A Model for Understanding Positive Intergroup Relations Using the In-Group-Favoring Norm

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We present a model of intergroup relations focused on the role of the in-group-favoring norm as capable of facilitating positive intergroup relations. We begin by defining the in-group-favoring norm and describing how it affects self-evaluations and evaluations of out-group members. We then outline how positive intergroup relations may result via the implementation of specific techniques fundamental to the in-group-favoring norm, including emphasizing the value of interactions with the out-group, establishing cooperative intergroup norms, and establishing superordinate goals. In so doing, we discuss how classic moderators of intergroup relations, including leadership, guilt, and in-group norms are facilitators of positive intergroup relations once in-group interests are considered.

Considerable research has proposed that group norms are primarily responsible for an array of intergroup atrocities ranging from terrorism (Louis & Taylor, 2002), racial discrimination, and segregation (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005), to warfare (Cohen, Montoya, & Insko, 2006). Whereas such accounts emphasize the negative consequences of group norms, the goal of this article is to specify and describe a model of intergroup relations based on a group-level norm that can explain not only negative, but also positive, intergroup outcomes. More specifically, we elaborate on how the in-group-favoring norm can produce both negative and positive evaluations of, and behavior toward, in-group and out-group members. In this article, we begin by discussing the definition, origin, and defining characteristics of the in-group-favoring norm. Second, we

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outline different strategies for how the in-group-favoring norm can be harnessed to facilitate more positive intergroup relations.

**What Is the In-Group-Favoring Norm?**

The in-group-favoring norm is a group-level norm that motivates and orients behavior in the intragroup and intergroup context by directing group members to first consider the interests of the in-group. Tajfel (1970) was among the first to propose the existence of such a norm. Specifically, Tajfel originally interpreted the intergroup competitiveness observed in the early minimal group studies as deriving from a learned “generic norm” that dictates that a group member “act in a manner that discriminates against the out-group and favors the in-group” (pp. 98–99). Years later, Rabbie and Lodewijkx (1994) similarly proposed that in-group favoritism developed from a normative in-group schema that includes beliefs that the in-group’s needs should precede the out-group’s needs.

The in-group-favoring norm has been hypothesized to be a result of evolutionary processes. According to this view, living in a group context offered humans a survival advantage via shared resources, common defense from outsiders, and communal child-rearing (Caporael & Brewer, 1991). Given this evolutionary landscape, individuals adhered to group norms and supported the group’s interests to avoid the reputation as a free rider and rejection from the group (Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998; Yamagishi & Mifune, 2008), either of which would lower inclusive fitness. From this perspective, norms developed as a means by which fitness is maximized by ensuring the fulfillment of basic survival needs (Kameda, Takezawa, & Hastie, 2005). Consistent with this evolutionary analysis, researchers have proposed that the norm to consider the interests of their group members was
an adaptation that not only maximized group members’ fitness, but also fostered harmonious intragroup relations and enhanced the viability of the group as a whole (Montoya & Pittinsky, 2013).

**Defining Characteristics of the In-Group-Favoring Norm**

We begin by outlining the defining characteristics of an in-group-favoring norm-based approach to intergroup relations, specifically, (i) the norm’s operation on mere group membership, (ii) how the norm can predict self-evaluations in the intergroup context, and (iii) the ability of the norm to account for positive and negative intergroup relations.

*Fundamental to Group Membership*

An in-group-favoring norm-based approach submits that mere categorization activates generalized expectations that bias group members’ evaluations and behavior in favor of the in-group. Campbell (1958) was the first to propose that any one of several intragroup characteristics, including similarity, common fate, and propinquity, was sufficient to generate the experience of “groupness.” Importantly, such group membership is also sufficient to facilitate cooperation among in-group members (e.g., Brewer & Kramer, 1986; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998) and instigate favoritism toward fellow in-group members (Gaertner, Iuzzini, Witt, & Oriña, 2006). Similarly, Wilder (1986) described a processes by which on exposure to the group, individuals follow a “social script” that dictates that they are to favor the in-group. Hertel and Kerr (2001) also proposed that in-group scripts are activated by mere group membership and dictates that group members are to favor the in-group (Kerr & Hertel, 1998, as cited in Hertel & Kerr, 2001). These views are also consistent with Yamagishi et al.’s (1998) “group heuristic,” which states that there is a group-level rule that becomes active “by default” in the mere presence of the group and states that group members should be willing to interact and freely exchange goods and outcomes with fellow group members.

