these configurations facilitate Murray Smith's character engagement level of 'allegiance', which we mentioned in the previous chapter, and which concerns the positive social evaluation of another group based on moral desirability. Decategorisation also facilitates these two conditions, but, similar to perspective-taking, on a more personal and psychological level, thus operating more through Smith's level of 'alignment' rather than 'allegiance'. The third condition of outgroup salience is facilitated by all configurations, although less so by the 'common ingroup category'. Overall, all configurations address intergroup similarity and difference in one form or another in order to reduce social distance and the activation of stigmatising stereotypes.

As the media case studies will demonstrate, and as noted in relation to the entire stereotype reduction model, the adaptation of these configurations—whether in conjunction or not—is highly dependent on the particular ingroup–outgroup context. The latter can be determined using OIMDA analysis and is dependent on the media context (genre, format, etc.). Still, the variety of configurations can cater for a wide range of both these contexts. Most importantly, regarding the bookkeeping model, they can be used for various different representations and in conjunction with traditional folk-psychological narrative formulas to reach a wide audience. Furthermore, although in our context of stigma reduction the target audience are ingroup viewers who are the main stereotype holders, stereotype reduction through all these configurations is possible for *any* groups or individuals who hold these stereotypes, including outgroup members who auto-stereotype.

The focus of the remainder of this chapter will be on cross-categorisation. This describes the basic intersection of multiple categories. The first configuration of 'surprising category combination' analyses how crossed social identities interact in surprising combinations in characters. The second configuration of 'shared ingroup category' examines how crossed and shared social identities interact across viewers and characters.

9.3 Surprising Category Combinations

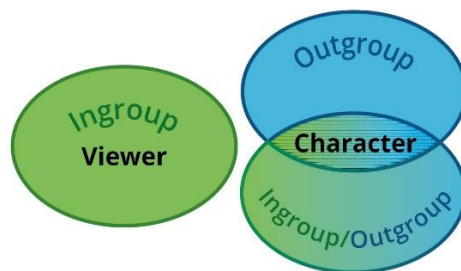


Figure 9.4: Surprising category combinations

Surprising category combinations aim to represent outgroup characters by making one (or more) additional group category salient that crosses with the initial outgroup, whether the new category is another outgroup or an ingroup (Figure 9.4). This results in a new, emergent category that encourages the viewer to rely less on held stereotypes while forming a new, stereotype-inconsistent impression of the character. The *surprising* combination is the reverse of *additive* combination, which we explored in Chapter 4 as a form of category combination that reinforces stereotypes. In terms of the parasocial contact conditions, the surprising category combination is suitable for preserving outgroup salience. Its focus is not to establish a sense of common interests or equal status, but rather to reduce stereotype activation. We will discuss later how adding an ingroup category shared with the viewer can address all three parasocial contact conditions. For now, we shall discuss this configuration exclusively in terms of stereotype-inconsistency. As observed in Chapter 8, the opening of *The Eagle Huntress* establishes Aisholpan as both a Mongolian nomad and a schoolgirl. Thus, from a Western viewer's perspective, the stereotypes that may be applied to Mongolian nomads, such as that of the primitive other, are mitigated. This example demonstrates that to meaningfully combine categories for reducing otherness, we must be aware of the stereotype set that an outgroup category may activate in the ingroup, which can be identified through the OIMDA model discussed in Chapter 4.

If the viewer recognises a combination of two equally salient categories that is unique and surprising to them, the attributed dispositions must be particular to that combination and cannot rely on dispositions stereotypically applied to either category in isolation (Crisp and Hewstone, 2006, p. 9). The condition required to achieve such a surprising outcome is that **the category groups must be related to one another in terms of thwarting observers' expectations** (Crisp, 2010b, p. 165). For instance, gender and profession can provide the surprising combination of 'female mechanic' because most mechanics are men. Similarly, sexuality and profession can provide the unexpected combination of 'gay soldier', given that soldiers are stereotypically considered heterosexual. Surprising combinations compel the viewer to construct a new, emergent category and perform a new evaluation, because they cannot easily apply their existing schematic knowledge (i.e. attribute stereotypical dispositions) to the new category. Being spontaneous, this process involves the emotion of 'surprise', which is one of the most basic and universal emotions that interrupts ongoing, automatic cognitive processes and motivates observers to be alert to the unexpected (Prati *et al.*, 2015, p. 32). The result is a momentary state of awareness and curiosity aimed at resolving the mismatch and swiftly producing a new, informed impression of the observed character. Given that this new impression cannot easily be based on retrieving stored category information from memory, it will most likely be based on causal reasoning that seeks to explain how a person belonging to one category can simultaneously belong to the other (Kunda *et al.*, 1990).

The single category of 'academic', for example, may activate in a non-academic the stereotypes associated with being educated and snobbish, while 'bricklayer' may activate in a non-bricklayer the stereotypes associated with being uneducated and vulgar. However, an 'academic bricklayer' would result in a mismatch of these inferred stereotypical dispositions, prompting a new, spontaneous evaluation. In theory, the group category of the

viewer is insignificant in relation to reducing stereotype activation. For instance, if the objective is to tackle the stigma of manual labourers as being uneducated and vulgar and thus having a low social status, combination of the manual labourer category with an academic category should reduce stereotype activation in *any* viewer who holds stereotypes associated with manual labourers.

