

Background

Stereotypes are widely shared within social group, have strong evaluative meaning (Phalet, & Poppe, 1997) and reveal in-group bias. Stereotyping represents important part of the processes through which different groups create social perceptions and judgments. Important contribution to theoretical advance in this area has been provided by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985). Both perspectives emphasize the role that social identity salience plays in stereotyping process. According to social identity theory identity the degree to which people identify with their social group determine in-group bias and the valence of in-group stereotypes. Thus this study further explores the relationship between social identification and the number, content and valence of self-generated in-group stereotypes in different type of groups.

Objectives

- to examine relationship between strength of social identification and the number, and the valence of in-group stereotypes among members of youth groups and members of the national group
- to examine differences between high and low identifiers in the number, proportion and valence of assigned in-group stereotypes
- to examine content of in-group stereotypes, and stereotype categories and consensus

Method

Samples

- sample of adolescents, year 2003, N=80
- sample of adults, year 2007, N= 348 (20 non-Croats were excluded from the study leaving N=328)

Instruments

- stereotype content:** open-ended measure - “name traits, features or phrases you associate with your group or which you use to describe the group you belong to”
- adults:** maximum of 3 stereotypes - referring to the Croatian nation
- adolescents:** maximum of 7 stereotypes - referring to the youth group they belong to
- stereotype valence:** respondents rated favorableness of each stereotype ascribed to their group by using 3 point scale (adults) or by using 7 point scale (adolescents)
- social identification:** Social Identity Scale (Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986) - respondents rated how often they feel or behave in 10 described ways by using a five point Likert scale (1 = "never" to 5 = "very often")
- group belongingness:** respondents either stated their nationality (adults) or named the youth group they belong to (adolescents)

Results

Table 1: Descriptive statistic and reliability coefficients for Social Identity Scale

Social identification	α	M	SD
Nation	.847	4.16	0.611
Youth groups	.760	4.18	0.464

Figure 1: Proportion of self-generated positive, neutral and negative in-group stereotypes



Social Identity Scale prove to have satisfactory and similar reliability coefficients in both samples, and high levels of social identification were obtained both for national group and for youth groups (Table 1). In adults’ sample one-factor solution accounted for 45.2 % of the total variance of Social Identity Scale, and in adolescent sample for 38.5 % of the total variance. In both samples respondents generated the greatest proportion of the positive in-group stereotypes, followed by the smaller number of neutral and negative in-group stereotypes (Figure 1).

The strength of national identity was negatively associated with the number and the proportion of negative in-group stereotypes, and positively associated with the number and the proportion of the positive in-group stereotypes. The strength of youth social identity was just negatively associated with the proportion of the negative in-group stereotypes. In-group bias, that is stereotype valence, correlated positively with the degree to which respondents identify with their national or youth group (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlations between strength of social identification and number, proportion and the valence of in-group stereotypes

Stereotypes	number				proportion			valence
	total	negative	neutral	positive	negative	neutral	positive	
Nation	-.048	-.351**	-.069	.296**	-.389**	-.056	.379**	.193**
Youth groups	.173	-.151	.143	.215	-.226*	.123	.153	.295**

Table 3: Differences between high and low identifiers in number, proportion and the valence of in-group stereotypes

Stereotypes		number								proportion						valence	
Social identification		total		negative		neutral		positive		negative		neutral		positive		M	SD
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Nation	high	2.30	.937	0.62	.720	0.20	0.467	1.48	0.988	0.26	.296	0.09	0.213	0.65	0.382	1.81	0.893
	low	2.37	.940	0.97	.913	0.28	0.545	1.08	0.917	0.41	.345	0.12	0.221	0.46	0.349	1.59	0.826
	t-test	0.633		3.933**		1.516		3.740**		3.937**		1.145		4.524**		2.310*	
Youth groups	high	5.19	1.332	0.81	1.220	0.44	0.665	3.95	1.812	0.15	0.221	0.08	0.130	0.77	0.285	4.20	1.430
	low	4.05	1.490	1.03	0.897	0.22	0.479	2.81	1.309	0.26	0.242	0.04	0.100	0.70	0.270	2.91	1.181
	t-test	3.588**		0.877		1.714		3.186**		2.070*		1.463		1.177		4.373**	

Respondents who identify more with their nation or youth group generated significantly more positive in-group stereotypes, lower proportion of negative in-group stereotypes, and rated in-group stereotypes as overall more positive than those who identify with their group less. Respondents whose national identity was stronger generated significantly smaller number and lower proportion of negative in-group stereotypes, and respondents whose youth group identity was stronger generated significantly more in-group stereotypes in general (Table 3).

