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Genius begins at home: Shared social identity enhances the recognition of creative performance

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The present research examines the extent to which the recognition of creative performance is structured by social group membership. It does this by analysing the award of merit prizes for Best Actor and Actress in a Leading Role for the international award of US-based Oscars and British-based BAFTAs since BAFTA's inception of this category in 1968. For both awards, the exclusive assessment criterion is the quality of artists' performance in the international arena. Results show that US artists won a greater proportion of Oscars than BAFTAs (odds ratio: 2.10), whereas British artists won a greater proportion of BAFTAs than Oscars (OR: 2.26). Furthermore, results support the hypothesis that these patterns are more pronounced as the diagnostic value of a quality indicator increases – that is, in the conferring of actual awards rather than nominations. Specifically, US artists won a greater proportion of Oscar awards than nominations (OR: 1.77), while British artists won a greater proportion of BAFTA awards than nominations (OR: 1.62). Additional analyses show that the performances of in-group actors in movies portraying in-group culture (US culture in the case of Oscars, British culture in the case of BAFTAs) are more likely to be recognized than the performances of in-group actors in movies portraying the culture of other (out-)groups. These are the first data to provide clear evidence from the field that the recognition of exceptional creative performance is enhanced by shared social identity between perceivers and performers.

If their acceptance speeches are anything to go by, receiving an Oscar or a BAFTA is one of the most significant events in the career of an actor.¹ Indeed, it is common for nominees to proclaim that 'it's an honor just to be nominated'. These nominations and awards clearly depend on the *quality* of a particular creative performance. However, are they also dependent on perceivers' capacity to *recognize* that performance? This is the issue that the present paper addresses.

To date, scholars who have explored the psychology of creativity have tended to focus on aspects of this process that lead to the effective and successful *production* of particular outputs (de Jesus, Rus, Lens, & Imaginário, 2013; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006). This body

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¹ In line with the *Guardian* and *Observer* style guide (*Guardian*, 2015), we use actor to refer to both male and female actors. We only use actress when it is part of a name of an award (e.g., Oscar for best actress in leading role).

of work has provided a range of important insights into the range of factors that allow individuals to be more or less creative. However, we have limited understanding of the factors that contribute to perceivers' *recognition* of particular output as creative (for a recent review, see Haslam, Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, & Jans, 2013). Addressing this issue, and inspired by self-categorization theory (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Ellemers, 2012; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Haslam, 2001; Postmes & Branscombe, 2010; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), in the present research, we examine the extent to which the recognition of creative output as extraordinary is structured by shared social group membership between perceivers and creative performers. To test these ideas, we analyse awards for best performance for the international merit prizes Oscars and BAFTAs – the most significant accolades in the film industry.

Generating and recognizing outstanding creative performances

Creativity is not only a defining feature of the human species but also at the heart of all movements that advance culture and society (e.g., Richerson, 2004). To gain insights into this process, scholars have focused on an array of factors that contribute to the generation of creative outputs. As a result of their efforts, we know, for instance, that individuals' creativity is enhanced by factors such as their (1) mood, arousal, and regulatory focus (Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008; Fong, 2006; Nijstad, De Dreu, Rietzschel, & Baas, 2010), (2) multicultural experience (Cheng & Leung, 2013; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009; Tadmor, Galinsky, & Maddux, 2012), (3) multiple identities (Gaither, Remedios, Sanchez, & Sommers, 2015; Steffens, Gocłowska, Cruwys, & Galinsky, 2016), (4) mind wandering (Baird *et al.*, 2012), and (5) feelings of empowerment as well as exposure to empowering leadership (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Sun, Zhang, Qi, & Chen, 2012; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

A second line of creativity research has focused on factors that determine whether creativity proves impactful. Here, there is evidence that, among other things, creative outputs are more likely to be embraced and implemented to the extent that individuals (1) work in a climate that is supportive of innovation (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013), (2) seek feedback during the creative process (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011), and (3) are skilled in networking as well as strongly motivated to put ideas into practice (Baer, 2012; Howe, 2000; West, 2002).