The new evaluation does not rely on stereotypes but requires a new causal reasoning that is based to a considerable extent on the observed situation rather than inferred, category-based dispositions (Hutter and Crisp, 2005, p. 648). This results in a combination of situational attribution and the attribution of new, emergent dispositions, which offers an efficient means of mitigating stereotype activation and considering the individual circumstances of outgroup characters. The existence of the academic bricklayer, for instance, could be accounted for by their being an ethnographic researcher whose fieldwork entails studying building sites and observing and participating in the work. Alternatively, they might have had a father who was a bricklayer and a mother who was an academic. These new impressions may even include specific sub-characteristics associated with the stereotypical dispositions from both categories on condition that these are not incompatible with one another or with the new emergent category (ibid). The academic bricklayer may be a dedicated ethnographer (new impression), who is intelligent and financially secure (academic sub-characteristics) in addition to skilful and extroverted (bricklayer sub-characteristics). Indeed, such sub-characteristics are useful for maintaining the salience of the outgroup category to be destigmatised.

Surprising category combinations do carry the risk that they will activate stereotypes. If one category stereotypically appears to contradict the other with respect to physical, psychological or social ability, for example, it may well result in the extra-capable other stereotype. Thus, while the category combination of a 'blind photographer' may seem surprising in combining blindness with a career in the visual arts, thus breaking the incapable other stereotype applied to people with disabilities, it may easily activate the supercrip stereotype, in which the character appears to achieve the impossible. This is a typical risk for outgroups that are socially marginalised and thus appear inferior to the ingroup. Repeatedly selecting and heroising or glorifying individual members from these outgroups can generate seemingly surprising combinations (e.g. Black, American president), which, as noted above, inevitably leads to positive stereotyping.

Another example of inadvertent stereotyping is found in combined categories that share stereotypes yet are not typically found in combination—for instance, a representation of a gay, Black man is likely to be surprising, to Black/white and gay/non-gay viewers, given that gay Black men are statistically in the minority and media representations of Black men predominantly portray them as heterosexual (Grant, 2020). However, if documentaries such as *Tongues Untied* (1989, Marlon Riggs) repeatedly emphasise the character's victimisation as a result of belonging to the two categories (i.e. touching on issues of racism and homophobia), the victimised other stereotype is generated in an additive manner, as observed in Chapter 4. Films like *Tongue Untied* are pivotal films that use category combinations to represent the lived experiences of outgroup members, combat stigma and celebrate individual achievements. At the same time, a constant repetition of these combinations and related character traits or social circumstances may not only reinforce existing stereotypes, but also create a new stereotype in the outgroup's stereotype set (e.g. the male, gay, Black victimised other).

Essentially, a surprising combination can only be surprising if it doesn't become a regular representation. The dilemma, however, is that if it only occurs occasionally enough to be surprising in the first place, it is prone to subtyping—that is, the character will be seen as an exception to both outgroup categories. Outgroup salience and the carrying over of corresponding stereotypical characteristics as sub-characteristics into the new evaluation (see our earlier example of the academic bricklayer) can mitigate the risk of subtyping (Hutter and Crisp, 2005, p. 656). Furthermore, the consistent use of different, surprising combinations that do not become a new recurrent category can reduce the risk of subtyping, as well as stereotyping itself. This is in line with the bookkeeping model, which is intended to yield a diverse spectrum of outgroup representations that dehomogenises the outgroup. Such varying combinations could include outgroup subgroups to increase

variability. Regarding the earlier example of tackling the stigma of manual labourers, such represented combinations could include an academic bricklayer, a disabled plumber and a rail track constructor who is also a pianist. If such a variability is reached, the spectrum of outgroup representations may even include non-surprising and additive combinations, such as a migrant plumber or male mechanic, on condition that these are not regular.

Because surprising category combination does not require a shared ingroup category with the viewer, and because the viewer's category is not essential for inhibiting the reliance on held stereotypes, this multiple categorisation configuration is relatively easy to achieve, compared to others. If general audiences are consistently exposed to surprising category combinations involving different outgroups and if these remain surprising, a more widespread occurrence of stereotype inconsistency may ensue, promoting the general reduction of stereotype activation and encouraging a positive attitude towards social and cultural diversity (Crisp and Turner, 2011, p. 254). However, as is evident from the above examples that illustrate this configuration's risk of stereotyping, it is crucial that media makers familiarise themselves with the outgroup's stereotype set through an OIMDA analysis, before proceeding to use surprising category combinations to tackle stigma.

9.4 Case Study: *The Gardeners of Kabul*

The BBC4 documentary *The Gardeners of Kabul* (2017, Lalage Snow) depicts the lives of male gardeners in the conflict-stricken city. Western viewers are typically not accustomed to seeing horticultural activities in an Afghan context, because Western media discourses concerning Afghanistan have focused primarily on narratives of conflict. Historically, these include the Soviet invasion in the 1980s; the subsequent Taliban regime, which was linked to terrorism and the violation of human rights; the US invasion in 2001, marked by two decades of violence and unrest; and the return of the Taliban regime in 2021. The outgroup of Afghan culture has been associated with a stereotype set of the primitive, the incapable, the amoral and the victimised other across various sub-outgroups: women, children and war casualties have been portrayed as victims; men have been portrayed as amoral in terms of gender inequality and terrorist activity; Taliban soldiers have been portrayed as inept in contrast to US soldiers, at least before their return to power in 2021; and the entire outgroup has been represented as primitive in light of the country's ultra-conservative traditions, outdated infrastructures and economic poverty.

Given Afghanistan's turbulent history, such stereotypes contain a strong kernel of truth and are typically a salient part of documentary narratives, such as *The Gardeners of Kabul*; it would thus be somewhat perverse to omit the precarious context and focus exclusively on gardening as though there were no surrounding conflicts. It is problematic, however, that there is a considerable social distance from the authoritative, journalistic, British perspective, manifested through off-screen narration, interviews with the characters, expository captions and the plot's rhetorical structure. In tandem with the conflict-laden and economically disadvantaged context, this creates an inequality in perceived status whereby the portrayed Afghan culture is perceived as inferior to the British ingroup culture. Social distance is not atypical of the format usually adopted by current affairs documentaries, which usually strives for an ostensibly impartial account of factual information. If this format is applied to disadvantaged communities, the perception of unequal status is almost inevitable. Nevertheless, the film uses strategies to considerably mitigate this perception and to counteract social distance. One is the direct spatial placement of the viewer in the actual locations, close to the characters and their material interactions of gardening (Figure 9.5). This provides a moderate level of perspective-taking, which is strengthened through the characters talking about their motivations and interests. This generates a certain sense of common interests with them.



