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THE IMPACT OF INTERGROUP COMPARISONS ON INGROUP AND OUTGROUP PERCEPTIONS OF ENTITATIVITY AND HOMOGENEITY

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Abstract: The present study examines the effect of social comparison on perceived ingroup and outgroup entitativity and homogeneity. Social comparison leads group members to close the ranks and to focus on intergroup rather than intragroup differences (Haslam et al, 1995). We hypothesized that a social comparison situation in contrast to a single group situation increases ingroup ratings of homogeneity and entitativity, while leaving outgroup ratings unchanged. Thus, an outgroup homogeneity effect was predicted in a single group context but not in a social comparison context. An ingroup entitativity effect was predicted in a social comparison context and to a lesser extent also in a single group context. To test our hypotheses, undergraduate students participated in an experiment manipulating social comparison. Results confirmed our hypotheses. The findings are discussed in terms of differences in the social meaning of the often confounded constructs of group entitativity and homogeneity and in terms of differences between ingroup and outgroup perceptions.

Keywords: entitativity, group perception, homogeneity, intergroup relations, outgroup homogeneity effect, social comparison

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Introduction

People belong to groups and want to be proud of their group memberships but at the same time maintain their unique selves (Brewer, 1991). On some occasions, however, people feel a stronger sense of belongingness and feel more similar to their fellow group members than on other occasions. The present study examines the effect of social comparison on perceived in-group and outgroup entitativity and homogeneity.

Entitativity and similarity

The term entitativity was first introduced by Campbell (1958) to refer to 'the degree of having the nature of an entity, of having real existence' (Campbell, 1958, p. 17). Recent research on entitativity has mainly focused on the circumstances under which people perceive aggregates of people to be meaningful and unified groups. Factors like common fate, similarity, salience, and boundedness increase the degree of perceived entitativity of a group (Campbell, 1958; Lickel, Hamilton, Wierzchowska, Lewis, Sherman, & Uhles, 2000). Thus, similarity constitutes an important aspect of group entitativity. Moreover, several studies examining perceptions of entitativity relied on similarity as an indicator of entitativity (Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens, & Paladino, 2000; McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson, & Grace, 1995) or as a means to manipulate perceptions of entitativity (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2003; Dasgupta, Banaji, & Abelson, 1999; Welbourne, 1999). Nevertheless, most authors agree that similarity is but one aspect of entitativity (Campbell, 1958; Castano et al., 2003; Lickel et al., 2000) and that similarity by itself is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for perceiving entitativity in groups (Crump, Hamilton, Sherman, Lickel, & Thakkar, 2009; Hamilton, 2007).

Ingroup and outgroup homogeneity

Many studies have focused on the role of perceived group homogeneity in intergroup relations. The idea that members of an outgroup are considered to be all alike predicts prejudice and stereotyping (e.g., Allport, 1954; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For a long time, the outgroup homogeneity effect has been assumed to be a very robust and general, but small effect (Linville, Salovey, & Fischer, 1986; Mullen & Hu, 1989). Recently, questions regarding the generality of the outgroup homogeneity effect have been asked (Boldry, Gartner, & Quinn, 2007; De Cremer, 2001; Haslam, Oakes, Turner, & McGarty, 1995). For instance, social identity theorists argue that perceptions of homogeneity vary with the characteristics of the intergroup situation.

One potentially important situational characteristic is the type of social comparison present in the intergroup situation (Castano & Yzerbyt, 1998; De Cremer, 2001; Haslam et al., 1995). That is, social comparisons can be made in a single group context without any reference to another group (*single group context*) or in an explicit social comparison context where judgments are made about both groups (*social comparison context*). The former represents a within-group social comparison, the latter a between-group social comparison. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), group members' personal categories are more salient in a single group context while social categories are more salient in the context of an intergroup comparison. However, Haslam and colleagues (1995) state that when group members make judgments about an outgroup, they always implicitly make intergroup comparisons between that group and their own group. According to these authors, outgroup judgments always result from between-group comparisons and social categories are always salient when thinking about outgroups. Therefore, a single group context constitutes a fundamentally different context for ingroups compared to outgroups. For ingroups, differences within the group and between persons are stressed which would be expected to lead to low perceived similarity. For outgroups, differences between the outgroup and the ingroup are accentuated and hence, within-group homogeneity would be expected to be perceived as high. In contrast, in a social comparison context, the difference in perception of ingroups and of outgroups disappears. For both groups, social categories are then very salient. This implies that ingroup members will perceive their own group as more homogenous in a social comparison context than in a single group context (Castano & Yzerbyt, 1998; De Cremer, 2001; Haslam et al., 1995).

