

Subtyping and social consensus: The role of the audience in the maintenance of stereotypic beliefs

ANDREA CARNAGHI^{1*} AND
VINCENT Y. YZERBYT²

¹*University of Padova, Italy*

²*Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve,
Belgium*

Abstract

Two studies investigated the effect of stereotypes held by a prospective audience on participants' reactions to a stereotype-disconfirming member. In Study 1, participants formed an impression of a positive disconfirming gay in order to communicate it to an audience known to hold a negative versus positive stereotype about gays. As predicted, participants subtyped the deviant more in the former than in the latter case. Moreover, participants' stereotype at the end of the study mirrored the audience's assumed stereotypes about gays. In Study 2, participants learned about a stereotype allegedly held by an ingroup or an outgroup audience about Belgians and then received information about a Belgian who disconfirmed the stereotype. As predicted, the deviant was seen as less typical when he violated the stereotype held by an ingroup than by an outgroup audience. Also, participants' stereotype about Belgians was more similar to the one held by the ingroup audience. A mediational analysis confirmed that participants subtyped the disconfirming member in order to embrace the stereotype advocated by the ingroup audience. Results are discussed in light of recent models of stereotype change. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Research on stereotype change acknowledges that perceivers' exposure to stereotype-disconfirming information is far from being a sufficient condition to alter people's preexisting beliefs (Rothbart & John, 1985). Stereotypes remain largely unaffected even when people cooperate with deviant members of a stigmatized outgroup over extended periods of time (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). In such situations, perceivers modify their attitude toward the positive exemplar in the interpersonal setting but fail to generalize their positive experience to the group as a whole (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). What explains this extraordinary resistance of stereotypes remains a puzzle. In spite of its achievements, the work on stereotype change has generally ignored the fact that perceivers are not confronted with stereotype-disconfirming information as isolated information processors but rather find themselves

*Correspondence to: Dr. Andrea Carnaghi, Dipartimento di Psicologia DPSS, Università di Padova, via Venezia 8, 35131 Padova, Italy. E-mail: andrea.carnaghi@unipd.it

embedded in a social network that comprises a number of *relevant others* (but see Johnston & Coolen, 1995). As Devine (1998, p. 71) noted, 'The social perceiver has to manage not only his/her cognitive processes, but also the social context in which stereotyping is playing out.' Building upon this insight, we argue that researchers ought to examine the complex issue of stereotype change in the larger social context that perceivers face when they are dealing with new and perhaps surprising information about a member of a stigmatized group. In particular, we suggest that perceiver's knowledge of what relevant others think about social groups is likely to influence their specific reactions toward particular group members as well as their personal beliefs about those groups.

Although some researchers have begun to examine the influence of social norms on people's stereotypes about social groups (Haslam et al., 1996; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001), the specific ambition of the present studies is to start posing the question of the role of social consensus on the processing of information about *deviant group members*. Our conjecture is that the tendency to either 'fence off' the deviant or generalize from a stereotype-disconfirming target to the rest of the group will depend both on the relationship that perceivers entertain with the other people in their social environment and on the assumptions made regarding their views (Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, in press).

SUBTYPING AS A MEANS TO PRESERVE STEREOTYPES

During the last decade, a variety of theoretical and empirical efforts have showed that people rely on different cognitive strategies in order to keep their stereotypes intact even in the face of counter-stereotypical evidence. One of these strategies, known as subtyping, has been the focus of a great many studies (Castano, Paladino, Coull, & Yzerbyt, 2002; Coull, Yzerbyt, Castano, Paladino, & Leemans, 2001; Hantzi, 1995; Hewstone, Hassebrauck, Wirth, & Waenke, 2000; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Kunda & Oleson, 1995, 1997; Maurer, Park, & Rothbart, 1995; Rothbart & John, 1985; Weber & Crocker, 1983; Wilder, 1986; Yzerbyt, Coull, & Rocher, 1999; Zoe & Hewstone, 2001). Subtyping is seen as a process whereby a counter-stereotypical member is considered an exception to the group and relegated outside the group boundaries. This process prevents stereotype change by impeding the influence of contingent disconfirming information on the representation of the group as whole.

Both cognitive and motivational factors would seem to contribute to the emergence of subtyping. As far as cognitive factors are concerned, Kunda and Oleson (1997) found that the extent to which a disconfirming member deviated from observers' stereotype determined how this individual affected the stereotype. Indeed, the deviant was perceived as extremely discrepant by people holding an extreme stereotype compared to people holding a moderate stereotype. As a consequence, the deviant was seen to be much more atypical in the former than in the latter case.

Several studies provide evidence that subtyping is also a motivated process. For instance, Kunda and Oleson (1995) observed that participants who come across a deviant member of a group are especially likely to engage in a causal reasoning aimed at reconciling their prior stereotypic expectations with the deviant example that invalidates them. Clearly, people work hard to construct a reason that would allow them to see the deviant member as belonging to an atypical subtype. Recent research also confirms that subtyping requires a non-negligible amount of cognitive work and that the absence of the necessary intellectual resources prevents perceivers from discounting the disconfirming evidence (Yzerbyt, Coull, & Rocher, 1999). Moreover, it seems that only more motivated perceivers will concede the costs of subtyping in order to preserve their stereotypic beliefs (Coull et al., 2001).

The importance of such individual factors notwithstanding, the present research aimed to investigate the role of social factors and, more specifically, the impact of consensus with the audience. Indeed, an important and heretofore unexplored question about the subtyping process concerns its intimate link

with group life. Research suggests that people tend to support the views allegedly shared within their group as a means of coordinating their social behavior and securing group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999; Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Turner, 1985). As a consequence, we would argue that perceivers cope with stereotype-disconfirming information in a way that takes into account the conception of that group from which they derive their social identity. In the present set of studies, we wanted to show that the stereotype held by a prospective audience about a specific target group, as well as the identity of this audience, jointly affect people's appraisal of information regarding a deviant group member.

Our goal is thus to recast a process that seems crucially involved in the perpetuation of stereotypes (i.e., subtyping) into a meaningful social context. In doing so, we intend to contribute to the debate about the contextual determinants of subtyping (Moreno & Bodenhausen, 1999; Yzerbyt, Coull, & Rocher, 1999) and locate the antecedent of this cognitive process in perceivers' motivation to achieve and preserve consensus within their referent group (Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, *in press*). Before we turn to our studies proper, we quickly examine existing work on the impact of an audience on perceivers' cognitive processes.

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION

The impact of an audience on information processing has been at the heart of several research programs in social psychology. Zajonc (1960) was among the first to report a modification in people's cognitive processes as a function of their role in a communication setting. Specifically, he showed that compared to participants assigned the role of receivers, those who expected to be communicators tended to exclude or minimize contradictory information and exhibited more polarized impressions on a given target. More recently, both Higgins, Rholes, and Jones, 1977 (Higgins, Fondacaro, & McCann, 1982) and Tetlock, Skitka, & Botteger, 1989 (Tetlock & Lerner, 1999) proposed that such tuning should be seen as a goal-oriented process and argued that the position of an audience on a given topic influences both the message of the communicator and the cognitive processes underlying the construal of this message.

For instance, Higgins and colleagues (1977) showed that participants tended to describe the target of impression by using traits with evaluative implications that were consistent with the attitude of their recipients (for similar results in dyads, see also Ruscher & Hammer, 1996; Ruscher, Hammer, & Hammer, 1996). These authors also found that participants' memory for target information was biased by the content of their message. Regardless of the message being communicated, it would seem that awareness of the position of the audience leads communicators to engage in a less complex and scrupulous thinking process (Tetlock & Lerner, 1999; Tetlock, Armor, & Peterson, 1994). These effects are believed to result from communicators' compliance with the audience as a means of forgoing the stress of arguing, avoiding rejections, and pursuing self-presentational goals (Cialdini, Levy, Herman, & Evenbeck, 1973; Quinn & Schlenker, 2002). It should be noted that communicators' conformity to the viewpoint of the audience is not necessarily a matter of superficial change. A clear illustration of this has been reported by Pennington and Schlenker (1999) who found that participants adopted the position of the audience even when the anticipated meeting with the audience was unexpectedly cancelled.

