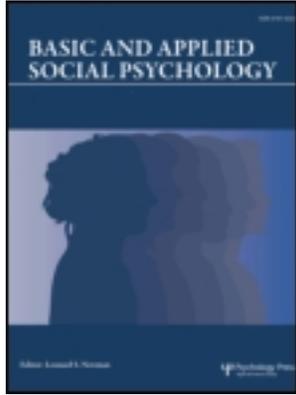


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Intergroup Distinctiveness and Discriminatory Immigration Attitudes: The Role of National Identification

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We examined the moderating role of national identification in understanding when a focus on intergroup similarity versus difference on ingroup stereotypical traits—manipulated with scale anchors—leads to support for discriminatory immigration policies. In line with intergroup distinctiveness research, national identification moderated the similarity–difference manipulation effect. Low national identifiers supported discriminatory immigration policies more when intergroup difference rather than similarity was made salient, whereas the opposite pattern was found for high national identifiers: They trended toward being more discriminatory when similarity was made salient. The impact of assimilation expectations and national identity content on the findings is discussed.

Presumed value differences between immigrants and the host population are regularly called upon in political debates to explain immigrants' difficulties of integration and to justify strict immigration policies. Social psychological research has indeed amply demonstrated that presumed value differences between native-born citizens and immigrants represent a symbolic threat to the national culture and the collective identity of the host society (for an overview, see Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). Thus, host society members expect immigrants to adopt the language, cultural values and ways of life of their new society (e.g., Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Green, 2009; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998). For instance, perceived divergence from the Protestant work ethic—a key cultural value in Western countries, including characteristics such as discipline, motivation, punctuality, and assiduousness—has been shown to trigger prejudice (Biernat, Vescio, Theno, & Crandall, 1996; Joffe & Staerklé, 2007).

Immigrants' endorsement of cherished ingroup cultural values, in turn, reduces the differences with host society members. Although cultural similarity is often called for, it can in some cases threaten intergroup

distinctiveness, which motivates individuals to enhance intergroup differentiation by derogating the outgroup (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Zárate, Garcia, Garza, and Hitlan (2004) demonstrated that intergroup similarity has different effects depending on the type of similarity involved. The authors showed that, in the United States, drawing attention to similarity on interpersonal-related traits such as being generous and friendly led to the appreciation of Mexican immigrants, whereas drawing attention to similarity on work-related traits such as being competent and hardworking led to more prejudice toward Mexican immigrants. Although some studies have shown that perceived intergroup similarity increases attraction and reduces outgroup bias, other studies, on the contrary, have established that perceived intergroup similarity promotes intergroup differentiation (see Brown, 2000). Such opposing ideological views regarding similarity and difference between the host populations and immigrants also exist side by side in society. Assimilationist views underscore that value similarity with the host population is the goal toward which immigrants should strive, whereas multicultural discourses embrace cultural and value difference. Indeed, individuals may differ in the ways they react to value similarity and difference between the national ingroup and the immigrant outgroup.

Drawing on the intergroup distinctiveness literature (for an overview, see Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004),

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the aim of the current research is to study the moderating role of national identification in understanding when a focus on similarity versus difference on stereotypical ingroup values leads to more support for discriminatory immigration policies. The novelty of the research is in studying national identification as a boundary condition of an experimental paradigm in which similarity or difference is rendered salient unobtrusively, merely by manipulating scale anchors (Zárate et al., 2004).

THE INTERGROUP DISTINCTIVENESS–DIFFERENTIATION RELATIONSHIP AS A FUNCTION OF INGROUP IDENTIFICATION

In the intergroup distinctiveness literature (Jetten & Spears, 2003; Jetten et al., 2004), *differentiation* is a general tendency to distinguish one's group from a comparison group. Differentiation can be evaluative and behavioral (e.g., ingroup bias and outgroup derogation), and it is the outcome of efforts to restore or enhance *distinctiveness*, that is, the perceived dissimilarity between one's own group and another group on a relevant dimension of comparison (see also Branscombe et al., 1999). In the context of immigration this phenomenon thus consists of differentiating the national ingroup from immigrant outgroups. In the present study, differentiation is assessed as support for discriminatory immigration policies that limit immigrants' access to resources to which the national ingroup has easier access such as jobs and social rights.