Laboratory evidence supports the view that the in-group-favoring norm becomes active once the group context becomes salient. Walton, Cohen, Cwir, and Spencer (2012), for instance, found that “mere belonging” to a group produced motivation to complete group-relevant goals. Montoya and Pittinsky (2008) went further to demonstrate that the in-group-favoring norm and group membership—and not the degree to which a group member identified with the group—predicted behavior in the intragroup and intergroup context.

Interestingly, activation of the in-group-favoring norm may even occur in even more minimal intergroup conditions than proposed by Tajfel (1970), such as those described in the literature on implicit partisanship (Greenwald, Pickrell, & Farnham, 2002; Pinter & Greenwald, 2004). Pinter and Greenwald (2011),
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for instance, revealed that simply asking participants to memorize the names of people assigned to their same group category resulted in greater attraction and biased monetary allocations, with these effects having similar magnitude as those observed with traditional group categorization-induction techniques.

In-Group-Favoring Norm Adherence Predicts Self-Evaluations

A model of intergroup relations based on the in-group-favoring norm outlines predictions regarding how a group member evaluates himself/herself. Specifically, other peoples’ approval and acceptance is considered to be an important source of self-esteem (e.g., Leary & Baumeister, 2000), and one critical determinant of acceptance is whether a group member adheres to the norms of the group. Yamagishi and Mifune (2008) forwarded a similar view, proposing that evaluations of in-group members result from determining whether they adhered to and supported the in-group’s norms. In line with this reasoning, Leary, Cottrell, and Philips (2001) proposed that being a good group member was the key to sustaining one’s self-esteem.

The link between self-esteem, norm adherence, and in-group acceptance is supported by both experimental (e.g., Leary et al., 2001) and correlational (Postmes & Branscombe, 2002) research. Vickers, Abrams, and Hogg (1988), for example, demonstrated that participants who followed an in-group’s cooperative norm in a minimal group context reported higher self-esteem than those who did not follow the norm. Alternatively, Vickers et al. (1985, as cited in Abrams & Hogg, 1988) reported that group members experienced lower self-esteem when they violated a cooperative intergroup norm.

In addition, research on stigmatized groups indicates that self-esteem is maintained by in-group acceptance despite negative comparisons with other groups. For instance, although there may be a negative perception of African Americans by non-African Americans, African Americans tend to have higher self-esteem compared to their non-African American counterparts (Gray-Little & Haf Dahl, 2000). One possible explanation for these findings comes from Postmes and Branscombe (2002), who in a study of in-group and out-group acceptance among African American participants, found that in-group acceptance ameliorated the adverse consequences of stigmatization. Such findings are consistent with theorizing regarding the in-group-favoring norm, such that being accepted by one’s group is critical to one’s self-esteem, and provides a separate pathway to self-esteem maintenance independent of intergroup comparisons.

In-Group-Favoring Norm Predicts Out-Group Behavior

Although the in-group-favoring norm has been repeatedly invoked to justify conflict and antagonism toward out-groups (e.g., Spini, Elcheroth, & Fasel, 2008),
closer inspection of the various definitions of the in-group-favoring norm indicates that the norm does not necessarily promote out-group antagonism. Whereas Tajfel’s (1970) defined his “generic norm” as dictating that group members favor the in-group by both biasing behavior toward the in-group and by discriminating against out-groups, Rabbie and Lodewijkx’s (1994) definition only proposed favoritism for the in-group. Wildschut et al. (2002) defined the in-group-favoring norm similarly, stating that group members “should take into account the interest of one’s own group before taking into account the interests of other groups” (p. 977). Importantly, empirical evidence supports Wildschut et al.’s and Rabbie and Lodewijkx’s definition, such that group members are primarily motivated to benefit the in-group rather than to harm the out-group. Specifically, in studies in which in-group evaluations can be assessed independently of out-group evaluations, behaviors that benefit the in-group are generally preferred over those that harm the out-group (Brewer, 1999; Mummendey et al., 1992). This is also consistent with research that concludes that adherence to the in-group-favoring norm leads to maximization of the in-group’s absolute outcomes rather than maximizing the relative differences between groups (Insko, Kirchner, Pinter, Efaw, & Wildschut, 2005).

