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'Different' just means 'better'. Some obvious and some hidden pathways to ingroup favouritism

Abstract

Within the framework von C.I.C. (social categorization - social identity - social comparison) theory, two studies - one in the laboratory, one in the field - were conducted to test the impact of comparison importance for ingroup as well as for outgroup upon the amount of ingroup- or outgroup favouritism. It was postulated that a) ingroup favouritism would be stronger on dimensions important for the ingroup irrespective of outgroup importance and that b) outgroup favouritism would be possible on those dimensions important for the outgroup which at the same time are unimportant for the ingroup. Results from both studies using different kinds of subjects, different operationalizations of importance differences and experimental procedures consistently support the assumptions.

One cornerstone which the development of Tajfel's C.I.C. (social catergorization - social identity - social comparison) theory (e.g. 1981. 1982 a) rests or may be seen in the finding that considerable intergroup discrimination can be caused by a "minimal" social categorization, which turned out meanwhile as showing robustness over various kinds of populations of Ss, kinds of independent as well as dependent measures (cf. Tajfel 1982, p.24). The main aspects which these numerous experiments have in common are mere ad hoc categorization of subjects into two different groups by a rather arbitrary criterion or even by chance, absence of any instrumental link between Ss' responses and their personal interest, experimentally induced salience of membership in one of those groups i.e. division into ingroup and outgroup, and as to the dependent measures, Ss' evaluation of ingroup as well as outgroup either by allocating amounts of money or by evaluating both groups on various dimensions of comparison. As we pointed out in a former study (Mummendey & Schreiber 1983) in nearly all operationalizations of ingroup bias (as unjustified appreciation of one's own group) ingroup and outgroup are to be compared on identical dimensions. This means, the only possibility to achieve positive distinctiveness of ingroup is at the expense of the outgroup's degradation to second place. In the experiment quoted above, different hypotheses were tested which principally postulated a differential effect of kind of method used to measure ingroup bias as dependent variable. Given a number of different dimensions, all be-

ing equally important for intergroup comparison, we expected a decrease of ingroup bias for experimental conditions where instead of complementary assessment (in- and outgroup being evaluated interdependently on identical dimensions) either a separate assessment (in- and outgroup being evaluated on identical dimensions but with two separate scales) or choice of dimension (in- and outgroup being separately assessed for different dimensions) were the measuring methods for ingroup bias. Results pointed in the expected direction: there was a steady decrease from "complementary assessment" with the highest ingroup bias over "separate assessment" down to "choice of dimensions" which created even a slight outgroup bias.

We do not think that these results either from the "complementary assessment" method or the "choice of dimensions" method should be considered as "artefact" inherent in the methods themselves. It is more likely that the different methods create conditions producing different functions of the respective comparisons with respect to intergroup evaluations. Thus, both methods or experimental conditions reflect differences in non-experimental conditions of intergroup evaluations.[1]

Results so far seem to open something like a possibility to mitigate the dilemma which comes along with C.I.C. theory and it's fundamental assumptions: On the one hand, there is the postulate of fundamental need for the positive social identity which is to be achieved by positive distinctiveness as result of social comparisons between ingroup and relevant outgroups;

[1] cf. Tajfel 1982b, p.486 for a similar reasoning on Wetherell's effect of method on ingroup bias within a cross-cultural study

thus being better at the same time necessarily means evaluating the others as being worse or inferior, i.e. outgroup discrimination. On the other hand, precisely this well known phenomenon is considered to be one of the essentials of numerous kinds of social relations within a society or even between rather large scale social groups which give rise very frequently to the most problematic and dangerous developments of social conflicts. Thus, providing and stressing a large diversity of important dimensions for intergroup comparisons would allow to achieve this positive comparison outcome for the ingroup with respect to some dimensions but, at the same time a positive comparison outcome for the outgroup as well, although with respect to some different dimensions.

A closer look upon the results obtained under the experimental condition "choice of dimensions" however revealed a more complicated and with respect to such a problem solving perspective - a less optimistic picture: The various dimensions were differentiated according to Ss' different use for comparison resulting in four different categories: dimensions chosen for evaluation of ingroup as well as outgroup both in the first run (1/1) or both only completed in the second run (2/2) or they were chosen either for ingroup in the first run and completed for outgroup in the second run (1/2) or vice versa (2/1) (cf. Mummendey & Schreiber 1983 for more detail). This means, by its' different use, the dimensions can be categorized (post hoc) into those chosen to evaluate especially ingroup (1/2) or outgroup (2/1),

to evaluate both on identical ones (1/1) and something like a rest (2/2).