The theoretical argument that the social context influences perceptions of ingroup homogeneity can also be derived from Brewer's optimal distinctiveness theory (1991). Brewer (1991) proposed that one seeks a balance between two opposing needs: the need for differentiation and the need for assimilation. In a social comparison context the need for differentiation can be met by stressing the differences between groups. The need for assimilation is accomplished by perceiving homogeneity within the ingroup. In a single group context, in turn, both the need for differentiation and the need for assimilation are to be fulfilled within the group and, thus, ingroup homogeneity may well decrease because it frustrates group members' need for differentiation.

The problem is that in many studies subjects make ratings for either the ingroup or the outgroup, not both (e.g., Jones, Wood, & Quattrone, 1981; Park & Rothbart, 1982; Wilder, 1984) and yet the social contexts in which the ingroup and the outgroup judgments take place may not be comparable. According to Haslam and colleagues (1995), ingroup observations are then made in a single group context whereas outgroup judgments take place in a social comparison context. For a valid assessment of the outgroup homogeneity effect it is crucial that ratings of both groups are made in the same social comparison context (Haslam et al., 1995).

In sum, an outgroup homogeneity effect is hypothesized when a single group situation is the case, whereas this effect is predicted to disappear in an explicit social comparison context (Castano & Yzerbyt, 1998; De Cremer, 2001; Haslam et al., 1995). Explicit social comparison increases perceived ingroup similarity through the accentuation of a social identity (e.g., Haslam et al., 1995) and by decreasing the need for within group differentiation (Brewer, 1991).

Ingroup and outgroup entitativity

So far, few studies have focused on the interface between intergroup relations research and social perception research on entitativity. Research on entitativity has primarily focused on understanding the antecedents and consequences of perceived entitativity, typically without reference to the perceivers' own group memberships (Hamilton, Sherman, & Castelli, 2002; Sherman, Hamilton, & Lewis, 1999). However, several authors have argued that perceptions of entitativity may differ between ingroups and outgroups (Abelson, Dasgupta, Park, & Banaji, 1998; Crump et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 1999). Moreover, Brewer and Harasty (1996) emphasized the functionality of perceiving a group as high in entitativity. Perceived entitativity goes along with perceived agency (Brewer, Hong, & Li, 2004; Hamilton, 2007; Rutchick, Hamilton, & Sack, 2008; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2007) and thus makes it more likely that a group will succeed in achieving its goals (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002). As Sherman et al. (1999) proposed, entitativity constitutes a desired ingroup feature: "perceptions of entitativity bestow predictability, controllability, stability to these groups and these are properties that we would want in our highly valued groups" (p. 105). Accordingly, people identify more with a highly entitative group (Castano et al., 2003; Yzerbyt et al., 2000). Moreover, ingroups are perceived as being more entitative than outgroups (Crump et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, research on entitativity suffers the same methodological lack of clarity as does research on homogeneity, as described earlier. In many experiments investigating entitativity, subjects rate only one group (Castano et al., 2003) and if both groups are rated this typically occurs without explicit reference to the other group (Crump et al., 2009; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2007). Thus, it remains unclear whether ingroup ratings are made in a single group or a social comparison context and hence whether they are comparable to outgroup judgments.

Drawing on Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979), we propose that in a social comparison situation people will be inclined to see their own group as more entitative than the outgroup in order to protect a positive group identity. Furthermore, an intergroup context may be interpreted as a situation where uncertainty and threat are salient so that group members will be motivated to perceive more entitativity in order to reduce threat and uncertainty (Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffit, 2007). In a single group context, where social categories are less salient for

the ingroup (Haslam et al., 1995), group entitativity is less functional to ingroup members than in an intergroup context where an explicit social comparison is made between the ingroup and the outgroup and the groups' positive social identity needs to be protected. However, even in a single group context ingroup entitativity may still be perceived as higher than outgroup entitativity, simply because the ingroup is seen as more important to group members than the outgroup (Lickel et al., 2000). Also, ingroup members are likely more aware of an ingroup's common fate and of the interaction between ingroup members compared to the outgroup's common fate and interactions between outgroup members. Hence, we propose that an ingroup entitativity effect will emerge in a social comparison group context, whereas this effect is expected to be smaller in a single group context. More specifically, entitativity ratings of the ingroup are believed to increase when social comparison is made salient.

