You should go for diversity, but I'd rather stay with similar others: Social distance modulates the preference for diversity[☆,☆☆]

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ABSTRACT

Organizations often state that they value diversity. The workforce, however, is often quite homogeneous, reflecting a striking mismatch between aspirations and reality. Based on the distinction between desirability and feasibility concerns, we provide a psychological argument for this mismatch. We hypothesize that social distance influences individuals' choices regarding diversity. When being socially more distant, individuals prefer to assemble a diverse team, due to a stronger impact of pro-diversity desirability concerns. In contrast, when being socially close, individuals prefer similar team members, due to a stronger weighing of anti-diversity feasibility concerns. Four studies investigate the different decision outcomes when being socially distant compared to close. Study 1 shows that working in a diverse group is perceived as desirable, but less feasible. Study 2 investigates the impact of psychological distance on individuals' choices of working with a more different (when being socially distant) or similar partner (when being socially close). Study 3 shows that participants created a more diverse team for another person (distance condition) than for themselves (proximity condition). In Study 4, participants did not create a more diverse group for a stranger (distance condition) than for a friend (adjusted proximity condition), however, participants weighted feasibility concerns less strongly for strangers than for friends. Implications for diversity research and practice are discussed.

1. Introduction

"Diversity? That's one of our top priorities!" could be a broad and general statement taken from most contemporary company websites or CEO interviews. Diversity is a fundamental part of most societies. Individuals differ regarding their age, gender, or ethnicity, nationality, religion, personality, education, or attitudes. Due to increased mobility and conventions regarding the free movement of persons (e.g., the Schengen Agreement in Europe), individuals today are more likely than ever to be confronted with different others. According to the United States Census Bureau, the diversification of our societies will increase even further (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Therefore, diversity is not only a core feature of our current, but even more of our future everyday lives.

With increasing diversity in our society, diversity in our workforce can be expected to increase, too (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Perhaps in response to this societal trend, organizations of all kinds have emphasized the importance of diversity, with 55% of senior executives stating

that their organizations strongly/very strongly promote diversity and inclusion (see Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). A popular example is a statement by Sundar Pichai, Google's current CEO, who is quoted as saying "A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone" (Pichai & Google Inc., 2016). At the same time, companies and especially the management level tend to be rather homogeneous. Looking at gender, for example, in early 2018 there were only 27 female CEOs within the Fortune 500 companies, (5.4%; Fortune Editors, 2017). This has resulted in a call for the necessity of political interventions such as the affirmative action policy in the US, or the German law to promote the equal participation of women and men in leadership positions across industries and public services. But how can this striking difference between the praise for diversity, and its factual lack across boards and management teams be explained? In this manuscript, we provide a psychological perspective to this question, focusing on how managers, HR decision makers, and–more generally speaking–individuals think of the concept of diversity. We argue that one factor that contributes to the mismatch is

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that depending on the situation, individuals adopt different mindsets or construal levels, resulting in abstract statements about the desirability of diversity on the one hand, but concrete hiring or promotion decisions favoring similar others on the other hand.

1.1. Explaining the mismatch: desirability and feasibility of diversity

When thinking about the *desirability* of diversity, individuals may be particularly influenced by *context variables*, such as norms of fairness or beliefs about diversity. More specifically, individuals might consider a moral responsibility of adhering to fair and equality-based hiring and promotion policies when choosing new members for a group. Individuals might thus consider it a good idea to ask candidates from, for example, different ethnic backgrounds to apply for the new job – everybody should have the same chance of being hired, irrespective of their ethnicity. Moreover, when desirability is focused on, specific *outcome variables* such as the creativity and performance of the group may be particularly taken into account. Individuals might think that a diverse group comes with certain benefits and advantages, resulting in better outcomes for the group. Hiring somebody with a different background could lead to new ideas, new solutions, and a better overall performance.

This perspective has received support in prior diversity and group research. Seeing benefits of diversity is highlighted in the Information and Decision Making approach (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), which argues that diverse groups profit from a richness of knowledge and experience that can result in increased creativity. The larger amount of information, competencies, experience, and knowledge that is available in diverse groups can further increase problem-solving abilities and group performance.

In contrast, when thinking about the *feasibility* of working in diverse teams, different considerations that relate more to the process of collaborating in a group might become important. For instance, when envisioning their day-to-day work in a group, individuals might think it would be easier to work with someone similar – someone who has studied at the same university, has the same background, speaks the same language, and has the same working habits and style. Focusing on feasibility aspects, which encompass, for instance, efficiency of collaboration and ease of communication, a more similar candidate for a new position may be preferred compared to a more different one.

That individuals prefer people who are similar to them is in line with research showing that individuals favor in-group members. According to the Similarity-Attraction paradigm, perceived similarities regarding attitudes, values, but also demographic variables such as age and gender, lead to more sympathy and attraction between individuals (Byrne, 1971). Similar attitudes and concepts validate our own ideas, and therefore work as positive reinforcement and solid ground for a positive relationship (Byrne, 1961). A second reason for preferring similar others can be derived from Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), which suggests that subgroups and conflicts can occur more easily in diverse groups. This is because similarities and differences between members of a group are used to construct subgroups and to differentiate between similar in-subgroup and different out-subgroup members. As a result, more homogeneous groups may offer the promise of less conflict. In consequence, the concerns about a shared culture might even outweigh employers' concerns about productivity (Rivera, 2012).

The above review suggests that there are at least two ways to look at diversity: On the one hand, one could focus on the *desirability* of diverse work teams, as diversity might increase experience, knowledge, and group performance, and therefore be of value for the group (value-in-diversity hypothesis; van Dijk, van Engen, & Paauwe, 2012). On the other hand, one could focus on the *feasibility* of working in diverse teams, admitting that diversity might also result in the formation of subgroups, devaluation processes, and conflicts.

Existing research on the effects of diversity in teams does not provide a clear answer to the question whether diversity is beneficial. The situation is complicated by the fact that empirical studies and meta-analyses differ in regard to which variables are taken into account when defining diversity (gender, skills, personality, etc.) and which outcome variables (performance, social integration, etc.) are analyzed. As a result, the literature does not offer a clear recommendation for or against diversity, but a mix of conclusions regarding the strength and valence of effects of diversity, depending on circumstances (see Bowers, Pharmer, & Salas, 2000; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007; Webber & Donahue, 2001; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). For example, Milliken and Martins (1996, p. 403) concluded: "Diversity thus appears to be a double-edged sword, increasing the opportunity for creativity as well as the likelihood that group members will be dissatisfied and fail to identify with the group."

We suggest that at least one contribution to this puzzle could be to take one step further and investigate whether and when individuals *prefer* to work with similar or different others. Thus, in this manuscript we will focus on how preferences for diversity change depending on whether individuals are more likely to focus on desirability or feasibility concerns.

1.2. A construal level theory perspective

One theory that allows for predictions about which type of concern individuals likely focus on is Construal Level Theory of Psychological Distance (CLT; Liberman & Trope, 2008). CLT holds that the weight that is attached to desirability versus feasibility considerations depends on whether individuals focus on the ends, or the means, of an action.

Looking at the *end state* (a good work performance), a diverse workforce seems more desirable compared to a non-diverse workforce: First, it promises more creativity and information sharing. Second, it is the societally fair solution, reflecting the conviction that all individuals, no matter their ethnicity, age, personality, background, and gender, should have equal opportunities in the workforce. The desirability of diversity can be derived from individuals' positive evaluations of diversity, which are often called diversity mindsets or diversity beliefs. Diversity beliefs reflect the extent to which individuals believe there is value in diversity (van Dick, van Knippenberg, Hägele, Guillaume, & Brodbeck, 2008). The descriptive results of studies that measure and do not manipulate diversity beliefs support the assumption that diversity is desirable, as pro-diversity beliefs are shared by the majority of participants. In these studies, the average diversity beliefs lie above the scale mid-point (e.g., Homan, Greer, Jehn, & Koning, 2010; van Dick et al., 2008; van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2007).

When looking at the *means* to reach the end state (good work performance), however, diversity might appear in a less positive light. In diverse groups, subgroup formation, misunderstandings, and increased conflict might occur and impede the daily work. When means are in focus, feasibility considerations are therefore pivotal.

CLT makes predictions about which dimensions are weighed more strongly in the decision process: When adopting an abstract mindset (high level construal), individuals focus on desirability. When individuals adopt a more concrete mindset (low level construal), they focus more on feasibility aspects (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Thus, we argue that when thinking about diversity more abstractly, individuals put emphasis on the end state and the desirability of diversity. In contrast, when having a more concrete mindset, individuals place emphasis on the means or feasibility concerns–preferring to work with similar others, as day-to-day collaboration should be easier and conflict-free.

CLT further holds that the adopted construal level is a function of psychological distance. The reference point for construal is always "me, here, and now" (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 457), and compared to this reference point, objects and events can be more or less psychologically distant. Especially relevant for research on diversity is the dimension of *social distance*. A stranger is psychologically very distant, one's best friend is psychologically closer, and the self is psychologically closest of

all. Furthermore, events that are linked to strangers are more psychologically distant, while events that happen to best friends are psychologically more and events that happen to oneself are most proximate.

CLT links psychological distance from objects and events to the mindset of the individual and mental construal: Events and objects that are close are construed in a concrete manner (low construal level), and events and objects that are rather distant are construed in an abstract manner (high construal level). In support of these assumptions, desirability considerations have a stronger effect on more distant decisions (in a higher construal level mindset), while feasibility considerations become more important for making psychologically near decisions (in a lower construal level mindset, Liberman & Trope, 1998). Deciding for a stranger, who is socially distant, should therefore result in attending to different concerns compared to when individuals decide for themselves.

