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Within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes: Application and development of the stereotype content model in an Eastern European culture

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ABSTRACT

There is little and unsystematic evidence about whether the content of stereotypes can vary within a culture. Using the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) as a theoretical framework, in two studies we examined the content of stereotypes in an Eastern European culture, namely Romania. Data were collected from four regions prototypical in terms of economic and social development in Romania, and we examined whether the content of stereotypes varies across these regions. As expected, the findings confirm the applicability of the SCM in Romania to reveal culture-specific stereotypes and provide initial support for within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes. We discuss, in particular, possible reasons for two main findings: a strong one-dimensional structure of stereotypes, and regional differences in stereotype content.

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The content of stereotypes refers to beliefs about affiliation and competition-related characteristics of members of social groups (for a review see Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). The content of stereotypes is usually shared among people (Thompson & Fine, 1999). While there is increasing evidence for similarities and differences in the content of stereotypes across cultures, there is comparably little and unsystematic investigations about whether the content of stereotype is homogeneous within a culture. In the present article, we propose a theoretical development in considering within-culture as opposed to between-culture differences (and similarities) in the content of stereotypes. We expect that, while in general the content of stereotypes is relevant throughout a culture, there can be important regional variation.

While the majority of empirical evidence about the content of stereotypes is from Western and East-Asian cultures, there is little information from former communist countries (Cuddy et al., 2009). Due to the proposed universal structure of the content of stereotypes, we propose that perceptions of warmth and competence are also relevant for stereotypes in Romania.

Culture and stereotype content

Culture represents "ideas and behavior patterns that are *obviously valid* for members of the culture and that need not be debated" (emphasis in original, cf. Baldwin, Faulkner, Hecht, & Lindsley, 2006, p. 218). It is knowledge that members of any given group develop, maintain, and perpetuate by means of social interaction (Kashima, 2008). It transcends the sole individual representing a characteristic of the group itself (Schwartz, 2014) and often emerges within a country's boundaries.

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Culture has been shown to influence various psychological processes related to cognition and behavior (Kitayama & Uskul, 2011; Schwartz, 2012).

Stereotypes are "beliefs about characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups" (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996, p. 240). While, generally speaking, certain characteristics, attributes, or behaviors can be relevant across cultures, the beliefs regarding them and the groups that are associated with them can be culture-specific. For instance, hardworking or friendliness are two attributes that can be relevant both in, say, the U.S. and China. However, which groups are considered hardworking and friendly can be different in the United States compared to China. In fact, this is the core assumption of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM, Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). The SCM proposes that stereotypes derive from two human motivational factors—social relatedness and individual striving (see Abele & Wojciszke, 2013)—and that these form the structure of the content of stereotypes. While the former encompasses the affiliating nature of individuals, thus informing the warmth attributes of individuals, the latter encompasses the competitive nature of individuals, thus informing the competence attributes of individuals (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007).

The structure of the content of stereotypes appears to be stable across cultures. With samples from 10 distinct cultures, Cuddy et al. (2009) were able to confirm that warmth and competence consistently distinguish between stereotyped groups. Successful usage of the stereotypes as a two-dimensional construct was also reported in studies using Brazilian (de Paula Couto & Koller, 2012), Chinese (e.g. Cheng, Guan, & Wang, 2012), German (e.g. Asbrock, 2010; Eckes, 2002), Italian (Vaes & Paladino, 2009), Swiss (Binggeli, Krings, & Sczesny, 2014), and New Zealand participants (Sibley et al., 2011).

Within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes

There are studies arguing for the necessity to explore potential within-culture differences. Stemming from the cultural psychology tradition, distinct geographical locations can correspond to specific regional cultures (Vandello, Hettinger, & Michniewicz, 2014). In an attempt to examine personality across different cultures, Leung and Cohen (2011) argued that beyond between-culture differences there is substantial within-culture variation. They indicated that a three-way interaction among culture, situation, and person would be most advisable for studying personality. In a study on the uniqueness of the self, Causse and Félonneau (2014) indicated that the notion of self differs not only across cultures but also within cultures. They argued that this is related to life contexts and societal structures such as social status. Yamawaki (2011) had a similar finding in a study set to examine the notion of collectivism in separate districts across Japan. Thus, psychological aspects can vary within a culture, not only between individuals but also between situations, life contexts, regions, and so on.

Within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes does not imply a different structure, but rather that the content of stereotypes can vary within regions of the culture. Unfortunately, empirical evidence is brief and unsystematic. In the original study, Fiske et al. (2002) alluded to this possibility when they used samples from distinct regions in the United States (Study 3, p. 893). Since their goal was to rule out potential sampling biases, the empirical evidence is not sufficient for arguing for the hypothesis of within-culture variation. Nevertheless, one particular finding stands out—whereas in this study housewives were situated in the high warmth-low competence cluster, a later study by Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2007) reported that the social group was in the high warmth-high competence cluster. The shift with 1.04 units on the 5-point competence scale was interpreted as a contextualization bias of the study procedure. Rather than using samples of students, the study used a sample of non-students in a nation-wide telephone survey, which might have activated contextualized meaning of stereotypes (e.g., child rearing) rather than typical stereotypes (e.g., paid work) (cf. Cuddy et al., p.638). Beyond this, we are aware of the existence of empirical evidence for the within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes only from Germany. In this culture, two separate studies that were

carried out some years apart, one in Eastern Germany (Eckes, 2002) and the other in Western Germany (Asbrock, 2010), had 64% agreement between the two data sets (Asbrock, p. 80).

The content of stereotypes in Romania

Following Rudmin's (2010) suggestion to expand the focus of research to other cultural contexts than the Western or East Asian cultures, we investigated the content of stereotypes in a culture emergent from the former Eastern European Communist bloc. Although the communist ideology has disappeared from the European context, the values that are often associated with it appear to have remained unchanged (Comșa & Rusu, 2011; Swadler, 2011).

Romanian culture is one exemplar of this culture set. While in terms of cultural heritage it aligns with Western European countries (e.g., Romanian is the only Latin language in Eastern Europe), in terms of historical aspects, it aligns with Eastern European countries (e.g., politically under Communist regime during the period 1945 and 1989). Ironically, despite a fertile cultural climate for stereotypes and prejudices, research investigating stereotypes in Romania is scarce. The majority of local studies report on ethnic stereotypes such as the animosity between Romanians and Romanian-Hungarians (Cernat, 2001) or between Romanians and the Roma people (Cernat, 2011). To the best of our knowledge there is no published empirical evidence regarding the content of stereotypes in Romania.

