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CICLO XX

**When “I” becomes one of “Us”:
Cognitive and Motivational Underpinnings of the Self-Stereotyping
Process in Minority Status Groups.**

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One day, I caught the bus. The bus-driver said to me: “ Welcome to the zoo ”. Astonished I smiled. After turning my face, I realized that the bus was crowded with Black people. Of course, the bus-driver was a White man.

One day, a colleague said to me: “ I can accept everything in the life, but homosexuality. The gays have to stay far away from me “. Of course, he was a heterosexual social psychologist.

One day, a friend wrote to me: “ I cannot stand women who complain when I fix something in the house. Women have to be worry about the household “. Of course, he was a man.

One day, a flatmate discussing with me said: “ This is your ‘Terrone-way’ to react to life’s problems ”. Of course, she was a Northern Italian girl.

All these days happened in the near future. I wish to dedicate this work to all the people that at least ones in their life have met discriminating episodes; those discriminating situations that make you angry and, at the same time, make you feel proud to be different.

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English Summary

Self-stereotyping is a process by which people belonging to a stigmatized social group tend to describe themselves more with both positive and negative, stereotypical personality traits compared to traits that are irrelevant to the ingroup stereotype. The present work wants to analyse some of the underlying mechanisms, both cognitive and motivational, explaining when, how, and why it are especially members of socially stigmatised groups that are more inclined to self-stereotype than members of majority status groups.

In the first chapter, we demonstrated that whether self-stereotyping occurs or not depends on the level at which self and ingroup traits are represented. Looking at the self-stereotyping process as the result of a greater overlap of the cognitive representations of the self and the ingroup, and implementing the match-mismatch paradigm (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & DeAmicis, 1999) we tested whether the self and the ingroup representations should match more on stereotypical rather than irrelevant traits, especially for minority rather than majority group members. Results will be discussed referring to self-stereotyping as a deduction-to-the-self process, differentiating it from self-anchoring which is more an induction-to-the-ingroup process.

The second chapter tested the hypothesis that belonging to a minority or stigmatized rather than a majority group may bring threatened group members to protect their self-perception increasing their similarity with the ingroup. Specifically, we investigated the effects of an experimental manipulation that was conceived to either threat or protect one's natural group membership for participants from either a minority or a majority group on the level of self-stereotyping. The findings generally supported the idea that only minority group members protected themselves when their group identity was threatened through increased self-stereotyping.

Focussing specifically on the possible motivational factors that lead stigmatized members to stereotype themselves, the third chapter investigated whether self-stereotyping may serve to maintain psychological well-being among stigmatised members. Following the rejection-identification model (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey; 1999) the perception of discrimination is directly negatively linked with well-being, but is compensated through an increased identification with the minority group that produces a positive effect on psychological well-being. In the present study, we propose that the compensatory role of ingroup identification on well-being is completely mediated by minority members'

tendency to self-stereotype. A structural equation analysis provided clear support for this hypothesis. The present results highlight the importance of the self-stereotyping process in maintaining psychological well-being for low status members and show its adaptive function.

The general discussion will bring together both the cognitive and the motivational components underpinning the self-stereotyping process and discuss its implications for several theories in intergroup relations.

Italian Summary

L'autostereotipizzazione è un processo attraverso cui, membri di un gruppo stigmatizzato tenderanno a descrivere se stessi maggiormente con caratteristiche di personalità stereotipiche del gruppo di appartenenza, sia positive che negative, che con caratteristiche irrilevanti rispetto allo stereotipo legato all'ingroup. Il presente lavoro vuole analizzare alcune delle componenti sottostanti, sia cognitive che motivazionali, con l'intento di spiegare il quando, il come e il perché siano specialmente i membri di un gruppo stigmatizzato che tendono ad autostereotipizzarsi rispetto a membri di un gruppo di status maggioritario.

Nel primo capitolo, abbiamo dimostrato che la presenza o meno dell'autostereotipizzazione può dipendere dal livello in cui gli stereotipi sono maggiormente rappresentati, il sé versus il gruppo. Innanzitutto, l'autostereotipizzazione è stata definita come il risultato di una larga sovrapposizione cognitiva tra il sé e il gruppo, soprattutto quando quest'ultimo si riferisce ad un gruppo di status minoritario. Inoltre, utilizzando il paradigma del match-mismatch (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & DeAmicis, 1999), abbiamo testato se la sovrapposizione cognitiva della rappresentazione del sé e del gruppo fosse maggiormente dovuta a caratteristiche stereotipiche, piuttosto che irrilevanti, specialmente per i membri della minoranza che per quelli della maggioranza. I risultati saranno discussi considerando l'autostereotipizzazione come un processo cognitivo di deduzione-al-sé, diverso dal processo di ancoraggio al sé, maggiormente interpretabile come un processo cognitivo di induzione-all'ingroup.

Il secondo capitolo ha preso in esame l'ipotesi che l'appartenenza ad un gruppo minoritario o stigmatizzato, piuttosto che un gruppo di alto status, porterà i suoi membri a proteggere la percezione di sé dalla minaccia legata alla loro appartenenza di gruppo, aumentando il grado di somiglianza con l'ingroup stesso. Più nello specifico, sarà preso in esame l'effetto, sul livello di autostereotipizzazione, di una manipolazione sperimentale, pensata per minacciare o proteggere l'appartenenza ad un gruppo naturale, che a sua volta poteva essere quello di una minoranza o di una maggioranza. I risultati hanno mostrato una coerenza con l'idea che solo i membri di un gruppo di minoranza proteggono se stessi, quando appunto il loro gruppo è minacciato, attraverso il processo di autostereotipizzazione.

Infine, puntando più nello specifico l'attenzione sui potenziali fattori motivazionali che portano i membri di un gruppo stigmatizzato ad autostereotipizzarsi, il terzo capitolo ha analizzato la possibilità che l'autostereotipizzazione possa servire al mantenimento del benessere psicologico fra i membri del gruppo stigmatizzato. Sulla base del Rejection-Identification Model (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey; 1999), la percezione della discriminazione ha avuto un effetto diretto e negativo sul benessere, ma l'aumento del grado di identificazione con il gruppo minoritario produceva un effetto positivo sul benessere psicologico che andava a compensare quello negativo della discriminazione. In tale studio, abbiamo proposto che il ruolo di compensazione dell'identificazione sul benessere sia completamente mediato dalla tendenza dei membri della minoranza ad autostereotipizzarsi. Analisi con equazioni di tipo strutturale hanno pienamente supportato questa ipotesi. I risultati hanno pertanto messo in luce l'importanza dell'autostereotipizzazione, e la sua funzione adattiva, nel processo di mantenimento del benessere psicologico tra i membri di un gruppo di basso status.

Il capitolo relativo alla discussione generale ha proposto un collegamento tra le componenti cognitive e motivazionali sottostanti il processo di autostereotipizzazione, mettendo in luce le implicazioni di questi risultati con alcune attuali teorie sulle relazioni intergruppo.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When does Self-Stereotyping Occur?

1 The Self and the Ingroup

Most theories in social psychology on the self take the meaning of the social group in the definition of the self into account. Although there is a large agreement about the existence of a fundamental connection between the two representations, some theories conceptualized this link in terms of self-ingroup distance; instead other theories have mainly looked at the similarities that define the self and the ingroup. These two separate lines of thought emphasize two different basic human needs that might lead to the construal of the self: the need for uniqueness and the need for belongingness. At the same time, however, both theories share the idea of a reference group, that is used to evaluate in which particular situation or along which specific dimensions people can represent themselves as different or similar to other members of that group.

Several theories have mainly focused on the need for uniqueness when studying people's self-conceptions. Theoretical models of individuation (e.g., Codol, Jarymowicz, Kaminska-Feldman, & Szuster-Zbrojewicz, 1989; Maslach, 1974), for example, have conceptualized this human tendency as a state by which a person feels different from other people and objects. In early works Fromkin (1972) demonstrated that the more people perceive themselves as unique, the higher the level of positive mood they report. Moreover Snyder & Fromkin (1980) in their Theory of Uniqueness proposed that people have a need for seeing themselves as unique and that indistinctiveness is an unpleasant affective state. At the same time, however, they underlined that extreme levels of uniqueness could lead to feelings of ostracism, so that uniqueness becomes an undesirable state. Thus, these models converge with the idea that individuals both need a certain level of differentiation from and of similarity with others. In other words, although these theories focus on the fact that people put a lot of energy in achieving distinctiveness, at the same time, they acknowledge

that people need to feel included in a social group (Lynn & Snyder, 2002; Brewer, 1991; Ames, & Iyengar, 2005).

In contraposition, analyzing the relations between the self and the ingroup, both Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Categorization Theory (SCT, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) proposed that the group and the individual are intrinsically connected so that one cannot study people's self-construal independently or separately from their social group. Moreover, according to SCT, categorization as a group member necessarily implies the depersonalization of the self. This process has been defined in terms of an increased perception of the self as an interchangeable exemplar of a certain social group, at the same time losing one's perception as a unique person. In other words, both SIT and SCT support the idea that group membership satisfies individuals' need of inclusion and belongingness, but inevitably leads to a loss of personal distinctiveness.

Brewer (1991) developed the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT), with the aim to answer the question on how individuals can negotiate the desire for inclusion and belongingness on one hand, and the need for uniqueness and distinctiveness on the other side. The author argued that these two opposite motivations can be satisfied simultaneously through the identification with social categories that are more likely to optimize the satisfaction of both needs. Those categories should offer individuals the possibility to feel part of the group at the same time giving them the opportunity to feel different through the comparison with an outgroup. Specifically, the theory suggests that the optimal level of distinctiveness of a category depends both on the relative size of the group and on the group's social status. Likely a group with a large number of members does not provide sufficient differentiation to form a meaningful social group. Hence, the theory predicts that minority group members reach optimal distinctiveness more easily, through higher levels of ingroup identification and loyalty, than majority members. Similarly, membership in high-status groups, even when it is more likely that they offer a positive social identity, may not present an optimal distinctiveness among ingroup members, so that majority status members tend to look for greater differentiation into subgroups. In contrast, members of low-status minority groups should stick to their distinctive social identity, regardless of the cost of a less positive social evaluation.

Considering the importance of the composition of one's group membership in the formation of the self concept, a general standpoint that is shared by all the theoretical approaches discussed above, the present work will focus on a further analysis of one's self representation, starting from the status position of a group in the social context. Recognizing both the need for uniqueness and the need for belongingness as universal human motivations, the present work will support the thesis that a majority status group, given its less distinctive identity, will motivate its members to individuate the self. In contrast, minority status groups are more likely to offer a salient and distinctive social identity to its members motivating them to depersonalize the self. In other words, whereas membership in majority groups is likely to nurture individuals' need for uniqueness, minority group membership should increase people's need for belongingness.

2 Stereotyping in a Minority versus a Majority Context

Prior research has widely shown that relative in-group size and relative in-group status are important determinants of various group phenomena, such as in-group favoritism (e.g., Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992) and out-group homogeneity (e.g., Simon & Brown, 1987; Brewer & Weber, 1994; Boldry & Kashy, 1999; Brauer, 2001). Despite the fact that a huge amount of studies have been conducted on the interplay between group status and group perception, the empirical evidence on this issue are inconsistent. For instance, Simon and Brown (1987) have shown that members of numerical minorities perceived the ingroup as more homogeneous than the outgroup, whereas members of numerical majorities show the opposite pattern, with the outgroup being judged as more homogeneous than the ingroup. In line with this research, Brewer and Weber (1994), defining minority versus majority membership on the basis of social status rather than relative size, have found high levels of outgroup homogeneity for majority members. However, different from Simon and Brown (1987), they also found that minority participants perceived the ingroup and the outgroup as equally homogeneous. In a similar vein, Boldry and Kashy (1999) found that members of high-status groups perceived the outgroup as more homogenous than the ingroup, whereas members of low-status groups perceived the ingroup and the outgroup as equally homogeneous. More recently, Brauer (2001), not employing the classical 2 x 2 design in which two groups judge the homogeneity of their own and the opposite group, found that

two high-status (doctors and lawyers) and two low-status groups (hairdressers and waiters) showed similar degrees of outgroup homogeneity. At least two crucial factors could account for these contradicting results. First, studies on this issue differed in terms of the type of group (e.g., minimal group, military hierarchical groups, high vs. low job status groups) that they addressed as well as in terms of the operationalization of the minority group (i.e., social status or group size). Second, several studies (Simon & Brown, 1987; Brauer, 2001) relied on perceived range distributions as a measure of group homogeneity, whereas other studies tapped the same issue by considering the general variability on similarity ratings (Boldry & Kashy, 1999), making it difficult to directly compare the reported findings. Still, studies on the interplay between group status/size and group perception converged at least on two points. First, data showed a clear general tendency for majorities to perceive more variability in the ingroup than in minority outgroups. Second, this pattern is less clear for minorities. As a matter of fact, minorities were found to perceive outgroups as more variable than the ingroup in some occasions (e.g., Simon & Brown, 1987), while they showed to judge the ingroup and the outgroup equally variable in other studies (e.g., Brewer & Weber, 1994; Boldry & Kashy, 1999).

Consistent with the literature on the perception of group homogeneity, there is some evidence showing that this process could be associated with the more general process of stereotyping. Research on the attribution of stereotypical characteristics to ingroup and outgroup members has generally shown that outgroup-stereotyping is stronger than ingroup-stereotyping (Judd, Ryan, & Park, 1991; Park & Rothbart, 1982). Most of the work on stereotyping has shown that the stronger the historical stigma against one social group, the higher the level of stereotyping versus the members of that group (for a review see, Biernat & Dovidio, 2003). With few exceptions (see Judd, Park, Ryan, Brauer, & Kraus, 1995), the literature on racism and sexism has often supported the idea that the majority stereotypes the minority more than vice versa: White Americans strongly attribute stereotypical characteristics to Black Americans (e.g., Devine & Eliot, 1995; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997), and women have to deal with stronger gender stereotyping than men (e.g., Eagly, & Wood, 1991; Eagly & Steffen, 2000).

Another relevant theory in this context, although from a different perspective, is System Justification Theory (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). The theory claims that members of stigmatized groups may internalize their inferior status out of a need to maintain the

existing social order. This theory hypothesized that one of the way to justify the nature and the appropriateness of the unequal social order is the use of stereotypes to make a distinction between high and low status groups. Consistent with this prediction, some research (Jost, 2001; Jost & Burgess, 2000) has demonstrated higher ingroup derogation and outgroup elevation when participants were members of low economic-social status groups in comparison to when they were members of a high status outgroup. In line with these results, the traditional debate on stigmatization as a process closely related to stereotyping has also supported the idea that social stigma may involve a process of internalization of ingroup stereotypes by the stigmatized members (Allport, 1954).

The present work will further investigate the idea that minority members more likely perceive the self as possessing ingroup stereotypes; for majority members, instead, we assume that they will attribute less stereotypic characteristics to the self (Latrofa, Cadinu, & Carnaghi, in preparation). This idea is consistent with a meta-analysis conducted by Mullen (1991), in which the author argued that, because of the size of the minority, their membership will be highly salient, which in turn will motivate minority members to pay greater attention to the ingroup, resulting in a tendency to perceive other ingroup members and the self as highly prototypical. In contrast, the membership of the numerically more frequent majority will be less salient. As a consequence, majorities will pay less attention to the ingroup and, hence, will be more likely to form exemplar rather than prototype representations of other ingroup members and of the self. According to Mullen (1991), group size is a central factor leading to stronger *salience* of minority versus majority groups. However, according to social categorization theory, membership *salience* emerges not only as a result of numerical inferiority (Simon & Brown, 1987), but also as a result of status (Simon & Hamilton, 1994) or other contextual factors (Haslam, Oakes, Turner, & McGarty, 1995). Our work will take into consideration groups that are minorities because of their lower social status or historical stigma.

3 Self-Stereotyping

The prediction that the self will be represented in stereotypic terms specifically by minorities but less so by majorities, is consistent with previous work on self-stereotyping (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Simon, Hadstedt, & Aufderheide, 1997;

Spears, Doosje & Ellemers, 1997). Consistent with the core prediction of Self-Categorization Theory (SCT, Turner et al., 1987), self-stereotyping is seen as a process of depersonalization by which a person perceives him or herself as an exemplar of a social group rather than a unique individual. Indeed, previous research, using different measures of self-stereotyping, has shown that people belonging to numerical or status minorities are more likely than majority members to ascribe stereotypic characteristics to the self (Simon & Hamilton, 1994). The self perception of minorities is also more influenced by meaningful social categorizations, leading to greater depersonalization compared to majorities (Simon et al., 1997). In particular, high identifiers of low status groups were found to define themselves as more similar to the prototypical ingroup member than low identifiers of low status groups and both high and low identifiers of high status groups (Spears et al., 1997; Pickett, Bonner & Coleman, 2002, Study 2; Latrofa & al., in preparation).

In some of the pre-existing literature, self-stereotyping has been measured in terms of self-description (Hogg & Turner, 1994), self-typicality (Simon et al., 1997), self-evaluation (Pickett et al., 2002), or self-construal (Guimond et al, 2006), emphasizing only the description of the self in a process that is highly dependent on the conception of the ingroup, as was illustrated above. In the literature, there are also other studies that have tried to analyze self-stereotyping considering both the individual and the group level of this process. Some of these studies have used global measures of similarity between the self and the ingroup or general measures of self-categorization (Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Spears et al., 1997). In doing so, this empirical evidence does not provide information on whether the self and the ingroup are considered similar to one another along the specific dimensions that are central to the socially shared stereotype as compared to non-relevant dimensions. Moreover, previous work (Biernat, Vescio, & Green, 1996; Ryan & Bogart, 1997; 2001) that has defined self-stereotyping considering both the individual and the group level and investigating both stereotypical versus irrelevant dimensions has one important limitation, namely the fact that the role of the social desirability of the dimensions was not considered. Although in real life stereotyping and favouritism often co-occur, they can be theoretically and methodologically distinguished (Park & Judd, 1993; Wittenbrink, Park & Judd, 1997, 2001).

The measure of stereotyping that we will be used throughout all the studies in the present work has been introduced by Latrofa et al. (in preparation). The authors introduced a novel stringent measure of stereotyping based on within-participant correlations between ratings describing the self and the group (ingroup or outgroup). More specifically, in order to compare the self and the ingroup representation in terms of a stereotype attribution process, self-stereotyping was defined as a stronger self-ingroup similarity along stereotype-relevant characteristics in comparison to stereotype-irrelevant dimensions. Moreover, to clearly differentiate stereotyping from prejudice or ingroup favoritism, within-participant correlations were controlled for valence partialling out the social desirability of each of the characteristics that were considered. In that work, strong evidence of self-stereotyping was found across three minority groups, regardless of whether the minority was numerical (Ladinos, ethno-linguistic minority in the north of Italy), based on social status (Females), or both (Homosexuals). Moreover, in Latrofa et al.'s study 3, the authors directly compared the level of self-stereotyping, ingroup-stereotyping, and outgroup-stereotyping between both low-status (females) and high-status group members (males). To do so, all participants were asked to rate: the ingroup in general, the outgroup in general, themselves, an ingroup member, and an outgroup member along a list of personality traits previously pretested as stereotype-relevant or stereotype-irrelevant. Thus, within-participant partial correlations were calculated between judgments of the group (ingroup or outgroup) and judgments of the individual (self, ingroup member, outgroup member), partialling out the social desirability of each trait. The authors obtained three correlational indexes of stereotyping: outgroup-stereotyping (i.e., the correlation between outgroup ratings and the ratings of the outgroup member), ingroup-stereotyping (i.e., the correlation between ingroup ratings and the ratings of the ingroup member) and self-stereotyping (the correlation between ingroup ratings and self ratings). Following the stringent definition of stereotyping as a stronger group-individual similarity on stereotype-relevant than stereotype-irrelevant traits, the authors found two radically different patterns of stereotyping for low- and high-status members (Figure 1).