Results of this more detailed analysis revealed a significant difference of ingroup bias between those dimensions especially chosen for ingroup evaluation (1/2 and 1/1) as compared to the other ones (2/1 and 2/2), irrespective of their relevance for outgroup evaluation. This means, if it is possible to judge in- and outgroup on separate dimensions they can both perform equally as well. However, in any case, the ingroup must perform well on it's own dimension, even when this causes discrimination on a dimension that is also important for the outgroup. Taking a closer look at the dimensions most frequently chosen for ingroup and outgroup rating, these turned out to be those which complied best of all criteria of the experimental task assignment. Ss had to work on the construction of a "humane" city and "creative" and "socially oriented" were the most frequently chosen dimensions. The rather tentative post hoc interpretation of these more detailed results proposes the following picture: An equally good rating of in- and outgroup on different dimensions reveals to be only a disguised form of ingroup favouritism as well as less obvious outgroup discrimination: the outgroup is judged to be superior to the ingroup on second-class dimensions that is a dimension of supposedly inferior quality or minor importance.

According to the post hoc analysis mentioned above the following

hypotheses were now derived:

1) Ingroup favouritism will be higher on comparison dimensions with high importance for the ingroup than on those with low importance for the ingroup.

2) This effect of ingroup importance differences will occur irrespective of importance differences for the outgroup.

3) Outgroup favouritism will be higher on dimensions important for the evaluation of the outgroup than on dimensions being less important for the outgroup. This effect however, will occur only for dimensions which are at the same time of low ingroup importance.

To test these hypotheses, two studies, one of them a laboratory experiment, the second a quasi-experiment in the field were conducted. In the first experiment which shows a procedure very similar to that of Mummendey & Schreiber 1983 briefly reported above, importance differences of comparison dimensions are looked upon in two ways: First there is again the differentiation between dimensions chosen for ingroup or for outgroup evaluation and those being only completed. Additionally, importance differences of comparison dimensions were induced experimentally. Ss' differentiation into different social groups was induced experimentally, as well. The second experiment should add external validity to the prospective results by using now natural groups and their already existing comparison evaluations as

well as the importance differences the respective groups associate with these dimensions.

The laboratory experiment "better or different II"

Method

Design and procedure

In the first step, we looked at simple mean differences from repeated measures of Ss from two different groups:
these groups were differentiated by two conditions of importance instructions: in the "imaginative" condition (I) subjects were told that imaginative rather than realistic dimensions of comparison would be important. In the "realistic" condition it was just the other way round.
Each experiment was carried out with groups of 6 subjects which were divided into groups of 3. The differentiation into the two groups was made salient by giving them either green or red smocks to wear, under the pretence that the task would involve the use of paints, so that the smocks would serve to protect personal clothes. Both groups were in the same room each of them sitting around a separate table. Then the task of "creative problem solving in groups" was set: With a lot of imagination each group should design an optimum "children's paradise" (a special playground). At the same time they should neglect the aspect of practical possibilities for realization. For each group paints, large sheets of cardboard etc. were available. It was emphasized that their paintings and designs should reflect the group's idea. After half an hour both groups were to discuss

and compare their respective group results together for approximately 20 minutes.

In accordance with the experimental design, half of the groups - although identical in each session - got the instruction to pay attention that the group product would be expecially "realistic" without neglecting aspects of originality and imagination (condition "realistic") the other half of the groups got the instruction that - just the other way round - "imaginative" should be the most important aspect of the product, but that aspects of realization should not be neglected (condition "imaginative"). After finishing the task and mutual comparisons of the respective group products Ss received a questionnaire for assessing the subjective estimate of the importance of comparison dimensions, their feeling of belongingness to their own group and the comparison of the two group products. For estimating the two group products 100-points metric rating scales for the following 8 different dimensions had to be used: <u>original</u>, easy to supervise, <u>to be shaped by children themselves</u>, <u>varied</u>, independent of weather, secure, <u>stimulating fantasy</u>. The underlined traits are the important ones in the condition (imaginative) the others are less important in this condition but - vice versa - of high importance in the condition "realistic" whereas the underlined traits in this condition are of low importance. According to the instructions for the task, for each experimental condition, the respective important traits were made salient by underlining.

