Is Valuing Equality Enough? Equality Values, Allophilia, and Social Policy Support for Multiracial Individuals

Todd L. Pittinsky* and **R. Matthew Montoya**
Harvard University

We conducted a field study to investigate positive intergroup attitudes (i.e., allophilia) and equality values as potential antecedents of social policy support for multiracial individuals. Participants (N = 97) reported their social policy support for multiracial individuals in two ways—support for the recognition of "multiracial" as a distinct racial category (recognition) and support for multiracial individuals' access to programs and policies (assistance). Results revealed that allophilia motivated those who held equality beliefs to support social policies for multiracial individuals. Implications of these findings for theories of positive intergroup relations, as well as the processes that may underlie progress for multiracial individuals, are discussed.

Minority groups often struggle for social policies that support their economic, social, and civil interests in the larger society (Nelson, 2002). However, one issue prior to receiving support is that a group must first be recognized as distinct from other minority groups. The struggle for recognition is particularly germane to emergent minority groups, which, unlike traditionally recognized minority groups, often must negotiate for the space they occupy in society. People with disabilities, for example, were not recognized in the United States as a distinct and protected minority group until 1973 (Hahn, 1985). Since then, people with disabilities have received not only civil and public recognition, but a set of codified rights and benefits in U.S. social policy (Hahn, 1996).

Individuals who identify as multiracial are a current example of an emergent minority group. Individuals with parents who identify with different racial groups have, of course, existed. However, such individuals have not always been recognized either as a separate racial group or as legitimate members of racial groups (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). In 1997, advocates for the recognition of multiracial individuals won a policy victory. A change to the U.S. Census allowed individuals to report belonging to more than one race (Tilove, 1999). This policy change recognized the large number of children from interracial unions present in the United States, and the projected increase in their numbers (Skerry, 1996). Notwithstanding this victory, advocacy groups for multiracial individuals are continuing their campaign for increased recognition in social policies and programs (Wardle, 2005).

The progress made by minority groups, however, is often limited by the support garnered from the citizenry. Historically, disadvantaged or relatively disadvantaged minority groups have made the case for recognition through appeals to peoples' value of equality (Canady, 1998; Mattson, 1999; Viv, 2006). For instance, appeals to equality values were central to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. President Lyndon Johnson, for example, issued principled appeals for equality to build support for the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination in housing in the United States based on race, religion, and sex (Goldzwig, 2003). President Johnson argued that the aim of this civil-rights legislation was to create "a more generous idea of brotherhood and a more responsible conception of equality" (Goldzwig, 2003, p. 5). Similarly, in a now famous speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. drew on equality as one of the central tenets of U.S. society by quoting the Declaration of Independence, saying, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal'" (King, 1963/2003, p. 67). Such appeals to equality have been credited with motivating and catalyzing support for social policies to benefit the African-American community (Jalata, 2002).

A second possible antecedent of support for a minority group is people's attitudes toward the minority group. Positive feelings toward the group may particularly motivate an individual to support that group. The experience of allophilia (i.e., positive attitudes or unqualified liking for a specific out-group), for example, predicts support behaviors toward the members of that group (Pittinsky, Rosenthal, & Montoya, 2008b). Moreover, positive evaluations of the specific group may further amplify the influence of equality values on supportive behaviors. Isen (1970), for instance, proposed that positive affect facilitates the expression of value-consistent behavior. Accordingly, in the current research, we explore whether allophilia bolsters the impact of equality beliefs on support for an emergent minority group.

Equality Values and Social Policy Support

As noted earlier, historical accounts indicate that valuing equality can motivate individuals to advocate social policies that benefit those in disadvantaged positions (Berry, 1996; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997). Research indicates that those who value equality are likely to express more of a concern for the welfare of others (Braithwaite, 1982) and to support income redistribution to benefit individuals of lower socioeconomic classes (Braithwaite, 1997). Heaven (1990) demonstrated a relationship between the degree to which one values equality and one's economic beliefs, such that those who value equality more tend to advocate socialism and trade unions, whereas those who value equality less tend to advocate free enterprise and privatization. Equality values also predict individuals' attitudes and behavioral orientations toward specific social groups. Braithwaite (1997), for instance, found that valuing equality is associated with support for benefits for Aboriginal Australians as well as support for increased job options for women. Equality predicts attitudes and behavior that supports others, as shown in research by Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, and Leeson (2006). They explored the equality value in the context of individuals' attitudes toward people in the Middle East. Heaven et al. revealed that belief in the equality value predicted advocacy for actions that would end conflict in the Middle East.