Our assumptions regarding psychological distance and preference for diversity receive tangential support from two lines of research that have investigated how individuals' mindsets impact intergroup relations. Adopting an abstract compared to a concrete mindset heightens conservatives' warmth and competence ratings for value-deviating outgroups (Luguri, Napier, & Dovidio, 2012). Furthermore, a more abstract construal of multiculturalism decreases white Americans' prejudice towards ethnic minorities, while a more concrete construal heightens perceived identity threat (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014). These studies indicate that adopting an abstract level decreases prejudice and outgroup-devaluation, as individuals are more concerned about fairness (Luguri et al., 2012) or think more about the broad and desirable goals of multiculturalism (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2014).

Interestingly, other findings offer a different perspective, suggesting that a more abstract construal could lead to more stereotyping (McCrea, Wieber, & Myers, 2012), that higher temporal distance could lead to more discrimination against different others (Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2012), and that a lower level of familiarity and therefore increased social distance could increase the perception of outgroup covariation (Linville, Fischer, & Yoon, 1996).

Given these competing perspectives, it is important to empirically test the effect of psychological distance on diversity decisions. Consistent with our general argument, we hypothesize that diversity is considered as desirable but less feasible, and that increasing social and therefore psychological distance will lead to a preference for diversity.

1.3. The present studies

Based on the theorizing reviewed above, we hypothesize that manipulations of social distance, affects individuals' preferences and choices regarding diversity: When being psychologically distant, individuals favor a diverse team – when being psychologically closer, they prioritize similar team members. Consistent with CLT we suggest that social distance triggers the direction of choice: From afar, diversity appears highly desirable and should therefore be preferred for work groups. As a consequence, individuals might recommend distant others to assemble a more diverse team. However, from a psychologically close-by perspective, potential problem and reasons of conflict might be in focus as feasibility considerations. This might result in a more hesitant attitude towards diversity in groups, especially in situations where individuals are deciding for themselves.

Comparing decisions for oneself with decisions made for others is a typical manipulation of social and therefore psychological distance (e.g., Lu, Xie, & Xu, 2013). At the same time, the self-other manipulation may initiate or activate processes independent of social distance or construal level. For instance, other research suggests that deciding for oneself may involve a different set of processes compared to when giving advice, and that individuals solve tasks differently for themselves versus others, resulting in different estimates for completion times (Buehler, Griffin, & Ross, 1994) or more versus less creative solutions (Polman & Emich, 2011). Furthermore, research on the self-other distinction has pointed out that individuals judge others differently

compared to themselves, as they can relate to themselves through "introspection," but to others only through "extrospection" (Pronin, 2008, p. 1177). By having more information about the self, involvement may be higher or stronger for decisions that relate to the self compared others. Separately or in unison, these self-other differences in knowledge, estimations, and perspectives may also contribute to the hypothesized pattern that individuals choose diversity for others but similarity for themselves. We will return to this issue in the General Discussion.

To test our hypotheses regarding the interplay between social distance and preference for diversity, we conducted four studies. All studies were conducted in Central Europe, with Study 1 as an online study and Studies 2, 3, and 4 conducted in the lab. Throughout all studies we focused on diversity in regards to variables such as gender, age, nationality, and field of study, which are among the most prominently discussed aspects of diversity in Europe (note that race is usually not in the center of diversity debates in Europe). In Study 1 we tested the idea that working in a diverse group is perceived as desirable, but eventually less feasible. In Studies 2, 3, and 4, we focused on choice behavior regarding diversity. In Study 2 we investigated the impact of social distance on individuals' choices of working with a more different or similar partner. In Study 3 we asked participants to create new study groups from a set of potential candidates and showed that deciding for others versus deciding for oneself significantly influences the diversity within the newly created group. In Study 4 we used a different social distance manipulation that does not involve decisions for the self by asking participants to decide for a stranger versus for a friend. In this study, we further assessed the weight given to desirability versus feasibility concerns. Throughout all studies, sample sizes were determined with power analyses before data collection. Furthermore, we report all measures, manipulations, and exclusions. Materials and datasets are available upon request.

2. Study 1

In Study 1 we tested the general idea that working in a diverse (compared to more homogeneous) group is perceived as desirable, but eventually less feasible. To this end, we assessed participants' diversity beliefs and their beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of diversity in work groups. Furthermore, we asked participants to evaluate the work of a fictitious team that was either diverse or homogeneous, and more specifically on a task that either demanded creativity (a brainstorming task) or efficiency (a budget planning task). In line with previous theorizing and research, we assumed that participants anticipate higher performance for diverse groups regarding tasks that demand creativity, as here individual differences could be associated with different perspectives and therefore a more innovative solution (desirability reasoning). Regarding tasks that require efficiency, we assumed that participants anticipate a higher performance for homogeneous groups, as here a smooth communication and collaboration is required which might be considered more likely when team members are rather similar (feasibility reasoning).

2.1. Methods

2.1.1. Participants and design

The study was conducted online, advertised as a study on group work on the platform Clickworker, and took about 7 min to complete. One hundred and thirty individuals participated, yet two participants asked for their data not to be analyzed. The resulting sample consisted of 60 females, 65 males, and three participants who refrained from indicating gender (M_{age} = 37.24 years, SD_{age} = 11.38). According to a sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), a minimal effect size of f = 0.15 could be detected under standard criteria (α = 0.05 two-tailed, power = 0.80, correlation between repeated measures set to 0.3). Participants received 0.50€

(approximately US$0.60) as compensation.

The design was a 2 (team diversity: diverse vs. homogeneous) x 2 (nature of task: creativity vs. efficiency) mixed design. Participants were randomly presented with either a homogeneous or a more diverse team. All participants then evaluated the hypothetical performance of the group on two tasks: one that demanded creativity (brainstorming) and one that demanded efficiency (budget planning; within-subjects-factor). Anticipated performance served as the dependent variable.

2.1.2. Materials and procedure

After providing informed consent, participants were asked to imagine being a department head in a company and managing a team consisting of four persons. In the diversity condition, two of these persons were male, two female. Moreover, the team members differed in age (range 20–53) and in origin (Germany, Italy, USA). In the homogeneity condition, the team consisted of males only, all in the same age range (31–37) and with the same origin (Germany). Images of the four individuals were created with the website avatarmaker.com. As a manipulation check for diversity, participants indicated the extent to which they approved of the statement "The members of the team are very diverse" on a 7-point Likert-scale (1 = *don't agree*; 7 = *completely agree*). Participants were then asked to imagine the daily working routine of the team and to evaluate the teams' collaboration with six items (e.g., "The team solves tasks effectively") on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *don't agree*; 7 = *completely agree*), Cronbach's α = 0.83. Interspersed among these items was an attention check, which asked participants to choose the option "don't agree." Participants then read about specific tasks that the team needed to work on: (a) a brainstorming task where ideas had to be generated, and (b) the task of establishing an exact budget plan for the next half year. Task order was randomized. Participants were asked to briefly describe each task and to rate to which extent the task demanded (a) creativity and (b) efficiency, each on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *don't agree*; 7 = *completely agree*). Then participants rated the anticipated performance of the team on three items ("I would not hesitate to assign the job to the team." "The team will perform well on this project." "I am completely confident that the team will manage this task well.") on a 7-point Likert-scale (1 = *don't agree*; 7 = *completely agree*), with Cronbach's α = 0.96 for the creativity task and Cronbach's α = 0.96 for the efficiency task.

At the end of the study we also assessed participants' general diversity beliefs and their evaluation of desirability and feasibility of diverse work groups. Individuals' general diversity beliefs were assessed with four items (e.g., "Diversity is an asset for teams"; Homan et al., 2010; Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007a), covering general beliefs irrespective of the present study, Cronbach's α = 0.93. In addition, we asked participants whether it was desirable to work in a diverse team, if they thought diversity in teams was positive (desirability), whether collaboration with diverse others leads to difficulties, and whether diversity in teams is easily implemented (feasibility). All questions were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *do not agree*, 7 = *agree*), Spearman's ρ = 0.92 for desirability items and 0.54 for feasibility items.[1] Furthermore, we assessed demographic variables such as gender, age, and nationality, and asked how carefully participants had completed the questionnaire, if there was any reason not to use their data, and if they had further remarks about the study. Participants were thanked and compensated for their participation.

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[1] Spearman's ρ for feasibility is not as high as we wished for, possibly reflecting that feasibility is a broad concept, of which we assessed two very different facets. Nevertheless, we believe that both facets are important and therefore rely on the index for analyses.

2.2. Results

2.2.1. Manipulation check

Participants in the diverse compared to the homogeneous team condition perceived the team to be more diverse, ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.44$, and $M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.51$, respectively), $t(126) = 9.32$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.65$, 95% CI [1.24, 2.05]. Furthermore, when asked to rate the creativity task, participants judged the task to require more creativity than efficiency, $M = 6.17$, $SD = 1.04$, and $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.64$, respectively, $t(127) = 9.26$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.12$, 95% CI [0.85, 1.40]. Likewise, for the efficiency task, participants judged the task to require more efficiency than creativity, $M = 6.25$, $SD = 0.95$, and $M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.87$, respectively, $t(127) = -12.81$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.62$, 95% CI [1.31, 1.94].