The focus on absolute outcomes, rather than on relative outcomes, is consistent with other research (e.g., Abrams, 1994; Hogg, 2007) that suggests that a competitive out-group orientation is not fait accompli. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that the processes that are associated with dislike are different from those associated with liking (e.g., Barbarino & Stürmer, 2016; Pittinsky, Rosenthal, & Montoya, 2011). From the in-group-favoring norm-based perspective, as a default, group members should be indifferent from out-groups that cannot materially facilitate or hinder the in-group’s outcomes. Such indifference is the proposed explanation for (i) a majority of monetary allocations during intergroup allocation tasks being fair or equitable in nature (e.g., Mummendey et al., 1992), (ii) the finding that group categorization does not necessarily produce more out-group derogation (Brewer, 1979), and (iii) the lack of conflict between distinct natural groups of 172 Western American Indian tribes (Jorgensen, 1980).

However, the in-group-favoring norm does hypothesize the presence of negative intergroup responses when competition is viewed as best supporting the interests of the group. Unfortunately, multiple group-level processes tilt intergroup orientations to be competitive, particularly in the minimal group context. For example, competitive behavior, compared to cooperative behavior, is more likely to be perceived as linked to the group’s interests (Wildschut, Pinter, Vevea, Insko, & Schopler, 2003) and individuals expect other group members to have a competitively self-interested orientation (Epley, Caruso, & Bazerman, 2006). These processes provide the foundation for adherence to the in-group-favoring norm in the minimal group context to default to greater intergroup competition (Wildschut et al., 2002).
Importantly, the focus on absolute outcomes indicates that positive intergroup relations can result when the out-group is perceived as a pathway to maximizing outcomes and/or when group-level norms are cooperative. Although competitive intergroup norms are common, not all groups have a group-level norm that dictates competitiveness. A cooperative group norm is associated with some professions (e.g., nurses, Oaker & Brown, 1986; forest rangers, Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, 1970), and those who adhere strongly to the in-group-favoring norm are expected to adhere more closely to group-level norms. In a laboratory demonstration of these processes, Montoya and Pittinsky (2013) gave participants a group norm to act either cooperatively or competitively with an out-group, and then provided participants with an opportunity to allocate money to the in-group and out-group. They found that individuals who adhered strongly to the in-group-favoring norm were particularly likely to follow the group norm; whether it was cooperative or competitive—when it was competitive, those participants who adhered closely to the in-group-favoring norm were more competitive, but when it was cooperative, they were descriptively more cooperative.

It is important to note that from this approach, intergroup cooperation or competition results from group members’ desire to be “a good group member.” In other words, intergroup competition results from an intragroup pressure to be viewed favorably by fellow in-group members. Whereas traditional approaches have framed competition as originating from intergroup processes, the in-group-favoring norm approach emphasizes the importance of adherence to group-level norms to acceptance and self-evaluations. The importance of group member’s considerations regarding acceptance can be observed from studies that explore group members’ group-level decisions that could (or could not) be evaluated by other group members. Wildschut et al. (2002), for instance, had participants who play a single-trial prisoner’s dilemma game (PDG) as part of a three-person group interacting with another group. They manipulated whether participants believed that they would discuss their individual PDG votes with their fellow group members after their votes had been cast (public condition) or not (private condition). The researchers proposed that group members in the public condition should feel more accountable to their group members and feel more concerned with taking into consideration the outcomes of the in-group. As expected, in the public condition, compared with the private condition, group members expressed more concern with maximizing their group’s outcomes, and as a result, competed more with the other group. Similarly, Ben-Yoav and Pruitt (1984) found that when group representatives were accountable to their group, they were more cooperatively motivated when cooperation was seen as beneficial to the group’s interests, but when cooperation was not seen as beneficial, they were less cooperative. Such findings support the contention that the public/private manipulation affected group members’ behavior due to concerns regarding acceptance/rejection from fellow group members.
Harnessing the In-Group-Favoring Norm to Facilitate Positive Intergroup Relations

In this section, we discuss several pathways by which the in-group-favoring norm can be used to promote positive intergroup relations. First, we describe how intergroup relations are enhanced by emphasizing the value that may result from interactions with an out-group. Second, we discuss how the establishment of in-group norms that focus on intergroup cooperation can facilitate positive intergroup relations. And finally, we discuss how superordinate goals, rather than superordinate identities, provide the most direct pathway to positive intergroup relations. For each pathway, we include a discussion of specific policy and program recommendations that would facilitate the impact of the in-group-favoring norm. Finally, and when available, we also include a discussion of how predictions of an in-group-favoring norm-based approach differ from predictions of other theories of intergroup relations.

