Cues to identity in CMC: the impact on person perception and subsequent interaction outcomes
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Citation for published version (APA):
CHAPTER IV: CUES TO IDENTITY IN AN INTERGROUP CONTEXT

Three studies are presented in this chapter investigating the impact of two different types of cues to identity. Based on the conclusions drawn in Chapter III, a distinction is made between cues to personal identity and cues to social identity. Cues to identity may be used as cues to social identity and thereby “pigeon-hole” a target as member of a particular ingroup or outgroup (cf. Turner et al., 1987). Whether or not specific cues will be used to categorize or to individuate depends on the situation at hand and the distinction between cues to personal identity and social identity can only be made with reference to the specific context:

"... categorizing is inherently comparative and hence is intrinsically variable, fluid, and relative to a frame of reference. It is always context dependent. Self-categories do not represent fixed, absolute properties of the perceiver but relative, varying context-dependent properties" (Turner et al., 1994, p. 456).

Therefore, people who are categorized as different in one context (e.g., women vs. men in a running competition) can be perceived as similar in another context (e.g., athletes vs. football players). The particular categorizations that are likely to be made (and hence the particular cues to identity that are likely to be picked up as cues to social identity rather than as cues to personal identity) depend on the social identities that could be potentially salient.

The factors which are classically involved in making social identities salient are fit and accessibility. Fit refers to the relevance of categorizing so that categories are shaped that seem sensible (Bruner, 1957; Haslam, 2001; Oakes, 1987). For example, a Dutch social scientist would categorize himself and others in such a way that the differences between the groups are larger than the differences within them. So, categorization as social scientist would be fitting in a multidisciplinary computer-technology conference attended by social scientists and computer programmers, but less fitting in an international soccer contest, where the category-
zation on the basis of Dutch versus non-Dutch could fit better. *Accessibility* is a closely related concept, and refers to “category salience” (Turner et al., 1994). By this, a given category is more likely to become salient to the extent that people recognize their belongingness to a specific group that has a prior meaning and significance to the perceiver (Haslam, 2001). To return to the example of the social scientist, categorizing himself as such could be less likely when he had just recently changed his career to social science after an earlier career as a computer programmer.

In line with expectations derived from SIDE (Reicher et al., 1995; Spears & Lea, 1992) expectations were that cues that emphasize the individuality and uniqueness of the person (i.e., cues to personal identity) would make it less likely that particular cues would be used for group categorization on the basis of accessibility and fit (cues to social identity). In other words, cues to personal identity were expected to set a person apart from the social background, thereby decreasing the categorizing effect of cues to social identity (cf. Spears & Lea, 1992). Thus, expectations were that cues to personal identity would de-emphasize attention to the social identity of the target. As a result, targets were expected to be seen less as members of their particular group. Targets would therefore be perceived not so much in terms of what is *shared* (when the target belongs to the same social group, or the *ingroup*) or what is *not shared* (when the target belongs to a salient other group, the *outgroup*) but more as an independent individual.

The consequences of this process, where cues to identity are so numerous and diverse that they result in personalized impressions and decrease attention to a target’s social identity, are examined in three studies. Study 4.1 and 4.2 examined how the different types of cues affected (online) collaboration preferences. Results showed that in conditions without cues to personal identity, people prefer to collaborate with members of the ingroup, whereas in the presence of cues to personal identity, this ingroup favoritism disappears. Study 4.2 specified these findings and isolates the level of identification with the ingroup as the process which is responsible for this phenomenon.

In Study 4.3, effects of cues to personal and social identity were examined in a different setting. This study reports an experiment that investigated the effect of the two forms of cues on the development of interpersonal trust, and their consequence for trusting behavior. Results showed that cues to personal identity form the basis for the development of interpersonal trust, but whether or not this interpersonal *perception* of trust is a necessity for trusting *behavior* seems to depend on the group membership of the target.
In the discussion section of this chapter, the implications of these findings are elaborated upon. It is concluded that the relation with the group, as well as the interpersonal relation play an important role in the groups under study.
STUDY 4.1: EFFECTS OF CUES TO IDENTITY ON COLLABORATION PREFERENCE

Even though cues to identity may reduce ambiguity and foster more positive impressions of the other, their effect on the outcomes of collaboration seems to be equivocal, at best. As was shown in the preceding chapter, the possibility to form a personalized impression, due to the availability of cues to identity, is not necessarily accompanied by a more positive experience of the collaboration. This resonates with findings that cues to identity can have opposite effects on interpersonal attraction and feelings of commitment and cohesion at the group level (Lea et al., 2001; Sassenberg & Postmes, 2002). Research in the previous chapter extended this, and showed that cues to identity negatively affected work satisfaction and (subjective) performance, and, as a result, users tended to prefer a medium which did not provide cues to identity, rather than a medium which did provide those cues. Furthermore, the assumption that the particular task at hand, and the recognition of both being a member from the same group formed the basis for these outcomes was confirmed: The perception of sharing a social identity was strengthened in conditions where cues to personal identity were absent.

Theoretically, this pattern of results indicates that, cues to identity were used by the participants as information for their understanding of the unique individuality of their collaboration partner. Thereby, they perceived this person as a distinct individual, set apart from a social background, and characterized as different from the self. That is, cues to identity were used to form impressions of personal identity of self and other as two distinct and independent actors. Where cues were not given, idiosyncratic characteristics of the collaboration partner are unknown, making this (anonymous) person potentially more interchangeable with other people from his or her (social) background (Spears & Lea, 1992). If this background is shared with the self, this implies that a lack of individuating information transforms a dyad into a set of collaborating but distinct actors (who may form personal bonds; liking each other as individuals) into a subunit of a larger collective entity, who subscribe to a common social identity (and who may therefore bond as members of this collective).

The present study builds on these assumptions and extends the findings of the previous chapter in that it seeks to establish that the absence of cues to personal identity may accentuate the social identity of the target, not just as member of the ingroup, but also as member of an outgroup. Thus, if cues to identity are informative about social identity this may foster categorization of other and self as being part of the same social group (ingroup) or
emphasize that target and self are members of two different groups (in which the target is being seen as a representative of the *outgroup*).