To explore the content of stereotypes in Romania and to investigate whether there is within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes, we conducted two studies applying a combined emic-etic reasoning (Cheung, van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011), which is common practice in SCM research (e.g. Asbrock, 2010; Sibley et al., 2011). This approach recommends complementing universally developed constructs (etic) with culture-specific information (emic). Based on etic reasoning we assumed that the structure of stereotype content is relevant in the Romanian culture, and based on emic reasoning we expected that the content of stereotypes in Romania would reveal culture-specific aspects.

Primarily, we considered regional differences as potential sources of within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes. We focused on four distinct regions: Center-South (Bucharest), West (Timișoara), North-East (Iași) and Center-North (Tîrgu Mureș). These regions are not only farthest apart from each other geographically; they are also prototypes for distinct economic and ethnic diversity contexts (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2011a). In terms of ethnic diversity, the Western and Center-North regions have the highest density of ethnic minorities, compared to the other two regions. In terms of economic development, the North-Easter region is the least developed compared to the other three.

As such, in Study 1 we sought to determine reliable measurement scales for warmth and competence in this culture and, additionally, we aimed at finding relevant social groups in Romania. These findings were used in Study 2, in which we constructed the stereotype map of Romania and, subsequently, we systematically investigated whether there are within-culture differences in the content of stereotypes.

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedure

The sample consisted of 100 Romanian participants: 53 were students, 37 nonstudents, and 10 did not specify. The participants were recruited from cities situated in four geographical regions in Romania, namely Bucharest, Timișoara, Iași, and Tîrgu-Mureș; 10 did not specify their place of residence (for a detailed description of study samples see Table 1). The student sample consisted of undergraduate students enrolled at one of the four regional universities. The non-student participants were, at the time

Table 1. Description of samples, Study 1 and Study 2.

	Study 1					Study 2					
	n	M_{age}	SD_{age}	% females	% non-students	*n*	M_{age}	SD_{age}	% females	% non-students	Total *N*
Bucharest	19	25.58	3.72	47.37	52.63	61	23.87	4.50	62.30	36.07	80
Iași	14	25.79	12.82	57.14	35.71	57	22.35	3.60	70.18	27.88	71
Timișoara	34	21.94	4.91	58.82	32.35	165	24.41	8.38	60.00	12.50	199
Tîrgu-Mureș	23	22.39	6.76	52.17	47.83	23	23.35	6.07	56.52	30.43	46
N	90	23.42	7.07	49.00	41.11	306	23.91	6.98	61.90	27.10	396

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; Bucharest = located in the Center-South region, is the capital and largest city in Romania; Iași = largest city in the East region; Timișoara = largest city in the West region; Tîrgu-Mureș = middle size city in the Center-North region, has Hungarian ethnicity as the second largest ethnic group after Romanians (44.9%); table is reproduced with permission from Stanciu (2015).

of the study, not enrolled in a higher education program. All participants were eligible to participate in a lottery for a monetary reward (20 Euros). The data collection procedure was the same in all four regions. For the student sample, student assistants advertised the study within classrooms. For the non-student sample, a snowball technique was employed where student participants recruited at least one non-student participant (for a similar procedure see Fiske et al., 2002). Both the student participants and the non-student participants completed a self-administered questionnaire that was available on an online research platform (EFS Survey version 10.4, Unipark). The questionnaire contained a question about social groups as well as measures for the scale adaptation.

Measures

Item selection. Similar to Leach et al. (2008), we conducted a literature search to identify studies in which warmth- and competence-related items were reported. From 14 studies we selected the 22 most frequently used items. For the warmth dimension we decided on the following: *likeable, warm, trustworthy, cold, friendly, good-natured, sincere, well-intentioned, honest, amusing*, and *sociable*, and for the competence dimension we chose the following: *intelligent, skillful, competent, lazy, capable, confident, efficient, competitive, independent, conscientious, and organized.* [1]

Adaptation of items and study instruction. All items and the study instruction were adapted into Romanian using back-translation (Hambleton & Zenisky, 2010). Disagreement was resolved by discussions among research assistants and the principal investigator. [2]

Instruction for identifying social groups. Participants were asked to give between 8 and 20 answers to the following question (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002): "Off the top of your head, what various types of people do you think today's Romanian society categorizes into groups?" [3]

Warmth and competence dimensions. Rather than personal stereotypes, we assessed cultural stereotypes (Devine, 1989). Participants were asked to use the 22 items to evaluate two arbitrarily selected social groups, namely elderly people and Romanians, on a 5-point scale (*1—not at all agree* and *5—completely agree)*. An example item is "As viewed by today's Romanian society, elderly people are warm". [4]

Results

Relevant social groups in Romania

In total, 309 social groups were mentioned by at least one participant. In order to identify a set of social groups that are culturally salient and consensually shared among participants (cf. Eckes, 2002), three criteria informed the decision of group selection: (a) a social group is mentioned by at least 10% of total participants, (b) a social group is mentioned by at least 10% of participants in at least

two distinct regional samples, and (c) a social group is mentioned by at least 10% of the student or the non-student participants (preferably in both). Thus, the following 15 social groups were considered relevant in Romania: students (32% of the general sample), politicians (31%), Roma people (28%), ethnic minorities (20%), family (17%), workers (17%), elderly people (16%), Maghiari (16%), rich people (16%), poor people (13%), delinquents (13%), unemployed people (13%), religious minorities (12%), pensioners (11%), and rockers (11%).,[5, 6]

Variation among regions in the relevance of social groups

A systematic analysis showed some variation among regions with regard to frequency of listed social groups. Given the small sizes of regional samples, a more conservative approach—threshold of $n = 4$ (a social group was mentioned by at least 4 participants in a sample) (cf. Eckes, 2002)—, revealed two social groups that were equally salient and highly consensual among regions: politicians and Roma people (although the frequency for students was just below the threshold in Iași) (for a detailed list of frequencies see Table 2). In addition, there were some social groups that appeared as salient and highly consensual in two distinct regions: ethnic minorities (Bucharest, Tîrgu-Mureș), family (Timișoara, Tîrgu-Mureș), workers (Timișoara, Tîrgu-Mureș), religious minorities (Timișoara, Tîrgu-Mureș), rich people (Timișoara, Iași), Maghiari (Timișoara, Tîrgu-Mureș), and unemployed people (Bucharest, Iași). As can be seen in Table 2, there were region-specific social groups.

