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REFERENCE GROUPS AND STEREOTYPE PERCEPTION IN COLOMBIA

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Abstract
The objective of this study is to understand the categorization of social groups in Colombia, as well as exploring possible in-group favoritism. The theoretical framework used is the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), according to which warmth and competence are universal principles that guide social cognition. The study was conducted in two phases. First, a diverse sample of 88 people identified the most relevant groups in Colombian society, which resulted in a list of 16 groups. Second, 210 people rated these groups in dimensions including warmth, competence, status and emotions associated. Results show idiosyncratic particularities of Colombian society, including failure to predict warmth from emotion ratings. These findings highlight difficulties in social group perception in Colombia as well as slight adjustments required for the SCM.

Por favor necesita poner las palabras claves

Resumen
El objetivo de este estudio es comprender la categorización de grupos sociales en Colombia, además de explorar la posibilidad de sesgo intra-grupo. El marco utilizado es el Modelo de Contenido Estereotípico (SCM), según el cual calidez y competencia son principios universales que guían la cognición social. El estudio se realizó en dos fases. Primero, una muestra diversa de 88 personas identificó los 16 grupos más relevantes de la sociedad colombiana. Después, 210 personas calificaron estos grupos en dimensiones que incluyen calidez, competencia, estatus y emociones asociadas. Los resultados muestran particularidades de la sociedad colombiana, como la imposibilidad de predecir calidez a partir de emociones. Estos resultados ilustran las dificultades en la percepción social de grupos en Colombia, así como ligeros ajustes necesarios para el SMC.

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GRUPOS DE REFERENCIA Y PERCEPCIÓN DE ESTEREOTIPO EN COLOMBIA

The aims of the present empirical report are several. First, to present a case study of the Stereotype Content Model (SMC) and the behavior from intergroup affect and stereotypes framework (BIAS map) in a context previously not studied. Second, to implement a methodological improvement in terms of the generation of the relevant social group categories to be assessed. Third, determine how in-group membership affects the assessment of emotions and prestige attributed to social groups in an unequal society. In what follows we will expand on these objectives by introducing the key elements of the SCM and the BIAS map.

Stereotypes and its study

An stereotype can be defined as a set of widespread and shared beliefs about characteristics, traits and roles of particular groups and its members that shape emotional and behavioral tendencies towards them (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010). Susan Fiske and her collaborators (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) re-sparked the interest in the study of stereotypes in recent times with the use of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM).

According to the SCM, stereotypes are the basic representation of social groups. These representations are determined by two universal trait dimensions: warmth and competence. The dimensions are representations of traits associated with the perceived place and actions of the *others* in the society. According to Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick (2007), "the warmth dimension captures traits that are related to perceived intent, including friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness and morality, whereas the competence dimension reflects traits that are related to perceived ability, including intelligence, skill, creativity and efficacy" (p.77). Stereotype content is determined by judgments along these two core dimensions that can vary in valence (positive/negative) and magnitude (low/high). The possible combinations determined by high versus low competence and warmth, result in specific emotional responses such as admiration (High Competence/High Warmth), pity(LC, HW), envy (HC, LW) and contempt(LC, LW) . The main tenets of the SCM have received ample empirical support (See a summary in Fiske et al., 2007) and are widely assumed as starting points in research on stereotypes and discrimination.

The BIAS map was proposed by Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007) in order to show how behaviors are connected with the cognitive content and emotions proposed by the SCM. The BIAS map consists of two dimensions for behavior tendency, facilitation versus harm, which can be either active or passive. While orthogonal to the SCM dimensions, superposing the BIAS map onto the SCM allows behavior prediction: on one side, HC/HW stereotypes will be associated with facilitation, which could be active or passive depending on the magnitude of the judgement for competence and warmth. On the other extreme, LC/LW stereotypes elicit harmful behaviors, which again can be passive or active depending on how extreme judgements along each dimension of the SCM are. Ambivalent stereotypes are associated with ambivalent behaviors. For example, groups with high competence and low warmth generate envy, which may be either distantly respected (passive facilitation) or used as scapegoats in times or social instability (active harm; see Cikara & Fiske, 2012).

