MEDIA SHAPE MAJORITY’S ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

EFFECTS OF LINGUISTIC LABELS FOR ETHNICITY, REPORT VALENCE AND INTERGROUP CONTACT

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BRNO LAB OF INTERGROUP PROCESSES
RESEARCH INTERESTS

Nouns Cut Slices: Effects of Linguistic Forms on Intergroup Bias

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Abstract
Three studies examined the effect of on intergroup bias. In Study 1, parti authors’ nationality was labeled wit group favoritism, manifested as a pro

Research article

Negative intergroup contact is more influential, but positive intergroup contact is more common: Assessing contact prominence and contact prevalence in five Central European countries

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Abstract
The present research tested the idea that the ecological impact of intergroup contact on outgroup attitudes can be fully understood only when relative frequency and relative influence of positive and negative contact are considered simultaneously. Participants from five European countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Slovakia; N = 1276) freely described their
CURRENT PROJECT

- Marie Curie Individual Fellowship
- "IMMIGRANTS IN THE MEDIA"
- University of Bern, Sabine Sczesny

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Marie Curie project IMMIGRANTS funded by the European Commission aims at a better understanding of how media influence majority's attitudes and behaviors towards immigrants – a socially pressing issue connected to rapid expansion of immigration in Europe.

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MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT
CURRENT PROJECT

- Research aim: Challenging majority’s prejudice against immigrants
- Intervention: Intergroup contact
- Problem: Limited direct contact of majority with immigrants
- Focus: Indirect contact through media, especially news
- Question: What aspects of media news influence majority’s prejudice?
Two main types of media content about immigrants - entertainment-based vs. report-based mass-mediated contact

Entertainment-based mass-mediated contact is mostly positive, report-based mass-mediated contact is mostly negative (Pagotto & Voci, 2013; Visintin et al., 2017)

Negativity bias more pronounced in outgroups than ingroup (Dragojevic et al., 2017)

Newly arriving and negatively stereotyped minorities mostly occur in news reports

Repeated exposure to negative outgroup representations in the mass media associates with disadvantageous attitudes toward minorities

-> can attitudes be altered already after a single exposure to news reports of different valence?
### VALENCE OF NEWS

- Past studies mostly focused on effects of negative news
- US border to Mexico, participants viewed a TV documentary depicting interaction between a border-patrolmen and an illegal immigrant that was either positive, negative, or ambivalent (Joyce & Harwood, 2014)
  - Positive TV documentary improved participants’ attitudes toward illegal immigrants, while the documentary with ambivalent content did not differ from the effect of negative content or control
- Specific intergroup context and entertainment-based media content
- We compared the effect of single exposure to positive, negative and ambivalent reports from newspapers in different European countries
LANGUAGE DESCRIBING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- Allport (1954) Nouns cut slices
- Carnaghi et al. (2008) nouns have higher inductive potential than adjectives in person perception due to the higher essentialism that they evoke (i.e., the inalterability of characteristics)
- Graf, Bilewicz, Finell, & Geschke (2013) nouns lead to more intergroup bias than adjectives – enhance differences in group evaluation
NOUNS MAKE YOU PREFER YOUR INGROUP...
...IN FINE ARTS

S.H.: a German, a painter

S.H.: a German painter

INGROUP

J.K.: a Dane, a painter

J.K.: a Danish painter

OUTGROUP
Study 1

Figure 1. Mean intergroup bias expressed in a relative preference of ingroup to outgroup artifacts as effect of nouns and adjectives used for labels of painters’ nationality sampled in four countries ($N = 237$)
NOUNS MAKE YOU PREFER YOUR INGROUP...