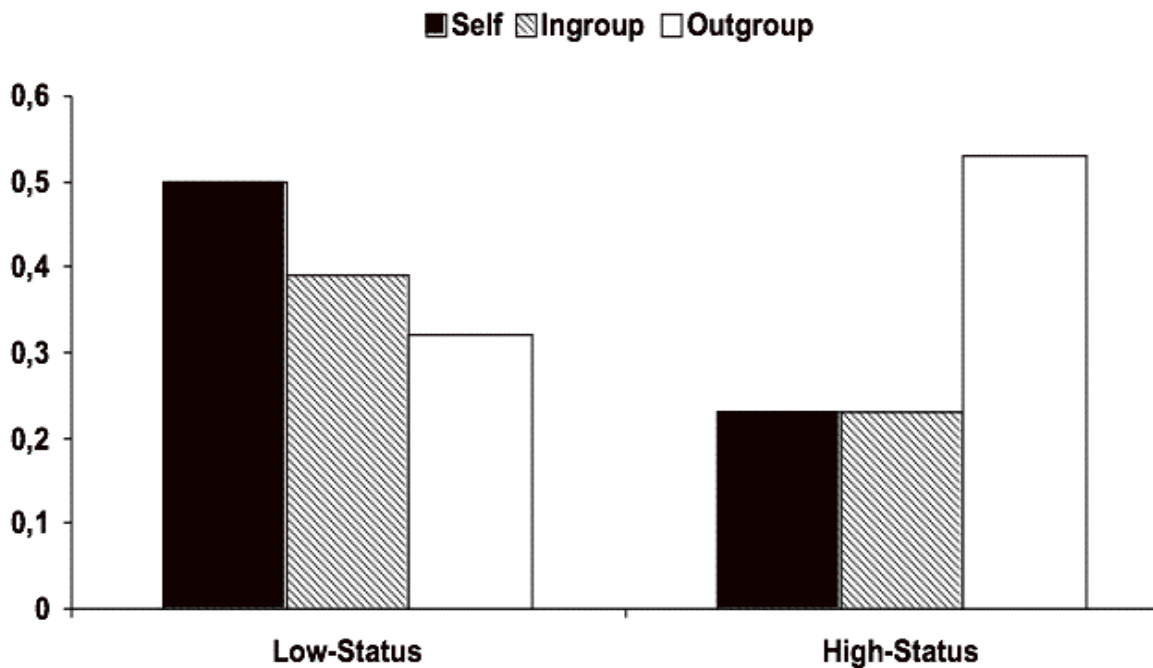


Figure 1. Type of stereotyping (outgroup, ingroup, self) as a function of the status of group members (Low or High). Stereotyping was measured calculating within-subject partial correlations between ratings of the group and ratings of an individual (self or other) on stereotype-relevant traits partialling out the social desirability out of the traits. Correlations were Fisher Z-transformed, analyzed, and reconverted into r's for presentation.

While both low- and high-status group members showed evidence of outgroup stereotyping, low-status group members confirmed to have a stronger level of ingroup- and self-stereotyping compared to high-status group members, who did not show any evidence to see either the ingroup or the self in –stereotypical terms. Moreover, in this study, ingroup identification was a significant mediator of the relation between status and self-stereotyping. In other words, the data supported the hypothesis that females engaged in stronger self-stereotyping than males because they identified more strongly with their ingroup than males. In contrast, the level of ingroup stereotyping, was not mediated by the level of ingroup identification, a result suggesting that the sense of attachment with the ingroup underlies specifically the willingness to see the self, but not other ingroup members, in terms of stereotype-relevant ingroup traits.

4 Description of the work

Stereotypes are general beliefs about a social group that characterize this group with, mostly negative (Allport, 1954) but also positive sets of attributes (e.g., Operaio & Fiske, 2004). Stereotypes serve, on the one hand, to simplify the great amount of information that is associated with each individual group member, on the other hand, to define a group as a distinct entity (e.g., Judd & Park, 1993). Because of their cognitive and social utility, stereotypes and their content are in general broadly endorsed and consensually shared in society (Haslam, 1997). Also, stereotypes have been defined as “pictures in the head” (Lippman, 1922) of the social world that can be represented both at a personal and a collective level (Stangor & Schaller, 2000). In the present work we will focus on when, how and why general group-stereotypes become self-attributes. Previous research (e.g., Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Spears et al., 1997; Latrofa et al., 2007) has already shown that stereotypes are more likely applied to the self-conception when they pertain to a social minority group. More specifically, the present work wants to analyse some of the underlying mechanisms, both cognitive and motivational, explaining why it is especially members of socially stigmatised or low status groups that are more inclined to self-stereotype than members of majority status groups. In the first chapter, we will try to demonstrate that whether self-stereotyping occurs or not depends on the level on which stereotypes are represented (the individual versus the “societal” level) and on the kind of information process that links the self and the ingroup representation. In Chapter 2, we will try to show that self-stereotyping more likely occurs for minority members especially because they tend to perceive a threat against their group membership. Finally, in Chapter 3, we will investigate whether self-stereotyping can be conceptualized as a coping strategy that helps minority members to compensate the threat of discrimination against their ingroup.

In Chapter 1, we will look at the self-stereotyping process as the result of an overlap between the cognitive representations of the self and the ingroup. This research aims to show that minority and majority members differ in self-stereotyping because they have different cognitive representations of stereotypical information both at the individual and at the group level. Several social psychological theories (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Simon, 1993) share the idea that mental representation of the self and the ingroup are inextricably linked. Only a few, however, have investigated the directionality of the process that connects the

two representations (e.g., Karniol, 2003). Is it the group that is seen as similar to the self (induction-to-the-ingroup; Krueger, 2007) or vice versa is it the self that is seen as similar to the ingroup (deduction-to-the-self; Turner et al., 1987)? Adopting the match-mismatch paradigm introduced by Smith & Henry (1996), we tested first whether self-stereotyping for minority members can be defined as an overlap between the self and the ingroup especially along ingroup stereotypical dimensions, and that this overlap is the result of a deduction-to-the-self process of ingroup-traits. In contrast, because self-stereotyping is not expected emerge for majority members, we hypothesize that when their self and ingroup descriptions overlap, it would be more likely the result of an induction-to-the-ingroup of self-traits.

In Chapter 2, we moved to the general question of why especially members of low status groups tend to self-stereotype. More specifically, we tested the hypothesis that self-stereotyping may be functional to a perception of a threatened versus favourable group identity. Experiencing and perceiving discrimination against one's own group necessarily puts individuals in a condition in which they perceive a threat against some aspects of their self-worth (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Therefore, when individuals perceive their social identity to be threatened, they have two possible ways to react. We predict that majority members would react reducing the similarity between the self and the ingroup, and distancing themselves from their social category; on the contrary, minority members should likely react to the threat by strengthening the similarity between the self and the ingroup especially on ingroup stereotypical characteristics. Starting from the model of Stigma-Induced Identity Threat (Major & O'Brien, 2005), we will specifically explore the interaction between a consensually devalued social identity and a situationally threatening cue as factors leading to self-stereotyping. Participant's gender in our experiment will account for a natural threatening ingroup identity for female participants, and a favourable ingroup identity for male participants. Moreover, the situational threatening cue that we will consider in the present research will consist in a bogus scientific article in which participants are informed those characteristics that are closely linked to their gender ingroup more likely lead to failure or success in life. We predict to find a higher level of self-stereotyping when one's gender ingroup is threatened both by the collective representation (i.e., the female low status) and by a threatening situational cue (i.e., the bogus content of the article). In contrast, we predict that a threatening situational cue will

exacerbate males' natural tendency to report low levels of similarity between the self and the ingroup.

In line with Chapter 2, Chapter 3 focuses on the perception of discrimination as a factor that motivates individuals of minority groups to cope with the threat of stigmatization. Several studies in social psychology have shown that one's sense of belongingness in a stigmatized group can influence one's individual psychological well-being (Crocker & Major, 1989; Cooley, 1956). Our research considers ingroup identification and self-stereotyping as two possible coping strategies that help stigmatized individuals to restore their psychological well-being from the direct negative effects of the perception of a threat against one's ingroup. Importantly, we will underline that, although ingroup-identification and self-stereotyping are closely linked processes (Latrofa et al., in preparation; Spears et al., 1997), they occur at different stages of one's self-conception. While ingroup identification may reflect the degree to which one likes or is committed to the ingroup, the process of self-stereotyping concerns the need to become actively part of the ingroup. Thus, we propose that the compensatory role of ingroup identification on the negative direct effect of perceived discrimination on well-being, as demonstrated by the Rejection-Identification Model (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey; 1999), is completely mediated by minority members' tendency to self-stereotype.

CHAPTER 1

The How of Self-Stereotyping: Evidence for Self-Ingroup Overlapping Cognitive Representations

1.1 Theoretical Introduction

Previous research clearly showed that self-stereotyping defined as a measure of similarity between the self and the ingroup along ingroup stereotypical traits, occurs mainly for minority compared to majority status members. Building on this research, the present study aims to show that when both minority and majority status members show overlap between the self and the ingroup they do this differently starting from different cognitive representations of the self, the ingroup and their relation. Investigating the similarity between the self and the ingroup in terms of self-ingroup overlapping representations intrinsically points to the *directionality issue*, that is, is it the group that is seen as similar to the self (social projection) or vice versa the self that is seen similar to the ingroup (depersonalization). According to Social Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987), people's self-perception is, at least partly, based on one's ingroup-perception, so that through a process of depersonalization the ingroup is used as basis to give form to the self (i.e., I am like my group). In contrast, and consistent with Social Projection Theory (for a review see, Krueger, 2007), it is also possible that the similarity between the self and the ingroup mainly derives from one's self-perception generalizing self characteristics to the ingroup as a whole (i.e., my group is like me). In general, experimental research studying self-ingroup similarity have defined self-stereotyping, as the attribution of ingroup characteristics to the self resulting from a deduction-to-the-self cognitive process (Latrofa et al., in preparation; Guimond et al., 2006). The reverse process has been called self-anchoring or social projection and consist in the attribution of personal characteristics to the ingroup resulting in an induction-to-the-ingroup cognitive process (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996). Even though this difference could appear subtle, it has recently provoked an interesting debate in the literature on social perception. Focusing on a protocentric

approach, Karniol (2003) claimed that it are especially the generic representations of prototypic others that lie at the basis of social perception; in contrast, the egocentric approach (Krueger, 2003; Mussweiler, 2003; Sedikides, 2003) assumes that the self is the default representational base.

So, even when there is overlap between the self and the ingroup this can be due to two opposing processes. In the present study, we aim to show that minority and majority group members will show these two different processes . If minority members showed a stronger tendency to show overlap between the self and the ingroup than majority members, this result would be consistent with the process of self-stereotyping and the greater overlap for minority members would be conceived as the result of a deduction-to-the-self process. Instead, it is hypothesized that when majority members' self-description overlaps with that of the ingroup this overlap would be the result of a self-anchoring or social projection kind of process. As such, we will investigate the processes of self-stereotyping and self-anchoring in the same experimental design comparing self-ingroup overlapping traits of minority versus majority status group members.

1.1.1 Self-Ingroup Overlap

The idea that the mental representation of the self and of the ingroup are inextricably linked is proposed by several social psychological theories. “Optimal Distinctiveness Theory” (Brewer, 1991) argues that the self-concept is characterized by the features that typically distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup. Similarly, the “Egocentric Social Categorization Model” (Simon, 1993) predicts that following an egocentric principle of what is mine and what is not-mine, individuals are led to describe themselves mainly along unique ingroup attributes that they have not in common with the outgroup. From a different perspective, “Social Identity Theory” (Tajfel, 1979) and “Social Categorization Theory” (Turner et al., 1987) hypothesize that through a process of depersonalization, people perceive themselves as interchangeable exemplars of the ingroup so that ingroup attributes became part of the self.

Even though these theories have a long tradition in social psychology, relatively few researches have tried to develop experimental paradigms to directly investigate the cognitive representation of the self in relation with the ingroup. The most well-know

paradigm has been introduced by Smith & Henry (1996). These authors readapted an existing response time technique of Aron et al. (1991) that initially aimed to investigate the overlap between the self and the representations of close partners, in such a way that it allowed them to adopt it to measure the interplay between the self and the ingroup. Specifically, Smith and Henry (1996) wanted to show that the self and the ingroup have overlapping representations. The adapted paradigm consisted in two phases. First a paper and pencil task was presented, in which participants rated themselves, the ingroup and the outgroup, along a list of generic personality traits on Likert-type scales. In the second phase, participants had to judge the self again on a computer task along the same list of traits responding with a yes or no key. Smith and Henry reasoned that reaction times on a computer task in which participants are asked to decide as fast as possible whether a trait is self-descriptive or not should be facilitated when these traits describe the ingroup in a similar way (i.e., traits on which the ingroup and the self-ratings match). Instead, traits that describe the ingroup and the self in a different way (i.e., traits on which the ingroup and the self-ratings mismatch) should decrease the ease with which people are able to make self-descriptions. Using this paradigm the authors confirmed this hypothesis showing that reaction times to make self-descriptions decreased for matching compared to self-ingroup mismatching traits. Similarly and more recently, Coats et al. (2000) extended the same match/mismatch effect to attitudes.

Importantly, the authors of the previous studies explained this facilitation effect of self-ingroup matching characteristics on the self-descriptiveness task in terms of a deduction-to-the-self process. Years later, however, Cadinu & De Amicis (1999) implemented the same research paradigm of Smith & Henry (1996) criticizing their supposed evidence for the occurrence of a deduction-to-the-self mechanism. These authors slightly changed the method of Smith and Henry adding the ingroup as a target condition in the computer task. Their results demonstrated that reaction times on an ingroup-descriptiveness task, as well as those on a self-descriptiveness task, were facilitated along matching-traits compared to mismatching-traits. Cadinu and De Amicis concluded that these results give clear support to the existence of an overlap in the representation of the self and the ingroup. Still, from these findings it is impossible to clearly infer if ingroup characteristics become self-features or vice versa, if it are self-characteristics that are generalized to the ingroup. At the same time, Cadinu & De Amicis (1999) found that participants were generally faster in

judging the self compared to the ingroup. This finding may suggest that, when considering generic traits not necessarily linked with the stereotype of a certain social group, likely they will be more easily represented at the level of the self compared to that of the ingroup.

1.1.2 Self-Stereotyping or Self-Anchoring

Recently, Otten & Epstude (2006) revived the directionality issue of the self-ingroup overlap adopting the same experimental paradigm illustrated above (Smith & Henry, 1996). These authors demonstrated that in the presence of ambiguous attributes individuals tend to infer ingroup characteristics from the self (self-anchoring). They focused their attention on so-called ill-defined characteristics or those traits that are rated by participants as neutral in describing the ingroup, or the self, (i.e., a 4 on a 7-point scale) and on which afterwards participants were forced, while a dichotomous choice (yes or no), to describe again the ingroup, or the self, on the computer task. Analyzing participants' reaction times on ingroup-ill-defined traits (but at the same time self-well-defined), evidence for a self-anchoring process was found, in that dichotomous ingroup responses were faster when matched the self-ratings on the questionnaire task. This finding shows an anchor-effect to the self-representation when participants were forced to attribute a trait to the ingroup that previously had been rated as neutral for the ingroup-description. In contrast, focusing on self-ill-defined attributes (ingroup-well-defined) no evidence for a directional process was found; in other words, dichotomous self-responses did not differ on matched or mismatched self-ratings. The authors concluded that when considering ambiguous traits, it is more likely that a self-anchoring process will occur rather than self-stereotyping. Moreover, the authors suggested that to find evidence for the two possible processes on well-defined traits it would be necessary to take into account the stereotypicality versus non-stereotypicality of these dimensions.

Building on the literature reviewed above, the present study aims to further investigate the nature of the self-stereotyping process. The general prediction that will be tested is that self-stereotyping for minority members can be defined as an overlap between the self and the ingroup especially along ingroup stereotypical dimensions, and this overlap would be considered the result of a deduction-to-the-self of ingroup traits. In contrast, because self-stereotyping should not emerge for majority members, we expect that when their self and

ingroup descriptions match this overlap should be more likely the result of an induction-to-the-ingroup of self traits.

To test these hypotheses, we adopted the same paradigm used in previous research (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006) to investigate the link between self and ingroup representations. However, the approach of the present study differed in many respects from that of previous work. First, the minority versus majority context was introduced focusing on the participants' gender category: females as the minority status group and males as the majority status group. Second, both the self- and the gender group-descriptions were not simply studied along personality traits in general, but were looked at as a function of previously pre-tested stereotypical, counter-stereotypical, or gender-irrelevant traits. Third, considering self-stereotyping in terms of the overlap between the self and the ingroup, we focused our reaction time analysis on those traits that were previously rated by participants as descriptive of both the self and the ingroup (MatchYY traits) in the questionnaire task (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999). Analysis on matching traits will suggest evidence for a deduction-to-the-self process if latencies will be faster on the dichotomous ingroup judgments than on self judgments; vice versa evidence for an induction-to-the-ingroup process could be inferred from faster reaction times on self judgments than on ingroup judgments. Indeed, traits that are both ascribed to the self and the ingroup but that clearly show to be more easily (i.e., faster) assigned to one level than to the other are more likely represented and defined at this level. As such, a trait that is ascribed faster to the self compared to the group is more likely represented at the level of the self and attributed to the group as whole due to a generalization process. Instead, when a trait tends to be defined at the level of the group as shown by faster reaction times at the group level, it will be attributed to the self through a deduction-to-the-self process. Following this reasoning that focuses on traits for which the self and the ingroup match and based on our predictions on the phenomenon of self-stereotyping, stronger evidence of the deduction-to-the-self process should be found for minority members, especially on stereotypical traits; in contrast, we predict stronger evidence for an induction-to-the-ingroup process for majority members, independently of the traits' stereotypicality.

1.2 Method

1.2.1 Participants

Two hundred and four participants took part in this study, 100 females and 104 males. They were all students recruited on the Campus of the University of Padova. The average age was 23 ranging from 19 to 37 years.

1.2.2 Procedure

The experimental procedure was very similar to that introduced by Smith & Henry (1996) and readapted by several others researchers (e.g., Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006). All participants were conducted in the laboratory in groups of 2 to 5, although they conducted the tasks individually. They were told that the study consisted of several parts, both a paper-pencil and a computer task. Participants were informed that comparing the different kind of tasks the study aimed to investigate how people form impressions about social groups.

First, participants received a questionnaire including in a fixed order: a scale of gender identification; two scales of trait ratings one judging the self and the other judging the typicality of each trait in describing the ingroup; and, finally, some personal information (age, sexual orientation, profession). Immediately afterwards, participants were asked to fill in another questionnaire including several multiple-choice questions about generic issues as a filler task. Finally, participants were asked to evaluate again either the self or their gender ingroup (depending on the condition) but in this case on the computer. At the end of the computer task participant were fully debriefed.

1.2.3 Stimulus Materials

Questionnaire Task

Ingroup Identification. In order to make one's gender category salient, participants' level of identification with their own gender ingroup was measured at the very beginning of the questionnaire. Participants expressed their level of agreement on a scale ranging

from 1 to 7 (*Not at all* to *Very Much*) along 19 affirmations of which, some pertained to gender identification itself (e.g. “I feel part of the group of women/men”; “Being a woman/man is a central part of my self-image”), while others were more related to the perception of social discrimination against their own gender group (e.g. “Most people think that women have little influence in our society”; “In general, women are respected in the society”). A factor analysis with an oblimin rotation resulted in a two-factor solution: one included twelve items of identification, and the second factor comprised four items of perceived discrimination¹. Both subscales were reliable ($\alpha = .91$ and $\alpha = .78$ for the identification and the perceived discrimination indexes respectively).

Self-Ratings. All participants rated the self, always as the first target. They were asked to describe themselves along 32 personality traits using a scale ranging from 1 to 9 (*Not at all* to *Very Much*). The list of adjectives included: 16 stereotype-relevant traits, 8 of which were feminine (orderly, sensitive, sentimental, delicate; nasty, impressionable, fragile, fearful), 8 masculine (vigorous, spontaneous, self-ironical, sturdy; rough, witless, mummy’s boy, insensitive), and 16 gender-irrelevant traits (e.g., punctual, serious). Within each type of trait, half of the traits were desirable to possess (e.g. orderly) and the other half were undesirable (e.g. fearful)².

Ingroup-Ratings. In accordance with participant’s gender they rated their own ingroup along the same 32 personality traits. They were asked to assess how much each adjective described the Female/Male group as a whole on a scale ranging from 1 to 9 (*Not at all* to *Very Much*).

Filler Task

With the intent to divert participants’ attention from the previous trait rating tasks, they were asked to answer to 50 multiple-choice questions about general knowledge in geography, nature, history, biology, and politics.

¹ Three of the initial 19 items did not load on any of the two factors, therefore they were discarded from further analyses.