The stereotypes and behaviors are, of course, shaped by the social structure of each particular society. The SCM proposes that these social structures reveal two forces in action: competition and status. Regarding intergroup behavior, the underlying idea is that all groups are perceived relative to how well they can cooperate or compete with the self in the context of a limited resource pool, where perceptions of cooperation predict judgements of warmth and perceptions of status predict judgments of competence. Regarding the standing of the group in a society, SCM also posits that non-competitive low status groups will be stereotyped with low competence and high warmth (e.g. the elderly) while high status competitive groups (e.g. Asians in the US), will be perceived as highly competent but low in warmth.

In consequence, describing the social structure itself becomes a good way of predicting stereotype patterns in a society and the corresponding emotions and prejudices (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009). An interesting corollary of this idea is that more unequal societies would tend to have more ambivalent stereotypes: as social change tends to be the exception rather than the norm, ambivalent stereotypes in unequal societies would serve the purpose of justifying the social order by suggesting that all groups got their share of good and bad traits. Durante et al. (2013) found evidence of this relationship, with a high correlation between the Gini coefficient (an economic inequality index) and a measure of stereotype ambivalence.

The SCM has been mainly used to examine the structure of stereotypes and prejudice against particular groups. For example, Cuddy et al. (2004) use the SCM to pinpoint the characteristics of female stereotypes and the underlying cognitive aspects of discrimination of women at the workplace. Cikara and Fiske (2012) investigate the stereotypes associated with Jewish people in Italy during the fascist regime. The SCM has also been used to investigate national stereotypes (Cuddy et al., 2009, Study 1; Glick et al., 2006) ethnic outgroup stereotypes (Bergsieker, Leslie, Constantine, & Fiske, 2012) and, recently, brand perception (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012).

In the Spanish speaking world, López-Rodríguez, Cuadrado, and Navas (2013) have analyzed the perception of the main immigrant groups in Spain and Saiz, Merino, and Quilaqueo (2009) have used the SCM to explore the social standing of Mapuche people in Chile.

In summary, The SCM and the BIAS map have achieved the status of pancultural tools for predicting stereotypes (Cuddy et al., 2009) and have garnered abundant support in its favor. It has not, however, gone unchallenged.

Adjustments to the SCM

Most of the studies whose objective is to generalize the SCM take, as a first step, a set of groups that do not necessarily exhaust the universe of relevant social groups in the society studied. As part of the largest cross-cultural comparison of the SCM undertaken so far, Cuddy et al. (2009) compared stereotypes of two universities by producing a list of indigenous stereotypes, asking students to answer to the question "what various types of people do you think today's society categorizes into groups (i.e., based on ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, ability, etc.)?" This strategy was pioneered by Fiske et al. (2002) and has been used recurrently in the study of stereotypes. It can be argued that there are, at least two factors at play here: participants' group membership and priming. On the one hand, it is likely that some groups are more visible and prominent than others depending on one's own perceived group membership. This factor has been analyzed broadly in the context of the *rating* of stereotypes (Durante, Capozza, & Fiske, 2010) but it has not been explored for the *generation* of stereotypes. On the other hand, participants are primed to think in terms of a very specific set of characteristics. The wording of the instruction can bias the generation towards the groups that have been consistently discovered (e.g. Immigrants, Career Women etc). For example, as part of his research about national stereotypes in Germany, Asbrock (2010), asked 30 people via email "to generate a list of 10 to 20 societal groups in Germany" (p. 77). This message was sent to people with and without an academic background, in an effort to control the possibility of a biased group list. This instruction could be enough to control for the bias we suggest in the case of Germany, but that might be insufficient in other societies, particularly those where inequality is more preeminent.