According to the measuring method "choice of dimensions", a scale was provided for each dimension and for each of the two groups. The subject had to rate the groups on only three out of the eight dimensions in a first run. The subjects were free in choosing the dimensions and were not obliged to choose the same dimensions for both groups. Finally in order to obtain comparable dependent measurement results, the subjects were asked to repeat their ratings for ingroup and outgroup on the five dimensions they previously had neglected.

Subjects

Twenty-six female students from a college for social work aged between 18 and 30 years participated in the investigation. They each received 10,00 DM for their participation.

Results

Manipulation checks

In order to test whether the categorization had resulted in an ingroup identification, questions were asked concerning satisfaction with the group constellation, as well as group preference for further work together. Altogether Ss were satisfied with their own group constellation and also preferred further cooperation within their ingroup rather than with their outgroup. Thus, the establishment of group identification is considered to have been effective.

Manipulation checks of the importance difference - instruction, however, show that this manipulation was only successful for Ss in the condition "imaginative" ($\bar{x}$ (high importance) 8,4 versus $\bar{x}$ (low importance) 6,4, $p < .001$ (ratings of subjective importance on 10 point scales)). For the condition "realistic" there was not any difference in subjective importance evaluations. Ss in this conditions evaluated objectively low important dimensions as highly important as the objectively high important ones (cf. table 1a).

Dependent measures

Simple effects of importance differences

For each subject, amount of ingroup bias (IB) was calculated as follows: in each dimension, the score given to the outgroup was substracted from the score given to the ingroup. The arithmetic mean of IB was then calculated for the four important as well as for the four unimportant dimensions for each subject. Table 1a shows means of IB on important and unimportant comparison dimensions for Ss in condition "imaginative" (I) and "realistic" (R).

For the Ss in the condition "I" with manipulation of importance differences being successful, effects on IB show in the expected direction although they miss significance. For Ss in the con-

Table 1a: Means (standard deviations) of rated importance (ri) and if ingroup bias (IB) for the condition "imaginative" (I) and "realistic" (R) with "objectively" high important (oH) versus low important (oL) dimensions of comparison (n=16 for I and n=10 for R).

		oH	oL
I	ri	8,4 (1,36)[a]	6,4[b] (1,91)
	IB	9,9 (17,4)	-0,5 (15,6)
R	ri	7,05 (1,76)	8,7 (1,23)
	IB	-0,1 (14,1)	0,5 (11,4)

Note: cell means in each row with no common superscripts differ from one another (p=1%) by Newman Keuls test.

Table 1b: Means (standard deviations) of rated importance (ri) and ingroup bias (IB) of Ss from both conditions I and R with subjectively high important (sH) versus low important (sL) dimensions of comparison (n=26).

		sH	sL
I+R	ri	9,67 (0,69)[a]	4,71[b] (2,23)
	IB	9,38 (16,79)[a]	-6,02[b] (16,25)

Note: cell means in each row with no common superscripts differ from one another (p=1%) by Newman Keuls test.

dition "R" (with unsuccessful manipulation of important differences) however, no effect on IB could be shown, which also is consistent with hypothesis 1.
Further analysis of data as far as it has to include the objective importance manipulation will only refer to Ss of the condition "I".
Besides effects of objective importance differences as induced by instruction, effects of "subjective" importance differences are of interest as well: For this purpose, according to Ss' importance ratings the two most and the two least important dimensions for each subject were selected. By this procedure a more pronounced operationalization of importance differences is attained.

Table 1b shows means and standard deviations of importance ratings of all Ss (conditions I and R) and the amount of ingroup bias on dimensions of either high or low subjective importance. On both measures, differences are highly significant now indicating a stronger ingroup bias on dimensions considered to be important than on those considered to be less important, as expected in hypothesis 1.