2.2.2. Team measures

Individuals rated the homogeneous team as collaborating significantly better compared to the diverse team, $M = 5.05$, $SD = 0.97$; $M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.88$; respectively, $F(1, 126) = 10.13$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.17]. A mixed-measures ANOVA with team diversity as a between-subjects variable and task (creativity vs. efficiency, $r = 0.57$, $p < .001$) as a within-subjects variable revealed a significant effect of the nature of the task, $F(1, 126) = 11.24$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.18]: Participants anticipated that both teams would perform better on the creativity compared to the efficiency task ($M_{creativity} = 5.49$, $SD = 1.19$; $M_{efficiency} = 5.17$, $SD = 1.25$; respectively). In line with our hypotheses, this main effect was further qualified by a significant nature of task x team diversity interaction, $F(1, 126) = 6.12$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.13]. Simple main effects indicate that anticipated team performance did not differ for the *creativity task* ($M_{diverse} = 5.48$, $SD = 1.14$; $M_{homogeneous} = 5.49$, $SD = 1.24$), $F(1, 126) = 0.01$, $p = .938$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.00]. However, for the *efficiency task*, the anticipated performance was higher for the homogeneous team compared to the diverse team ($M_{homogeneous} = 5.41$, $SD = 1.25$, $M_{diverse} = 4.91$, $SD = 1.21$, respectively), $F(1, 126) = 5.26$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.12]. The main effect for team diversity was not significant, $F < 1.84$.

2.2.3. Diversity beliefs

Participants strongly believed in the value of diversity. Average diversity beliefs were pro diversity ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.17$) and significantly different from the scale-midpoint of four, $t(127) = 15.62$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.38$, 95% CI [1.14, 1.62]. Moreover, participants rated the general desirability of diverse teams more highly than the feasibility of diverse teams, $M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.25$, and $M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.16$, respectively; $t(127) = 8.61$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.66$, 95% CI [0.49, 0.83]. The diversity manipulation neither affected diversity beliefs nor the difference between desirability and feasibility beliefs, $F(1, 126) = 1.76$, $p = .187$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.08], and $F(1, 126) = 1.87$, $p = .174$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.08]; respectively.

2.3. Discussion

The results of Study 1 indicate that participants generally believe in the value of diversity (positive diversity beliefs). Moreover, the desirability aspects of diversity are deemed more prevalent and more positive than the feasibility aspects. At the same time, results indicate that participants evaluate the potential collaboration within the homogeneous compared to the diverse team more positively. This was especially true when the nature of the task required efficiency (budget planning). Group evaluations did not differ for the creativity task, where we had expected that individuals evaluate the diverse compared to the homogeneous group more positively. That group evaluations did not differ for the creativity task may reflect that in individuals' naïve theories, diversity and collecting creative ideas (e.g., designing a new and innovative communication campaign) are not as closely related as

research suggests (e.g., van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

We should note a potential alternative explanation for our findings, which hinges on a confound between the diversity manipulation and gender: While the homogeneous group consisted of only male members, the diverse group consisted of both male and female members. We opted for this group set-up because diversity with regard to gender is typically discussed given a lack of women in high-performance teams. However, contrary to our hypothesis, a confound of diversity and gender allows for the assumption that participants focused on gender only. Under the arguably very speculative assumption that participants consistently expected men to perform better than women, adding female members in the diverse group could have resulted in decreased performance, irrespective of diversity. This potential confound is addressed in Study 2.

3. Study 2

Study 2 pursued three primary goals: First, we wanted to show that diversity would not only predict participants' evaluations of a group (as in Study 1), but also participants' choice behavior. Second, we wanted to show that manipulating social distance shifts individuals' preference for diversity and ultimately their choices. Third, Study 2 used only female stimulus persons and therefore allows to test whether Study 1 results hold even if different gender stereotypes between groups cannot serve as an alternative explanation.

Participants chose between two persons with whom they could collaborate on a task: one person being different to themselves, the other rather similar. If high distance leads to a stronger consideration of desirability concerns, but low distance to a stronger focus on feasibility concerns, preference for diversity should shift depending on social distance. We hypothesized that when choosing for oneself (and thus being socially close), the similar person would be preferred, while when choosing for somebody else (and being socially more distant), the different person would be chosen more often as a collaboration partner. This setup mirrors the situation of organizations in everyday life, where managers choose their employees for their teams (a condition of social proximity), but at the same time make more abstract general statements about the desirability of diversity for their organization overall (a condition of social distance).

4. Pretest

We conducted a pretest to ensure that the two potential collaboration candidates differed in regards to perceived diversity, but not in general attractiveness.

4.1. Methods

4.1.1. Participants and design
Thirty-three individuals (15 females; M_{age} = 31.97 years, SD = 11.79) participated in the study via tablets in the cafeteria of the local university library. The majority of participants were Swiss (85%), with one individual each originating from Germany, Georgia, New Zealand, and Slovakia. Participants received a chocolate bar for their participation. We used a between-subjects-design, where participants were shown one profile of one of the potential candidates and were then asked to answer some questions. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions.

4.1.2. Materials and procedure
Participants were presented with a profile of either a female Swiss psychology student whose mother tongue was German, or of a rather different female business student from Chile, whose mother tongue was Spanish. Participants learned about the students' hobbies, their favorite book, and favorite movie, which were chosen to be typical for the countries they came from. After reading the profile, participants

answered the following questions: "How do you evaluate the person?" (1 = *positive*; 7 = *negative*), "Compared to myself, the person is rather…" (1 = *similar*; 7 = *dissimilar*), and "I think the person described is …" (1 = *interesting*; 7 = *not interesting*). Participants were then asked a few demographic questions and thanked for their participation.

4.2. Results

Ratings for the two profiles did not differ significantly with regard to valence ($M_{similar}$ = 2.71, SD = 1.36, and $M_{different}$ = 2.06, SD = 0.93, $t(31)$ = 1.58, p = .125, d = 0.55, 95% CI [−0.15, 1.24]) and general interest ($M_{similar}$ = 3.00, SD = 1.12, and $M_{different}$ = 2.75, SD = 1.00, $t(31)$ = 0.68, p = .504, d = 0.23, 95% CI [−0.45, 0.92]). A significant difference was only obtained for the rating on similarity ($M_{similar}$ = 3.53, SD = 1.37, and $M_{different}$ = 5.13, SD = 1.31, $t(31)$ = −3.41, p = .002, d = 1.19, 95% CI [0.44, 1.92]), indicating that the Swiss psychology student profile was perceived as more similar to oneself than the Chilean business student. Excluding non-Swiss participants did not change the resulting pattern.

5. Main study

In Study 2, we investigated whether the preference for collaboration with different or similar others shifts depending on social distance. We hypothesized that high social distance leads to a preference for a different collaboration partner, while low social distance leads to a preference for a more similar collaboration partner. To manipulate social distance, we adopted a technique from previous research (Lu et al., 2013) and asked individuals to choose for themselves or for another participant of the same study, which participants could assume to be most likely another psychology student with the same nationality as their own.

It is important to emphasize that we do not expect the manipulation of social distance to result in differences in participants' motivation or involvement in the task (Kray, 2000; but also Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 449). We therefore do not expect differences regarding the evaluation of the potential partners, for instance, whether one would be generally willing to collaborate with a specific person. But when forced to make a choice between several candidates, we predict that the weight given to the desirability and feasibility dimensions are key. Again, note that the two candidates were pre-tested to be equally attractive.

5.1. Methods

5.1.1. Participants and design
As we assumed a medium effect size for the social distance manipulation (see Soderberg, Callahan, Kochersberger, Amit, & Ledgerwood, 2015) and aimed for a power of 0.80 with an alpha error probability of 0.05, we calculated a required total sample size of at least 88 participants. One hundred and two individuals (73 females, 27 males, 2 no details; M_{age} = 23.73 years, SD = 5.09) participated via tablets in the university's seminar rooms. As described below, three participants were excluded from the analysis as they did not complete the tasks at the beginning of the study. According to the sensitivity power analysis a minimal effect size of w = 0.28 could be detected under standard criteria (α = 0.05 two-tailed, power = 0.80). Participants received a chocolate bar or course credit for participation and were additionally told that they could win a small bonus. Participants were randomly assigned to a between-subjects-design, and either asked to make a decision for themselves (a manipulation of low social distance) or for future study participants (a manipulation of higher social distance, see Lu et al., 2013).

5.1.2. Materials and procedure
In Phase 1, participants read a text about diversity being a desirable

concept but also learned that problems might emerge in the day-to-day work, to increase the salience of diversity being associated with desirability, but less feasibility (see Appendix A for a translation of the original text). To increase the manipulation's strength, participants were asked to summarize the text briefly. Participants were then asked to help future study participants to solve quiz questions (e.g., Which country was the first to introduce suffrage for women in 1893?). To do so, participants were presented with the correct answer (e.g., New Zealand) and ten possible cues that would help others solve the question (e.g. island state; has over 40 million sheep; local currency is the dollar). Participants then selected three cues that they thought were most helpful for solving the question out of ten possible cues. Subsequently, participants were asked to complete a short fact sheet about themselves that should help future study participants to decide from whom they wanted to receive their cues for the quiz. This fact sheet was printed on paper and participants were reassured that this information would not be stored or linked to the data in the questionnaire. This first phase was the same for all participants to make them more familiar with the quiz and also to make the group work appear more real.