The idea that low intergroup distinctiveness is threatening to ingroup identity is based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a theory that argues that group members strive to positively differentiate their own groups from other groups. Drawing on this assumption, the *reactive distinctiveness* hypothesis states that differentiation is a reaction to threatened group distinctiveness. This threat thus motivates group members to restore intergroup distinctiveness by increasing intergroup differentiation. Self-categorization theory (which developed from social identity theory; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) on the contrary, argues that intergroup distinctiveness helps to define and enhance group boundaries more clearly and increases the perceptual salience of groups (i.e., category salience), which then drives subsequent differentiation. Drawing on the reasoning from self-categorization theory, the *reflective distinctiveness* hypothesis states that differentiation takes place when intergroup distinctiveness is high, that is, when differences are large. Differentiation results thus from either a reaction toward threatening similarity or a perception of salient intergroup difference. Research examining the relationship between distinctiveness and differentiation has attempted to integrate social identity

theory (focusing on the motivational aspects of this relationship) and self-categorization theory (stressing the cognitive and perceptual aspects of the relationship) to explain the two roads to differentiation.

The present study aims to show how *national* identification moderates the effects of intergroup similarity and difference on support for discriminatory immigration policies. As perceived closeness and similarity *within* a national group are building blocks of national identity, drawing attention to similarity with foreign outgroup members on stereotypical ingroup values can become threatening for individuals who identify with the nation. Due to their commitment to the national ingroup, high identifiers should be more sensitive to low intergroup distinctiveness (i.e., similarity) than low identifiers (Jetten & Spears, 2003). In line with the reactive distinctiveness hypothesis, when distinctiveness is low, people who strongly identify with the nation should be motivated to maintain and restore clear boundaries between the national ingroup and immigrant outgroups (see also Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006; Deschamps & Brown, 1983) and thus differentiate between these groups by supporting discriminatory immigration policies. When group boundaries are clear and unthreatened, that is, in contexts of high distinctiveness, high identifiers should not be inclined to differentiate the groups to the same extent. In other words, when immigrants' similarity, rather than difference, with stereotypical ingroup values is made salient, high national identifiers should be especially motivated to support discriminatory immigration policies.

Low national identifiers, in turn, should not be motivated to clarify group boundaries when intergroup distinctiveness is low. Indeed, they will not feel threatened by low distinctiveness, because of their low commitment with the nation and its values. However, when distinctiveness between groups is high, the clarity of group boundaries increases the salience of group membership. According to the reflective distinctiveness hypothesis, high distinctiveness leads low national identifiers to define their ingroup more clearly thereby triggering differentiation. That is, low national identifiers should support discriminatory immigration policies more when immigrants' difference on ingroup values is made salient (i.e., high distinctiveness) compared to when similarity is made salient. For low identifiers, thus, perceiving clear ingroup-outgroup distinctiveness is a prerequisite for differentiation.

A meta-analytical review on the moderating power of group identification on the distinctiveness–differentiation relation confirmed that different processes underlie the way high identifiers and low identifiers react to intergroup distinctiveness (Jetten et al., 2004; see also Jetten & Spears, 2003). Reactive distinctiveness (motivational) processes determine high identifiers' responses, whereas reflective distinctiveness (perceptual) processes

underlie responses of low identifiers. In this meta-analysis, however, identification was defined by type of group (relevance of group membership for self-definition determined by independent judges) instead of self-assessed *degree* of identification as in the current study.

