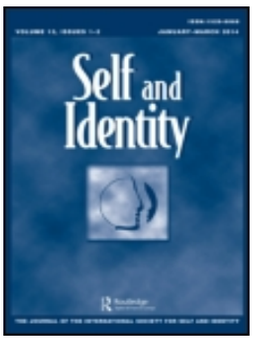

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Self and Identity

ISSN: 1529-8868 (Print) 1529-8876 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/psai20

Why Self-enhancement Provokes Dislike: The Hubris Hypothesis and the Aversiveness of Explicit Self-superiority Claims

Carolien Van Damme, Vera Hoorens & Constantine Sedikides

To cite this article: Carolien Van Damme, Vera Hoorens & Constantine Sedikides (2016) Why Self-enhancement Provokes Dislike: The Hubris Hypothesis and the Aversiveness of Explicit Self-superiority Claims, Self and Identity, 15:2, 173-190, DOI: 10.1080/15298868.2015.1095232

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2015.1095232

SELF AND IDENTITY, 2016
VOL. 15, NO. 2, 173–190
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2015.1095232

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Why Self-enhancement Provokes Dislike: The Hubris Hypothesis and the Aversiveness of Explicit Self-superiority Claims

Carolien Van Damme[a], Vera Hoorens[a] and Constantine Sedikides[b]

[a]Center for Social and Cultural Psychology, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium; [b]Center for Research on Self and Identity, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK

ABSTRACT

Most people believe that they are in many respects superior to others. When they publicly express their superiority, they may do so in an explicitly or implicitly comparative manner ("I am better than others" vs. "I am good"). According to the hubris hypothesis, observers dislike explicit self-superiority claims, because these suggest a negative view of others and hence of the observers. The results of two experiments were consistent with the hubris hypothesis. Participants evaluated explicit self-superiority claimants more unfavorably than implicit self-superiority claimants (Experiments 1–2). They attributed less warmth, but not less competence, to explicit than implicit self-superiority claimants (Experiment 2), and this occurred to the extent that participants inferred a negative view of others (Experiments 1–2) and hence of them (Experiment 2).

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 23 January 2015
Accepted 14 September 2015

KEYWORDS
Self-enhancement; superiority; self-presentation; social comparison; hubris hypothesis

People believe that, in many respects, they are better and behave better than others (Alicke & Govorun, 2005; Sedikides & Alicke, 2012). These self-superiority beliefs have been linked with diverse interpersonal consequences, ranging from social acceptance to social rejection (Hoorens, 2011; Sedikides, Hoorens, & Dufner, 2015). We argue that the interpersonal consequences of self-superiority beliefs hinge, in part, on the manner in which they are expressed.

People may convey self-superiority beliefs by claiming that they are "better than others." Alternatively, they may do so by claiming that they are "good." Borrowing terms introduced by Alicke (2007), we call these "explicit self-superiority claims" and "implicit self-superiority claims," respectively (cf. Hoorens & Van Damme, 2012). Although it is tempting to refer to the latter as non-comparative rather than implicitly comparative (cf. Hoorens, Pandelaere, Oldersma, & Sedikides, 2012), we have come to prefer the explicit–implicit distinction because even seemingly non-comparative self-judgments involve social comparison (Corcoran & Mussweiler, 2010). Performance success is typically defined as doing better than others (Gaines, Duvall, Webster, & Smith, 2005). Also, socially comparative information often influences self-judgments more than any other type of information (Goolsby & Chaplin, 1988; Klein, 2003; Wood & Wilson, 2003; but see Moore & Klein, 2008). Socially comparative

CONTACT Carolien Van Damme Carolien.VanDamme@ppw.kuleuven.be

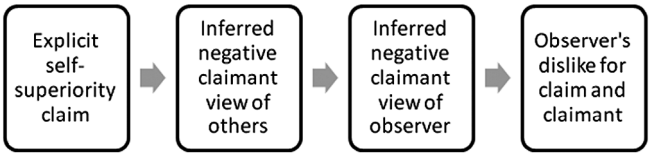

Figure 1. The three-step directional path proposed by the hubris hypothesis.

information even influences self-judgments, affect, and behavioral intentions in those cases where objective standards are available and relevant (Klein, 1997).

There are good reasons to assert, therefore, that both explicit and implicit self-superiority claims rest upon the belief of being superior to others. Still, observers dislike explicit, but not implicit, self-superiority claims and claimants (Hoorens et al., 2012). But why do they do so? The answer cannot be that explicit, relative to implicit, self-superiority claims communicate a more excessively positive claimant self-view. Indeed, observers do not infer a more positive self-view from an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim (Hoorens et al., 2012). Neither do observers dislike explicit self-superiority claims simply because these violate norms that discourage overt comparison of self to others (Wood & Wilson, 2003). Finally, observers do not seem to dislike explicit claims about the self in general: They disapprove of explicit *self-superiority* claims, but not of explicit *self-equality* claims ("I am as good as others are;" Hoorens et al., Experiments 3–4).

The Hubris Hypothesis

The hubris hypothesis, depicted in Figure 1, offers a viable account for observers' dislike of explicit self-superiority claims. The label 'hubris' refers to conveying one's self-superiority beliefs blatantly and unabashedly, that is, by making explicit self-superiority claims. The hypothesis states that observers' dislike of explicit self-superiority claims and claimants is driven by inferences about how negative the claimant views other people in general and *them* (i.e., the observers) in particular. Specifically, observers infer from explicit (relative to implicit) self-superiority claims that the claimant holds a negative view of others. From this negative view of others, they in turn infer that the claimant holds a negative view of them. It is this last inference that ultimately provokes an unfavorable evaluation of the claimant.

Preliminary findings have been consistent with the hubris hypothesis. In Hoorens et al. (2012, Experiment 4), observers read an explicit vs. implicit self-superiority claim about friendship (i.e., "I am a better friend than others" vs. "I am a good friend"). Besides judging the claim and claimant, observers inferred the claimant's self-view and the claimant's view of others on the comparison dimension (i.e., how good a friend the claimant believed to be, how good a friend the claimant believed others to be). Observers evaluated the self-superiority claim and claimant more unfavorably when the claim was explicit than implicit. Observers also inferred a more negative view of others from the explicit than implicit claim. Indeed, the more negative the inferred view of others was, the more unfavorably observers evaluated the claim and claimant. These findings were replicated in Hoorens et al.'s Experiment 7. Here, observers also inferred how the claimant viewed *them*. It was this inference, rather than the

inferred claimant self-view or claimant view of others, that accounted for the dislike of the explicit self-superiority claim and claimant.