Effects of choice of dimensions for ingroup- and outgroup-evaluation

To test hypotheses 1 and 2 at the same time, a more detailed analysis of the data with respect to the other way of operationalizing importance i.e. choice of three dimensions versus completion of the remaining five dimensions was performed. Irrespective of the manipulated importance differences between dimensions, the relation between ingroup and outgroup ratings (IB) on those dimensions used by subjects either in the first run (free choice) or in the second run (completion) for ingroup or outgroup were taken into account. This leads to a 2 (ingroup versus outgroup-evaluation) X 2 (1st run versus 2nd run of evaluation) factorial design. The measure of IB in this analysis was determined as follows: In a first step, the differences between ingroup and outgroup evaluations were calculated for each dimension. In a second step, these difference scores were grouped corresponding to the four pairings of two runs (1/1 or 1/2 i.e. choice for ingroup evaluation and 2/2 or 2/1 i.e. completion for ingroup evaluation).
Finally, in a third step, the difference scores on all dimensions with identical pairings were aggregated (cf. Mummendey & Schreiber 1983 for more details about this procedure). Table 2 show means and standard deviations of IB for the four possible pairings of the runs.

Table 2: Means (standard deviations) of ingroup bias (IB) for the four pairings of the two runs for ingroup and outgroup evaluation (IE,OE) Ss from both conditions (I and R included. n means the number of dimensions with characteristics of their respective cells i.e. 1/1, 1/2, 2/1, or 2/2.

		ingroup evaluation (IE)	
		1st run	2nd run
outgroup evaluation (OE)	1st run	1/1 n=25 8,81[a] (21,7)	2/1 n=19 -8,66[b] (13,6)
	2nd run	1/2 n=19 10,18[a] (14,8)	2/2 n=26 2,52[a] (10,00)

Significant results of ANOVA: IE: F=13,67, df=1/85, p=0.001.

Note: cell means with no common superscripts differ from one another (at least p=5%) by Newman Keuls test.

Table 3: Means (standard deviations) for IB on high important (H) versus low important (L) dimensions used in the four pairings of runs for ingroup evaluation (IE) and outgroup evaluation (OE) of Ss in condition "I" (imaginative).
n refers to number of dimensions with the characteristics of their respective cells.

		OE			
		1.		2.	
		H	L	H	L
IE		n=12	n=8	n=9	n=5
1.	IB	12,00(25,44)	18,25(30,36)	4,26(16,79)	18,00(27,75)
		n=9	n=5	n=14	n=16
2.	IB	-1,11(21,62)	-21,40(19,59)	13,48(17,05)	-3,66(16,87)

ANOVA: IB: IE1/IE2: F=6,27; df=1/70; p=0.015
IE1/IE2 x OE1/OE2: F=4,06; df=1/70; p=0.049
IE1/IE2 x H/L: F=7,56; df=1/70; p=0.008

Analysis of variance shows a significant main effect: Ingroup bias is stronger for the dimensions chosen for ingroup evaluation (IB 1/1 + 2/2 = 9,4) than for the completed ones (IB 2/1 + 2/2 = -2,2) independently of runs of outgroup evaluation ($F=13,67$; $df=1/85$; $p=0,001$). According to Newman Keuls test, there were significant differences of IB 2/1 versus IB 1/2, and IB 1/1 ($p=0,01$) and versus IB 2/2 ($p = 0,05$).

Choice of dimension and importance differences

In a more detailed analysis, effects of choice of dimensions and induced importance differences on IB were tested in a 2 (choice versus completion) X 2 (IE versus OE) X 2 high versus low importance) analysis of variance.

Table 3 shows means and standard deviations of IB only for Ss in the condition "I" where the manipulation of importance differences has been successful.[2]

As compared with the mere choice analysis, results show besides the main significant effect of IE1/IE2 on IB equivalent to the results of mere choice analysis, two significant interaction effects: First, the interaction effect of IE1/IE2 X OE1/OE2 just reaches the level of 5%, the pattern of means being similar to that of the former analysis. More interesting, however, appears to be the interaction effect of IE1/IE2 x H/L being highly sig-

[2]Unfortunately this analysis could not be conducted with subjective importance differences because the number of dimensions used by Ss is too small to fit the factorial design