Item selection for warmth and competence

Eleven participants (and 19 respectively) dropped out (or had missing values) prior to filling in the measures relating to the SCM, and as such were discarded from further analyses. To identify reliable items to measure the warmth and competence stereotype dimensions, a cross-validation—combination of a principal component analysis (PCA) on all items evaluating elderly people, and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on confirming the structure on items evaluating Romanians—was conducted (Cooil, Winer, & Rados, 1987).

First, the PCA with oblique rotation (Promax) was conducted. The results of a parallel analysis—which compares variance accounted for by the factor solution to a solution based on a randomly generated data set (O'Connor, 2000)—indicated that the set of items was most appropriately summarized by a two-factor solution. Thus, six items with factor loadings > .60 were retained for further analyses, namely: good-natured, well-intentioned, and honest (warmth dimension), and competent, efficient, and independent (competence dimension).

Second, the CFA was conducted. The statistical package AMOS22 (Arbuckle, 2013) was used, and for evaluating the overall goodness-of-fit of the model the following indices were consulted: χ^2 and p value, comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Good model fit was evaluated against the following thresholds, χ^2 with insignificant p value, CFI > .95, RMSEA < .07, and SRMR < .08 (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Items were allowed to load only on the factor they theoretically belonged to. The two stereotype content factors were allowed to correlate. The estimated model using maximum likelihood estimation had good fit, $\chi^2(8) = 2.28$, $p = .97$, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, and SRMR = .02. The standardized item loadings confirmed that both factors were well defined by their respective items. The majority of item loadings exceeded .60, and all differed reliably from zero ($p < .05$). Moreover, the scale reliabilities were all above $\alpha = .77$ (see Table 3). [7]

Table 2. Frequency of listed social groups per regional samples, and associated chi-square test results.

Social group	Bucharest		Iași		Timișoara		Târgu-Mureș		χ^2 (3, N = 90)	p
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%		
Adults	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Anarchists	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Ardeleni	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Artists	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Băsiști	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Children	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Cocalari	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	26.47	0	0.00	2973.40	<.01
Colleagues	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	8	34.78	813.71	<.01
Corporatists	5	26.32	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9.94	.02
Delinquents	0	0.00	3	21.43	5	14.71	0	0.00	1058.71	<.01
Drug addicts	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Elderly people	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	14.71	0	0.00	1651.89	<.01
Ethnic minorities	5	26.32	2	14.29	0	0.00	10	43.48	592.22	<.01
Family	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	11.76	10	43.48	1094.49	<.01
Football fans	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Friends	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	39.13	915.42	<.01
Gamers	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Hipsters	2	10.53	0	0.00	4	11.76	0	0.00	877.85	<.01
Homosexuals	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Idlers	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Maghiari	2	10.53	0	0.00	4	11.76	8	34.78	829.66	<.01
Medics	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Migrants	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Misogins	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Moldavians	2	10.53	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.98	.26
Olteni	3	15.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	5.96	.11
Optimists	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Peasants	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Pensioners	3	15.79	0	0.00	5	14.71	0	0.00	1028.36	<.01
Pessimists	0	0.00	2	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00	57.93	<.01
Pițipoance	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	17.65	0	0.00	1982.26	<.01
Politicians	6	31.58	5	35.71	9	26.47	9	39.13	1198.46	<.01
Poor people	3	15.79	3	21.43	4	11.76	0	0.00	545.36	<.01
Professors	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	13.04	305.14	<.01
Protestants	4	21.05	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	7.95	.05
Relatives	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	13.04	305.14	<.01
Religious minorities	2	10.53	0	0.00	4	11.76	4	17.39	681.37	<.01
Rich people	2	10.53	4	28.57	6	17.65	0	0.00	1018.08	<.01
Rockers	3	15.79	0	0.00	6	17.65	0	0.00	1316.77	<.01
Roma people	4	21.05	4	28.57	10	29.41	9	39.13	1514.95	<.01
Romanians	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	7	30.43	711.99	<.01
Sași	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	13.04	305.14	<.01
Secui	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	13.04	305.14	<.01
Socialists	3	15.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	5.96	.11
Stars	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	14.71	0	0.00	1651.89	<.01
Students	8	42.11	3	21.43	9	26.47	7	30.43	1157.32	<.01
Unemployed	6	31.58	4	28.57	0	0.00	0	0.00	45.43	<.01
Workers	2	10.53	0	0.00	9	26.47	6	26.09	1773.39	<.01
Youngsters	4	21.05	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	7.95	.05
Sub-sample *N*	*19*		*14*		*34*		*23*			

Note. Listed are social groups mentioned by at least 10% of the participants in the respective sample; n = count of participants from sub-sample that listed a social group; % = percentage of participants from sub-sample that listed a social group; N = sample size; p = significance level; bold emphasized: rule of n = 4 applies to all 4 regions; underlined: rule of n = 4 applies to at least 2 distinct regions.

Table 3. Descriptives, scale reliabilities, and correlations.

Target group	Dimension	*M* (*SD*)	1	2
Elderly	*Warmth*	3.29(.92)	*(.82)*	
	Competence	2.44(.88)	.49	*(.77)*
Romanians	*Warmth*	3.01(.91)	*(.86)*	
	Competence	3.20(.93)	.73	(.80)

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .05$, diagonals present scale reliabilities.

Discussion

Social groups and variation of their relevance across regions in Romania

This study allowed us to identify relevant social groups for Romanian culture. The present findings suggest that universally stereotyped groups, such as rich people and women, are also relevant in Romania. Noteworthy is the finding of one social group that is culture-specific, namely "Maghiari." The Maghiari represent the second-largest ethnic group after Romanians (6.5% of the total population) and generally reside in the Center-West and North-West regions (Institutul Național de Statistică [INS], 2011b). They can be best described as Romanian born with Hungarian ancestry. Since the World War 1 events, this social group has been considered the main symbolic enemy for the modernization of Romania (Boia, 2001).