The present study

In the present experiment we examine the effect of intergroup comparison on perceptions of homogeneity and entitativity of ingroups and outgroups. The aim of the present study is to empirically study whether there are differences in perceptions of homogeneity and entitativity between ingroups and outgroups and whether these differences depend upon explicit intergroup comparison. We hypothesize that in a single group context group members judge higher similarity within the outgroup than within the ingroup but lower outgroup entitativity than ingroup entitativity. Thus, under these conditions, an outgroup homogeneity effect and an ingroup entitativity effect are predicted. In contrast, in an intergroup comparison context, where ingroup members' social categories become more salient and intergroup rather than intragroup differences are stressed, perceived ingroup homogeneity and entitativity are expected to increase. Hence, the outgroup homogeneity effect is expected to diminish whereas the ingroup entitativity effect should increase. The stimulus groups are social categories (nation groups) with a high-status: Americans (ingroup) and Europeans (outgroup).

Method

Participants

120 undergraduate students from the University of California, Santa Barbara (20% male, 80% female) participated in the current study in exchange for partial course credit or 10 USD. Only Caucasian-White Americans born in the U.S. were selected for participation. The mean age of the participants was 18.98 ($SD = 1.55$).

Design

The experiment had a 2 (target group: ingroup/outgroup) \times 2 (social context: single group context/social comparison context) between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In each condition participants completed a questionnaire consisting of measures of entitativity and similarity. The order in which the entitativity and the similarity measures were presented in the questionnaire was counterbalanced between participants. The stimulus groups were two high status national groups, "Americans" and "Europeans". For participants being Caucasian White Americans born in the U.S., "Americans" represented an ingroup and "Europeans" represented an outgroup.

In the single group context, participants made ratings for one target group, either the ingroup or the outgroup, without any reference to the other group. In the social comparison context, explicit social comparison was induced by instructing participants to answer each item for both groups. More specifically, ratings for the target group were made after having rated the other group. When the ingroup was the target group, participants rated for each item first the outgroup and then the ingroup. Conversely, with the outgroup being the target group, outgroup judgements were preceded by ingroup judgments. This guarantees that target group ratings are made in reference to the other group and that group comparison is salient. Only the target group ratings were used in the data analysis.

Procedure

A trained experimenter, who was blind to both the study's hypothesis and the experimental conditions, randomly ordered the eight different versions of the questionnaire around the table of a small conference room. One questionnaire was assigned to each seating position, waiting for a participant. Questionnaires were placed face down. Participants entered the small conference room in groups of eight. The experimenter asked the participants to choose a seat and informed them that the aim of the study was to investigate group perception and attitudes in various social settings. Once seated, participants then signed an informed consent form.

Participants who were given the version of the questionnaire designed to represent the single group context were asked to complete measures of similarity and entitativity for either Americans or Europeans. In the questionnaires representing a social comparison context, participants were instructed that, for each measure, they would indicate their opinion for both groups. Upon completion of the various tasks, participants read a debriefing sheet, were thanked and paid or assigned credit.

Materials

The response format for all items was a seven-point Likert scale running from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (7).

Similarity. Similarity was assessed with one global similarity item (adapted from Park & Rothbart, 1982): "How similar are Americans/Europeans in general?"

Intragroup differences. Additionally, we measured within group differences with three items: "How large do you think differences among Europeans/Americans are in (a) norms and values, (b) personality, (c) behaviour. Cronbach alphas were .78 for Americans and .68 for Europeans. Perceived similarity and perceived intragroup differences were not highly correlated ($r(59) = .052$, ns for Europeans, $r(59) = -.36$, $p < .01$ for Americans). Therefore, we will present analyses separately for similarity and intragroup differences.

Entitativity. An eight-item scale developed by Spencer-Rogers et al. (2007) was used to measure perceptions of entitativity: (a) Some groups have the characteristic of a 'group' more than others do. To what extent does this group qualify as a 'group'? (b) "To what extent do you think the members of the group feel that they are part of the group?" (c) "How cohesive is the group?" (d) "How organized is the group?" (e) "How much unity do you think the members of the group feel?" (f) "To what extent are members of the group interdependent (i.e., dependent on each other) for achieving the group's goals?" (g) "How much do the group members interact with each other?" (h) "How important is the group to its members?". Cronbach alphas were .86 for Americans and .88 for Europeans.