In Phase 2, participants were told that they would solve quiz questions themselves and could gain a bonus of CHF 1 (approximately US\$ 1) for every correct answer. To solve the questions, they would also receive helpful cues that were allegedly selected by a former participant of the study. Participants were presented with both the different and the similar hand-written profile (we randomized the handwriting of the two fact sheets between construal level conditions, see Appendix B for a scan of one of the versions of the material). In the low distance condition, participants were asked from whom of the two persons they wanted to receive the selected cues. In the high distance condition, they were asked to make this decision for a future participant of the study. Participants then evaluated the potential collaboration partners on items regarding warmth (warm, nice, friendly, and sincere) and competence (competent, confident, skillful, able; see Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *most*). The results on warmth and competence do not relate to our hypothesis and therefore will not be further reported in this manuscript. Next, participants were asked how much they would like to work with each collaboration partner on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) and then to make their choice between the potential collaboration partners (forced choice item and main dependent variable).

In Phase 3, participants solved three quiz questions themselves. Each question was presented with three cues. After answering these questions, participants were asked if it was desirable to work in a diverse team, if they thought diversity in teams was positive, if collaboration with diverse others leads to difficulties and if diversity in teams is easily implemented (adapted from Homan et al., 2010). All questions were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *do not agree*, 7 = *agree*). We also included a control question and asked participants for whom they had made their decision: for themselves, or for a future participant (forced choice item). At the end we assessed demographic variables such as gender, age, nationality, level of education, and field of study. Participants were debriefed and asked how carefully they had completed the questionnaire, if there was any reason not to use their data, and if they had further comments on the study. Participants were thanked and if applicable, received their bonus for correctly answered quiz questions.

5.2. Results

5.2.1. Choice behavior

Three participants did not complete the task of summarizing the text about diversity and were therefore excluded from the analysis. Our main variable of interest was participants' choice of collaboration partner. We thus calculated a χ^2-Test with social distance as the independent and decision of collaboration partner as the dependent variable. There was a significant association between construal level

and the choice of collaboration partner, $\chi^2 (1) = 6.36$, $p = .012$. When choosing for future participants (high distance) 63.8% of participants chose the dissimilar person as a collaboration partner, while when choosing for themselves (low distance) only 38.5% of participants chose to work with the dissimilar person. The odds of choosing the dissimilar person were 2.82 (95% CI [1.25, 6.39]) times higher for high distance participants compared to low distance participants.

5.2.2. Control questions

We asked participants for whom they had made the decision in the study's second part. Twenty-two participants failed to answer the forced-choice item correctly. Out of these, 21 participants were assigned to the high distance condition. Potentially this is because the control question was worded in a suboptimal manner, allowing for the pragmatic interpretation that we were interested in what participants would want when deciding for themselves, instead of what they actually did in the task. Nevertheless, we reran the χ^2-Test with distance as the independent and decision of collaboration partner as the dependent variable and excluded all participants that failed to complete the manipulation check correctly. The association between social distance and the choice of collaboration partner remained significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 7.05$, $p = .008$. When deciding for others, 69.2% of participants chose the dissimilar person as a collaboration partner, but when choosing for themselves, only 37.3% of participants chose the dissimilar person. Based on the odds ratio, the odds of choosing the dissimilar person were 3.79 (95% CI [1.38, 10.38]) times higher for high distance participants compared to low distance participants.

Participants also rated how much they would like to work with each of the two potential collaboration partners. As discussed before, we did not expect any differences, as the candidates were pretested for similar attractiveness. Results from a mixed ANOVA with distance as a between- and collaboration partner as a within-subject variable yielded no significant effect on willingness to collaborate, all Fs < 1.3.

5.2.3. Evaluation of diversity

Finally, we looked at participants' ratings regarding the desirability and feasibility of diversity. Average ratings on all four items did not differ between participants in the low and high distance condition, all $ts < |0.7|$. Averaging the two desirability and the two feasibility items, participants evaluated the desirability of diversity as more positive than its feasibility ($M_{desirable} = 5.85$, $SD = 0.90$; $M_{feasible} = 4.65$, $SD = 1.06$; $t (96) = 11.74$, $p < .001$ $d = 1.22$, 95% CI [0.96, 1.49]), which is in line with our theorizing, the results of Study 1, as well as the introductory text in Phase 1 of this study. The manipulation of social distance should not affect the ratings of diversity's desirability and feasibility, but instead the weighting of these concerns for subsequent decisions.

5.2.4. Evaluation of warmth and competence

In addition to the confirmatory analyses, we exploratorily investigated whether individuals differed in their ratings of the potential collaboration partners on warmth and competence. Paired sample t-tests revealed that participants rated the different person as significantly warmer ($M_{different} = 4.02$, $SD_{different} = 0.51$ and $M_{similar} = 3.76$, $SD_{similar} = 0.52$, $t(98) = 4.38$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.50$, 95% CI [0.27, 0.74]), however, ratings did not differ with regard to competence ($M_{different} = 3.85$, $SD_{different} = 0.45$ and $M_{similar} = 3.89$, $SD_{similar} = 0.52$, $t(98) = -0.71$, $p = .478$, $d = -0.08$, 95% CI [−0.30, 0.13]).

5.3. Discussion

Study 2 provides support for the notion that the preference for a collaboration partner depends on social distance. In particular, participants who chose a collaboration partner for another person were more likely to select the more different person, while participants who chose for themselves were more likely to select the person similar to

themselves. Although participants differed in their choices made, they did not differ in their general willingness to collaborate with the potential candidates and also not in their ratings of the potential candidates' competence, suggesting that the candidates did not differ in regards to overall attractiveness. Only when it comes to making a choice, desirability and feasibility were presumably weighed differently as a function of social distance. Study 2 also replicates Study 1 in showing that desirability of diversity is rated more positively compared to feasibility.

6. Study 3

Study 2 shows that the choice of a collaboration partner is influenced by social distance. In Study 3, we put this malleability of diversity preferences to another test. Here, we asked participants to build a team and offered them a range of possible candidates. The diversity of the resulting team served as the dependent variable and was analyzed against the background of our hypothesis that individuals build a more diverse team in conditions of social distance, but a less diverse team in conditions of social proximity.

6.1. Methods

6.1.1. Participants and design

As we assumed a small to medium effect size for the construal level manipulation and aimed for a power of .80 with an alpha error probability of 0.05, we calculated a required total sample size of 172 participants with G*Power3 (Faul et al., 2007). One hundred and sixty-nine individuals (144 females, 25 males; M_{age} = 21.54 years, SD = 3.93) participated in the study advertised as a study-package on "person perception." However, we excluded all participants from the analysis who indicated that their data should not be used (3 individuals). To control for uncontrolled variance due to the potential diversity of the study group, we also excluded those participants from the analysis who themselves would be part of the study group but didn't have the same nationality as any of the stimulus persons in our material (Swiss, German, Portuguese, or Italian). This exclusion resulted in a sample of 159 individuals (136 females, 23 males; 132 Swiss, 2 double nationality / Swiss and other, 18 German, 1 Italian, 1 Portuguese, plus 5 other nationalities in the condition where participants were not part of the group themselves; M_{age} = 21.47 years, SD = 3.83). According to a sensitivity power analysis, a minimal effect size of V = 0.05 could be detected under standard criteria (α = 0.05 two-tailed, power = 0.80). All participants were psychology students. The present study was the first of two studies that participants worked on; the second is independent of this project and not reported here. Participants received course credit for their participation. Participants were randomly assigned to a between-subjects-design, and were either asked to build a project group in which they themselves would participate (as a manipulation of low social distance) or not (higher social distance). The diversity of the resulting groups (with regards to gender, field of study, and country of origin of the groups' members) served as the dependent variable.

6.1.2. Methods and procedure

Participants were welcomed to the lab and gave informed consent. They read a short text (taken from the Pretest of Study 2, see Appendix A) about desirability and feasibility regarding diversity in work groups. On this page, the continue button occurred only after a delay of 15 s, to ensure that participants do not skip over the information displayed. Participants were then asked to briefly summarize the text's content. Next, participants were asked to imagine participating in a course in which small groups work on a project. This course would be held in English and would be open for students from various fields. The study groups should plan and work on an intervention project for an organization, which they would be presenting at the end of the semester.

The organization would then choose the most promising project and reward the group with a substantial amount of money. To manipulate social distance, we asked participants to either imagine being part of one of these study groups (low distance) or not (high distance). More specifically, participants were asked to choose two individuals with whom they would form a study group (low distance), versus three individuals, who would then form a study group on their own (high distance). To strengthen the manipulation, we asked participants to briefly summarize the task at hand.

Participants then saw an overview of the potential students of the course: 24 individuals were presented with an avatar (created with the website avatarmaker.com) and name (which allowed unambiguous inferences about gender: male versus female), their field of study (psychology, business, law, or medicine), and their country of origin (Switzerland, Germany, Italy, or Portugal). No further information regarding the candidates' qualifications was given. Participants could select the respective number of students (two or three) for the study group by clicking on the avatars. The set of options consisted of 24 students, 12 female/12 male; 12 Swiss/4 German/4 Italian/4 Portuguese; 12 psychology/4 medicine/4 law/4 business students. This setup was chosen to enable all participants (mostly Swiss and all studying psychology) to build a completely homogeneous team, no matter whether they were female or male, or whether they were part of the team (choosing two candidates only) or not (and choosing three candidates). Participants were then asked to briefly explain why they made these choices, how much they had considered their own willingness to work with the resulting group (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*), and whether the decision was made spontaneously or deliberatively (1 = *spontaneously*; 7 = *deliberatively*). As a control question we subsequently asked participants whether they had constructed a group with whom they themselves would collaborate or a group that would work without the participant (forced-choice item). Finally, demographics and carefulness of completion of the study were assessed and participants were thanked for their participation.