Together, these two avenues of research have provided valuable insights into the features of the creator and the creative product that shape a creators' capacity to have impact (see also Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2010). Yet in addition to these twin lines of research, another integral part of the creative process concerns the conditions under which individuals come to *perceive* and recognize a particular performance as creative. Speaking to this issue, research by Amabile (1983) has shown that perceivers (in particular, those who can rely on pre-existing guidelines and expertise) often agree on the extent to which a given output is creative (see also Sawyer, 2003). Moreover, research by Simonton (1999) indicates (1) that the recognition of creativity is dependent on the knowledge of experts (such that with increasing knowledge people become better at judging a creative output against relevant criteria) and (2) that there is often significant overlap in the judgements of experts, such that they prove to be a reasonably reliable indication of a given creation's greatness (e.g., awards and nominations for Oscars and BAFTAs are reliable indicators of greatness; Simonton, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). Moreover, research by Mueller, Wakslak, and Krishnan (2014) showed that a product is more likely to

be seen to be creative when perceivers are in a high, rather than low, construal mindset (e.g., thinking abstractly or about spatial distance).

However, beyond these factors, research has also pointed to *social* determinants of the recognition of creative outputs. For instance, Elsbach and Kramer (2003) provide evidence for social group-based determinants from a qualitative study of Hollywood pitch meetings in which screenwriters try to sell their work to producers or studio executives. Findings indicated that despite the fact that these meetings are conducted along strictly predetermined lines, creativity perceptions are influenced by cues about both target creators (i.e., the extent to which they are seen to be consistent with the stereotype of a creative person) and the nature of the relationship between artists and perceivers (i.e., the extent to which the relationship is construed as collaborative).

Expanding upon these ideas, in the present research, we propose that shared social group membership is a significant factor that has a major bearing on the recognition of a creative output. This argument is based on a social identity approach – which argues that people can construe the self not only in terms of personal identity (as ‘I’ and ‘me’) but also in terms of social identity (as ‘we’ and ‘us’; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010; Ellemers, 2012; after Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner *et al.*, 1987, 1994). Consistent with these ideas, a social identity approach to creativity suggests that the process of producing and evaluating creative output is bound up with concerns that relate to creators’ and perceivers’ sense of shared identity (Haslam *et al.*, 2013). Evidence from the laboratory supports these assertions in showing that novel outputs (e.g., television formats, advertisements) are seen to be more original to the extent that they are (1) consistent with the norms of the group to which creators and perceivers belong (Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, & Haslam, 2006) and (2) believed to have been created by individuals who share (rather than do not share) group membership with perceivers (Adarves-Yorno, Haslam, & Postmes, 2008). Further support for these claims emerges from research which indicates that when creative products and performances violate important collective concerns, they are more likely to be considered outrageous or ‘unthinkable’ and hence disregarded (Bénabou & Tirole, 2011; Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). It is important to note that this does not mean that deviance from norms is necessarily rejected. However, it suggests that deviance is likely to be embraced only to the extent that it is collectively welcomed by members of a given group and seen to contribute to group functioning (Fielding, Hogg, & Annandale, 2006; Jetten & Hornsey, 2013; Jetten, McAuliffe, Hornsey, & Hogg, 2006; Packer, 2008).

In sum, a social identity analysis suggests that creative output is shaped both by issues related to creation and by those related to perception and evaluation – and more specifically, that perceivers tend to regard the creative performance of in-group members to be qualitatively different from, and more outstanding than, that of out-group members. Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether previously reported experimental evidence of the impact of group membership on perceptions of the quality of creative products is obtained only in contrived laboratory situations or can be found in the world at large. This is a core question that the present research addresses.

Beyond this, if it is true that the recognition of creativity is determined by shared group membership, then the diagnostic value of the quality of a creative output for a particular social group membership is likely to play an important role in this process. Along these lines, we hypothesize that perceivers’ engagement with creative outputs and their sensitivity to issues of shared identity will be enhanced to the extent that a given indicator of quality has high diagnosticity for them (i.e., when a marker of quality is particularly significant for their in-group). In short, perceivers’ engagement with the creative outputs

of individuals they share group membership with should be particularly pronounced in the process of establishing whether outputs are not just excellent but outstanding. This hypothesis contrasts the notion that differential evaluation of creative outputs (as a form of 'in-group bias') would only be evident at 'lower levels' of outputs so that, when it really matters, the objective quality of a creative output shines through. Indeed, Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, and Manstead (2006) outline that expressions of in-group bias and group-based perceptions derive from self-based motivated information processing that serves a range of social and material functions (rather than from processes that are inherently mindless or flawed; see also Brewer, 1979). In line with this notion, we thus expect that the differential recognition of in-group creative outputs will be more marked as the collective self-relevance of a given marker of quality increases.