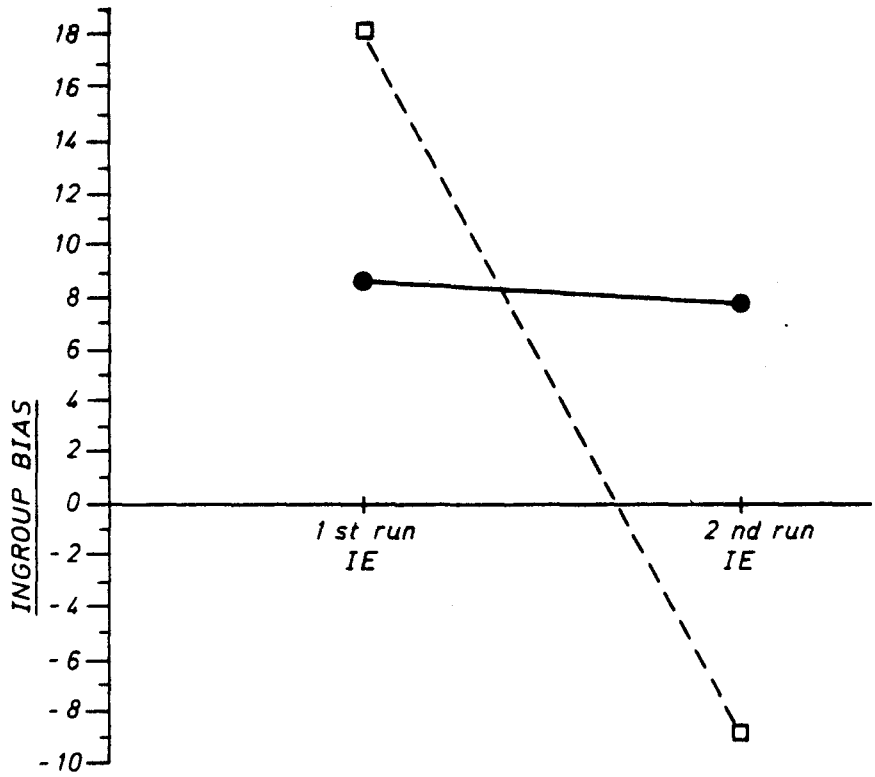

Figure 1: Ingroup bias on highly important (●——●) versus low important (□- - -□) dimensions, either chosen (IE 1 st run) or completed (IE 2 nd run) for ingroup evaluation.

nificant: As shown in figure 1, for high important dimensions no effect of choice versus completion on IB could be shown,

IB being consistently at a higher level (IB 1st IE/H = 8,68; IB 2nd IE/L = 7,77); for low important dimensions however, a dramatic effect of choice versus completion on IB appears: IB for low important and only completed dimensions for ingroup evaluation turns into outgroup favouritism (IB 2nd IE/L =-7,89 as compared with IB 1st IE/L =18,15).

The field experiment

Method

Subjects

Twenty active partymembers of "Die Grünen" (the Greens) and twenty active partymembers of the "SPD" (Social Democrats) participated in the investigation. These two groups have been selected because at the time the investigation was performed, they could be considered as rather similar but competitive with respect to their political program and potential voters. Both parties to some extent developed their profile by sharply outlining against one another, to some extent by stressing similarities as well. SPD-partymembers especially belonged to a regional suborganization which shows besides dissimilarities rela-

tively great deal of sympathy towards the Greens which cannot be considered as representative for the SPD on the whole in Germany. Ss were on the average 30 years old, the Greens with 29 years being slightly younger than SPD members being about 32 years old. On the average members of the Greens were higher educated than SPD-members.

Procedure

The investigation took place in the early summer of 1983 just after the general election of the German Bundestag . Thus the more general atmosphere created by the election campaign was still alive; the Greens succeeded to enter the parliament as the fourth party after many years with only three parties in Bundestag. SPD on the other hand was considered as the looser because the present conservative government which had been established after overthrowing the former SPD-government was now strongly confirmed. An interviewer presented a questionnaire with 34 attributes for which Ss should give the following kinds of estimates and ratings:

1) Importance of the respective attribute for self concept or identity of own as well as other party. Ss should estimate whether own as well as other party would use the critical attribute for public self presentation. For this purpose the various attributes could be ordered according to the follow-

ing categorization:

a) high importance for own as well as other party (H/H)

b) high importance for own party but low importance for the other party (H/L)

c) low importance for own but high importance for the other party (L/H)

d) low importance for both parties (L/L)

This categorization corresponds to that of the different use of comparison dimensions either by choice or completion for evaluation of ingroup and outgroup, i.e. H/H can be considered as analogous to 1/1.

