

Other racial groups 'look alike because of visual and neural processes' — study

Notes & Cues:	<p><b>Article:</b></p> <p>The common perception that people from other racial groups look alike is rooted in the way human brains process what they see, researchers say.</p> <p>It has long been known that people find it easier to tell apart members of their own race than those of a different race. Now a new study backs up the idea that the phenomenon is rooted, at least in part, in visual and neural processes.</p> <p>The researchers, whose study has been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, reported how 20 white participants were shown a series of images including faces, numbers and objects, while they had their brains scanned using functional MRI — a technique that allowed the team to spot changes in activity.</p> <p>In 19 of the 20 participants, a greater area of the face-recognition region was activated when the participants saw a white face compared with a black face. The researchers said that it suggested participants were better at picking up on physical differences between white faces — even for faces completely different to each other, brain activity was higher for white faces.</p> <p>The researchers said the findings could help to investigate ways to avoid harmful biases. Nick Camp, the co-author of the research from Stanford University, said some evidence suggested the phenomenon could depend on which characteristics were used to group people. He said: “Getting people to think about groups in different ways, or re-categorising individuals, might be an effective way of combating even these low-level perceptual biases.”</p>
Summary:	