Other recent research has also examined the moderating role of self-assessed identification on the links between distinctiveness and differentiation. In a study on interpersonal similarity, Costa Lopes (2010) showed that high national identifiers tended to be more negative toward immigrants when similarity rather than difference was salient. The opposite tended to be the case for low national identifiers. The current research extends this work by examining the distinctiveness–differentiation relationship with a pretested dimension of comparison that is characteristic of the national ingroup (Jetten et al., 2004). Gabarrot, Falomir-Pichastor, and Mugny (2009, Study 2) demonstrated that when an antidiscrimination norm was salient, high national identifiers in France displayed more prejudice and discrimination toward North African immigrants when they were described as similar to the French than when they were described as different. Low distinctiveness was argued to intensify distinctiveness threat when ingroup norms prescribe an egalitarian and undifferentiated treatment between the ingroup and the outgroup. Similarly, in a study comparing northerners and southerners in Italy, Voci (2006, Study 2) showed that when group distinctiveness was threatened, regional identification was related to outgroup derogation.

CURRENT STUDY

This study was carried out in Switzerland, which has a long history of labor-importing immigration and hosts a foreign population of more than 20%. Much like in other European countries, multicultural policies and immigrant rights remain controversial and high on the political agenda (e.g., Piguët, 2004). Due to recent expansions of the European Union that also affect Switzerland through bilateral agreements, East European immigrants' impact on the job market is a topic of discussion and they are often depicted as “taking away” the jobs that are considered to rightfully belong to the Swiss. Therefore, in the Swiss context, East European immigrants represent a relevant (though vast and heterogeneous) outgroup for intergroup comparison (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see Jetten & Spears, 2003).

Previous studies have manipulated distinctiveness threat through providing bogus feedback by explicitly describing the proportion of immigrants that are similar to the national population (e.g., Gabarrot et al., 2009; Voci, 2006). In the current study, and unlike in the distinctiveness–differentiation research tradition, we

examine how an unobtrusively manipulated focus on similarity versus difference between the ingroup and the outgroup affects immigration attitudes. To do so, we adopted the experimental paradigm developed by Zárate and colleagues (e.g., Carpenter, Zárate, & Garza, 2007; Zárate et al., 2004) and manipulated the focus on intergroup similarity versus difference on stereotypical Swiss values between the national ingroup, the Swiss, and the immigrant outgroup, East Europeans. According to this paradigm, completing a similarity scale should draw attention to similarities, making intergroup similarity more salient on given values (i.e., low distinctiveness), whereas completing a difference scale should make intergroup difference more salient (i.e., high distinctiveness). The manipulation is unobtrusive to the extent that similarity versus difference are referred to merely in the scale anchors. Independent of the absolute comparison ratings on the scales, framing the question as assessing intergroup similarity or difference is expected to evoke different representations of intergroup distinctiveness. Unlike for experiments providing bogus feedback, experimentally manipulating the attention drawn to intergroup similarities or differences is assumed to render salient a representation of the intergroup similarity or difference based on participants' actual, real-life experiences. When asked to judge outgroup similarity of socially relevant groups, ingroup members are assumed to think of specific East European individuals (“exemplars”) or subgroups. Questions on outgroup difference, in turn, should lead participants to think of other exemplars or subgroups. The different representations evoked through this manipulation should affect immigration attitudes (for a discussion, see Carpenter et al., 2007).

Extending the work of Zárate et al. (2004) and Carpenter et al. (2007), by drawing on the distinctiveness–differentiation literature (e.g., Jetten et al., 2004), we sought boundary conditions for the mechanisms revealed by this experimental paradigm. To our knowledge, this is among the first studies examining the extent to which reactions to distinctiveness salience on discriminatory attitudes induced by this paradigm are moderated by national identification (see also Costa Lopes, 2010). It is important to note that the current research applies an experimental paradigm developed in the United States to study prejudice toward African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Mexican immigrants for investigating immigration attitudes in a European setting. Whereas in the United States, ethnicity has historically been a relevant cue for differentiating between groups, in Europe, immigrant origins are more central and groups are best identified by their nationality. Moreover, although prior research (Costa Lopes, 2010; Crisp et al., 2006; Hall, Crisp, & Suen, 2009; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 2001; Voci, 2006; Zárate et al., 2004) has mainly examined the effect of perceived intergroup distinctiveness on general

expressions of outgroup prejudice, we focus on concrete discriminatory immigration policy attitudes that are debated in the Swiss political context.