Unresolved Issues

We aimed for a more definitive test of the hubris hypothesis by addressing three unresolved issues. The first issue pertains to the question of whether observers disapprove of explicit *self-superiority* claims in particular or of any explicitly stated *difference* between self and others (no matter if this difference depicts the self as superior or inferior) on the comparison dimension. Observers, in their penchant for egalitarianism (Arnesen, 2002; Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007), may simply be intolerant of publicly pronounced self-other differences. According to the hubris hypothesis, however, observers will disapprove of an explicit self-superiority claim but not of an explicit self-inferiority claim, because the former suggests that the claimant holds a negative view of others and hence of them (i.e., the observers), whereas the latter does not.

The second issue pertains to the hubris hypothesis' directional path from the self-superiority claim via an inferred negative view of others to an inferred negative view of the observer, and subsequently to the observer's dislike for the claimant (Figure 1). Prior research (Hoorens et al., 2012) has not provided conclusive evidence for the full path. We set out to test unequivocally the three-step path via mediation (Hayes, 2013) and experimentation (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005).

The third issue pertains to the breadth of observers' inferences about the claimant's self-view, view of others, and view of the observer. Are these inferences confined to the comparison dimension at hand (e.g., friendship) or are they generalizable to broader dimensions (i.e., personality traits)? The hubris hypothesis and related literature (Hoorens et al., 2012) have thus far been silent on this matter. Yet, impression formation models assume that observers integrate a target person's traits and attributes into a general impression, which in turn influences trait ascriptions (Carlston, 2013; Srull & Wyer, 1989). Moreover, observers exaggerate associations between traits so that they readily derive general impressions from a limited amount of information (implicit personality theory; Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Schneider, 1973). We therefore predicted that observers' inferences of how the claimant views the self, others, and the observer would be general rather than dimension specific. At the same time, based on a sizeable literature (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008), we anticipated that the attribution of negative traits to explicit self-superiority claimants as well as inferences about these claimants' view of others and view of the observer would be structured along the two fundamental dimensions of social cognition: warmth (also called communion) and competence (also called agency).

Overview

We report two experiments in which participants observed a claim that an individual had allegedly made. Participants thus served as observers. Given that in prior research (Hoorens et al., 2012) claim and claimant evaluations were highly correlated, we focused exclusively on claimant evaluations. In Experiment 1, we examined whether observers specifically object to explicit self-superiority claims (hubris hypothesis) or to any explicitly stated self-other difference (alternative hypothesis). We also tested part of the directional path stipulated by

the hubris hypothesis, namely that an inferred negative view of others drives the unfavorable evaluation of explicit self-superiority claimants. Lastly, we assessed our newly formulated prediction that observers' inferences from the claim are not specific to the pertinent comparison dimension (i.e., friendship), but rather generalize to broader personality traits.

In Experiment 2, we examined, through a serial multiple mediation analysis and experimentation, the full directional path as specified by the hubris hypothesis (Figure 1). We offered a rigorous test of the hypothesis by capitalizing on an implication of this path. Observers will evaluate unfavorably claimants holding a negative view of both others and them, but they will not evaluate unfavorably claimants holding a negative view of others and a positive view of them. That is, observers' dislike of claimants will be localized in perceived claimant negativity of *them*. In addition, we assessed our newly stated prediction that the dimensions of warmth and competence structure observers' evaluations of and inferences about the claimant.

Experiment 1

In Experiment 1, we tested the prediction, derived from the hubris hypothesis, that observers will evaluate explicit self-superiority claimants more unfavorably than implicit self-superiority claimants (as in past research; Hoorens et al., 2012), but will evaluate explicit self-inferiority claimants similarly to implicit self-inferiority claimants. We pitted this prediction against the alternative that observers, driven by egalitarianism (Arnesen, 2002; Sedikides et al., 2007), object to any explicit statement about differences between self and others. According to this alternative, both explicit self-superiority claims and explicit self-inferiority claims will evoke a more unfavorable claimant evaluation than implicit self-superiority claims and implicit self-inferiority claims, respectively.

As stated above, the hubris hypothesis anticipates a more unfavorable evaluation of the explicit claimant than of the implicit claimant in the case of self-superiority claims only. This is because, according to the hypothesis, observers will infer a negative view of others from an explicit self-superiority claim, but not from an implicit self-superiority claim or from an implicit/explicit self-inferiority claim. Further, the hubris hypothesis states that this inference, rather than an inference about an excessively positive self-view, mediates observers' dislike of explicit self-superiority claimants. We therefore tested the prediction that participants would infer a more negative view of others from the explicit self-superiority claim than from any other claim, and that this negative view of others would predict (statistically) an unfavorable evaluation of the claimant.

We tested an additional prediction, namely that the inferences observers draw about self-superiority claimants generalize to broader personality traits beyond the current comparison dimension. Not only do observers overestimate the extent to which traits co-vary (Anderson & Sedikides, 1991; Schneider, 1973), but they also integrate a target person's traits into a general impression, which influences subsequent trait attributions to that person (Carlston, 2013; Srull & Wyer, 1989). As a consequence, observers' inferences of how the claimant views the self and others are likely to be general rather than limited to the specific dimension of comparison.

Participants in Experiment 1 read a self-superiority or self-inferiority claim about friendship. The claim was either explicitly or implicitly comparative. Then, participants evaluated the claimant and inferred the claimant's self-view and view of others on friendship and on a

series of personality traits. We expected the following patterns. While participants would not differ in their inferences of the claimant's self-view from explicit and implicit self-superiority claims, they would infer a more negative claimant view of others from explicit than implicit self-superiority claims. The claimant's view of others would mediate participants' unfavorable evaluations of explicit relative to implicit self-superiority claimants. Participants would evaluate explicit self-superiority claimants more unfavorably than implicit self-superiority claimants, both on the comparison dimension and on broader personality traits. In contrast, they would not differ in their evaluations of explicit and implicit self-inferiority claimants.

Method

Participants and design

We tested 72 participants (43 women, 29 men; M_{age} = 18.44, SD_{age} = .98) in a 2 (claim rank: self-superiority, self-inferiority) × 2 (claim type: explicit, implicit) × 2 (rating scope: general, specific) mixed design. Claim rank and claim type were between-subjects factors (18 participants per condition), whereas rating scope was a within-subjects factor. In both reported experiments, (a) participants were undergraduate students fulfilling a course option, (b) participants were randomly assigned to between-subjects conditions, (c) we determined sample size on the basis of Hoorens et al. (2012), and (d) we excluded gender from the analyses, because the samples had many more females than males and preliminary analyses yielded no gender effects.