...IN SPORTS

The Daily V

Sunday, August 30, 2006

Footballer ends in hospital

In last minutes of a deciding match between the Czech Republic and Germany, football fans witnessed a harsh foul. A forwarding Czech appeared in a promising situation which would with a high probability lead to a goal and thus to the win of the Czech national team. However, a defending German stopped the Czech before he was able to shoot. The German attacked the member of the competing team in a harsh way. The foul has been so serious that the Czech had to be taken to hospital.
Study 2

Figure 2. Attitudes toward in-group and out-group in the noun and adjective condition ($N = 431$)
NOUNS MAKE YOU PREFER YOUR INGROUP...
...IN POLITICAL DECISIONS

- Restitution of property to ingroup (Poles, owners vs. Polish owners) or outgroup (Jews, owners vs. Polish owners)
Study 3

Figure 4. Acceptance of restitution to in-group (IG: Polish) and out-group (OG: Jewish) former property owners in the noun and adjective condition (N = 979)

Note. The scale of restitution acceptance ranged from 1 (does not accept restitution) to 7 (accepts restitution)
THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE ON PREJUDICE

- Limitation of previous studies: The effect language was not compared across contexts of different valence

- Nouns could always lead to more prejudice than adjectives because they enhance intergroup bias [based on the studies on group perception]

- Nouns could enhance the effect of context, leading to more prejudice than adjectives in negative contexts less prejudice than adjectives in positive contexts because nouns lead to higher perceived essentialism of the described characteristics [based on the studies on person perception]
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What aspects of news influence majority’s prejudice against social minorities after a single exposure to a media report?

- News valence – difference between + / - / +-
- Language – difference between nouns and adjectives

Are the effects the same for people who believe that the media report was real?
ROLE OF PAST EXPOSURE

- People who consume media content regularly are prone to consider recent and frequent outgroup exemplars transmitted by the media when forming their outgroup attitudes (Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2016; Busselle & Crandall, 2002; Ramasubramanian, 2013)

- Information about social minorities from mass media is especially important for people without direct experiences with members of social minorities (Fujioka, 1999; Graves, 1999; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007; Mutz & Goldman, 2010; Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005; Tan, Fujioka, & Lucht, 1997)
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

▪ What aspects of news influence majority’s prejudice against social minorities after a single exposure to a media report?
  ▪ News valence – difference between + / - / +- 
  ▪ Language – difference between nouns and adjectives 
▪ Are the effects the same for people who believe that the media report was real?
  ▪ Are the effects of news on prejudice comparable for people with/out previous experiences with members of the given social minority?
  ▪ Mass-mediated contact – previous repeated exposure to positive and negative news 
  ▪ Past positive and negative direct intergroup contact
RESEARCH CONTEXT

- Czech Republic: ROMA
  588 Czech majority participants
  72% women
  \( M_{\text{age}} = 26.18, \ SD = 6.35 \)

- Switzerland: KOSOVO ALBANIANS
  392 participants
  65% women
  \( M_{\text{age}} = 23.4, \ SD = 4.4 \) years
RESEARCH DESIGN

- 3 types of VALENCE – positive, negative, ambivalent

A Roma man saved an assaulted man

A Roma man assaulted a man

A Roma man assaulted a man, another Roma man saved him
RESEARCH DESIGN

- 3 types of VALENCE – positive, negative, ambivalent
- 2 different types of immigrants’ labels – nouns or adjectives
- prejudice – affective and behavioral aspect
- credibility of news, past intergroup contact with immigrants

A Roma man saved an assaulted man

A male Roma saved an assaulted man

A Roma man assaulted a man

A male Roma assaulted a man

A Roma man assaulted a man, another male Roma saved the victim
METHOD

- **Positive and negative mass-mediated and direct contact** was measured with 2 items each (e.g., “How often do you encounter positive/negative news about the Roma in the media?” “How often are your direct encounters with the Roma positive/negative?”)

- The affective part of prejudice was measured with outgroup thermometer ranging from 1 to 100 with anchors cold and warm

- The behavioral part of prejudice was measured with a social distance scale comprising 5 items

- The *report credibility* was measured by asking participants whether they believed that the report was a real newspaper report with three response options 1) I believed, 2) I doubted, 3) I did not believe that the report was real (Study 1) 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 (Study 2)
EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE AND VALENCE

- Consistent effect of **language** for immigrants’ background
  
  ROMA: $V = 0.20$, $F(2, 581) = 6.05$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2_p = .02$
  
  KOSOVARS: $V = 0.20$, $F(2, 385) = 4.03$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .02$
  
  NOUNS led to more prejudice than adjectives.