We predict a National Identification \times Intergroup Comparison interaction such that when comparison with East Europeans draws attention to value similarity (i.e., low distinctiveness), individuals who identify strongly with Switzerland will hold more discriminatory immigration policy stances (e.g., be more willing to restrict immigrants' access to jobs and deny immigrant rights) than when the comparison draws attention to value differences (i.e., high distinctiveness) between East Europeans and the Swiss. The opposite pattern is expected for individuals who identify weakly with the national ingroup. In other words, for high national identifiers, but not for low national identifiers, ingroup distinctiveness is jeopardized when similarity of East European immigrants on stereotypically Swiss values is made salient. For low national identifiers, but not for high national identifiers, focus on difference, in turn, should underscore group boundaries and thus elicit discriminatory immigration policy stances.

METHOD

First, we present the results of a pretest conducted to select the most relevant ingroup traits and then describe the participants, design, and measures of the current study.

Pretest

In a pretest, 33 psychology students rated 47 traits. Eleven non-Swiss participants were excluded. We examined the remaining 22 participants (13 women, M age = 25) who rated the extent to which the traits were characteristic of the Swiss (descriptiveness scale; 1 = *not at all characteristic of Swiss*, 7 = *extremely characteristic of Swiss*). Following Zárate et al. (2004), they also judged whether the traits were related to work-related success or to interpersonal skills (domain scale; 1 = *very interpersonal-related*, 7 = *very work-related*) and defined the valence of each trait (valence scale), from 1 (*extremely negative*) to 7 (*extremely positive*). The descriptiveness and domain-definition scales were given in a random order, and order was used as a control variable in an analysis of variance. Fourteen traits were defined as work related with scores significantly above the midpoint on the domain scale (all $ps < .05$, $Ms = 4.90$ – 6.09). Twelve traits were defined as interpersonal related with scores significantly below the midpoint on the domain scale (all $ps < .05$). Nine traits were defined as neither work related nor interpersonal related, as scores did not differ from the scale midpoint. The 14 work-related traits also scored above the midpoint on the descriptiveness scale

(all $ps < .05$, $Ms = 4.68$ – 5.91), indicating that they were perceived as both stereotypical of the Swiss and work related. None of the remaining traits scored above the midpoint on the descriptiveness scale ($Ms = 2.86$ – 4.23), with the exception of *traditional*, which was defined as interpersonal related. Thus, interpersonal-related traits were not used in the main study.

The work-related traits were evaluated positively with scores above the midpoint on the valence scale (all $ps < .05$, $Ms = 4.77$ – 5.91), with the exception of two traits, competitive and prestigious, which did not differ from the scale midpoint. To maintain the brevity of the main questionnaire, we selected the eight work-related positive attributes with the highest means on the descriptiveness scale: ambitious, organized, competent, efficient, disciplined, hardworking, punctual, and systematic.

Participants

Fifty-two 1st-year biology students at a Swiss university (58% female; M age = 20 years; 100% Caucasian) voluntarily completed the questionnaire in French during class. Five participants among the 52 did not have Swiss nationality and were excluded from further analyses. Of five participants with a double nationality, two were excluded because they had Eastern European nationality (Croatian and Romanian) in addition to Swiss nationality. The remaining binationals were Turkish (one participant) and French (two participants). These three binationals were kept in the sample. This inclusion did not alter the final results. The final sample consisted of 45 respondents.

Procedure, Design, and Measures

First, the questionnaire included an assessment of *national identification*. National identification was assessed with three items (How strongly do you identify with other people of your nationality; How close do you feel to other people of your nationality; How often do you think about yourself in terms of your nationality) ranging 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very strongly/close/often*) ($\alpha = .87$; $M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.32$).