Materials and procedure

An experimenter who was unaware of conditions and predictions tested participants in groups of 2–10. Each participant was seated in a private cubicle and handed a booklet containing all materials. The booklet featured a claim allegedly taken from a group discussion on relationships. The claimant, whose gender was not revealed, described herself or himself as a friend. The claim conveyed either self-superiority or self-inferiority and did so either explicitly or implicitly. We used verbatim the explicit self-superiority and implicit self-superiority claims from Hoorens et al. (2012), and we modeled the explicit and implicit self-inferiority claims after them. The self-inferiority claims read as follows (with explicit and implicit claims appearing in brackets, and with the explicit claim first in order):

> You know, I am a [less of a good person/not a good person] to be friends with [than others are] … I am [less often/rarely] ready to have a ball … I also do [less/little] for people who belong to my circle of friends [than others do]. I do not support them when times get tough and I do not encourage them to achieve their goals, particularly if these are different from mine. I feel that I find it [more difficult than others/difficult] to accept my friends as they are … If I [compare myself to others/look at myself], I have to say that I am [less/not] devoted, loyal, and open-minded and that you [can have less/cannot have much] fun with me.

After having read the claim, participants provided general ratings of the claimant on the eight bipolar trait dimensions used by Hoorens et al. (2012): Disrespectful–respectful, egoistic–altruistic, disagreeable–agreeable, unfriendly–friendly, unintelligent–intelligent, meddlesome–peaceful, unattractive–attractive, conceited–modest. To allow a stringent test of the generalization of the inferences participants made from the claims, however, we excluded the dimension unfriendly–friendly, which semantically overlapped with the content of the

Table 1. Unstandardized Mean Ratings for Claimant Evaluation, Claimant Self-view, and Claimant View of Others as a Function of Claim Rank, Claim Type, and Rating Scope in Experiment 1.

	Self-superiority claim		Self-inferiority claim	
Rating	Implicit	Explicit	Implicit	Explicit
Claimant evaluation				
Specific	5.89 (1.78)	4.17 (1.98)	3.28 (2.08)	3.78 (1.96)
General	.70 (1.35)	−.73 (1.02)	−1.18 (.82)	−.97 (.83)
Claimant self-view				
Specific	9.33 (.84)	9.28 (.67)	1.61 (1.97)	2.00 (1.68)
General	2.16 (.79)	2.07 (.61)	−.06 (1.17)	−.11 (1.07)
Claimant view of others				
Specific	5.83 (1.86)	3.94 (1.76)	6.06 (2.10)	5.72 (2.89)
General	.51 (.72)	−.60 (.41)	−.12 (.75)	.26 (1.13)

Notes: Specific ratings were made on a 0–10 scale; general ratings were made on a −3 to 3 scale. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

claim, from the analyses (analyses including this dimension yielded identical results to the reported ones). Response options ranged from −3 to +3, with the negative pole appearing to the left on half of the dimensions and to the right on the other half. Participants also indicated how, according to them, the claimant viewed herself/himself and other people. They did so on the same trait dimensions and with the same response options. Finally, participants provided specific ratings by indicating how good a friend the claimant truly was, how good a friend the claimant believed to be, and how good the claimant believed others were as friends. Response options ranged from 0 to 10 (0 = *not at all*, 10 = *very much*).

Participants thus gave general and specific ratings of the claimant (*claimant evaluation*), the self-view they thought the claimant had (*claimant self-view*), and the view of others they thought the claimant had (*claimant view of others*). The specific and general ratings for claimant evaluation and claimant view of others served to test the hubris hypothesis, whereas the specific and general claimant self-view ratings served as a manipulation check. As noted in the introduction, the hubris hypothesis implies that observers' discrepant evaluations of explicit and implicit self-superiority claims do not necessarily depend on differential claimant self-views that these claims might communicate. Hence, to lay the foundation for an unequivocal test of the hypothesis, it would be important to show that explicit and implicit self-superiority claims do not convey different claimant self-views. At the same time, our manipulation of claim rank (inferiority vs. superiority) could only be informative insofar as participants believed that claimants of self-inferiority claims had a more negative self-view than claimants of self-superiority claims.

Results

For the general ratings, we calculated mean claimant self-view, claimant evaluation, and claimant view of others (alphas ranged from .73 to .90). To enable a specific–general comparison, we standardized all scores. We subjected the standardized scores to 2 × 2 × 2 Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) with claim rank (self-superiority, self-inferiority) and claim type (explicit, implicit) as between-subjects factors and rating scope (general, specific) as a within-subjects factor. We provide the unstandardized descriptives in Table 1.

Manipulation check: claimant self-view

As expected, a main effect of claim rank indicated that participants inferred a more negative self-view from a self-inferiority than a self-superiority claim, $F(1, 68) = 287.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .809$. A Claim Rank × Rating Scope interaction, $F(1, 68) = 5.46$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2_{part} = .074$, revealed that the effect of claim rank was stronger on the specific than on the general scope, although it was significant in both cases, $t(70) = 22.89$, $p < .001$, and $t(70) = 10.14$, $p < .001$, respectively. Also as expected, there were no main or interaction effects involving Claim Type, $Fs \leq .5$, $ps \geq .538$. Participants inferred an equivalently positive self-view from an explicit and an implicit self-superiority claim, and an equivalently negative self-view from an explicit and an implicit self-inferiority claim, both on the specific and general rating scope.

Claimant evaluation

The ANOVA yielded the crucial Claim Rank × Claim Type interaction, $F(1, 68) = 10.89$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_{part} = .138$. Participants evaluated self-superiority claimants more unfavorably when the claim was explicit than implicit, $t(34) = 3.56$, $p = .001$, but their evaluation of self-inferiority claimants did not depend on the claim being explicit or implicit, $t(34) = .89$, $p = .382$. This held true for the specific and general rating scope, the triple interaction being non-significant, $F(1, 68) = .49$, $p = .487$. A significant claim rank main effect indicated that participants evaluated the claimant more unfavorably when the claim reflected self-inferiority than self-superiority, $F(1, 68) = 18.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .217$, and a significant claim type main effect indicated that participants evaluated the claimant more unfavorably when the claim was explicit than implicit, $F(1, 68) = 4.69$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2_{part} = .064$.

