Editorial

Fundamental dimensions of social judgment

In recent years, research on social judgment–including interpersonal perception, group perception, and even self-perception–has converged on the important realization that two fundamental content dimensions underlie these various judgments (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008; Dubois & Beauvois, 2005; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005; Paulhus & John, 1998; Peeters, 1992, 2008; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Phalet & Poppe, 1997; Rosenberg, Nelson, & Vivekananthan, 1968; Wiggins, 1979). This special issue presents a collection of recent empirical and theoretical developments in the study of these two dimensions.

Different names denote the two fundamental content dimensions, depending on the specific strand of work that is examined. For instance, researchers refer to communion versus agency (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Bakan, 1966), warmth versus competence (Cuddy et al. 2008; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Judd, et al., 2005), expressiveness versus instrumentality (Parsons & Bales, 1955), socially versus intellectually good-bad (Rosenberg, et al., 1968), other-profitability versus self-profitability (Peeters, 1992), social desirability versus social utility (Dubois & Beauvois, 2005), morality versus competence (Wojciszke 2005), and socio-morality vs. taskability (Ybarra, Chan, Park, Burnstein, Monin, & Stanik, in this issue). The first of the two dimensions (e.g., communion, warmth, etc.) is represented by such positive traits as warm, friendly, honest, and good-natured, and by such negative traits as deceitful, cold, and unreliable. The second of the two dimensions (e.g., agency, competence, etc.) is exemplified by such positive traits as competent, assertive, ambitious, and intelligent, and by such negative traits as inefficient, indecisive, passive, and lazy. Although both dimensions play key roles in social judgment, the communion/warmth dimension is regarded as primary because it accounts for more variance in trait ratings (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, Study 1), is more quickly recognized (Ybarra, Chan, & Park, 2001), and more severely constrains judgments on the other dimension than vice versa (Yzerbyt, Kervyn & Judd, 2008).

The organization of traits into these two fundamental dimensions is not incidental, but rather has a functional meaning. Summarizing earlier intuitions (Fiske et al., 2007), Ybarra et al. (in this issue) argue that these two dimensions reflect the two core challenges humans have faced over millennia. The first key challenge concerns social acceptance and connection, clearly critical to survival. The second key challenge concerns the manifestation of skills, competencies, and status, and the pursuit of goals, given available opportunities.

One might ask why there are so many different names for these fundamental dimensions. Although we cannot provide an in-depth discussion in this introduction, two issues should be noted. First, the variety of labels for these two dimensions reflects the range of research areas from which they emerged. For instance, the widely acknowledged distinction between warmth and competence is well established in stereotype research (Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2006; Judd et al., 2005). At the same time, the distinction between communion and agency is ubiquitous in research on the self or on gender (Abele, 2003; Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). Second, are these dimensions operationalized similarly, regardless of their idiosyncratic nomeclature? It appears that across research areas, operationalizations of the first dimension (i.e., communion/warmth) converge; researchers in different fields define and operationalize this dimension very similarly. In a way, this corroborates the claim that the communion/warmth dimension is primary in social judgment. For the agency/competence dimension, the convergence is also high for the components of ''competence'' and ''efficiency.'' However, the conceptualization of ''agency'' also stresses traits that refer to motivation and assertiveness (e.g., ambitious, goal-oriented). This facet of the agency/competence dimension is perhaps more important with respect to self-perception and interpersonal perception than with respect to group perception (i.e., stereotypes). The somewhat different ways by which these two dimensions are translated into concrete measures, hence, may stem from different research focuses (e.g. self/others vs. groups/stereotypes).

The idea for this special issue arose from a Small Group Meeting of EAESP held in Namur Belgium, in 2007. The participants of this meeting were very enthusiastic about these convergences in theoretical perspectives and empirical findings in the field of social judgment. We believe that time has come to integrate relatively narrow approaches into broader theorizing, and that the fundamental dimensions are a candidate for such an endeavor.

The response to the call for papers for this thematic issue was overwhelming, as more than three dozen manuscripts were received and handled by the guest editors and reviewers. The manuscripts were impressive both conceptually and empirically. As a result, we chose to include a relatively large number of shorter-length manuscripts (i.e., "research notes") in the special issue.