Figure 9.5: Gardeners' material interactions *The Gardeners of Kabul* (2017)

Another strategy is the use of two surprising category combinations that are stereotype-inconsistent. One is the combination of Afghan culture, which would typically activate the abovementioned stereotypes, with the profession of gardening, which typically would activate stereotypes related to tranquillity, peace, economic affluence and care. The other combination unexpectedly adds a gender category to the first combination. Afghan males per se do not represent a surprising combination for a Western viewer, as we have seen them in many media discourses, and we know that Afghan men must exist. Male gardeners, too, is a common combination in real life and media representations. The two combinations are thus unsurprising because the categories are unrelated in terms of their defiance of viewers' expectations. However, it is the intersection of *Afghan male* and *gardener* that constitutes the surprise: Afghan men are usually stereotyped as violent, warmongering, primitive and patriarchal in Western media. They are rarely portrayed performing chores, such as caretaking, in domestic environments, which may usually be expected from Afghan women.

The outgroup of 'gardener' also feels significantly more familiar and less deviant to a Western ingroup audience in comparison to the image of a stereotypical Afghan male, which also helps mitigate social distance. All in all, the result is that through these surprising category combinations the activation of stereotypes of Afghan culture in general, and stereotypes of Afghan men in particular, is reduced. Instead, the average British ingroup viewer is prompted to form a new impression, which is likely to be based on a causal reasoning as to how these Afghan men can be gardeners, not only because of their gender but also because of the precarious context. Indeed, in reducing the cognitive load demanded of the viewer in forming this new impression that cannot easily rely on existing knowledge, the film effectively directs this impression by having several men voice their motivations and reasons for being gardeners and providing sufficient contextual exposition.

9.5 Less distant Outgroups

Surprising category combinations are particularly useful for characters with multiple outgroup categories, as they can mitigate the social distance through stereotype reduction. However, outgroups can appear more or less distant to the ingroup. Combining the initial outgroup category with an additional, less distant outgroup category in a surprising manner may mitigate social distance even further. This would mean that the stereotypes associated with the second outgroup appear to deviate less from ingroup norms. The ingroup is more familiar with that outgroup, which appears less abnormal from the ingroup's perspective. Therefore, the surprise here does not stem only from the combination of categories, but from merging something 'abnormal' something 'less abnormal'. **The closer that second outgroup is to the ingroup, the greater the surprise will be.** The 2022

UK Virgin Media campaign video²² features Aamira, a young woman who wears a hijab and joins the Melanin Skate Gals and Pals community. The short clip, in which the ability to quickly stream social media videos using broadband plays a central role, emphasises the themes of inclusion and resilience through Aamira's inspirational story, from her first failed attempt to skateboard and subsequently her being embraced by the community. The surprising category combination is the character's triple identity of Muslim, girl and skateboarder, which is immediately rendered visually salient by her hijab, her feminine facial features, the skateboard and the helmet, which she evocatively wears over her hijab as a means of merging her identities (Figure 9.6).



Figure 9.6: Aamira and her multiple identities in the UK Virgin Media campaign video (2022)

The average British, non-Muslim, non-skateboarder ingroup viewer is likely to be unaccustomed to seeing young Muslim girls transgressing gender boundaries—after all, stereotypical Western representations of Muslim girls tend to portray them as passive, domestic and subject to patriarchal supervision rather than active, athletic and independent. Interestingly, the clip begins with an image that indeed activates these stereotypes, as she is shown alone in her semi-darkened bedroom, yearningly watching skateboarding videos on her laptop. This is a strategy for establishing outgroup salience. Shortly thereafter, however, she walks to the skateboarding ground to try it out herself. While the outgroup category salience remains, the stereotype is soon subverted through the alternative stereotype of the skateboarder category as fun-loving and mobile. The transgression is embodied in the Muslim girl who initially activates stigmatising stereotypes, eventually adopting a group category and related, alternative stereotypes that, in comparison with Muslim stereotypes, appear less socially distant and thus more 'normal' for the ingroup viewer. Of course, this new category combination prompts the ingroup viewer to form a novel, less stereotype-reliant and probably more individuated impression of Aamira.

This clip initially activates, but soon subverts stereotypes associated with Muslim women. In other examples, however, different outgroup stereotypes co-exist throughout the entire narrative, perhaps creating an even greater sense of surprise. In *Zanzibar Soccer Queens* young Muslim female footballers are represented as having two co-existing and seemingly contradictory social identities: outside the football pitch (i.e. at home, at work, at school or with friends) they adhere to patriarchal rules and restrictions, including fully covering their bodies, which confirms the stereotype of the oppressed Muslim woman; on the football pitch, however, they play in shorts and T-shirts, they leave their hair uncovered and they express independence and empowerment. These

²² <https://news.virginmediaio2.co.uk/virgin-medias-latest-campaign-features-a-female-skateboarder-overcoming-adversity-to-master-her-craft/>

two identities in combination are incompatible with the stigmatising media representations of Muslim (and African) women to which most Western viewers are accustomed.

In addition to mere surprise, such category combinations offer the additional benefit of promoting more positive attitudes towards the outgroup characters. When evaluating others, the more similar the outgroup is to the ingroup, the more positive the evaluation will be and the more likely it is that social distance will be reduced (Mastro and Kopacz, 2006, p. 309). I shall elaborate on this next, in relation to the 'shared ingroup category' configuration, in which the added category is not only close to but is actually shared with the ingroup viewer.