While the SCM is committed to the idea of warmth and competence as functional fundamental dimensions of intergroup perception that operate generally for all social stereotypes, it is also committed to the idea of separate processes and study of the generation and preservation of the stereotypes, on one hand, and their perception, on the other. The social group stereotypes are taken as an input for the SCM, so identification of the local stereotypes is a key issue. In this study, we take steps towards developing a more nuanced strategy to guarantee correct stereotype identification. This is especially important given that the SCM has received limited attention in Latin America. Most studies in these countries are focused on a either a specific group here such as left and right-wing guerrillas (Barreto, Borja, & Lopez-Lopez, 2012) or more broad applied (Solano-Gómez & Smith-Castro, 2017) and theoretical (Chacon, del Rio - Urrutia, Perez-Sanchez, & Smith-Castro, 2018) settings with little attention given to adapting the whole SCM framework to this cultural context.

Perceived group membership also affects warmth and competence ratings (Durante et al., 2010). The SCM predicts that in-group favoritism will be manifested in terms of either protection (for HW/HC groups), or enhancement (for LW/ LC groups). The evidence available is not conclusive for valuating this prediction. SCM suggests that in-group identification implies favoritism for this reference group although not necessarily out-group derogation (Cuddy et al., 2009). In-group favoritism has also been found with Western student samples but not with Asian students (Cuddy et al., 2009). In a study on national stereotypes in Europe, participants showed slight favoritism on the positive dimensions of their own country (Cuddy et al., 2009). This picture stands in contrast with research on system justification motivation, which has shown that there is a consistent outgroup favoritism displayed by low status groups, which in turn may hold ambivalent beliefs about themselves (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Following Durante et al. (2013), we believe that high status groups in more unequal societies will tend to display the in-group derogation, as a mechanism to compensate for the perceived unfairness of their advantages relative to other groups, also in line with the idea of system justification. We assess this hypothesis in the current study.

In summary, in this paper we focus on stereotype generation strategies and on the study of in-group favoritism, topics that we believe require further study within the SCM framework.

The current study

In this study we set out to test SCM in the context of Colombia, implementing an improved stereotype selection strategy, and analyzing in-group bias in this context. Colombia is a country located in the Northwest corner of South America, characterized by a varied ethnic makeup and a challenging geography. This has given origin to strong regional differences that continue to shape local relations and partly informs the current social conflict

(Appelbaum, 2003). Colombia is a medium income country with several problems in terms of inequality and access to some basic services ("World Development Indicators," 2013), characteristics associated with an internal armed conflict, the longest in the western hemisphere. The current social context of the country is dominated by the possibility of ending this conflict, with developing peace dialogues in 2014. These characteristics make Colombia an ideal place to study social representations and to test our hypotheses.

We conducted a two-part study to explore of the social stereotypes in Colombia, along the dimensions proposed by the SCM. As an country with a high inequality index (Gini Coef=53.5, "World Development Indicators," 2013), we expect to find a significant number of ambivalent stereotypes. We also want to determine whether in-group favoritism, as predicted by the SCM (Durante et al., 2010) or in-group derogation, as suggested by system justification motivation (Jost et al., 2004) would be the modal response with student samples. We believe the latter is consistent with societies with high levels of competition and a high prevalence of ambivalent stereotypes, which would be case of Colombia given its high inequality (Durante et al., 2013).

Method

Participants

88 people (45 women, mean age = 32) took part in the first section of the study. Participants were general members of the public. Convenience stratified sampling was implemented taking into account age, gender, and socioeconomic status as reported in the latest national census (2005). This sampling method helps control for the possibility of stereotype selection bias. For the second part of the study, we recruited 210 students (144 female) from several programs at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, with ages ranging between 19 and 25 years. Students from this university come mainly from middle and upper class families, and mostly from the capital, Bogotá.

Materials and Procedure

Consistent with other studies within the SCM framework, the study was divided into two parts. In the first part we elicited an indigenous list of social groups. Participants were asked to fill out a two page paper-based questionnaire individually. In the first, page basic demographic information was requested (age and gender) along with data about professional and socio- economic status. In the second page, participants were requested to offer “any number of groups you consider to be important in Colombian society”. Additional to this instruction, we used a concrete example of a group could be (Female Soccer Players) to explicitly explain what a social group is. Participants were encouraged to write as many groups as they could think of.