Emphasizing the Value of Interactions with the Out-Group

One pathway by which intergroup relations can be improved via the in-group-favoring norm is by emphasizing the value of interactions with the out-group. Although a tactic centered on emphasizing the benefits of cooperating with the out-group appears obvious, considerable research has proposed that even seemingly cooperative intergroup relations generate intergroup hostilities. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), for example, posits that individuals’ social identities are derived from their group memberships. Group members are generally motivated to maintain a positive social identity and in so doing, maintain and enhance individual self-esteem (for other motives, see Hogg, 2007). Social identity theory further submits that group members compare their group to other relevant groups and are motivated to view their group favorably (i.e., positive distinctiveness via metacontrast; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Deschamps and Brown (1983), for instance, concluded that even cooperative relations produce identity threats that fuel intergroup hostilities.

In contrast to placing an emphasis on intergroup comparisons, the in-group-favoring norm perspective emphasizes that cooperative relations are possible due to the importance of adherence to group-level norms for gaining acceptance from fellow group members. To capitalize on the relation between the in-group-favoring norm and cooperation, social programs may emphasize the beneficial outcomes that may accrue from cooperative relations with the out-group. As noted by Paolini and colleagues (Paolini, Wright, Dys-Steenbergen, & Favara, 2016), the benefits that may result from positive intergroup relations may be tangible (e.g., better monetary outcomes) or intangible (self-expansion). The aforementioned study by Montoya and Pittinsky (2013) is particularly relevant: Participants were not
competitive with an out-group to bolster self-esteem, but rather they responded to whichever situation-specific norm was operating. Participants who adhered most strongly to the in-group-favoring norm were the most likely to conform to cues to the in-group’s interests, whether that was manifested as cooperation or competition. Clearly, whatever self-esteem concerns participants had were tied closely to the normative demands of the particular cooperation/competition group situation and resulted in more cooperation when cooperation was seen as beneficial.

Two additional areas of inquiry are relevant for considering strategies for emphasizing the value of interactions with the out-group. First, research has explored the influence of patriotism on evaluations of in-group and out-group members (e.g., Staub, 1997). This work has specifically focused on the degree to which citizens attach themselves to their country and makes the distinction between blind patriotism and critical patriotism. Blind patriotism refers to the degree to which citizens experience an “unquestioning” positive evaluation of the country and its actions and policies. Alternatively, critical patriotism assesses the degree to which individuals support their country with the goal of enhancing the welfare of the nation. Critical patriotism mirrors sentiments that comprise the in-group-favoring norm construct, as both constructs emphasize the desire to maximize the group’s interests independent of the degree to which group members identify with the nation. Importantly, critical patriotism is negatively related to fears regarding the nation’s uniqueness and distinctiveness, but also with fears of heterogeneity and loss of national distinctiveness. Importantly, constructive patriotism (which is analogous to critical patriotism) predicts attitudes oriented toward cooperative policies with other nations (Henderson-King, Henderson-King, & Hathaway, 2010) and predicts proimmigration and multicultural views (Spry & Hornsey, 2007). Such research provides evidence for the relation between an in-group-favoring orientation and cooperative behavior: If group members can perceive cooperative behavior as beneficial to the group, group members—particularly those who adhere strongly to the in-group-favoring norm—support intergroup cooperation.

