



Projeto de Investigação "Harmonia"
Diversidade social na escola:
Compreender, gerir e agir

Research Project "Harmonia"
Social diversity in schools:
Understanding, managing and acting

ISCTE IUL
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

FCT
Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia

Reducing prejudice among different status-groups: National vs. School Identity¹

Morais, R., Monteiro, M. B., Correia, R., Feddes, A., Justo, M., & Rodrigues, R.

Department of Social and Organizational Psychology, ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon University Institute, Portugal
Research Centre for Social Intervention (CIS/ISCTE), Lisbon, Portugal

1. ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that intergroup prejudice arises already in childhood (e.g., Aboud, 1988). The present research focuses on the question how prejudice can be reduced in children. Two theoretical models are compared. The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1989) posits that making salient a shared identity, also called a superordinate category (i.e., "We are all human") reduces intergroup bias. In contrast, the Ingroup Projection Model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999) predicts that such a superordinate category can actually lead to an increase in intergroup bias as higher status groups perceive themselves as more representative for the superordinate category than the lower status out-group. This process is called *in-group projection*. We propose these different outcomes may depend on the nature/type of the superordinate category (i.e., status-related - National Identity vs. status-unrelated - School Identity). First, we predict that when the intergroup structure comprises different status-groups (i.e., White-Portuguese versus Black-Portuguese) and the superordinate category is related to groups' status (i.e., the National Identity; Portuguese), the higher-status group (White-Portuguese) may consider itself as more representative of the superordinate category than the lower-status group (Black-Portuguese), thereby increasing intergroup bias. In contrast, when the superordinate category is independent from groups' status (i.e., School Identity) we expect that the subgroup categories (White-Portuguese versus Black-Portuguese) are less important as a basis for intergroup comparison. In turn, this should lead to less in-group projection and, consequently, lower intergroup bias. An experimental study was conducted with 144 White Portuguese children and 90 Black Portuguese children (age 9-10 years) testing these predictions. Initial results show that in the condition where the National Identity is salient, intergroup bias among high status, but not low status children, is positively associated to in-group projection. This association was not found in the condition where the School Identity was salient.

2. INTRODUCTION

Improving Intergroup Relations

a) *The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1989)*

- When different groups share a common identity (i.e., superordinate category) intergroup attitudes become more positive. This common identity can be achieved in two ways:

- Recategorization: subgroup boundaries are blurred and a shared identity is made salient (e.g., from "we" and "they" to "us").
- Dual Identity: subgroup boundaries are preserved but bound together within a shared superordinate category (e.g., "two groups in the same team").

b) *The Ingroup Projection Model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999)*

- When groups share a common identity they may strive for positive distinctiveness within the shared identity;
- The ingroup can be perceived as more representative of the shared identity than the outgroup, a process called *ingroup projection*;
- Ingroup projection may drive higher levels of intergroup bias when groups share a common identity.

Aims of the present study

- To test the role of the type of superordinate category (status-related vs. status-unrelated) on prejudice reduction for asymmetrical status-groups (ethnic higher-status - White-Portuguese children; and ethnic lower-status - Black-Portuguese children).

Type of the superordinate category

- When groups are categorized in simultaneous dimensions and when these are related to each other (e.g., status-related), the salience and significance of the ingroup-outgroup distinction is increased, which can maintain or increase bias.

- However, when the categorization dimensions are independent (e.g., unrelated to groups' status), the salience of the ingroup-outgroup categorization is reduced, which can preclude bias (Euriich-Futcher & Schofield, 1995; Hall & Crisp, 2005).

Hypotheses

- Superordinate category is status-related:** the higher-status group (e.g., White-Portuguese) may consider itself more representative (i.e., more prototypical) of the superordinate category (e.g., Portugal) than the lower-status group (e.g., Black-Portuguese), therefore increasing intergroup bias
- Superordinate category is status-unrelated:** both subgroups (e.g., White-Portuguese and Black-Portuguese) may perceive they are equally prototypical for the superordinate category (e.g., School), which can preclude bias.

3. METHOD

Participants and design

- 147 White-Portuguese (ethnic higher-status) and 88 Black-Portuguese (ethnic lower-status) fourth-graders ($M_{age} = 10.07$; $S.D. = 1.08$) from 6 schools in the suburban area of Lisbon (30% of minority students);

- 3 (condition: categorization, recategorization, dual identity) \times 2 (type of superordinate category: status-related - Portugal, status-unrelated - school) \times 2 (participants' ethnic status: higher, lower)

Procedure

- An indirect contact situation (i.e., non-interactive) was created to assign participants to each experimental condition, by displaying pictures of ingroup and outgroup members.
- In order to perform the experimental task - an adaptation of the Winter Survival Problem (Monteiro et al., 2009) - each participant was assigned to a virtual group and pictures of the ingroup were displayed.
- After the task, participants filled in a questionnaire with the dependent measures.