² A pretest was conducted in order to select traits that were feminine, masculine, and irrelevant to gender stereotypes. Unlike participants in the experiment who had to give their personal opinion, participants in the pretest were asked to report what they thought society thinks of females and males as groups in general. Relevant traits were selected so that they were stereotypical for one group and at the same time counter-stereotypical for the other gender group. Doing so we selected 8 feminine traits (4 positive and 4 negative) that were also masculine counter-stereotypical traits and 8 masculine traits (4 positive and 4 negative) that were also feminine counter-stereotypical traits. The other 16 selected traits were judged as irrelevant in describing females and males.

Computer Task

Half of participants was asked to rate the self again along the same 32 personality traits that appeared in the questionnaire; whereas the other half was asked to rate their gender ingroup. Each trait appeared in the middle of a computer screen, and remained until participants responded. Only two answers were allowed: yes = the trait is descriptive, or no = it is not descriptive relative to the target. Participants were told to answer as quickly as possible using one of the two keys on the computer keyboard indicating Yes (left keys) or No (right keys). After pressing a key, the screen remained blank for 1500 milliseconds, before a new trait appeared. The order in which traits appeared was randomized for each participant.

1.3 Results

1.3.1 Preliminary Analysis

Stereotype Consensus. In a first step we explored whether participants in our experiment actually shared the same gender group representation in terms of stereotypical and irrelevant traits compared to participants in the pretest. A 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 3 (Trait Stereotypicality: Feminine, Masculine, Irrelevant) mixed ANOVA was run on participants' ingroup ratings. A main effect of Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,404) = 25.94, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$, and participants' Gender emerged, $F(1,202) = 14.26, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Moreover, consistent with the results of the pretest, the interaction between these two variables was significant, $F(2,404) = 582.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .74$. As predicted, women represented their ingroup more with feminine traits ($M = 6.40$) compared to both masculine ($M = 3.91; t(99) = 23.82, p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 5.04; t(99) = 19.86, p < .001$). In contrast, men described the male group as a whole with masculine traits ($M = 5.64$) more than with both feminine ($M = 4.02; t(103) = -14.72, p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 5.03; t(103) = 8.29, p < .001$)³.

³ We ran the same analysis adding Trait valence (Positive and Negative) as a within participant variable. The three-way interaction between Gender, Stereotypicality and Valence was found $F(2,404) = 7.14, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$. In addition, we tested the same ANOVA separately along positive and negative traits. For both for the positive, $F(2,404) = 368.35, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .65$, and the negative traits, $F(2,404) = 474.69, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .70$, the interaction between Gender and Trait Stereotypicality was significant and in the expected direction.

Self-Ingroup Similarity. Although it was not the main goal of the present study, for consistency with all the other studies that are included in this thesis, we investigated the level of self-stereotyping, in terms of similarity between self and ingroup descriptions. We obtained four Self-Stereotyping indexes calculating within-participant correlations between self and ingroup ratings separately for stereotype-relevant⁴ and stereotype-irrelevant traits, and for positive and negative traits. We conducted a 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 2 (Trait relevance: Relevant vs. Irrelevant) X 2 (Trait valence: Positive vs. Negative) mixed ANOVA on the Fischer-Z transformed correlations (Michela, 1991). We found a main effect of participants' Gender, $F(1,197) = 25.37, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$, indicating that female participants showed stronger correlations between self and ingroup than males. Importantly, the previous effect was qualified by a significant interaction with Trait relevance, $F(1,197) = 6.59, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Consistent with previous studies (Latrofa et al., in preparation), this interaction showed that female participants described themselves similar to their ingroup especially along stereotype relevant traits ($M = .48$) compared to the irrelevant traits ($M = .34; F(1,197) = 8.59, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$). On the contrary, males generally showed a lower similarity between the self and the ingroup both on relevant ($M = .18$) and irrelevant traits ($M = .22$), which did not differ from each other ($F(1,197) = 0.46, n.s.$). This interaction clearly replicated (Latrofa et al., in preparation,) that self-stereotyping is a process occurring for women ($M = .48$), as a minority status group, and not for men ($M = .18; F(1,197) = 29.33, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$), as the majority status group. It is noteworthy to discuss the role of Trait Valence, $F(1,197) = 17.23, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, on the level of self-stereotyping. Trait Valence interacted both with participant's Gender, $F(1,197) = 4.56, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$, and with Trait relevance, $F(1,197) = 5.15, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Moreover the previous interactions were qualified by a marginally significant three-way interaction between Gender, Trait relevance and Trait Valence, $F(1,197) = 3.03, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Interestingly, analyzing the latter interaction separately for positive and negative traits, we found a significant two-way interaction between Gender and Trait Relevance, $F(1,198) = 9.94, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$, only for the negative traits: for females the

⁴ We collapsed feminine and masculine traits as stereotype-relevant traits because they were selected both as stereotypical and at the same time counter-stereotypical for the relative gender group. Moreover, since we used a similarity index, we expected the same type of correlation between self and ingroup ratings both on stereotypical (the more to the self, the more to the ingroup) and on counter-stereotypical traits (the less to the self, the less to the ingroup).

similarity between the self and the ingroup along negative relevant traits tended to be higher ($M = .57$) compared to negative irrelevant traits ($M = .45$; $F(1,198) = 3.71$, $p = .055$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$); on the contrary, male participants showed higher self-ingroup similarity on the negative irrelevant traits ($M = .31$) than on negative relevant traits ($M = .15$; $F(1,198) = 6.45$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$). Although the Gender by Relevance two-way interaction did not emerge along positive traits, ($F(1,198) = 0.38$, *n.s.*), pairwise comparisons confirmed that only female participants stereotyped themselves as shown by significant higher correlation on positive relevant traits ($M = .38$) than irrelevant ($M = .23$; $F(1,198) = 5.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$); males did not show this difference ($M_{Relevant} = .21$; $M_{Irrelevant} = .12$; $F(1,198) = 2.14$, *n.s.*). This result further supported the idea that self-stereotyping is a process occurring only for minority members. In addition, almost paradoxically, the latter result indicates that self-stereotyping not only derives from a similarity between self and ingroup on positive stereotypical traits but also and more strongly on negative ingroup stereotypical characteristics⁵.

Self-Ingroup Overlap. In line with previous work using the same experimental paradigm (e.g., Smith & Henry, 1996), we coded questionnaire ratings for the self and the ingroup as follows: responses ranging from 1 to 4 were codified as ‘NO’ and responses ranging from 5 to 9 were codified as ‘YES’⁶. This procedure allowed us to create four possible combinations relative to the overlap between the self and ingroup ratings: 1) matchYY (Yes to the self and yes to the ingroup); 2) matchNN (No to the self and No to the ingroup); 3) mismatchYN (Yes to the Self and No to the ingroup); 4) mismatchNY (No to the Self and No to the Ingroup). Table 1.1 shows the percentage of observations that was obtained for each of the four combinations separately for female and male participants. Independently from the stereotypicality of the traits, we obtained the highest number of observations for the matchYY index both for female and male participants.

⁵ Although ingroup identification was included in the questionnaire mainly to make participants’ gender salient, we investigated it as a between participant factor splitting the sample in low and high identifiers. Including ingroup identification in the ANOVA on the self-stereotyping indexes never interacted with the other variables. In line with previous research, female participants identified with their gender ingroup ($M = 5.28$) more strongly than males ($M = 4.96$; $t(202) = 2.79$, $p < .01$). In addition, females perceived to be discriminated against ($M = 3.94$) more than males ($M = 2.73$; $t(202) = 11.25$, $p < .001$).

⁶ We divided responses into YES and NO considering that the midpoint 5 in the scale coincided also with the median along all questionnaire ratings. Using the median split allowed us to obtain a quite balanced number of YES (59%) and NO responses (41%).

Table 1.1. Percentage of observations for each self-ingroup overlap indexes.

	Self-Group Overlap Indexes			
	matchYY	matchNN	mismatchYN	mismatchNY
<i>Female</i> Participants	43%	24%	12%	21%
<i>Male</i> Participants	39%	21%	17%	23%

In order to look at the self-stereotyping process, not only in terms of correlation between self and ingroup ratings, but more in terms of the actual overlap between the self and the ingroup, we decided to conduct, as for the correlational indexes, a 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 3 (Trait Stereotypicality: Stereotypical, Counterstereotypical, Irrelevant) X 2 (Trait valence: Positive vs. Negative) mixed ANOVA on the number of observations for the matchYY index⁷. Two main effects emerged: participants' Gender, $F(1,202) = 14.18, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ and Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,404) = 172.41, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .46$, that were qualified by their interaction $F(2,404) = 15.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Consistent with the analysis including the correlational index of self-stereotyping, this interaction showed that the self-ingroup overlap for female participants was strongest on stereotypical traits ($M = .61$) compared to counter-stereotypical ($M = .26$) and irrelevant traits ($M = .43$); in contrast the overlap between the self and the ingroup for male participants was similar for stereotypical ($M = .45$) and irrelevant ($M = .43$) traits and in comparison smaller for counter-stereotypical traits ($M = .24$). Most importantly, the self-ingroup overlap on stereotypical traits was larger for females ($M = .61$) than for males ($M = .45; F(1,202) = 34.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$) and no difference was found between females and males either for the counter-stereotypical ($F(1,202) = .68, n.s.$) or the irrelevant ($F(1,202) = .01, n.s.$) traits.

⁷ Considering the Stereotypicality and Valence of the traits, we obtained the matchYY indexes computing the proportion of the number of yes/yes responses for each type of trait divided by the total number of traits that were presented. For instance, we obtained a matchYY-stereotypical-positive index computing the number of matchYY divided by 4 (i.e., the amount of stereotypical positive traits considered). This approach allowed us to compare the overlap on stereotypical, counter-stereotypical and irrelevant traits independently of the absolute number of traits that were presented to participants (8 stereotypical, 8 counterstereotypical, 16 irrelevant).

Moreover, as for the self-ingroup correlational analysis, Trait Valence, $F(1,202) = 455.41, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .69$, plays an interesting role. Again, Trait Valence interacted both with participant's Gender, $F(1,202) = 4.85, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$, and with Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,404) = 7.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Moreover, the previous interactions were qualified by a significant three-way interaction between Gender, Trait Stereotypicality and Trait Valence, $F(2,404) = 19.38, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$. As above, analyzing the latter interaction separately for positive and negative traits, we found a significant two-way interaction between Gender and Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,404) = 39.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .16$, for the negative traits, but not for the positive traits $F(2,404) = 2.01, n.s.$. However, for both positive and negative traits, the overlap between the self and the ingroup on stereotypical traits was larger for female than for male participants ($M_{Females} = .44; M_{Males} = .24; F(1,202) = 28.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12; M_{Females} = .77; M_{Males} = .67; F(1,202) = 7.96, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$, for negative and positive traits respectively).

1.3.2 Differential Representations of Self-Group Overlap

To analyse the response time data as a function of the kind of overlap between the representations of the self and the Ingroup, we eliminated responses faster than 300 ms and slower than 5000 ms as recommended by Ratcliff (1993). In addition, all within participant errors were eliminated from the reaction time analysis, which were defined as the discrepancies between responses given in the questionnaire (e.g., 'Yes' rating, along the trait 'sensitive' when judging the self) and those given in the computer task (e.g., 'No' button, to the same trait 'sensitive' when judging the self). Furthermore, the remaining reaction times were log-transformed to normalize the reaction time distribution (Fazio, 1990). To ease interpretation, however, raw means are reported.

In a first step, independently from the traits' stereotypicality, we investigated whether our data confirmed the original effect showing faster responses judging the self (Smith & Henry, 1996; Coats et al., 2000) than the ingroup (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999) especially along traits on which the self and the ingroup ratings matched. We conducted a mixed model analysis with the individual response times as units of analysis. The final model included: participants' Gender (Female vs. Male), and computer Target (Self vs. Ingroup), both as between participants variables, Self-Description (Yes vs. No, as coded from the

questionnaire data), Ingroup-Description (Yes vs. No, as coded from the questionnaire data), and Trait Valence (Positive vs. Negative trait, as defined by the pretest), with the last three variables being within participant variables. From this analysis two main effects emerged, one regarding Trait Valence, $F(1,894) = 14.78, p < .001$, and the other including participants' Gender, $F(1,189) = 3.75, p < .05$. The previous effects were qualified by their interaction, $F(1,895) = 4.72, p < .05$, indicating that men were faster on positive ($M = 1235$ ms) than negative traits ($M = 1318$ ms; $F(1,103) = 15.43, p < .001$), while women were equally fast on positive ($M = 1182$ ms) and negative traits ($M = 1209$ ms; $F(1,99) = 2.65, n.s.$)⁸. Moreover, Gender interacted with the Target that had to be judged in the computer task, $F(1,189) = 4.60, p < .05$, showing that females tended to be generally faster in judging the ingroup ($M = 1152$ ms) compared to the self ($M = 1,237$ ms; $F(1,198) = 3.25, p = .07$), while males were faster responding to the self ($M = 1225$ ms) than to the ingroup ($M = 1336$ ms; $F(1,206) = 5.65, p < .05$). Most importantly and replicating previous work, we found an interaction between participants' Self-Description and Ingroup-Description, $F(1,755) = 17.30, p < .001$, indicating that participants, independently from the computer Target were always faster on traits for which the self and ingroup description positively matched (matchYY $M = 1209$ ms) compared to traits that were only attributed to the self (mismatchYN $M = 1268$ ms; $F(1,184) = 19.89, p < .001$); similarly, when the two target negatively matched (matchNN $M = 1193$ ms) participants tended to be faster than when the traits were only attribute to the ingroup (mismatchNY traits $M = 1288$ ms; $F(1,198) = 2.59, p = .11$). No other effects emerged from this analysis.

1.3.3 Self-Stereotyping versus Self-Anchoring

In order to test whether the overlap between the self and the ingroup is the result of a deduction-to-the-self process or is rather due to an induction-to-the-ingroup process, we analysed reaction times relative to those traits for which participants indicated yes for both their self and their ingroup description on the questionnaire (i.e., matchYY). Indeed, the

⁸ Less important for the present purpose, Trait Valence interacted with participants' Self-Description, $F(1,659) = 4.60, p < .05$, and this effect was also qualified by a three way interaction including Target, Valence and participants' Self-Description, $F(1,659) = 15.55, p < .001$. The latter interaction generally showed participants' tendency to respond faster on positive relative to negative traits, especially for those traits that were attributed to the self in the questionnaire when judging the self on the computer task.

MatchYY observations exactly indicate the overlap between individuals' representation of themselves and of their ingroup⁹. Moreover, according to previous research (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999), when one focuses exclusively on matchYY traits, analysis will show evidence for a deduction-to-the-self process if participants' latencies are faster on the dichotomous ingroup judgments than on self judgments; instead, evidence for an induction-to-the-ingroup process could be inferred from faster reaction times on the self compared to ingroup judgments.

We conducted a mixed model analysis including Gender (Female vs. Male), computer Target (Self vs. Ingroup), and Trait Stereotypicality (Stereotypical, Counterstereotypical, Irrelevant), with the first two variable as between participant variables and the last one as a within participant variable. A significant interaction emerged between Gender and Target, $F(1,33) = 5.33, p < .05$), showing that females tended to be faster judging the ingroup ($M = 1153$ ms) than the self ($M = 1205$ ms; $F(1,289) = 2.16, p = .14$); in contrast, males were faster responding for the self target ($M = 1158$ ms) compared to the ingroup ($M = 1220$ ms; $F(1,278) = 7.75, p < .01$). Moreover, Gender interacted with Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,51) = 17.16, p < .001$, indicating that females, independent of the target that they were judging, were faster in saying yes to feminine traits ($M = 1045$ ms) in comparison to both masculine ($M = 1330$ ms) and irrelevant traits ($M = 1173$ ms; $F(2,212) = 15.05, p < .001$). In a similar vein, male participants tended to show the shortest latencies for masculine traits ($M = 1145$ ms), although this response was not significantly different from both feminine ($M = 1298$ ms) and irrelevant traits ($M = 1235$ ms; $F(2,174) = 4.75, p < .05$). Finally and as expected, a three-way interaction was found between Gender, Trait Stereotypicality and Target, $F(2,51) = 9.88, p < .001$, (see Figure 1.1). In order to get a better understanding of this three-way interaction, we decided to run the analysis including Target and Gender as between participant factors separately for each type of trait.

As expected, the mixed model on the latencies relative to the ingroup stereotypical traits showed a significant two-way interaction between Gender and Target, $F(1,196) = 7.10, p < .01$. Consistent with our hypothesis, only women showed to be significantly faster judging stereotypical traits at the level of the ingroup ($M = 954$ ms) compared to that of the self ($M = 1134$ ms; $F(1,97) = 10.95, p = .001$). Instead, men tended to be faster judging the self (M

⁹ Moreover, in order to avoid too large a number of factors that are accounted for in the model we only focused on the matchYY traits.

= 1120 ms) rather than the ingroup ($M = 1171$ ms), although not significantly, $F(1,99) = .40, n.s.$.

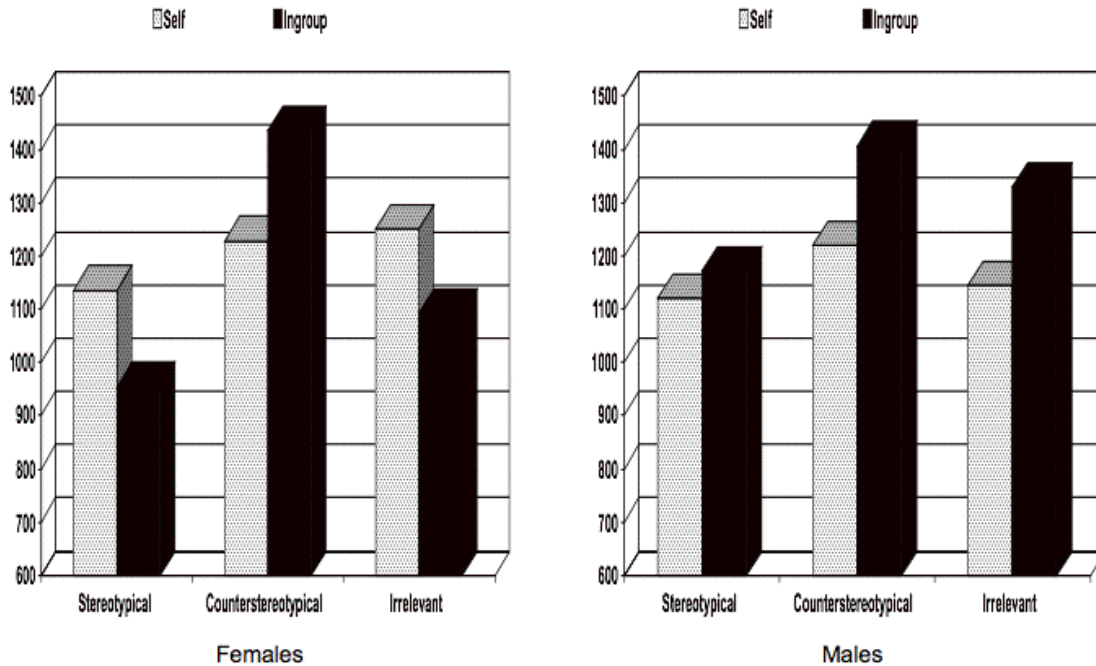


Figure 1.1. Mean raw reaction times for traits that were both attributed to the self and the ingroup in the questionnaire as a function of participants' Gender, Target and Trait type.

In contrast and consistent with our expectation, the above interaction between Gender and Target did not emerge along counter-stereotypical traits, ($F(1,163) = .04, n.s.$). Instead, a main effect of Target emerged $F(1,163) = 4.82, p < .05$. On traits that were stereotypical of the opposite gender group, both male and female participants were faster at saying yes when judging the self ($M = 1,224$) compared to the ingroup ($M = 1,424$).

Finally, we found a similar two-way interaction between Gender and Target for irrelevant traits as we found for stereotypical traits, $F(1,200) = 11.41, p = .001$. On those irrelevant traits that participants ascribed both to the self and the ingroup this interaction showed that women were faster in judging the ingroup ($M = 1092$ ms) than the self ($M = 1251$ ms; $F(1,98) = 3.94, p = .05$); in contrast, men were significantly faster in judging the self ($M = 1145$ ms) compared to the ingroup ($M = 1329$ ms; $F(1,102) = 7.50, p < .01$). This last result gives further support for the hypothesis that minority members derive their self-

conception from their representation of the ingroup. In contrast, majority members are more inclined to generalize personal characteristics to their ingroup.