Research that identifies differences in cultural worldviews provides a second domain for considering strategies for emphasizing the value of interactions with the out-group. Specifically, research has made a distinction between individualistic and collectivist societies. According to Hofstede (1991), individualistic societies are oriented toward the individual as a unique entity with loose connections to the group, in which an individual’s identity is based on autonomy and personal accomplishment (see also Hofstede, 1980). Alternatively, collectivism emphasizes an individual’s place in a structured relational network with interpersonal bonds among group members (Triandis, 1995). Relevant to the current approach, cultures can be further categorized by their vertical versus horizontal orientations. Important to processes that mirror the in-group-favoring norm, in horizontal-collectivistic societies, people emphasize interdependence with other in-group members and orient toward equality with other in-group members (Erez & Earley, 1987).
In principle, there is a high degree of correspondence between the values of the in-group-favoring norm and horizontal collectivists, as they are both interested in prioritizing the in-group’s goals and the well-being of group members without identification with the in-group or the desire to positively distinguish the group (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Soh and Leong (2002), for example, concluded that horizontal collectivism is associated with beliefs in universalism (protecting and tolerance for all people) and conformity (the restraint of action that may harm others). In addition, Turel and Connelly (2012) found that collectivists were more focused on collaboration and had a greater concern for others. Furthermore, and analogous to the aforementioned findings regarding the in-group-favoring norm, collectivists in a competitive context were the most competitive, but in a cooperative context, they were descriptively the most cooperative (Chatman & Barsade, 1995). Similarly, Chen, Wasti, and Triandis (2007) revealed that the degree to which participants identified with a collectivistic orientation moderated the relation between cooperative/competitive group norm and intergroup cooperation, such that participants who identified strongly with collectivism were the most cooperative when a cooperative group norm was present. Such findings provide additional evidence that constructs analogous to the in-group-favoring norm can facilitate intergroup cooperation when group members perceive a benefit from cooperation.

After the value of positive intergroup relations is made salient, a simple manipulation of asking group members to consider “what is best for your group” is hypothesized to be associated with not only more cooperation, but with higher self-esteem. The jigsaw classroom (Aronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan, & Snapp, 1975), for example, involves creating small student led interdependent workgroups, in which each student is asked to study one topic before presenting that topic to the larger group. Research is consistent in showing that this technique is effective at not only reducing prejudice, but also boosting self-efficacy and self-esteem (Aronson & Yates, 1983). From the perspective of the in-group-favoring norm, prejudice falls because positive intergroup relations are seen as beneficial to the in-group’s interests, and bolstered self-esteem results from adherence to the in-group’s norms. Perhaps, counterintuitively, after making cooperative relations salient, asking students to “consider the interests of your group” is expected to generate more concerns regarding the welfare of in-group members, and thus produce more positive relations and self-esteem.

Establish a Group Norm to Cooperate with the Out-Group

As noted earlier, the importance of group-level norms to guide group members’ actions has received considerable empirical attention. From the in-group-favoring norm perspective, cooperative relations result when group members view cooperative interactions as facilitating the in-group’s interests. In other words,
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when in-group members perceive cooperative intergroup behavior as profitable, they are predicted to become more motivated to cooperate, as positive intergroup relations are viewed as bolstering the group’s (and one’s own) interests (Pruitt & Kimmel, 1977; Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989). Importantly, there is laboratory support for the hypothesis that the in-group-favoring norm does moderate group norms, with evidence suggesting that emphasizing the importance of cooperation produces more cooperation between groups (Montoya & Pittinsky, 2013).

The importance of establishing a group norm is particularly apparent in studies of social inclusion (vs. exclusion). For example, in a case study of the methods used by Bulgarian leaders to end the deportation of their Jewish citizens in the years before World War II, Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, and Levine (2006) revealed how leaders motivated intergroup cooperation by producing rhetoric that made salient social norms emphasizing inclusiveness. Similarly, Tropp and Mallett (2011) proposed that school systems may generate norms of inclusion that can facilitate children’s interest in friendships with out-group members. Relatedly, in the domain of bullying, Perkins, Craig, and Perkins (2011) produced a reduction in bullying attitudes after presenting students with normative information regarding bullying. More broadly, these processes should operate in any of a number of situations, whether it is the school playground, negotiation table, or local discotheque. In each case, presenting in-group members with clear expectations about the group’s standards is not only expected to result in more positive intergroup outcomes, but clear expectations with the salience of the in-group’s interests should moderate the degree of positivity.

Guilt enhances the effects of group norms. The influence of guilt on the development of positive intergroup relations requires specific discussion. Guilt, given its nature as a moral emotion (Tangney, 2003), increases adherence to norms (e.g., Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996), particularly when norm-relevant behavior can be evaluated by other group members (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Accordingly, guilt should predict adherence to the in-group-favoring norm, such that guilt-prone group members should act competitively in the intergroup context to ensure that they behave consistently with the in-group’s norm. Consistent with this premise, Wildschut and Insko (2006) found that group members were more competitive when group members were aware of their intergroup choices (public) than unaware (private), but only for those participants high in guilt. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2006) found that relative to guilt-prone group members who were instructed to remain objective, guilt-prone group members who were instructed to empathize with their in-group were more competitive with the out-group.