Kashima (2000; Lyons & Kashima, 2003) recently proposed that such cognitive tuning could also play a key role with respect to stereotype maintenance. Participants in earlier positions of a communication chain reproduced more inconsistent information than consistent information but consistent information was better represented than inconsistent information toward the end of the chain (Kashima, 2000).

Turning from an interpersonal to a group communication context, theorists working in the tradition of social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, 1991) have examined how individuals may be affected by their group membership in a communication setting (Reicher, 2000; Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2003). For these authors, the group communication context is regulated by a cognitive as well as a strategic dimension. The cognitive dimension refers to the particular category that is made contextually salient in the communication setting. In line with SCT, once individuals perceive themselves as members of a given category, they tend to actively compare their viewpoint with the beliefs of the other members of the same category. This contextually driven comparison process leads people to determine the group norm (i.e., ingroup prototype) and, presumably, to assign the norm to the self. As a result, individuals' perceptions and behaviors tend to be ingroup normative. In other words, when some social identity is being activated, group members strive to reach a consensus with other members of their group on relevant issues. This process transforms an idiosyncratic perception about the social environmental into a shared and subjectively valid point of view on social reality (Hogg, 1987; Turner, 1991).

Stereotypes are no exception to this so-called depersonalization process (Haslam et al., 1996; Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Wittenbrink & Henly, 1996). For instance, Haslam et al. (1996) found that participants shifted their *a priori* beliefs about national groups toward the beliefs publicly held by members of a positively evaluated ingroup. In contrast, participants shifted their stereotype away from the stereotype expressed by an undesirable outgroup. In another relevant contribution, Stangor, Sechrist, and Jost (2001) told participants about the beliefs held by other individuals (i.e., ingroup members) regarding African Americans. This information was either systematically more favorable or more unfavorable than the stereotype participants thought was shared within their ingroup. Participants showed a more positive (negative) stereotype when they learned that relevant others held a more favorable (unfavorable) stereotype.

As for the strategic dimension of the group-communication context, a number of studies indicate that people are not only concerned with their individual reputation but also care about how others see their social self (Barreto, Spears, Ellemers, & Shahinper, 2003; Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Beyond merely a passive reaction to the group norm, people may also actively bring external perceptions of themselves in line with expectations. In fact, communicational settings allow people to switch from being a mere target of group pressure to being an agent of influence (Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; Spears & Lea, 1994). Said otherwise, the confrontation with an audience provides people with an ideal opportunity not only to think of themselves as group members but also to secure acknowledgement of their depersonalized self-views from others.

Not surprisingly, people are inclined to present themselves as group members when the group has a desirable social standing and could function as a referent group. They align their messages to the norm advocated by the group as an audience either because associating with a referent group could be seen as personally profitable (Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Ellemers, 1993) or because behaving in accordance with the group-based expectations may prevent them from being sanctioned (Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988; Reicher & Levine, 1994a, 1994b). To be sure, people do not conform to audiences in a non-discriminating manner. When confronted with an outgroup audience, and even though people may take into account outgroup norms in their message in order to avoid their public violation (Reicher & Levine, 1994a, 1994b), they still tend to express what is normative for their own group (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003).

In a research program pertaining to the distinction between a surveillance effect and genuine internalization of the audience's viewpoint, Carnaghi, Yzerbyt, Cadinu, and Mahaux (2005; see also Carnaghi & Yzerbyt, 2006; Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, in press) started examining some predictions of this socially situated view of cognitive processes. These authors asked their participants to form an impression of an ambiguous target (i.e., a gay person) on the basis of several pieces of stereotype

confirming and disconfirming information. Participants were informed that they had to communicate their impression either to an audience who comprised several other students (i.e., a known audience) or to an audience who comprised several individuals (i.e., an unknown audience). The time used to read the information was assessed as a measure of participants' attention allocation and behavioral interpretation (Fiske, 1980). Results indicated that participants took more time to scrutinize stereotype-disconfirming information compared to stereotype confirming information when they expected to interact subsequently with a known rather than with an unknown audience. Carnaghi et al. (2005) interpreted these findings as evidence for the influence of social concerns on information processing. Indeed, to the extent that participants intended to preserve consensus with the audience, they seemed ready to mobilize their cognitive resources in order to debunk whatever information clashed with the stereotype held by the audience.

Along similar lines, Carnaghi and Yzerbyt (2006) exposed participants to several pieces of information concerning a gay man. Whereas some participants expected to meet with an ingroup audience whose members held a positive stereotype toward gays, others were informed that their future ingroup audience held a negative stereotype about gays. The target description was constructed in such a way that a piece of information confirmed the stereotype allegedly held by the audience in one experimental condition and disconfirmed the stereotype held by the audience in the other experimental condition. Results showed that participants took more time to process the information when it ran against the stereotype of their prospective audience. This pattern strongly suggests that perceivers' conformity to the stereotype of the audience was far from being a matter of superficial compliance (Mackie, Gastardo-Conaco, & Skelly, 1992; Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990). The fact that perceivers were ready to mobilize their cognitive resources to explain away or discount the relevance of any piece of inconsistent information is indicative of people's active commitment in the preservation of the stereotype allegedly held by their prospective audience.

The present studies extend these earlier efforts by examining the possibility that communication settings determine not only the way people stereotype a *target group* as a whole but also how they deal with information about *deviant members* and, possibly, subtype them. We reasoned that perceivers' would be more or less prone to subtype the same disconfirming member as a function of both the assumed beliefs of the audience and its status as a referent group. In two studies, participants learned that they would have to communicate their personal impression of an individual member to an audience. Study 1 confronted participants with one of two referent audiences, each with a different view of the stereotyped group. In Study 2, the stereotype of the audience about the group was kept constant but participants expected to meet with either an ingroup or an outgroup audience.

As a set, these studies allow us to see whether participants would prove sensitive to the specific combination of audience and stereotype in such a way that they would want to rely on subtyping more when the deviant member of the stereotyped group contradicts the views of a referent audience. Although anticipated public contexts are obviously not the same thing as actual communication, participants may easily imagine that others could be appraising their judgments (Lambert et al., 2003) and this should tune participants' attention on social beliefs held by the prospective audience (Tetlock & Lerner, 1999) as well as lead participants to try and influence how the audience view themselves in terms of their social identities (Reicher & Levine, 1994a).

STUDY 1

Study 1 arranged for participants to meet with a referent audience in each one of the two experimental conditions. Preliminary work ascertained that our two audiences (a group of students vs. members of an

equal opportunity organization) were thought to hold different views about homosexuals (see below). Participants were exposed to a positive counter-stereotypical gay member and they were asked to report their impression of the target, the perceived typicality of the gay member, and their stereotype about the group of gays.

Clearly, we expected the positive disconfirming gay member to be seen as less (vs. more) representative of the group when the prospective audience was thought to hold a negative (vs. positive) view about homosexuals (Hypothesis 1). In addition, we hoped that participants' expression of stereotypical beliefs would be more positive when the audience was believed to hold a positive as opposed to a negative view towards homosexuals (Hypothesis 2). This means that we expected some overlap between the assumed stereotype of the audience concerning gays and the personal stereotype about the same group.

Pilot Work

A series of preliminary studies were conducted in order to select our audiences. First, qualitative interviews with participants issued from the target population suggested that two specific types of audiences, namely students from the same university and an equal-opportunity organization, would meet our requirement in terms of finding audiences that were holding different views about the target group yet would be seen by our participants as similar in terms of social regard and referent status. A first pretest involving 13 students of the University of Padua confirmed that participants not only perceived students and equal opportunity organizations in equally positive terms ($M = 4.46$ and $M = 4.23$, respectively, $t(12) = 0.35$, n.s.) but that they also granted them an equally moderate social status ($M = 3.61$ and $M = 3.61$, respectively, $t(12) = 0.0$, n.s.).¹ These two audiences were thus perceived to be equally likable and to enjoy the same social status. It is worth noticing that, although referent groups are not the same thing as self-inclusive groups, referent groups should by definition elicit perceivers' willingness to present themselves as embracing the referent norm (Allport, 1954; Barreto & Ellemers, 2003).