The present research

In the present research, we sought to gather large-scale evidence from the field to examine the extent to which the recognition of exceptional creative performance is influenced by shared social group membership between perceivers and performers. Furthermore, we aimed to provide a test of the proposition that the relationship between shared social group membership and perception of creative performance is moderated by the diagnostic significance of a quality indicator. To address these issues, we analysed the recognition of creativity in the film industry – which is commonly seen as an exemplary area of human creativity and art (e.g., Simonton, 2011). This involved examining US-based Oscar and British-based BAFTA awards for international merit in the form of 'best performance by an actor/actress in a leading role' in the years since BAFTA's inception of this prize in 1968.

In the present research, in line with previous research conceptualizing the creative process of actors (Nemiro, 1997), we refer to actors' final output that is displayed on screen and that is the basis for the conferring of merit awards as performances that require some degree of creativity (i.e., creative performances). At the same time, it is noteworthy that the form of creativity that is involved in screen acting is unique and differs from that of other artistic forms. As Nemiro (1997) outlines (see also Alter, 1984), in contrast to originating artists (artists who originate the work they produce such as, say, writers, or painters), actors have been conceptualized as interpretative artists whose work mainly revolves around interpreting the work they perform (such as dancers and musicians). Moreover, we conceptualize actors' final output as creative performance in the light of the fact that the process requires complex interpretive skills to perform a novel act (Kogan, 2002; Nemiro, 1997). The creative process of actors that leads to a final output can be broken down into different stages (including preparation, rehearsal, and performance), which are characterized by a unique set of skills and vary in the extent to which they require improvisation (Nemiro, 1997). In this regard, we would note that we do not equate creativity with either 'improvisation' or 'spontaneity' (for a discussion of the nature and degrees of improvisation, see Millard, 2014; Weick, 1998). Finally, we can conceptualize acting as a creative endeavour given that novel performances vary in their perceived *quality* (e.g., Choi, 2004; Madjar, Oldham, & Pratt, 2002; Shalley & Perry-Smith, 2001; for discussions of the distinction of outcome-based creativity from other forms of creativity, see Montag, Maertz, & Baer, 2012; Simonton, 2003).

As outlined above, a social identity approach to creativity leads us to expect that novel creative performances will be regarded as being of better quality by perceivers who share social group membership with creators than by those who do not (H1). More specifically,

we predict that US performers will win a greater proportion of US-based Oscars than British-based BAFTAs (H1a). In contrast, we anticipate the reverse pattern for British performers such that they will win a greater proportion of BAFTAs than Oscars (H1b).

Furthermore, we hypothesize that this tendency for perceivers to differentially recognize the performances of artists with whom they share or do not share social group membership will be more pronounced to the extent that the diagnostic value of a quality indicator increases – that is, for awards of, rather than nominations for, a given award (Hypothesis 2). Specifically, this leads us to expect that US performers will win a greater proportion of US-based Oscar awards than nominations (H2a), but that British performers will win a greater proportion of British-based BAFTA awards than nominations (H2b).

Method

We analysed the distribution of the Academy Awards for best actor/actress in a leading role (a.k.a. the Oscars) by the Los Angeles-based Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) as well as the award for best actor/actress in a leading role by the London-based British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). This allowed us to determine the number of awards that US artists received from internal and external sources (from AMPAS and BAFTA members, respectively) as well as the number of awards that British artists received from internal and external sources (BAFTA and AMPAS members).

Winners of the Oscars and BAFTAs are determined by votes of all registered members of the awarding organization (around 6,000 AMPAS and 6,500 BAFTA members) representing professionals in all fields of the industry (e.g., actors, producers, directors). The majority of BAFTA members are based in Britain (BAFTA, 2016) while the majority of AMPAS members are based in the USA (although AMPAS has not officially disclosed its membership list, it is acknowledged that the vast majority are White US Americans; AMPAS, 2016; *Los Angeles Times*, 2012). The awarding bodies explicitly seek to assess performance and honour those actors who have displayed the best performance (regardless of actors' nationality, the country in which a film was produced, or any other factor).