In addition to this categorization of attributes, Ss rated the amount of respective importance separately for own and other party on a 9-point rating scale.

2) Extent to which the parties factually possessed these attributes. Ss should rate to what extent the respective attribute factually described own and other party. Ratings were given on separate 100 point metric scales.

3) Ss' personal evaluation of these attributes as either positive, neutral or negative.

Additionally Ss were asked several questions concerning their personal relation to their respective parties as well as some demographical data.

The Ss' categorization of the 34 attributes according to the four different kinds of ingroup/outgroup importance was used as quasi experimental conditions for the two factors importance for ingroup versus importance for outgroup and high versus low importance. Ss' ratings of factual group attributes on these 34 dimensions i.e. their comparison of ingroup and outgroup on these dimensions presents the operationalization of the dependent variable "ingroup bias" (IB).

Results

A simple assessment of categorization frequencies for all Ss showed the following consensual estimates of these attributes:

SPD/GREENs (H/H) : protecting minorities, progressive, trustworthy, caring for peace politics

SPD/greens (H/L for SPD; L/H for Greens) : well organized, order oriented, disciplined, traditional, pragmatical, united

spd/GREENs (L/H for SPD; H/L for Greens) : imaginative, extra-parliamentary, unconventional. "basic democratic", pleasure oriented

spd/greens (L/L) : religious, confessional, conscious of nation.

The rating scores of the factual attribute for ingroup, for outgroup as well as the difference between them (IB) were aggregated and averaged for each of the four categories of dimensions. Only those dimensions were used for data analysis which were rated by Ss as either very highly important (points 8 or 9) versus very low important (points 1 or 2 on the scale of importance for respective parties). Dimensions with personal negative evaluation were excluded from analysis.

Table 4 shows means and standard deviations of IB as dependent variable for the conditions H/H, H/L, L/H, amd L/L. 2(ingroup importance/outgroup importance) by 2 (high versus low importance) analysis of variance shows significant main effects of each factor: Ingroup bias is rather stronger on dimensions highly important for ingroup (IB H/H + H/L =25,92) whereas on those of low importance for ingroup-outgroup favouritism is shown (IB L/H + L/L =-14,28). Consistently the opposite effect appears with dimensions more versus less important for outgroup evaluation, although there is no outgroup favouritism (for high outgroup importance IB =2,42, for low outgroup importance IB =33,66).

Table 4: Means (standard deviations) of ingroup bias (IB) high versus low importance for ingroup x high versus low importance for outgroup.
n means the number of judgments on dimensions with the characteristics of their respective cells.

Importance for outgroup	Importance for ingroup: high	Importance for ingroup: low
high	H/H n= 24 11,27[a] (25,6)	L/H n=3 -68,33[b] (25,6)
low	H/L n=10 61,07[c] (20,4)	L/L n=9 3,20[d] (15,5)

significant results of ANOVA:

ingroup importance: F=88,60; df=1/43; p=0,000

outgroup importance:F=89,29; df= 1/43; p=0,000

Note: cell means with no common superscripts differ from one another (at least p=5%) by Newman Keuls test.

Discussion

Stimulated by a post hoc interpretation of results from a former study "better or different I" two further investigations were conceptualized now to test directly the impact of importance differences in dimensions for intergroup comparison. For this purpose three interrelated hypotheses predicted a stronger ingroup bias on comparison dimensions with high importance for ingroup evaluation than on those with low importance for the ingroup. Results by each analysis point into the predicted direction. Irrespective of the kind of operationalization of importance differences, be it by the "choice versus completion" procedure, by experimentally inducing or selecting already existing importance differences, a main effect of this factor of the amount of ingroup bias is clearly shown (cf. all tables).

The second hypothesis predicted this effect of importance differences on ingroup bias irrespective of importance differences for the outgroup. Apparently there is some evidence for this prediction in the results: Interaction effects of 1st versus 2nd run ingroup evaluation (cf. table 3) reveals that outgroup importance only effects ingroup bias on those dimensions which are second class for ingroup. Only among dimensions being second class ones ingroup evaluation outgroup is evaluated more favourably than ingroup on dimensions chosen for outgroup evaluation

(IB 2/1=-7,82 compared to IB 2/2=2,67 for IB 1/1=15,93 as well as IB 1/2=10,53).