The present volume includes 16 articles. The articles by Peeters, Suitner and Maas, and Ybarra et al. concern the fundamental dimensions under general perspectives of theoretical integration, of valence, and of intercultural issues. Uchronski focuses on the situational variability of the fundamental dimensions in the self-concept, whereas Cislak and Wojciszke, Scholer and Higgins, Kenworthy and Tausch, and Tausch are concerned with the perception of other persons. Wojciszke and Abele address the perception of self vs. different "others." The articles by Bosak, Scesny and Eagly and by Park are concerned with gender and gender stereotypes. Leach, Poppe and Hagendoorn examine the role of the two dimensions in stereotypes of Chechens and Jews in the Russian Federation, and Kervyn, Yzerbyt, Demoulin and Judd study compensation effects on the two dimensions in national stereotypes. Pinel, Long and Crimin consider warmth and competence in the content of race stereotypes and their consequences for inter-racial interactions. Russell and Fiske study the impact of power on warmth and competence stereotypes. Finally, the paper by Abele, Uchronski, Suitner, and Wojciszke reports data of an international study specifically conducted for this special issue. Trait ratings operationalizing the fundamental dimensions are compared across five different languages.

We wish to thank all of our colleagues who submitted their manuscripts for consideration in this special issue. We also wish to thank the many reviewers of the manuscripts, and Wolfgang Boban for facilitating the logistics involved in handling the manuscripts. We hope to have collected a group of articles that will contribute to our understanding of the fundamental dimensions underlying social judgments.

The Guest Editors:

ANDREA E. ABELE
AMY J. C. CUDDY
CHARLES M. JUDD
VINCENT Y. YZERBYT

REFERENCES

Abele, A. E. (2003). The dynamics of masculine-agentic and feminine-communal traits: Findings from a prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 768–776.

Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*, 751–763.

Bakan, D. (1966). *The duality of human existence. An essay on psychology and religion*. Chicago: Rand Mcnally.

Cuddy, A., Fiske, S., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS Map. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*, 61–149.

Dubois, N., & Beauvois, J. L. (2005). Normativeness and individualism. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *35*, 123–146.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A., & Glick, P. (2007). Universal dimensions of social cognition: Warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *11*, 77–83.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from the perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*, 878–902.

Judd, C. M., James-Hawkins, L. J., Yzerbyt, V., & Kashima, Y. (2005). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment: Understanding the relations between judgments of competence and warmth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*, 899–913.

Parsons, T., & Bales, R. F. (1955). *Family socialization and interaction processes*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Paulhus, D. L., & John, O. P. (1998). Egoistic and moralistic biases in self-perception: The interplay of self-deceptive styles with basic traits and motives. *Journal of Personality*, *66*, 1025–1060.

Peeters, G. (1992). Evaluative meanings of adjectives in vitro and in context: Some theoretical implications and practical consequences of positive-negative asymmetry and behavioral-adaptive concepts of evaluation. *Psychologica Belgica*, *32*, 211–231.

Peeters, G., & Czapinski, J. (1990). Positive-negative asymmetry in evaluations: The distinction between affective and informational negative effects. In W. Stroebe, & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *European review of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 33–60). London: Wiley.

Phalet, K., & Poppe, E. (1997). Competence and morality dimensions of national and ethnic stereotypes: A study in six eastern-European countries. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *27*, 703–723.

Rosenberg, S., Nelson, C., & Vivekananthan, P. (1968). A multidimensional approach to the structure of personality impressions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *9*, 283–294.

Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R. L., & Stapp, J. (1974). The personal attributes questionnaire: A measure of sex role stereotypes and masculinity femininity. *JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology*, *4*, 43–44.

Wiggins, J. S. (1979). A psychological taxonomy of trait-descriptive terms: The interpersonal domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*, 395–412.

Wiggins, J. S. (1991). Agency and communion as conceptual coordinates for the understanding and measurement of interpersonal behavior. In W. M. Grove, & D. Ciccetti (Eds.), *Thinking clearly about psychology: Personality and Psychopathology* (Vol. 2, pp. 89–113). Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Wojciszke, B. (2005). Morality and competence in person and self perception. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *16*, 155–188.

Ybarra, O., Chan, E., & Park, D. (2001). Young and old adults' concerns about morality and competence. *Motivation and Emotion*, *25*, 85–100.

Yzerbyt, V. Y., Kervyn, N., & Judd, C. (2008). Compensation versus halo: The unique relation between the fundamental dimensions of social judgment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*, 1110–1123.