We analysed all merit awards from 1968 when BAFTA first established a global prize for 'best performance of an actor/actress in a leading role' (a.k.a. best actor in a leading role) to the present (up to and including the awards for 2015, announced at the award ceremonies early 2016). We conducted an exhaustive search for the winners of all nominations and awards and coded the nationality (i.e., US, British, other) of the winning actors. Data were retrieved from the openly accessible official databases of the Academy Awards (<http://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies>) and BAFTA (<http://awards.bafta.org/explore/>) to code nominees and award winners, and Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>) to code nationality.

While AMPAS and BAFTA typically honour only a single male and female actor with an actual merit award in any given year, each has once honoured multiple actors (in 1968 AMPAS awarded an Oscar to both Katharine Hepburn and Barbra Streisand and in 1983 BAFTA awarded a BAFTA to both Michael Caine and Dustin Hoffman). This search yielded a total of 908 instances of recognition: 97 Oscar and 97 BAFTA awards ($N = 194$) and 383 Oscar and 331 BAFTA nominations ($N = 714$). In order both to be able to compare actors who received nominations versus awards (converted nominations) and to avoid counting data points twice, (and thus violating assumptions of independence of observations), actors who ended up with a nomination for, and not the actual award of, a given prize

were coded as nominees, while those who received an award (thereby converting a nomination) were coded as award winners.

For explorative purposes, we also coded the culture that movie's plot portrayed (i.e., whether a movie was about US culture, British culture, or other cultures) in order to examine the extent to which the culture portrayed in a movie influences the focal relationships. Coding of the culture was based on the plot of the movie and the nationality of the main character(s). Data were retrieved from the openly accessible databases The Movie Database (<http://www.themoviedb.org/>) and Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>).

Results

Main analyses

Recognition as a function of shared social group membership

The total number of Oscar and BAFTA merit prizes (nominations and awards) is presented in Table 1 (US and British artists clearly dominate receiving 87.71% and 85.51% of Oscar and BAFTA merit prizes, respectively). It is noteworthy that in both BAFTAs and Oscars, US artists were recognized with the majority of merit prizes. However, supporting H1, a Pearson's chi-square test of distinctions for 'best actor/actress' revealed a significant relationship, $\chi^2(2, N = 908) = 32.92, p < .001$, between the awarding organization (AMPAS, BAFTA) and the nationality of the nominated and awarded actors (US, British, other). In support of H1a and as shown in Figure 1, results indicated that US actors were recognized with a nomination for, or award of, 'best actor/actress in a leading role' in a greater proportion of US-based Oscars than British-based BAFTAs: in 51.87% of BAFTAs but in 69.38% of the Oscars. An odds ratio of 2.10 indicated that a US actor was more than twice as likely (110% more likely) to have received an Oscar than a BAFTA merit prize.

This distribution was almost perfectly reversed for British artists. Consistent with H1b, they were recognized in 18.33% of all US-based Oscars but in 33.64% of all British-based BAFTAs. An odds ratio of 2.26 indicated that a British actor was 126% more likely to have been recognized with a nomination for, or award of, a BAFTA than an Oscar.

Table 1. Merit prizes for 'Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role' as a function of shared social group membership between nationality of awarding organization and of winning actor/actress (1968 up to 2015)

	Nationality of winning actor/actress			Total
	US	British	Other	
US-based Oscar merit prizes				
Awards	76 (78.35%)	14 (14.43%)	7 (7.22%)	97
Nominations	257 (67.10%)	74 (19.32%)	52 (13.58%)	383
Total	333 (69.38%)	88 (18.33%)	59 (12.29%)	480
British-based BAFTA merit prizes				
Awards	45 (46.39%)	41 (42.27%)	11 (11.34%)	97
Nominations	177 (53.47%)	103 (31.12%)	51 (15.41%)	331
Total	222 (51.87%)	144 (33.64%)	62 (14.49%)	428

Note. Absolute frequencies of observations and relative percentage within a distinction category are displayed; to avoid counting data points twice, nominations include only those who ended up with nomination for, and not actual award of, a given prize.