1.4 Discussion

Consistent with previous work showing that self-stereotyping occurs especially for minority members and not for majority members (e.g., Latrofa et al., in preparation; Simon & Hamilton, 1994), the present study aimed to demonstrate that this distinction is due to differences in the cognitive representations of the self and the ingroup. Building on the literature that investigated the interplay between the mental representations of the self and the ingroup (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006), the present experimental paradigm allowed us to get some insight on differences in the overlap of the mental representations of the self and the ingroup held by minority or majority members.

First of all, the data replicated that, although both minority (females) and majority (males) members shared a consensus relative to the stereotypicality of the traits that characterize their own gender group, only the minority group members tended to apply these gender stereotypes to describe the self. This finding emerged not only on the “classical” measure of self-stereotyping in terms of a higher self-ingroup correlation, but also when adopting a measure that simply counted the amount of overlap between the two representations. Counting those traits that were previously rated by participants as descriptive of both the self and the ingroup (MatchYY traits) in the questionnaire task (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999), we found that the amount of traits for which the self and the ingroup match was overall greater for females than for males. Moreover, while the male participants showed an equally large overlap between self and ingroup on both stereotypical and irrelevant traits, females showed a higher amount of matching traits on the stereotypical characteristics. In other words, we demonstrated that self-stereotyping for minority members can be defined as a larger cognitive overlap between the self and the ingroup especially along ingroup stereotypical dimensions; in contrast, consistent with the absence of self-stereotyping for majority members, we found that their self-ingroup overlap is smaller, compared to that of minority group members, and undifferentiated for stereotypical and irrelevant traits.

Most importantly, in the present study we wanted to analyze the *directionality* of the self-ingroup overlap more closely: Is it the group that is seen as similar to the self (induction-to-the-ingroup; Krueger, 2007) or vice versa is it the self that is seen as similar to the ingroup (deduction-to-the-self; Turner et al., 1987)? We addressed this issue readapting the paradigm that was originally introduced by Smith & Henry (1996; but see also Cadinu & de Amicis, 1999; Coats et al., 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006). First of all, and in line with previous research, the reaction time analysis replicated the facilitation effect on matching traits compared to mismatching traits (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006). Participants, independently of whether they were judging the self or the ingroup in the computer task, were always faster on traits for which the self and the ingroup description matched compared to traits that were only attributed either to the self or to the ingroup. Moreover and because we were specifically interested to understand the self-stereotyping process, we conducted further reaction time analysis focusing only on those traits that were previously rated by participants as descriptive of both the self and the ingroup (MatchYY traits) in the questionnaire task (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999) taking into account the stereotypicality of these traits. As predicted, females showed faster reaction times judging the ingroup than the self, especially along ingroup stereotypical traits. Faster latencies on the ingroup-target can indicate that this stereotypical information is mainly represented at the group level rather than at the level of the self. As such, this pattern supports our hypothesis that for minority members the self-ingroup mental overlap can be the result of a deduction-to-the-self process of ingroup stereotypical information. In other words, females tend to self-stereotype in the true sense of the word, that is, describing the self in terms of group stereotypes instead of vice versa taking the self as a template to characterize females in general. The absence of this ingroup facilitation effect along stereotypical traits for male participants indicated that, even in the presence of a self-ingroup overlap, for them it is not possible to deduce any information about the directionality of the interplay between self and ingroup. A tentative answer could be that both the self and the ingroup representations influence each other in a bi-directional way (Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999).

In contrast, looking at the counter-stereotypical matching traits, both minority and majority group members showed a facilitation effect when judging the self compared to the ingroup. This result makes a lot of sense if one thing that these traits are anything but

stereotypical of one's own group, so hardly represented at the ingroup level. As a consequence, when only looking at the reaction times of traits that were attributed both to the self and the ingroup, it is logical to expect that these traits will be more easily described at the level of the self both for minority and majority members.

Finally, reaction time analysis along stereotype-irrelevant traits, surprisingly at first glance, generally replicated what we found on stereotypical traits. Indeed, latencies along stereotype-irrelevant traits were facilitated at the ingroup level for minority group members; in contrast they were faster at the level of the self for members of the majority. These findings, however, give further support to our prediction that the mental overlap between the self and the ingroup even on irrelevant traits is due to a deduction-to-the-self process for minority members, while it is more likely to reflect an induction-to-the-ingroup process for members of the majority.

All together these findings allow us to infer that minority members, consistent with the high salience of their group membership (Hogg & Turner, 1987), more easily engage in a process of depersonalization (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979; SCT, Turner et al, 1987) through which they built their self-image on the basis of their group-representation. Instead, majority members, in line with their higher need for distinctiveness (ODT, Brewer, 1991), tend to engage in a process of self-anchoring (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996); meaning that even when there is an overlap between the description of the self and the ingroup it is more likely the result of a generalization of self traits to the group as whole.

CHAPTER 2

The Why of Self-Stereotyping: The Central Role of an Ingroup Threatening Identity

2.1 Theoretical Introduction

The present line of research focuses on the role of self-stereotyping when one's social identity is threatened. Experiencing and perceiving discrimination against one's own group necessarily puts individuals in a condition in which they perceive a threat against some aspects of their self-worth (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998).

One of the more evident effects of self-threat due to ingroup stigmatization is the phenomena called 'stereotype threat' that was first introduced by Steele & Aronson (1995; 2000). These authors have demonstrated that the awareness of negative ingroup stereotypes can lead individuals both to increase the fear to be judged just on the basis of these stereotypes, and also to perform in a way to confirm them. Another important aspect of the self-concept that is affected by a threatened social identity is self-esteem. Having a devalued social identity may lead to low levels of both personal and collective self-esteem (Cooley, 1956); however this can also guide stigmatized group members to compensate their threatened identities through the engagement of direct (Crocker, & Major, 1989) and indirect (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999) strategies of coping.

The present experiment aims to investigate the role of a threatened ingroup identity on the tendency to stereotype the self for minority and majority groups. The general assumption here is that when individuals perceive their social identity to be threatened they have two possible ways to react. One would be to reduce the similarity between the self and the ingroup distancing oneself from one's social category. In contrast, the alternative strategy would consist in strengthening the similarity between the self and the ingroup especially on ingroup stereotypical characteristics. We predict that while the former reaction will be preferred by majority members, the latter, somewhat counter-intuitive strategy, will be chosen by minority group members. As such, we would demonstrate that

is the threatened condition of the ingroup that leads individuals to stereotype the self, supporting the contention that the process of self-stereotyping is a coping strategy by which minority group members restore their own identity when it is threatened at the social level.

Starting from the model of Stigma-Induced Identity Threat (Major & O'Brien, 2005), we will specifically explore the interaction between a consensually devalued social identity and a situationally threatening cue as factors leading to use self-stereotyping as a coping strategy.

2.1.1 The Stigma and The Ingroup Identity Threat

The model of Stigma-Induced Identity Threat proposed by Major & O'Brien (2005) integrates most of the previous identity threat models of stigma (Crocker, & Major, 1989; Steele et al., 2002), and theorizes that the appraisal of a threatened identity derives from three components: collective representations, situational cues, and personal characteristics. The concept of *collective representations* refers to the awareness, possessed both by stigmatized and non-stigmatized group members, of the existence of a cultural stereotype that is related to a specific stigmatized social group. In other words, all members of a culture share the same stereotypical representation of the stigmatized group, and even the stigmatized members endorse this representation. These collective stereotypes should bring stigmatized group members to perceive a threat to their personal-social identity, but should be irrelevant for non-stigmatized group members' identity. Consequently, the same *situational* (threatening) *cues* in everyday life should affect or should be perceived differently by stigmatized and not-stigmatized individuals; for instance a sexist interviewer will create different job-expectancy for a female or a male candidate. Finally, the appraisal of an identity threat may be influenced by some *personal characteristic*, such as stigma consciousness (Pinel, 1999), the relevance for the self of the domain in which the threat is formulated (Steele et al., 2002), and ingroup identification (Spears et al., 1997; Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997).

When an individual is aware of the threat to his or her social identity, he or she will need to cope with this stressful experience. Major and O'Brien (2005) distinguish the responses to identity threat in *involuntary* reactions (e.g., anxiety), that are emotional,

cognitive or physiological automatic responses that do not regulate the stressful stimuli; and *voluntary* responses, that are volitional coping strategies adopted to compensate with the painful awareness of the situation. Finally, both voluntary and involuntary responses may serve to restore self-esteem, health and psychological well-being in general (See Figure 2.1).

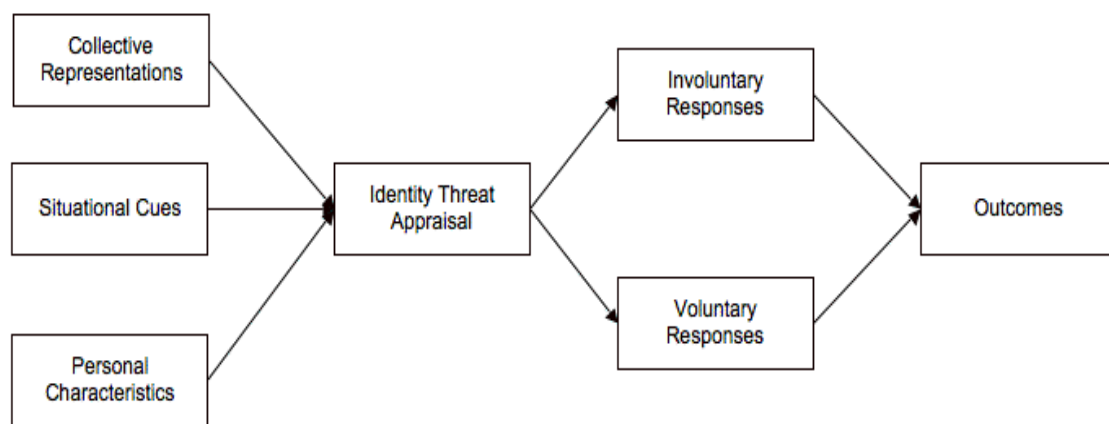


Figure 2.1. The Model of Stigma-Induced Identity Threat (Major & O’Brien, 2005).

2.1.2 Gender Ingroup Threat Appraisal

The present research will focus mainly on the first two components that are proposed by Major & O’Brien (2005) and that may trigger appraisals of one’s ingroup identity as threatening (See Figure 2.2).

As for the collective representations, we will focus on the stereotypes’ consensus about gender differences. Our culture is marked by the existence of strong gender stereotypes that historically treat women as the low status group and give men the position of a high status group (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1991; Fiske & Stevens, 1993;). Moreover, men are aware of their high social status, whereas women are conscious of their low social status relative to men (Swan & Wyer, 1997). The status difference between women and men has shown to influence a large variety of phenomena such as political attitudes and social roles (Eagly, & Diekmann, 2006), the outgroup homogeneity effect and perceived group variability (Lorenzi-Cioldi, Eagly, & Stewart, 1995). Experiencing low power and

dominance is also reflected by a higher frequency of smiling by women than men (Deutsch, 1990) and, relevant to our experiment, the tendency to engage in self-stereotyping (Latrofa & al., in preparation). In line with this reasoning, we investigated collective gender representations assuming that, due to the cultural consensus about gender status differences, the gender identity of women is always potentially threatened as opposed to male identity. In other words, participant's gender in our experiment will account for a natural threatening ingroup identity for female participants, and a favourable ingroup identity for male participants.

The situational threatening cue that we will consider in the present research will consist in a bogus scientific article which content will be manipulated. This article will state to half of the participants that certain personality characteristics that are related to their gender ingroup are more likely to lead to failure in life; in contrast the other half of the participants will be informed that the same characteristics bring forth success. The former manipulation should be perceived as a threat to participants' gender identity, in contrast the latter cue should be perceived by participants as giving them a favourable gender identity.

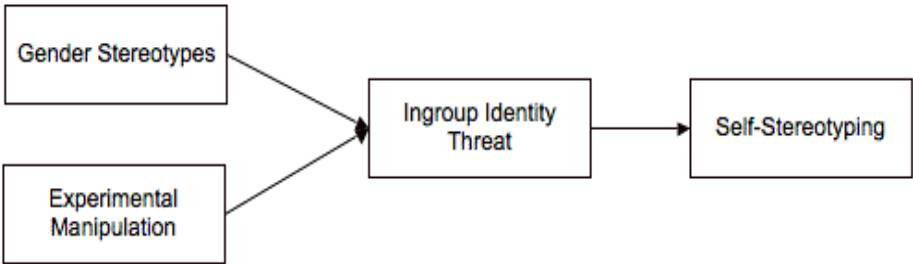


Figure 2.2. The variables investigated in our research.

2.1.3 Self-Stereotyping versus Self-Maintenance

The general idea supported in this study is that the link between the representation of the self and the ingroup may be different for members of minority and majority members as a function of a threatened versus favourable group identity. In this way, we propose that group membership serves different needs for minority and majority groups when their group identity is threatened.

Consistent with Self Categorization Theory (Turner, 1987) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), people are motivated to maintain a positive social self-image and in doing so they will likely define themselves in terms of their social group membership especially when the ingroup is put in a positive light. Several studies have shown such a tendency that has been called basking in reflected glory. This image maintenance process has been demonstrated especially through increments in one's associations with successful others. As such, it has been shown that university students are more willing to wear school-identifying t-shirts after their school's football team had been victorious rather than non-victorious (Cialdini et al., 1976). In a similar vein, people who displayed election posters in front of their houses were more willing to keep them visible after the elections when their party won the elections (Boen, Vanbeselaere, Pandelaere, Dewitte, Duriez, Snauwaert, Feys, Dierckx, & Van Avermaet, 2002). Importantly for the purpose of the present research, this phenomenon has shown to be exacerbated when one's ingroup is threatened and involves two complementary processes: a tendency to strengthen one's association with a successful group (i.e., basking-in-reflected-glory) and a tendency to lower one's association with a negative group (i.e., cutting-off-reflected-failure) (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986).

On the other hand, recent theorising on the psychology of stigmatised and devalued groups has shown that the awareness that one belongs to a devalued ingroup likely brings its members to increase the need to identify with it (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt et al., 2002). These studies demonstrated that ingroup identification helps stigmatized group members to defend their subjective well-being from the direct negative consequences of perceiving prejudice towards one's group. In contrast, members of a dominant group did not show any compensating reactions, suggesting that they did not feel threatened at the social level.

How can these two apparently diverse mechanisms to maintain one's self-image be reconciled? We propose that one important variable that is likely to determine whether one or the other strategy will be used when one's group identity is threatened is the majority or minority status of the group. While members of a high status or majority group will be more likely to use a strategy like cutting-off-reflected-failure indicating less similarity with their group when it is related to failure, we propose that minority group members, instead,

will increase their similarity with the ingroup especially on stereotypical traits in order to cope with their threatened group identity.

These predictions are consistent with Lorenzi-Cioldi's (2006) work, who illustrated how the (un)favourability of one's social group and its related perceived salience on one's self-concept, are located in the status hierarchy. Instead of differentiating between personal and social identity along a continuum, so that an increase of one extremity decreases the other as it is pointed out by SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Lorenzi-Cioldi argued that personal identity may depend as much on one's group membership as one's social identity. Importantly, according to the author this seems to be especially true if one considers the social status of the group an individual belongs to. He supports the thesis that high status group membership tend to stress personal aspects of the self-concept, in contrast low status group membership may emphasise collective aspects of the self-image. Members of a majority status group are more likely to perceive their membership just as juxtaposition, that is, they will tend to express themselves and their personal identity with few references to their membership. On the contrary, members of a minority status group tend to perceive themselves and their group as salient and overlapping entities, that is, they will likely describe themselves with the same characteristics as those of the ingroup. Analysing researches on cultural values, oppression, social attribution, co-variation, and ideology, Lorenzi-Cioldi supported this assumption showing a greater salience of personal-aspects in the definition of the self-concept of high-status group members, and in contrast of a greater relevance of collective-aspects in the way members of low-status group define themselves. Moreover, the same author underlines that considering gender differences in terms of status differences will predict that, on one hand men are motivated to enhance their personal identity in order to underline their personal tribute to the high status of their group, on the other hand women might enhance their social identity in order to defend themselves from the threat against their low status group (Rubin, Hewstone, Crisp, Voci, & Richards, 2004).

Consistent with this conceptualisation, we predicted to find a higher level of self-stereotyping when one's gender ingroup is threatened both by the collective representation (i.e., the female low status) and by a threatening situational cue (i.e., the bogus content of the article). Self-stereotyping has been defined as a stronger similarity between the self and the ingroup on stereotypical rather than on irrelevant traits. The interaction between the

natural and the experimental threat at the ingroup level will likely lead women to use more ingroup stereotypical traits in their self-representation because of the high salience of their social identity in this context. In contrast, we predict that a threatening situational cue will exacerbate males' natural tendency to report low levels of similarity between the self and the ingroup. Following the reasoning of a strategy to cut-off-reflected-failure, males should decrease the similarity with the male ingroup when their group identity gets threatened.

2.2 Study 1: Method

2.2.1 Participants

Two hundred twenty-five participants took part in this study, 112 females and 113 males. They were recruited individually on the Campus of the University of Padova. The average age was 23 ranging from 18 to 35 years.

2.2.2 Procedure

All participants were asked to fill in the same questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire included the manipulation's content. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions: half of both females and males participated in the "*Threatened Group Identity*" (TGI) condition, the other halves took part in the "*Favourable Group Identity*" (FGI) condition.

"Recently Psychologists distinguished the 'Masculine Personality' from the 'Feminine Personality'. These kinds of personalities can be held both by women and by men, featuring them with specific traits, attitudes, and behaviours. Recent studies (Graham, T., Hanusa, B.H. e Tidwell, M., 2004) have investigated these two personalities focussing on the role they have in creating better and healthier psychophysical conditions for individuals. Concretely, these studies have shown that individuals with a Feminine Personality show higher levels of psychological balance and a greater ability in social adaptation increasing the possibility to obtain success in their lives when compared with individuals with a Masculine Personality".

In the example above participants are informed that a Successful Life is related to a Feminine Personality. Hence, according to participants' gender the same manipulation represents either a FGI condition (female judges) or a TGI condition (male judges). Table 2.1 summarizes all the possible messages that were given to participants as a function of whether the feminine versus masculine personality was linked to a successful life versus failure in life, and participants' gender.

Immediately after reading the manipulation, participants had to rate a number of traits indicating the extent to which they described the self and the ingroup in order to calculate the Self-Stereotyping index. Participants also responded to an ingroup identification measure (see the Measure section for details). At the end of the questionnaire we asked participants to report some general information (age, sex, sexual orientation). Before dismissing participants they were informed about the bogus content of the initial manipulation and the true aim of the study.

Table 2.1. Overview of the experimental conditions in function of participants' gender.

	Experimental Conditions	
	<i>Threatened Group Identity</i>	<i>Favourable Group Identity</i>
<i>Female</i> Participants	Feminine Personality & Failure in Life	Feminine Personality & Successful Life
	Masculine Personality & Successful Life	Masculine Personality & Failure in Life
<i>Male</i> Participants	Feminine Personality & Successful Life	Masculine Personality & Successful Life
	Masculine Personality & Failure in Life	Feminine Personality & Failure in Life

2.2.3 Measures

Self-Stereotyping

As in previous research (Latrofa et al., in preparation), self-stereotyping has been defined as a stronger similarity between the self and the ingroup along stereotype-relevant traits rather than stereotype-irrelevant traits.

Self-Ratings. All participants rated the self, always as the first target. Thinking about themselves, they were asked to assess how typical they considered each of 32 personality traits along a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Very Atypical* to *Very Typical*). The list of adjectives included: 16 stereotype-relevant traits, 8 of which were feminine (orderly, sensitive, sentimental, home-loving; nasty, impressionable, fragile, fearful), 8 masculine (vigorous, risk-taker, self-ironical, sturdy; rough, tactless, reckless, insensitive), and 16 gender-irrelevant traits. Within each type of traits, half of the traits were desirable (e.g. orderly) and the other half were undesirable (e.g. fearful)¹⁰.

Ingroup-Ratings. In accordance with their gender, participants rated their own ingroup along the same 32 personality traits. They were asked to assess how typical they considered each adjective in describing the Female/Male group as a whole on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Very Atypical* to *Very Typical*).