Claimant view of others

The critical Claim Rank × Claim Type interaction was significant, $F(1, 68) = 9.45$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2_{part} = .122$. Participants inferred a more negative view of others from an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim, $t(34) = 4.93$, $p < .001$, but they inferred a roughly equal view of others from the explicit and implicit self-inferiority claims, $t(34) = .45$, $p = .657$. A significant claim type main effect indicated that participants inferred a more negative view of others from explicit than implicit claims, $F(1, 68) = 5.40$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2_{part} = .074$. Finally, a significant triple interaction, $F(1, 68) = 5.77$, $p = .019$, $\eta^2_{part} = .078$, reflected that participants particularly inferred a more negative view of others from an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim on the general scope. Still, the explicit–implicit difference was significant on both the specific and the general scope, $t(34) = 3.13$, $p = .004$, and $t(34) = 5.65$, $p < .001$, respectively. Participants did not infer a different view of others from an explicit than an implicit self-inferiority claim either on the specific or general scope, $t(34) = .40$, $p = .694$, and $t(34) = 1.19$, $p = .242$, respectively.

Mediational analysis

We tested a key tenet of the hubris hypothesis, namely that, for self-superiority claims, claimant view of others mediates the effect of claim type on claimant evaluation. Given that claim type did not affect claimant evaluation in the case of self-inferiority claims, we did not conduct mediational analyses for such claims. We carried out two mediational analyses for the self-superiority claims, one for specific and one for general rating scope. Both analyses tested a mediation model in which claim type figured as a categorical independent variable with two levels (0 = implicit, 1 = explicit). We followed the bootstrapping method (Preacher

& Hayes, 2004) using the PROCESS macro for SSPS (version 2.11; Hayes, 2013). In this and all reported mediational analyses, we based the bootstrap estimates on 5000 re-samples and conducted two-tailed *t*-tests.

In the first analysis, we entered specific claimant evaluation as the dependent variable, and specific claimant view of others as the mediator. The direct effect of claim type on specific claimant evaluation was significant, $B = -1.72$, $t(34) = 2.75$, $p = .009$. The indirect effect through specific claimant view of others differed from zero at $p < .05$, with a point estimate of −1.22 (95% CI [−2.49, −.39]). In the second analysis, we entered general claimant evaluation as the dependent variable, and general claimant view of others as the mediator. We obtained similar results. The direct effect of claim type on general claimant evaluation was significant, $B = -1.43$, $t(34) = 3.57$, $p = .001$. The indirect effect through general claimant view of others differed from zero at $p < .05$, with a point estimate of −.80 (95% CI [−2.06, −.13]). The prediction was thus supported both on the specific and the general scope.

Discussion

We replicated and extended past research on the hubris hypothesis. In particular, we replicated the finding that observers evaluate explicit (relative to implicit) self-superiority claimants unfavorably. Ruling out an alternative in terms of disapproval of explicitly stated self-other differences, we showed that observers do not evaluate explicit self-inferiority claimants more unfavorably than implicit self-inferiority claimants. Also ruling out an alternative in terms of explicit self-superiority claims conveying an excessively positive self-view, we showed that observers do not infer a more positive self-view from an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim.

In support of the hubris hypothesis, observers inferred that explicit self-superiority claimants viewed others particularly negatively. Most important, the mediational analyses indicated that this negative view of others drove the dislike for explicit self-superiority claimants. This was true both when we entered the claimant's specific view of others as a mediator of specific evaluations of the claimant, and when we entered the claimant's general view of others as a mediator of general evaluations of the claimant. Not only are these results consistent with the hubris hypothesis, but they also expand it to incorporate a broader evaluative domain.

One ancillary finding of Experiment 1 was that participants responded unfavorably, in general, to the claimant of a self-inferiority claim. This may reflect a generic dislike for people who hold and show negative self-views. Indeed, given that participants inferred a negative self-view, it is unlikely that their dislike for self-inferiority claimants reflected a disapproval of false modesty or self-effacement. Alternatively, being confronted with another individual's (explicit or implicit) self-inferiority claim put participants in the position of a target of a threatening upward comparison, and this unpleasant position may have led to their dislike of the claimant (Exline & Lobel, 1999).

Experiment 2

Despite the supportive results of Experiment 1, several postulates of the hubris hypothesis await experimental testing. We focus on two. First, observers conclude that the claimant holds a negative view of them from their initial inference that the claimant of an explicit

self-superiority claim holds a negative view of others in general. Second, it is this conclusion that ultimately drives observers' dislike for explicit self-superiority claimants. In Experiment 2, we gauged these postulates in a complementary manner.

We aimed to test the hubris hypothesis' full directional path (Figure 1). We included in the design the explicit and implicit self-superiority conditions of Experiment 1, but extended them with a measure of how participants thought the claimant would view *them*. Besides examining inferences from and evaluations of the claims, we conducted a mediation analysis to find out how these inferences and evaluations were related. We predicted that participants would infer from the explicit (more so than from the implicit) self-superiority claim that the claimant held negative views of others in general, that participants would infer from the alleged negative view of others that the claimant also held negative views of them, and that they would consequently evaluate the claimant unfavorably.

We also aimed to test the more general prediction, implied by the hubris hypothesis, that messages from which observers infer negative views of others provoke dislike only if they give rise to an inferred negative view of the observer. We therefore compared a claim from which observers would infer negative views of both others in general and themselves to a claim from which they would infer a negative view of others but a positive view of themselves. Specifically, we extended the experimental design with conditions in which the claimant lauded the participant's superiority (participant-superiority condition) rather than making a self-superiority claim. Of course, there is no hubris involved in telling a conversation partner that they are good or that they are better than others. These conditions solely served to test one specific (and at the same time more broadly generalizable) theoretical implication of the hypothesis.

If a claimant's negative view of others in itself determines observers' evaluations, observers should evaluate more unfavorably the explicit participant-superiority claim ("You are better than others") than the implicit participant-superiority claim ("You are good"), just like they evaluate more unfavorably an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim. Indeed, an explicit participant-superiority claim is likely to communicate a more negative view of others than an implicit participant-superiority claim. If, as implied by the hubris hypothesis, a claimant's negative view of others provokes dislike only when it suggests a negative view of the observer, then participants should not evaluate more unfavorably an explicit participant-superiority claim than an implicit participant-superiority claim. In fact, based on the literature, we expected observers to evaluate favorably any participant-superiority claim (Hepper & Sedikides, 2012; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Indeed, any participant-superiority claim—be it explicit or implicit—unequivocally conveys a positive view of the observer. Observers do not infer that the claimant ranks them higher if they are praised in an explicitly than an implicitly comparative manner (Gaines et al., 2005).

We had an additional objective in Experiment 2, that is, to explore further the nature of observers' dislike and the inferences they draw from explicit self-superiority claims. In prior research on the hubris hypothesis and in Experiment 1, we measured observers' evaluation of the claimant and their generalized inferences in terms of trait dimensions that we combined into a single scale (Hoorens et al., 2012). We wondered if observers attribute to explicit self-superiority claimants a lack of warmth, a lack of competence, or both. To answer this question, we had participants rate the claimant (as well as the claimant's view of others and the claimant's view of them) on the dimensions of warmth and competence. According to the hubris hypothesis, observers evaluate explicit self-superiority claimants unfavorably

Table 2. Mean Ratings for Claimant Evaluation, Claimant View of Others, and Claimant View of Observer as a Function of Claim Target, Claim Type, and Rating Dimension in Experiment 2.