Positive Intergroup Attitudes and Social Policy Support

Research exploring the connection between individuals' attitudes toward a minority group and their evaluations of social policies aimed at benefiting that group often relies on prejudice measures to assess individuals' attitudes. Measures of prejudice, such as modern racism (McConahay, 1983) or symbolic racism (Kinder & Sears, 1981), for example, have been used to predict biases in evaluations of minority group members (Saucier & Miller, 2003), behavior that discriminates against minority groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977), negative nonverbal communication (Hendricks & Bootzin, 1976), and increased aggression (Donnerstein, Donnerstein, & Simon, 1972).

There is, however, a bias in the literature on intergroup attitudes, observed by Gordon Allport (1954/1979) and others. Although much attention is paid to the negative spectrum in the intergroup context, less attention is paid to the positive. This "negative approach to the study of interpersonal relations . . . [is] reflected in the nature of the resulting knowledge" (Phillips & Ziller, 1997, p. 420). Consequently, the intergroup literature is replete with information about the connection between negative attitudes and negative behaviors but does not widely address the effects of positive intergroup attitudes. Moreover, by not specifically

measuring positive attitudes, researchers have often relied on scales designed to assess negative prejudice or generalized, undifferentiated positive attitudes (e.g., Cairns, Kenworthy, & Campbell, 2006; Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Miller, Smith, & Mackie, 2004). Such research usually treats positive and negative attitudes as if they lie at opposite ends of a single dimension.

In contrast, recognizing that psychological constructs that are semantic opposites are not necessarily unidimensional (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994; Jordan, 1965), some researchers (e.g., Pittinsky, Rosenthal, & Montoya, 2008a) have proposed an alternative two-dimensional approach to intergroup evaluations. According to this approach, negative intergroup attitudes (i.e., negative prejudice) and positive intergroup attitudes (i.e., allophilia) are conceptually distinct, though negatively correlated, constructs. Pittinsky et al. (2008b), for instance, found that positive attitudes toward minority groups predict positive behaviors such as personal and policy support, but not negative behaviors, better than do negative attitudes. In addition, Ho and Jackson (2001) found that positive attitudes of Asians predicted positive behaviors (i.e., lower social distance) whereas negative attitudes predicted negative behaviors (i.e., hostility, greater social distance), but not vice versa. Findings like these have led Pittinsky and colleagues to conclude that positive evaluations should be studied directly as a distinct dimension from negative evaluations (Pittinsky, Montoya, Tropp, & Chen, 2007), particularly in instances in which understanding positive rather than negative intergroup relations is the goal (Pittinsky et al., 2008a, b).

Positive Intergroup Attitudes and Equality

Whereas the literature indicates that valuing both equality and allophilia are potential antecedents of support behaviors for multiracial individuals, it may be that these constructs do not operate independently to predict behavior.

Past research has demonstrated reliably that the presence of emotion can facilitate value-consistent behavior. The experienced emotion acts as a motivator of behavior, something that "pushes" the individual into action relevant to the situation (Butz & Plant, 2006; Keltner & Gross, 1999; Schwarz, 2000). When positive affect toward a specific target is aroused, it has been linked to increased generosity and helpfulness (Isen & Levin, 1972), as well as a desire to improve the living conditions of those in need (Veitch & Griffitt, 1976). Arousing empathy for a specific person, for instance, increases the readiness to help the person in need (Batson et al., 1991).

