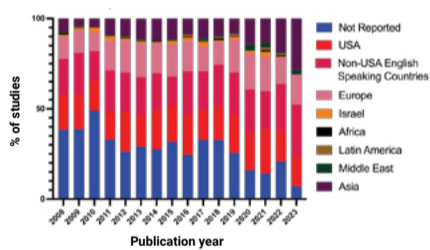# MAKING RESEARCH LESS... WEIRD?

Most face libraries used in psychological research include only younger, white participants from Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic (WEIRD) cultures. These databases are not representative of the diverse range of facial characteristics and expression found in general populations globally, and this presents a major challenge to the quality and impact of research findings.

The study of face perception plays a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of social dynamics, and contributes to real-world developments in fields such as medicine and technology. **Dr Deema Awad's** project calls for more researchers to report the demographics of their study participants, and paves the way for more representative research through the creation of a new, inclusive face database.

ANGRY

HAPPY

SAD　**FEAR**　　　**SURPRISE**

DISGUST

NEUTRAL

NEUTRAL GAZE TO SUBJECT LEFT　　**NEUTRAL GAZE** TO SUBJECT RIGHT

FACE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARL GOODWIN

FACE PERCEPTION (2008-2023): PAPERS BY POPULATION LOCATION

Legend: Not Reported, USA, Non-USA English Speaking Countries, Europe, Israel, Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Asia

Y-axis: % of studies. X-axis: Publication year

This diagram shows where in the world studies into facial perceptions have been carried out since 2008. 81 per cent of the 3,217 papers with specific location details were carried out in Western countries.

85%

85 PER CENT OF STUDIES HAVE NOT REPORTED THE AGE OF PEOPLE USED IN STIMULI IMAGES.

81%

81 PER CENT OF STUDIES SINCE 2008 CARRIED OUT IN WESTERN COUNTRIES.

70%

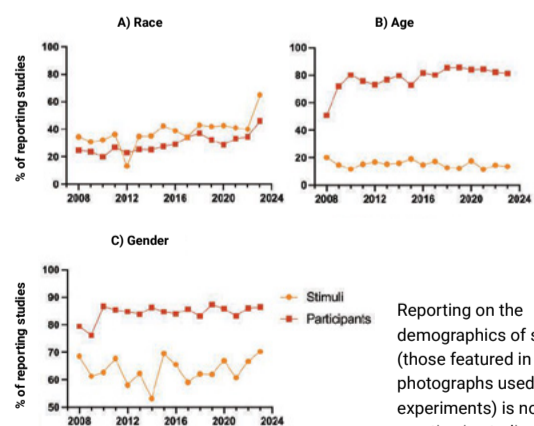WHERE ETHNICITY IS REPORTED, NEARLY 70 PER CENT OF FACIAL STUDIES FEATURE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE WHITE.

50%

GENDER REPORTING IN STIMULI HAS FLUCTUATED HUGELY SINCE 2008, NEVER RISING ABOVE 70 PER CENT, AND DROPPING TO JUST OVER 50 PER CENT IN 2014.

TRANSPARENCY IN STIMULI AND PARTICIPANTS DISCLOSURE

A) Race　　B) Age

C) Gender

Legend: Stimuli, Participants

Reporting on the demographics of stimuli (those featured in photographs used in experiments) is not standard practice in studies.

RACE DIVERSITY

Y-axis: % of reported papers. X-axis: Race

Legend: Stimuli, Participants

This graph shows the race distribution of people presented in stimuli, and participants, for studies with available data since 2008. The vast majority of facial studies feature individuals who are white at almost 70 per cent.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Y-axis: % of papers. X-axis: Age (18-35, Above 35, Not reported)

Legend: Stimuli, Participants

This graph shows the age distribution of people presented in stimuli, and of participants, in face perception studies since 2008. Around 85 per cent of studies have not reported the age of people used in stimuli images.

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

LSE's representative face library will include 36 categories for the identification of images, including wide ranges of age, gender, and ethnicity. The database will also include differing evaluations of photographs in terms of attractiveness, trustworthiness, dominance, credibility, and basic emotions.
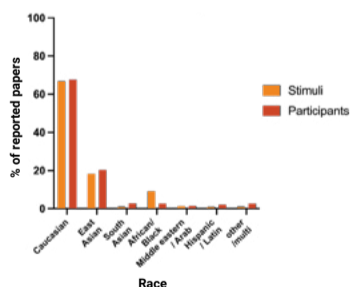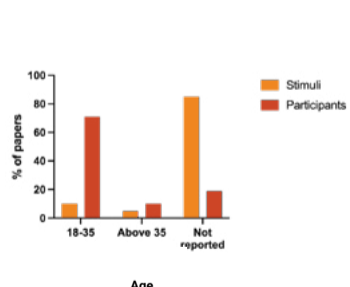
By providing a more representative sample of faces, this project will improve face perception research and have a significant impact on the psychological and behavioural sciences. The diverse face database will serve as a facial library for researchers around the world, and will enable them to engage with more representative sampling in their studies, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the role of faces in psychological research.