	Self-superiority claim		Participant-superiority claim	
Rating	Implicit	Explicit	Implicit	Explicit
Claimant evaluation				
Warmth	5.03 (1.09)	3.45 (.96)	5.07 (1.00)	4.71 (.89)
Competence	5.11 (.73)	4.96 (1.21)	4.51 (.97)	4.49 (.94)
Claimant view of others				
Warmth	4.90 (.99)	3.19 (.95)	4.45 (.83)	3.64 (.94)
Competence	4.26 (.87)	3.32 (.81)	4.33 (.83)	3.74 (.88)
Claimant view of participant				
Warmth	5.21 (1.01)	4.31 (1.12)	6.01 (.90)	5.80 (.81)
Competence	4.33 (1.01)	3.88 (1.23)	5.01 (.98)	5.11 (.85)

Notes: Ratings were made on a 1–7 scale. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

because they infer that these claimants hold a negative view of others. Although people's self-view mostly depends on their self-attributed competence (Gebauer et al., 2015) at least in agentic cultures (Gebauer, Wagner, Sedikides, & Neberich, 2013), their view of others mostly depends on the warmth these others seem to show (i.e., how they treat their fellow human beings; Cuddy et al., 2008; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005). We therefore predicted that observers would view explicit self-superiority claimants as lacking in warmth rather than in competence.

Method

Participants and design

We tested 80 participants (66 women, 14 men; M_{age} = 18.89, SD_{age} = 1.46) in a 2 (claim target: claimant, participant) × 2 (claim type: explicit, implicit) × 2 (rating dimension: warmth, competence) mixed design. Claim target and claim type were between-subjects factors (20 participants per condition), whereas rating dimension was a within-subjects factor.

Materials and procedure

Participants received a booklet containing all stimulus materials at a single testing session and completed the booklet at their own pace. The self-superiority claims (explicit and implicit) were identical to those of Experiment 1. To model the participant-superiority claims after them, we replaced all first person statements by second person statements. Participants rated the claimant (*claimant evaluation*) on seven warmth-related traits (helpful, honest, just, loving, respectful, tolerant, trustworthy) and seven competence-related traits (ambitious, confident, decisive, energetic, resourceful, sharp, willful). We selected these traits from Peeters (1997). Response scales ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Participants also indicated how they thought the claimant viewed other people (*claimant view of others*) and how they thought the claimant viewed them (*claimant view of participant*) on the same traits and using the same scales.

Results

We calculated mean warmth and competence scores referring to claimant evaluation, claimant view of others, and claimant view of participant (alphas ranged from .87 to .95). We

subjected these scores to 2 × 2 × 2 ANOVAs with claim target (claimant, participant) and claim type (explicit, implicit) as between-subjects factors and rating dimension (warmth, competence) as a within-subjects factor. We report descriptive statistics in Table 2.

Claimant evaluation

The theoretically relevant Claim Target × Claim Type × Rating Dimension interaction was significant, $F(1, 76) = 4.79$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2_{part} = .059$. As predicted, participants evaluated explicit self-superiority claimants as falling short on warmth, $t(38) = 4.85$, $p < .001$, but not on competence, $t(38) = .50$, $p = .621$, relative to implicit self-superiority claimants. In contrast, participants evaluated explicit and implicit participant-superiority claimants equivalently on both rating dimensions, $ts(38) \leq 1.20$, $ps \geq .238$. The claim type main effect was also significant, $F(1, 76) = 8.45$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2_{part} = .100$, as was the Claim Type × Rating Dimension interaction, $F(1, 76) = 12.64$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .143$. Participants evaluated claimants more unfavorably when the claim was explicit than implicit. Further, they evaluated the claimant as colder, $t(78) = 4.02$, $p < .001$, when the claim was explicit than implicit, but not as more incompetent, $t(78) = .40$, $p = .692$.

Finally, we obtained a theoretically irrelevant Claim Target × Rating Dimension interaction, $F(1, 76) = 23.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .235$, that we report for completion purposes. Participants evaluated self-superiority claimants as less warm than participant-superiority claimants, $t(78) = 2.58$, $p = .012$, but as more competent, $t(78) = 2.49$, $p = .015$.

Claimant view of others

As predicted, the claim type main effect was significant, $F(1, 76) = 30.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .284$. Participants inferred that the claimant held a more negative view of others when the claim was explicit than implicit. Showing that they did so regardless of whether the claim expressed self-superiority or participant-superiority, the Claim Type × Claim Target interaction was not significant, $F(1, 76) = 2.87$, $p = .094$. The claim type main effect was qualified by a Claim Type × Rating Dimension interaction, $F(1, 76) = 10.85$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_{part} = .125$. The difference in claimant view of others inferred from an explicit vs. an implicit claim was larger on warmth than on competence, but it was significant in both cases, $t(78) = 5.96$, $p < .001$, and $t(78) = 4.02$, $p < .001$, respectively.

Claimant view of participant

As predicted, we obtained a main effect of claim target, with participants inferring that a participant-superiority claimant viewed them more positively than a self-superiority claimant did, $F(1, 76) = 28.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .274$. A main effect of rating dimension indicated that participants inferred that the claimant had a more positive view of their warmth than their competence, $F(1, 76) = 51.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_{part} = .403$. The Claim Target × Claim Type interaction was not significant, $F(1, 76) = 2.43$, $p = .123$. We proceeded with exploratory analyses, given their theoretical relevance. Participants inferred a more negative view of them from an explicit than an implicit self-superiority claim, $t(38) = 2.18$, $p = .035$, whereas they inferred equivalently positive views of them from an explicit and an implicit participant-superiority claim, $t(38) = .25$, $p = .805$.

Mediational analysis

To test the full directional path as proposed by the hubris hypothesis (Figure 1), we conducted a serial multiple mediation analysis for the self-superiority claims. We could thus determine

whether participants' dislike for explicit self-superiority claimants was driven by their inference of the claimant holding a negative view of others and, consequently, a negative view of them. As predicted, claim type did not affect claimant evaluation for participant-superiority claims. We therefore did not conduct mediational analyses for these claims.