Figure 2a: National stereotypes (%)

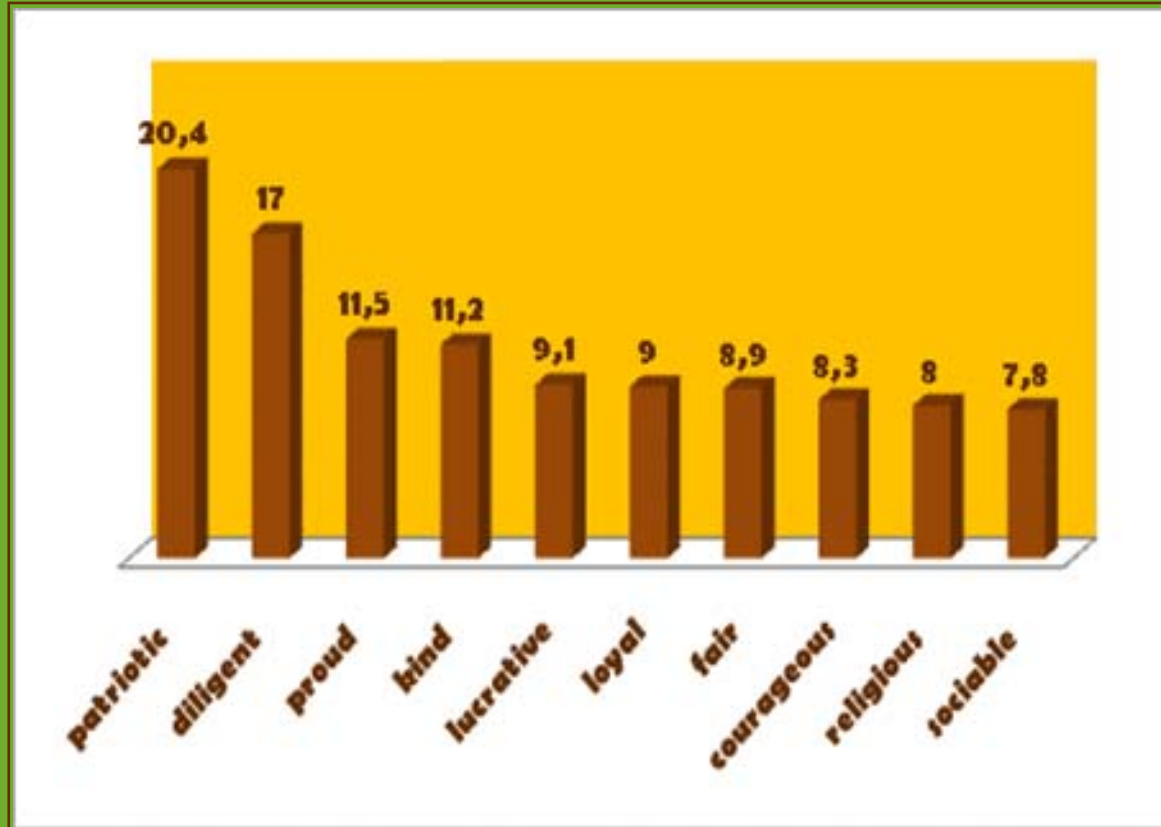
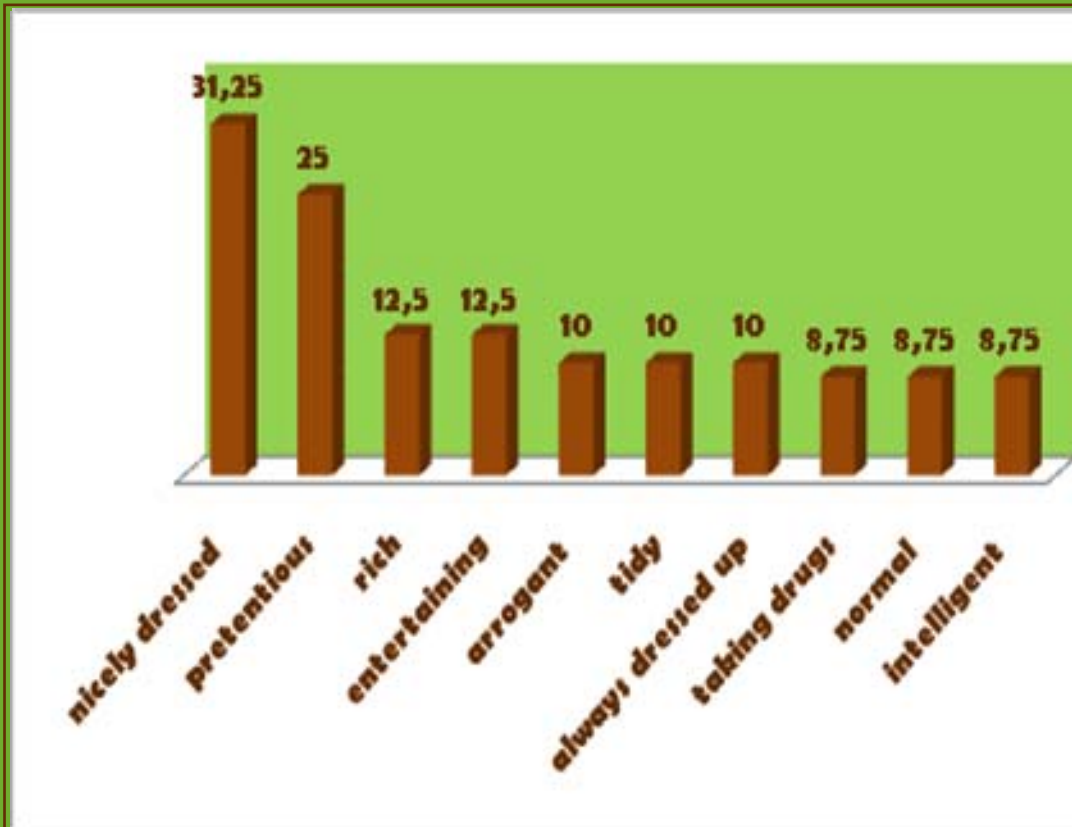