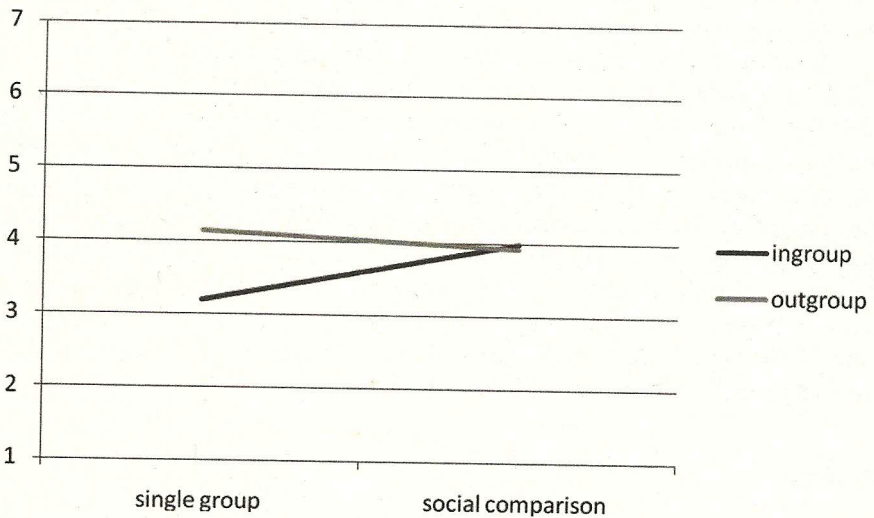
Results

There were no significant effects of the order in which the entitativity and similarity measures were presented. Therefore, we collapsed across both orders for further analysis.

Similarity. To examine the effect of social context and target group on similarity we performed an ANOVA with target group and social context as the independent variables and with similarity as the dependent variable. The major prediction, an interaction between target group (ingroup/outgroup) and social context (single group/social comparison), received support, $F(1,116) = 3.78$, $p = .054$, $\eta^2 = .032$. In a single group context, the outgroup Europeans ($M = 4.14$, $SE = .26$) was seen as more similar than the ingroup Americans ($M = 3.20$, $SE = .26$), $t(58) = 2.55$, $p < .05$. Thus, an outgroup homogeneity effect was observed in a single group context. However, in a social comparison context this difference disappeared. Ratings of Similarity for the ingroup ($M = 4.00$, $SE = .25$) and the outgroup ($M = 3.93$, $SE = .26$) did not differ from each other, $t(60) = .19$, ns (see Figure 1). Furthermore, as

predicted, the disappearance of the outgroup homogeneity effect was due to an increase in perceived ingroup similarity when social comparison was made salient, $t(60) = 2.21, p < .05$, whereas perceived outgroup similarity was unaffected by a change in social context, $t(58) = 0.56, p = .58$. The main effect for target group over social contexts failed to reach significance, $F(1,116) = 2.84, p = .094, \eta^2 = .024$, although participants saw Europeans ($M = 4.04, SE = .18$) as a slightly more homogeneous group than Americans ($M = 3.60, SE = .18$). Finally, no main effect was found for social context, $F(1,116) = 1.33, ns, \eta^2 = .011$.

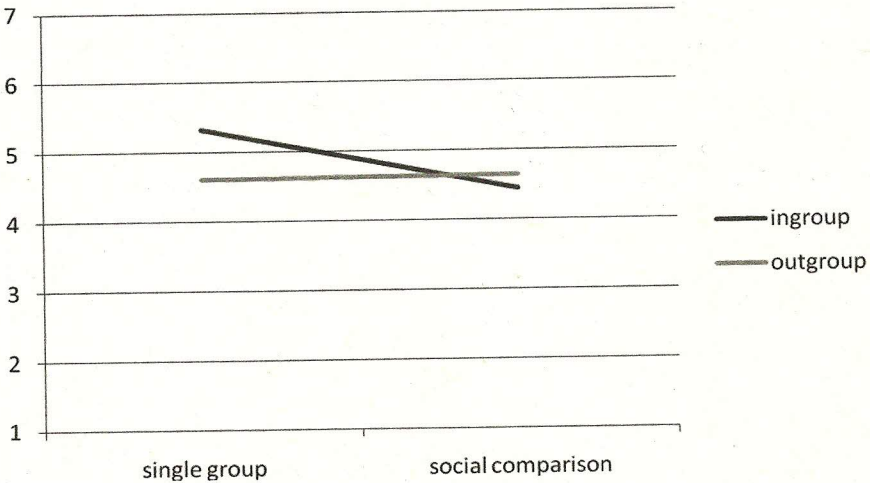
Figure 1. Perceived similarity as a function of social comparison context and target group.