We entered claim type as the independent variable, claimant warmth (i.e., participants' evaluation of the claimant's warmth) as the dependent variable, and claimant view of others followed by claimant view of participant as mediating variables. We also tested the mediators individually. The total effect of claim type on claimant warmth was significant, $B = -1.58$, $t(38) = 4.85$, $p < .001$. The sole indirect effect that differed from zero at $p < .05$ included claimant view of others followed by claimant view of participant, the point estimate being −.24 (95% CI [−.92, −.01]). The confidence intervals for the indirect effects through claimant view of others and claimant view of participant individually were [−.88, .49] and [−.26, .38], respectively.

Discussion

Experiment 2 supported, clarified, and extended the hubris hypothesis. It showed that observers infer a negative view of others from an explicit self-superiority claim, that they infer a negative view of them from such a claim, and that this negative view of them ultimately gives rise to their dislike for the claimant. Experiment 2 thus provided evidence for the full directional path specified by the hypothesis. Observers' inferences about the claimant's view of others generalized to the domains of warmth and competence, whereas the unfavorable evaluations of explicit self-superiority claimants took the form of regarding them as cold but not incompetent.

In addition, Experiment 2 supported the prediction, implied by the hubris hypothesis, that claims from which observers infer a negative view of others provoke dislike when they give rise to an inferred negative view of the observer but not when they give rise to an inferred positive view of the observer. Whereas participants evaluated unfavorably an explicit self-superiority claimant (whose claim suggested a negative view of others and of them), they evaluated favorably an explicit participant-superiority claimant (whose claim suggested a negative view of others, but a positive view of them).

General Discussion

Observers evaluate explicit self-superiority claims unfavorably. This is remarkable, if not counterintuitive, for at least three reasons. First, most people share the belief that they are better than others (Alicke & Govorun, 2005; Alicke & Sedikides, 2009, 2011). The superiority beliefs that are being expressed by explicit self-superiority claimants are therefore far from rare. Second, people like individuals who self-present in a seemingly non-comparative manner (Hoorens et al., 2012) even though the latter self-presentations just like explicit self-superiority claims rest upon comparison processes (Alicke, 2007; Corcoran & Mussweiler, 2010; Hoorens & Van Damme, 2012). Hence, self-presenters who state that they are better than others (i.e., explicit self-superiority claimants) and those who state that they are good (i.e., implicit self-superiority claimants) disclose similar information about how they view themselves. Third, the claims in our research were hypothetical. The claimants were unknown to participants and imaginary. From that point of view, the claims were harmless, and yet

participants were unfavorable to explicit self-superiority claims. Our findings are consistent with literature suggesting that people often respond to imagined information as if it were true (Holmes & Mathews, 2005; Morewedge, Huh, & Vosgerau, 2010; Sedikides & Green, 2000).

Supporting and Enriching the Hubris Hypothesis

The hubris hypothesis predicts that observers dislike explicit self-superiority claimants and explains this dislike by proposing that observers infer from these claims a negative view of others and therefore of them. We tested the hubris hypothesis and obtained support for it in two experiments using divergent experimental designs, dependent measures, and data analytic practices.

Consistent with the hypothesis, explicitly comparative claims were evaluated more unfavorably than implicitly comparative ones when they implied self-superiority (Experiments 1–2) but not when they implied self-inferiority (Experiment 1). This pattern ruled out an alternative hypothesis stating that observers' dislike for explicit self-superiority claimants is due to an aversion for overtly conveyed self-other differences. Also consistent with the hubris hypothesis, observers' inferences about how negatively the claimant viewed others predicted their evaluations of self-superiority claims (Experiments 1–2) because these inferences made observers believe that the claimant viewed them negatively as well (Experiment 2). In addition, inferred negative views of others led to observers' dislike only when they went hand in hand with inferred negative views of the observers. Observers considered claimants who singled out the observer as superior to others to hold an equally negative view of others as did claimants who singled out the self as superior to others; nevertheless observers evaluated the former claimants more favorably than the latter ones (Experiment 2). Finally, the inferred claimant view of others and the inferred claimant view of the observer were not limited to the pertinent comparison dimension but instead generalized to broader personality traits (Experiments 1–2).

Implications

In research by Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, and Chatman (2006), members of social groups readily accepted that in-group members privately self-enhanced on social acceptance (by believing that they were liked better than they actually were), but they objected against in-group members privately self-enhancing on their group status (by believing that they had risen higher in the hierarchy than they actually had; see also Anderson, Ames, & Gosling, 2008). Anderson et al. (2006) concluded that "individuals incur social costs when they self-enhance on a dimension in which they directly compete with others—that is, when individuals' expressed superiority necessarily implies others' inferiority—but not when they self-enhance on noncompetitive dimensions" (p. 1108). Our findings suggest that self-enhancement on a noncompetitive dimension may also incur costs, particularly when it is communicated through an explicit self-superiority claim. We thus provided converging evidence that people dislike individuals who claim that they are better than others (Hoorens et al., 2012; Sedikides et al., 2015).

The findings that observers dislike explicit, more than implicit, superiority claims another person makes about herself or himself, whereas they like both explicit and implicit superiority claims another person makes about them, point to an interesting difference in how people

cope with information about others vs. themselves. Stated differently, observers do not accept others claiming superiority, but they readily accept others claiming that observers are superior. There is even some evidence that people derive greater pleasure and pride from explicitly than implicitly comparative praise (Gaines et al., 2005), particularly when the praise occurs in public (Webster, Duvall, Gaines, & Smith, 2003). These examples document fundamental differences in the way people perceive others and themselves.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

In both experiments, the claims were always about friendship. In prior relevant research, observers evaluated unfavorably claims about being a better (relative to a good) student as well (Hoorens et al., 2012, Experiments 2 and 5). Still, observers' attribution of a lack of warmth (vs. competence) to explicit self-superiority claimants may be ambiguous, because the claims under study referred to a social role that was closely linked to the dimension of warmth. As such, observers may either find explicit self-superiority claimants generally lacking in warmth, or as lacking on a dimension that is closely linked to the social role to which the claim refers (i.e., being a friend). We will address this potential limitation in future research by varying the claim's social role while assessing observers' evaluations on the dimensions of both warmth and competence. In the meantime, we note that the differential claimant views of others and of the observer that observers inferred from explicit vs. implicit self-superiority claims occurred on both warmth and competence (Experiment 2). This finding suggests that the inferences observers draw from self-superiority claims are not necessarily limited to the dimension of the claim itself.