The second part of consisted of the SCM-based analysis of a selection of 16 the groups found in the first part. After filling in the relevant demographic information, each participant answered a 19-question paper-based survey concerning only four groups. The number of groups per person was kept intentionally small to prevent any fatigue effects. Participants were invited to answer as “Colombians in general would think”, trying not to express their own personal views. Participants rated each of the four groups in competence and warmth, four items for each dimension (Fiske et al., 2002), then rated associated positive and negative emotions (three items per valence) and lastly perceived status within the society (five items). Participants were students of several disciplines and were tested in small groups.

Results

Participants in the first part of the study generated 274 different groups, with a median of 4 groups per person. We selected groups that were mentioned by at least 25% of our sample. The final list can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. List of social groups selected

Classification feature	Group
Occupations	Left-wing guerrillas; Right-wing paramilitary; Soldiers; Student; Peasants.
Ethnicity	Afro-Colombians; Indigenous people.
Social Status	Rich; Poor.
Beliefs	Catholics; Christians; Atheists.
Regional	Costeños (inhabitants from the Caribean coast); Paisas (from Western Colombia).
Other	LGBTQ; Refugees.

People from all social strata mentioned the guerrillas, paramilitary, soldiers, refugees and politicians as relevant social groups. Next to this, the most frequent mentions are of regional stereotypes, *costeños* and *paisas.* This reflects some regional stereotypes as seen from the capital. Unlike previous studies, women and immigrant groups were not prominent, and were barely mentioned perhaps due to relatively low abroad immigration towards Colombia. We expect these groups to change with relevant political situations like the newly created Peace Process or a large number of Venezuelan immigrants entering Colombia in recent months. Altogether the final sample of groups highlights how relevant stereotypes depend on the political moment the country experiences.

To analyze the results of the surveys, we conducted a three-step analysis. The first step was to run 16 Exploratory Factorial Analyses (EFA), one per considered social group, to determine whether the answers generated the predicted two-factor solution dividing warmth and competence factors. The results of the EFA using Varimax rotation showed that a two-factor solution explained more than 50% variance for fourteen out of the sixteen groups. Also, almost all considered groups exhibited good KMO indicators of internal consistency. Only *peasants* and *Paisas* groups fail to show the predicted two-factor structure[2]. To confirm these results we ran two sets of confirmation procedures. First, a series of two ways ANOVAs comparing composite warmth and competence scores. Second, we computed correlation matrixes for warmth and competence ratings for each considered group. As predicted by SCM, most ANOVAs resulted in significant differences between warmth and competence scores. Also, as expected competence ratings (sure of themselves, competent, capable and intelligent) correlated highly with each other. Similar results were found with warmth ratings (kind, warm, sincere and good people).

The second step was to perform a cluster analysis to identify the relative location of social groups as well as of the reference group, students in a two-dimension space defined by warmth and competence ratings. For each group, we calculated the average of each dimension rating per participant. These warmth and competence scores were then submitted to cluster analysis to determine the best number of clusters and relative membership to make sense of all collected data. Following the same analytic procedures used by Fiske et al. (2002), we conducted a hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's method) to determine the optimal number of clusters. Then using *K*-means cluster analysis, the groups were categorized. See figure 1 for the four-cluster solution.

[2] For brevity's sake we do not present most raw results and comparisons. However, raw data, data analysis scripts in R yielding KMO scores as well as EFA, ANOVA, correlation matrixes, clusters results and all other presented procedures are publicly available in osf.io/e68j9 .