The second main effect of high versus low importance for outgroup evaluation on IB in the party study (cf. table 4) shows a more complex picture (the pattern of mean differences in the "Better or different II" study is similar although OE did not produce a significant main effect on IB). The outgroup is favourably judged where this does not touch the favourable evaluation of the ingroup and correspondingly, the ingroup is evaluated most favourably where it is no importance for the outgroup; on dimensions important for both groups, however, clear ingroup favouritism though less than on the mere ingroup dimensions is shown (IB L/H=-63,33; IB H/L=61,07; IB H/H=11,27). Thus, although there is a generally stronger ingroup bias on dimensions important for the ingroup as compared to less important ones, high importance for outgroup seems to "pull down" this ingroup bias to a still obvious but more moderate level. The assumption made in hypothesis 2 therefore should be modified as follows: Importance differences for outgroup evaluation do not remove but mitigate the strengthening effect of high ingroup importance on the amount of ingroup bias.

The third hypothesis postulated favourable results for the outgroup only on those comparison dimensions which are important for outgroup evaluation but at the same time of no particular

relevance for in-group evaluation. Results of all analyses concerning data of ingroup - as well as outgroup importance differences of comparison dimensions - are consistent with this assumption: Intergroup comparisons resulting in more favourable evaluations of the outgroup are all on dimensions important for the outgroup but only under condition of low importance for the ingroup at the same time (2/1 or L/H, cf. tables 2,3, and 4).

Of additional interest with respect to this hypothesis is the interaction effect of "1st versus 2nd run for ingroup evaluation" by "high versus low importance of dimensions" (cf. table 3 and figure 1): Whereas there is no significant difference of ingroup bias for comparisons on dimensions chosen for ingroup evaluation, the only comparison resulting in a favourable result for the outgroup is on dimensions of low importance and not at the same time chosen for ingroup evaluation. This means, if a more differentiated consideration of importance differences between comparison dimensions is made, outgroup favouritism seems to shrivel up to comparisons on dimensions of the last range.

To sum up, hypotheses were supported by the different studies:

- High ingroup bias is shown in intergroup comparisons on dimensions with high importance for the ingroup.
- There is no essential impact on this finding by the differential relevance these comparison dimensions may have for outgroup evaluation except a tendency of mitigating the amount

of ingroup favouritism on dimensions of high outgroup importance as well.

- Outgroup favouritism is shown on comparisons relevant for the outgroup if, at the same time comparisons dimensions are of low importance for the ingroup.

The results reported above show nearly the same pattern of intergroup comparisons in each of the two present studies using different operationalizations of importance differences as well as different subjects and procedures.
Above that, both patterns of results are very similar to that found in the former experiment "better or different I" using again different kinds of subjects. Thus the findings of importance differences of dimensions for ingroup as well as outgroup comparisons appear to be rather stable.

The finding of a simple effect of importance differences on the amount of ingroup bias (hypothesis 1) is completely consistent with C.I.C theory. The role of importance of or value dimensions associated with intergroup comparison dimensions has been stressed by Tajfel since his early work on social categorization and social stereotypes (cf. Tajfel 1981).
Besides, the possibility to compare ingroup and outgroup on various dimensions and, by this way, to favour ingroup on dimensions relevant for ingroup identity and simultaneously favouring outgroups on other dimensions seemed to open a perspective con-