The four Self-Stereotyping indexes were obtained by calculating within-participant correlations between self and ingroup ratings separately for stereotype-relevant¹¹ and stereotype-irrelevant traits, and for positive and negative traits. All four indexes were included in the analysis to investigate the differences in the level of Self-Stereotyping between the experimental conditions. As suggested by Michela (1990), in order to increase the normality of the distribution of correlations, the indexes were transformed in Z Fisher values before they were entered in the analysis.

Finally, participants were asked to rate how positive versus negative each of the 32 personality traits was on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very Negative*) to 7 (*Very Positive*)

¹⁰ A pretest was conducted in order to select traits that were feminine, masculine, and irrelevant to gender stereotypes. Unlike participants in the experiment in which participants had to give their personal opinion, participants in the pre-test were asked to report what they thought society thinks of females and males as groups in general. Relevant traits were selected so that they were stereotypical for one group and at the same time counter-stereotypical for the other gender group. Doing so we selected 8 feminine traits (4 positive and 4 negative) that were also masculine counter-stereotypical traits and 8 masculine traits (4 positive and 4 negative) that were also feminine counter-stereotypical traits. The other 16 selected traits were judged as irrelevant in describing females and males.

¹¹ We collapsed feminine and masculine traits as stereotype-relevant traits because they were selected both as stereotypical and at the same time counter-stereotypical for the relative gender group. Moreover since we used a similarity index we expected the same type of correlation between self and ingroup ratings both on stereotypical (the more to the self the more to the ingroup) and on counter-stereotypical (the less to the self the less to the ingroup).

Ingroup Identification

Participants' level of identification with their gender group was measured using the following identification items: 1) *How much do you feel part of the group of women (men)?* 2) *How proud are you to be a woman (man)?* 3) *Is being a woman (man) a central aspect of yourself?* 4) *How close do you feel to other women (men) as a whole?* 5) *How much does being a woman (man) affect your way of being and thinking?* 6) *How typical do you personally feel of the group of women (men).* Ratings were made on a scale that ranged from 1= *Not at all* to 7= *Very much*. The group identification scale showed a good internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .82).

In the present sample, the level of identification with one's gender group tended to be higher for female ($M = 4.86$) participants than for males ($M = 4.72$), although not significantly, $t(220) = 1.07$, *n.s.*. Moreover, no effect the manipulation¹² was found on the level of ingroup identification.

2.3 Study 1: Results

2.3.1 Preliminary Analysis: Stereotype Consensus

First of all, we controlled whether the experimental condition affected the stereotypicality of the male and female group along the presented traits. Participants' group ratings were analyzed using a 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 2 (Condition: TGI vs. FGI) X 3 (Trait Stereotypicality: Feminine, Masculine, Irrelevant) mixed ANOVA. Importantly, the experimental condition did not interact significantly with any of the variables in this analysis. Instead, we found main effects of Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,442) = 13.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and participants' Gender $F(1,221) = 5.59$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, that were qualified by their expected interaction, $F(2,442) = 388.05$ $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .64$, showing that, independently from the experimental manipulation, women ascribed more feminine traits

¹² Although the level of ingroup identification was measured at the very end of the questionnaire, we also investigated it as a between subject factor splitting participants as either low or high identifiers on the base of the median. Consistent with previous literature (e.g., Spears et al., 1997; Latrofa et al., in preparation) ingroup identification interacted with participants gender and trait relevance $F(1,201) = 8.91$, $p < .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, confirming that self-stereotyping is a process occurring mainly for women who highly identify with their gender group. Moreover, ingroup identification marginally interacted with the experimental condition and trait relevance $F(1,201) = 3.58$, $p = .06$, showing a tendency for low identifiers to increase the similarity with their ingroup only in the FGI condition especially on irrelevant traits.

to their ingroup ($M = 5.21$) than both masculine ($M = 3.03$; $t(111) = 18.58$, $p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 4.20$; $t(111) = -14.87$, $p < .001$). Consistently, men described the male group as a whole more with masculine traits ($M = 4.79$) than with both feminine ($M = 3.29$; $t(112) = -12.54$, $p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 3.97$; $t(112) = -10.21$, $p < .001$). Hence, the consensus about group stereotypes did not vary in function of favourable or threatening information that was linked to participants' ingroup.

2.3.2 Self-Stereotyping

To test whether participants' tendency to self-stereotype was affected by participants' gender and by the manipulation that either promoted or threatened one's gender ingroup, we conducted a 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 2 (Condition: TGI vs. FGI) X 2 (Trait relevance: Relevant vs. Irrelevant) X 2 (Trait valence: Positive vs. Negative) mixed ANOVA on the Fischer-Z transformed correlations¹³. The first two factors in the ANOVA were manipulated between participants while the latter two were entered as within participant variables. Evidence for self-stereotyping would be present if self-ingroup similarity were stronger on stereotype-relevant than irrelevant traits.

Consistent with this prediction and with previous studies (Latrofa et al., in preparation) a significant main effect of Trait relevance was found, $F(1,205) = 20.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, indicating that correlations were stronger for stereotype-relevant ($M = .35$) than for stereotype-irrelevant traits ($M = .20$). In addition, we found a main effect of Gender, $F(1,205) = 18.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, showing that female participants showed stronger correlations between self and ingroup than males. Importantly, the previous effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between Trait relevance and Gender, $F(1,205) = 28.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Consistent with previous studies this interaction showed that female participants described themselves similar to their ingroup especially along stereotype relevant traits ($M = .55$) compared to the irrelevant traits ($M = .22$; $F(1,205) = 47.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$); whereas males showed lower similarity between the

¹³ Since none of the interactions that resulted from this analysis was qualified by the positivity of the message (i.e., whether it talked about success or failure in life) we collapsed these two conditions in all analyses. Even though one could argue that psychologically it is different to feel threatened by the failure that is associated to one's own group compared to the success that is linked to the outgroup, they both constitute a potential threat to one's in-group.

self and the ingroup both on relevant ($M = .15$) and irrelevant traits ($M = .17$; $F(1,205) = 0.32$, *n.s.*). This interaction clearly replicated (Latrofa et al., in preparation) that self-stereotyping is a process occurring especially for women ($M = .55$), as a minority status group, and not for men ($M = .15$; $F(1,205) = 37.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$), as the majority status group. Less important for our predictions another two-way interaction emerged between Gender and Trait valence, $F(1,205) = 13.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, showing that, independently from the relevance of the traits, female judges rated the self and the female group as highly similar on negative traits ($M = .46$). Finally, and as expected, a three-way interaction emerged between participants' Gender, Condition and Trait relevance, $F(1,205) = 5.30$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

As illustrated in Figure 2.3, female and male participants showed two clearly different correlational patterns. Hence, we analyzed participants' self-stereotyping indices in function of Trait relevance and Condition for female and male participants separately. For female participants a main effect of Trait relevance emerged, $F(1,100) = 46.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .32$ showing that independently of a threat that was linked to their ingroup women always tended to feel more similar to their gender group on stereotype relevant compared to stereotype irrelevant traits. Moreover the experimental Condition marginally interact with Trait relevance $F(1,100) = 3.33$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.; showing that in the *Threatened Group Identity* (TGI) condition, women reported a strong pattern of self-stereotyping, with higher self-ingroup similarity on the stereotype-relevant traits ($M = .58$) than on irrelevant traits ($M = .17$; $F(1,100) = 38.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .28$); instead, in the *Favourable Group Identity* (FGI) condition, their level of self-stereotyping decreased, as shown by a somewhat smaller, but still significant difference between the self-ingroup similarity on the relevant traits ($M = .52$) in comparison to the irrelevant traits ($M = .28$; $F(1,100) = 12.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$). Thus, this pattern of results seems to suggest that women tended to self-stereotype especially when their group identity was threatened.

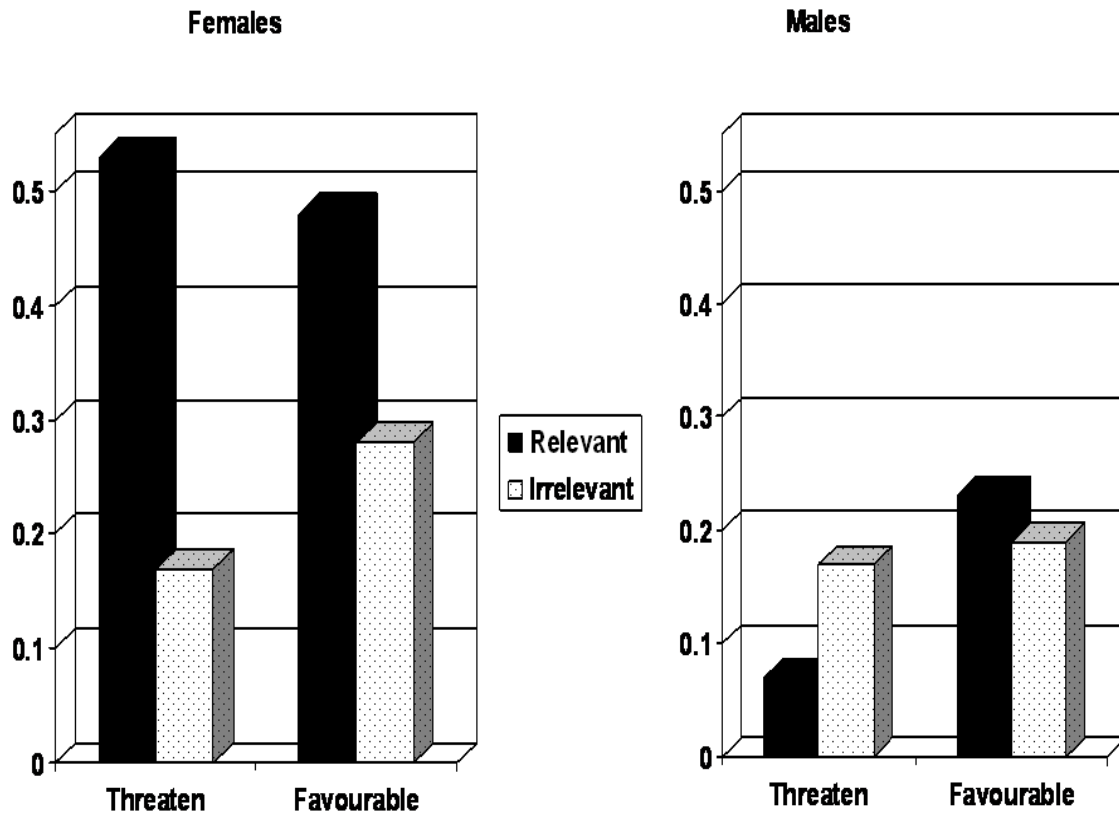


Figure 2.3. Within-participant correlations between ratings of the self and ratings of the ingroup both on stereotype-relevant and stereotype-irrelevant traits in function of participants' gender and condition (Study 1). Fisher Z-correlation, were reconverted into r for presentation in this Figure.

In contrast, Condition did not interact with Trait relevance for male participants, $F(1,105) = 2.02, p = .16$. Pairwise comparisons, however, showed an interesting effect. Even though male participants generally did not engage in self-stereotyping, as was shown by the absence of the main effect of Trait relevance, they tended to increase similarity between the self and the ingroup on stereotype-relevant traits in the FGI ($M = .23$) condition compared to the TGI ($M = .07, F(1,105) = 2.88, p = .09$). No difference emerged on the irrelevant traits between the FGI condition ($M = .17$) and the TGI condition ($M = .19, F(1,105) = .06, n.s.$). In other words, when thinking that they belonged to a successful group, or that failure was especially part of the life of women, male participants tended to act in an opportunistic way increasing their similarity with their ingroup.

2.4 Study 1: Discussion

The results from Study 1 provide some support for the general idea that belonging to a successful or unsuccessful group may affect the self-representation of its members. Importantly, however, the way in which participants' self-representations were influenced depended greatly on their group membership in a permanent minority or majority status group. When individuals belonged to a minority status group, such as the women in the present experiment, threatening their ingroup did affect their self-descriptions in that they showed a clearer self-stereotyping pattern of results than when their group identity was favourably depicted. Independently of the valence of the traits, minority members always showed a higher correlation between self and ingroup ratings on stereotype relevant compared to stereotype irrelevant traits and threatening their ingroup seemed to have an additional effect on their natural tendency to self-stereotype. In other words, threatening their group identity lead minority members to increase the similarity between the self and the group especially on stereotype relevant dimensions.

In contrast, majority members showed exactly the reverse tendency. Only when they believed to belong to a favourable group, male participants somewhat opportunistically introduced stereotype relevant characteristics in their self-description

Overall, however, the results of the present study were rather weak. On the one hand, this could be explained by the fact that our threat versus success manipulation was not convincing enough. As a matter of fact the present study did not include a manipulation check that could test the efficacy of the experimental manipulation. Moreover, it is conceivable that male and female participants react differently to feedback of failure or success because they interpret it very differently. Maybe, male participants were more sceptical towards the failure feedback since present-day reality often shows a somewhat different picture.

In light of these considerations, we decided to conduct a second experiment that introduced a more convincing manipulation of the value that is associated to one's group identity and included a manipulation check.

2.5 Study 2: Method

The present study originated as a replication of Study 1; thus the experimental design and the dependent variables remained unchanged. Still, we slightly changed the content of the manipulation to make it more convincing and introduced a manipulation check.

2.5.1 Participants

Two hundred forty-seven subjects participated in this study, 124 females and 123 males. They were recruited individually on the Campus of the University of Padova. The mean age was 22 ranging from 18 to 32.

2.5.2 Procedure

As in Study 1, the first page of the questionnaire included the experimental manipulation, but in this second study the form was changed making the abstract look like that of a real psychological journal to increase its reliability. In addition, the content of the manipulation was modified as follows:

“Recently Psychologists distinguished people in two groups: ‘The group with a Masculine Personality’ and ‘The group with a Feminine Personality’. These two groups of personality are independent from people’s gender. In other words, both women and men can belong to one of the two groups, and their membership will make that they can be described with specific traits, attitudes, and behaviours. Recent studies (Graham, T., Hanusa, B.H. e Tidwell, M., 2004) have investigated these two groups of personalities focussing on the role they have in creating better and healthier psychophysical conditions for individuals. Concretely, these studies have shown that individuals who are part of the group with a Feminine Personality show higher levels of psychological balance and a greater ability in social adaptation increasing the possibility to obtain success in their lives when compared with individuals who belong to the group with a Masculine Personality”.

Hence, this manipulation hoped to influence participants’ gender identity more clearly referring to ‘*the group with a Feminine Personality*’, instead of individuals with a ‘*Feminine Personality*’. As in Study 1, according to their gender, participants were

randomly assigned to either the *Threatened Group Identity* (TGI) condition or to the *Favourable Group Identity* (FGI) condition.

Afterwards participants had to fill in the manipulation-check task, the self-stereotyping scales, and finally the ingroup identification scale. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were informed about the bogus content of the abstract and fully debriefed.

2.5.3 Measures

Self-Stereotyping

As in Study 1, the main dependent variable was the level of Self-Stereotyping defined as a stronger similarity between the self and the ingroup along stereotype-relevant traits than stereotype-irrelevant traits.

Self-Ratings. Again, all participants rated the self, always as the first target. Thinking about themselves, they were asked to assess how typical they considered each of 24 personality traits to be in describing themselves along a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Very Atypical to Very Typical*). The list of adjectives included: the same 16 stereotype-relevant traits of the first study, and only 8 gender-irrelevant traits. We reduced the number of irrelevant adjectives to balance it with the number of both feminine and masculine traits and to make the rating task lighter.

Ingroup-Ratings. As in Study 1, participants rated their gender group along the same 24 personality traits listed on the previous page on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Very Atypical to Very Typical*).

As in Study 1 self-stereotyping indexes were obtained by calculating within-participant correlations between self and ingroup ratings separately on stereotype-relevant, both for positive and negative traits, and stereotype-irrelevant, both for positive and negative traits, that were transformed in Z Fisher values before they were entered in the analysis.

Finally, the level of social desirability of each of the 24 traits was assessed asking participants to rate their valence on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very Negative*) to 7 (*Very Positive*).

Manipulation Check

Immediately after reading the bogus article, on the second page of the questionnaire, participants were asked to report their personal opinion clarifying the reasons why the group with a feminine/masculine personality is likely to have more success/failure in life. This procedure allowed us to reinforce the salience of the manipulation's content and check the extent to which participants could imagine that the information they just received was true.

Ingroup Identification

In Study 2, the level of identification with the gender ingroup was measured using the same 6 items of Study 1¹⁴. Ratings can range from 1 = *Not at all* to 7 = *Very much*. The group identification scale showed a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$).

The level of identification with the gender ingroup was significantly higher for female ($M = 4.87$) than for male participants ($M = 4.61$, $t(210) = 2.06$, $p < .05$) confirming previous research that consistently showed that minority group members identify more strongly with their ingroup than majority group members¹⁵.

2.6 Study 2: Results

2.6.1 Preliminary Analysis

Manipulation Check Task. First of all, two independent judges coded the participants' opinions relative to the abstract's content as either consistent or inconsistent with the manipulation. Eleven percent of the sample did not answer, 12% of them had an inconsistent opinion or described reasons that could discount the bogus research that was named in the abstract, and the majority of 77% participants reported arguments in line with the content of the manipulation. We decided to include in the analysis only this part of

¹⁴ Actually, we added 13 items to the original scale all measuring identification with the intent to increase the scale's reliability. Because they did not ameliorate the α of the original scale we only considered the 6 original items in the analysis to make comparisons with Study 1 possible.

¹⁵ As in Study 1, we also investigated ingroup identification as a between subject factor, splitting the sample on the median and comparing low with high identifiers. A significant three-way interaction was found between Identification, Condition and Trait relevance $F(1,145) = 4.47$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, showing, more clearly than in Study one, a tendency of low identifiers to increase the similarity with their ingroup only in the FGI condition especially on irrelevant traits.

participants, of whom we were sure that they believed and recognized the content of the manipulation. As such, the final sample consisted of 189 participants of which 106 females (54 in TGI and 52 in FGI) and 83 males (40 in TGI and 43 in FGI).

Stereotype Consensus. As in Study 1, we investigated whether the experimental manipulation influenced participants' perception of the gender stereotypes. A 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 2 (Condition: TGI vs. FGI) X 3 (Trait Stereotypicality: Feminine, Masculine, Irrelevant) mixed ANOVA was run on participants' group ratings. Again, the experimental condition did not affect significantly any of the variables in this analysis. Moreover, also in this study, we found a main effect of Trait Stereotypicality, $F(2,370) = 11.61, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$, that was qualified by the interaction with participants' Gender, $F(2,370) = 297.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .62$, showing a pattern consistent with the expected stereotype consensus. Women ascribed more feminine traits to their ingroup ($M = 5.38$) compared to both masculine ($M = 3.21; t(105) = 18.99, p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 4.18; t(105) = -16.61, p < .001$). In contrast, men described the male group as a whole with masculine traits ($M = 4.85$) more than with both feminine ($M = 3.40; t(82) = -9.61, p < .001$) and irrelevant traits ($M = 4.23; t(82) = -6.91, p < .001$)¹⁶.

2.6.2 Self-Stereotyping

With the aim to replicate the findings of Study 1 showing the effect of a *Threatened Group Identity* (TGI) vs. *Favourable Group Identity* (FGI) condition on the level of self-stereotyping we conducted a 2 (Gender: Female vs. Male) X 2 (Condition: TGI vs. FGI) X 2 (Trait relevance: Relevant vs. Irrelevant) X 2 (Trait valence: Positive vs. Negative) mixed ANOVA on the Fischer-Z transformed correlations. The first two factors were manipulated between participants while the latter two were entered as within participant variables.

¹⁶ Both in Study 1 and 2, we also retested the level of stereotypicality for each trait that was listed in the questionnaire. On the basis of this analysis, in Study 2 we excluded the trait 'self-ironical' from the self-stereotyping index because both female ($M = 3.99; t(103) = -.084, n.s.$) and male ($M = 4.08; t(109) = .482, n.s.$) participants rated this trait not significantly different from the midpoint (=4) of the ingroup rating scale. In other words, participants in Study 2 considered the trait self-ironical as an irrelevant trait with respect to gender stereotypes. Still, inclusion of the trait in the analysis would lead to the same conclusions.