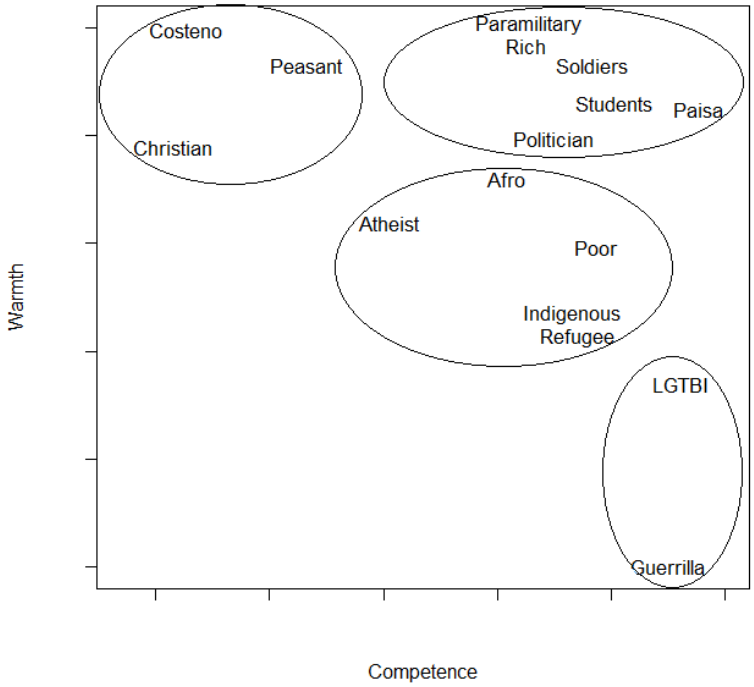

Figure 1. Four cluster solution.

As shown in Figure 1 there are two ambivalent clusters. Notice that the reference group, students, is clustered together with politicians and the rich, as it would be expected given the students' socio-economic background. However, disturbingly, the paramilitary is also included in this cluster. Peasants, Costeños and Christians (a label normally used to lump together any non-Roman Catholic Christian denomination) are considered high in warmth and low in competence, while LGTBI and guerrillas constitute a HC/LW cluster. Interestingly, no group cluster was overtly considered LW/LC. A number of presumably non-reputable and negatively considered groups (Afro, Atheists, Poor and Indigenous people and Refugees) were considered as medium competence and warmth while no group was considered overtly low in both warmth and competence. The relative pervasiveness of ambiguous stereotypes, only the 6 out of 16 groups exhibit unambiguous stereotypes, fits the system justification theory (Jost et al, 2004) predictions given a highly unequal society such as Colombia.

In the third step, we tested whether status is a good predictor of warmth and competence. Notice that the correlation between the dimensions is negative ($r(16)= -.42$, $p=.11$). We also wanted to test the predictions of the BIAS map about the link between emotional responses and competence/warmth. To this end, negative emotion ratings were inverted (jealousy, envy, etc.) in order to simplify the interpretation of the results. Both hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression models, summarized in Table. 2

Table 2
Summary of linear Regressions for competence and warmth

	Competence				Warmth			
	Status	Emotions	r2		Status	Emotions	r2	
Afro-Colombians	0.63**	0.05	0.22		0.3*	0.29*	0.18	
Rich	0.18	-0.01	0.01	ns	0.16	-0.13*	0.07	ns
Soldiers	0.44*	0.27	0.24		0.26	0.61**	0.35	
LGBTQ	0.66**	.10*	0.28		0.32*	0.01	0.06	ns
Students	0.04	0.5**	0.3		0.001	0.42*	0.06	ns
Poor	0.67**	0.19	0.34		0.60**	0.51*	0.26	
Paisas	0.47**	-0.22	0.15		0.17	0.55*	0.16	ns
Paramilitary	0.56**	-0.04	0.24		0.23	0.77**	0.36	
Peasants	0.34*	0.01	0.08	ns	0.001	0.001	0	ns
Atheists	0.52**	0.2	0.18		0.47	0.01	0.02	ns
Indigenous	0.93**	0.15	0.37		0.62**	0.36	0.28	
Christians	0.47**	0.47**	0.25		0.41*	0.57**	0.25	
Costeños	0.38**	0.14	0.12		0.13	1.29**	0.17	
Politicians	0.46*	0.36	0.1		-0.14	0.64**	0.16	
Refugees	0.46**	0.30**	0.25		-0.03	0.21	0.02	ns
Guerrillas	--	0.30*	0.1		0.75*	0.07	0.05	ns

*Significant at p = 0.05 ** Significant at p = 0.01

Note: The model for guerrillas competence could not be estimated because competence and status are almost perfectly correlated and collinearity assumption is violated.