A second pretest checked whether stereotypes about gays were thought to vary depending on the nature of the audience. We expected participants to assume that students would hold a more negative attitude toward gays as a group than members of an equal opportunity organization. Thirty students enrolled at the University of Padua were contacted in two different libraries of the same university: the library of Psychology and the library of Engineering.² They were told that the study concerned the way people communicate their opinion about a specific target group (i.e., gays) to others via questionnaires. They were informed that they would have to answer several questions about a target group on standard answer sheets, that their answer sheets would then be handed over to an audience, and that the members of this audience would comment on their ratings about the target group. Depending on conditions, participants learned that the audience comprised several students from the same university or several members of an equal opportunity organization. Participants were then asked to write down what they thought was the attitude of the audience about homosexuals on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (=very negative) to 7 (=very positive). The assumed attitude of the audience was analyzed by means of a 2 (Audience: students vs. equal opportunity) \times 2 (Library: Psychology vs. Engineering) ANOVA with both variables as between-subjects factors. As expected, participants believed that students held a less

¹The fact that these two audiences did not differ in terms of social attractiveness questions the possibility that the audience is being perceived differently by participants in terms of referent group.

²It is worth noticing that these two libraries differed in terms of male and female students distribution but also in terms of prejudice toward homosexuals as an active political group (Bianchi & Carnaghi, 2002). Therefore, in order to control for any effect due to this variable, we should perform analyses including the Library as a factor.

positive, albeit still moderate, attitude toward homosexuals ($M = 4.6$, $SE = 0.20$) than members of the equal opportunity group ($M = 5.6$, $SE = 0.31$), $F(1, 26) = 7.89$, $p < 0.01$. This allowed us to proceed to the experiment proper.

Method

Participants

Forty male students in psychology enrolled at the University of Padua volunteered to participate. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions depending on the specific audience they were confronted with. Four participants were excluded from the analyses because they expressed some suspicion concerning the experimental scenario. An additional seven participants were excluded because they indicated that they were homosexuals.

Procedure

Upon their arrival at the laboratory, participants were told that we were interested in how people form an impression about a target and communicate it to others via technical support. They were informed that they first had to form an impression about a gay man. They would then have to communicate their reactions to an audience by recording a tape that the experimenter would later hand over to an audience. Furthermore, participants were told that the members of this audience would listen to participants' impression of the target and offer their feedback comments via e-mail. Participants were asked to provide their e-mail address in order for them to receive the feedback. Depending on conditions, experimental participants learned that the audience comprised several students of the same university or several members of an equal opportunity organization.

Participants then read an interview of a positive disconfirming gay man and answered a series of questions. The description of the target comprised statements that disconfirmed the stereotype of homosexuals (e.g., he hates movies about love stories but he is very fond of action movies) statements that confirmed counter-stereotypical traits (e.g., he works hard as a construction worker and he hardly ever feels tired). A pre-test ($N = 13$) had confirmed that the target was perceived more in terms of positive ($M = 4.27$, $SE = 0.16$) than negative traits ($M = 3.48$, $SE = 0.12$), $F(1, 12) = 69.39$, $p < 0.001$, as well as more in terms of counter-stereotypical ($M = 5.04$, $SE = 0.20$) than stereotypical traits ($M = 2.71$, $SE = 0.11$), $F(1, 12) = 12.55$, $p < 0.005$. When participants had answered all dependent measures, they were asked to inform the experimenter. Participants were then informed about the actual aim of the study, thanked, and dismissed.

Dependent Measures

First, participants were asked to indicate what was, to the best of their knowledge, the *stereotype of the audience* concerning the group of homosexuals. They were presented 12 personality traits on a series of 7-point scales ranging from 1 (=very uncharacteristic of the group of homosexuals in general) to 7 (=very characteristic of the group of homosexuals in general). These 12 traits comprised two positive traits stereotypical of gays (Sensitive, Tolerant), two negative traits stereotypical of gays (Effeminate, Disorganized), two positive traits counter-stereotypical of gays (Strong, Robust), two negative traits

counter-stereotypical of gays (Aggressive, Dominant), and four additional traits, two positive and two negative ones, that were irrelevant to the issue of sexual orientation.

Next, participants were asked to convey their *impression about the target* using the same 12 personality traits associated to 7-point scales ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much). Participants also indicated how *typical* the target was with reference to the group of homosexuals on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (=very atypical) to 7 (=very typical) and the extent to which they thought that the target was *representative* of the group of homosexuals on a scale ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much; for similar measures, see Kunda & Oleson, 1997). We relied on the perceived typicality of the target as a measure of the psychological exclusion of a deviant from the group because recent findings indicate that it is among the best indicators of whether subtyping has occurred (Maurer et al., 1995; Park, Wolsko, & Judd, 2001; Zoe & Hewstone, 2001).

Participants' personal stereotype of the group of homosexuals was then assessed again on the same 12 personality traits. Finally, participants were asked to indicate how much they were in favor of *homosexual relationships* from 1 (=I totally disapprove) to 7 (=I totally approve) as well as their gender and sexual orientation.

Results

Assumed Stereotype of the Audience

We analyzed the assumed stereotype of the audience by means of 2 (Audience: students of the same university vs. members of an equal opportunity group) \times 2 (Stereotypicality: stereotypical traits vs. counter-stereotypical traits) \times 2 (Valence: positive traits vs. negative traits) mixed-model ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors. This analysis revealed the presence of significant main effects of valence, $F(1, 28) = 32.39$, $p < 0.0001$, and stereotypicality, $F(1, 28) = 58.93$, $p < 0.0001$. These effects confirm that the two audiences were thought to hold a stereotype based more on positive traits ($M = 4.59$, $SE = 0.16$) than on negative ones ($M = 3.28$, $SE = 0.19$) and also more on stereotypical traits ($M = 4.74$, $SE = 0.16$) than on counter-stereotypical traits ($M = 3.13$, $SE = 0.15$). The interaction between audience and valence was also significant, $F(1, 28) = 13.28$, $p < 0.001$. In line with expectations, the members of an equal opportunity organization ($M = 4.96$, $SE = 0.22$) were thought to attribute positive traits to the homosexuals more than the students ($M = 4.22$, $SE = 0.22$), $t(28) = 2.35$, $p < 0.03$. Participants also believed that the members of the equal opportunity organization ($M = 2.72$, $SE = 0.27$) would attribute negative trait ratings to the homosexuals to a lesser extent than the students ($M = 3.84$, $SE = 0.27$), $t(28) = 3.0$, $p < 0.01$. Globally, the stereotype of homosexuals that was thought to prevail among students was thus less flattering than the stereotype believed to exist among members of an equal opportunity organization.

Impression of the Target

We assessed participants' impression about the gay target by relying on the same $2 \times 2 \times 2$ mixed-model ANOVA as above. The valence main effect was highly significant, $F(1, 28) = 32.51$, $p < 0.0001$, confirming the positive evaluation of the target ($M = 4.38$, $SE = 0.16$, and $M = 3.30$, $SE = 0.17$, on positive and negative traits, respectively). The main effect of stereotypicality was also significant, $F(1, 28) = 41.91$, $p < 0.0001$, showing that the target was attributed more counter-stereotypical traits ($M = 4.64$, $SE = 0.21$) than stereotypical traits ($M = 2.80$, $SE = 0.17$). Moreover, the interaction between valence and stereotypicality was significant, $F(1, 28) = 8.58$, $p < 0.0001$. Further

inspection of the means revealed that the target was perceived more extremely on the positive counter-stereotypical traits ($M = 5.47$, $SE = 0.23$) than on the positive stereotypical traits ($M = 3.21$, $SE = 0.23$), $t(28) = 6.88$, $p < 0.001$. Also, the ratings on the negative counter-stereotypical traits were higher ($M = 3.81$, $SE = 0.26$) than the ratings on the negative stereotypical ones ($M = 2.30$, $SE = 0.19$), $t(28) = 4.74$, $p < 0.001$. There were no other significant effects.

Target Typicality

A significant correlation between the two typicality questions, $r(29) = 0.45$, $p < 0.002$, allowed a global typicality score to be created. An independent samples t -test was performed on the typicality score with audience as the between-subjects factor. The analysis revealed the presence of a highly reliable audience effect, $t(28) = 3.46$, $p < 0.002$. In line with predictions, the typicality of the target was lower in the students condition ($M = 2.27$, $SE = 0.23$) than in the equal opportunity condition ($M = 3.37$, $SE = 0.21$).