6.2. Results

6.2.1. Construction of the group

To analyze whether the resulting groups differed in diversity regarding gender, field of study, and country of origin, we calculated a blau index (Blau, 1977) to reflect variety for each of the three categorical variables. The blau index is calculated as $1 - \Sigma p_k^2$, where p represents the proportion of group members in the kth category. Its minimum is 0 (when all group members belong to the same category), whereas its maximum depends on the number of categories. The blau index reaches its maximum when group members are equally distributed across all categories. These blau indices of variety (z-standardized due to the different maximums) served as dependent variables in our MANOVA, with social distance (low versus high) as a between-subjects factor.

Pillai's trace indicates a significant effect of construal level on the diversity of the resulting group, V = 0.11, $F(3, 155)$ = 6.08, p = .001, η^2 = 0.11, 95% CI [0.02, 0.19]. In general, diversity was higher in groups that did not include the participants (high distance) compared to the groups in which participants imagined working with the group themselves (low distance). This was true for origin, $M_{high\ distance}$ = 0.30, SD = 0.85; $M_{low\ distance}$ = − 0.29, SD = 1.05; and field of study, $M_{high\ distance}$ = 0.19, SD = 0.93; $M_{low\ distance}$ = −0.17, SD = 1.04; and gender, $M_{high\ distance}$ = 0.05, SD = 0.93; $M_{low\ distance}$ = −0.05, SD = 1.06. Correlations between the three z-standardized outcome variables were as follows: $r_{origin\&gender}$ = 0.12, p = .128; $r_{origin\&study}$ = 0.17, p = .035; $r_{gender\&study}$ = −0.01, p = .935. Separate univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed only a significant effect for diversity regarding origin, $F(1, 153.66)$ = 15.23, p < .001, η^2 = 0.09, 95% CI [0.02, 0.18], and field of study, $F(1, 157)$ = 5.27, p = .023, η^2 = 0.03, 95% CI [0.00, 0.10], but not for gender, $F(1, 157)$ = 0.40, p = .530,

$\eta^2 = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.04].

Given our choice of materials, one could argue that only Swiss psychology students were able to build a completely homogenous team consisting of two or three other Swiss psychology students with the same gender. Participants who were not Swiss were by design not able to form a completely homogeneous team, which could have inflated the resulting diversity when being part of the team. However, a potential bias resulting from that constriction should have skewed the results in the opposite direction than our hypothesis. Taking this potential bias into account, our results can thus be seen as an even more conservative hypothesis test. Nevertheless, to control for this concern, we re-calculated the analysis, only including Swiss psychology students in both conditions. The MANOVA yields a significant result, $V = 0.12$, $F(3, 148) = 6.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.12$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.21].

6.2.2. Control question

Some participants failed to indicate correctly whether they would have joined the chosen group or not (low distance condition seven out of 82 and in the high distance condition 12 out of 77). If we exclude all participants that failed to answer the manipulation check correctly, the MANOVA still yields a significant result, $V = 0.11$, $F(3, 136) = 5.81$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.20].

6.2.3. Exploratory findings

Exploratorily, we also looked at the open comments in which participants indicated reasons for why they selected the respective participants into the group. Two independent raters coded every answer in regards to presence of desirability concerns regarding diversity (coded as 1; 0 otherwise) and feasibility concerns regarding diversity (coded as 1; 0 otherwise). The raters agreed in 81% of desirability ratings and 88% of feasibility ratings. Differences in ratings were discussed until agreement was reached. In general, participants were less likely to mention feasibility concerns compared to desirability concerns (28.3% compared to 81.1%). Participants in the self and the other condition were equally likely to mention desirability concerns (81.7% in the self-condition and 80.5% in the other-condition; $\chi^2 (1) = 0.04$, $p = .848$). Furthermore, participants in the low social distance condition were again equally likely to mention feasibility concerns compared to the high social distance condition (29.3% versus 27.3%; $\chi^2 (1) = 0.08$, $p = .780$).

Furthermore, we looked at between-group differences regarding how much individuals had considered their willingness to work with the resulting group, which could be interpreted as feasibility concern. Here, participants that selected members to form a group together (low distance), compared to participants that selected the full group without being part of it (high distance), described having more strongly considered whether they themselves would have liked to work with the group, $M = 5.89$, $SD = 1.32$; $M = 4.26$, $SD = 2.05$; $t(128.19) = 5.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.95$, 95% CI [0.62, 1.28]. The groups also differed in regards to their decision mode, in that low compared to high distance participants indicated to have chosen more deliberatively, $M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.31$; $M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.65$; $t(144.64) = 2.73$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.44$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.75].

6.3. Discussion

Study 3 provides support for the hypothesis that social distance does not only affect partner choices (as in Study 2), but also the composition of entire groups. More specifically, results show that participants who imagined putting together a group of three students created a more diverse group regarding students' field of study and country of origin. In contrast, participants who believed that they themselves would be part of the group created significantly less diverse groups. Participants that created the group for themselves compared to participants that created a separate group further described having more strongly considered whether they themselves would have liked to work with the group,

providing another hint for the validity of our initial argument: Diversity is a desirable state in general, but for themselves, individuals consider the smoothness of collaboration (feasibility) and therefore might prefer similar teammates.

We have chosen the present set-up of choosing team-members for oneself to mirror the fact that in real-life, group leaders usually assemble a team for themselves. The comparison condition—building a team without being a part of it—may be less intuitive at first sight, but closely resembles the situation HR managers or HR consultants are often in. Irrespective of its real-life prevalence, we think that the comparison condition may prove a powerful cognitive intervention strategy: merely imagining building a team for oneself versus others resulted in the documented results; perhaps it helps already if group leaders imagine selecting for someone else before they make a choice, in cases where they aim for increased diversity.

7. Study 4

Studies 2 and 3 asked participants to make decisions for themselves versus for another person as one way to manipulate social distance. While this manipulation creates a particular strong distance effect between conditions (the self is the zero point of psychological distance, compared to which others are psychologically quite distant), it comes with a confound: Deciding for oneself versus for another person does not only impact social distance, but may affect other variables, too, as discussed in the introduction. For instance, one could argue that participants find the outcome more important when it affects themselves versus another person. Whereas prior Construal Level Theory research suggests that there is no systematic relationship between the effects of psychological distance and measures of involvement (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 449), research focusing specifically on the distinction between self and other suggests that decision strategies and outcomes may differ in important ways (see e.g., Buehler et al., 1994; Polman & Emich, 2011; Pronin, 2008). Against this background, it appeared desirable to manipulate social distance a way that does not involve the self. Study 4 serves this goal by replicating the basic setup of Study 3, yet asking participants to assemble a team either for a friend (who we expect to be socially more close) or a stranger (who we expect to be socially more distant). Compared to the manipulation used in Study 3, this close-versus-distant-other manipulation forestalls potential confounds associated with the self-other-distinction inherent to Study 3. However, it comes with the cost that the spanned psychological distance is likely less pronounced than with distance manipulations that involve the self as in Study 3.

In addition, we designed Study 4 so as to test the suggested process, namely the differential weighing of desirability and feasibility concerns when assembling a team, as a function of psychological distance. In doing so, we can further test whether differences in participants' choices hinge on different levels of involvement. If those low compared to high in social distance are more involved, one could argue that they should process and weigh *all* concerns more strongly. In contrast, in line with our hypothesis, we expect that low compared to high social distance participants weigh feasibility more, and desirability concerns less.

We set up a first version of Study 4 and recruited psychology students only. This sample restriction was mandated by the specificities of the Study 3 materials, which allowed only psychology students to create both a fully homogeneous group as well as a diverse group. However, reaching the desired sample size was not possible in an acceptable time frame, which resulted in the termination of this first attempt. For full transparency, we provide all results from this first attempt in the Appendix C. Although these results are directionally consistent with our hypothesis, we caution readers to bear in mind the small sample size.

For the second attempt, we changed the study materials so that students irrespective of study subject can participate. We focus on this second attempt in what follows.

7.1. Methods

7.1.1. Participants and design

Based on the first round of data collection (see Appendix C), we assumed a small effect size of $f = 0.21$ for the social distance manipulation and aimed for a power of 0.80 with an alpha error probability of 0.05. Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007), we calculated a required total sample size of at least 218 participants. Two hundred and twenty-seven individuals (139 females, 88 males; $M_{age} = 23.27$ years, $SD = 3.66$) participated via tablets in the university's seminar rooms.

Three participants were excluded from the analysis as they asked for the exclusion of their data; five participants failed to complete the manipulation attention check as they did not correctly identify the condition they were assigned to (see below). The resulting sample consists of 219 participants. According to a sensitivity power analysis a minimal effect size of $f = 0.2$ could be detected under standard criteria ($\alpha = 0.05$ two-tailed, power = –0.80). Participants received a snack or course credit for participation. Participants were randomly assigned to a between-subjects-design, where they were either asked to make a decision for a close friend (low social distance) or for a stranger (high social distance). This manipulation is a weaker adaptation from the original version used in Studies 2 and 3 (based on Lu et al., 2013). Diversity in the group regarding its four members' faculties as well as gender (including the friend or stranger) served as first set of dependent variables. The extent to which participants weighed desirability and feasibility concerns when making their decision served as second set of dependent variables and potential mediators.