Figure 2a/2b: Ten the most frequently mentioned in-group stereotypes

Croats assigned 83 different characteristics to their nation, while adolescents assigned 135 different features to the 12 youth groups they mentioned they belong to. Croats most frequently described themselves as patriotic, diligent, proud and kind, while adolescents perceive their own youth group mostly as nicely dressed, pretentious, rich, entertaining, arrogant, and tidy (Figure 2a/2b). Since the highest proportion of adolescents (55%) declared to belong to the group of preppies choice of their stereotypes is not surprising (e.g. nicely dressed). All group members assigned more positive than negative characteristics to their own group, but stereotype content showed to be very group specific (Figure 2a/2b). National stereotypes could be categorize along the dimensions of morality, sociability and competence (Phalet and Poppe, 1996) as well as youth group stereotypes, although youth group stereotypes capture important additional dimension – physical appearance.

Figure 2b: Youth stereotypes (%)



Conclusion

In-group bias of studied groups correlated positively with the degree to which they identify as group members. Respondents who define themselves more in terms of a social group generated smaller proportion of negative in-group stereotypes, and showed greater favorableness of in-group stereotypes. Stereotype content showed to be partly group specific, although physical appearance emerged as the most important dimension in perception of youth groups, similar dimensions could be identified for both types of groups.