Second, participants were randomly assigned to one of two types of intergroup comparison conditions and asked to rate either the *similarity* ($n = 21$) or the *difference* ($n = 24$) of East European immigrants compared to the Swiss ingroup on the eight work-related, stereotype-consistent Swiss traits resulting from the pretest. In the similarity condition, participants were invited to judge how similar Swiss were to East Europeans on each of the traits. The scale anchors were 1 (*not at all similar*) and 7 (*very similar*). In the difference condition, in turn, participants were invited to judge how different Swiss were from East Europeans on each of the traits. The

scale anchors were 1 (*not at all different*) and 7 (*very different*).

Third, the dependent measure consisted of support for discriminatory immigration policies concerning East European immigrants and was tapped with a scale varying from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Five items assessed support for discriminatory immigration policies denying job opportunities and immigrant rights (i.e., Employers should refuse to hire East European immigrants; Certain sectors of employment should be strictly limited to Swiss people and others to East European immigrants; *reversed*: Extend right to vote on municipal level after five years of residence in Switzerland; Offer fellowships to immigrants to facilitate access to university studies; Relax Swiss immigration and asylum policies; $\alpha = .85$; $M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.16$).¹ All composite scores were computed by averaging items.

Finally, participants were debriefed upon finishing.

RESULTS

Main Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were conducted on the discriminatory immigration policy attitudes measure using robust standard errors.² The centered national identification score and type of intergroup comparison ($-0.5 = \text{different}$, $0.5 = \text{similar}$), and the National Identification \times Type of Intergroup Comparison interaction term were used as predictors. The interaction term tested our main prediction concerning the moderating role of national identification on intergroup similarity versus difference effects (see Baron & Kenny, 1986).

No main effects of national identification and type of intergroup comparison were evidenced ($B = .07$, $SE = .12$ and $B = -.34$, $SE = .32$, respectively). As expected, however, the National Identification \times Type of Intergroup Comparison interaction (Figure 1) yielded a significant effect ($B = .82$, $SE = .25$, $p = .002$). The

¹In preliminary analyses, two scores—a restrictive and an empowering immigration policy attitude—were distinguished. The results patterns were very similar and the scores were highly correlated ($r = .65$, $p < .001$, when empowering immigration policy items were reversed). Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, the scores were combined in the final analyses.

²The distribution of residuals in the presented regression analyses do not meet the homoscedasticity requirement, which might result in incorrect estimates of the variance, leading to inconsistent and uninterpretable t statistics for the parameters (White, 1980). Therefore, using robust standard errors ensures inference consistency (for a discussion, see Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010). The regression coefficients are identical to the estimates of ordinary least squares regression analysis, but the standard errors are robust against failure to meet homoscedasticity assumptions. In our study, ordinary least squares regression analyses revealed essentially identical results.

model accounted for 25% of the variance, $F(3, 41) = 4.52$, $p = .008$.

To examine the predicted moderating effect of national identification, differences in the slope points between similarity and difference conditions in Figure 1 were calculated at 1 SD above and below mean national identification (Aiken & West, 1991). The analysis of differences in the slope points revealed that although high national identifiers (1 SD above mean) expressed more support for discriminatory immigration policies in the similarity condition than in the difference condition, this difference did not reach significance ($B = .74$, $SE = .47$, $p = .12$). Low national identifiers (1 SD below mean), in turn, gave more support to discriminatory immigration policies in the difference condition ($B = -1.43$, $SE = .45$, $p = .003$) than in the similarity condition.