The analysis produced two main effects, one relative to participants' Gender, $F(1,149) = 14.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, indicating higher self-ingroup similarity for females ($M = .44$) than for males ($M = .18$), the other regarding Trait valence, $F(1,149) = 20.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, showing higher correlations on negative ($M = .43$) than on positive traits ($M = .19$). Consistent with Study 1 and with previous studies (Latrofa et al., in preparation), a significant two way interaction was found between Trait relevance and Gender, $F(1,149) = 11.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, showing again that women described themselves as similar to the ingroup especially on relevant ($M = .53$) rather than irrelevant traits ($M = .35$; $F(1,149) = 4.79$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.); whereas males showed lower similarity between the self and the ingroup on relevant ($M = .07$) than on irrelevant traits ($M = .29$; $F(1,149) = 6.26$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$). Hence, like previous works, we replicated that self-stereotyping is a process occurring solely for women ($M = .53$), as a minority status group, but not for men ($M = .07$; $F(1,149) = 33.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$), as the majority status group. Moreover, Trait relevance interacted with Trait valence, $F(1,149) = 4.94$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, showing that negative traits always showed the highest correlations but this difference was highest on irrelevant traits, $F(1,149) = 14.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, ($M = .15$ and $M = .50$ for positive and negative irrelevant traits respectively). In addition Trait relevance interacted with the experimental Condition, $F(1,149) = 4.78$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, showing that while relevant traits had slightly higher correlations than irrelevant traits in the TGI condition, $F(1,149) = 1.77$, *n.s.*, ($M = .31$ vs. $M = .20$ for relevant and irrelevant traits respectively), the reverse happened significantly in the FGI condition, $F(1,149) = 3.07$, $p = .08$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, ($M = .29$ vs. $M = .44$ for relevant and irrelevant traits respectively).

Contrary to expectations, the supposed three-way interaction between participants' Gender, Condition and Trait relevance did not emerge, $F(1,149) = 0.40$, *n.s.*. Still, considering our hypothesis and the results of Study 1, we decided to analyze participants' self-stereotyping indices in function of Trait relevance and Condition for female and male participants separately. As illustrated in Figure 2.4, for female participants we replicated the same pattern as in Study 1. A main effect of Trait relevance emerged, $F(1,81) = 4.85$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, confirming that women described themselves always more similar to their gender group on stereotype relevant compared to stereotype irrelevant traits. Again, the experimental Condition marginally interacted with Trait relevance $F(1,81) = 3.14$, $p = .08$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, corroborating the result that in the *Threatened Group Identity* (TGI) condition

women reported a strong pattern of self-stereotyping, with higher self-ingroup similarity on the stereotype-relevant traits ($M = .58$) than on irrelevant traits ($M = .26$; $F(1,81) = 8.85$, $p < .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$); in contrast, in the *Favourable Group Identity* (FGI) condition the self-stereotyping process almost disappeared, as shown by the similar correlations' strength on the relevant ($M = .47$) in comparison with the irrelevant traits ($M = .43$; $F(1,81) = .08$, *n.s.*). Hence, more clearly than in the previous study, these results indicate the peculiar process of women to self-stereotype especially when their gender identity is threatened.

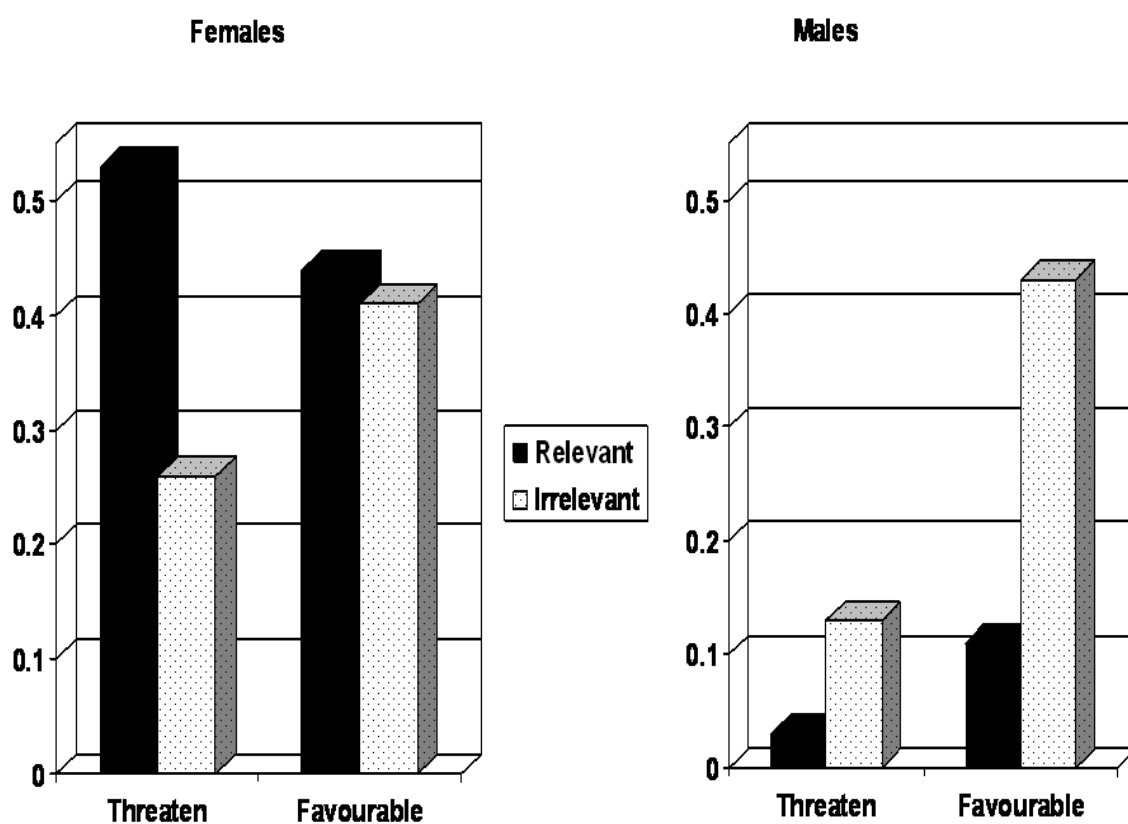


Figure 2.4. Within-participant correlations between ratings of the self and ratings of the ingroup both on stereotype-relevant and stereotype-irrelevant traits in function of participants' gender and condition (Study 2). Fisher Z-correlation, were reconverted into r for presentation in this Figure

As for male participants, analysis showed a Trait relevance main effect, $F(1,68) = 6.17$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, indicating that they felt especially similar to their ingroup on the irrelevant rather than on the stereotype relevant traits. More importantly, a marginally significant Condition main effect was found, $F(1,68) = 3.11$, $p = .08$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, that

showed that independently of the type of trait male participants significantly increased their similarity with the ingroup in FGI ($M = .29$) compared to the TGI condition ($M = .08$). Even if this main effect was not qualified by the interaction with Trait relevance, $F(1,68) = 1.80$, $p = .19$, we calculated pairwise comparisons as in Study 1. Differently from Study 1, these contrasts showed that male participants increased their similarity with the ingroup in the FGI compared to the TGI condition mainly on the irrelevant traits ($M = .45$ versus $M = .13$, $F(1,68) = 3.87$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$; for the FGI and TGI respectively). Even though the means went in the same direction no significant differences emerged on the relevant traits between the FGI ($M = .12$) and the TGI condition ($M = .03$, $F(1,68) = 0.48$, *n.s.*). In other words, similarly to male participants in Study 1, only when they think to belong to a favorable group they seem to increase their similarity with this group. However, unlike Study 1, male participants of Study 2 only showed this opportunistic behavior on gender irrelevant traits rather than on the relevant ones. This discrepancy will be discussed more deeply in the general discussion of this chapter looking at differences in the perception of traits' stereotypicality between participants in the two different samples.

Overall, the results in this study give better support to the original hypothesis underlining the central role of identity threat for minorities to stereotype themselves. Likely this is due to the more reliable manipulation we used in this study in comparison to Study 1.

2.7 Discussion of Study 1 & Study 2

In this Chapter we did a first attempt to understand why specifically members of low-status groups engage in a self-stereotyping process but not members of high-status groups. When one's ingroup identity is perceived as threatened, two possible alternative strategies can be adopted in response: a stronger individualisation process or a higher depersonalisation process. While the former process leads individuals to perceive themselves more strongly as unique individuals than as members of a social group (e.g., Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), the latter process easily results in an assimilation of ingroup stereotypical knowledge to the self (SCT, Turner et al., 1987). Starting from the model of Stigma-Induced Identity Threat (Major & O'Brien, 2005), we explored the interaction between a consensually devalued ingroup identity (female group) and a situationally

threatening cue (a bogus article) as factors leading to self-stereotyping. On the basis of this model and previous research, we expected minority group members to use an assimilation strategy, while majority group members should tend to individuate when their group identity is under threat.

Defining self-stereotyping as a stronger self-ingroup similarity on stereotype-relevant traits than on irrelevant traits (Latrofa et al., in preparation), in study 1 we found results supporting this prediction. While low-status group members reacted to the ingroup threat by strengthening the similarity between the self and the ingroup especially on ingroup stereotypical characteristics, high-status group members tended to distance themselves from their ingroup category. More specifically, we found a higher level of self-stereotyping when participants' gender ingroup was threatened both by the collective representation (i.e., the female low status) and by the threatening situational cue (*Threatened Group Identity*, TGI, condition). In comparison, self-stereotyping decreased when females were in the *Favourable Group Identity* (FGI) condition. Taking together, these results demonstrated that the threatening situational cue (TGI) exacerbates the female's natural tendency to self-stereotype, suggesting that it is the perception of threat associated to their gender ingroup that causes them to self-stereotype. In contrast, we found that males never showed a self-stereotyping process both in TGI and in FGI conditions, consistent with their assumed natural tendency to perceive their gender ingroup as unthreatening. Interestingly, however, males showed a tendency to increase their similarity with the ingroup along stereotypical information only when they thought they belonged to a successful group, or that failure was especially associated to women. In other words, although males never engaged in a self-stereotyping process, they tended to be opportunistic assimilating the self to the ingroup only when their group was seen under a favourable light.

Study 2 aimed to replicate these findings introducing a more rigidly controlled experimental manipulation. Considering only participants for whom we were sure that they believed and recognized the content of the manipulation in the analysis, the data from Study 2 mainly replicated that from Study 1. Specifically, females stereotyped themselves significantly more in the *Threatened Group Identity* condition than in the *Favourable Group Identity* condition, a pattern that gives further support to the general prediction that low-status members use self-stereotype as a strategy to deal with their threatened ingroup. As for male participants, similarly to Study 1, we found that they decreased their similarity

with the ingroup only when they thought to belong to an unfavorable group¹⁷. Indeed, a marginally significant effect of the experimental Condition showed that males in the *Threatened Group Identity* condition showed the lowest general similarity with the ingroup, consistent with the phenomena of cutting-off-reflected-failure (Snyder et al., 1986) that predicts a lower association with a negative threatening ingroup. As such, male participants showed to be opportunistic increasing their similarity with the ingroup only when this was put in a positive light.

In other words, where low-status group members (females) seem more responsive to the threat against their ingroup in the tendency of assimilating the self with the ingroup, in contrast high-status group members (males) appear more sensitive to a successful view of the ingroup in order to show self-ingroup similarity.

Finally, considering the data both from Study 1 and 2, we can conclude that it is the appraisal of the threat at the ingroup level that is internalized by low-status members which in turn triggers their need to become similar to their group especially along both positive and negative stereotypical traits. Although it can appear paradoxical at first glance, this research clearly suggests that self-stereotyping is a strategy that minority members adopt to defend themselves from the threat against their ingroup. The next Chapter more clearly investigates this possibility further testing the hypothesis that self-stereotyping is a coping mechanism that allows minority members to deal with their threatening social condition.

¹⁷ In order to explain this discrepancy between both studies it could be worthwhile to look at differences in the perception of the pre-tested traits between studies. It could be, for example, that male participants in Study 2 increased their similarity with the ingroup in the *Favourable Group Identity* condition along irrelevant rather than relevant traits because they actually perceived these traits as more stereotypical rather than irrelevant as was initially intended. This explanation found some evidence first by an independent sample t-test showing that male participants in Study 2 ($M = 4.23$) rated the supposed-irrelevant traits differently than males in Study 1 ($M = 3.97$; $t(194) = -3.46$, $p < .001$). This difference did not occur either on feminine or masculine traits for males, and never occurred either comparing female participants in Study 1 and Study 2 along the different types of traits. In addition, a one sample t-test (test value = 4, the midpoint on the scale) confirmed that males in Study 2 ($M = 4.23$) rated the supposed-irrelevant traits as more stereotypical in describing the ingroup ($t(82) = 3.57$, $p < .001$) than males in Study 1 ($M = 3.97$; $t(113) = -0.74$, *n.s.*).

CHAPTER 3

Because of Self-Stereotyping, ... I Feel Better

3.1 Theoretical Introduction

In this chapter, we would like to analyze and investigate the motivations that underlie the self-stereotyping process. Specifically, we consider the hypothesis that people include the stereotypical characteristics of the group that they belong to in their self-representation because of its ego-protective function. As such, we propose that the self-stereotyping process could increase personal well-being.

As discussed in the general introduction, several studies on self-stereotyping (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Simon, & al., 1997; Spears, & al., 1997; Simon, & al., 1995; Biernat, & al., 1996; Pickett, & al., 2002; Sinclair, & al., 2006; Guimond, & al., 2006) have shown the specificity of this process for disadvantaged group members relative to privileged groups. Independently of this line of research, several studies in social psychology have shown that one's sense of belongingness in a stigmatized group can play an important role on the level of one's individual psychological well-being. Actually, there is a longstanding controversy on the effect that the perception of discrimination would have on one's psychological well-being (for a recent discussion see Major & O'Brien, 2005). Consistent with the 'discounting hypothesis' (Crocker & Major, 1989) the perception of being discriminated would have a direct and positive effect on one's level of self-esteem; in contrast, the 'looking-glass' approach to the self (Cooley, 1956) supports the idea that internalizing a negative view of others on one's group membership should decrease the level of individual self-esteem of members of a disadvantaged group.

Our approach will more specifically focus on the indirect coping strategies through which disadvantaged group members compensate the potential negative effects of discrimination. Starting from the Rejection-Identification Model (Branscombe, Schmitt, &

Harvey, 1999), we hypothesize that members of stigmatized groups cope with the negative effects of discrimination, not only through the tendency to increase ingroup identification as proposed by Branscombe and colleagues (1999; Schmitt et al., 2002), but especially through the ascription of ingroup stereotypical features to one's self image. In other words, the self-stereotyping concept will be added to the rejection-identification model and introduced as a necessary variable in explaining the way in which stigmatized group members deal with the negative effect of their group membership on psychological well-being.

3.1.1 Discrimination and Psychological Well-Being

According to Crocker & Major (1989), one's membership in a stigmatised group, *per se*, has an ego-protective function on one's self-conception; indeed, negative outcomes that are linked to one's social status are attributed externally when blaming the discrimination of others, thus protecting the self as the responsible cause of these negative events. Specifically, these authors consider three mechanisms through which one's group membership may protect the level of self-esteem in stigmatised members. The first process regards people's tendency to justify personal negative outcomes in terms of prejudice against the ingroup. Stigmatized individuals have the possibility to explain their disadvantaged situation externally, in terms of prejudice towards their group, instead of considering their negative outcomes as the result of internal causes, such as their lack of abilities or skills. Secondly, the self-esteem of disadvantaged group members is protected because sticking to one's group favours ingroup social comparisons and leads to avoid outgroup comparisons. Generally, social comparisons are motivated by the need to enhance the self (Wills, 1981) so that stigmatized members who especially seek similar others can easily stay away from the certain painful or unpleasant comparison with privileged members. Thirdly, Crocker & Major (1989) argue that minority members protect their self-esteem valuing especially those domains in which ingroup members usually do well not taking into account those dimensions on which their group stereotypically fails.

In contrast, Schmitt & Branscombe (2002) reviewed several lines of research showing a negative effect of stigma consciousness on psychological well-being. Several studies

clearly show that the perception that one is a victim of prejudice undermines both physical (for a recent review see Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999) and several mental health aspects. It increases negative affect (e.g., Frable, Platt, & Hoey, 1998), depression (e.g., McCoy & Major, 2003), anxiety (e.g., Baumeister & Tice, 1990), and diminishes one's life satisfaction (e.g., Cozzarelli & Karafa, 1998). Moreover, there is abundant empirical evidence showing increments in psychological and physical health problems that more likely occur for a variety of disadvantaged groups such as women (e.g., Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002), African-Americans (e.g., Branscombe & al., 1999), lesbian and gay (e.g., Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999). These studies are all consistent with the sociological 'looking-glass' approach (Cooley, 1956), theorizing that when individuals recognize to be rejected by a dominant outgroup because of their group membership, they tend to internalize this negative conception and consequently show lower levels of self-worth. In conclusion, Schmitt & Branscombe (2002) argue that for stigmatized group members attributions to prejudice may painfully affect internal aspects of the self, rather than just discount the self as the cause of negative outcomes.

Moreover, as pointed out by Schmitt & Branscombe (2002) and also by Crocker & Major (1989) (see Major & O'Brien, 2005, for a recent discussion), there are several factors that may moderate the widespread self-protective effects of stigmatization. One of these factors is the stability of the stigma. Specifically, we will consider the condition in which victims actively internalize the negative attitudes toward their ingroup. When these individuals are aware of their negative ingroup stigma, this will likely have a painful direct effect on their psychological well-being.

In general, the main concept that can be derived from the research discussed above is that stigmatized individuals will need to cope with the threat of stigmatization. Devalued group members may cope with stigma with a variety of strategies. As mentioned before, the 'discounting hypothesis' (Crocker & Major, 1989) proposed some direct coping mechanisms, as using group discrimination to make external attributions, or preferring ingroup comparisons to avoid those with the outgroup, or devalue the domains in which one is stereotyped that helped stigmatized members to protect themselves. However, even in the presence of these direct coping strategies, in specific context (e.g., presence of an historical stable stigma), stigma may continue to affect the psychological well-being negatively, motivating stigmatized individuals to protect themselves through indirect

coping strategies (Branscombe et al., 1999). Our research will specifically consider two of these possible indirect coping strategies, that is, ingroup identification and self-stereotyping.

3.1.2 Coping with Discrimination: the Rejection-Identification Model

According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and several empirical findings (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; McCoy & Major, 2003), when individuals feel rejected by a powerful outgroup, they will more likely increase the level of identification with their disadvantaged ingroup. Ingroup identification is a process by which individuals can satisfy their need to belong. More specifically, if one is a member of a discriminated group, the higher the level of identification with the ingroup, the higher the desire to be accepted by a group. Thus, when rejected by a privileged outgroup, the need to feel accepted by the ingroup should become stronger as well as the motivation to identify with the ingroup, even if it is a disadvantaged group.

Since it is easier to bear one's predicament with others instead of alone, ingroup identification has great potential to increase personal well-being. In line with this reasoning, Branscombe et al. (1999) demonstrated that perceived discrimination against the ingroup increases the level of identification with the stigmatized group indirectly compensating for the negative effect that the perception of discrimination has per se on one's psychological well-being. They tested the rejection-identification hypothesis using structural equation modelling studying a sample of African Americans. They found that perceptions of discrimination had a negative and direct effect on participants' subjective well-being. At the same time, the more participants perceived discrimination towards their group, the more they identified with it. Identification on its turn was positively related to psychological well-being. As such, ingroup identification has shown to be an efficient strategy to protect the self from the negative consequences of social stigma.

More recently, Schmitt et al. (2002) provided another empirical test assessing the importance of ingroup identification as a mechanism to protect one's psychological well-being from the negative effects of discrimination. In this case, the rejection-identification model was tested for both a high (i.e., men) and a low status group (i.e., women). The data

clearly showed that perceptions of discrimination had a negative effect on the well-being of female participants but had no effect at all for the psychological well-being of males. Moreover, the more women perceived discrimination, the higher was the level of identification with their ingroup leading again to increments in psychological well-being. As for the African-Americans (Branscombe & al., 1999), these data show that ingroup identification helps disadvantaged group members to defend their subjective well-being from the negative consequences of being a member of a stigmatized group. Importantly, the dominant group of white participants did not show any of these compensating reactions, suggesting that they did not feel threatened in the first place or that ingroup identification has another role for dominant groups.