Intragroup differences. The results for intragroup differences confirmed the pattern obtained for similarity. The interaction between target group and social context was significant, $F(1,116) = 4.60, p < .05, \eta^2 = .038$. In a single group context, perceived within group differences were lower for the outgroup Europeans ($M = 4.61, SE = .22$) compared to the ingroup Americans ($M = 5.33, SE = .22$), $t(58) = 2.35, p < .05$. In a social comparison context within group differences were seen to the same extent within both groups ($M_{ingroup} = 4.44, SE_{outgroup} = .21$; $M_{outgroup} = 4.64, SE_{outgroup} = .22$), $t(60) = .67, ns$ (see Figure 2). Furthermore, the disappearance of the outgroup homogeneity effect was due to a decrease in perceived ingroup differences when social comparison was made salient, $t(60) = 2.94, p < .01$, whereas perceived outgroup differences were unaffected by a change in social context, $t(58) =$

0.11, *ns*. Generally, ratings in the single group condition ($M = 4.54$, $SE = .15$) were higher than ratings in the social comparison condition ($M = 4.97$, $SE = .15$), $F(1,116) = 3.93$, $p = .050$, $\eta^2 = .033$. Finally, the main effect for target group was not significant, $F(1,116) = 1.45$, $p = .23$, $\eta^2 = .012$.

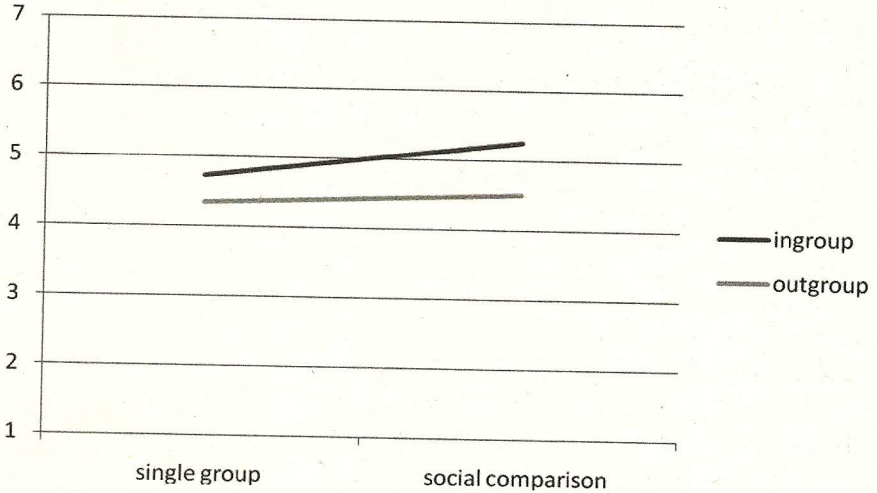
Figure 2. Perceived intragroup differences as a function of social comparison context and target group.



Entitativity. In the same vein, we performed an analysis of variance for entitativity as a dependent variable and target group and social context as independent variables. The analysis resulted in a reliable main effect for target group, $F(1,116) = 10.08$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .080$. Participants perceived the target group Americans ($M = 4.99$, $SE = .13$) as more entitative than Europeans ($M = 4.43$, $SE = .13$). Additionally, a marginally significant effect for social context was obtained, $F(1,116) = 3.76$, $p = .055$, $\eta^2 = .031$. Participants made slightly higher ratings for entitativity in the social comparison context ($M = 4.88$, $SE = .13$) compared to the single group context ($M = 4.54$, $SE = .13$). The interaction between target group and social context proved to be not significant, $F(1,116) = 1.05$, $p = .31$, *ns*, $\eta^2 = .009$ (see Figure 2). However, simple contrasts revealed that in the single group context there existed only a marginal effect for perceived entitativity in favour of the ingroup ($M_{\text{ingroup}} = 4.73$, $SE_{\text{ingroup}} = .18$, $M_{\text{outgroup}} = 4.34$, $SE_{\text{outgroup}} = .18$), $t(58) = 1.51$, $p = .13$ whereas the ingroup-outgroup difference in entitativity ratings was pronounced in the social comparison context ($M_{\text{ingroup}} = 5.26$, $SE_{\text{ingroup}} = .18$, $M_{\text{outgroup}} = 4.51$, $SE_{\text{outgroup}} = .18$), $t(60) = 3.00$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, the ac-