Additional Analyses

Finally, we examined whether the intergroup comparison ratings made by participants on the comparison scales affected support for discriminatory immigration policies and the interaction pattern predicted in this research (see Carpenter et al., 2007). The intergroup comparison ratings in the difference condition were reverse scored such that high scores indicated higher perceived similarity in both conditions (i.e., *very similar* in similarity condition and *not at all different* in difference condition). Intergroup comparison ratings did not correlate with national identification, $r(45) = .005$, $p = .97$, or with the type of intergroup comparison manipulation, $r(45) = -.12$, $p = .42$. To explore the effect of intergroup comparison ratings on support for discriminatory immigration policies, this variable was included in the regression analysis as covariate. Support for discriminatory immigration policies was thus regressed on the centered national identification score, type of intergroup comparison, the

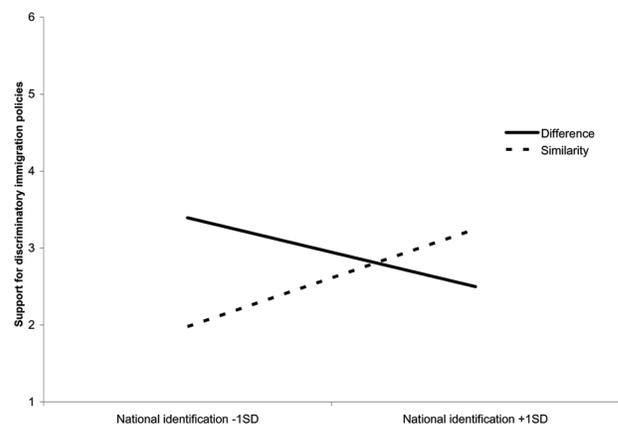


FIGURE 1 Support for discriminatory immigration policies as a function of national identification and intergroup similarity versus difference.

National Identification \times Type of Intergroup Comparison interaction term as well as intergroup comparison ratings. To gain statistical power and because intergroup comparison ratings did not correlate with the other predictors, this measure was not included in the interaction terms in the subsequent analyses (see Yzerbyt, Muller, & Judd, 2004, for including covariates in interactions).³

This analysis demonstrated a main effect of intergroup comparison ratings on support for discriminatory immigration policies ($B = -.44$, $SE = .11$, $p < .001$). Similar to the Carpenter et al. (2007) findings, higher levels of perceived similarity on intergroup comparisons predicted less support for discriminatory immigration policies. More important, the predicted interaction between national identification and the type of intergroup comparison remained significant ($B = .47$, $SE = .23$, $p = .05$). The differential support for discriminatory policies revealed by the interaction between national identification and the manipulated focus on similarity or difference between the Swiss and East Europeans was evident even when accounting for participants' intergroup comparison ratings, attesting to the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation.⁴

³In preliminary analyses, Intergroup Comparison Ratings \times Type of Intergroup Comparison and Intergroup Comparison Ratings \times National Identification interactions were also separately included in the model. These interaction terms, however, were not significant. It is important to note that the predicted National Identification \times Type of Intergroup Comparison interaction pattern remained significant.

⁴That intergroup comparison ratings did not differ between the experimental similarity–difference conditions may at first seem surprising. This finding indeed suggests that drawing attention to similarities does in fact not make a group seem more similar than drawing attention to differences. However, this does not undermine our reasoning and interpretation of our main findings. The responses to the two types of scales (“how similar” vs. “how different” are ingroup members from outgroup members) are not strictly comparable even when the responses are reverse coded. Identical *strength* of comparison ratings does not imply that the retrieved *representations* of immigrants (i.e., exemplars) are the same (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). That is, the scale anchors do not necessarily carry the same psychological meaning for participants (e.g., that “very similar” would be identical to “not at all different”). Instead, different processes may be at work in the two conditions. Because “East European immigrants” are a vast and highly diverse group including several nationalities, the retrieved representations of immigrants (i.e., the exemplars) in the two conditions may not be the same. In the similarity condition, Swiss participants may more easily think of “good” (i.e., hardworking, competent, and ambitious) East Europeans who are similar to them, whereas in the difference condition they may activate representations of “bad,” lazy, and incompetent immigrants. It seems plausible that activation of stereotypes of different subgroups of East European immigrants and the corresponding distinct representations of similarity and difference drive the effect rather than the actual magnitude of perceived intergroup similarity and difference. Importantly, this explains why the effect of the experimental manipulation occurred over and above the (covariate) effect of comparison ratings.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which focus on similarity or difference between the national ingroup and an immigrant outgroup on stereotypical ingroup values affects support for discriminatory immigration policies and how national identification moderates this relationship. In line with intergroup distinctiveness research, we found that high national identifiers supported discriminatory immigration policies more—though not significantly—when similarity rather than difference was made salient (in support of the reactive distinctiveness hypothesis). The opposite occurred for low national identifiers who gave more support for discriminatory immigration policies when intergroup difference rather than similarity was made salient (supporting the reflective distinctiveness hypothesis).