- **Valence** of newspaper reports
  
  KOSOVARS: $V = 0.04$, $F(4, 772) = 3.93$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2_p = .03$
  
  Reading a single positive associated with less prejudice than reading a single negative report.
  
  Ambivalent report did not differ from the effect of positive report – positive information hinders negativity.
NEWS CREDIBILITY

- **Credibility** of news moderated the effect of report valence on prejudice – the more people believed that the article was real, the stronger the effect of valence on prejudice

ROMA (Thermo) $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(1, 583) = 9.34$, $p = .01$
(SD) $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $F(1, 583) = 15.69$, $p = .001$

Believers: valence $V = 0.10$, $F(4, 502) = 6.52$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$
linguistic forms $V = 0.01$, $F(2, 250) = 1.77$, $p = .17$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$

Non-Believers: valence $V = 0.01$, $F(4, 650) = 0.79$, $p = .53$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$
linguistic forms $V = 0.02$, $F(2, 324) = 3.92$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$

KOSOVARS (Thermo) $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(1, 387) = 7.69$, $p = .01$
(SD) $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(1, 387) = 7.64$, $p = .01$
PAST MASS MEDIATED CONTACT

- 70% of Czechs frequently the exposed to negative news about the Roma, 40% never or seldom encountered positive news
- 80% of Swiss frequently the exposed to negative news about Kosovars, 87% never or seldom encountered positive news
- Positive mm contact moderated the effect of valence on prejudice

  ROMA (Thermo) $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 583) = 4.26$, $p = .04$.
  KOSOVARS (Thermo) $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 388) = 3.24$, $p = .07$
  (SD) $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(1, 388) = 6.03$, $p = .01$

- In participants who previously consumed positive news, the exposure to the positive report yielded significantly less prejudice toward than the exposure to the negative report.
DIRECT IG CONTACT

- 50% stated frequent negative contact ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.08$), 5% frequent positive contact with the Roma ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.89$).
  - In participants who had positive direct experience, the difference between positive and negative report on prejudice was significant.
    \[
    ROMA \text{ (Thermo)} \Delta R^2 = 0.01, F(1, 583) = 5.24, p = .02
    \]

- 16% stated frequent negative contact ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.08$), 45% frequent positive contact with Kosovars ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.03$).
  - In participants who had negative direct experience, the difference between positive and negative report on prejudice was significant.
    \[
    KOSOVARS \text{ (Thermo)} \Delta R^2 = 0.02, F(1, 282) = 5.35, p = .02
    \]
    \[
    (SD) \Delta R^2 = 0.01, F(1, 282) = 3.26, p = .07
    \]
CONCLUSION

▪ After single exposure to a report about a social minority, NOUNS and NEGATIVE articles led to more prejudice than ADJECTIVES and POSITIVE or AMBIVALENT articles (small effects)

▪ CREDIBILITY of the report influenced the effect of report valence on prejudice – more pronounced in those who believed

▪ Past POSITIVE (~ the less frequent) mass mediated contact enhanced the effect of report valence on prejudice

▪ In the Roma, past POSITIVE (~ the less frequent) direct contact enhanced the effect of valence on prejudice, while in Kosovars, it was the past NEGATIVE (~ the less frequent) contact – scarcity of information may be more diagnostic
AFTER REVIEW

- Got rid of intergroup contact
- Use credibility as manipulation check and not moderator
- Additional study – Italians in Switzerland
- Nouns led to more prejudice than adjectives in all 3 Studies
- Valence predicted prejudice in all 3 Studies
  - The effect of negative and ambivalent report differed, effects of positive and ambivalent reports comparable (cf. St 2)
  - In Study 3, we measured change in prejudice before and after reading the report. Negative report the highest effect on prejudice change.
STUDY 3

Change in prejudice

noun adjective

negative ambivalent positive
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

▪ The effect of framing of news – episodic vs. thematic
▪ Episodic framing from ingroup and outgroup perspective
▪ Mediating role of emotions
▪ The effect of pictures accompanying the news
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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