3.1.3 Ingroup Identification and Self-Stereotyping

As we referred to in the general introduction, it is important to remember that higher levels of identification with the minority ingroup have been associated with strong predispositions to describe oneself along the stereotypical dimensions of the stigmatized ingroup (Spears et al., 1997, Study 1 and 2; Pickett, Bonner & Coleman, 2002, Study 2; Latrofa et al., in preparation).

Important for our present aim, however, is to highlight the specificities of ingroup identification and self-stereotyping. While ingroup identification mostly reflects the degree to which one likes or is committed to one's group, the process of self-stereotyping concerns the need to become actively part of one's group. To say it in the words of Spears et al. (1997), ingroup identification has to do with how a group is part of the self, whereas self-stereotyping refers to how the self is part of a disadvantaged group. Defining both processes in these terms, we propose that both ingroup identification and self-stereotyping are important in order to compensate for negative outcomes due to one's group membership. As stated above, it is especially through feelings of belongingness, which go beyond mere commitment, that disadvantaged group members actively become part of their ingroup and are able to increase their psychological well-being. Following this line of thinking, we suggest that individuals' perceptions of discrimination will increase the need to feel socially accepted by boosting their commitment for their stigmatized ingroup (ingroup identification), that on its turn motivates participants to rebuild their own self

view on the basis of the stereotypical dimensions of the ingroup (self-stereotyping). Therefore, a novel aspect of the present study is the hypothesis that the compensatory role of ingroup identification on well-being is completely mediated by minority members' tendency to self-stereotype (see Figure 3.1).

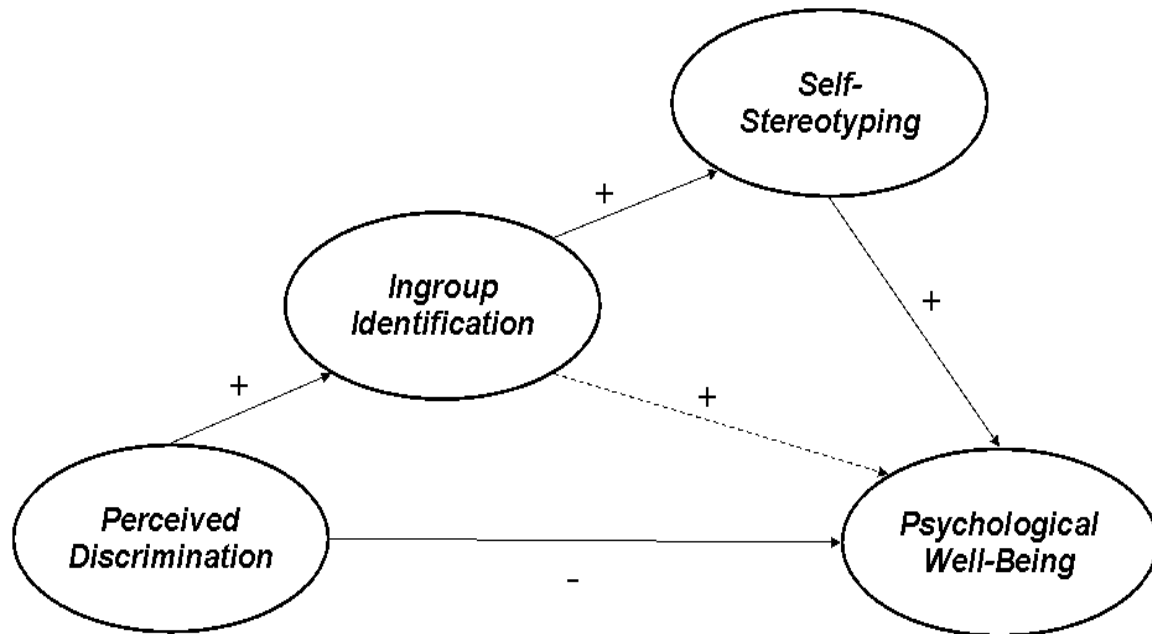


Figure 3.1. Linked between the main variables investigated in our model on the role of Self-Stereotyping on Well-being.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Participants

One hundred sixty-seven Southern Italians (86 men, 81 women) participated in this study. Participants were last-year high school students that were recruited from the same High School in a big city in the south of Italy. The mean age of the sample was 19. All participants identified as Southerners. A large majority (97.6%) of the participants was born in the South of Italy, 94.3% had a Southern father and 92.2% had a Southern mother. Almost all participants resided all their lives in the South of Italy (95.2%)¹⁸.

¹⁸ Only 8 participants affirmed to have lived in the Nord of Italy for an average period of 6 years and a half (ranging from 1 to 17 years).

3.2.2 Procedure

Within each class, participants were asked to take part in a research on “Self-perception and group membership”. At the beginning of each session, the experimenter who was from the south of Italy herself gave general instructions to the students to fill-in the questionnaire. The order of the measures was randomized within each questionnaire, except for the Identification Scale that was always presented on the first page and the demographic items (sex, age, place of birth, mother’s place of birth, father’s place of birth, profession) that always appeared on the last page.

3.2.3 Measures

Perception of Discrimination

Participants expressed their level of agreement on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Totally Disagree* to *Totally Agree*). In order to distinguish Personal and Group Discrimination we submitted the ten items¹⁹ of the Perceived Discrimination Scale to a factor analysis with an oblimin rotation. All items except two had high to moderately high loadings on the first factor in the non-rotated factor solution. These two items clearly loaded on one factor after rotation and consisted of the personal discrimination items. The other two factors that emerged, instead comprised two different aspects of the group discrimination scale (i.e., ingroup disadvantage and outgroup privilege) and will be discussed in the Group Discrimination section. A finer description of the Personal and Group Discrimination measures follows.

Personal Discrimination. One factor consisted of 2 items and was related to participants’ perception of being personally discriminated as a member of the Southern Group (e.g., “ I have personally been a victim of prejudice because I am a Southerner”) ($\alpha = .57$).

Group Discrimination. The other two factors included the remaining 8 items that were all associated with the general perception of discrimination against the Southern group as a

¹⁹ These ten items were embedded in a larger set of items that asked participants about concrete differences between the North and the South of Italy (e.g., Health care is generally better in the North than in the South, People from the South live in a less secure environment than those living in the North). This was done to activate some of the more obvious differences between North and South among our young sample of participants who hardly had any contact with people from the North.

whole. Specifically, 4 of these items loaded on one factor clearly linked to the ingroup disadvantages (e.g., “Southerners as a group have usually been discriminated against”), whereas the other 4 items loaded on the other factor more connected to outgroup privileges (e.g., “There are privileges that only Northerners have had and that they would not have received if they would have been Southerners”). The index of *Ingroup Disadvantages* was calculated averaging the relative 4 items ($\alpha = .70$); as for the index of *Outgroup Privileges* we averaged just 2 ($\alpha = .70$) of the initial 4 items because cronbach’s alpha clearly increased when leaving out 2 items that were not properly linked to the construct of outgroup privileges.

Ingroup Identification

Participants’ level of identification with their ingroup was assessed using 5 items. Two items measured participants’ sense of *Commitment* to the ingroup (“How much do you feel part of the South of Italy?”, “How proud are you to be a southern Italian?”). The three remaining items instead indicated the *Centrality* of participants’ group membership (“Is being a southern Italian a central aspect of yourself?”, “How much does being a southern Italian affect your way of being and thinking?”, “Is being a southern Italian an important part of your self-representation?”). A factor analysis with an oblimin rotation provided two factors confirming the proposed split of the identification scale in two factors: one included the two items of Commitment, and the second factor comprised the three items of centrality. Both subscales were reliable ($\alpha = .76$ and $\alpha = .83$ for the commitment and the centrality index respectively) and all items were judged on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Not at all* to *Very much*).

Self-Stereotyping

As in previous research (Latrofa et al., in preparation), self-stereotyping has been defined as the similarity between the Self and the Ingroup along stereotypical dimensions. Participants rated both the self and their southern ingroup on 16 personality traits of which: 4 stereotypical/positive (friendly, warm, expansive, generous), 4 stereotypical/negative (noisy, fighting, superstitious, revengeful), 4 counter-stereotypical/positive (concrete, independent, organized, progressive), 4 counter-stereotypical/negative (closed, unfriendly, materialistic, stressed). The list of traits was completed with 4 neutral-filler traits including

both positive and negative ones. Participants rated always the self first followed by the inroup. They assessed how typical each trait was to the self/inroup on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (*Very Atypical to very Typical*). The self-stereotyping indexes were obtained by calculating within-participants correlations between self and ingroup ratings separately on positive-relevant²⁰ traits (*Positive Traits*) and negative-relevant traits (*Negative Traits*). To increase the normality of the distribution of correlations, both correlational indexes were transformed in Z Fisher values before they were entered in the analysis.

Finally, participants were asked to rate how positive vs. negative each of the 20 personality traits was on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very Negative*) to 7 (*Very Positive*).

Psychological Well-Being

Participants' psychological wellbeing was measured through 6 related indexes:

Positive Affect. Participants were asked to assess how often they feel six positive emotions (optimistic, glad, proud, happy, satisfied, and enthusiastic; Schmitt & al., 2002). The response scale ranged from 1 to 7 (*Almost Never to Almost Always*) and showed a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$).

Negative Affect. Similarly, participants were asked to indicate how often they feel four negative emotions (depressed, unhappy, sad, and worn-out; Branscombe, & al., 1999). As with positive affect, the scale ranged from 1 to 7 (*Almost Never to Almost Always*) and showed a good reliability ($\alpha = .79$).

*Inclusion*²¹. Following the indications of Rook (1987), inclusion was measured using four items taken from the UCLA Short-Form Loneliness Scale (Russel, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980). Participants were asked how frequently they felt: "Apart from others", "In tune with others", "Accepted by others", and how often "They could find a friend when they wanted one". The scale ranged from 1 to 7 (*Almost Never to Almost Always*) and showed a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .79$).

Self-Esteem. The 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory was used. Participants' responses ranged on a scale from 1 to 4 (*Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree*) ($\alpha = .80$).

²⁰ We consider both stereotypical and counter-stereotypical traits as traits that are relevant in describing the general stereotype of Southern Italians. Moreover since we used a similarity index we expected a similar correlation between self and ingroup ratings both on stereotypical (the more to the self the more to the ingroup) and on counter-stereotypical (the less to the self the less to the ingroup).

²¹ Positive and Negative Affect, and the Acceptance items were always presented on the same page

Life Satisfaction. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1, *Strongly disagree* to 7, *Strongly Agree*) on three items ($\alpha = .83$) (“I am pleased with my accomplishment in life”, “Although some parts of my life could be improved, overall, I have no complaints”, “I am satisfied with my life”; Schmitt & al., 2002).

Depression. We used the CES-D Scale (The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, Radloff, L.S. 1977). Participants were asked to rate how often they felt or found themselves in each of the 20 emotional situations during the last 7 days ($\alpha = .89$). The response scale ranged from 1 (*Never or Almost Never, less than 1 day*) to 4 (*Often or Always, 5-7 days*).

Additional Measures

Among the Perceived Discrimination items, we added two items related to the perception of *Illegitimacy* about the differences between the South and the North of Italy (“The differences in terms of social status between the South and the North are justifiable” (reverse code), “The differences in terms of social status between the South and the North are illegitimate”) ($\alpha = .64$).

Immediately following the identification items, two items measured participants’ perception of their own groups *Status* (“ In general, how often does the Italian Society refer to the Southern Italians as a low status group?”; “How much do you personally consider the Southern Italians as a low status group?”).

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Preliminary Analysis

For each of the subscales’ indexes obtained we report the relatively means, standard deviations, and both the obtained and the possible ranges, as shown in Table 3.1. Participants acknowledged that the Italian Society at large treats Southern Italians as a low status group ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.19$) and in general consider this status difference as illegitimate ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.55$). In contrast, they personally do not consider their own ingroup as a low status group ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.38$).

Table 3.1
Descriptive Statistics for all Measures

	M	SD	Obtained Range	Possible Range
<i>Group Status</i>				
Society	5.20	1.19	1-7	1-7
Personally	2.50	1.38	1-7	1-7
Illegitimacy	5.78	1.55	1-7	1-7
<i>Perceived Discrimination</i>				
<i>Personal</i>				
	2.87	1.69	1-7	1-7
<i>Group</i>				
Ingroup Disadvantages	4.37	1.18	1-7	1-7
Outgroup Privileges	4.79	1.45	1-7	1-7
<i>Ingroup Identification</i>				
Commitment	4.93	1.37	1-7	1-7
Centrality	3.01	1.41	1-7	1-7
<i>Self-Stereotyping</i>				
Positive Traits	.07	.55	-1.24 – 1.53	
Negative Traits	.31	.62	-1.47 – 2.80	
<i>Psychological Well-Being</i>				
Positive Affect	4.93	1.01	2.33-7	1-7
Negative Affect	3.45	1.14	1-7	1-7
Inclusion	5.27	1.15	1.50-7	1-7
Self-Esteem	3.18	.47	1.70-4	1-4
Life Satisfaction	5.17	1.25	1-7	1-7
Depression	1.81	.50	1-3.30	1-4

Using a series of regression analyses we assessed whether each subscale of psychological well-being could be predicted by personal discrimination, ingroup identification and Self-stereotyping²². Personal Discrimination tended to predict well-being negatively as far as Positive Affect ($\beta = -.01, n.s.$), Inclusion ($\beta = -.09, p = .07, n.s.$), and Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.01, n.s.$) were concerned. In the case of Life Satisfaction ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$), Negative Affect ($\beta = .10, p < .05$) and Depression ($\beta = .07, p < .01$) this tendency became significant. Although Personal Discrimination was not always a significant

²² We entered the three predictor variables simultaneously for each regression equation on the following criteria: Positive Affect $F(3, 161) = 8.31, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.12$; Negative Affect $F(3, 161) = 4.60, p < .005, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.06$; Inclusion $F(3, 161) = 9.92, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.14$; Life Satisfaction $F(3, 160) = 4.60, p < .005, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.06$; Self-Esteem $F(3, 161) = 4.68, p < .005, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.06$; and Depression $F(3, 161) = 4.99, p < .005, \text{adj. } R^2 = 0.07$. In most cases, adding the interaction terms in the regression equations did not result in a significant increment in R^2 . Only when predicting Self-esteem the interaction between Personal Discrimination and Self-Stereotyping was a predictor resulting in a significant increase in explained variance, ($R^2_{\text{change}} = .032, p < .05$).

predictor of each subscale of psychological well-being, overall the regression equations suggest that the higher the level of perceived discrimination at the personal level, the lower the level of reported psychological well-being between participants in our sample. Differently, the level of Identification with the Ingroup never had a direct significant effect on well-being: Positive Affect ($\beta = .03, n.s.$), Inclusion ($\beta = .08, n.s.$), Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.03, n.s.$), Life Satisfaction ($\beta = .13, n.s.$), Negative Affect ($\beta = -.01, n.s.$), and Depression ($\beta = -.03, n.s.$). Finally, the level of Self-Stereotyping was always a significant predictor of each measure of well being, showing a positive link with Positive Affect ($\beta = .72, p < .001$), Inclusion ($\beta = .81, p < .001$), Self-Esteem ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$), and Life Satisfaction ($\beta = .44, p < .05$), and a consistent negative relation with both Negative Affect ($\beta = -.55, p < .01$) and Depression ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$). In other words, higher levels of Self-Stereotyping were always associated with higher levels of psychological well-being.

3.3.2 Structural Equation Model Analysis

We tested the relationships among the measured variables adopting a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis using LISREL, Version 8.71 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). SEM produces several fit indexes that determine the degree to which the specified model fits the sample data. For each model we tested, we will present three fit indexes that are also reported in previous studies on the same issue (Branscombe, & al., 1999; Schmitt & al., 2002). The first is the chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit index that evaluates the degree of difference between the reproduced covariance matrix and the observed covariance matrix. Specifically, a p -value, associated with the χ^2 , larger than .05 indicates a good fit of the model to the observed data, whereas a p -value ranging between .01 and .05 indicates an acceptable fit (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Muller, 2003). Since the chi-square goodness-of-fit index is easily influenced by sample size, Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996) suggested to report the ratio χ^2 / df (numbers of degree of freedom associated with the χ^2) as a more reliable fit index. This index should be as small as possible (Schermelleh-Engel & al., 2003). A ratio value between 0 and 2 is indicative of a good fit of the tested model, whereas a ratio value between 2 and 3 indicates an acceptable fit of the model to the sample data. In addition, we will report two other descriptive measures of fit: the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Both NNFI and CFI

values can range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating better fit. For both these indexes a cut-off value of .97 specifies good fit of the tested model relative to the null model, whereas values ranging between .95 and .97 indicate an acceptable fit of the target model.

Table 3.2.
Correlations between the Measured Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Perceived Discrimination</i>													
1. Personal	–												
2. Ingroup Disadvantages	.20*	–											
3. Outgroup Privileges	-.01	.33**	–										
<i>Ingroup Identification</i>													
4. Commitment	.13	.00	-.14	–									
5. Centrality	.16*	.02	-.02	.44**	–								
<i>Self-Stereotyping</i>													
6. Positive Traits	-.03	-.03	-.15	.19*	.18*	–							
7. Negative Traits	.01	.07	-.01	.19*	.06	.34	–						
<i>Psychological Well-Being</i>													
8. Positive Affect	-.01	-.09	-.05	.21**	.03	.21**	.39**	–					
9. Negative Affect	.15*	.21**	.08	-.13	.05	-.18*	-.22**	-.58**	–				
10. Inclusion	-.14	-.08	.03	.18*	.08	.37**	.23**	.54**	-.46**	–			
11. Life Satisfaction	-.16*	-.11	.01	.19*	.07	.05	.27**	.66**	-.53**	.45**	–		
12. Self-Esteem	-.07	-.03	-.01	.11	-.09	.17*	.29*	.72*	-.58**	.54**	.63**	–	
13. Depression	.21**	.18*	.07	-.14	-.02	-.15	-.16*	-.55**	.66**	-.46**	-.49**	-.61**	–

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Sometimes, even in the presence of good fit indexes, the tested model could present paths that did not reach statistical significance; therefore for each model we also reported the significance of the hypothesized paths. Indicative in this regard are the correlations between the measured variables as shown in Table 3.2.

*Personal Discrimination: Ingroup Identification vs. Self-Stereotyping*²³.

Consistent with the Rejection Identification Model (Branscombe, & al., 1999) we proposed that perceived discrimination at the individual level would exert a direct and negative effect on personal well-being. But differently from the Rejection Identification Model we expected that the indirect and positive role of ingroup identification on psychological well-being would be completely mediated by minority members' tendency to stereotype themselves.

To test these predictions, we specified a model entering four latent factors. The first latent factor of Personal Discrimination was identified by the two items that emerged from the factor analysis. Secondly, both the Commitment Index and the Centrality Index loaded on the Ingroup Identification latent factor. The Self-Stereotyping latent factor was specified by the two correlational indexes between Self and Ingroup ratings, one including only the *Positive Traits* and the other the *Negative Traits*. Finally, all the 6 subscales assessing the level of psychological well-being in our sample (*Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Inclusion, Self-Esteem, Life Satisfaction* and *Depression*) loaded on the fourth latent factor that was named Individual Psychological Well-Being. Because both Negative Affect and Depression were negative subscales it was unlikely that the positive construct of Psychological Well-being could account for all of the covariance between these two variables. Hence, we allowed the errors associated with the latter two variables to correlate.

As expected the hypothesized model fits the sample data very well, $\chi^2(49, N = 167) = 70.24, p = .02$, the ratio $\chi^2 / df = 1.43$, NNFI = .96, CFI = .97. All of the estimated parameters were in the direction consistent with our predictions. Specifically, perceived discrimination at the personal level negatively affected the psychological well-being of members of a stigmatized group. Actually this path was not statistically significant; however, we presume that this was due to the average low level of perceived personal discrimination ($M = 2.83$) in our sample. A large majority of them (95.2%) resided all their young lives (average mean = 19) in the South of Italy, and for this reason have had very

²³ Given the low correlation between personal and group discrimination ($r = .10, ns.$) and previous results by Bourguignon et al. (2006) that underlined the specific role of perceptions of personal but not group discrimination in the rejection identification model, the present analysis only focused on participants' perception of their personal experience with discrimination. An alternative model as the one reported above that focused on perceptions of group discrimination only showed a significant negative path between group discrimination and psychological wellbeing. In line with Bourguignon et al. (2006), in this model no evidence was found for the compensatory role of identification since group discrimination was not linked with identification.

few occasions to encounter discriminative behaviours against themselves as Southern Italians. Notwithstanding the low level of perceived personal discrimination in our sample, this variable tends to have a direct and negative effect on participants' psychological well-being.