The consequences of categorization in terms of ingroup or outgroup has received a lot of attention in group studies, starting with the so-called “minimal group studies” paradigm in the early 1970s by Tajfel and colleagues (e.g., Tajfel et al., 1971), which were the impetus for social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), and later self categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), and the SIDE-model (Postmes et al., 1998; Reicher et al., 1995; Spears & Lea, 1992). All these approaches are based on the idea that perceiving a person as an ingroup or an outgroup member can have powerful effects on (interpersonal) evaluations of that person and the subsequent behavior towards him or her. For example, the minimal group studies from Tajfel et al. onwards have illustrated that even under the most minimal conditions under which a distinction between ingroup and outgroup could be made, strong ingroup favoritism occurred (See Chapter I for more elaborate description of these studies). Since then, numerous empirical studies have shown that ingroup members are likely to be perceived as more flexible, kind, fair, and potent, and that members of a negatively evaluated outgroup risk being derogated in a variety of ways (for an overview, see Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002).

The present experiment examined the impact of cues to identity on preferences for the ingroup over the outgroup. More particularly, the effects of different cues to identity on collaboration preferences were examined. Cues to identity consisted of two distinct types: On the one hand I provided participants with cues (such as portrait pictures and biographies about hobbies etc.) which were likely to be used as *cues to personal identity*. On the other hand I provided them with cues which, due to the nature of the task and the nature of the experiment, were more likely to be used as *cues to social identity* (in other words cues that enabled categorization as outgroup member or ingroup member). During the experiment, participants were to select and evaluate potential (online) collaboration partners who were either part of the same group as the participant, or not. The aim was to examine to what extent shared group membership influenced the effect of cues to personal identity on selection of the partner.

Predictions were that cues to personal identity would lead to a more positive impression. Furthermore, it was expected that when participants had to make a selection between potential collaboration partners, the presence of cues to personal identity would reduce ambiguity, which was operationalized as an increased certainty in the choice of partner. Finally, on the basis of the SIDE model (Postmes et al., 1998; Reicher et al., 1995; Spears & Lea, 1992), predictions were that the inability to individuate, due to the absence of cues to personal identity, would lead to a preference for collaborating with ingroup
members.\textsuperscript{14} This would be in line with assumptions made by Brewer (1979), who suggests that discrimination in groups such as these often results in ingroup favoritism and not so much in outgroup rejection. This preference for ingroup members when individuation is impossible is likely to occur because the less differentiated impressions formed of targets are compensated by attribution of group characteristics to individuals. As the ingroup stereotype tends to be more positive than the outgroup stereotypes, participants would therefore favor ingroup members over outgroup members (Locksley et al., 1980).

These assumptions were tested in an experiment in which participants had to perform a number of tasks. To accomplish these tasks participants ostensibly had to select a collaboration partner. Potential partners were either ingroup or outgroup others, who were either identified with cues to personal identity or not.

\textit{Method}

\textit{Participants and Design}

In total, 33 undergraduate students of the University of Amsterdam (11 males, 22 females) participated in the experiment in return for a gift voucher. The design was a 2 (social identity of partner: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) repeated measures design in which participants rated several targets from either the ingroup or the outgroup, whom they were given cues to personal identity about or not.

\textit{Procedure and Independent Variables}

The experiment was conducted in the laboratory as described in the previous studies. Upon entering the laboratory, a digital portrait picture was taken of each participant. After brief instructions concerning the computer and the task, all participants were taken to an isolated cubicle. The rest of the instructions were provided via the PC.

The participants were informed they were about to perform several on-line tasks. They were led to believe that in order to perform these tasks, collaboration with partners would be necessary. This collaboration meant that the person they selected would (independently)

\textsuperscript{14} A pilot study ($N=100$) was conducted to confirm this assumption. When no individuating information whatsoever was presented about a target with whom participants could collaborate, they preferred collaboration with ingroup targets in 59\% of the cases. 39\% of participants had no preference for either group, while only 2\% preferred collaborating with an outgroup target.
perform the same task they did, and their mutual score on that particular task would be compared with scores of other pairs. Thus, there were benefits associated with choosing the best partner. The tasks they performed were either simple word recollection tasks, common knowledge questions, or pattern recollection tasks. In total, participants performed 11 tasks and had to choose between two targets for each subsequent task. Per task, participants were given the choice between two targets each with a different social identity; one from the ingroup (University of Amsterdam, UvA), and one from the outgroup (Free University, VU). They were informed that, if available, a portrait picture and biographical information of the target would be presented, but that sometimes this information was not available for technical reasons. The only information that was always presented was the target’s group membership, UvA (ingroup), or VU (outgroup). This cue to social identity was presented by means of the logo of the particular university. After reading the cover story and the instructions on the computer screen, participants were asked a number of biographical details (sex, name, age, place of residence, education, and hobbies). Participants were led to believe that this information would, along with the portrait picture taken from them upon entering the laboratory, be presented to the collaborator of their choice, but since there was no real interaction nor a real target, this information was not actually used during the experiment.

In reality, all feedback was false and no real interaction took place. The researchers selected the pictures and the biographies were fictional. The computer randomized all information (pictures and biographical information) across targets in order to prevent systematic biases. Pictures of targets were of the same gender as that of participants in order to prevent group effects on the basis of gender. The first round was a "practice session" in order to make the participant aware of the necessity to choose a good "partner". Results of this first round were not included in the analysis. There were 3 rounds in which cues to personal identity of both targets were available. In 3 rounds no cues to personal identity were presented. Four "filler-rounds" were mixed in between, in which only one of the targets’ cues to personal identity were present, in order to avoid suspicion. Only the balanced comparisons were used for analysis: those comparisons in which cues to personal identity were available or not available for both targets. Before the presentation of targets, identification with the

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15 Portrait pictures and biographical information were drawn from the same database as used in the preceding chapters. So, neutrality of pictures and biographies was assured.
ingroup, the University of Amsterdam (UvA), was measured with a scale consisting of three questions ("I identify myself with students from the UvA", "I see myself as a member of the group of students from the UvA", "I feel connected to the group of students from the UvA") (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995). Identification with the outgroup was measured using the same questions, replacing "UvA" with "VU".

**Dependent Variables**

After each selection, participants were presented a number of statements to which they indicated their agreement on 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). In order to assess ambiguity, participants indicated how uncertain they were about choosing the right partner (7-point scale; 1 = not certain at all, 7 = completely certain). In addition, four questions were asked concerning the positivity of impressions ("Of which of these persons do you have the most positive impression?", "Which of these persons do you feel attached with most?", "Which of these two people seem to be more capable", and "With whom would you like to carry out other tasks as well?" (7-point scales; 1 = definitely the person on the left, 7 = definitely the person on the right, 4 = left person as much as right person).