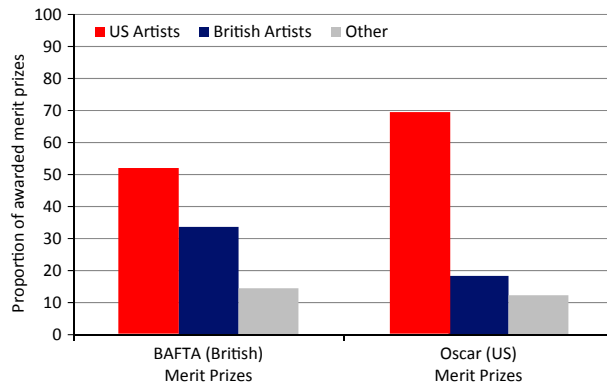


Figure 1. Recognition of creative performance as a function of awarding organization (US-based Oscars vs. British-based BAFTAs) and nationality of winning artist (US Artists vs. British Artists). [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Moderation by diagnostic value of quality indicator

To test H2, we analysed the number of merit prizes that were won by artists who were in-group members (US in the case of Oscars and British in the case of BAFTAs) or out-group members (non-US in the case of Oscars and non-British in the case of BAFTAs) as a function of diagnostic value of the quality of a merit prize (nominations vs. awards). Supporting H2, a Pearson's chi-square test identified a significant relationship, $\chi^2(1, N = 908) = 5.98$, $p = .014$, between social group membership and the diagnostic value of merit prize (nominations vs. awards). As shown in Figure 2, US actors received 67.10% of Oscar nominations but 78.35% of Oscar awards. An odds ratio of 1.77 suggested that a US actor was 77% more likely to receive an Oscar award than a nomination (controlling for the absolute number of awards and nominations).

Results were almost perfectly reversed in the case of BAFTAs. As presented in Figure 2, British artists received 31.12% of all BAFTA nominations but 42.27% of all BAFTA awards. An odds ratio of 1.62 indicates that a British actor was 62% more likely to be honoured with

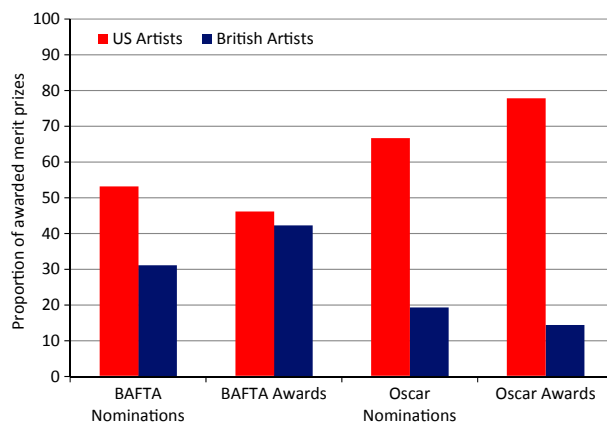


Figure 2. Recognition of creative performance as a function of shared social group membership (in-group: US Artists in Oscars/British Artists in BAFTAs vs. out-group: US Artists in BAFTAs/British Artists in Oscars) and diagnostic value of quality of merit prize (moderate: nominations vs. high: awards). [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

a BAFTA award, rather than a nomination, for the prize of ‘best actor/actress in a leading role’ (again, controlling for the absolute number of awards and nominations).

Additional analyses

We conducted additional analyses to examine the extent to which the recognition of actors’ performances was impacted by whether a movie’s plot portrayed the culture of the awarding body’s in-group (US culture in the case of Oscars or British culture in the case of BAFTAs) or the culture of a different (out-)group. Results are displayed in Table 2. It is worth noting that actors in movies about US culture received the majority of merit awards in both Oscars and BAFTAs. A chi-square analysis examining the relationship between actors’ social group membership (in-group artists: US artists in the case of Oscars and British artists in the case of BAFTAs vs. out-group artists: non-US artists in the case of Oscars and non-British artists in the case of BAFTAs) and the culture portrayed in a movie’s plot (in-group culture: movies about US culture in the case of Oscars and movies about British culture in the case of BAFTAs versus out-group culture: movies about non-US culture in the case of Oscars and movies about non-British culture in the case of BAFTAs) revealed a significant relationship between these two factors, $\chi^2(1, N = 908) = 405.765$, $p < .001$. In the case of Oscars, US artists received 26.03% of merit awards in movies portraying non-US culture but they received 88.32% of merit awards in movies portraying US culture. An odds ratio of 21.50 suggests that a US actor in a movie about US culture was 21 times more likely to have received an Oscar merit prize than a US actor in a movie about non-US culture (controlling for the absolute number of movies about US and non-US culture).