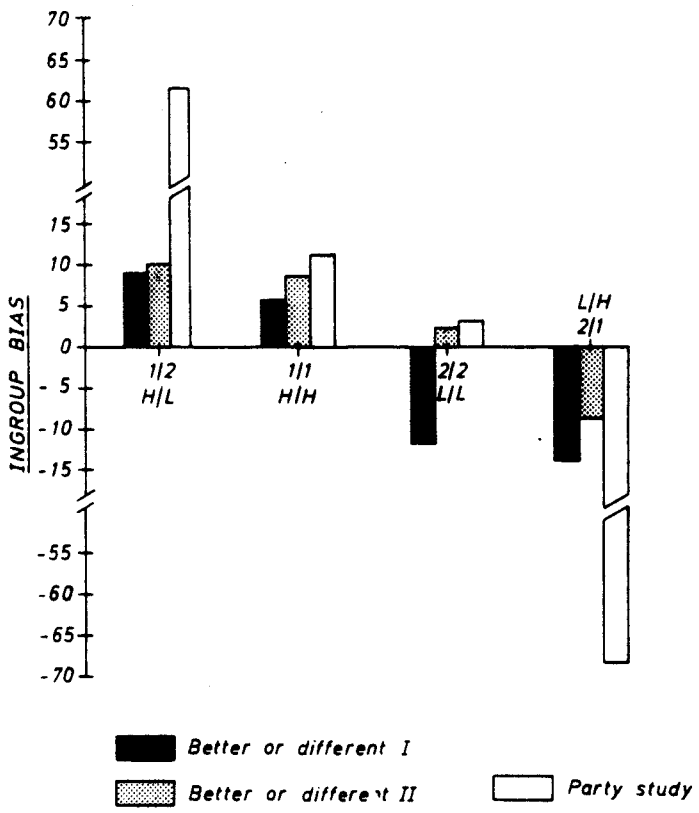

Figure 2: Amount of ingroup bias in three studies "Better or different I", "Better or different II", and "Party study" for the four different pairings of runs (1|2, 1|1, 2|2, 2|1) and four different pairings of ingroup/outgroup importance (H|L, H|H, L|L, L|H).

sistent with C.I.C.-theory, but nevertheless approaching towards a less socially competitive way of preserving positive social identitiy. This way seems to be consistent with a liberal ideology endorsing the existence of a pluralistic society, would mean to propose a partition of the total of comparison dimensions into defined areas belonging to the various groups. Positive comparison outcome for ingroup on dimensions of this area then, would not prevent a positive comparison outcome for the outgroup on dimensions defining another area.

A simple look upon the results of intergroup comparison under the condition of various comparison dimensions being available seems to support the "practicability" of this perspective: the overall amount of ingroup bias in this condition appears to be rather low as compared to its amount in conditions where subjects do not have the possibility to seperate between dimensions for ingroup- and those for outgroup-evaluation.
But the closer look upon this result reveals the implicit differentiation along importance differences, and then a less obvious modus of outgroup discrimination again is the case.
Besides that it should be mentioned that such a partition into more or less important comparison dimensions cannot be established arbitrarily. This appeared already in the experiment very clearly by the failure of manipulating importance differences independently of content of dimensions with respect to the group

product to be evaluated: Ss in the condition "realistic" did not accept this information but estimated the "imaginative" attributes as more important. A generalization of this "apercu" generated by the experimental procedure to the situation of "real life" would point to the same difficulties: Perceived value- and importance differences cannot be blown away; they are fundamently anchored in materialistic as well as ideological pecularities of a society. It does not seem to be a promising program therefore to prevent outgroup discrimination by the mere cognitive verdict of equal value of a great number of comparison dimensions which are to be separated into different areas and attributed differently to ingroup and to outgroups.

Training programs which teach their participants to interprete the relation between own and other groups as a matter of differences in attributes or contents nut not in evaluations seem to reflect an illusionary sight on the social structure of the surrounding society, at least of that kind in the country the studies have been conducted. The dimensions' differentiation along characteristics of contents cannot be separated from the associated differentation along evaluations.

Considering the results reported above as well as those from numerous other studies in the context of C.I.C.-theory it seem to be more the evaluation-characteristics of the comparison dimensions which effect the comparative descriptions of in- and outgroup than their contents-characteristics.

A different - only tentative - perspective of outgroup discrimination seems to be more realistic and therefore more appropriate: If the functional value of ingroup favouritism and more or less obvious outgroup discrimination for positive social identity is taken as a social fact, this perspective should try to deal with it as a fact: People - being respective group members could be made aware of these mutual perceptions and evaluations being relative to the particular intergroup relations. Doubts in the absoluteness of one's interpretations and intergroup evaluations may - to some extent - pull away the carpet under perceived security to feel entitled for evaluation consistent actions aginst other groups. The perception of being better - on the one hand -could be persuasive enough to serve it's function for positive social identity but could be on the other hand - not doubtless and absolute enough to turn these perceptions into actions which would mean treating the others as if being worse.

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