Personal Stereotype About Gays

The same $2 \times 2 \times 2$ mixed-model ANOVA as above was used to analyze participants' personal stereotype of the out-group. The analysis revealed the presence of a main effect of stereotypicality, $F(1, 28) = 37.45$, $p < 0.0001$. Not surprisingly, participants rated homosexuals higher on the stereotypical traits ($M = 4.62$, $SE = 0.17$) than on the counter-stereotypical traits ($M = 3.38$, $SE = 0.16$). The main effect of valence was also significant, $F(1, 28) = 32.5$, $p < 0.0001$. In fact, participants perceived homosexuals more extremely on the positive traits ($M = 4.65$, $SE = 0.17$) than on the negative ones ($M = 3.36$, $SE = 0.17$). The main effect of valence was qualified by a significant interaction with the audience factor $F(1, 28) = 4.40$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that participants in the equal opportunity condition perceived gays to be much more characterized by positive ($M = 4.82$, $SE = 0.25$) than negative traits ($M = 3.05$, $SE = 0.24$) compared to participants in the students condition ($M = 4.48$, $SE = 0.25$ and $M = 3.67$, $SE = 0.24$, respectively for positive and negative traits).

Because there were *no* significant interactions between stereotypicality and the other independent variables, such as valence, we decided to compute an index of negative stereotyping by reversing the ratings on the positive traits and averaging them with the ratings on the negative traits. Replicating the above interaction effect albeit in a different manner, this negative stereotyping score confirmed that the homosexual group was rated more negatively in the student audience condition ($M = 3.59$, $SE = 0.11$) than in the equal opportunity audience condition ($M = 3.12$, $SE = 0.20$), $t(28) = 2.1$, $p < 0.05$.

In order to test our hypothesis that there would be an overlap between the personal stereotype and the assumed stereotype of the audience, we also computed an index of negative stereotyping (i.e., we reversed the ratings on positive traits and averaged them with the ratings on the negative traits) for the participants' assumed stereotype of the audience ($M = 3.81$, $SE = 0.14$, for the students condition and $M = 2.88$, $SE = 0.21$, for the equal opportunity condition). Paired-samples t -tests confirmed that, in both audience conditions, the negative stereotyping scores did not differ as a function of whether they concerned participants' personal stereotype about gays or the assumed stereotype of the audience about gays ($t(14) = 1.76$, $p < 0.1$ and $t(14) = 1.59$, $p < 0.13$, respectively for the students and the equal opportunity condition). Additionally, the negative stereotyping score attributed to the audience was significantly correlated with the personal negative stereotyping score, $r(29) = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$. Finally, we computed within-subject correlations on participants' ratings of the stereotype of the audience about gays and their personal stereotype about gays. After transformation of the correlations into

Fisher's z -scores, we found no difference between the two audience conditions. Interestingly, the overall z -score was pretty high ($z = 0.92$, $SD = 0.55$) and significantly different from 0, $t(28) = 9.24$, $p < 0.001$.

Participants' Attitude Towards Homosexual Relationships

Participants' personal attitude towards homosexual relationships was subjected to an independent samples t -test with the audience as the between-subjects factor. Results revealed that participants in the students condition tended to have a more negative attitude towards gays ($M = 3.80$, $SE = 0.20$) than participants in the equal opportunity condition ($M = 4.53$, $SE = 0.35$), $t(28) = 1.82$, $p < 0.08$. In line with the idea that the nature of the audience affected people's reactions to the target group, a correlation analysis showed that participants' assumed stereotype of the audience was significantly related to their attitude towards gays, $r(29) = 0.32$, $p < 0.04$.

Discussion

The present results provide initial support for our idea that perceivers deal with a counter-stereotypical member by taking into consideration the assumed stereotype of a referent audience. Our data indicate that the perceived typicality of a disconfirming member varied as a function of the stereotype thought to be held by the audience (Hypothesis 1). Interestingly, the impression of the target was unaffected by the stereotype of the audience. Still, participants were more prone to consider the positive disconfirming target as an atypical member of the group when they expected to interact later with an audience believed to hold a negative rather than a positive stereotype about gays. Such a pattern suggests that the perceived discrepancy of the target from the stereotype assumed to prevail in the audience provides good reasons for relegating the deviant into the class of exceptions.

The reported dissociation between the outcome of the impression formation task and participants' perceived typicality of the target is not unprecedented in the subtyping literature (Kunda & Oleson, 1995, 1997; Yzerbyt et al., 1999). For instance, Yzerbyt et al. (1999) found that participants reported similar impressions of an extroverted engineer even though they differed in their perception of target typicality as a function of whether they were or were not cognitively busy (see also, Kunda & Oleson, 1995, Exp.1). In line with Kunda and Oleson's (1997) earlier finding that the perceived typicality of a counter-stereotypical member was a better mediator variable of stereotype change than to participants' impression of the same target, our data suggest that these two processes (i.e., impression and perception of typicality) are not isomorphic.

Turning to participants' personal stereotype, homosexuals as a group were rated more negatively when participants expected to meet with students rather than with members of an equal opportunity organization (Hypothesis 2). Interestingly, participants' personal stereotype about gays and the assumed stereotype of the audience did not only overlap at a nomothetic level but these two ratings were also correlated at an idiothetic level. Confirming this result, but in a different manner, participants tended to express a more negative attitude towards same-sex relationship when they expected to later meet with a student rather than with an equal opportunity audience.

Study 1 aimed to demonstrate that the content of the stereotype of an audience influences the way perceivers approach a stereotype-disconfirming target. Our design had the participants expect an encounter with one of two equally prestigious referent groups and the manipulation resided in the kind of stereotype assumed to be held by these audiences. Although we had ascertained that these audiences were equivalent in terms of likeability and status, a critical reader may argue that the two audiences are

not strictly equivalent, especially in terms of participants' membership status. Moreover, as the identity of the audience and the stereotype held by the audience were not manipulated independently, we cannot determine whether participants identified with the value expressed by the norm (i.e., to be non-homophobic or homophobic, respectively, for the equal opportunities and students conditions) or with the membership of the audience. This limitation notwithstanding, we think that this first study provides intriguing evidence regarding the impact of referent groups on information processing.

In order to further ascertain our argument concerning the socially situated nature of stereotype change and subtyping, we conducted a second study in which we kept the content of the stereotype of the audience constant and varied instead the nature of the audience. Such a manipulation would help us clarify whether participants shape their judgment to suit the stereotype held by the audience because such a reaction is individually profitable, in terms of gaining prestige or avoiding sanctions, or because it clarifies their social identity by affirming what is normative from the perspective of the (referent) ingroup.

STUDY 2

In Study 2, experimental participants (i.e., psychology students) expected to meet with an audience comprising members of an ingroup (i.e., psychology students) or an outgroup (i.e., education students). The stereotype of the audience was held constant across conditions, namely participants were always informed that the members of the audience considered Belgians as 'people who are not proficient in foreign languages.'³ As for the deviant group member, participants were confronted with a Belgian target who moderately disconfirmed the stereotype held by the audience. Participants in a control condition did not receive any information about an audience and the specific stereotype allegedly shared within this audience.

We decided to rely on this manipulation for several related reasons. First, this procedure allowed us to disentangle the identity of the audience and the content of the stereotype assumed to prevail among the members of this audience. To be sure, the specific stereotype selected in the study represented a local norm which likely does not reflect the stereotype that exists at the level of a macro-community.⁴ Fortunately, the use of local norms has been shown to be successful in having a regulatory function, such as prescribing appropriate thought and behaviors within the contingent group (Levine & Moreland, 1998; Postmes, Spears, & Cihangir, 2001).

Second, the fact that we relied on an ingroup versus outgroup audience provides us with an opportunity to test whether audience effects are the consequence of mere compliance with the position of the audience or correspond to a shift in participants' responses in order to affirm their social identity through communication. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of a control group allowed us to shed a light on the social influence mechanisms that could account for a differential subtyping of the deviant as a function of the nature of the audience. We expected the deviant to be seen as much less typical when participants learned that they would later communicate their judgments to an ingroup rather than to an outgroup audience (Hypothesis 1). However, if the perceived typicality of the stereotype-disconfirming member turned out to be weaker in both the ingroup and outgroup audience conditions compared to the

³A recent survey conducted in 2000 (see a recent report by IRES, 2005) reveals that a proportion ranging from 34 to 44% of Belgians are fluent in French and Dutch, French and English or Dutch, and English. Moreover, this same survey indicates that 29% of Belgians are fluent in French, Dutch, and English.