When inspecting the data for outliers, three participants were found that did not identify with the ingroup. In fact, they identified more with the outgroup than with the ingroup. Since the interest was in the effects of sharing a social identity, I felt that these cases should be deleted from the sample (in fact, in the Netherlands it is possible to study at different universities at the same time, so it could not be ruled out that these were taking courses at the other university). So as not to make a one-sided (partial) selection, the 5% highest and 5% lowest identifiers were removed (see Barnett & Lewis, 1984, p. 98). In total, six outliers were excluded from the analyses (three on either side) with identification scores more than two standard deviations removed from the mean.

**Results**

Reliabilities of the identification scales were satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha of the ingroup (UvA) identification scale was .90, the outgroup (VU) identification scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .76. As predicted, identification with the ingroup ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.02$) was much higher than identification with the outgroup ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .73$), $F(1,25) = 268.11$, $p < .001$.

A 2 (social identity of partner: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) analysis of variance was conducted with repeated measures on the factor cues to personal identity. Cronbach's alpha of the scale measuring positivity of target impressions
was satisfactory ($\alpha = .86$). In order to test the effect of cues to personal identity on the positivity of impression of the target, the items were recoded in such a way that a more positive impression of one of the two targets resulted in a higher score (with a score of “0” indicating no difference in positivity for one of the two targets, and a score of “3” indicating a strong positive impression for the chosen target). The presence of cues to personal identity had a reliable effect on positivity of impression, $F(1, 23) = 48.11, p < .001$. When they were given cues to personal identity, participants had much more positive impressions of the targets ($M = 0.97, SD = 0.63$) than when no cues were present ($M = 0.29, SD = 0.48$).

The presence of cues also had a significant effect on reduction of ambiguity, $F(1, 23) = 21.03, p < .001$. In the cues condition participants felt more certain about their choices ($M = 4.28, SD = 1.01$) than in the no-cues condition ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.26$).

Figure 3: Selection bias: The effect of cues to personal identity on the selecting of ingroup members to collaborate with (equality = 50%)

As predicted, cues to personal identity had an effect on the preference for working with an ingroup or an outgroup member, $F(1, 23) = 4.45, p < .05$. A score of zero would indicate that participants always chose to work with an outgroup other, and one would indicate that the choice was always in favor of a member of the ingroup. In the condition without cues (i.e., no cues were presented for both the ingroup and the outgroup target),
participants more often chose to work with an ingroup target ($M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.29$) compared to the condition with cues (i.e., when cues were present for ingroup and outgroup target), ($M = 0.54$, $SD = 0.29$). So, in the condition with cues, participants preferred an ingroup target in 54\% of the cases. This does not differ significantly from equality, i.e., 50\%, $t(25) = 0.732$, $p = .47$. However, when no cues were present, ingroup favoritism occurred: in 70\% of the cases, participants preferred an ingroup target over an outgroup target. This is 20\% more often than equality, $t(25) = 3.63$, $p = .001$ (see also Figure 3).

**Discussion**

Results confirmed that when cues to personal identity were present, participants formed a more positive impression of the targets compared to the condition without cues to personal identity. Furthermore, similar effects were obtained for ambiguity: participants expressed more certainty about their target choice in conditions were cues to personal identity were presented for both targets. These results are in line with previous findings that suggest that mere cues to personal identity are sufficient to improve *interpersonal* rapport one has with a target.

When it comes to choosing a collaboration partner of either the ingroup or the outgroup, cues to personal identity (or actually the lack thereof) affected the choice made by the participants. When cues to personal identity were given, participants did not prefer working with an ingroup over an outgroup member. This suggests that they perceived in- and outgroup members as equally capable and competent individuals. However, when no cues to personal identity were presented, personal impressions could not be formed to such great satisfaction. Under these conditions, a preference for working with the ingroup was found, despite the fact that there was no reason to assume that either target would be better or worse. This suggests that when targets cannot be individuated due to an absence of cues to personal identity, they tend to be treated as representatives of their group, leading to a preference for collaboration with ingroup rather than outgroup members. Once more it should be stressed that group membership was the *only cue* available that could have led to this preference of ingroup over outgroup.

This finding confirms predictions derived from the SIDE model, that viewing the other in a less a less favorable (ethnocentric) way should be especially strong when individuation is impossible. One might venture that to the extent that group preferences are expressed in particular conditions, group identification should be positively related to this type of pro-group behavior: high identifiers should have a greater preference for working with
their group than low identifiers do. Such an effect of identification would confirm that this is a consequence of greater affiliation with the ingroup, as predicted by SIDE, and would rule out the alternative that the selection bias is due to greater familiarity with the own group. Unfortunately I was not able to investigate this effect of ingroup identification because of the skewedness of the distribution of identification scores: almost all participants identified very strongly with the ingroup, and identification scores were not distributed normally. In order to investigate the (possible) effect of the degree of identification more closely, Study 4.2 was conducted.
Study 4.2 was a conceptual replication of Study 4.1, which attempted to show that identification with the ingroup would moderate the effects reported in Study 4.1. Predictions were that the level of ingroup identification would affect participants’ choices, especially in the condition with no cues to personal identity. In conditions in which individuation is not possible, group members are not seen as individuals but as representatives of their group, and evaluations will be based on group characteristics. This being so, one would expect that high identifiers would value these characteristics more highly than low identifiers would. This reasoning was tested in an experiment that was almost identical to Study 4.1, but with a different sample. In order to obtain a wider distribution of identification scores, freshman students were asked instead of more “senior” students to participate in the experiment. The underlying expectation was that these freshman students, most of whom were in their first month at the university, would (on average) show a broader range of identification scores with the university compared with more senior students.

Method

Participants and Design

Thirty-eight freshmen students of the University of Amsterdam (15 male, 23 female) participated in return for a gift voucher. The design was a 2 (ingroup identification: low vs. high) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) factorial design.

Procedure

The experiment was conducted in a laboratory consisting of seven Apple Macintosh computers, connected to a local network. Upon entering the laboratory, similar instructions to those described in Study 4.1 were given. The experiment was identical to Study 4.1, but shortened due to time constrains. Therefore, the questions following the choices of participants were not included. Also participants had to choose only 7 collaboration partners to work similar tasks to Study 4.1. Otherwise, the procedure was identical: Cues to personal identity were manipulated as in Study 4.1 by either providing a portrait picture and biographical
information\textsuperscript{16}, or no picture and information. The level of identification with the ingroup variable was created by means of a median split on relative ingroup identification (see below).