Such effects may be magnified in contexts in which leaders control the group decision making. Pinter et al. (2007; Experiment 2) compared leaders in an intergroup mixed-motive setting who were either accountable or unaccountable to
their group members. Results revealed that high guilt-proneness produced more competition for those leaders who were accountable, but reduced competition for unaccountable leaders. Pinter et al. proposed that the greater competition for high-guilt leaders resulted from the salience of the in-group-favoring norm (via thinking about how their group members might respond), whereas the reduced competition for the high-guilt unaccountable leaders resulted from the relative salience of the individual’s own motives (which in the case of interindividual interactions is cooperative; Wolf et al., 2009). Such results indicate that to promote positive interactions, researchers must not only consider the dynamics of intergroup processes, but also the complexities associated with individual difference variables.

Establish superordinate goals, Not superordinate identities. A commonly theorized mechanism for the enhancement of intergroup relations is to produce or make salient a superordinate identity. From the perspective of the common in-group identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), conflict is likely when group members clearly categorize intergroup relations as “us” versus “them.” It is only when group members recategorize an out-group as part of the in-group can positive “intergroup” relations occur (i.e., via recategorization). One implication is that individual group members must reduce their identification with their “home” group or must identify with a superordinate group before positive intergroup relations can occur (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990).

However, research has also revealed that greater in-group identification can be associated with more favorable intergroup relations and that strong identification with the superordinate group is unnecessary for positive intergroup relations. Brown and colleagues (Brown & Williams, 1984; Oaker & Brown, 1986), for example, found that in a cooperative context, the more group members identified with their group, the more they liked and demonstrated favoritism toward the out-group. Similarly, Montoya and Pittinsky (2011) experimentally manipulated the cooperative/competitive relations between groups and the degree to which group members identified with the group. Consistent with expectations, highly identified group members who engaged in cooperative relations with the out-group had the most positive out-group evaluations (also see Montoya & Pittinsky, 2016).

Given that threats to one’s social identity are hypothesized to result when either cooperation or competition is present, it is reasonable to question whether superordinate identities, versus superordinate goals, are more effective in generating positive intergroup relations. A resolution to the question may rely on changing the focus of the question from “superordinate identity versus superordinate goal” to “amount of available information.” From the in-group-favoring norm perspective, group members are oriented toward maximizing self-interest and group interest, and do so by evaluating the degree to which out-groups are evaluated as positively/negatively affecting in-group members (see also Sherif,
Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). In this light, evaluating the relative importance of “superordinate goals” versus “superordinate identities” can be viewed as subsumed under a drive to understand the positivity/negativity of the relations between groups. Categorical information (“in-group member” or “out-group member”) informs group members of what actions to take, with the expectation that in-group members will be cooperative (e.g., Yamagishi & Mifune, 2008) and uncertainty regarding how out-group members will respond. Thus, in minimal contexts, the only available information is the categorical information of group membership; and as discussed earlier, when intergroup decisions are based on mere category information, group members tend to perceive out-group members as competitively oriented (e.g., Pemberton, Insko, & Schopler, 1996). Importantly, as the amount of information about the out-group grows, the less competitive intergroup relations become (Wilder & Simon, 1998; Wildschut et al., 2003). In other words, as intergroup relations develop, more information regarding the relative interests/goals of out-groups becomes available that makes it possible for superordinate goals, relative to superordinate identities, to be the driving force behind the enhancement of intergroup relations. In this way, to facilitate positive intergroup relations via the in-group-favoring norm, interventions should focus on making salient superordinate goals, as goals are more direct at informing group members as to what is “good for the group.” For example, Pinto, Pinto, and Prescott (1993) revealed that the competitive relations in the context of the health care industry were attenuated by a focus on superordinate goals, a focus that produced both enhanced intergroup task performance and enjoyment with the intergroup task.

Conclusion

We contend that the in-group-favoring norm—the expectation that group members first consider the interests of fellow group members—can promote the degree to which intergroup relations are positive. Despite the apparent contradiction that an orientation toward one’s own group members can be beneficial to intergroup relations, we presented three pathways by which the norm can result in more positive intergroup relations. Specifically, we proposed that the in-group-favoring norm can be harnessed to improve intergroup relations via (i) emphasizing the value of interactions with the out-group, (ii) establishing an in-group norm to cooperate with the out-group, and (iii) establishing a superordinate goal.

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