⁴A pre-test indicated that students of Padova perceived Belgians as a moderately able to appropriately speak foreign languages ($M = 1.05$, $SE = 0.2$; t -test on the zero mid-point of 7-point scale ranging from -3 (=not at all typical) to $+3$ (=very typical), $t(20) = 5.29$, $p < 0.001$).

control condition, then one could argue that the mere presence of an audience, regardless of its referential nature, would trigger normative influence (Hypothesis 2a). In other words, the anticipated surveillance of the audience as well as participants' motivation to circumvent the stress of arguing with the audience could jointly lead participants to comply with the stereotype advocated by the audience and then discard any information that does not fit with the audiences' viewpoint. In contrast, if the stereotype-disconfirming member is perceived equally typical in the control condition and in the outgroup audience condition, but more typical than in the ingroup condition, then one could argue for the role of a mechanism of referential information influence (Turner, 1991; Hypothesis 2b). Indeed, only the ingroup audience condition, but not the outgroup audience condition, would then seem to prompt participants to discount the relevance of the stereotype-disconfirming member.

We also intended to examine the impact of the stereotype of the audience on participants' personal views about Belgians. We expected the relationship between participants and audience to influence participants' endorsement of the stereotype of the audience. We thus hoped that participants would consider Belgians as less 'able to speak foreign languages' in the ingroup than in the outgroup audience condition (Hypothesis 3). Again, if participants perceived the group of Belgians to be less 'able to speak foreign languages' in both experimental conditions compared to the control condition, then one could argue that the mere presence of an audience would trigger compliance with the norm advocated by the prospective audience (Hypothesis 4a). By way of contrast, if participants considered the group of Belgians equally in the control and in the outgroup audience conditions with respect to the stereotypical dimension under consideration, but judged the same group to be less 'able to speak foreign languages' in the ingroup audience condition (Hypothesis 4b), referential information influence can be invoked to account for the obtained findings (Turner, 1985).

Finally, we intended to check for the possibility that participants' reaction to the deviant was playing a mediating role in shaping their personal views about the target group. Ideally, we would want to see perceivers' specific reaction to the deviant, as it rests on the identity of the audience, shaping their views regarding Belgian in general. This would provide strong evidence indeed regarding the close relationship between people's conceptions about social groups and their response to particular individual members of the group.

Method

Participants

Seventy-six psychology students enrolled at the University of Padova, Italy, volunteered to participate in the experiment. They were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (Audience: ingroup vs. outgroup vs. control). One participant was excluded from the analyses because she expressed some suspicion concerning the experimental scenario, leaving 75 participants ($N = 54$ female students and $N = 21$ male students).

Procedure

Upon their arrival at the laboratory, participants learned that we were interested in the way people form an impression about an individual target and communicate it to others in a face-to-face interaction. The experimenter informed participants that they first had to form an impression about a Belgian target and that they would then have to communicate their reactions to an audience comprising several students.

At that time, a confederate entered into the laboratory and, as a part of the cover story and depending on the experimental condition, told participants that the psychology students (or education students) failed to arrive at the department on time and that the audience thus only comprised psychology students (or education students). In doing so, we hoped to properly activate an intergroup context, which involved psychology students (an ingroup audience) and education students (an outgroup audience). Participants in the control condition were simply told that they had to form an impression about a Belgian target, but they were not informed about neither the presence of an audience nor of the stereotype held by the audience.

As for the experimental conditions, the confederate provided participants with a paper sheet indicating the ratings of the audience about Belgians on a 7-point scales ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much) associated to the behavior '*To speak foreign language.*' In both audience conditions, the audience's ratings revealed a score of 2 on the 7-point scale. Moreover, below the ratings of the audience about Belgians, participants read an ostensibly hand-written comment from the audience in response to its ratings: 'We all agree that Belgians are not able to appropriately speak different languages.' This made the stereotype held by the audience highly salient.

Participants next read a description of a Belgian man who could speak foreign languages moderately well. The description comprised five behaviors that disconfirmed the stereotype held by the audience (i.e., he likes watching movies in their original language and when he reads a romance that has been written in a language other than French, he likes to compare the original version of the romance to the translated version so as to learn new words in the foreign language. Sometimes he gives class of Spanish and English. He typically reads the news in one of the EU languages) and one that confirmed the same stereotype (i.e., when he writes e-mails to his foreign friends, he usually relies on the spoken language of the recipients but he needs to check out all the mistakes he makes by means of the spelling corrector). A pretest ($N = 12$) using 7-point rating scales confirmed that the target was perceived as moderately able to speak foreign languages ($M = 5.17$, $SE = 0.32$, one-sample t -test on the midpoint $t(11) = 3.63$, $p < 0.004$).

Finally, participants were reminded that they later had to communicate their answers to the audience and were asked to fill a series of questions.

Dependent Measures

First, participants indicated their *impression about the target* with respect to the stereotypical characteristic (i.e., speak many languages) and five filler items (e.g., ecologist, athletic, greedy) on 7-point rating scales ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much). Participants also indicated how *typical* the target was with reference to the group of Belgians on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (=very atypical) to 7 (=very typical) and to what extent the target was *representative* of the group of Belgians on a scale ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much; see also Kunda & Oleson, 1995).

Participants' *stereotype* about the group of Belgians was also assessed. Participants were presented with four behaviors and asked to indicate the percentage of Belgian people who usually performed each one of these behaviors. This measure ensured that the way the stereotype of the audience was initially presented and the measure of participants' personal stereotype were not identical (for similar procedure, see also Sechrist & Stangor, 2001). These four behaviors depicted actions that were diagnostic of the multilingualism dimension (i.e., they can read newspapers in foreign languages; they watch movies in English without subtitles; they appropriately speak, read, understand different languages; they can talk to tourists relying on a language other than their mother tongue).

Then experimental participants were asked to fill in a *manipulation check*. They first had to report the stereotype of the audience with respect to the trait multilingual on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much) and then they had to indicate the membership of the audience.

All participants reported the strength of their *identification* with the group of Italians on two items ('I'm proud to be an Italian'; 'To be an Italian strongly determines what I am') on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 7 (=very much). Participants' levels of contact with Belgians were also assessed by means of two items ('How often did you visit Belgium?'; 'How many Belgians did you meet?') on a 7-points scale ranging from 1 (=never) to 7 (=always).

After participants had filled out all questionnaires, they were thanked and debriefed.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Given the significant correlation between the two items pertaining participants' identification to the national group, $r(75) = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$, these were averaged to form a score of national group identification. Participants reported a reasonable level of identification with their national group ($M = 4.53$, $SE = 0.16$) which was unaffected by the experimental condition, $F(2, 74) = 1.77$, $p > 0.1$. Moreover, because the two items measuring participants' levels of contact with Belgians were significantly correlated, $r(75) = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$, we averaged them to form an index of contact. Participants reported a low level of contact with Belgians ($M = 1.4$, $SE = 0.11$) and, most importantly, the level of contact was unaffected by the experimental condition, $F(2, 74) = 1.59$, $p > 0.2$.

Impression About the Target

We analyzed participants' ratings on the crucial dimension, namely 'to appropriately speak foreign languages,' by means of one-way ANOVA, with type of audience (ingroup vs. outgroup vs. control) as the between-subjects factor. The type of audience did not affect participants' ratings, $F(2, 74) = 0.97$, n.s. Regardless of the type of audience, participants generally perceived the target to be moderately able to speak foreign languages ($M = 5.29$, $SE = 0.13$).

Typicality Ratings

Given the significant correlation between the two typicality questions, $r(75) = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$, the ratings on these items were collapsed to form a global typicality score. We analyzed the global typicality score by means of one-way ANOVA, with type of audience (ingroup vs. outgroup vs. control) as the between-subjects factor. A significant effect of the type of audience was found $F(2, 74) = 4.83$, $p < 0.011$. In line with Hypothesis 1, participants considered the target more as an atypical member of the group in the ingroup ($M = 3.50$, $SE = 0.22$) than the in the outgroup condition ($M = 3.98$, $SE = 0.15$), although this effect just fell short of being significant, $t(72) = 1.79$, $p < 0.078$. Moreover, and in line with Hypothesis 2b, participants in the outgroup audience condition and in the control condition ($M = 4.30$, $SE = 0.17$) reported very similar levels of the global typicality score $t(72) = 1.27$, $p > 0.2$. In contrast, participants in the ingroup audience condition, compared to their colleagues in the control condition, reported lower levels of the global typicality score $t(72) = 3.10$, $p < 0.003$.