This pattern was entirely reversed in the case of BAFTAs. Here, British artists received 16.13% of merit prizes in movies portraying non-British culture but 79.66% of merit prizes in movies portraying British culture. An odds ratio of 20.37 indicates that a British actor in a movie about British culture was 20 times more likely to be honoured with a BAFTA merit

Table 2. Merit prizes for ‘Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role’ as a function of shared social group membership between nationality of awarding organization and (a) nationality of winning actor/actress and (b) national culture portrayed in movie content (1968 up to 2015)

	Nationality of winning actor/actress			Total
	US	British	Other	
US-based Oscar merit prizes				
Movie content				
US culture movie	295 (88.32%)	25 (7.49%)	14 (4.19%)	334
British culture movie	16 (21.33%)	49 (65.33%)	10 (13.33%)	75
Other culture movie	22 (30.99%)	14 (19.72%)	35 (49.29%)	71
Total	333 (69.38%)	88 (18.33%)	59 (12.29%)	480
British-based BAFTA merit prizes				
Movie content				
US culture movie	192 (81.01%)	27 (11.39%)	18 (7.60%)	237
British culture movie	16 (13.56%)	94 (79.66%)	8 (6.78%)	118
Other culture movie	14 (19.18%)	23 (31.51%)	36 (49.31%)	73
Total	222 (51.87%)	144 (33.64%)	62 (14.49%)	428

Note. Absolute frequencies of observations and relative percentage within movie culture are displayed.

prize than a British actor in a movie about non-British culture (again, controlling for the absolute number of movies about British and non-British culture).

Overall, these additional results show that in-group actors in leading roles in movies portraying the culture of the in-group are recognized more often than in-group actors in leading roles in movies portraying the culture of other (out-)groups. These results might be expected given that more generally it is likely that in-group artists more frequently take on leading roles in movies about in-group culture. Nevertheless, results are informative in showing that while performances both by in-group actors and by actors in movies about in-group culture are more likely to receive merit prizes than their counterparts overall, in-group actors are particularly likely to be recognized for their performance when that performance is in movies about in-group culture.

Furthermore, for exploratory purposes we examined the extent to which the present relationships varied as a function of gender. Analyses in the subsamples of actors and actresses in a leading role revealed substantively identical pattern of results. More specifically, examination of H1 in the subsample of actors indicated that US actors received 45.78% of all BAFTAs but 68.33% of all Oscars, while British actors received 17.50% of all Oscars but 34.70% of all BAFTAs (chi-square for relationship between awarding organization and nationality of nominated and awarded actors: χ^2 (2, $N = 459$) = 18.26, $p < .001$). Furthermore, in the case of actresses, US actresses received 51.67% of all BAFTAs but 70.42% of all Oscars, while British actresses won 22.01% of all Oscars but 32.54% of all BAFTAs, chi-square for relationship among actresses: χ^2 (2, $N = 449$) = 16.72, $p < .001$. Similarly, examination of H2 revealed substantively identical distributions in the subsamples of actors and actresses (even though given the reduced statistical power of these subsample analyses only the differences among actresses are statistically significant). More specifically, in-group actors received 50.55% of all nominations but they received 58.76% of all awards, χ^2 (1, $N = 459$) = 2.07, $p = .151$, while in-group actresses received 50.28% of all nominations but 61.86% of all awards, χ^2 (1, $N = 459$) = 4.09, $p = .043$.