centuation of the ingroup entitativity effect is due to an increase in perceived ingroup entitativity in a social comparison context, $t(60) = 2.12$, $p < .05$, whereas perceived outgroup entitativity appeared unaffected by a change in social context, $t(58) = 0.64$, *ns*.

Figure 3. Perceived entitativity as a function of social comparison context and target group.



Social Comparison Context. So far, for each participant ratings for one group have been analyzed. However, in a social comparison context participants rated both groups after each other. We only used their second rating to make sure social comparison was salient throughout the experiment. Here, we compare within subjects ratings for each subject in the social comparison context using repeated measures ANOVA with type of rating (similarity/differences/entitativity) and target group (ingroup/outgroup) as within subject factors and order (first similarity or first entitativity ratings) as between subject factor. There were no reliable effects of order.

A reliable main effect for type of rating emerged, $F(2,47) = 24.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .34$, indicating that entitativity ratings ($M = 4.82$, $SE = .13$) and difference ratings ($M = 4.65$, $SE = .16$) were generally higher than similarity ratings ($M = 3.54$, $SE = .14$), $t(47) = 8.10$, $p < .001$.

Additionally, the analysis resulted in an interaction between type of rating and target group, $F(2, 47) = 3.63$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .072$. The ingroup ($M = 5.10$, $SE = .14$) was perceived as higher in entitativity than the outgroup ($M = 4.54$, $SE = .16$), $t(47) = 3.60$, $p < .01$ whereas ingroup ($M = 3.49$, $SE = .19$)

and outgroup ($M = 3.60$, $SE = .18$) were seen as equally similar, $t(47) = .47$, *ns*. Within group differences were also perceived to the same extent in the ingroup ($M = 4.78$, $SE = .18$) and the outgroup ($M = 4.53$, $SE = .17$), $t(47) = 1.56$, *ns*. There were no other significant effects.

Discussion⁴

The present findings suggest that perceived entitativity and perceived homogeneity may not share the same social meaning in the eye of the perceiver. In and of itself, perceived homogeneity/similarity, representing the degree to which group members are alike, is not a highly valued ingroup feature. In a single group context, ingroup members refrain from seeing themselves as very similar to their group mates, thus facilitating an outgroup homogeneity effect. However, social comparison situations drive group members to "close the ranks". The difference between groups becomes accentuated and the desire to be a unique group member recedes. Consequently, the ingroup and the outgroup are perceived as equally homogeneous. Entitativity, in contrast, is a desired ingroup feature. People see their own group as more entitative than the other group, especially when social comparison is made salient.

The social meanings of both constructs thus have to be understood within the specific social context. The present data suggest that in a single group context ingroup homogeneity is seen as a rather negative ingroup feature, while ingroup entitativity is considered to be a more positive group characteristic. Entitativity may be a means to obtain agency and to contribute to a sense of belongingness while low similarity can be seen as a way to accomplish ones' need to be a unique group member. However, inducing social comparison produced a similar effect on both perceptions of ingroup similarity and perceptions of ingroup entitativity. In a social comparison context, the functions of perceived entitativity and perceived similarity may both converge on the most prevalent goal, i.e., creating a cohesive, well-tuned group that will come positively out of the social comparison. Thus, we propose that the social meaning of similarity shifts from a frustration of the need to be unique in a single group context to a tendency to create a stronger, bonded ingroup when social comparison is made salient. The function of entitativity, in promoting agency and belongingness, remains more or less the same in a social comparison context compared to a single group context. A further examination of the functionality of group entitativity and similarity, as suggested above, might be useful to broaden the scope of the domain.

⁴ Throughout the present paper homogeneity and similarity are used interchangeably.