Personal Stereotype

Because the items measuring participants' personal stereotype of Belgians revealed the presence of a mono-factorial structure that explained 78.22% of total variance, we averaged responses on these items to form a stereotype score ($\alpha = 0.91$). Lower levels on this score indicated lower consideration of Belgians as a polyglot group and thus higher agreement with the stereotype of the audience.

We analyzed participants' stereotype score by means of a one-way ANOVA, with type of audience (ingroup vs. outgroup vs. control) as the between-subjects factor. A significant effect of the type of audience was found $F(2, 74) = 3.13, p < 0.050$. In line with Hypothesis 3, participants considered the group of Belgians as less multilingual in the ingroup ($M = 51.41, SE = 3.13$) than in the outgroup condition ($M = 60.00, SE = 2.54$), $t(72) = 2.16, p < 0.03$. Moreover, participants in the outgroup audience condition and in the control condition ($M = 59.91, SE = 2.53$) reported closer levels of the stereotypical score, $t(72) = 0.24, n.s.$ In line with Hypothesis 4b, participants in the ingroup audience condition reported lower levels on the stereotype score than participants in the control condition, $t(72) = 2.22, p < 0.03$.

Mediational Analyses

We also wanted to test whether participants' reaction to the deviant was playing a mediating role in shaping their personal views about the target group. Because we found no difference between the outgroup audience condition and the control condition on the dependent variables in general, and on the global typicality score as well as on the stereotype score in particular, we collapsed these two conditions into a single level of the independent variable and contrast it to the other level of the independent variable, namely the ingroup audience condition (Contrast code: $-1 =$ control condition or outgroup audience condition, $+1 =$ ingroup audience condition).⁵ The potential mediator, namely the global typicality score, was significantly related to the stereotype score, $\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$. The independent variable significantly affected both the global typicality score, $\beta = -0.31, p < 0.006$, and the stereotype score, $\beta = -0.28, p < 0.01$. More importantly, we regressed the stereotype score on the independent variable while controlling for the typicality score. Results indicated that the independent variable did not significantly predict the dependent variable, $\beta = -0.18, p > 0.1$, whereas the potential mediator and the dependent variable were still significantly related, $\beta = 0.34, p < 0.004$. Importantly, when controlling for the typicality score, the size of the effect for the independent variable on the stereotype score was significantly reduced (Sobel-test, $t(73) = 2.31, p < 0.025$). Finally, we also tested for the reverse model, in which the stereotype score was used as the potential mediator and the global typicality score as the dependent variable. Results indicated that the independent variable continued to significantly affect perceived typicality ($\beta = -0.22, p < 0.05$) after controlling for the stereotype score.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 provide support to our predictions. As far as impression formation is concerned, participants reported the same impression of the target regardless of the experimental condition. This

⁵An alternative, and strictly speaking more correct, strategy to examine our mediational model would have us keep track of the three conditions and rely on two contrast coded variables, one that compares the ingroup condition with the two others and one that compares the outgroup condition with the control condition. Still, we decided to collapse the control and outgroup conditions together and to consider only a two-level independent variable because the conclusions flowing from this analysis are virtually identical. Last but not least, they allow us to keep things much simpler while saving a substantial amount of space.

result nicely echoes data coming from the impression formation task of the Study 1 and confirms that learning about the view of the audience regarding Belgians did not directly affect the way participants saw the individual target. In sharp contrast, the construction of the typicality of the target was influenced by the stereotype believed to be held by the audience. As a matter of fact, participants were ready to consider the target less as a typical group member when they recognized the audience as a self-inclusive group than when the audience was an outgroup. In other words, participants tended to perceive the target to be much less typical of the larger group of Belgians when he violated the stereotype thought to prevail among an ingroup rather than an outgroup audience (Hypothesis 1). More importantly, a direct comparison of the experimental conditions to the control group confirmed that it was not merely the presence of an audience that prompted participants to subtype the deviant. Specifically, participants subtyped the target only when he violated the stereotype advocated by a self-inclusive audience (Hypothesis 2b).

Looking at the data concerning the group stereotype, participants judged the group of Belgians as less able to speak different languages when they expected to later communicate their judgment to an ingroup rather than to an outgroup audience (Hypothesis 3). Interestingly, participants in the outgroup condition reported the same level of stereotyping as participants in the control group, indicating that participants did not comply with an audience who was not perceived as a referent group (Hypothesis 3b). By contrast, participants who expected to interact with an ingroup audience clearly reported a stereotype about Belgians that, at least in part, mirrored the one advocated by the ingroup audience. This means that, whereas the ingroup audience prompted participants to conform to the audience's norm, the outgroup audience allowed participants to disagree with the viewpoint of the audience.

Our mediational analyses strongly suggest that participants embraced the stereotype held by the audience about Belgians because they previously managed to minimize the relevance of a deviant member. Apparently, participants agreed to engage in this cognitive consuming process (i.e., subtyping the deviant) only because they were striving to endorse the stereotype held by the ingroup audience. Importantly, the fact that participants' stereotype failed to be a reliable mediator rules out the possibility that participants superficially endorsed the stereotype of the audience and then noticed the incongruence between the deviant target and the beliefs of the audience.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present set of studies investigated the viability of a socially situated view of stereotype change (Carnaghi & Yzerbyt, 2006; Carnaghi et al., 2005; Yzerbyt & Carnaghi, in press). Building upon various lines of research that show perceivers' attachment to the opinions of their group of reference (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Haslam et al., 1996; Sherif & Sherif, 1953; Stangor et al., 2001) and their tendency to connect to their ingroup by tailoring their opinion to its viewpoint (Barreto et al., 2003; Higgins et al., 1977; Reicher, et al., 1995; Spears & Lea, 1994; Tetlock & Lerner, 1999), we proposed that perceivers' motivation to achieve and preserve consensual beliefs even in the face of counter-stereotypic group exemplars plays a crucial role in the perpetuation of stereotypic views. Specifically, we argued that perceivers' stereotype about a group are unlikely to change if disconfirming evidence about a target member deviates from the convictions of a referent audience. Our reasoning is related to recent work in subtyping literature that uses the idea of atypicality as ground for treating counter-stereotypical evidence as largely irrelevant information (Coull et al., 2001; Kunda & Oleson, 1997; Yzerbyt et al., 1999). Adding to these earlier efforts, we wanted to show that the perceived atypicality of the target is, at least in part, socially determined. We conjectured that exposing social perceivers to a disconfirming member who violated (vs. fitted) the stereotype of the audience

would induce them to discount (vs. take into account) a deviant exemplar as an exception. In turn, this process would affect perceivers' personal views about the group.

Study 1 tested whether participants ended up considering the deviant exemplar more as an irrelevant instance (i.e., whether they saw him as an atypical and non-representative member of the group) when the exemplar information was seen as opposing the stereotype assumed to prevail among the members of a prospective audience. The data were in line with our predictions and provided us with initial evidence that the assumed stereotype of the audience about a group biases the way people construe the typicality of the member of the stereotyped group and generalize from this disconfirming evidence to alter their representation of the group as a whole (Kunda & Oleson, 1997). Study 2 helped us better understand the social processes that promote (or prevent) perceivers' debunking of contrary evidence. Indeed, we found that participants did not simply conform to the position endorsed by their prospective audience. Rather, they aligned their reactions to the views held by their putative audience only when they considered it to be an ingroup. That is, participants ended up perceiving the disconfirming member as an atypical case only when they expected subsequently to interact with an ingroup rather than an outgroup audience.