In addition, to the social groups that seem relevant in general in Romania, the findings revealed some regional specifics. For example, although Bucharest and Iași are at opposite ends of unemployment rate in the country—Bucharest = 1,89% and Iași = 4,42% (Agenția Națională pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă [ANOFM], 2015)—unemployed people are highly and equally salient in the minds of participants from both regions. This may be evidence that while there can be homogeneity in the salience of a social group, there can be diverging motives for this. Furthermore, two social groups that are identified based on ethnic motives—the general category of ethnic minorities and the specific category of Maghiari—are highly salient in regions where minorities represent a high percentage of the local population. For instance, in Iași only 8% of the local population has a different ethnicity than Romanian, contrasting Bucharest (14,05%), Timișoara (19,40%), and Tîrgu-Mureș (49,65%) (INS, 2011b). A similar pattern emerges with regard to religious minorities. Whereas Orthodoxy is the major religion in Iași (85,91%) and in Bucharest (84,31%), in both Timișoara (74,25%) and Tîrgu-Mureș (51,03%) there exists a wider variety of religious affiliations (INS, 2011c). Overall, these findings seem to suggest that there is a link between demographic distributions of a regional population and the degree of salience of a social group. The salience of a social group is inherently neither positive nor negative, it simply specifies the degree of relevance of a social category in a specific context (Blanz & Aufderheide, 1999).

Warmth and competence measurement

While we assumed that the warmth and competence stereotype dimensions are meaningful in this culture, we sought to identify items that most reliably measure the two dimensions in this culture. Stable across evaluation of two groups, the findings indicated that the warmth dimension is reliably measured by three items: good-natured, well-intentioned, and honest; and the competence dimension by three items: competent, efficient, and independent.

Study 2

In Study 2 we sought to identify a stereotype map for Romania and to systematically examine whether the content of stereotypes varies across the four regions.

In addition to the list of groups identified in Study 1, seven social groups were included. Based on previous SCM literature (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002), six groups were considered for purposes of comparability with other cultural contexts. These were: "people with HIV/AIDS," "Homosexuals," "People with disabilities," "Drug addicts," "Men," and "Women." Due to historical and cultural reasons, one additional social group was considered, namely "Bessarabians." Bessarabians are citizens of Republic of Moldova, with the same historical and cultural background as Romanians in Romania (Petrescu, 2001). Thus, Study 2 examined Romanian participants' stereotypes of 22 social groups.

Method

Participants and procedure

The final sample consisted of 306 participants: 190 were females (116 males), and 214 listed high school as the most recent level of education finalized. A detailed sample description is presented in Table 1. The definitions for students and non-students and the data collection procedure were the same as in Study 1. All participants were eligible to participate in a lottery for a monetary reward (30 Euros). After the demographics section, the following questions were presented in a randomized order across participants.[8]

Measures

Based on Study 1 findings, three items were used for assessing the warmth dimension (*good-natured, well-intentioned*, and *honest)* and three items were used for assessing the competence dimension (*independent, conscientious*, and *organized)*. Participants were asked to evaluate all 22 social groups on these items. The instruction and answer options were the same as in Study 1.

Results

To examine whether the items identified in Study 1 reliably measured the warmth and competence dimensions, separate CFAs were conducted on the evaluation of each of the 22 groups. The analysis procedure and decision criteria for model fit were the same as in Study 1. Across the 22 groups, the hypothesized factor structure had good model fit indices, with values ranging between evaluations of people with disabilities, $\chi^2(8) = 27.36$, $p = .001$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .09, and SRMR = .06, and evaluations of students, $\chi^2(8) = 7.63$, $p = .47$, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .02. Thus, separate for each social group the warmth and competence items were averaged across participants. Scale reliabilities ranged between $\alpha_{\text{unemployed}} = .79$ and $\alpha_{\text{ethnic minorities}} = .93$ for warmth, and between $\alpha_{\text{politicians}} = .80$ and $\alpha_{\text{homosexuals}} = .94$ for competence.

Content of stereotypes in Romania

To identify a stereotype map for Romania, the warmth and competence scores for each social group were plotted on a scatter diagram (Figure 1) (Fiske et al., 2002). To determine the number of clusters that best summarized the present data, a hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward method) was performed (Everitt, Landau, Leese, & Stahl, 2011). The consultation of dendograms and agglomeration schedule coefficients (η^2) revealed a four-cluster solution. To identify the allocation of groups into clusters, a k-means cluster analysis was performed.

Cluster A (high warmth, high competence) included the following groups: family, students, women, workers, men, and Bessarabians. Cluster B (low warmth, high competence) included: rockers, religious minorities, homosexuals, ethnic minorities, Maghiari, and rich people. Cluster C (high warmth, low competence) included: elderly people, pensioners, people with disabilities, poor people, unemployed people, and people with HIV/AIDS. Finally, cluster D (low warmth, low competence) included: drug addicts, Roma people, politicians, and delinquents. The clusters differed

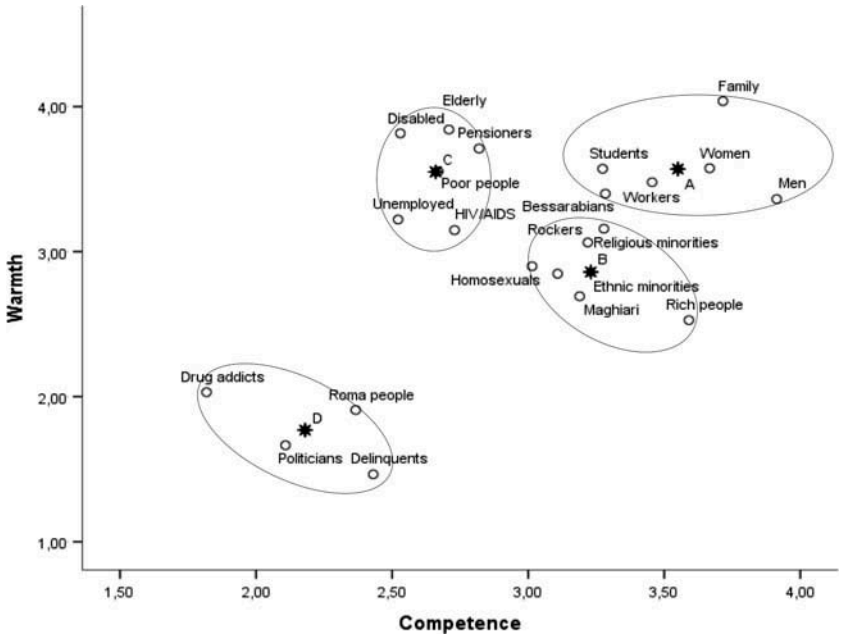

Figure 1. A stereotype map that is relevant in Romania, four cluster solution. *Note*. Cluster centers are in capital letters.