**Dependent Variables**

Identification with both the ingroup and the outgroup was measured using the same scale as used in Study 4.1. The choices made by the participants for working with an ingroup member or an outgroup member were registered. For each subsequent task, I measured which of the targets was chosen.

**Results**

Cronbach’s alpha of the ingroup identification scale was .90, the outgroup identification scale had an alpha of .80. Identification with the ingroup ($M = 4.51, SD = 1.30$) was higher than identification with the outgroup ($M = 2.38, SD = 1.25$), $F(1,36) = 466.57, p < .001$. As expected, the observed variance in identification scores was greater than that in Study 4.1. The relative identification with the ingroup was calculated by computing the mean difference between ingroup identification and outgroup identification, and accordingly high identifiers ($M = 3.49, SD = 0.81$) were distinguished from low identifiers ($M = 1.00, SD = 0.67$) by means of a median split.

In order to test whether choices for collaboration partners were influenced by the experimental conditions, a 2 (ingroup identification: low vs. high) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) analysis of variance was conducted with repeated measures on the factor cues to personal identity. Results showed a main effect of identification, $F(1, 34) = 4.43, p < .05$. This main effect was qualified by the predicted two-way interaction, $F(1, 34) = 6.08, p < .05$. Inspection of the means (displayed in Table 9) reveals that there were no differences between low and high identifiers when cues were present, $F(1,34) = 0.05$, ns.

Moreover, in this condition there was no reliable preference for an ingroup partner, either among high identifiers ($M = 0.58, SD = 0.38$) or low identifiers ($M = 0.60, SD = 0.36$): neither differed significantly from base equality, i.e., .50 ($t(17) = 0.90$, ns and $t(17) = 1.29$, ns, respectively). However, in the condition without cues, high identifiers ($M = 0.76, SD = 0.31$)

\textsuperscript{16} Drawn from the database with neutral portrait pictures.
Table 9. Ingroup Collaboration Preference for High and Low Identifiers in Condition With and Without Cues to Personal Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No cues</td>
<td>0.76**</td>
<td>0.39c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cues</td>
<td>0.58b</td>
<td>0.60b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.36</td>
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Note. Means with a different subscript differ significantly from each other at $p < .05$

** Collaboration preferences differ reliably from equality, $p < .01$.

more often chose to work with an ingroup member, compared to low identifiers ($M = 0.39$, $SD = 0.36$), $F(1, 34) = 11.68, p < .005$. The choice of the low identifiers, who actually showed a small tendency to prefer the outgroup, did not differ from equality, $t(17) = 1.29, ns$, but the choices of the high identifiers, who preferred the ingroup as predicted, did significantly differ from equality $t(17) = 3.75, p = .001$. This indicates that high identifiers had a preference for working with the ingroup, but only when no cues were present.

**Discussion**

The results confirm predictions and support and extend the findings of Study 4.1. Both cues to personal identity and cues to social identity play a role in participants’ preferences for partners when collaborating online. As predicted, group membership and more specifically the level of identification with the ingroup influence people’s choices especially in conditions in which impressions cannot be formed on the basis of individual characteristics. The level of identification with a particular group seems to determine the selection bias in favor of collaborating with an ingroup member. High identifiers behave consistent with predictions derived from the SIDE model, in that ingroup favoritism would be found where evaluations need to be made on the basis of group characteristics only. This confirms the underlying rationale that these effects are indeed related to the operation of social identity processes. In conditions without cues to personal identity, low identifiers even seem to have a slight preference for outgroup members, although it should be stressed that this preference was not reliably different from equality. Low identifiers seem to behave in a slightly ethnocentric way only when targets are identifiable. This would suggest that low identifiers choose to affiliate with
the ingroup only in contexts in which accountability pressures can be exerted, which is suggestive of strategic considerations on their part (see Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Reicher et al., 1995; Spears, Lea et al., 2002, for elaboration on the strategic component of SIDE-model).

This study again confirms that person perceptions have behavioral consequences. People prove less willing to team up with outgroupers when they are unable to form a personal impression on the basis of a portrait picture and biographical information, and are thereby unable to individuate them. Under these conditions they prefer working with an ingroup member. The moderating effect of identification accentuates that social contextual factors, such as a shared group membership, play a crucial role in determining the outcomes of seemingly straightforward consequences of the availability of cues to personal identity.

This study as well as the preceding one examined the effects of both forms of cues to identity on people's choice of partner for collaboration. Because the design forced participants to choose between an ingrouper and an outgrouper, the result (in conditions without cues and among high identifiers in particular) of greater preference for the ingroup can not be understood or examined independently of the relative dislike of the outgroup. The objective of Study 4.3 was to investigate the effect of these cues to identity in more detail, and in particular to disentangle their more proximate effect on perceptions of in- and outgroup targets. In this study, participants are not required to choose between two targets but are faced with either an in- or outgroup other. In this context, the perceptions of the other, interpersonal judgments and subsequent behaviors were examined, related to interpersonal trust and trusting behavior.
STUDY 4.3: INDIVIDUATION OR SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION AS A BASIS FOR TRUSTING BEHAVIOR

In order to examine the interplay between cues to personal identity and cues to social identity in more detail, the present study investigated the influence of these different cues to identity on interpersonal trust, reciprocity expectations, and behavioral consequences in the form of invested trust. In developing relationships between individuals or groups, being able to put trust in a person is believed to be very important, for trust allows people to reveal vulnerable parts of themselves to others and to know others intimately in return (Friedman, Kahn, & Howe, 2000). Trusting individuals expect that their interests will be protected and promoted by those in whom they put their trust. Furthermore, trusting people feel more confident about disclosing personal information for they feel assured of full and frank information sharing (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995). Especially when interacting with relative strangers, the increase of trust by means of reducing anxiety and uncertainty has been seen as important (Goffman, 1971; Williamson, 1973).

On the question of what trust is, and how it is influenced, there has been considerable debate (for overview see Lewicki & Bunker, 1995). One approach to trust is that it can be seen as a more or less static characteristic of a person or group (Granovetter, 1985; Rotter, 1967). In this perspective, a person's level of trust is based on general attitudes towards other people, feelings about risk taking, attitudes towards technology use, cultural values, et cetera. By this, some people are inherently more trusting than others, and trust can be described in terms of attributes of trustors (Rotter, 1967). Another perspective emphasizes the influence of contextual factors, in which trust is seen as a cognitive process associated with the confidence in another, another's goals or purposes, or the perceived sincerity of another's word (Hosmer, 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Mellinger, 1956). In this view, the level of trust is specific to the relationship, and trustors' focus on trustee and the contextual factors which enhance or inhibit the development and maintenance of trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995).