Our results nicely confirm other research showing that the validity of a persuasive message is largely determined by the membership of its source and that people are more influenced by ingroup than by outgroup sources (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Clark & Maass, 1988; David & Turner, 1996; Hogg & Turner, 1987; Mackie, 1986). Interestingly, if the results of Study 1 might be interpreted in terms of a surveillance effect (i.e., the tendency to tailor one's communication in order to avoid sanctions from the audience; Reicher & Levine, 1994a,b; Tetlock, Skitka, & Boettger, 1989), the results of Study 2 allow us to question such an interpretation as they clearly indicate that perceivers are sometimes ready to disagree with their prospective audience. Indeed, it is not the pressure to comply with their audience that pushed people to subtype the deviant and to perceive the group of Belgians in the same way as their audience. Study 2 tells us that the degree to which the content of the stereotype about Belgians held by the audience provides evidence about reality (Turner, 1991, p. 76) is a direct function of the degree to which the audience is perceived to be a self-referent group (i.e., an ingroup). Only in the ingroup audience condition did participants align their perception about Belgians to the stereotype held by the ingroup audience.

More generally, our results are consistent both with theories that suggest that people conform to the judgments of others in order to be accepted and with theoretical perspectives that propose that people endorse other people's beliefs in order to reduce informational uncertainty. Importantly, our studies also stress the fact that it is not the ambiguity of the stimulus *per se* that elicits a sense of subjective uncertainty but, rather, that the uncertainty is an emerging product of the disagreement between what participants saw (the target) and what the (ingroup) audience is believed to think about Belgians. In other words, uncertainty is a socially (and experimentally) created property of the stimulus. Having said this, we hasten to note that normative and informational mechanisms are certainly not exclusive of each other (Asch, 1951; Turner, 1991). The experience of the pressure to comply with relevant others results into both a search for a rational basis of people's public conformity and a genuine internalization of the external norm (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brein, 2002). With this perspective in mind, the present work began addressing the consequences of social constraints, in the form of the beliefs held by a putative audience; on the way people deal with a deviant member of a stereotyped group.

As for the consequences of the confrontation with a deviant on people's stereotype about the group as a whole, our data suggest that the overlap between participants' stereotype and the assumed stereotype of the audience is far from being a matter of 'easy conformism.' Clearly, participants came to express views about gays (Study 1) and about Belgians (Study 2) that paralleled those attributed to the audience at least in part because they managed to handle the deviant member in such a manner as to preserve the prevailing conceptions of the audience. These results are in line with previous evidence

(Carnaghi et al., 2005; Yzerbyt, Coull, & Rocher, 1999) indicating observers' propensity to engage in an explanatory reasoning aimed at debunking contradicting information and thus at preserving consensus with the audience. Our findings imply that perceivers will be in a position to embrace the views of an audience only to the extent that they find good reasons to agree. In particular the results of Study 2 indicate that participants preserved the stereotype of the audience, and endorsed it, to the extent that they had first managed to explain away the contradictory evidence.

CONCLUSIONS

The present studies brought together communicational work and subtyping research. On the one hand, audience-related theories emphasize the role of social factors in shaping people's messages. On the other, subtyping research stresses the importance of construal processes in allowing perceivers to come up with a rational basis for the psychological exclusion of deviant members. The present contribution allows these two strands of research to be integrated and may, we think, prove beneficial to both. With respect to communicational theories, our research shows *how* people deal with a disconfirming member depending on the specific audience's stereotype people are confronted with. This work thus represents an initial attempt at using social influence theories to explore a new question, namely how people process social information that threatens prevailing stereotypic views. Turning to subtyping theories, the present studies identify perceivers' tendency to achieve a consensus with their audience as a possible factor influencing the inclusion or exclusion of a deviant member in the representation of the group as whole. Indeed, we examine an important cognitive process in light of the social identity of the perceivers. The message is that social factors seem fundamentally important in pressing individuals to maintain or indeed change their stereotypic beliefs.

At a practical level, our research has also important consequences for any intervention by institutional organizations (e.g., school) aimed at changing people's stereotypes. As we showed, the same disconfirming member should have a different impact on people's stereotypes depending on the degree of discrepancy between the deviant and *the assumed norm of the referent group*. If we accept the idea that we can change stereotype via the presentation of disconfirming evidence, great care should be taken not only in the choice of the evidence but also concerning the normative context in which observers meet with this evidence. Indeed, choosing exemplars that contradict the stereotype shared within the observers' group may very well fail to trigger the desired revision process. Rather, a promising strategy for stereotype change would be to provide perceivers with carefully chosen information about the prevailing stereotype of their group right before presenting the disconfirming evidence. This should allow the normative concerns to kick in and should prompt people to include the disconfirming evidence into the representation of the group rather than discount it. More work on the social constraints attached to stereotype change is needed, however, before we can evaluate the true role of such factors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was conducted as partial fulfillment for the dissertation degree of Andrea Carnaghi under the supervision of Vincent Y. Yzerbyt. Portion of this paper were presented by Andrea Carnaghi at the International Graduate College in Louvain-La-Neuve, June 2003. The research reported in this article has been made possible by a Assegno di Ricerca grant to Andrea Carnaghi and ARC grant of the Communauté Française de Belgique to the Vincent Y. Yzerbyt. The authors thank Luciano Arcuri, Manuel Bengochea, Luigi Castelli, Olivier Corneille, Alex Haslam, Kerry Kawakami, Anne Maass,

Cristiano Taverna, and Yoshi Kashima, for their helpful comments as well as Mauro Bianchi for his help in collecting data.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (1990). Social identification, self-categorization and social influence. *European Review of Social Psychology, 1*, 195–228.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Asch, S. E. (1951). Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. In H. Guetzkow (Ed.), *Groups, leadership and men: Research in human relations* (pp. 177–190). Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press.
- Barreto, M., & Ellemers, N. (2000). You can't always do what you want: Social identity and self presentational determinants of the choice to work for a low status group. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 891–906.
- Barreto, M., & Ellemers, N. (2003). The effect of being categorised: The interplay between internal and external social identities. *European Review of Social Psychology, 14*, 139–170.
- Barreto, M., Spears, R., Ellemers, N., & Shahinper, K. (2003). Who wants to know? The effect of audience on identity expression among minority group members. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*, 299–318.
- Bianchi, B., & Carnaghi, A. (2002). Tratti stereotipici del gruppo gay e atteggiamento nei confronti della giornata per l'orgoglio gay. Padova, Unpublished data.
- Branscombe, N. R., Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (1999). The context and the content of social identity threat. In N. Ellemers, R. Spears, & B. Doosje (Eds.), *Social Identity: Context, commitment, content* (pp. 35–58). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Carnaghi, A., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (2006). Social consensus and the encoding of consistent and inconsistent information: When one's future audience orients information processing. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 36*, 199–210.
- Carnaghi, A., Yzerbyt, V. Y., Cadinu, M., & Mahaux, N. (2005). Tell me who you are and I'll tell you what I think: Stereotyping and accountability. *Italian Journal of Psychology, 1*, 91–110.
- Castano, E., Paladino, M. P., Coull, A., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (2002). Protecting the ingroup stereotype: Ingroup identification and the management of deviant ingroup members. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 41*, 365–385.
- Cialdini, R. B., Levy, A., Herman, C. P., & Evenbeck, S. (1973). Attitudinal politics: The strategy of moderation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 25*, 100–108.
- Clark, R. D., & Maass, A. (1988). The role of social categorization and perceived source credibility in minority influence. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 18*, 381–394.
- Coull, A., Yzerbyt, V. Y., Castano, E., Paladino, M. P., & Leemans, V. (2001). Protecting the ingroup: Motivated allocation of cognitive resources in the presence of threatening ingroup members. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 4*, 327–339.
- Crandall, C. S., Eshleman, A., & O'Brein, L. (2002). Social norms and suppression of prejudice: The struggle for internalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 359–378.
- David, B., & Turner, J. C. (1996). Studies in self-categorization and minority conversion: Is being a member of the outgroup an advantage. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 35*, 179–201.
- Devine, P. G. (1998). Behind the isolated social perceiver: Why inhibit stereotypes? In R. S. Wyer (Ed.), *Stereotype activation and inhibition* (pp. 69–81). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ellemers, N. (1993). The influence of socio-structural variables on identity management strategies. *European Review of Social Psychology, 4*, 27–57.
- Fiske, S. T. (1980). Attention and weight in person perception: The impact of negative and extreme behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*, 889–906.
- Hantzi, A. (1995). Change in stereotypic perceptions of familiar and unfamiliar groups: The pervasiveness of the subtyping model. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 34*, 463–477.
- Haslam, S. A., Oakes, P. J., McGarty, C., Turner, J. C., Reynolds, K., & Eggins, R. (1996). Stereotyping and social influence: The mediation of stereotype applicability and sharedness by the views of in-group and out-group members. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 35*, 369–397.