significantly on both warmth, $F(3, 18) = 49.05$, $p < .001$, and competence, $F(3, 18) = 39.91$, $p < .001$. With regard to warmth, post-hoc tests with Bonferroni correction revealed that social groups in cluster A were evaluated more positively than social groups in cluster B, $M_{\text{difference}} = .70$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.26; 1.15], and in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.80$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.30; 2.29]; no difference was between cluster A and cluster C, $M_{\text{difference}} = .02$, p = n.s. Social groups in cluster B were evaluated less positively than social groups in cluster C, $M_{\text{difference}} = -.68$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [−1.13; -.24], and more positively than social groups in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.60; 1.59]. Social groups in cluster C were evaluated more positively compared to social groups in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.78$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.28; 2.27]. With regard to competence, post-hoc tests with Bonferroni correction revealed that social groups in cluster A were evaluated more positively compared to social groups in cluster C, $M_{\text{difference}} = .89$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.52; 1.22], and in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.37$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.96; 1.78]; there was no difference between cluster A and B, $M_{\text{difference}} = .31$, $p = .11$. Social groups in cluster B were evaluated more positively compared to social groups in cluster C, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.37$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.96; 1.78], and in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.64; 1.46]. Social groups in cluster C were evaluated more positively compared to social groups in cluster D, $M_{\text{difference}} = .48$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.07; .89].

Regional differences in the content of stereotypes

To examine whether there was within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes, separate cluster analyses (hierarchical and k-means) were conducted on the regional subsamples. The same procedure was employed as in the previous section. Results revealed a four-cluster solution in Bucharest, Timișoara and Iași, and a three-cluster solution in Tîrgu-Mureș (see Figure 2).

As can be seen in Table 4, only cluster D (low warmth, low competence) had stable memberships across regions. Some social groups changed cluster memberships between regions. These were: Bessarabians (cluster A to cluster B in Iași), students (cluster A to cluster C in Tîrgu-Mureș), rockers

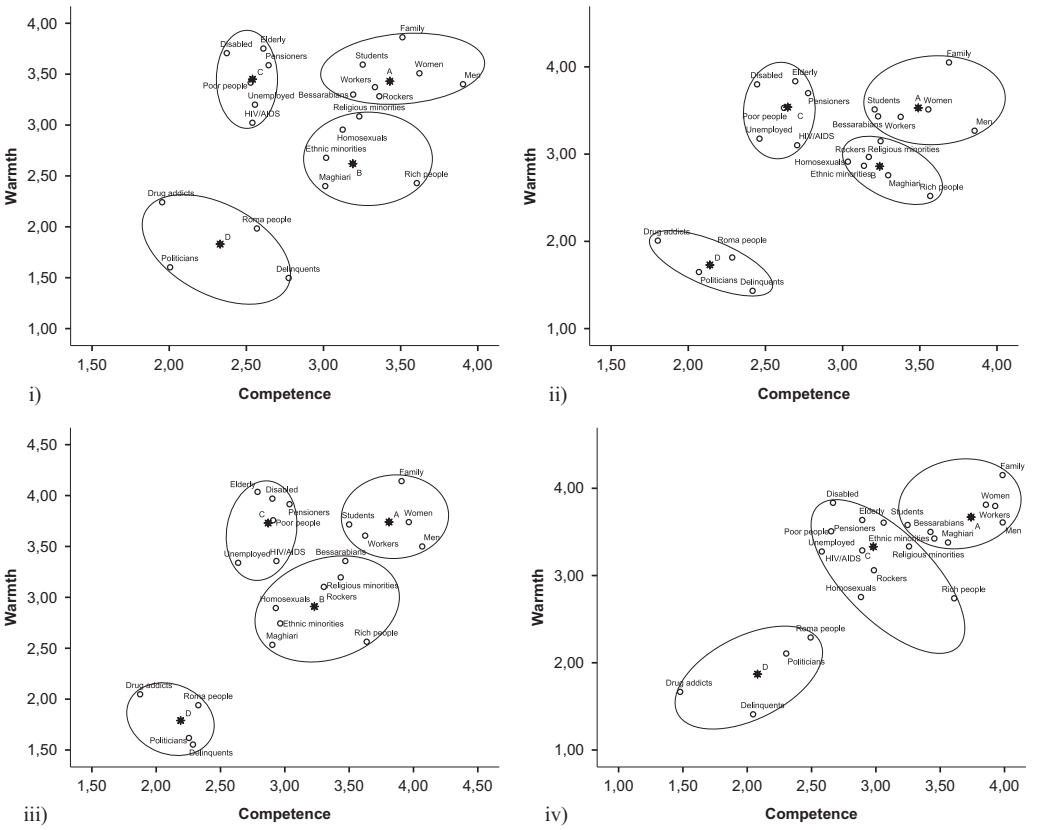

Figure 2. Content of stereotypes across regions in Romania, i) Bucharest, ii) Timisoara, iii) Iasi, and iv) Tirgu-Mures. *Note*. Cluster centers are in capital letters.

Table 4. Cluster membership and cluster centers across regions.