9.6 The Shared Ingroup Category

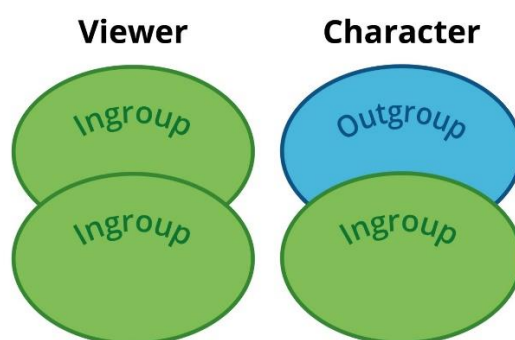


Figure 9.7: Shared ingroup category

The second configuration of cross-categorisation is the 'shared ingroup category', created by the addition of one (or more) ingroup category that is shared by the ingroup viewer and the outgroup character (Figure 9.7). The character's outgroup–ingroup crossing can but need not be a surprising combination, as the primary focus of this configuration is to mitigate negative attitudes towards the outgroup. Recalling the Danish advert, a nurse who was a bully in the past is seen as sharing an ingroup with viewers who are not nurses but who were also bullies in the past. The primary ingroup–outgroup constellation was thus non-nurse viewer vs. nurse character, and the added category of 'bully' resulted for some viewers in the shared ingroup category of bully viewer and bully character. Such viewers are likely to have a less negative attitude towards the bullying nurse.

As we know from the ingroup favouritism bias and the stereotype content model detailed in Chapter 2, an ingroup typically regards an outgroup negatively. This negative valence does not necessarily imply 'dislike' (though it can), but rather the cognitive, affective and behavioural tendency to exclude outgroup members through stereotype activation and application. This is even more the case if a viewer observes two (or more) crossed outgroups in the character (Crisp *et al.*, 2003), such as a non-nurse, non-bully viewer observing a nurse, bully character. However, if an outgroup character has an **additional, salient category that triggers the self-identification of the same category in the viewer**, the resulting shared ingroup, alongside the initial ingroup–outgroup constellation, can result in a much less negative attitude towards the character (*ibid*). If that shared ingroup is more salient than the outgroup category, or if a further shared ingroup category is added, it can even lead to a positive and thus inclusive attitude in the viewer. This greatly facilitates the parasocial contact conditions of equal status and common interests while continuing to preserve a degree of outgroup salience. Furthermore, if the overlapped outgroup and ingroup categories in the character represent a surprising category combination in a manner that inhibits stereotype activation, there is a further enhancement in the viewer's attitude towards the outgroup.

The general aim of destigmatisation through shared ingroup categories is to transform *exclusion* into *inclusion* by emphasising perceived similarity through the shared category to the extent that it counteracts stereotype

activation based on perceived difference in the non-shared category (Crisp and Hewstone, 2006, p. 10). Several cognitive and affective factors can manipulate category perception towards this aim, and these can be deployed through narrative and aesthetic means in factual media.

Category salience is particularly crucial (Crisp *et al.*, 2003). If a shared ingroup category is made more salient than the outgroup category, it will become more accessible to the viewer for social categorisation and evaluation. As detailed in Chapter 2, in terms of representational strategies, category salience is determined by narrative context, paratextual priming and the momentary alignment of the viewer's goal with that of the character. In terms of narrative context, *The Eagle Huntress* portrays Aisholpan at school listening to the teacher, writing in her notebook, interacting with fellow pupils and performing well in her studies. Her outgroup identity as Mongolian is visually salient but not narratively emphasised. Her other outgroup identity as a nomad is not made at all salient until the next scene. Thus, the school context strategically emphasises the 'schoolgirl' category, an ingroup category with which a Western audience can easily identify. Thus, the attitude towards Aisholpan as a Mongolian will likely be generally positive. In the scene that follows, owing to the surprising combination of schoolgirl and nomad, this attitude is enhanced through the inhibition of the primitive other stereotype associated with nomads. The film's narrative context highlights a further ingroup category: womanhood. Aisholpan is represented as the only female eagle huntress among numerous male hunters who express disapproval at the prospect of a woman's entry into their community. This makes her womanhood, which is a shared category with female Western ingroup viewers, and her struggle within a male-dominated context, which is a category-related social implication with which many female Western ingroup viewers can identify, more salient than her identities as a nomad and Mongolian.

In terms of priming, all of the film's paratexts (e.g. synopses, trailers) emphasise her gender transgression, thus making the ingroup category of womanhood salient and priming the viewer before watching the actual film. In addition, the school scene is the first scene featuring Aisholpan and the first scene of the film's major plot, which primes the viewer in terms of the shared ingroup category of 'schoolgirl'. In terms of the viewer's momentary goal, the film prompts perspective-taking with Aisholpan, thus aligning the viewer with her main goal of (and all the subgoals towards) becoming a professional eagle huntress. This emphasises the two shared ingroup categories of 'teenager' and 'woman' within this difficult trajectory.

To maintain the parasocial contact condition of outgroup salience, however, the emphasis on the shared ingroup category should not entail the suppression of the outgroup category but rather should suppress the activation of othering outgroup stereotypes. *The Eagle Huntress* demonstrates this by the cultural specificity of the seen artefacts, places and everyday life routines. In documentaries that cannot easily increase a shared ingroup category's salience, it is even more important to mitigate the perceived otherness of the outgroup, as a later case study will illustrate.

Affective valence concerns how the viewer's attitudinal affects towards ingroup and outgroup categories can be primed through affective reinforcement (Crisp *et al.*, 2003, p. 46). As we know, attitudinal affects tend to be positive towards ingroup and negative towards outgroup categories. The generation of additional, positive mood in the viewer will prime and thus heighten the positive affect towards the shared ingroup category to make it more salient than the outgroup category. The positive mood can either be a general mood within the film's narrative, or it may be related to the outgroup category through perspective-taking, which, as established, can generate positivity through familiarity.