In these approaches, trust often tends to be confined to the perception of one regarding the other: that is, trust is defined as a positive attitudinal evaluation. This, I argue, is a rather limited conception of what trust is, as it does not clearly differentiate the concepts from other "relational goods", such as respect, attraction, support, or endorsement. However, there is one feature of trust which makes it unlike any of the latter. This feature is that by definition trust entails relinquishing some degree of control or power, and moreover to give another person
power over self-relevant outcomes. A person one trusts is a person whom one would entrust the completion of a particular task, or the keys to one's house. All these are examples of more than just a positive evaluation or attitude; they are examples of giving another power over outcomes valuable to the self. This is qualitatively different from the features of relationships that have been central to this thesis thus far, which were all related to evaluative preferences and interpersonal attraction in one way or another. The study of trust goes beyond this in that it lends itself to examining behavioral consequences, and in particular power sharing.

This study investigates to what extent interpersonal trust (i.e., trust as an attitude towards the other) and trusting behavior (i.e., trust as relinquishing power) is influenced by cues to identity, again differentiating between cues to personal identity and cues to social identity. It could be that the inability to form a personal impression, due to lack of cues to personal identity creates problems of integrity for the anonymity might "disconnect" the words from the person, and makes the interaction more "mechanical", less personal. Not "knowing" the individual with whom one is interacting might lead to the apprehension that the individual is more likely to behave in undesirable ways (Johnson, 1997). This belief is closely related to the general assumption that "trust needs touch" (Handy, 1995), which proclaims that interpersonal contact is important (if not vital) for trust to develop. Yet, the absence of personal information may draw the attention to the social context of the interaction. By focusing on the social identity of the trustee, group characteristics could be attributed to the individual, and targets could be categorized in terms of ingroup or outgroup member (cf. earlier studies in this thesis). Emphasizing that a person shares the same social identity or not could thus have strong behavioral consequences

**Overview**

In order to examine the effects of cues to personal and social identity on trust, a so-called investment game was designed in which participants were confronted with a dilemma (see: Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995). Participants were told that they had the option of investing the reward they would receive for participating in the research session, but with the risk of losing it. Subsequently they were told that they would be linked to a randomly selected counterpart to whom they could transfer (a part of) their reward for cooperation. The experiment leader would triple the amount of money participants decided to send to the counterpart. Participants were led to believe that the person linked to them was to choose how much (if
any) of the money was to be returned to the participant. In other words, participants could give the other person the power to decide how big their reward would be (Berg et al., 1995).17

Based on earlier findings showing that cues to personal identity may reduce ambiguity, and make the perception more "personal" (Culnan & Markus, 1987; Rutter, 1987; Short et al., 1976, see also Study 2.2), expectations were that the presence of cues to personal identity would lead to increased interpersonal trust. However, whether or not this would have behavioral consequences such as an increased willingness to transfer money, the so-called invested trust, was believed to be influenced by cues to personal identity as well as cues to social identity. In line with the preceding studies in this chapter, predictions were that cues to social identity would moderate the effect of cues to personal identity, in such a way that cues to personal identity would be vital when having to invest trust in a counterpart that belonged to a salient outgroup. This was expected because absence of cues to personal identity fosters attention to the cues to social identity, and cause counterparts to be perceived as group members rather than individuals. This increased attention to a group membership that is shared or not, may lead to group stereotypes and expectancies of behavior that is seen as appropriate within or between groups (Reicher et al., 1995). Predictions were that from the ingroup, reciprocity would be expected to a higher extent than from the outgroup, hence, emphasizing the social identity due to the inability to individuate would lead to reciprocity expectations for ingroup members and not for outgroup members.

**Method**

**Participants and Design**

One hundred ninety-three freshmen students of the University of Amsterdam (48 male) participated in return for a financial compensation. The design was a 2 (social identity of partner: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) factorial design.

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17 The original game by Berg, et al. (1995) consisted of a second part in which the counterpart received the money and decided how much money to send back. In our version, no actual counterpart existed, so the procedure was ended after the participant had decided how much money to transfer.
Chapter IV: Cues to Identity in an Intergroup Context

Study 4.3

Procedure and Independent Variables

The experiment was conducted in a laboratory with eight personal computers connected to a local network. Upon entering the laboratory, brief instructions with regard to the computer handling were given. Participants were each guided to an isolated cubicle with a desktop computer. All instructions were provided via the computer. In addition to some demographic questions (age, sex), ingroup identification was measured using the same three-item scale that was used in the preceding studies (Doosje et al., 1995, Cronbach’s alpha = .82). Identification with the outgroup was measured using the same scale replacing the ingroup name for the one of the outgroup (a = .82). Participants were told that they would be given the opportunity to invest their earnings for their participation in the experiment. They could either keep the money all to themselves or transfer (a part of) their earnings to another person. They were informed that the computer would randomly team up the participant with a counterpart that was to come to the laboratory later that day to participate in an experiment. Participants were led to believe that—if they decided to transfer money—the experimenter would triple the amount of money they transferred. It was then for the alleged counterpart to choose how much (if any) of the money to send to their counterpart. Furthermore, participants were told that, when available, a portrait picture and name of the alleged counterpart (cues to personal identity) and information regarding their university (cues to social identity) would be presented. The cues to social identity were given by means of presenting the logo of the particular university. Understanding of the procedure was tested through a multiple-choice question and when answered incorrectly, instructions were repeated.

Subsequently, participants were led to believe that the computer randomly chose a counterpart. This was done by simultaneously portraying two targets (each on one side of the computer screen) by means of the logo of the accompanying university (one of each university). This initial joint presentation of an in- and outgroup counterpart ensured that the intergroup context was made salient for all participants. The counterparts were identified with randomly selected portrait pictures and names in the cues to personal identity condition, or not identified with just a gray square instead of a picture in the condition without cues to personal identity. After ten seconds, one of the persons presented faded away and an arrow pointed to

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18 In reality, participants were not linked to another person. Participants were led to believe that the counterpart was coming later that day in order to prevent suspicion.

19 Again, portrait pictures and first names were randomly drawn from the same database that was used in the previous studies, therefore bias on the basis of personality traits could be ruled out.
the remaining person, who allegedly would be the counterpart, linked to the participant and capable of increasing the reward. After this, the participant was asked whether or not (s)he was willing to transfer money, followed by a number of questions measuring dependent variables, followed by a manipulation check.