	Bucharest	Timișoara	Iași	Tîrgu Mureș
Cluster A High warmth, High competence	*W* = 3.43, *C* = 3.43 *Family, Women, Men, Workers*, Students, Bessarabians, Rockers, Religious minorities	*W* = 3.49, *C* = 3.53 *Family, Women, Men, Workers*, Students, Bessarabians	*W* = 3.74, *C* = 3.81 *Family, Women, Men, Workers*, Students	*W* = 3.66, *C* = 3.68 *Family, Women, Men, Workers*, Bessarabians, Maghiari, Ethnic minorities
Cluster B Low warmth, High competence	*W* = 2.62, *C* = 3.19 *Homosexuals, Ethnic minorities, Maghiari, Rich people*	*W* = 2.86, *C* = 3.24 *Homosexuals, Ethnic minorities, Maghiari, Rich people*, Religious minorities, Rockers	*W* = 2.91, *C* = 3.23 *Homosexuals, Ethnic minorities, Maghiari, Rich people*, Religious minorities, Rockers, Bessarabians	- -
Cluster C High warmth, Low competence	*W* = 3.45, *C* = 2.54 *Disabled people, Elderly, Pensioners, Poor people, Unemployed people, HIV/AIDS people*	*W* = 3.53, *C* = 2.62 *Disabled people, Elderly, Pensioners, Poor people, Unemployed people, HIV/AIDS people*	*W* = 3.73, *C* = 2.87 *Disabled people, Elderly, Pensioners, Poor people, Unemployed people, HIV/AIDS people*	*W* = 3.33, *C* = 2.98 *Disabled people, Elderly people, Pensioners, Poor people, Unemployed people, HIV/AIDS people*, Religious minorities, Rockers, Homosexuals, Rich people, Students
Cluster D Low warmth, Low competence	*W* = 1.83, *C* = 2.33 *Drug addicts, Roma people, Delinquents, Politicians*	*W* = 1.73, *C* = 2.14 *Drug addicts, Roma people, Delinquents, Politicians*	*W* = 1.79, *C* = 2.19 *Drug addicts, Roma people, Delinquents, Politicians*	*W* = 1.87, *C* = 2.08 Drug addicts, Roma people, Delinquents, Politicians

Note. *W* = warmth; *C* = competence; in italics are social groups that share cluster membership across regions.

and religious minorities (cluster B to cluster A in Bucharest, and to cluster C in Tîrgu-Mureș), Maghiari and ethnic minorities (cluster B to cluster A in Tîrgu-Mureș), homosexuals and rich people (cluster B to cluster C in Tîrgu-Mureș). To examine whether the change in cluster membership was qualified by significant differences in absolute values, multivariate ANOVAs with planned comparisons were conducted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For each of the above cases, one-factorial (region: Bucharest vs. Timișoara vs. Iași vs. Tîrgu-Mureș) MANOVAs with warmth and competence as dependent variables were estimated. There were significant findings for two of the social groups, using Pillai's trace.

First, there were significant differences among regions on measures of warmth and competence for Maghiari, $V = .08$, $F(6, 596) = 4.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .04$, which was reflected in univariate effects on warmth, $F(3, 298) = 6.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .06$, and on competence, $F(3, 298) = 4.15$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. Planned comparisons revealead that Maghiari were more positively evaluated on warmth in Tîrgu-Mureș compared to Bucharest, $M_{difference} = .98$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.52; 1.44], to Timișoara, $M_{difference} = .62$, $p = .004$, 95% CI [.20; 1.04], and to Iași, $M_{difference} = .84$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.38; 1.31]. With regard to the competence measure, Maghiari were more positively evaluated in TgM compared to Bucharest, $M_{difference} = .55$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [.08; 1.02], and to Iași, $M_{difference} = .65$, $p = .007$, 95% CI [.18; 1.13].

Second, a multivariate effect of region was found for evaluation of ethnic minorities, $V = .05$, $F(6, 594) = 2.32$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .02$, which was reflected in an univariate effect on warmth, $F(3, 297) = 4.19$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2_p = .04$ (but not competence). Planned comparisons showed that ethnic minorities were more positively evaluated in Tîrgu-Mureș compared to Bucharest, $M_{difference} = .75$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.31; 1.18], to Timișoara, $M_{difference} = .46$, $p = .005$, 95% CI [.17; .95], and to Iași, $M_{difference} = .68$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.25; 1.11]. In all other cases there were no significant differences between regions. [9]

A strong positive-negative evaluative dimension

Both sets of analyses revealed a systematic finding, which was not predicted. Although, as we previously indicated, the stereotype map in Romania had a composition wherein there were ambivalent stereotypes, there was a high correlation between the stereotype dimensions of warmth and competence, $r(22) = .53$, $p = .01$. Moreover, the results of our analyses on the regional differences further revealed that in three regions of the country there was a strong correlation between the two dimensions, Timișoara, $r(22) = .51$, $p = .01$, Iași, $r(22) = .64$, $p = .001$, and Tîrgu-Mureș, $r(22) = .76$, $p < .001$. Bucharest was the only region where warmth and competence were not correlated, $r(22) = .38$, $p = .08$.

Discussion

Content of stereotypes in Romania: A strong one-dimensional structure

Contrasting findings in other cultures where there is little overlap between warmth and competence (Asbrock, 2010; Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002), in Romania there is a strong positive-negative evaluative dimension. Research has shown that a country's degree of income inequality (Gini index) is associated with ambivalent stereotypes (Durante et al., 2013). The more income inequality there is in a country, the smaller the warmth-competence correlation. Although Romania was not included in that research, the present finding fits the expected pattern. In 2012 Romania had an estimated Gini Index of 27.3, which qualifies the country as having low income inequality (high income equality) (The World Bank, 2016).

This pattern could be driven by the warmth dimension, which often explains most of the variance in data sets, and, compared to the competence dimension, is more salient and more important during social interactions (e.g. Cohrs, Asbrock, & Sibley, 2011). This is usually interpreted by its

function, namely that of distinguishing threat from non-threat in social interactions. Social groups that are closer to one's notion of self are more likely to be positively evaluated compared to social groups that are further apart (Henning-Lindblom, 2013). With respect to this, there is a clear separation in the present data set between drug addicts, delinquents, politicians, and Roma people and the rest of social groups. Whereas drug addicts and delinquents have intuitive negative connotations (i.e., drug usage and criminal activities) that can explain their evaluation, the evaluation of politicians and Roma people seem to have negative connotations that are culture-specific. With respect to politicians, this may be an outcome of the lack of efficacy and integrity of the post-Communist Romanian political spectrum (Mungiu, 1995). With respect to Roma people, our findings are in line with local research in showing that the Romanian majority sees this group as a rejected otherness, which may be a consequence of perceptions of violation of rules of good cohabitation (Gavreliuc & Gavreliuc, 2014).