The Eagle Huntress establishes a positive mood throughout its narrative towards Aisholpan. The viewer becomes familiar with her everyday life, her family life and her cultural traditions and values, all of which are portrayed in a positive light and conducive to her goal. In particular, her father's support and mentorship emerge as positive compared to the critical voices from other, male eagle hunters. The film also cultivates a generally positive mood through the use of rousing music, impressive cinematography, breath-taking landscapes and

likeable characters. These prime the viewer's positive attitude towards Aisholpan's shared ingroup categories (schoolgirl, woman) in addition to enhancing their attitude towards her outgroup category (Mongolian nomad).

Conversely, negative mood can prime and thus reinforce negative attitudes towards outgroup categories, which may occur in documentaries whose subject matter is inherently negative, such as crime, natural disaster, war and stigma. If these films' genre, format and thematic focus lack the scope required to manipulate affective valence, they must resort to other stereotype reduction strategies.

Cognitive load denotes the general difficulty associated with the cognitive processing of multiple social categories. This can lead to stressful arousal in the viewer, which induces a negative affect that can prime the negative evaluation of outgroup categories (Crisp *et al.*, 2003, p. 48). This may occur as a result of annoying distractions, such as a noisy and busy viewing environment, distractions originating from the viewer's own thoughts unrelated to the film or distractions within the film itself (e.g. random images, arbitrary aesthetic stimuli, technical faults). It can also occur through task difficulty, such as the need to process a complex narrative or lack of sufficient access for narrative comprehension (e.g. inadequate subtitles). For instance, folk-psychological narratives, such as that in *The Eagle Huntress*, adhere to clear, comprehensible formal patterns (e.g. cause–effect links between scenes, clear plot points and aesthetics that relate to characters, narrative trajectories and themes) that alleviate the cognitive load. Such narrative coherence and exposition can be highly effective in priming positive evaluations of shared ingroup categories. However, the viewer's media preferences and expectations in relation to documentary genre play a crucial role here. The average mainstream viewer expects folk-psychological narratives. If confronted with a more experimental, subversive, poetic or essayistic narrative, like that of *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (see Chapter 7), it may result in a stressful arousal because of the higher cognitive load required, thus counteracting the formation of positive attitudes. Meanwhile, other less mainstream viewers may find such narratives more pleasurable, resulting in positive affect that may indeed prime positive evaluations of shared ingroup categories.

9.7 Case Study: Africa with Ade Adepitan

The documentary examples cited so far predominantly establish a direct parasocial contact between viewer and character. But what about more complex scenarios, in which the parasocial contact is indirect? The following case study deliberately chooses such a complex scenario in order to demonstrate the applicability of multiple categorisation configurations to a wide range of documentaries.

The travel documentary mini-series *Africa with Ade Adepitan* (2019, BBC2) explores various African countries and cultures. The series overall aims to alter British people's negative preconceptions about 'Africans' as a general outgroup. It does so by largely avoiding the ubiquitous stereotypes of the primitive, victimised, incapable and amoral other. It also reduces the perception of outgroup homogeneity, thus inhibiting the activation of these stereotypes by portraying a range of different sub-categories within the overall outgroup category (e.g. rangers, chefs, musicians, activists, farmers, engineers, soldiers, doctors). These sub-categories encompass a range of issues that are not exclusively focused on stereotypically pertinent contexts such as war, poverty, corruption, famine and disease. However, the series also strategically employs the shared ingroup category configuration to reduce social distance.

Since the presenter in presenter-led documentaries is the main reference point for the viewer's perspective, we should first analyse the parasocial multiple category configurations between viewer and presenter. Ade Adepitan, a Black British disabled athlete and TV personality, presents each episode through his physical presence and his voiceover narration of the journey, supplemented by maps and travelling shots captured from his perspective. His salient categories are presenter, British, Black and disabled, the latter evident in his visible wheelchair use and occasional references to his mobility. Adepitan shares with the average British viewer the

ingroup category of Britishness and differs in his outgroup category of ‘presenter’. Depending on whether the viewer is disabled or not, Black or white, Adepitan may share with them further ingroup categories or differ through further outgroup categories. For the sake of simplicity, Figure 9.8 illustrates the category configuration from the perspective of a non-presenter, non-disabled and non-Black viewer. This is, so to speak, the worst-case scenario in terms of social distance, which is why the series seeks to de-emphasise Adepitan’s three outgroup categories while emphasising his shared ingroup category.

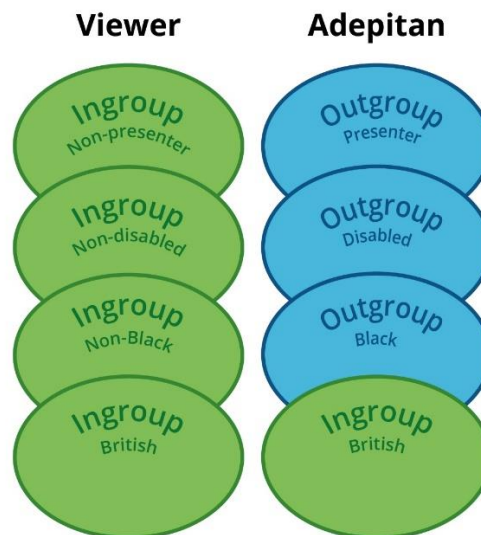


Figure 9.8: Adepitan’s categories in relation to the viewer’s

The Britishness category is highly salient in Adepitan’s casting: as a prominent figure in British mainstream media (presenter, Paralympian, disability activist) and sporting an English—mildly cockney—accent, his Britishness is extremely distinct. This is reinforced by his numerous, comparative references to life in Britain. Interestingly, his Nigerian origin (he was born in Nigeria but moved to the UK aged three) is not made salient in most episodes, which may be a strategy designed to avoid diluting the salience of the shared ingroup category. At the same time, the presenter category is purposely understated. Many contemporary presenter-led documentaries are aware that parasocial contact between viewer and character is distanced by default through the presenter’s presence and perspective. To compensate for this, they attempt to align the viewer with the presenter by diminishing the intergroup boundary between non-presenter and presenter and deviating from the traditional journalist-presenter found in newscasts, such as the BBC interview analysed in Chapter 2.