7.1.2. Methods and procedure

Participants were welcomed and gave informed consent. Next, they read the short text about desirability and feasibility regarding diversity in work groups (see Appendix A). On this page, the continue button occurred only after a delay of 15 s, to ensure that participants do not skip over the information displayed. Participants were then asked to briefly summarize the text's content. Then participants were asked to imagine that their university would organize an applied course, in which students would work independently on different projects. To this end, participants would be working in groups of four to plan a project. The best project work would receive a prize, and as a result, all students would be very motivated to team up successfully. To manipulate social distance, we asked participants to either imagine that a close friend (low distance) versus a stranger (high distance) would be participating in the seminar. Participants were asked to briefly describe the person they imagined and to indicate the university faculty this person belonged to (one of seven) as well as the person's gender.

In a next step, participants were asked with whom the stimulus person (friend versus stranger) should ideally collaborate in the course. Participants then saw a display of 18 potential students, represented by avatars that differed in gender (nine female, nine male; no further systematic differences were visible). Participants also saw each student's name, her/his age (varying from 20 to 25 to reflect the average age range of students at the university), and faculty (six from the faculty that the friend or stranger belonged to, and two of each of the other six faculties at the university). Participants were asked to select three students for the study group by clicking on the avatars. This setup was chosen to ensure that participants can build both a completely homogeneous versus a diverse team on the two dimensions gender and faculty.

Participants were then asked to briefly explain why they had chosen these particular students and how much they had considered their own willingness to work with the resulting group (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*). Moreover, participants indicated to what extent they had considered two desirability concerns (that diverse teams would be fair and desirable from a societal perspective and that diversity in teams could lead to better outcomes), and two feasibility concerns (that collaboration with very different persons can lead to difficulties and that

similarity in teams can increase efficient collaboration). The consideration of desirability and feasibility concerns was rated on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very strongly*).

As a manipulation attention check, we asked participants whether their task had been to construct a group for a close friend versus a stranger (forced choice item). Furthermore, we exploratorily asked participants whether they had thought about a real versus a hypothetical person (forced choice item). Finally, demographics, carefulness of completion of the study, and reasons for not using participants' data in the analyses were assessed and participants were thanked for their participation.

7.2. Results

7.2.1. Construction of the group

To analyze whether the resulting groups differed in diversity regarding gender and faculty, we calculated a blau index (Blau, 1977) to reflect variety for each of the two categorical variables. These indices of variety (z-standardized due to the different maximums) served as dependent variables in a MANOVA, with social distance (low versus high) as between-subjects factor.

Pillai's trace indicates no significant effect of construal level on the diversity of the resulting group, $V = 0.00$, $F(2, 216) = 0.44$, $p = .646$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.03]. In general, there was no clear pattern whether diversity was higher in groups created for a stranger (high distance) compared to the groups created for a close friend (low distance). The respective means and standard deviations are for faculty, $M_{high\ distance} = 0.06$, $SD = 0.98$; $M_{low\ distance} = -0.06$, $SD = 1.02$; and for gender, $M_{high\ distance} = -0.02$, $SD = 1.05$; $M_{low\ distance} = 0.02$, $SD = 0.95$. Separate univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed no significant effect of condition on diversity regarding faculty or gender, all $Fs < 0.75$.
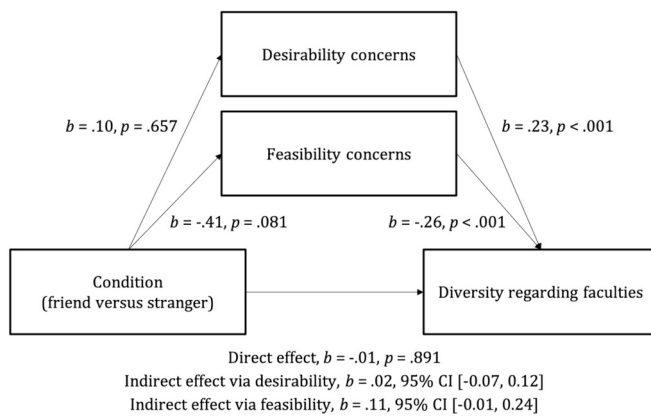
7.2.2. Desirability and feasibility concerns

To test underlying processes, we analyzed between-group differences regarding how much individuals had weighed desirability and feasibility concerns when making decisions. We calculated a mean across the weights given to the two desirability concerns ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.63$, $r_{items} = 0.47$), and a mean across the weights given to the two feasibility concerns ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.75$, $r_{items} = 0.69$). These means were subjected to two independent Welch Two Sample t-tests. No difference occurred for desirability concerns, $M_{friend} = 4.19$, $SD = 1.60$; $M_{stranger} = 4.28$, $SD = 1.65$; $t(216.63) = -0.45$, $p = .657$, $d = -0.06$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.31]. However, for feasibility concerns, there is a tendency that participants weighted feasibility more strongly in the friend compared to the stranger condition: $M_{friend} = 4.09$, $SD = 1.74$; $M_{stranger} = 3.67$, $SD = 1.73$; $t(217) = 1.75$, $p = .081$, $d = 0.24$, 95% CI [−0.03, 0.50].

Although a full mediation model often asks for an association between the independent on the dependent variable, we proceeded with the planned analyses and tested whether the impact of condition and diversity of the team is mediated by weighting of desirability versus feasibility concerns, using PROCESS for SPSS (Hayes, 2017). In both models, condition served as predictor variable and desirability and feasibility concerns as mediators. Diversity regarding faculty or diversity regarding gender were the dependent variables. Fig. 1 shows that although statistically not significant, there was a tendency of feasibility concerns mediating the effect of condition on diversity regarding faculty, $b = 0.11$, 95% BCa CI [−0.01, 0.24], *Sobel test* $z = 1.71$, $p = .088$.

Fig. 2 shows that there was no significant indirect effect of condition on diversity regarding gender neither through desirability concerns, $b = 0.01$, 95% BCa CI [−0.04, 0.08], *Sobel test* $z = 0.41$, $p = .679$, nor feasibility concerns, $b = -0.03$, 95% BCa CI [−0.12, 0.00], *Sobel test* $z = -1.13$, $p = .260$.

Consistent with our theorizing, it should be noted that weighing

Fig. 1. Condition as a predictor of diversity regarding faculties, mediated by weight assigned to desirability and feasibility concerns. The confidence interval for this indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI on 5000 samples.
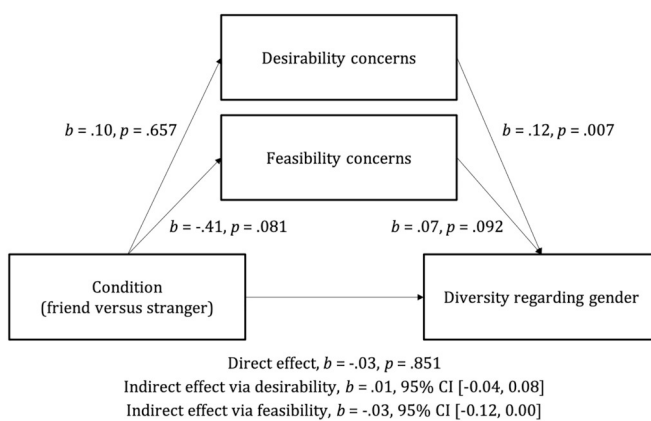
Fig. 2. Condition as a predictor of diversity regarding gender, mediated by weight assigned to desirability and feasibility concerns. The confidence interval for this indirect effect is a BCa bootstrapped CI on 5000 samples.

desirability more strongly positively predicted diversity with regard to both faculty and gender. Furthermore, weighing feasibility more strongly negatively predicted diversity with regard to faculty (see also Figs. 1 and 2).

7.2.3. Exploratory analyses

For exploratory purposes, we looked at between-group differences regarding how much individuals had considered their willingness to work with the resulting group and their decision mode. Interestingly, participants that selected group members for a close friend (low distance), compared to participants that selected group members for a stranger (high distance), reported a tendency to having considered their own preferences to a lesser extent, $M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.91$; $M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.99$; $t(216.44) = -1.79$, $p = .075$, $d = -0.24$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.50].

7.3. Discussion

Study 4 was designed to replicate Study 3 using a different manipulation of social distance by asking participants to decide for a friend (low distance) or a stranger (high distance). This setup was chosen to overcome a potential confound inherent to the manipulation adapted from Lu et al. (2013), namely that deciding for oneself might be more important than deciding for others. Furthermore, Study 4 aimed to shed light on the processes that drive diversity choices, namely desirability and feasibility concerns.

Results of Study 4 are not consistent with those of the previous two studies, but nevertheless provide further insight and partial support for some of our hypotheses. In particular, different from the previous studies, no significant association between condition (deciding for a friend versus stranger) and the diversity of the resulting team in regards to faculty and/or gender was observed. Potentially, this is because the adapted social distance manipulation in Study 4 was not strong enough. As the self is considered the zero point of psychological distance, a strong distance effect can emerge when thinking about other individuals (Study 3). This distance effect is comparably smaller when the comparison focuses on two other persons only, in our case: a friend and a stranger. Independent of Construal Level Theory, one could argue that differences in importance between decisions for oneself versus others are not a confound but a necessary ingredient driving differences in diversity preferences.