The distinction made by Romanian participants between strongly negatively connoted groups and positively connoted groups may have to do with the country's climate of social cynicism (Leung & Bond, 2008). From a social evolutionary stance, social cynicism represents a way to deal with deception in social interactions, which influences negative views with regard to some human behavior (cf. Bond, 2004). For Romanians, social cynicism is associated with anger and aggression towards others (Dincă & Iliescu, 2008; Gavreliuc & Gavreliuc, 2012). At the culture leval, Romania is characterized by high societal cynicism, which is among the highest values in the European context (Bond, 2004), and is corroborated with a low tolerance for deviant behavior (score on cultural tightness is 3.90, on a self-reported 7-point scale) (Stanciu, 2016).

Apart from the groups that fit the profile of deviants, all other groups are generally seen by Romanians in a positive manner. The relative homogeneity in evaluating social groups may have to do with a lack of social complexity, which is a belief that human behavior is variable across situation (Bond, 2004). Instead, in Romania there is a strong sense of maintaining good relations with others (Guan, Bond, Dinca, & Iliescu, 2010). In fact, our findings corroborate past research that shows that Romanians tend to have excessive positive self-images (Gavreliuc, 2012).

According to recent evidence, it seems that in Romania sub-dimensions of warmth and competence can be more reliable in detecting differences among social groups (Stanciu, 2015). In an attempt to provide a more rigorous analysis of the current procedure of item adaptation Stanciu used the present data set to explore whether the structure of the available items matched indeed the theorized structure of warmth-competence. He argued that the assumption based on which these items were selected from existing literature—i.e., that each item belonged to either the stereotype dimension of warmth or competence—restricted the emic exploration of whether the items pertain to a different structure of stereotypes. The results confirmed this expectation. In other words, Stanciu was able to show that the items used in the present studies pertain to a sub-dimensional structure of stereotypes wherein the sub-dimensions of friendliness and trustworthiness belong to the dimension of warmth and the sub-dimensions of conscientiousness and efficacy belong to the dimension of competence. The author argued that these stereotype sub-dimensions could provide a more sensitive differentiation among social groups because it can help identify more accurately deviant behavior. For example, some individuals can be friendly without not necessarily being trustworthy (e.g. Casanovas) and other individuals can be unconscientious but highly efficacious (e.g. Actionists) (cf. Stanciu, 2015, p.9).

Within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes

The stereotype map of Romania shows similarities and some differences compared to stereotype maps in other cultures. A more systematic investigation reveals that, although a clear segregation of negatively connoted social groups is present across different regions in the country, there are a number of noteworthy regional specifics. The findings indicate that the strong one-dimensional evaluative structure is specific only to three regions in the data set, namely Timișoara, Iași and Tîrgu-

Mureș. The findings in Bucharest are similar to findings in other cultures—there is evidence against a one-dimensional evaluative structure. Considering that Bucharest is the capital and the city most developed in terms of economic and social aspects (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2011a), perhaps the complexity of social life might facilitate a more heterogeneous evaluative structure (Bond, 2004).

The findings reveal two social groups based on ethnic motives that show systematic variation between regions with regard to stereotype content, namely Maghiari and the general category of ethnic minorities. Both are more positively stereotyped in Tîrgu-Mureș compared to all other regions, an aspect that is indicated by both a change in cluster membership and a significant difference on warmth and competence scales. Specific to this region, there is a high inclusion of ethnic minorities in the general evaluative in-group (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Consequently, the in-group favouritism appears to have promoted a regional culture where the content of stereotypes about ethnic groups is more positive than in other regions where ethnic groups are less well represented (Dasgupta, 2004). Our results are in line with previous findings on inter-ethnic relations in this region (e.g. Gavreliuc, 2011).

General discussion

The present article presents evidence for within-culture variation in the content of stereotypes. Although a total of seven social groups showed regional specificity with regard to degree of salience, only two of these groups showed regional specificity with regard to stereotype content. One possible interpretation is that, whereas they are highly meaningful (i.e. high normative fit) (Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991), there are no region-specific factors that shape differently the content of stereotypes about them. Noteworthy is the homogeneous evaluation of religious minorities across the regions, despite a considerably higher proportion in Tîrgu-Mureș (~49%). In Romania, religiosity plays a central role to people's sense of identity, and at the same time people in Romania are tolerant towards other religious affiliations (cf. David, 2015, p. 168). Indeed, participants across the four regions seem to be neutral with regard to religious minorities.

Two social groups formed on ethnic motives, Maghiari and the general category of ethnic minorities, are both highly salient (see Study 1) and most positively evaluated in the region in Romania with highest percentage of ethnic minorities (see Study 2). This finding supports the contact hypothesis, which states that frequent contact with a social group is associated with favorable evaluations towards that group (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Moreover, this result broadens the consideration that stereotype content is socially contextualized (Alexander, Brewer, & Livingston, 2005; cf. Fiske et al., 2007, p. 638) by showing that stereotype content is also regionally contextualized. The systematic regional specificity of these groups on salience (Study 1) and evaluation (Study 2) is in line with evidence from the German inter-ethnic context (Christ, Asbrock, Dhont, Pettigrew, & Wagner, 2013; Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, & Wolf, 2006; Wagner & van Dick, 2001). For instance, Wagner et al. (2006) showed on the basis of a German representative sample that a high proportion of foreigners in a region was associated with more favorable evaluations of foreigners. The authors also showed that the degree of contact can explain the link between a region's ethnic composition and evaluation. A high proportion of foreigners creates opportunities for contact, which in turn is associated with less prejudice towards foreigners.

The quintessence of the findings is that the contextualization of stereotype content in a country's region can determine varying content of stereotypes within a culture. Apart from ethnic distribution, there can be a number of other regional specific factors that can influence how social groups are stereotyped, like regional value climate (Voicu & Voicu, 2007). Contrary to our expectation that economic disparities between regions will nurture distinct stereotypes, there was no systematic variation in the content of stereotypes about social groups based on economic motives, namely unemployed, rich, and poor people. Unemployed people emerged as highly salient in Bucharest and in Iași, two regions opposite in terms of unemployment rate. As we pointed out in the discussion of Study 1, for a similar level of salience of a group across regions, in each region there may be different

reasons that are not necessarily associated with content of stereotypes. However, an equally plausible interpretation may be that the difference in rate of unemployment between the two regions (1.89% in Bucharest vs. 4.42% in Iasi) is not sufficiently large to provide a ground for different content of stereotypes.