Discussion

The present research expands upon previous research that has focused on the generation and impact of creative outputs (Baas *et al.*, 2008; de Jesus *et al.*, 2013; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006), by exploring factors that shape the perception and recognition of those outputs. While there are objective properties that make an artist's given output valuable (e.g., in terms of novelty, usefulness, or quality; Simonton, 2004a, 2004b), the present results from the film industry show that perceivers' recognition of creative performances is significantly conditioned by social group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Ellemers, 2012; Ellemers *et al.*, 2002; Haslam, 2001; Postmes & Branscombe, 2010; Turner *et al.*, 1987, 1994). Here, it is important to note that in both Oscars and BAFTAs, US actors win more nominations and awards than their British counterparts (US actors win more than half of all accolades in both merit awards). Beyond this, though, the present data show that the recognition of creative performances is enhanced to the extent that perceivers and performers share social group membership (supporting H1). In concrete terms this means that (a) the creative performances of US artists are much more likely to be recognized by US-based, than British-based, awards (H1a), while (b) those of British artists are much more likely to be recognized by British-based, than US-based, awards (H1b). Exploratory analyses provide additional support for the role of shared social identity in the recognition

of creative output by showing that the performances of in-group artists in movies portraying in-group culture (US culture in the case of Oscars, British culture in the case of BAFTAs) are more likely to be recognized than the performances of in-group actors in movies portraying the culture of other (out-)groups.

These results are the first to provide large-scale evidence that shared social group membership is predictive of the recognition of creative output in the field (in this case, within the screen acting profession). In this, they extend upon previous evidence from laboratory experiments which have observed that people tend to regard in-group outputs to be more creative than out-group outputs (Adarves-Yorno *et al.*, 2008). It is also noteworthy that by examining the impact of social group membership of artists in two different awards that control for each other (US and British artists in US-based Oscars and British-based BAFTAs), the quasi-experimental design of the present study rules out the possibility that any differences in the recognition of creative performances arise from objective differences in creative performance rather than the subjective standpoint of perceivers. In this, the findings give empirical weight to theoretical claims that the recognition, celebration, and impact of creativity are profoundly structured by shared identity concerns (Haslam *et al.*, 2013; see also Morton, Haslam, Postmes, & Ryan, 2006; Peters, Daniels, Hodgkinson, & Haslam, 2014).

Furthermore, the present results break new theoretical ground by demonstrating that the importance of shared group membership for perceivers' recognition of extraordinary artistic performances becomes more pronounced as the diagnostic value of a quality indicator increases (thereby supporting H2). More specifically, our results showed British perceivers were more likely to recognize the creative performance of British artists in the actual award of prizes than in their nominations. Moreover, the same was true for American perceivers when recognizing the creative output of American performers. This question is of practical, not just theoretical relevance as we know that while marketing efforts may enhance reputation, artistic reputation has greater marketing potential and therefore bearing on the ultimate success and earned revenue of a movie – such that the patterns observed here have consequences that can be measured in (millions of) dollars and pounds (Deuchert, Adjahmah, & Pauly, 2005; Elberse, 2007; Prag & Casavant, 1994; for a review see McKenzie, 2012).

The present findings also have broader implications in pointing to the potential to harness social group membership and identity concerns as a means of actively promoting and managing perceptions of creative outputs. While issues concerning national identity may be highly salient in film awards, the salience of national identity (as well that of other alternative identities) is not fixed but negotiable. Indeed, research in the social identity tradition has demonstrated that people's sense of self is context-sensitive and highly flexible and can be defined at different levels of inclusiveness (e.g., Doosje, Haslam, Spears, Oakes, & Koomen, 1998; Haslam & Turner, 1992; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; see also Ellemers *et al.*, 2002; Reicher *et al.*, 2010; Turner *et al.*, 1987, 1994). Accordingly, if we recognize that social group membership plays a role in the recognition of creative outputs, then it follows that perceivers' evaluations of creative outputs can also be shaped interactively through their own as well as creators' active management of identity salience (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Yet while the present study clearly anticipates such possibilities, it is also the case that future empirical research needs to examine these dynamics in more detail with a view of providing richer insights into the ways in which identity management can shape the creative process (see also Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). Along these lines, the present research also points to the possibility that the social group memberships and social identities that play a key role in the process of

producing creative outputs may differ from those that play a key role in their ultimate recognition.