The finding that observers evaluated explicit and implicit self-superiority claimants as differing in warmth but not in competence is seemingly at odds with research on overconfidence and overplacement (i.e., the tendency to rank the self higher than others; Larrick, Burson, & Soll, 2007). Overconfident and overplacing individuals come across as more competent and have a higher social status than their counterparts (Anderson, Brion, Moore, & Kennedy, 2012; Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013). However, this work differs from ours in at least two ways. First, the typical overconfidence study refers to how people privately rank themselves and others. Thus, this research addresses the interpersonal consequences of self-superiority beliefs that are not necessarily communicated to observers. Second, work on overconfidence focuses on self-superiority beliefs about knowledge or task performance, both of which can be tested objectively. It is possible that claimants who explicitly express their superiority on an objectively measurable quality come across as relatively competent and high in social status just like privately overconfident individuals do. Varying the domain of the claim while measuring evaluations of warmth and competence will permit testing of this possibility.

Attributing a lack of warmth to an explicit self-superiority claimant does not necessarily coincide with socially rejecting that claimant. However, to the extent that observers base their affiliative choices on behavior-derived traits (Carlston, 2013; Srull & Wyer, 1989), we may assume that targets who are rated as particularly cold (especially if they are not rated as particularly competent) are more likely to be socially rejected. Nevertheless, we aim in follow-up investigations to disentangle observers' attribution of traits to the claimant from their acceptance/rejection of the claimant.

Some research indicates that self-promoters who brag in the right context (e.g., answering questions about their performance) meet with less disapproval than those who seemingly brag out of the blue (Tal-Or, 2010). Similarly, observers view others less unfavorably when they regard their self-presentation as unintentional (being unable to describe the self accurately) than intentional (choosing to describe the self in a glowing manner; Lafrenière, Sedikides, Van Tongeren, & Davis, in press). It is possible, therefore, that explicit self-superiority claims would in some contexts meet with less unfavorable reactions than in the current research. Importantly, however, we examined differences between types of claims and directional paths attempting to account for differential evaluations of such claims. Even if observers in some contexts respond more leniently to bragging in general, they would still respond relatively more unfavorably to explicit self-superiority claims.

Given that the claims were hypothetical, the observers could not anticipate an interaction with the claimant. It would be interesting to examine whether observers evaluate unfavorably explicit self-superiority claims in naturalistic settings (e.g., during an interdependent task; Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998). Based on the assumption that such an explicit self-superiority claim would be more threatening, and based on findings showing that people respond more extremely to social comparison to the extent that the comparison other is closer to them (Tesser, Millar, & Moore, 1988), we would predict that observers' evaluations of claimants would be more negatively polarized.

Why do people infer a relatively negative view of others and of them from explicit (relative to implicit) self-superiority claims even though these claims do not necessarily imply such a view? After all, self-presenters who claim that they are superior to others may judge others favorably while reckoning that they are still a little bit better. One explanation evokes the presence of a strong social norm against negativity in descriptions of groups and individuals (Jones, Hester, Farina, & Davis, 1959; Mae & Carlston, 2005; Sutton, Elder, & Douglas, 2006). If observers are aware of this norm, they may assume that people criticize others in subtle or indirect manners at most (Bergsieker, Leslie, Constantine, & Fiske, 2012; Kervyn, Bergsieker, & Fiske, 2012). They may therefore construe an ambiguous comment as if it conveys negativity, no matter how many plausible alternative interpretations of the comment there might be. If someone brags in an explicitly comparative manner, he or she may do so to communicate something flattering to the self, but also critical of others. We found that observers spontaneously choose the latter interpretation. Stated differently, they treat explicit self-superiority claims as criticism of others in disguise rather than as vehicles for self-enhancement. If someone brags in an implicitly comparative manner, in contrast, the message does not include any basis from which to infer that the claimant wants to criticize others. Observers therefore treat implicit self-superiority claims as just that—as self-enhancement, and not as criticism of others. We will test this explanation in future studies.

In Closing

The interpersonal consequences of self-superiority beliefs depend on how they are expressed. Observers do not mind if others brag, as long as these others do not leak out that their flattering self-views rest upon social comparison. If they do, they convey diminishment for their fellow human beings and, more importantly, for the observer. It is when these openly comparative statements "hit home" that observers dislike the claimants.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2014). Communal and agentic content: A dual perspective model. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 50*, 195–255. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-800284-1.00004-7

Alicke, M. D. (2007). In defense of social comparison. *International Review of Social Psychology, 20*, 11–29.

Alicke, M. D., & Govorun, O. (2005). The better-than-average effect. In M. D. Alicke, D. A. Dunning, & J. I. Krueger (Eds.), *The self in social judgment* (pp. 85–106). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Alicke, M. D., & Sedikides, C. (2009). Self-enhancement and self-protection: What they are and what they do. *European Review of Social Psychology, 20*, 1–48. doi:10.1080/10463280802613866

Alicke, M. D., & Sedikides, C. (2011). *Handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Anderson, C., Brion, S., Moore, D. A., & Kennedy, J. A. (2012). A status-enhancement account of overconfidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 103*, 718–735. doi:10.1037/a0029395

Anderson, C., Ames, D. R., & Gosling, S. D. (2008). Punishing hubris: The perils of overestimating one's status in a group. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*, 90–101. doi:10.1177/0146167207307489

Anderson, C. A., & Sedikides, C. (1991). Contributions of a typological approach to associationistic and dimensional views of person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 203–217. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.60.2.203

Anderson, C., Srivastava, S., Beer, J., Spataro, S. E., & Chatman, J. A. (2006). Knowing your place: Self-perceptions of status in face-to-face groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 1094–1110. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.91.6.1094

Arnesen, R. (2002). Egalitarianism. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2002/entries/egalitarianism

Bergsieker, H. B., Leslie, L. M., Constantine, V. S., & Fiske, S. T. (2012). Stereotyping by omission: Eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*, 1214–1238. doi:10.1037/a0027717

Carlston, D. E. (Ed.). (2013). *The handbook of social cognition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Corcoran, K., & Mussweiler, T. (2010). The cognitive miser's perspective: Social comparison as a heuristic in self-judgements. *European Review of Social Psychology, 21*, 78–113. doi:10.1080/10463283.2010.508674

Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 61–149. doi:10.1016/s0065-2601(07)00002-0

Exline, J. J., & Lobel, M. (1999). The perils of outperformance: Sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison. *Psychological Bulletin, 125*, 307–337. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.125.3.307

Gaines, L. M., Duvall, J., Webster, J. M., & Smith, R. H. (2005). Feeling good after praise for a successful performance: The importance of social comparison information. *Self and Identity, 4*, 373–389. doi:10.1080/15298860500280223

Gebauer, J. E., Sedikides, C., Wagner, J., Bleidorn, W., Rentfrow, P. J., Potter, J., & Gosling, S. D. (2015). Cultural norm fulfillment, interpersonal belonging, or getting ahead? A large-scale cross-cultural test of three perspectives on the function of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 109*, 526–548. doi:10.1037/pspp0000052