Study limitations

Some limitations restrict the generalizability of the present findings. The first limitation is that, although the four regions included in the study are prototypical for economic and social development in Romania, these regions represent only few of the total regions in the country. In total, Romania is divided into nine historical regions, and each has particularities that can shape differently the content of stereotypes. Follow-up studies can use country-representative samples and examine (a) whether in each of these regions there are regional specific social groups and (b) what other regional specifics influence variation in the content of stereotypes. A second limitation is that in the present studies the link between social structure and content of stereotypes was not addressed. Whereas there is universal evidence showing that competition and status predicts how a social group is stereotyped in terms of warmth and competence (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009; Cuddy et al., 2009), there remains to be discovered whether this is the case also in Romania. The associated limitation is that it is yet unclear whether there are regional specifics with regard to the social structure of stereotypes (competition and status).

The sample sizes used in the present analyses are disproportionate between regions (varies between 165 in Timişoara to 23 in Tîrgu-Mureş). Whereas these samples are sufficiently balanced in terms of gender and type of participants, the unequal sample sizes can be a motive for interpreting with caution the comparisons between the Tîrgu-Mureş region and the rest of regions. Considering the implications of the Central Limit Theorem (CLT) in statistical analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), each variable measured with the sample in Tîrgu-Mureş was checked against departure from normal distribution. This investigation revealed no systematic departure from normality. Nevertheless, we recommend that future research tests the hypothesis of within-culture variation with regional samples that are, as much as possible, equal in size.

Conclusion

The present article suggests that the content of stereotypes can vary within a culture. We do not consider this a criticism of the existent research on the SCM. On the contrary, we believe this to be a complement to it. We argue that, although in general the content of stereotypes can be relevant throughout a culture, there can be regional particularities that can provide the grounds for variation in the content of stereotypes. Aspects like a region's distribution of ethnic groups can determine *within*-culture variation in the content of stereotypes.

Notes

1. Translated as: *simpatic, amiabil, de încredere, insensibil, prietenos, cu caracter bun, sincer, cu intenții bune, onest, amuzant*, and *sociabil*, and *inteligent, îndemnatic, competent, leneș, capabil, confident, eficient, competitiv, independent, conștiincios*, and *organizat*.
2. Initial disagreement regarding the word "to categorize" (translated as "a categorisi" *to categorize*), "a discuta ca fiind grupuri" *to talk as being groups*, and "a clasifica" *to classify*) was solved by agreeing on the term "to classify".
3. Translated as: *Care sunt diversele tipuri de oameni pe care consideri că societatea Românească de astăzi le clasifică în grupuri?*
4. Translated as: *Așa cum sunt văzuți de societatea Românească de astăzi, bătrânii sunt amiabili (1*—dezacord total*; 5*—acord total)

5. Due to similarities, some social groups were combined as follows: politicians, political groups, parliamentarian, political parties, belonging to politics, Government, part members, and USL-iști into *politicians*; ethnic minorities, Jews, Turks, Aromâni, Germans, and Serbs into *ethnic minorities*; thieves, delinquents, mobsters, bad people, criminals into *delinquents*; religious groups, Greco-Catholics, repentant Christian, sectarians, Muslims, and Protestants into *religious minorities*
6. School pupils (26% of total participants) and Adolescents (11%) were excluded from the list of social groups relevant in Romania due to conceptual similarities with Students.
7. A systematic analysis of all items is reported elsewhere (Stanciu, 2015).
8 From the initial sample of 551 Romanians, information from 224 participants had to be discarded due to a) extreme values on a variable measuring *study completion duration* (the mean duration time was approximately 20 minutes) and b) missing information on the study questions: drop out after answering demographics. Listwise deletion was used.
9. For each of these cases, independent *t*-tests were conducted to examine whether within each region there were differences between the evaluations made by students and non-students. The results revealed that in the Timișoara sample, Maghiari were evaluated more positively by non-students compared to students on warmth, $M_{\text{difference}} = -.36$, $t(163) = -2.20$, $p = .03$, 95% [-.67; -.03], and on competence, $M_{\text{difference}} = -.51$, $t(163) = -3.24$, $p < .001$, 95% [−.83; −.20]. In the samples from Timișoara and Tîrgu-Mureș, ethnic minorities were also evaluated as more positive by non-students compared to students. To examine whether this difference was systematic, independent *t*-tests were conducted. With regard to the evaluations made by students, there were no differences between the two regions on either warmth or competence measures. With regard to the evaluations made by non-students, the findings showed a significant difference on warmth, $M_{\text{difference}} = -.99$, $t(51) = -4.05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [−1.48; −.50] and on competence, $M_{\text{difference}} = -.67$, $t(51) = -2.81$, $p = .008$, 95% CI [−1.17; −.18]. We can think of two possible explanations for these findings. First, the age of the participants might be confounded with the amount of personal experience that the study participants had with regard to these social groups. Whereas the student samples were virtually identical across regions with regard to age, Bucharest, $M = 21.41$, $SD = 1.76$, Timișoara, $M = 21.23$, $SD = 3.01$, Iași, $M = 22.04$, $SD = 3.62$, and Tîrgu-Mureș, $M = 21.00$, $SD = 1.21$, the non-student samples were more heterogeneous, Bucharest, $M = 28.23$, $SD = 4.61$, Timișoara, $M = 32.63$, $SD = 11.67$, Iași, $M = 24.71$, $SD = 2.98$, and Tîrgu-Mureș, $M = 28.71$, $SD = 9.12$. The non-student samples in Timișoara and in Tîrgu-Mureș have the highest age heterogeneity (*SD*) among all sub-samples. Because of this high variance it is difficult to tell whether the regional differences in terms of stereotypes about Maghiari and Ethnic minorities are indeed due to regional specifics between students and non-students or because of individuals' personal experiences. The second possible explanation of why there were regional differences with regard to stereotypes about Maghiari and Ethnic minorities may also be related to the participants' own ethnicity. Unfortunately, at the time of data collection, we did not ask for participants' ethnicity; we implicitly assumed that all participants would identify themselves as Romanians. However, should ethnicity play a role with regard to which social groups are relevant in a society and how they are stereotyped, the argument would serve to further recommend that future studies consider the within-culture variation of stereotypes. Future research should consider both criteria in sample selection.

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