**Dependent Variables**

*Invested trust* was measured dichotomously (0 = not willing to transfer any money, 1 = willing to transfer (part of) the money). Following the choice of transferring money or not, the amount of money that participants were willing to transfer was also measured but because of the characteristics of distribution (most participants transferring nothing or everything) this measure was effectively the same as the previous one. In addition to this, participants responded to statements on 7-point scales (1 = I strongly disagree, 7 = I strongly agree) assessing the degree of trust they had in their counterpart, forming a measure of *interpersonal trust*: (“I had faith in the person that was linked to me”, “I think that the other person could be trusted”, $\alpha= .79$), and their expectation of reciprocity (“I believe that the person that is linked to me will reward me”).

**Data Analysis**

Eight participants were excluded from analysis because participants did not recall correctly the counterpart’s group membership, as measured by the manipulation check. The rest of the data were scanned for outliers using the method of estimating Mahalanobis distances on the key dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Six participants were identified as outliers using this method, and these cases were excluded from further analysis. This resulted in a total sample size of 125 (40 male, 85 female).

**Results**

As predicted, ingroup identification ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.17$) was higher than outgroup identification ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .91$), $F(1,124) = 600.12, p < .001$. A series 2 (social identity of partner: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (cues to personal identity: no cues vs. cues) analyses of variance were conducted in order to examine the effect of both sorts of cues to identity on the dependent variables. Results are presented in Table 10.
Table 10: Mean Scores of Interpersonal Trust, Perceived Reciprocity, and Invested Trust by Cues to Personal Identity and Social Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No cues</th>
<th>Cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ingroup</td>
<td>Outgroup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Trust</td>
<td>3.73\textsubscript{a}</td>
<td>3.85\textsubscript{a}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy of Reciprocity\textsuperscript{1}</td>
<td>4.18\textsubscript{b}</td>
<td>3.35\textsubscript{a}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invested Trust\textsuperscript{2}</td>
<td>0.67\textsubscript{b}</td>
<td>0.41\textsubscript{a}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Means in the same row with a different subscript differ significantly from each other at p < .05

\textsuperscript{1} Higher scores indicate greater expected reciprocity

\textsuperscript{2} Higher scores indicate greater invested trust on a scale from 0 to 1

*Interpersonal Trust.* As predicted, cues to personal identity had a positive effect on the level of interpersonal trust, $F(1, 121) = 33.16, p < .001$. When cues were provided, participants indicated that they trusted the counterpart more ($M = 4.98, SD = 1.12$), compared to when no cues were provided ($M = 3.78, SD = 1.18$). Group membership showed no significant effect on interpersonal trust, $F(1, 121) = .35, ns$, and the interaction was not reliable either, $F(1, 121) = .00, ns$.

*Expectancy of Reciprocity.* A main effect of cues to personal identity was found on participants’ expectations that their trusting donations would be reciprocated, $F(1, 121) = 4.59, p < .05$. When cues were present, participants reported a higher level of expected reciprocity ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.48$) than when no cues were given ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.49$). Group membership had no significant effect on reciprocity, $F(1, 121) = .98, ns$. The main effect of cues was qualified by a significant interaction effect, $F(1, 121) = 4.84, p < .05$. In order to test whether the pattern of results was as expected, a planned comparison analysis was conducted (Rosenthal, Rosnow, & Rubin, 2000). The tested contrast specified that the expectation of reciprocity would differ significantly in the outgroup - no cues condition. This was confirmed by a highly significant contrast analysis, $F(1, 121) = 9.02, p < .005$. Participants least expected reciprocity from an anonymous outgroup member ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.45$) compared to other conditions ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.51$; see Table 10).
**Invested Trust.** Presence of cues to personal identity had no main effect on the willingness to donate money, i.e., the invested trust, $F(1, 121) = 1.55, ns$. Also, group membership had no significant effect on invested trust, $F(1, 121) = 0.80, ns$. The planned comparison showed that the interaction as predicted was nevertheless significant $F(1, 121) = 5.47, p < .05$. Indeed, inspection of the means in Table 10 showed that, compared to other conditions ($M = 0.66, SD = 0.48$), participants were less willing to invest money in the outgroup – no cues condition ($M = 0.41, SD = 0.50$).

**Expected Reciprocity as a Mediator for Invested Trust.** Results showed that the availability of cues to personal identity interacted with group membership (in which the outgroup – no cues condition differed from the other conditions) in influencing invested trust. In order to test whether this effect was mediated by expected reciprocity, a path-analysis was performed (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Results of this path analysis are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Path model for the effect of the interaction of cues to personal and social identity and expected reciprocity on invested trust.

Regression analysis showed that the interaction of cues and social identity had a significant impact on the invested trust ($\beta = .21, p < .05$). The interaction was also significantly related to the expectancy of reciprocity ($\beta = .26, p < .005$). The expectancy of reciprocity had a significant effect on the participants’ invested trust ($\beta = .59, p < .005$). However, when the expectancy of reciprocity was entered in the regression equation, the direct effect of cues and social identity was no longer significant ($\beta = .06, ns$.). Thus, the expectancy of reciprocity mediated the willingness to transfer money.
Model for Invested Trust for Outgroup Members. When looking at the pattern of results as displayed in Table 10, it is clear that for those whose counterpart was a member of the *ingroup*, cues had no marked effect on perceived reciprocity or invested trust, only on the perception of interpersonal trust (i.e., an effect which is essentially similar to those of interpersonal attraction reported throughout this thesis). For those participants whose counterpart was a member of the outgroup, however, cues did have a marked effect on all three variables: perceived interpersonal trust, expected reciprocity, and invested trust. When the counterpart is an outgrouper, the expectancy of reciprocity can (obviously) not be based on positive stereotypes that may exist of the ingroup, or on grounds of being part of the same social group. Rather, it seems likely that for an outgrouper, any expectation of reciprocal behavior stems from a feeling of *interpersonal* trust which is induced by cues to *personal* identity. In other words, if it is the case that cues to identity had the effect of making salient the *personal identity* of outgroup members, then the difference between conditions on expected reciprocity and behavioral outcomes should be accounted for by differences in interpersonal perceptions.