The series achieves this by reducing the stereotypes of the authoritative, impersonal, omniscient and analytical presenter, rendering Adepitan more like a narrative character, through whom the viewer is prompted to vicariously experience the African characters’ perspectives. He refrains from using lengthy, factual and didactic explanations, opting instead for genuine, tentative and non-judgemental initial reactions to what he experiences, as the average viewer may have in that context. This is coupled with a range of narrative and aesthetic perspective-taking techniques that align the viewer with Adepitan’s perspective epistemologically (gaining knowledge as he gains it), spatially (establishing locations from his perspective and the camera being often at his eye level), temporally (experiencing the journey’s chronology and transition between spaces as he does) and affectively (abundant reaction shots and his verbal expression). This perspective is facilitated through a range of everydayness techniques, through which he sometimes spontaneously and randomly meets people, such as a female taxi driver, and stumbles on new issues to be explored (Figure 9.9); on other occasions, he follows through planned and repeated events, such as his summaries at the beginning and end of each episode; in numerous instances, he experiences and comments on quotidian details of the African characters’ lives, such as their daily routines, traffic, crowds, clothes, food and domestic spaces. Material interactions are also

depicted, including his attempts to harvest palm fruits for palm oil, and references to materialities are made, such as his commentary on road texture in relation to his wheelchair and mobility.



Figure 9.9: Adepitan's (left) everyday encounters in *Africa with Ade Adepitan* (2019)

This visual and occasional narrative salience of Adepitan's disability category also creates a strategic surprising combination of 'disabled travel presenter'. This would probably seem incompatible to the viewer, who would stereotypically attribute mobility to a travel presenter and immobility to a disabled person. Thus, the viewer's need to re-evaluate Adepitan in a new, non-stereotypical manner enhances the perspective-taking and further reduces stereotype activation. All these strategies preserve the salience of the outgroup categories of 'presenter', 'disabled' and 'Black' while reducing the activation of corresponding stereotypes. His shared ingroup category of being British is emphasised through category salience *and* portraying related dispositions, such as curiosity and fascination towards a non-British culture. The three parasocial contact conditions are overall addressed: common interests through the shared British category; a moderate sense of equal status by mitigating the non-shared presenter category and personalising him; outgroup salience through his visually salient disability and Blackness. Thus, an average white, non-disabled British viewer will be prompted to form a positive and inclusive attitude towards Adepitan on a personal and social level, which, as a by-product, may also promote a positive attitude towards social and cultural diversity in British society.

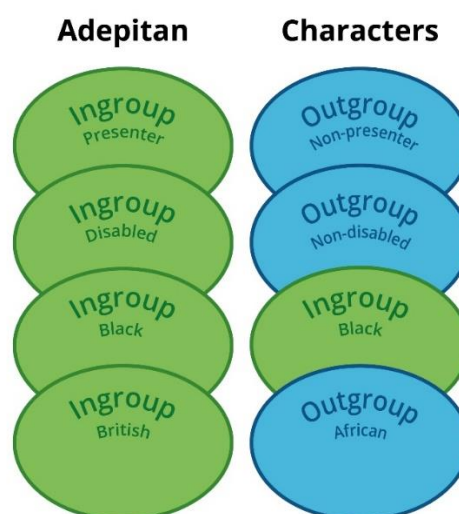


Figure 9.10: Adepitan's categories in relation to the characters'

Figure 9.10 illustrates the category configuration relating to contact between Adepitan and most of the African characters. The disabled–non-disabled category binary is mitigated through the aforementioned method of rendering disability narratively insignificant most of the time. The presenter–non-presenter and British–African binaries are somewhat mitigated as a result of Adepitan’s pronounced, experientially immersive, material and immaterial interactions with the locals. These interactions address the parasocial contact conditions to a certain degree. For instance, he strives for a mutual sense of equal status between them by participating in local activities and never appearing either superior or inferior. The relationship between the presenter and character, particularly when the former is from an economically privileged background, incorporates an intrinsic status imbalance. However, the visual salience of Adepitan’s disability may somewhat mitigate this imbalance due to the stigma attached to disability.

The mutual sense of common interest is somewhat evoked through his agreement with and support for activist, economic and conservationist endeavours, while those engaging in such endeavours facilitate his exploratory journey, often appearing pleased to share information about their lives and work. Nevertheless, from a target viewer’s perspective, Adepitan is more socially distant in his engagement and perspective-taking with the characters than he is from the viewer, which is not unusual for a travel series. After all, while the viewer has time to bond with him across multiple episodes, Adepitan only interacts with individual locals relatively briefly as he covers several locations across multiple countries in a single episode. This is exacerbated by the fact that he is clearly a foreigner speaking in a different language or with an English accent and expressing his lack of familiarity with local customs. The one shared ingroup category of Blackness is visually but not narratively salient. However, visually salient features, such as skin tone, can (at least initially) initiate a powerful bottom-up categorisation and dispositional attribution process, as observed in Chapter 2. Thus, the selection of a Black rather than non-Black presenter is a good strategy for reducing social distance between him and the characters.