National Identification, Prejudice, and Discrimination

On the whole, in this study, the effects of focus on intergroup similarity versus difference were greater for low national identifiers than for high national identifiers. Following work on intergroup distinctiveness threat, when difference is highlighted, group boundaries are salient and group distinctiveness is assured. High national identifiers can achieve their need for distinctiveness, thereby reducing their need to derogate outgroups. However, this need may still exist. Jetten and Spears (2003) suggested that when the intergroup relation is asymmetrical (as is the case between a national ingroup and an immigrant outgroup) instrumental motives may also drive intergroup differentiation in the context of high distinctiveness (see also Jetten et al., 2004). Because ingroup members are motivated to preserve the power and resource advantage of their group, they use high intergroup distinctiveness to legitimize intergroup differentiation (Branscombe et al., 1999). Therefore, high national identifiers may derogate the outgroup also when distinctiveness is salient: Differentiation may occur in both the similarity and difference condition, albeit for different reasons. These opposing forces for high national identifiers may to some extent cancel each other out. Hence, the overall difference between the conditions is smaller for high rather than low identifiers.

Another explanation for the weaker effect for high identifiers may be the prevailing expectation in Switzerland that immigrants assimilate by adopting the language and the cultural views of their host society. One could speculate that a majority of Swiss population embraces this mainstream expectation, independent of their level of national identification. Therefore, low national identifiers “punish” immigrants who are not assimilated and “reward” immigrants who are. High

national identifiers may be concerned by both immigrants' assimilation and the preservation of intergroup boundaries at the same time. The conflict between these two contrasting concerns may explain why high national identifiers' reactions to intergroup similarity versus difference focus were less clear-cut than those of low national identifiers. To disentangle the effects of intergroup distinctiveness and views about immigration, future research might examine whether the relationship between national identification and immigration attitudes is affected by specific acculturation expectations (see Berry & Sam, 1997) called for by political parties. For instance, the Swiss People Party's (right-wing party) position on immigration (Union Démocratique du Centre, 2006) stresses immigrant *assimilation* (i.e., expectations to embrace Swiss laws and traditions while abandoning their own culture) and proposes to increase discriminatory immigration policies (e.g., reduce the right to stay in the country if unemployed). The position of Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (left-wing party; Parti Socialiste Suisse, 2002) stresses *integration* (i.e., embracing cultural differences while encouraging contact with the Swiss host culture) and proposes to increase immigrant rights (i.e., right to vote on local topics). According to our results, the former strategy may render intergroup similarity salient and thus increase negative attitudes toward immigration among high national identifiers, whereas the latter strategy may render differences salient and have an impact in particular on low national identifiers (though not in the direction desired by the Social Democratic Party!).

The prejudice literature often suggests that high national identifiers hold more negative attitudes toward immigrants, because they are more concerned about national interests than low identifiers (e.g., Jackson, Brown, Brown, & Marks, 2001; for a discussion, see Esses, Dovidio, Semanya, & Jackson, 2005) or at least they may use arguments voicing concern for national interest to legitimize anti-immigration stances (Jetten & Spears, 2003). Further analyses of our data revealed that this effect was evident only when the focus was on intergroup similarity, that is, low distinctiveness (simple slope analysis: $b = .48$, $SE = .15$, $p = .003$). When intergroup difference was made salient (high distinctiveness), national identification tended to be negatively related to discriminatory immigration policy stances ($b = -.34$, $SE = .19$, $p = .091$), highlighting the fact that the salience of intergroup distinctiveness is an important variable to take into account when considering prejudice reduction. Another avenue for future research is investigating not only the role of *degree* of national identification but also the role of the *content* one bestows on this identity (Duckitt & Mphunthing, 1998; Kunovich, 2009; Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009) and how this content qualifies reactions to intergroup distinctiveness. When