The overall fit of the competence models (adjusted r^2) ranges between 0.1 and 0.37 and 14 of the regressions are significant. As expected given prior results, in 15 of the 16 groups competence is predicted by status, and only in 4 by emotions. On other hand, warmth is predicted by emotions in 10 out of 16 groups, but half of the models are not significant. Only for one group, Christians, competence and warmth are highly associated and are predicted equally well by status and emotions, and only for politicians negative emotions are a predictor of warmth. Overall our results show that perceived competence is reliably predicted by group status but perceived warmth is not reliably predicted by emotions.

Discussion

Results are generally consistent with previous applications of the SCM. Factorial analyses of competence and warmth ratings showed that a two-factor solution fitted the majority of the groups. Also, most of the regressions analyses showed that competence can be predicted by status, in line with previous research, but warmth cannot be reliably estimated from the emotions elicited by a group. Surprisingly, we did not find any LC/LW cluster, unlike most prior studies.

This is the first study where the generation of the stereotypes was controlled by sampling participants from across a society. We implemented strict criteria for sampling of the relevant social groups to be examined. Unlike other studies with the SCM (e.g. Asbrock, 2010), we did not include any extra groups and limited the study only to the list of relevant groups generated by participants. We believe the inclusion of other groups that the researchers, but not necessarily the participants, believe to be relevant is partially responsible for findings larger numbers of ambivalent stereotypes. This facilitates comparison with previous research but might portray an inaccurate picture of the society studied. Against our prediction, we also found that the perceived in-group, students, scores in the highest competence and warmth cluster. In this sense, this study provides negative evidence against the link between in-group derogation and social inequality.

Limitations and future studies

We must highlight that the demographic characteristics of populations in the two phases of our study were not the same. This sample difference between the first and second studies may limit results. Indeed the first phase, included participants from all social backgrounds which lends external validity to the generated list. The same is not true for the second phase who focused on upper class university students from a private university. Consequently, it is likely that psychological distance plays a more prominent role in group ratings despite the fact that, following standard procedure in the literature, participants were explicitly instructed to answer as they believe most people would, not following their own personal opinions. We believe that future studies including perceived distance to the target grout as a covariate would explain a relevant amount of variation in warmth and competence ratings. Specifically, we expect a significant moderation of psychological distance to the target group with warmth and competence ratings whereby more psychological distance to the target group is associated with more stereotyped groups (e.g. more extreme values in each dimension) whereas closer groups would correspond with less extreme warmth and competence ratings. We believe that recent developments in construal level theory can be helpful here (Stephan, Liberman, & Trope, 2011; Trope & Liberman, 2010). This is the line pursued by McCrea, Wieber, and Myers (2012), who found that a broader, more abstract mind-set facilitated stereotyping as well as stereotype-consistent trait ratings and performances both on the self and others.

As noted above, it is at least troubling to realize that the in-group is clustered together with paramilitary squads. Notice that participants never rated these two groups at the same time. Recently, paramilitary activities have been found be linked with several high-standing Colombian politicians which could explain the similarity between the ratings given to the groups, and by transitivity, to students. In this regard, we believe our study offers admittedly weak and correlational evidence of the importance of social changes and politics on the construction of stereotypes. This finding should be replicated via a natural experiment design in order to determine if it depends on the particular moment when ratings were collected.

Stereotypes are malleable and respond to the social and political reality of the society studied, and to circumstantial events. Colombia is facing a host of such pressures, and the changeable nature of society and the relative position of its members could be fruitfully captured by identifying the standing of the perceived in-group standing in a society.

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