Limitations and future research

The quasi-experimental design and large-scale archival data are clearly significant strengths of the present research (in particular, in demonstrating applicability of theory and external validity), but they also have limitations. First, while the present results provide clear evidence that the recognition of creativity is moderated by social group membership in the arts, future research might want to expand this line of research by examining the extent to which the present dynamics apply to other fields and contexts.

Second, the present research does not examine issues of underlying process. At the same time, the present findings complement findings from laboratory studies that have shed light on issues of process in creativity perceptions more generally (i.e., findings related to H1, but not H2). In particular, previous laboratory studies show that the recognition of creative output is not simply a reflection of generic liking, but instead reflects greater capacity to identify and engage with the innovative contributions of in-group members (as a form of in-group favouritism that extends to specific processes of creativity judgement). Speaking to these points, there is evidence that an identical performance can be (1) seen to be more *creative* (but not necessarily liked more) when it has been produced by a member of one's in-group (rather than an out-group; Adarves-Yorno *et al.*, 2008) and also (2) seen to be *better* to the extent that a performer is prototypical of a shared identity (Steffens, Haslam, Kessler, & Ryan, 2013). Furthermore, evidence indicates that individuals in fact engage with (or process) more deeply information that originates from sources they share group membership with (Molenberghs, Prochilo, Steffens, Zacher, & Haslam, 2015). Nevertheless, future research in the field could augment this line of research by examining more nuanced aspects of creative outputs and recognition – not only in the film industry (e.g., by looking at the dynamics of the film review process; cf. Peters *et al.*, 2014) but also in other spheres of creativity.

Third, it is noteworthy that perceivers may be more familiar with the creative output of in-group artists and that the relevant movies need to be released at recognized national theatres in order to be eligible for the present awards. While these issues might account for some of the variance of the main effect (whereby a greater proportion of merit prizes are given to in-group members; H1), they cannot explain the finding that the perception of creative performance of in-group actors is more pronounced as the diagnostic value of the quality indicator increases (H2). Furthermore, previous experimental studies have shown that controlling for familiarity does not diminish the impact of shared identity on perceived creative outputs (Adarves-Yorno *et al.*, 2008). In this regard, a significant strength of the present study is that it complements the study of 'little c' creativity (creativity that has been advanced through laboratory-based experiments) with the study of 'big C' creativity (creativity that is present in the world at large). Indeed, one could argue that, when it comes to recognizing creative outputs, few awards have more impact (or receive more publicity) than those we have studied here. It is notable too that examples of 'big C' creativity such as this inspire most of the experimental studies in the area (i.e., those that involve controlled experimentation), but to date they have made up much the smaller part of the psychological literature on this topic (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

Finally, it is worth noting that, beyond familiarity, a range of other factors impact the likelihood of receiving a nomination for, or award of, best actor/actress in a leading role.

For instance, in an examination of the Academy Awards Pardoe and Simonton (2008) found that previous nominations increase the chance of winning an Oscar among actors in leading roles, while previous awards reduce the chance of winning on Oscar among both actors and actresses in leading roles. There is also evidence that actors/actresses in highly acclaimed movies are more likely to win an award (yet the recognition of actresses in leading roles is associated to a lesser extent with a movie's overall success; Simonton, 2004a, 2004b). In this regard, future research might examine the extent to which these factors combine with shared group membership to impact issues of recognition of creative performance in other categories and awards (e.g., it is conceivable that the recognition of artists' performance is more strongly related to an overall movie's success in the case of in-group, rather than out-group, artists).

Concluding remarks

When it comes to the allocation of rewards for exceptional creative outputs, it is generally true that 'many are called but few are chosen'. However, this experience is particularly pronounced for those who do not share social group membership with perceivers. The present results underline the point that there is more to what we come to understand as exceptional than the objective qualities of a creative output (an observation first made by Galton, 1869). In particular, our results demonstrate that the recognition of creative output is strongly conditioned by the degree of shared social group membership between perceivers and performers. While this may be generally the case, findings also show that perceivers are more likely to recognize in-group artists' creative output to the extent that a given indicator of quality becomes more diagnostic of quality. In the most basic terms, this means that a creation is most likely to be regarded as outstanding when artists are seen by perceivers to be 'one of us' – something that becomes even more true as the identity-related stakes get higher.

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