While the distance manipulation may not have been strong enough to affect *behavior*, there is some support that it guided underlying processes in the predicted way. In particular, consistent with hypotheses, there is a (non-significant) tendency that participants weigh feasibility concerns more strongly for a friend compared to stranger. There was no differential weighing of desirability concerns, potentially reflecting that participants did not want to give the impression that they disagree with the arguably strong pro-diversity norms in the introductory text (see Appendix A). Interestingly, Study 4 also shows a tendency for an indirect effect between social distance and diversity regarding faculties of the group members through feasibility concerns. Furthermore, the results show that weighing desirability more strongly positively predicted diverse team choices whereas weighing feasibility aspects more strongly negatively predicted diverse team choices, thus corroborating the hypothesized link between desirability/feasibility weighing and diversity choices.

8. General discussion

This manuscript investigates how social distance modulates preference for diversity. Study 1 provides support for the notion that individuals perceive diversity as desirable but have concerns about its feasibility. Study 2 shows that participants were very willing to choose a dissimilar collaboration partner for others, but when choosing for themselves, they rather preferred to work with a similar other. Study 3 indicates that this is not only the case when choosing a single person to work with, but also when composing a project group for a seminar course. Here, too, individuals established a more diverse group when they themselves were not part of it (socially distant), and a less diverse group when they themselves would need to work together with the other persons (socially close). Study 4 set out to replicate Study 3 with a weaker manipulation of social distance that does not confound distance with self/other decision making. Contrary to expectations, an unsystematic pattern of results was observed, perhaps reflecting an unsuccessful, or at least the weaker manipulation of social distance. Perhaps this finding also suggests that the self is a necessary ingredient to the general notion that individuals choose diversity primarily for others. Study 4 further sheds light on potential underlying processes when creating groups, showing that participants weighed feasibility concerns more strongly for a friend compared to stranger.

In this manuscript we investigated two perspectives on diversity: one that focuses on the desirability of diversity, and one that focuses on feasibility concerns. Previous research provides support for both perspectives: diversity may increase creativity and performance due to the pluralism of perspectives and knowledge, but may also hinder collaboration processes, as subgroups may form, communication may be limited, or conflicts may occur (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). To our knowledge, this contribution is first to integrate these divergent findings by suggesting that the differential weighting of desirability versus feasibility concerns is key. Our results indicate that both desirability and feasibility concerns are predictive for the group's resulting diversity, in opposite ways: preferentially weighing desirability

concerns leads to the composition of a more diverse group, whereas preferentially weighing feasibility concerns leads to the composition of a more homogeneous group. Based on Construal Level Theory we argue that depending on psychological distance, and more specifically social distance, individuals are more likely to focus on desirability versus feasibility aspects. When deciding for others (socially distant), individuals focus on the desirability of a diverse group. But when deciding for oneself (socially close), different aspects of diversity come into focus such as feasibility concerns. Therefore, depending on the person that will be impacted by the decision, a more different or more similar candidate may be preferred as a team member. Our results offer support for this hypothesis and provide a first stepping stone by showing that especially feasibility concerns could serve as a process variable.

8.1. Self/other decision making discrepancies

Study 4 was conducted to rule out self/other decision making as an alternative account. Given that Study 4 offered mixed results, it seems that the observed diversity patterns might be explained by other mechanisms in addition to (or eventually even instead of) psychological distance alone. The self/other account rests on findings that individuals tend to act differently when deciding for themselves versus another person. Stone, Choi, de Bruin, and Mandel (2013), for example, show that in physical safety scenarios (where risk aversion is valued or eventually considered as desirable), individuals make more risk averse decisions for others than for themselves, while in relationship scenarios (where risk taking is valued or eventually considered as desirable), they make more risk-taking decisions for others than for themselves.

Research further shows that advisers (who make choices for someone else to a certain degree) are more likely to be influenced by idealistic considerations or desirability concerns, while choosers (who make choices for oneself) are more likely to be influenced by pragmatic considerations or feasibility concerns (Danziger, Montal, & Barkan, 2012, who, however, also base their theorizing on Construal Level Theory). Consequently, the difference between a setting of giving advice (deciding for somebody else) versus choosing for oneself could also be a fruitful account to explain the findings in this manuscript, without building on Construal Level Theory alone. In summary, there seems to be consistent evidence that desirability and feasibility concerns are important in diversity choice, but to what extent their differential weighing depends on processes suggested by Construal Level Theory, or processes characteristic of self-other decision making, awaits further research.

Irrespective of the specific underlying process, this manuscript offers an innovative perspective on the mismatch between aspirations of organizations regarding diversity, and the reality of homogeneous management teams as well as governmental interventions to increase the percentage rates of underrepresented groups. This perspective is based on a psychological argument and focuses on how managers, HR decision makers, and - more generally speaking - individuals think of the concept of diversity and that their thoughts might strongly differ when they make a decision for themselves compared to another person. It allows for both theoretical and practical considerations, which we detail below.

8.2. Theoretical considerations on desirability and feasibility

In this research we focus on the mismatch between often claimed aspirations regarding diversity and the reality in work groups. We show that individuals generally rate the desirability of diversity higher as its feasibility and that concerns differ when making decisions for the self versus for other persons. Future research could deep-dive into desirability and feasibility concerns and investigate their specific set-up. Do individuals perceive that diversity leads to innovation? Is diversity morally desirable? Or is it simply undesirable to appear prejudiced?

What do feasibility concerns relate to: communication, conflict, or subgroup formation? Furthermore, feasibility concerns could also refer to situational variables (in addition to the process variables mentioned above). Although our studies controlled for situational variables by offering potential candidates that were similar as well as different, practitioners might simply find it less feasible to *find* different candidates that might increase the diversity of a group. These feasibility concerns could be more important for some areas than others, however, they might also be strong drivers for differences in the resulting groups.

Another interesting question concerns the exact mechanisms regarding the integration and differential weighing of feasibility and desirability aspects when making diversity-related decisions. Throughout our studies with mostly student samples, we assumed that participants would principally agree on the desirability of diversity. However, there might be groups where other norms apply. One could therefore investigate whether the resulting pattern in choices eventually flips when investigating individuals who value diversity to a lesser degree.

8.3. Theoretical considerations on (perceived) diversity

When talking about the diversity, it is important to not only look at the objective diversity of a group, but also to investigate individuals' *perceptions* regarding diversity. Although Cunningham (2007) shows a reliable correlation between objective and perceived diversity, it is the *perceived diversity* that may lead to subgroup formation (Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007b) and therefore impact an individual's preference for diversity. Future research could therefore investigate whether the impact of self-other decision making and/or psychological distance on choices is mediated via differential perception of a team's diversity. One could speculate that individuals perceive themselves as unique and when bringing this uniqueness to a group, they consider the group as diverse. Therefore, more homogeneous team members can be selected for oneself compared to a stranger. In contrast to this speculation, however, previous research has shown that an abstract construal level could also lead to more stereotyping as broader categories such as gender might become more salient (McCrea et al., 2012). Based on this account, deciding for others might increase perceptions of diversity in a group. Further research may fruitfully focus on perceptions of diversity, which might impact individuals' choices when assembling new groups.

Future research could also investigate how different attributes such as gender, origin, faculty, but also differences in (ascribed) personality might impact perceived diversity and respective choices. Based on research in the realm of interpersonal attraction, one could assume that certain attributes might be more strongly guiding decisions when individuals adopt a more abstract compared to concrete mindset. Research for example shows that when judging the abstract attractiveness of a potential partner (compared to judging the concrete attractiveness of a current partner), individuals use different cues (see Eastwick, Finkel, & Eagly, 2011; Eastwick, Luchies, Finkel, & Hunt, 2014; Park, Young, & Eastwick, 2015). Furthermore, different attributes could also lead to an increase or decrease of perceived diversity, which then in turn might motivate individuals to search for more different or similar team members.

8.4. Theoretical considerations on construal level and psychological distance

Guided by the fact that companies claim to put diversity first, but apparently act differently when individuals hire other individuals, all studies presented in this manuscript varied social distance as means to manipulate psychological distance. Interestingly, Construal Level Theory posits three other dimensions of psychological distance, namely spatial distance, temporal distance, and hypotheticality, and purports that all distances work in tandem (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Against

this background, one could speculate that similar findings might be obtained when other distances are manipulated, too, which may help to address one potential alternative explanation for the present findings: In particular, one could hypothesize that individuals prefer similarity for themselves because they think it is advantageous, and choose diversity for others to hinder their performance, a tendency that could be summarized as a selfishness bias. Given the setup of our studies, we do not think that such a selfishness bias was a driving force; nevertheless, if one wanted to definitely rule out such a possibility, one way could be to manipulate temporal or spatial instead of social distance.

8.5. Practical considerations

Our results suggest that attitudes towards diversity generally reflect high levels of desirability, at least in the populations we sampled from. If this finding generalizes to other populations, why do diversity managers concentrate on making diversity as a concept even more desirable by implementing glossy marketing campaigns? Alternatively, they could focus on reducing the weight of feasibility concerns in the here-and-now. The present results highlight that reducing the weight of feasibility concerns could increase the chances that when being in a psychologically close situation of making a choice between two candidates, the different person stands a chance of being chosen, too. If an organization strives to increase diversity, it could try to influence the focus of the respective decision makers in the situations in which they make hiring or promotion decisions. This aim could be achieved by increasing the social distance of the decision maker towards the people who will work with the respective candidates. Decisions, for example,

could be made by or (when aiming for a less drastic intervention) jointly with a non-involved manager or HR person. Alternatively, the manager in charge could be advised to think about the decision as making recommendations for somebody outside of the team. Furthermore, providing a decision protocol that requires managers to ask desirability related questions could increase the weight given to these aspects, which might then overweigh feasibility concerns when interviewing a dissimilar applicant.