Measures

Group Prototypicality

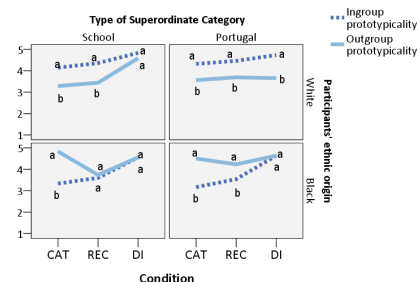
A pictorial measure was used to assess groups' prototypicality (adapted from Walczus & Mummendey, 2004). Participants were presented with a picture with 5 items varying in the degree of similarity between subgroup and super-ordinate category (1= minimum similarity; 5= maximum similarity). Participants assessed the degree of similarity of both in-group and out-group to the superordinate category.

Intergroup evaluation

A measure of infra-humanization was used (adapted from Marinho & Monteiro, 2006). Participants rated the extent to which the ingroup and the outgroup possessed typically human characteristics (low, *poorly*, *few*) on a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all; 5= a lot) ($r_{ingroup} = 0.639$; $r_{outgroup} = 0.608$).

4. RESULTS

Group Prototypicality

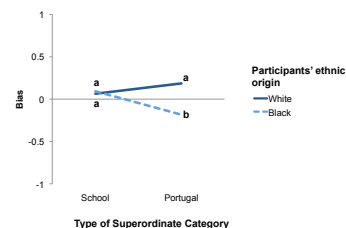


Note: CAT = Categorization; REC= Recategorization; DI= Dual Identity.

Higher values indicate more similarity between the target-group (ingroup/outgroup) and the superordinate category.

Intergroup evaluation

A measure of intergroup bias was computed by subtracting the out-group score from the ingroup score. Positive values indicate higher ingroup bias. Bias is reliably different from zero for the White-Portuguese children when the superordinate category is status-related (Portugal) ($t(76)=2.044$; $p<.05$).



Relation between group prototypicality and intergroup bias

- Superordinate category status-related (Portugal):**

For the higher-status group (White-Portuguese), higher ingroup prototypicality is positively associated to intergroup bias ($r = .323$; $p<.001$).
For the lower-status group (Black-Portuguese), this relation was not found.

- Superordinate category unrelated to status (School):**

No associations were found between ingroup prototypicality and intergroup bias when the superordinate category was unrelated to status, for both subgroups.

5. CONCLUSION

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1989) and the Ingroup Projection Model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999) make opposing predictions about the effects of a superordinate category to reduce intergroup prejudice. Whereas the former model proposes that a superordinate category improves intergroup attitudes, the latter contends that a superordinate category may, however, maintain or increase intergroup bias.

The aim of this study was to show these opposing predictions can be better understood if we consider another variable - the type of the superordinate category.

The results showed, as predicted, that in order to reduce prejudice among asymmetrical status-groups it is important to consider the type of the selected superordinate category - status-related vs. status-unrelated.

A status-related superordinate category (e.g., Portugal) triggered more bias among the higher-status group and increased the perception of group differences - both the higher and the lower-status group (White-Portuguese and Black-Portuguese, respectively) perceived the former as more representative of the superordinate category. On the other hand, when a status-unrelated superordinate category (e.g., School) was salient both subgroups perceived the ingroup and the outgroup as equally representative of the superordinate category (namely in dual identity) and neither showed ingroup bias.

Interventions aimed at prejudice reduction among asymmetrical-status groups should therefore consider the different effects of the type of superordinate category to improve intergroup relations.

6. REFERENCES

- Euriich-Futcher, R., & Schofield, J. W. (1995). Correlated versus uncorrelated social categorizations: the effect on intergroup bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21 (2), 149-159.
- Gaertner, S. L., Mannix, J. A., Murrell, A. J., & Dovidio, J. F. (1989). Reduction of intergroup bias: The benefits of recategorization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 239-246.
- Hall, R. N., & Crisp, R. J. (2005). Considering multiple criteria for social categorization can reduce intergroup bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31 (10), 1435-1444.
- Marinho, C. M. S. (2005). Racismo fagante e subtil: asmetria positivo-negativo e infra-humanização e igualdade: o efeito de variáveis sócio-cognitivas na expressão do racismo em grupos locais com 9-10 anos. Tese de mestrado não publicada, Lisboa: ISCTE.
- Monteiro, M. B., Guerra, R., & Rebelo, M. (2009). Reducing prejudice: Common Ingroup and Dual Identity in unequal status intergroup encounters. In S. Demeulder, J. P. Leyens & J. F. Dovidio (Eds.), *Intergroup misunderstandings: Impact of divergent social realities*. London, UK: Psychology Press.
- Mummendey, A., & Wenzel, M. (1999). Social discrimination and tolerance in intergroup relations: Reactions to intergroup difference. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 158-174.
- Waldzus, S., & Mummendey, A. (2004). Inclusion in a superordinate category, in-group prototypicality, and attitudes towards outgroups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40, 466-477.

For more information please contact:

Rita Moraes
Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal
Email: rtmora1@iscte.pt

Website: <http://harmonia.cis.iscte.pt>

¹ This research was supported by the National Scientific Research Foundation (FCT) grants awarded to the first author (SFRH/BD/31651/2006) and to the *Harmonia* Research Project (PTDC/PSI/71271/2006).