high identifiers conceive their nation as an egalitarian and democratic society, in which all inhabitants should have the same rights, low distinctiveness regarding outgroup members should not be threatening. However, when high identifiers conceive their nation in nationalistic terms, with national citizens deemed to have more rights than immigrants, low distinctiveness should lead to restricting immigrant rights.

Other Factors Affecting the Distinctiveness–Differentiation Link

Besides the role of group identification, other conditions influencing the relationship between distinctiveness and differentiation have been outlined in the distinctiveness literature (Jetten et al., 2004). Both the dimension of comparison and the group with which the ingroup members compare themselves influence the relationship between distinctiveness and differentiation (i.e., discriminatory immigration policy attitudes) and need consideration in light of our findings.

In the current study, the dimension of comparison was composed of work-related traits. The pretest showed that almost none of the interpersonal-related traits were considered typical of Swiss, whereas most of the work-related traits were, leading us to select these latter as a relevant dimension of comparison (see Jetten & Spears, 2003; Voci, 2006; Zárate et al., 2004). The work ethic is a crucial component of the Swiss civic understanding of nationhood (see Kriesi, Armingeon, Siegrist, & Wimmer, 1999) that provides an ideological basis for differentiating Swiss from foreign citizens. Immigrants' endorsement of work-related values allows them to gain status in the host country and potentially eliminate value-based status distinctions between these groups (Biernat et al., 1996; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008). Indeed, work-related threat is frequently mobilized in the rhetoric of anti-immigration political campaigning of Swiss right-wing parties, especially in the context of referendums.

However, to the extent that liberal university climates usually cultivate tolerant worldviews and raise students' awareness of prevailing antidiscrimination norms (Henry, 2008), the participants in the current study expressed rather lenient immigration policy attitudes. Using East Europeans as the comparison group in the manipulation may be yet another explanation for the weak effects among highly identified university students. University students in Switzerland can be considered as the elite. In 2009, only 12% of 20- to 24-year-olds attended university (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2011). After graduating, students are unlikely to compete in the job market with East Europeans who mainly come to the country for lower level jobs. Low distinctiveness on work-related traits may be somewhat less relevant

and unrealistic for the population under study and should thus not trigger strong threat perceptions. Had the comparison group been French students (or German students in the Swiss German region), with whom Swiss students are more likely to compete on the job market, the participants might have reacted to similarity or difference in a more marked way.

CONCLUSION

This study showed opposing effects of low and high distinctiveness on discriminatory immigration attitudes as a function of national identification. To our knowledge, no other studies have examined the moderating role of national identification on immigration attitudes while manipulating focus on similarity versus difference on stereotypical ingroup values with scale anchors (Zárate et al., 2004). Furthermore, the current research is the first to apply this experimental paradigm developed in the United States to investigate discriminatory immigration attitudes in Europe. Finally, the study demonstrates that focus on intergroup similarity not only leads to general expressions of prejudice and outgroup derogation but also affects specific, politically relevant immigration policy stances.

Overall, our findings suggest, on one hand, that despite populist political discourse calling for similarity by adopting values of the national ingroup, such similarity is not always appreciated when it questions existing group boundaries between host country members and subordinate immigrant groups, thereby threatening intergroup distinctiveness and ingroup identity. On the other hand, focus on differences frequently advocated by a multicultural view on society can also engender negative immigration attitudes. To conclude, more research is needed to increase understanding of how immigrants face these contradicting demands emanating from the host population and to help shape policy.

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