

Unpacking Cultural Superiority - Part 2: Inter-Cultural Attitudes

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Exploring how attitudes of cultural superiority manifest among immigrants from one culture towards others can provide valuable insights into broader societal dynamics.

Here are some points to consider:

1. **Internalized Hierarchy:**

Immigrants may bring with them hierarchical attitudes learned from their home culture, viewing their own culture as superior to others. This can lead to discriminatory behaviors or attitudes towards immigrants from different cultural backgrounds.

2. **Colonial Legacy:**

Some immigrants may come from former colonies where hierarchical structures and cultural dominance were ingrained. This history can influence how they perceive and interact with immigrants from other cultures, sometimes replicating patterns of discrimination they experienced, observed or became aware of.

3. **Social Exclusion and Assimilation:**

Immigrant communities often face challenges in integration and acceptance. In response, some groups may establish hierarchies where certain cultures are deemed more 'assimilable' or 'desirable' than others, perpetuating discrimination against those perceived as less assimilated.

4. **Economic Competition:**

Economic competition among immigrant communities can exacerbate tensions. Groups may perceive others as threats to their economic opportunities or as competitors for resources, leading to discriminatory attitudes or actions.

5. **Cultural Stereotypes:**

Stereotypes about different immigrant groups can fuel discriminatory attitudes. These stereotypes are often rooted in cultural prejudices and perceptions of superiority or inferiority based on cultural practices,

norms, or economic status.

6. Power Dynamics:

Power imbalances within immigrant communities can also play a role. Groups that perceive themselves as more established or influential may exert dominance over newer or less influential groups, reinforcing discriminatory attitudes or practices.

7. Intersectionality:

Discriminatory attitudes among immigrants can intersect with other forms of discrimination such as racism, classism, or xenophobia. Immigrants who face multiple forms of discrimination may in turn discriminate against others perceived as less marginalized.

Addressing these issues requires fostering inclusive environments, promoting intercultural dialogue, challenging stereotypes, and addressing power imbalances. Recognizing and understanding how cultural superiority manifests among immigrants is crucial for fostering harmony and equality within diverse societies.

Inter-cultural Pejorative Language

The term “coconut” is a pejorative term often used within communities of colour to describe someone who is perceived as betraying their cultural identity or assimilating too much into the dominant white culture. It implies that the person is “brown on the outside, white on the inside.” Here’s why a Pakistani Sikh for example might use this term to refer to a wealthy Muslim:

1. Perceived Assimilation and Betrayal of Cultural Identity

- **Assimilation:**

The term suggests that the individual has adopted the customs, attitudes, and behaviours of the dominant culture to the point of losing their own cultural identity.

- **Betrayal:**

It can be used to accuse someone of abandoning their community or cultural heritage in favour of acceptance by the dominant white culture.

2. Socioeconomic Tensions

- **Class Differences:**

The term might reflect resentment or jealousy towards wealthier individuals within the same broader ethnic community. A Pakistani Sikh might see a wealthy Muslim as having achieved socioeconomic success by conforming to white societal norms.

- **Power Dynamics:**

Wealth often brings social mobility and influence, which can create tensions between different socioeconomic classes within ethnic communities.

3. Inter-Community and Intra-Community Conflicts

- **Historical Tensions:**

There are historical and political tensions between different religious and ethnic groups in South Asia, including between Sikhs and Muslims. These tensions can carry over into diaspora communities.

- **Intra-Community Criticism:**

The term might also be used to criticize someone within the same ethnic group who is perceived to be neglecting or looking down on their own community.

4. Cultural Superiority and Stereotypes

- **Internalized Superiority:**

The wealthy individual might be perceived as adopting a sense of superiority over their own ethnic community, aligning themselves more with the dominant culture and looking down on their own heritage.

- **Stereotyping:**

The use of the term might also reflect internalized racism or self-stereotyping within communities of colour, where people police each other's behaviour based on perceived conformity to ethnic stereotypes.

5. Identity Politics

- **Authenticity:**

The term “coconut” challenges the authenticity of an individual’s cultural identity, questioning whether they are genuinely part of their ethnic community if they adopt the behaviours or values of another culture.

- **Group Solidarity:**

It can be used to enforce group solidarity, pressuring individuals to maintain cultural traditions and resist assimilation into the dominant culture.

6. Personal Experiences and Perspectives

- **Individual Bias:**

Personal experiences and biases of the individual using the term might play a significant role. The Pakistani Sikh might have specific grievances or perceptions that influence their use of such a term.

Addressing the Issue

Understanding and addressing such tensions requires:

- **Promoting Cultural Awareness:**

Encouraging dialogue and understanding between different cultural and socioeconomic groups within the same broader community.

- **Challenging Stereotypes:**

Actively working to challenge and dismantle stereotypes and prejudices within and between communities.

- **Building Inclusive Spaces:**

Creating environments where all members feel valued and included, regardless of their level of assimilation or socioeconomic status.

- **Fostering Solidarity:**

Emphasizing shared experiences and common goals while respecting and celebrating cultural diversity.

We've had this conversation before Richard. ONE Muslim man in the entire country making a donation doesn't prove anything. Nothing. Other than he is a complete 🍌 and probably a bit thick. <https://t.co/y9pSEbv3hF>

— Narinder Kaur (@narindertweets) [June 19, 2024](#)



Narinder Kaur
@narindertweets



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Richard Tice 🇬🇧 🟦 @TiceRichard · 3h

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