Researchers often fail to acknowledge the influence of the social context in which an experiment or survey is conducted. Many social perception and intergroup relation studies use a single group study paradigm (e.g., Jones, Wood, & Quattrone, 1981; Park & Rothbart, 1982; Wilder, 1984). Building on the present findings, a comparison between ingroup and outgroup ratings in a single group context may not be valid. That is, it was assumed that ingroup ratings take place in a single group context while outgroup judgments spontaneously occur in a social comparison context, even when judgments are made without reference to any other group (Haslam et al., 1995). In line with this assumption, we observed a change in the perception of the ingroup when social comparison was made salient, whereas social comparison did not influence outgroup ratings of entitativity and similarity, presumably because for outgroups social comparison was already salient in the single group condition. However, it remains an unanswered question whether outgroups are indeed spontaneously perceived in a social comparison context, i.e., by reference to the own group and whether ingroups are by default seen as single groups.

Concerning ingroup-outgroup differences in group perception, Park and Rothbart (1982) proposed a theory that stated that different levels of social categorization are used to encode ingroup and outgroup members' behavior. In their fourth study men and women were more likely to remember the subordinate attributes of an ingroup member than of an outgroup member. Similarly Park et al. (1992) explained outgroup homogeneity by saying that people are more aware of ingroup subgroups than of outgroup subgroups. However, the authors did not discuss any influence of the social context. It follows from our line of reasoning when perceiving ingroups one focuses more on subgroups, on subordinate attributes, and on within-group differences in a single group context compared to a social comparison context. More research needs to be conducted to test this thesis.

Furthermore, the processes underlying the suggested shift in ingroup perception remain unclear. One possible underlying process is ingroup identification. It may be that social comparison invigorates ingroup members' identification which then explains differences in ingroup homogeneity across contexts (De Cremer, 2001). Alternatively, it could be that only high identifiers perceive their own group as more homogeneous in a social comparison context (Yzerbyt & Castano, 1998). It may also be interesting for future research to measure peoples' commitment to the groups' outcomes and their focusing on ingroup subgroups, commonalities and differences as a way of shedding light on underlying processes.

One limitation of the present study is that the similarity item was not strongly related to the difference items and thus we were not able to construct a composite homogeneity scale. This may be because the similarity item was worded in terms of general similarity whereas the intragroup dif-

ferences items addressed specific domains (i.e. personality, behavior, norms and values). Another shortcoming of the design is that we used only one pair of groups. More specifically, the current study used social categories as targets of perceptions. Yet, it may be interesting to try to replicate the obtained findings for task and intimacy groups. Perceived entitativity and perceived similarity are less intertwined in task groups and intimacy groups compared to social categories (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2007). For task groups, agency and role differentiation play a crucial role (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2007) whereas for intimacy groups, affiliation proved to be a more important cue (Hamilton, 2007). Yet, task and intimacy groups possess a higher level of perceived entitativity than social categories (Lickel et al., 2000). Furthermore, there exist few intergroup relation studies that explicitly make a distinction between group types and that discuss the effects encountered in relation to group types. Hence, the extent to which the present predictions and findings may be generalized to other group types remains yet to be observed.

In this study we showed that people rather not see themselves as too similar to their fellow group members unless some social comparison is made salient. At the same time, people like to think of the groups they belong to as meaningful, unified, and agentic. This may potentially have many social implications. People may feel happier in groups that have common goals and a common fate but to which they can still contribute in a unique way. Also, if one wants people to feel more similar to their group members and see their group as more meaningful it may be helpful to make social comparison salient.

Este volume reúne um conjunto de textos que espelham o dinamismo da investigação contemporânea em Psicologia Social e das Organizações em contexto internacional. É o resultado do trabalho levado a cabo por investigadores/as doutorandos/as que se juntaram num encontro internacional que teve lugar em Lisboa, em 2009. Conta com a participação de autores/as portugueses/as e estrangeiros/as, numa edição com capítulos em Português e Inglês. Este conjunto de trabalhos ilustra o processo de construção de conhecimento científico, enquadrado teórica e metodologicamente nas mais recentes abordagens da Psicologia Social e Organizacional.

This volume gathers a set of papers that reflect the vibrant contemporary research in Social and Organizational Psychology in an international context. It results from the work carried out by PhD students who gathered in an international meeting held in Lisbon, in 2009. Contributions to this volume come from Portuguese and foreign authors, edited with chapters in Portuguese and English. This work illustrates the development of scientific knowledge in the framework of the most recent approaches in Social and Organizational Psychology.

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