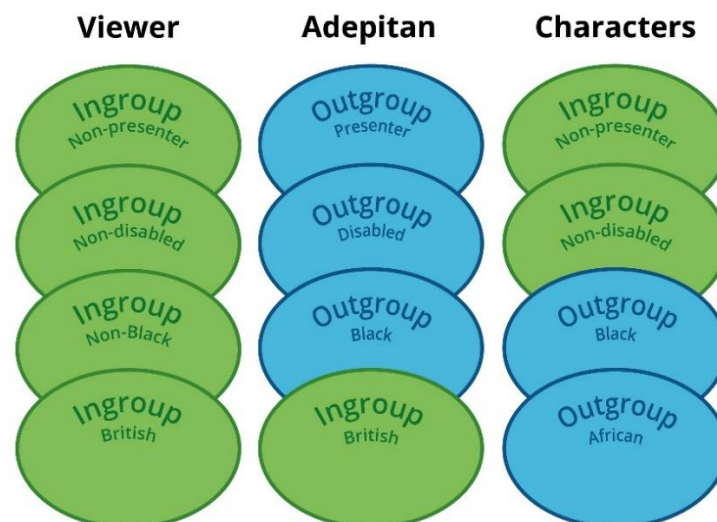


Figure 9.11: Viewer’s categories in relation to Adepitan’s and the characters’

Returning to spectatorship, Figure 9.11 illustrates the category configurations from the viewer’s perspective. Between viewer and characters are two shared ingroup categories—non-presenter and non-disabled—and two non-shared outgroup categories—African and Black. The non-presenter and non-disabled categories have only little narrative significance, while the non-shared African category is the narratively most significant outgroup, and the non-shared Black category has significant visual salience. The viewer shares only a single ingroup category with Adepitan, but that one is narratively very salient, while the other three non-shared outgroup categories have only little narrative salience. Based on the above analyses we can hypothesise that the viewer positively evaluates Adepitan and only somewhat positively evaluates the characters. This positive character evaluation, however, is facilitated by the viewer’s perspective, which is closely aligned with that of Adepitan.

This appropriates the indirect parasocial contact between viewer and character to a more vicarious parasocial contact through which the viewer experiences the characters similarly to the way Adepitan does (see Hodson *et al.*, 2018, p. 527). Furthermore, from the perspective of outgroup variability, the show's depicted amount and diversity of general Africans (in terms of age, gender, profession, class, etc.) is a major strategy in dehomogenising the main outgroup category to be destigmatised, thus reducing stereotype activation and mitigating social distance. In fact, further multiple-categorisation analysis could be interestingly applied to theorise the viewer's perception of particular outgroup sub-categories, such as African women.

In terms of category perception factors, the series employs positive affective valence throughout to prime the viewer's positive attitude towards the characters. Examples include Adepitan's own positive and non-judgemental attitude towards the locals, his jokes and joyful curiosity, his support for prosocial initiatives and the series' upbeat music and general style. Incorporating issues that elicit negative affects in the viewer, such as war, tribalism, famine, poverty, corruption and pollution, the series strategically balances these with issues that elicit positive affects, such as appetising food, entrancing wildlife, infrastructural innovation, community activism, social care and rhythmic music. However, while Adepitan (and the viewer by proxy) has direct contact with empowered and resilient individuals who engage in positive, prosocial and pro-ecological actions, he has almost no contact with individuals or institutions that are responsible for or directly subjected to negative actions. For instance, corrupt politicians or warlords are merely talked about or implied. In this way, social distance to negative groups who are regarded as impediments to progressive, prosocial and pro-ecological initiatives is deliberately maintained by keeping them intangible and stereotypical. This supports the attempt to prompt positive spectatorial attitudes towards the general African outgroup.

The cognitive load demanded from the viewer is kept low by maintaining a good balance between simplified and personified factual information and experiential engagement in positive local practices. In addition, the narrative is held tightly together by the clear journey depicted through maps, establishing shots and Adepitan's voiceover narration. There is also efficient use of 'redundancy' (Bordwell, 1985, p. 48), through which the same geographical and cultural information is repeated multiple times but in different forms so that there is no risk of ambiguity or missing information on the viewer's part.

In summary, the producers' choice of Adepitan in terms of his multiple social categories and the series' narrative format is highly strategic, as it can enhance intergroup relations on multiple levels. The series provides an excellent example of how a documentary genre and format that is usually quite rigid in its formula can employ destigmatisation strategies that push the formula boundaries yet stay within the general parameters that make it accessible and enjoyable for a mainstream audience.

9.8 Extended Cross-group Intimacy

The viewer's parasocial contact with African people in the above examples is experienced vicariously through Adepitan as a quasi-parasocial mediator by virtue of the shared ingroup category. His on-screen interactions with the outgroup are, however, relatively brief and superficial. Nevertheless, the represented relationship between the parasocial mediator and outgroup characters can be significantly more intimate, which is highly conducive to positive evaluations of outgroup members. Ingroup viewers who watch an ingroup character having an intimate and positive on-screen relationship (e.g. friendship, romantic relationship, kinship) with an outgroup character, will positively evaluate the outgroup by extension (Wright *et al.*, 1997; Vezzali *et al.*, 2014). Through this extended cross-group intimacy the outgroup character becomes a quasi-associate member of the ingroup. This is particularly useful for intergroup scenarios that are not wholly conducive to the establishment of a shared ingroup category.

For this scenario to work, several requirements that address the three parasocial contact conditions must apply (ibid). One is **group salience**: the ingroup character's group membership must be salient, so that the viewer can

perceive the ingroup category that they share with the character; the outgroup character's group membership must also be salient. Another factor is **common interest salience**: significant shared common goals and/or values between the two characters must be salient for them both to perceive themselves as being voluntarily in and benefiting from the relationship. The positive attitude will be enhanced, if these common interests are embedded in an **institutional or formalised community/communion** that configures the characters as equal in status in a way that is accepted by the ingroup viewer, such as marriage or a football club.