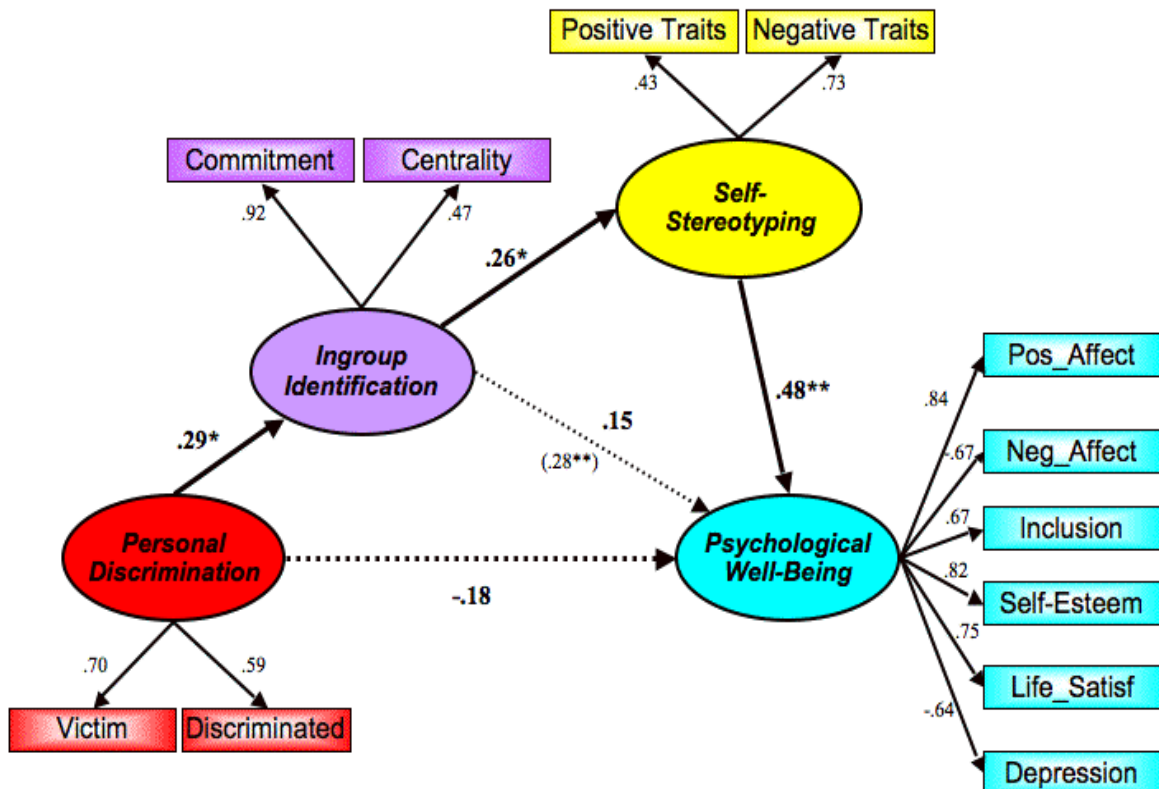


Figure 3.2. Structural Equation Model assessing both the direct and indirect effect of personal discrimination on psychological well-being between minority members. The estimated paths weights are standardized.

* $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$.

Perceiving to be discriminated at the personal level, on the other hand, significantly predicted higher levels of identification with the stigmatized group. In addition, the more participants identify with the ingroup, the more they significantly tend to stereotype themselves. Consequently, the higher the level of self-stereotyping, significantly higher is the psychological well-being reported by minority members. Finally, in this model the direct and positive effect of ingroup identification on well-being (reported between

parentheses in Figure 3.2), that supports the Rejection-Identification Model, disappeared when controlling for Self-stereotyping. In other words, when personally discriminated, the indirect and positive role of ingroup identification on psychological well-being is actually mediated by minority members' tendency to stereotype themselves.

Personal Discrimination: the central role of Self-Stereotyping.

To further support the central role of Self-Stereotyping, over the Ingroup Identification process, in compensating the direct negative effect of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being, we tested two alternative models entering always the same four latent factors as in the original model, but removing some paths. As such the following three alternative models are nested within the original model allowing to calculate the χ^2 difference test between each of the alternative models and the original model. If the χ^2_{diff} is significant, the null hypothesis of equal fit for both models will be rejected and the original model should be considered as the best of the two. (Schermelleh-Engel & al. 2003)

First, we tested a modified version of the previously described model in which we removed the path from Self-Stereotyping to Psychological Well-Being. The fit indexes of this model clearly drop with most of them falling below the value of an acceptable fit, $\chi^2(50, N = 167) = 85.47, p < .001$, the ratio $\chi^2 / df = 1.71$, NNFI = .937, CFI = .952. Moreover, the chi-square difference between this alternative and the original model $\chi^2_{diff}(1, N = 167) = 15.23, p < .001$ is significant, supporting the idea of a better fit of the original model over the first alternative model. In other words, the effect of Self-Stereotyping on Psychological Well-Being, even though its removal makes the path from Ingroup Identification on Well-Being significantly positive, is fundamental in itself to fit the observed data well. Conversely, fixing the link between Ingroup Identification and Psychological Well-being to zero in the original model did hardly vary the fit indexes, $\chi^2(50, N = 167) = 71.61, p = .02$, the ratio $\chi^2 / df = 1.43$, NNFI = .960, CFI = .969 and did not change the fit significantly compared to the original model, $\chi^2_{diff}(1, N = 167) = 1.37, ns$. These alternative models clearly show the central role of Self-Stereotyping in compensating the direct negative effect of personal discrimination on psychological well-being.

An alternative explanation for the obtained pattern of results could be found in the fact that identification and self-stereotyping are related concepts and that their role could be

easily reversed. From this point of view, increments in perceptions of Personal Discrimination would predict Self-Stereotyping which in turn would result in heightened Ingroup Identification and Well-being. To verify this possibility, a second alternative model was tested that swapped the causal relation between Self-Stereotyping and Ingroup Identification creating a direct path between Personal Discrimination and Self-Stereotyping and between Ingroup Identification and Well-being. Compared to the original model, this second alternative model has an unacceptably low fit, $\chi^2(51, N = 167) = 91.09, p < .001$, the ratio $\chi^2 / df = 1.79$, NNFI = .931, CFI = .947. In addition, the original model fits the data significantly better, $\chi^2_{diff}(2, N = 167) = 20.86, p < .001$. As such, we excluded the possibility of a direct effect of Personal Discrimination on Self-Stereotyping at the same time rejecting the alternative causal explanation from Self-Stereotyping to Ingroup Identification.

3.4 Discussion

In this chapter we further investigated the mechanisms that motivate minority members to include the stereotypical characteristics of the ingroup, even if negative, into their self-representation. Almost paradoxically, we demonstrated that self-stereotyping has an ego protective function increasing the psychological well-being of stigmatized group members.

First of all, and consistent with Chapter 2, all Southern Italian participants in our sample recognized the existence of status differences between their ingroup and Northern Italians at a societal level. Moreover, they considered this status difference as illegitimate and they tended to perceive discrimination against their ingroup. However, the average level of perceived personal discrimination was not very high for participants in our sample. Most likely this is due to the fact that our sample only included high school students and that the large majority of them resided all their young lives in the South of Italy. For these reasons even though they acknowledged the status differences at the group level, they probably had very few occasions to encounter discriminative behaviours against themselves as Southern Italians. Notwithstanding the moderate level of perceived personal discrimination in our sample, we found that the perception of personal discrimination tended to lead stigmatized members to lower their level of psychological well-being, as predicted by the 'looking-glass' approach (Branscombe et al., 1999; Cooley, 1956). The question of interest was then

how this threatening condition would motivate stigmatized group members to find strategies to cope with the social threat. The present study also made an important distinction between ingroup identification and self-stereotyping. Even if these two processes always seem to co-occur - the higher the level of identification with a stigmatized minority group, the higher the tendency to ascribe stereotypical ingroup characteristics (Spears et al., 1997; Latrofa et al., in preparation) - the present research proposed that these two phenomena arise at different stages of one's self-conception. While ingroup identification reflects the degree to which one likes or is committed to the ingroup, the process of self-stereotyping concerns the need to become actively part of the ingroup. As such, the former process is indispensable to observe the latter, while the reverse is not necessarily true.

Consistently, we hypothesized that members of stigmatized groups cope with the negative effects of discrimination, not only through the tendency to increase ingroup identification as proposed by the Rejection Identification Model (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt et al., 2002), but especially through the ascription of ingroup stereotypical features to one's self image. Adopting Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis, we tested and found support for this prediction. The proposed model, on the one hand, confirmed the Rejection-Identification Model (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt et al., 2002), with respect to the direct and negative tendency of personal discrimination on the psychological well-being of members of a stigmatized group and the compensatory role of identification in mitigating this negative effect. On the other hand, however, the proposed model gave support to the predicted central role of the self-stereotyping process in mediating the indirect and positive effect of identification on psychological well-being. The central role of self-stereotyping, over the ingroup identification process, in compensating the direct negative effect of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being, was further supported when testing alternative causal models that were nested within the original model. Analysis of three alternative models, removing the path from Self-Stereotyping to Psychological Well-Being, or fixing the link between Ingroup Identification and Psychological Well-being to zero, or swapping the causal relation between Self-Stereotyping and Ingroup Identification, never significantly increased the fit to the data of the original model.

In conclusion, the present research clearly showed that for the positive, indirect effect of personal discrimination on psychological well-being to occur it is not sufficient for a

person to like or feel close to her or his minority ingroup; instead, she or he should actually become like the group ascribing the ingroup's stereotype to the self. Following the principle that "*United we stand, divided we fall*", our model demonstrated that the best strategy that helps stigmatized group members to balance their affected well-being from their threatening condition comes from increasing the overlap between their self-description and that of the ingroup. In other words, the more they 'become the ingroup', the better they feel.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Meaning of Self-Stereotyping

1 The Dark Side of Self-Stereotyping

With the aim to clarify the meaning of self-stereotyping, the present work tried to analyze the when, the how, and the why 'individuals become the ingroup' through a process of self-stereotyping.

First of all, and in line with previous research, throughout all the studies we clearly found that self-stereotyping is a process pertaining to minority but not majority group members (e.g., Simon & Hamilton, 1994; Simon et al., 1997). We found that in an intergroup situation where status differences exist, as is the case for gender groups (Chapter 1 & 2), or for groups that are marked by a historical stigma (Southern Italians, Chapter 3), low-status group members engage in self-stereotyping, while high-status group members do not.

Secondly, defining self-stereotyping in terms of a similar attribution of stereotypical, both positive and negative, characteristics to the self and the ingroup, somehow allowed us to re-conceptualize the '*depersonalization*' process. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987), that so far introduced this phenomenon, we found that minority members perceive themselves as interchangeable members of the ingroup rather than as unique individuals. Differently from these theories, however, we also demonstrated that this phenomena does not occur just because individuals' motivation to maintain a positive social self-image. Indeed, in line with previous research (Latrofa et al., in preparation), we found evidence of depersonalization especially in the presence of a social stigma, which is, by definition, a negative instance. Moreover, we showed that stigmatized members not only ascribe the positive stereotypical features of the ingroup to the self, but internalize to the same extent the negative stereotypical characteristics of the group they belong to. From the very

beginning we found evidence showing that the more negative is the ingroup, the more ingroup members also internalize the negative ingroup's characteristics, we started to think on how this could happen? Why should stigmatized individuals strengthen the link with their ingroup when they could also exclude their negative group image from their self-description? In general, people tend to stay away from negative events and avoid to be associated with them, but membership in a stigmatized group does not lie under individuals' control. One is born black, female, or as a Southern Italian; one cannot choose to be black, or female, or a southerner. Belonging to a stigmatized group puts individuals in a somewhat unchangeable situation, limiting the ways with which they can deal with their stigma. Taking these limitations in consideration rather the opposite becomes conceivable. As such, we have assumed and found that it is exactly self-stereotyping that is one of the strategies that stigmatized members can adopt to cope with the threat of their ingroup membership.

2 The Components of Self-Stereotyping

In Chapter 1, we found data supporting the hypothesis that self-stereotyping is the result of a *deduction-to-the-self* process of ingroup stereotypical attributes. This finding is important because it sheds light on the longstanding controversy on the causal mechanism underlying the elaboration of the information linking the self to the ingroup (self-anchoring, Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996 or social projection, e.g., Krueger, 2007) or vice versa the ingroup to the self (depersonalization, Turner et al., 1987). Adopting the match-mismatch paradigm (Smith & Henry, 1996; Cadinu & De Amicis, 1999; Otten & Epstude, 2006) and focussing on traits that were both used to describe the self and the ingroup, for the first time we found evidence that minority group members are more likely to deduce information from the ingroup to the self on ingroup stereotypical traits, whereas majority group members generally tend to induce self-characteristics to the ingroup (*induction-to-the-ingroup* process). Especially the latter result shows that while stereotypes should be represented at the ingroup level by definition, this was not so evident for participants of the majority group. If one thinks about the higher cognitive salience (Hogg & Turner, 1987) of the ingroup-category for minority members, it is not surprising that for them the less expensive strategy in terms of cognitive efforts should be the acquisition of information

from the ingroup to the self. Moreover, this assumption is at least partly supported from the evidence that the ingroup-facilitation effect occurred not only along stereotypical traits but also along irrelevant ones. Reversely, because majority group members feel an increased need to differentiate and to see themselves as unique individuals (Brewer, 1991; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), their way to create an overlap between the self and the ingroup representations is an egocentric one (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996; Krueger, 2003) generalizing information from the self to the group.

On the one hand, these first findings show that belonging to a low- versus high-status group may influence the mental representation of the self and the ingroup and the way people process information (see also, Mullen, 1991); on the other hand, they are consistent with our assumption that the membership in a low- versus high-status group generally satisfy different human motivations. That is, minority status membership offers a salient and distinctive social identity to its members, increasing their *need for belongingness* that results in a depersonalization process. In contrast, majority status membership, given its less distinctive identity, nurtures individuals' need for uniqueness, leading its members to individuate the self. The findings of Chapter 2 converged with this general idea. Not only did minority members present themselves as more similar to the ingroup than majority members, but the latter also tended to include the ingroup in their self-conception only when the experimental manipulation put their group into a favourable light. Most importantly, the studies from Chapter 2 showed that for minority group members a threatening ingroup identity increased the level of assimilation of the self to the ingroup. Apparently, the threat that often accompanies one's membership in a stigmatized ingroup is, almost paradoxically, the central key to understand the greater level of self-stereotyping that is typically observed with stigmatized individuals.

A similar reasoning surfaces in yet another theoretical perspective that puts a figure-ground principle at the centre of the understanding of self-focused attention (e.g., Snow, Duval, & Silvia, 2004). Following a Gestalt perceptual principle (Kohler, 1929), Duval & Wicklund (1972) suggested that making the self figure against a background of other people should increase self-awareness. According to the findings in the present work we can argue that where minority status members more often perceive their group (i.e. Us) as figure and the self (i.e. I) as the background. Instead, majority status group members will perceive the self (i.e. I) as figure and their ingroup as the background of (i.e. Us). As such,

also this peculiar figure-ground perspective indicates that minority members will more likely engage in a process of self-stereotyping defined throughout this thesis as a process by which the “I” becomes one of “Us”.

It is important to keep in mind here that we consider both the need for uniqueness and the need for belongingness as universal human motivations. Even though minority group membership increases people’s need for belongingness, this does not necessarily exclude minority members to have a desire to feel as unique individuals. Most likely they will satisfy this latter need exacerbating comparisons with the outgroup. Even though several studies have demonstrated (e.g, Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Banse, 2005; Guimond et al., 2006) that outgroup comparison makes ingroup knowledge more relevant, even in one’s self-definition (Onorato & Turner, 2004), it could be interesting to investigate whether increased outgroup comparisons help minority members to maintain a sense of differentiation as unique individuals. In a similar vein, majority group membership tends to satisfy its members’ need for uniqueness. As such, majority members should obtain their need for belongingness making outgroup comparisons.

In light of this reasoning, it is noteworthy to consider that individuals belong at the same time to a variety of social groups, and each of them can result as more or less inclusive depending on several factors. The concept of *Social Identity Complexity* (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) is a theoretical construct that underlines how individuals subjectively represent the interrelationships among her or his multiple group identities. Although the relevance of this issue in daily live, research on the salience of a specific ingroup, and the activation of its stereotypical representations considering several possible ingroups at the same time is very new (Sinclair, 2006). It is important in order to get a further understanding of how the self is built starting from the ingroup perspective that future research considers the interrelation of the multiple ingroup identities each individual belongs to.

3 The Bright Side of Self-Stereotyping

Building on the observation that stigmatized members especially stereotype themselves when they appraise a threat at the ingroup level, in Chapter 3 we found evidence that the process of self-stereotyping somehow restores stigmatized group members’ personal

wellbeing when they perceive to be victims of discrimination. Based on previous research showing ingroup identification (Branscombe et al., 1999, Schmidt et al., 2002) to be an important mechanism that helps minorities to re-establish their psychological well-being that is potentially threatened in a direct way by the perception of discrimination against their ingroup, we demonstrated that self-stereotyping has a similar coping effect that likely plays at a more profound level of the self-construal process than ingroup identification does. Indeed, self-stereotyping completely mediated the link between identification and psychological well-being. Although we measured the level of identification with the ingroup in all the studies included in this work, we never found evidence for a central role of this process in moderating either the overlap of the self and the ingroup representations (Chapter 1), the reaction of minority group members to their threatening ingroup identity (Chapter 2), or the restoring effect on psychological well-being (Chapter 3). Instead, we replicated previous research showing that minority members identified more strongly with the ingroup than majority group members, and that higher levels of ingroup-identification were related to higher levels of self-stereotyping. Inevitably, the absence of a moderating effect, however, calls for future research that investigates the interplay of identification and self-stereotyping. One possibility is that these two mechanisms act at different stages of the self-construal process. Results from the third chapter give initial support to the idea that ingroup identification reflects the degree to which one likes or is committed to the ingroup, while the process of self-stereotyping concerns the need to become actively part of the ingroup. Thus, another important challenge for future research should be to further test the hypothesis that, even though ingroup-identification and self-stereotyping always co-occur, the former could be conceptualized as a necessary condition for the self-representation to contain elements of the ingroup's image whereas the latter could be defined as the process through which minority group members actively build their self-representation.

The evidence from Chapter 3 that self-stereotyping plays a central role in restoring minority members' psychological well-being could be linked with some of the work on System Justification Theory (Jost et al., 2004). According to this theoretical perspective, disadvantaged group members, driven by a (ideological) motive to justify the existing social order, internalize their inferiority condition. Our findings support a different perspective dealing with similar variables but reversing their causal order. According to our findings, the justification of the existing social order could rather be a consequence of

minority members' need to cope with the threat associated to their inferior social position. Disadvantaged members do not need to justify the social system *per se*, but probably justify their existing inferiority, at least to a certain extent, by internalizing ingroup stereotypes. At the same time, the present data rather suggest that perceiving discrimination against one's social identity motivates the discriminated to increase their ingroup-identification and, moreover, to build their self-representation along ingroup stereotypical characteristics, which in turn leads the stigmatized to restore their psychological well-being. The circularity of this phenomenon is likely to maintain the already existing discriminatory social order. So, while on the one hand self-stereotyping fulfils a positive role in helping the stigmatized to cope with discrimination against their social identity, on the other hand self-stereotyping will likely maintain, and almost reinforce, the negative social evaluation of the stigmatized within the pre-existing social order. Still, it is also possible that self-stereotyping may motivate a group of disadvantaged people to undertake actions of "social change". Previous research has already shown the central role of ingroup identification in predicting collective actions that aim to improve the social condition of a whole stigmatized group (see for a review, Wright & Tropp, 2002). Considering the close link we demonstrated in the present work between ingroup identification and self-stereotyping, it is possible to hypothesize that also the latter process can, under certain circumstances, motivate stigmatized group members to undertake collective actions. While in the present work we began to investigate the positive consequences of self-stereotyping at the individual level, future research should analyze when, how and why self-stereotyping may influence the social system either through fixing the status quo or promoting social change.

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