- Haslam, S. A., Oakes, P. J., Reynolds, K., & Turner, J. C. (1999). Social identity and the emergence of stereotype consensus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *25*, 809–818.
- Hewstone, M., & Brown, R. J. (1986). Contact is not enough: An intergroup perspective on the contact hypothesis. In M. Hewstone, & R. J. Brown (Eds.), *Contact and conflict in intergroup discrimination* (pp. 1–44). Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Hewstone, M., Hassebrauck, M., Wirth, A., & Waenke, M. (2000). Pattern of disconfirming information and processing instructions as determinants of stereotype change. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *39*, 399–411.
- Higgins, E. T., Fondacaro, R., & McCann, C. D. (1982). The ‘communication game’: Goal-directed encoding and cognitive consequences. *Social Cognition*, *1*, 21–37.
- Higgins, E. T., Rholes, W. S., & Jones, C. R. (1977). Category accessibility and impression formation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *13*, 141–154.
- Hogg, M. A. (1987). Social identity and group cohesiveness. In J. C. Turner, M. A. Hogg, P. J. Oakes, S. D. Reicher, & M. S. Wetherell (Eds.), *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory* (pp. 89–116). Oxford and New York: Blackwell.
- Hogg, M. A., & Turner, J. C. (1987). Intergroup behaviour, self-stereotyping and the salience of social categories. *British Journal of Social-Psychology*, *26*, 325–340.
- IRES. (2005). La dynamique des langues en Belgique. *Institut de Recherches Economiques et Sociales de l'Université Catholique de Louvain*, *42*.
- Johnston, L., & Coolen, P. (1995). A dual processing approach to stereotype change. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *21*, 660–672.
- Johnston, L., & Hewstone, M. (1992). Cognitive models of stereotype change: (3) Subtyping and the perceived typicality of disconfirming group members. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *28*, 360–386.
- Kashima, Y. (2000). Maintaining cultural stereotypes in the serial reproduction of narratives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 594–604.
- Kunda, Z., & Oleson, K. C. (1995). Maintaining stereotypes in the face of disconfirmation: Constructing grounds for subtyping deviants. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *68*, 565–579.
- Kunda, Z., & Oleson, K. C. (1997). When exceptions prove the rule: How extremity of deviance determines the impact of deviant examples on stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 965–979.
- Lambert, A. J., Payne, B. K., Jacoby, L. L., Shaffer, L. M., Chasteen, A. L., & Khan, S. R. (2003). Stereotypes as dominant responses: On the ‘social facilitation’ of prejudice in anticipated public contexts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 277–295.
- Levine, J. M., & Moreland, R. L. (1998). Progress in small group research. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *41*, 585–634.
- Lyns, A., & Kashima, Y. (2003). How are stereotypes maintained through communication? The influence of stereotype sharedness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 989–1005.
- Mackie, D. M. (1986). Social identification effects in group polarization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*, 720–728.
- Mackie, D. M., Gastardo-Conaco, M. C., & Skelly, J. J. (1992). Knowledge of the advocated position and the processing of in-group and out-group persuasive messages. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *18*, 145–151.
- Mackie, D. M., Worth, L. T., & Asuncion, A. G. (1990). Processing of persuasive in-group messages. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *58*, 812–822.
- Marques, J. M., Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Leyens, J. P. (1988). The ‘Black Sheep effect’: Extremity of judgment towards ingroup members as a function of group identification. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *1*, 1–16.
- Maurer, K. L., Park, B., & Rothbart, M. (1995). Subtyping versus subgrouping processes in stereotype representation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*, 812–824.
- Moreno, K. N., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (1999). Resisting stereotype change: The role of motivation and attentional capacity in defending social belief. *Group Processes and Intergroup relations*, *2*, 5–16.
- Park, B., Wolsko, C., & Judd, C. M. (2001). Measurement of subtyping in stereotype change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *37*, 325–332.
- Pennington, J., & Schlenker, B. R. (1999). Accountability for consequential decisions: Justifying ethical judgments to audiences. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *25*, 1067–1081.
- Postmes, T., Spears, R., & Cihangir, S. (2001). Quality of decision making and group norms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*, 918–930.

- Quinn, A., & Schlenker, B. R. (2002). Can accountability produce independence? Goals as determinants of the impact of Accountability on conformity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 472–483.
- Reicher, S. (2000). Social identity definition and enactment: A broad SIDE against irrationalism and relativism. Proceedings of the conference 'SIDE issues centre stage: Recent development in studies of deindividuation in groups', Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam, 30 June–2 July, 1999.
- Reicher, S., & Levine, M. (1994a). Deindividuation, power relations between groups and the expression of social identity: The effects of visibility to the out-group. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 145–163.
- Reicher, S., & Levine, M. (1994b). On the consequences of deindividuation manipulations for the strategic considerations of the self: Identifiability and the presentation of social identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 145–163.
- Reicher, S. D., Spears, R., & Postmes, T. (1995). More on deindividuation, power relations between groups and the expression of social identity: Three studies on the effects of visibility to the in-group. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 6, 161–168.
- Rothbart, M., & John, O. P. (1985). Social categorization and behavioral episodes: A cognitive analysis of the effects of intergroup contact. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41, 81–104.
- Ruscher, J. B., & Hammer, E. Y. (1996). Choosing to sever or maintain association induces biased impression formation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 701–712.
- Ruscher, J. B., Hammer, E. Y., & Hammer, E. D. (1996). Forming shared impressions through conversation: An adaptation of the continuum model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 705–720.
- Sechrist, G. B., & Stangor, C. (2001). Perceived consensus influences intergroup behavior and stereotype accessibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2, 645–654.
- Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1953). *Reference groups*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Spears, R., & Lea, M. (1994). Panacea or panopticon? The hidden power of computer-mediated communication. *Communication Research*, 21, 427–459.
- Stangor, C., Sechrist, G. B., & Jost, J. T. (2001). Changing racial beliefs by providing social consensus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 486–496.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41, 157–175.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In W. G. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Tetlock, P. E., Armor, D., & Peterson, R. S. (1994). The slavery debate in antebellum America: Cognitive style, value conflict, and the limits of compromise. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 115–126.
- Tetlock, P. E., & Lerner, J. F. (1999). The social contingency model: Identifying empirical and normative boundary conditions on the error-and-bias portrait of human nature. In S. Chaiken, & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social psychology* (pp. 571–585).
- Tetlock, P. E., Skitka, L., & Botteger, R. (1989). Social and cognitive strategies for coping with accountability: Conformity, complexity and bolstering. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 632–640.
- Turner, J. C. (1985). Social categorization and the self concept: A social cognitive theory of group behaviour. In E. J. Lawler (Ed.), *Advances in group processes: Theory and research* (Vol. 2, pp. 77–271). Greenwich, CT: JAL Press.
- Turner, J. C. (1991). *Social influence*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Weber, R., & Crocker, J. (1983). Cognitive processes in the revision of stereotype beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 961–977.
- Wilder, D. A. (1986). Intergroup contact: The typical member and the exception to the rule. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 20, 177–194.
- Wittenbrink, B., & Henly, J. R. (1996). Creating social reality: Informational social influence and the content of stereotypic beliefs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 598–610.
- Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Carnaghi, A. (in press). Stereotype change in the social context. In Y. Kashima, K. Fiedler, & P. Freytag (Eds.), *Stereotype dynamics: Language-based approaches to stereotype formation, maintenance, and transformation*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.
- Yzerbyt, V. Y., Coull, A., & Rocher, S. J. (1999). Fencing off the deviant: The role of cognitive resources in the maintenance of stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 449–462.
- Zajonc, R. B. (1960). The process of cognitive tuning in communication. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 61, 159–167.
- Zoe, R., & Hewstone, M. (2001). Subtyping and subgrouping: Processes for prevention and promotion of stereotype change. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(1), 52–73.

Copyright of *European Journal of Social Psychology* is the property of John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 1996 and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.