In order to test this, a structural equation model was tested which predicted that the cues condition would affect interpersonal trust, which in turn would give rise to expected reciprocity, which in turn predicted invested trust (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Structural equation model for invested trust in members of the outgroup.

```
Interpersonal trust --> Expected reciprocity
| \ .48*       | \ .70*
```

\[ \text{Cues to personal identity} \quad \text{Invested trust} \]

\[ *: p < .05 \]

This model was tested in *EQS* version 5.7a for Windows (Bentler, 1995). The conventional test for significance when evaluating structural equation models is Chi-square goodness-of-fit test, in which a better fit is indicated by a lower chi-square. By this, a non-significant Chi-square indicates that the difference between the observed and estimated variance-covariance matrices is not reliable, which means that the model fits the data well. In
addition to this, the *Comparative Fit Index* (CFI) and the *Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index* (BBNFI) are reported. Both are indicators for the degree to which the model fits the data better compared to the *null-model*, in which no covariance between the variables is expected. These indices may range between 0 and 1, in which a perfect fit is represented by 1. Values larger than .90 are generally considered to represent an adequate fit of the model on the data (see: Bentler, 1995). Also, a measure of the proportion of unexplained variance is given; the *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation* (RMSEA). On this index of fit, values less than .05 are considered to be good (a value of 0 indicates that the model accounted for all the covariance). The predicted model had excellent fit, $\chi^2(3) = 3.46$, $p = .33$, BBNFI = .96, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .05. All expected parameters were significant and the direction of the relations matched the expectations.\(^{20}\) As can be seen in Figure 5, presence of cues significantly affected interpersonal trust ($\beta = .48$, $p < .05$), which significantly predicted reciprocity expectations ($\beta = .70$, $p < .05$), which determined invested trust ($\beta = .60$, $p > .05$). The path of the presence of cues to reciprocity expectation proved insignificant ($\beta = .05$, ns), as did the path of cues to invested trust ($\beta = .01$, ns). Also interpersonal trust did not directly affect invested trust ($\beta = .25$, ns)

**Discussion**

Results confirm predictions that cues to personal identity such as portrait pictures and first names affect how others are perceived as individuals. These findings support the previous studies confirming that basic personal information affects impressions in that they reduce ambiguity and cause impressions to be more positive (see chapter II and III, and Hancock & Dunham, 2001; Walther et al., 2001). Again, assumptions are supported that the presence of cues to personal identity affects the relationships of people and leads to feelings of “intimacy” and “immediacy” (cf. Kiesler et al., 1984; Rutter, 1987; Spears & Lea, 1992; Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), and people are perceived as more trustworthy in the presence of cues to personal identity. This is in line with the general belief that “trust needs touch” (Handy, 1995), suggesting that in order to achieve interpersonal trust, personal contact (even if this is

\(^{20}\) In order to rule out the possibility that the direction of the causal paths between interpersonal trust and expected reciprocity as specified in this model did indeed provide the best description of these data, we tested a reverse causality model, in which the expectancy of reward influences interpersonal trust. This reverse causality model did not account for the data well: All three fit indices spoke to the fact that it failed to account for the pattern of covariation among the variables, $\chi^2(3) = 15.14$, $p < .001$, BBNFI = .82, CFI = .85.
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not physical, but virtual in the form of pictorial or textual information) is beneficial, if not necessary. It should be emphasized once more that the portrait pictures did not portray extremely attractive or eye-catching targets, which rules out the alternative explanation that it is the attractiveness rather than the presence of cues that fosters interpersonal trust.

However, results also showed that interpersonal trust, based on cues to personal identity, is no necessity for trusting behavior to occur. Support was found for the prediction that behavior towards another is also determined by social group membership. Whether or not cues to personal identity (and the perceived trust accompanying it) were implicated in participants’ decision to invest trust was largely determined by the target’s social identity. When, due to a decreased possibility to distinguish between the person and his/her group, group members’ “individuality” is de-emphasized, perceptions will be based on their group membership and people will be characterized in terms of their social identity (Postmes et al., 1998; Reicher et al., 1995). For members of the ingroup this means that the emphasis lies on the shared social identity, while for outgroup members such a shared identity is obviously not available. When cues are not available, social identity has a larger influence in guiding behavior and, in this case, invested trust. As was shown by the mediation analyses, invested trust was largely determined by the expectancy of reciprocal behavior. So, participants were most willing to transfer a part of their money when they expected that they would be rewarded for this by their counterpart. Reciprocity was not expected from the anonymous outgroup members and, as a consequence, less invested trust was demonstrated under those conditions. However, when cues to personal identity were present, participants expected more reciprocity even from an outgroup member, and proved to be more willing to invest their trust in them as a result. This conclusion was supported by the structural equation analysis showing that when the counterpart was an outgroup member, invested trust, linked to expected reciprocity, was most strongly demonstrated when cues to personal identity were present, in other words, when there was a basis for interpersonal trust.

The outcome was entirely different for ingroupers: here cues to identity had no influence on invested trust. This is despite the fact that, based on SIDE, the investment of trust in ingroup members is under influence of the same process, in which cues to personal identity individuate one’s counterpart, automatically drawing away the attention from the social identity of that person. However, when an ingroup member is not individuated by the presence of such cues, and hence remains anonymous, there still is the same level of expected reciprocity and concomitant investment of trust, for the simple reason that a shared group membership provides a sufficient basis for the expectation of benevolence of the other.
It could be argued that the opposite effect could also have occurred: cues to personal identity decreasing reciprocity expectations, and thereby decreasing invested trust. Indeed, this would be to some extent what research on SIDE has shown regularly: That social influence within the group is reduced when attention is drawn to personal characteristics (e.g., Lea et al., 2001; Postmes et al., 2001). Due to the presence of cues to personal identity, interpersonal differences become salient. This de-emphasizes the unity of the group, diminishing the influences exerted by shared social identity (Spears & Lea, 1992). The reason for this reverse pattern not occurring in the present experiment, I believe, is that the dependent variable of invested trust is one that is influenced both by interpersonal perceptions of attraction, liking (and particularly trust), as well as by common ingroup membership. This can be contrasted to effects studied in traditional SIDE research, which tend to be confined to conformity to more explicit social norms specific to a larger social group (something which is unlikely to occur on the basis of attraction between individuals). Returning to the data of the present experiment, the effects of group membership on trust are most clearly illustrated in the comparison between the two no-cues conditions, where ingroupers were trusted more than outgroupers, but importantly not in perceived interpersonal trust. It is possible that this difference in invested trust and expected reciprocity across groups is related to norms of reciprocity being stronger in intra-group interactions, and weaker or absent across group boundaries. In addition to these positive expectations of ingroup members in general, interpersonal perceptions of trust are very strongly related to the behavioral outcomes of trust as investment. This is borne out by the findings as shown in the mediational analyses. Moreover, cues to personal identity fostered interpersonal trust felt towards ingroupers as well as outgroupers.