The Adanna & David Family YouTube channel²³ reduces the stigma attached to African people or, in particular, Nigerians, in the West. Run by married couple Adanna Steinacker, a Nigerian medical doctor and David Steinacker, a German business consultant, it documents their everyday lives as a couple and as a family with their two children. As shown in Figure 9.12, a white, European viewer automatically shares two ingroup categories with David. White, German and male viewers will have additional shared ingroup categories that will probably foster a strong positive evaluation of David. Adanna, on the other hand, shares no ingroup category with the hypothesised viewer, being Black and African. She may share her gender category with female viewers, but for the sake of simplicity and to illustrate a worst-case scenario, we shall assume that she shares no categories with any viewers.

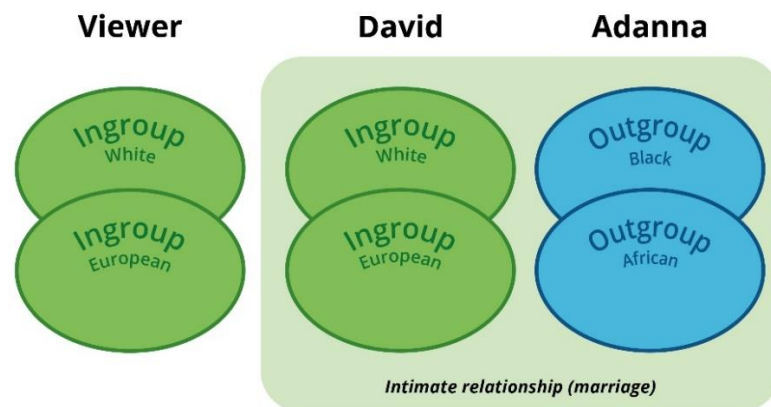


Figure 9.12: Viewer, David and Adanna

A double outgroup character would typically be evaluated negatively (i.e. excluded) by the ingroup viewer (Crisp *et al.*, 2003, p. 40). However, this is largely mitigated by the couple's representation of themselves within a highly intimate, cross-category relationship formalised by marriage. The majority of their videos focus on their relationship dynamics and parenthood, framed by various themes, including general lifestyle, cross-cultural understanding, anti-racism and children's education. Both characters' skin tones, accents and numerous references to their cultural differences satisfy the criteria for ingroup and outgroup salience. Moreover, all videos explicitly portray the couple's intimacy and unity, thus representing their common interests (shared values and goals). These are framed not only by matrimony but also by several other mutual group memberships, such as parenthood, digital influencers and anti-racist activism. These additional group categories inevitably solidify the intimate relationship by adding shared groups to the couple. If the viewer were to share any of these, positive attitudes would be further facilitated. Alternatively, they might constitute additional outgroups for the viewer, which may jeopardise the viewer's positive attitude towards both David and Adanna. This depends entirely on which ingroup viewer segments are hypothesised. For instance, a white, Western, racist viewer may negatively evaluate both David and Adanna, in particular because of their anti-racist activist pursuits. Assuming that this is not the case, the viewer will positively evaluate Adanna via David's positive evaluation of her. Naturally, this can also work in reverse, whereby a viewer who shares Adanna's group categories will be likely to develop a positive attitude towards David through Adanna.

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeVwoCINroOJCldZb9fUgg>

Essentially, extended cross-group intimacy is based on three correlating perceptual mechanisms (Wright *et al.*, 1997, pp. 75–76; Vonofakou *et al.*, 2008, p. 111). The first is the viewer's perception that ingroup norms have the capacity to positively evaluate outgroup characters. The second is the reverse: the viewer perceives that outgroup norms have the capacity to positively evaluate ingroup members. Thus, intergroup interactions appear validated by ingroup as well as outgroup norms—that is, the ingroup viewer has the sense that the intimate, intergroup relationship is acceptable within both groups because both have the scope to have positive—and thereby inclusive—attitudes towards one another. The third mechanism is the viewer's perception of the outgroup member as part of the 'self' (Wright *et al.*, 1997, p. 76). Our sense of the individual 'self' usually includes others with whom we are particularly close or intimate. Thus, based on the given contextual salience of an ingroup–outgroup configuration, we include ingroup members into our sense of 'self' and simultaneously exclude outgroup members. However, when we watch another ingroup member who, through intimacy, includes an outgroup member into their sense of self, we vicariously include that outgroup member, at least to some extent, into our own selves. Therefore, Adanna is part of David's sense of self, and because David is regarded as part of the viewer's sense of self, Adanna also becomes part of the viewer's sense of self.

9.9 Conclusion

The case studies in this chapter have demonstrated that crossing categories within and across viewers and characters offers multiple strategies for stereotype reduction. Surprising category combinations provide an easy means of reducing stereotype activation. If achieved cautiously through awareness of the outgroup stereotype set, they are particularly useful for outgroup characters who have multiple outgroup categories that exacerbate social distance. Shared ingroup category configurations are more complex but can be considerably more effective in mitigating social distance through their role in establishing intergroup similarity, which facilitates positive intergroup attitudes. They can be used in conjunction with surprising category combinations, and their limitations may be compensated through methods of perspective-taking and extended cross-group intimacy. All cross-categorisation endeavours essentially hinge on manipulation of the viewer's category perception. It should be borne in mind, however, that all cross-categorisation configurations only make sense up to four simultaneously salient categories, as more than that will lead to individuation (decategorisation), which will be discussed in Chapter 11. For this reason, cross-categorisation works particularly well for documentaries that lack the time or opportunity to introduce and develop complex characters who occupy multiple, overlapping categories.

Chapter 10 will examine a multiple categorisation type based on a common ingroup category: recategorisation. Unlike the premise of the shared ingroup category configuration, which adds a shared ingroup *alongside* an existing outgroup category, recategorisation adds a superordinate group category that *includes* the character's outgroup, as well as the viewer's ingroup category within the same, new ingroup.