9. Conclusion

The present findings suggest that individuals' preference for diversity depends on social distance. When deciding for themselves and being socially proximate, individuals prefer to work with similar others. However, when deciding for others and thus being socially distant, individuals are more likely to show an increased preference for diversity. This manuscript provides support for the existence of this differential choice pattern and allows for first conclusions about mitigation measures to achieve the aim of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Acknowledgments

Appendix A. Translation of the text provided in Studies 2, 3, and 4

In work life, more and more tasks are being performed in teams, while simultaneously the workforce in companies is becoming more and more diverse. Therefore, in psychology, researchers are interested in group work and diversity in work groups. Within this context, research especially focuses on the effects of team composition on group performance.

Diversity is in any case an important and especially desirable attribute of teams. For the sake of fairness, all persons – regardless of age, gender, nationality, or background – should have the same chance of getting a job and a place in a team. Theories even say that teams can benefit from differences in regard of age, gender, nationality, and background – Diversity can broaden everyone's horizons within a team.

In applied settings it appears that collaboration in diverse groups requires a bit more time, as potential misunderstandings need to be clarified before the group can work on delivering concrete results. When group members introduce very different ideas due to their different backgrounds, it is often very time-consuming and hard to agree on a certain procedure and way of working. Additionally, differences can lead to subgroup formation within a group and therefore to information not being shared with all group members.

Appendix B. Exemplary version of the profiles in Study 2

Appendix C

In a first attempt, we recruited only psychology students for Study 4. Unfortunately, the required sample size could not be reached. We therefore stopped the first attempt and slightly changed the setup of the study to allow students from all faculties to participate. The second attempt to collect the data was successful and is reported as Study 4. However, for full transparency, we present the method and results section of the first attempt in this Appendix C. Please note that the power of this first study attempt is too small to draw conclusions

C.1. Methods

C.1.1. Participants and design

We collected data from 110 participants in the lab and via their own laptops within a lecture (87 female, 22 male, 1 no information, M_{age} = 21.97 years, SD = 2.67).

From this sample we had to exclude one participant that asked us not to use his or her data and another 27 students as they had indicated having participated in a similar study. Furthermore, one participant failed to complete the attention check for the manipulation, meaning that he or she did not correctly identify the assigned condition (see below). The resulting sample consists of 81 participants. According to a sensitivity power analysis a minimal effect size of f = 0.37 (a medium to large effect) could be detected under standard criteria (α = 0.05 two-tailed, power = 0.80). Participants received course credit for their participation or could join a lottery for vouchers for online retail stores. Participants were randomly assigned to a between-subjects-design, where participants were either asked to make a decision for a close friend (a manipulation of low social distance) or for a stranger (a manipulation of higher social distance). This manipulation is an adaptation from the original version used in Studies 2 and 3 (based on Lu et al., 2013). Diversity in regards to the three selected persons' gender, field of study, and origin served as first set of dependent variables. Furthermore, the extent to which participants weighed desirability and feasibility concerns when making their decision served as second set of dependent variables and potential mediators.

C.1.2. Methods and procedure

Participants were welcomed and gave informed consent. Participants read the short text about desirability and feasibility regarding diversity in work groups (see Appendix A). On this page, the continue button occurred only after a delay of 15 s, to ensure that participants do not skip over the information displayed. Participants were then asked to briefly summarize the text's content. Next, participants were asked to imagine that their the faculty of psychology would organize an applied course, in which students would work independently on different projects. To this end, participants would be working in groups of four to plan a project. The best project work would receive a prize, and students would be very motivated to team up successfully. To manipulate social distance, we asked participants to either imagine that their close friend (low distance) versus a stranger (high

distance) would be participating in the seminar. They were asked to briefly describe the person they imagined.

In a next step, participants then learned that that we were interested in their opinion with whom the stimulus person (friend versus stranger) should collaborate for this course. Participants then saw the same display of potential students used in Study 3. Participants could select three students for the study group by clicking on the avatars. Participants were then asked to briefly explain why they made these choices and how much they had considered their own willingness to work with the resulting group when building them (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*). Importantly, in Study 4 we asked participants to what extent they had considered two desirability concerns (that diverse teams would be fair and desirable from a societal perspective and that diversity in teams could lead to better outcomes), and two feasibility concerns (that collaboration with very different persons can lead to difficulties and that similarity in teams can increase efficient collaboration). The consideration of desirability and feasibility concerns was rated on 7-point Liker scales (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very strongly*).

As a manipulation attention check, we asked participants whether their task had been to construct a group for a close friend versus a stranger (forced choice item). Furthermore, we exploratorily asked participants whether they had thought about a real versus a hypothetical person (forced choice item). We also asked participants about the gender, nationality, and field of study of the person they had thought of, but participants could also indicate that they had not thought about these aspects at all (especially relevant for participants in the stranger condition). Finally, demographics, carefulness of completion of the study, and reasons for not using participants' data in the analyses were assessed. Importantly, we also asked participants whether they had previously participated in a similar study to avoid analyzing data from a student that had participated in one of the previous studies.

C.2. Results

C.2.1. Construction of the group

To analyze whether the resulting groups differed in diversity regarding gender, field of study, and country of origin, we calculated a blau index (Blau, 1977) to reflect variety for each of the three categorical variables. These measures of variety (z-standardized due to the different maximums) served as dependent variables in our MANOVA, with social distance (low versus high) as a between-subjects factor.

Pillai's trace indicates no significant effect of construal level on the diversity of the resulting group, $V = 0.03$, $F(3, 77) = 0.84$, $p = .475$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.11]. In general, there was no clear pattern whether diversity was higher in groups created for a stranger (high distance) compared to the groups created for a close friend (low distance). The respective means and standard deviations are for gender, $M_{high\ distance} = 0.09$, $SD = 0.92$; $M_{low\ distance} = -0.08$, $SD = 1.08$; and for origin, $M_{high\ distance} = -0.13$, $SD = 1.09$; $M_{low\ distance} = 0.12$, $SD = 0.91$; and for field of study, $M_{high\ distance} = 0.11$, $SD = 0.87$; $M_{low\ distance} = -0.10$, $SD = 1.11$. Separate univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed no significant effect of condition on diversity regarding faculty, origin, or gender, all $Fs < 1.28$. However, we do find a (not significant) trend that at least in regards to gender and field of study, participants did create a more diverse group for a stranger than for a friend. We therefore focus on these two variables in Study 4.

C.2.2. Desirability and feasibility concerns

To test underlying processes, we analyzed between-group differences regarding how much individuals had weighed desirability and feasibility concerns when making decisions. We calculated a mean across the weights given to the two desirability concerns ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.45$, $r_{items} = 0.48$), and a mean across the weights given to the two feasibility concerns ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.48$, $r_{items} = 0.49$). These means were subjected to two Independent Sample t-tests. No difference occurred for desirability concerns, $M_{friend} = 4.63$, $SD = 1.50$; $M_{stranger} = 4.97$, $SD = 1.39$; $t(79) = -1.07$, $p = .289$, $d = -0.24$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.66]. However, for feasibility concerns, participants weighted feasibility significantly more strongly in the friend compared to the stranger condition: $M_{friend} = 3.95$, $SD = 1.50$; $M_{stranger} = 2.97$, $SD = 1.29$; $t(79) = 3.14$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.70$, 95% CI [0.25, 1.15].

Although a full mediation model often asks for an association between the independent on the dependent variable, we proceeded with the planned analyses and tested whether the impact of condition and diversity of the team is mediated by weighting of desirability versus feasibility concerns, using PROCESS for SPSS (Hayes, 2017). In all of the three models, condition served as predictor variable and desirability and feasibility concerns as mediators. Diversity regarding gender, origin, and field of study were the dependent variables. We find no significant indirect effect of condition on diversity regarding gender through desirability concerns, $b = 0.17$, 95% BCa CI [−0.11, 0.83], *Sobel test z* = 0.88, $p = .381$, or feasibility concerns, $b = 0.20$, 95% BCa CI [−0.35, 1.03], *Sobel test z* = 0.74, $p = .459$. The same applies for diversity regarding origin, where we find no significant indirect effect of condition on diversity regarding origin through desirability concerns, $b = 0.04$, 95% BCa CI [−0.02, 0.20], *Sobel test z* = 0.70, $p = .482$, or feasibility concerns, $b = 0.12$, 95% BCa CI [0.00, 0.34], *Sobel test z* = 1.30, $p = .195$. Furthermore, no indirect effects are present for diversity regarding field of study, where we find no significant indirect effect of condition on diversity regarding field of study through desirability concerns, $b = 0.08$, 95% BCa CI [−0.04, 0.36], *Sobel test z* = 0.95, $p = .340$, or feasibility concerns, $b = −0.02$, 95% BCa CI [−0.21, 0.10], *Sobel test z* = −0.22, $p = .827$.

C.2.3. Exploratory analyses

For exploratory purposes, we looked at between-group differences regarding how much individuals had considered their willingness to work with the resulting group and their decision mode. In general, participants that selected members to form a group for a close friend (low distance), compared to participants that selected the group for a stranger (high distance), did not differ in regards to how much they had considered their own preferences, $M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.86$; $M = 3.87$, $SD = 2.09$; $t(79) = 0.75$, $p = .940$, $d = 0.17$, 95% CI [−0.27, 0.61].

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