Thus, in interactions with members of the ingroup, two different processes are taking place which can be held responsible for the relinquishing of control. On the one hand, expectations of reciprocity are greater for members of the ingroup than for outgroup members when social identity is salient. When social identity is not salient, cues to personal identity can foster interpersonal trust and thereby increase invested trust. So, on the one hand the inability to individuate ingroup members reinforces social salience and thereby raises reciprocity expectations as a function of group membership, while on the other hand cues to personal identity can “take over” and raise reciprocity expectations as a function of more positive interpersonal perceptions.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results presented in this chapter provide insight in the varying effects of cues to identity and support the idea that in order to predict their effect, a distinction between the effects of cues to identity is valuable: On the one hand cues to personal identity are used to individually differentiate people from each other, and on the other hand cues to social identity are used as a basis for categorization and identification of group membership.

Studies 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrated that in conditions where cues to personal identity are not available, cues to social identity become important: Both studies show that people prove less willing to team-up with people from an outgroup when they are unable to individuate them. Under these conditions participants prefer working with an ingroup member. The level of identification with the ingroup moderates this effect. This finding accentuates that social contextual factors, such as group membership and group affiliation, play a crucial role in generating a wider range of social outcomes than would be expected on the basis of the seemingly straightforward effects of cues to personal identity on aspects of person perception. For ingroup members, cues to personal identity did not play this crucial role. The fact that the social-behavioral consequences of a lack of cues to personal identity are moderated by a target’s group membership and by the strength of group affiliation is completely consistent with SIDE. Study 4.3 confirmed these findings, and specified the influence of both forms of cues to identity in more detail. This study showed that cues to personal identity play an important role in interpersonal perceptions such as a person’s trustworthiness. However, whether or not this is vital for trusting behavior depended on the target’s group membership. Again, cues to personal identity proved important for outgroup members only.

In conclusion, the studies showed that whether or not cues to personal identity are important for guiding social behavior (partly) depends on the group membership of the target. For outgroup members, the results corroborate SIDE-expectations, in that participants proved to be less willing to team-up, and demonstrated less trusting behavior with anonymous targets that could be categorized as members from the outgroup. This supports the idea that the inability to individuate, due to the absence of cues to personal identity, leads to perceiving the target as a representative of his/her group with particular behavior as a consequence.

However, for the ingroup, expectations were a little different to some prior studies examining SIDE effects. In this prior research, the characteristic pattern is one of cues to personal identity disrupting the unity of the group, and thereby reducing feelings of shared
social identity and social influences exerted by that identity (e.g., Lea et al., 2001; Postmes et al., 2001). One could therefore predict that decreased attention for the shared social identity diminishes ingroup favoritism, resulting in decreased willingness to collaborate with (Study 4.1 and 4.2) or invest trust in (Study 4.3) individuated ingroup members. As mentioned above, this is not what the studies showed. In contrast to the results of Chapter III, where collaboration was preferred in the absence of cues to personal identity, the studies presented in this chapter showed that people were “indifferent” as to whether cues to personal identity about the ingroup member were available or not.

A possible explanation for this is related to the nature of the dependent variables in this research. These were not dependent variables which exclusively reflect adherence to, for example, ingroup social norms, or which are exclusively the result of social influence. Although results of all three studies do show that those factors come into play, the results of the third study show very clearly that these outcomes also depend on interpersonal affection. Thus, trust invested can both be a function of perceived interpersonal trust (a variable much on a par with interpersonal affection, as argued) but also of a salient shared social identity as members of an overarching social group. Benevolence of the counterpart was expected as a result of both interpersonal and social identity related factors, then. This can be contrasted with much of the work on the SIDE model, which has been more closely confined to examining the effects of individuating cues on outcomes such as normative behavior and social influence. These dependent variables are ones which, as shown by research, are much less sensitive to factors in the interpersonal sphere, such as interpersonal attraction (Sassenberg & Postmes, 2002). In this sense, the present studies are consistent with suggestions that certain outcomes can be as much related to the groups in question and social identities involved, as to interdependence between individuals within that setting (e.g., Turner, 1999).

In that sense, the results presented in this chapter extend SIDE to a new dimension. They show that SIDE principles are not just confined to group-relevant outcomes. Particular outcomes such as trust and the desire to collaborate with another person are not merely interpersonal constructs, which are influenced by factors such as attraction and interdependence. They can equally be the result of the recognition of shared group membership (and salience of it). The most powerful demonstration of this was perhaps given in Study 4.3: Even when interpersonal trust (or attraction) was low, people still invested their money and their trust in others provided they were members of the social ingroup.
One further important difference between this research and prior studies on SIDE is the qualitative change induced by quantitative constraints. What I mean by this is that the small size of the “groups” under investigation may have reinforced the importance of interpersonal factors in these interactions. Most SIDE studies focus on groups consisting of more than 2 persons (see Postmes et al., 1998), where these studies examined dyads. It could be that the individuating effect that is studied in the bulk of SIDE-research is found to de-emphasize social identity and lead to “fragmentation” because the cues to personal identity stress the unique individuality of each member, thereby blurring the common denominator of its members. If, however, this reasoning is applied to the dyads that are subject of investigation in the present studies, individuation may also shift the attention from what is shared, but at the same time provide the information that is supposed to be necessary for interpersonal relations (Culnan & Markus, 1987; Rutter & Stephenson, 1979; Short et al., 1976).

Put differently, due to the fact that the groups that are studied here consist of only one tie, cues to personal identity could shift the attention from group affection (“I like this group) to interpersonal affection (“I like you”). Whereas in groups that consist of more than two people this shift would be less easily made, enhancing the likelihood that the shift would be one from group affection to diminished group affection (but not necessarily greater interpersonal attraction). Having said that, this remains speculative however, and some research evidence exists that shows that under particular conditions interpersonal attraction can also be greater when cues to identity are available, even in larger groups (Sassenberg & Postmes, 2002).

What is clear, though, is that the very fact that dyads were investigated in this research meant that the odds were stacked against finding any group-level effects as predicted by SIDE. After all, a dyad is all about coming to terms with an inter-personal situation, and generally the construct of social identity is believed to be irrelevant to this kind of interpersonal setting. The present findings nonetheless show clear evidence that, even in the most interpersonal of social settings, group membership should not be ignored.