Gebauer, J. E., Wagner, J., Sedikides, C., & Neberich, W. (2013). The relation between agency-communion and self-esteem is moderated by culture, religiosity, age, and sex: Evidence for the self-centrality breeds self-enhancement principle. *Journal of Personality, 81*, 261–275. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00807.x

Goolsby, L. L., & Chaplin, W. F. (1988). The impact of normative, ipsative, and idiothetic information on feelings about academic performance. *Journal of Research in Personality, 22*, 445–464. doi:10.1016/0092-6566(88)90003-7

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hepper, E. G., & Sedikides, C. (2012). Self-enhancing feedback. In R. M. Sutton, M. J. Hornsey, & K. M. Douglas (Eds.), *Feedback: The communication of praise, criticism, and advice* (pp. 43–56). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Holmes, E. A., & Mathews, A. (2005). Mental imagery and emotion: A special relationship? *Emotion, 5*, 489–497. doi:10.1037/1528-3542.5.4.480

Hoorens, V. (2011). The social consequences of self-enhancement and self-protection. In M. D. Alicke & C. Sedikides (Eds.), *Handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection* (pp. 235–257). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hoorens, V., Pandelaere, M., Oldersma, F., & Sedikides, C. (2012). The hubris hypothesis: You can self-enhance, but you'd better not show it. *Journal of Personality, 80*, 1237–1274. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2011.00759.x

Hoorens, V., & Van Damme, C. (2012). What do people infer from social comparisons? *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 6*, 607–618. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2012.00451.x

Jones, E. E., Hester, S. L., Farina, A., & Davis, K. (1959). Reactions to unfavorable personal evaluations as a function of the evaluator's perceived adjustment. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 59*, 363–370. doi:10.1037/h0047311

Judd, C. M., James-Hawkins, L., Yzerbyt, V., & Kashima, Y. (2005). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment: Understanding the relations between judgments of competence and warmth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 899–913. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.899

Kennedy, J. A., Anderson, C., & Moore, D. A. (2013). When overconfidence is revealed to others: Testing the status-enhancement theory of overconfidence. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 122*, 266–279. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2013.08.005

Kervyn, N., Bergsieker, H. B., & Fiske, S. T. (2012). The innuendo effect: Hearing the positive but inferring the negative. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*, 77–85. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2011.08.001

Klein, W. M. (1997). Objective standards are not enough: Affective, self-evaluative, and behavioral responses to social comparison information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 763–774. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.72.4.763

Klein, W. M. (2003). Effects of objective feedback and "single other" or "average other" social comparison feedback on performance judgments and helping behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 418–429. doi:10.1177/0146167203251195

Lafrenière, M.-A. K., Sedikides, C., Van Tongeren, D. R., & Davis, J. L. (in press). On the perceived intentionality of self-enhancement. *Journal of Social Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/00224545.2015.1041447

Larrick, R. P., Burson, K. A., & Soll, J. B. (2007). Social comparison and confidence: When thinking you're better than average predicts overconfidence (and when it does not). *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 102*, 76–94. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.10.002

Mae, L., & Carlston, D. E. (2005). Hoist on your own petard: When prejudiced remarks are recognized and backfire on speakers. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*, 240–255. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2004.06.011

Moore, D. A., & Klein, W. M. (2008). Use of absolute and comparative performance feedback in absolute and comparative judgments and decisions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 107*, 60–74. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.02.005

Morewedge, C. K., Huh, Y. E., & Vosgerau, J. (2010). Thought for food: Imagined consumption reduces actual consumption. *Science, 303*, 1530–1533. doi:10.1126/science.1195701

Peeters, G. (1997). *Zelf-profitabiliteit (SP) en Ander-profitabiliteit (OP) van eigenschappen* [Self-profitability (SP) and Other-profitability (OP) of traits] (Internal Report No. 19). Belgium: Laboratorium voor Experimentele Sociale Psychologie, KU Leuven.

Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers, 36*, 717–731. doi:10.3758/bf03206553

Schneider, D. J. (1973). Implicit personality theory: A review. *Psychological Bulletin, 79*, 294–309. doi:10.1037/h0034496

Sedikides, C., & Alicke, M. D. (2012). Self-enhancement and self-protection motives. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of motivation* (pp. 303–322). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sedikides, C., Campbell, W. K., Reeder, G., & Elliot, A. J. (1998). The self-serving bias in relational context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 378–386. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.74.2.378

Sedikides, C., & Green, J. D. (2000). On the self-protective nature of inconsistency-negativity management: Using the person memory paradigm to examine self-referent memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 906–922. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.79.6.906

Sedikides, C., & Gregg, A. P. (2008). Self-enhancement: Food for thought. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*, 102–116. doi:10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00068.x

Sedikides, C., Gregg, A. P., & Hart, C. M. (2007). The importance of being modest. In C. Sedikides & S. Spencer (Eds.), *The self: Frontiers in social psychology* (pp. 163–184). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Sedikides, C., Hoorens, V., & Dufner, M. (2015). Self-enhancing self-presentation: Interpersonal, relational, and organizational implications. In F. Guay, D. M. McInerney, R. Craven, & H. W. Marsh (Eds.), *Self-concept, motivation and identity: Underpinning success with research and practice*. International advances in self research (Vol. 5, pp. 29–55). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Spencer, S. J., Zanna, M., & Fong, G. T. (2005). Establishing a causal chain: Why experiments are often more effective than mediational analyses in examining psychological processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 845–851. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.845

Srull, T. K., & Wyer, R. S. (1989). Person memory and judgment. *Psychological Review, 96*, 58–83. doi:10.1037/0033-295x.96.1.58

Sutton, R. M., Elder, T. J., & Douglas, K. M. (2006). Reactions to internal and external criticism of outgroups: Social convention in the intergroup sensitivity effect. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 563–575. doi:10.1177/0146167205282992

Tal-Or, N. (2010). Bragging in the right context: Impressions formed of self-promoters who create a context for their boasts. *Social Influence, 5*, 23–39. doi:10.1080/15534510903160480

Tesser, A., Millar, M., & Moore, J. (1988). Some affective consequences of social comparison and reflection processes: The pain and pleasure of being close. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 49–61. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.54.1.49

Webster, J. M., Duvall, J., Gaines, L. M., & Smith, R. H. (2003). The roles of praise and social comparison information in the experience of pride. *Journal of Social Psychology, 143*, 209–232. doi:10.1080/00224540309598441

Wood, J. V., & Wilson, A. E. (2003). How important is social comparison? In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 344–366). New York, NY: Guildford Press.