Positive affect in the form of liking may act to "push" an individual toward action consistent with their values. Gouaux (1971), for example, revealed that increasing liking for a target led to behavioral intentions that improved the target's standard of living. In the presence of positive affect toward a

specific group, valuing equality should then lead to more support for that specific group.

This Study

This study explored two potential antecedents of policy support for multiracial individuals. We operationalized policy support for multiracial individuals in two ways: First, supporting policies that recognize multiracial individuals as a distinct minority group in society (recognition); and second, supporting policies and programs that afford benefits to multiracial individuals (assistance). Recognition was deemed an important social policy, and although the U.S. Census has provided an opportunity for multiracial individuals to identify themselves, many important social institutions (e.g., universities, businesses) still operate under traditional racial taxonomies that do not. Assistance policies were deemed important because they help mitigate discrimination that minority groups often encounter.

In light of the reviewed research on the connection between support for minority groups and positive intergroup attitudes and equality, we expect both allophilia and equality to predict support for recognition and assistance of multiracial individuals. Based on the ability of affect to catalyze extant beliefs into action, we further expect an interaction between allophilia and equality such that in the presence of allophilia and equality values, support for these social policies will be the strongest.

We studied these hypotheses in the context of African Americans' and Whites' support for social policies to support African-American/White multiracial individuals. We chose this group because it represents one of the largest segments of the multiracial population in the United States (American Demographics, 2002) and is the subgroup of multiracial individuals that, given the long history of African Americans and Whites in the United States, has been the subject of the most sustained study by the research community (e.g., Brown, 1995; Constantine, Miville, & Kindaichi, 2005; Williams & Jackson, 2000).

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through advertisements placed in a popular collegiate online community. Participants were 97 students between the ages of 17 and 31 years ($M = 20.46$, $SD = 2.20$) at a large public university in the southeastern United States. Participants were 70 women and 27 men. With respect to the racial composition of the sample, 73 Whites and 24 African Americans completed the questionnaire. Participants were compensated $10.

Measures

Equality value.   Participants completed a value scale measuring the degree to which they value international harmony and equality (Braithwaite & Law, 1985). The scale comprised 10 equality-value items (e.g., "A good life for others: improving the welfare of all people in need"). Participants indicated the extent to which they thought each of these values was important to them on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important*). The scale was reliable, $\alpha = .86$.

Liking for multiracial individuals.   The degree to which participants liked multiracial individuals was assessed using the Allophilia Scale developed by Pittinsky et al. (2008a). On the 17-item scale, participants indicated their response on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A sample item is "I feel positively toward (the target group)." The measure was reliable, $\alpha = .92$.

Social policy support.   The degree to which participants advocated social policies supportive of multiracial individuals was assessed using two measures developed for this study. Support of policies relating to recognition of multiracial individuals as a legitimate distinct minority group was assessed with three items (e.g., "Multiracial individuals should be able to identify themselves with more than one race on the U.S. Census," "Multiracial individuals should choose one of the major ethnic groups on the U.S. Census, but not be able to choose multiple racial identifications." [reverse scored]). Support for social policies relating to the rights of multiracial individuals to access assistance programs and policies to benefit them were assessed with three items (e.g., "Multiracial individuals should be eligible for minority scholarships intended for Black Americans," "Black History Month should be dedicated equally to Black Americans and multiracial achievers."). For each item, participants indicated their response on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The reliability of the measures was acceptable, $\alpha = .73$ and $\alpha = .80$, respectively.[1]

Procedure

Participants completed the survey online. They were instructed to complete the questionnaire in private, and were assured that their responses would remain

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[1]To confirm the reliability of our sample, we also estimated the reliabilities separately for African Americans and Whites for equality values ($\alpha_{African American} = .85$ and $\alpha_{White} = .87$), liking for multiracial individuals ($\alpha_{African American} = .90$ and $\alpha_{White} = .93$), policy support recognition ($\alpha_{African American} = .69$ and $\alpha_{White} = .77$), and policy support assistance ($\alpha_{African American} = .80$ and $\alpha_{White} = .80$).

anonymous. Participants were told that this was a study of attitudes about multiracial individuals, and that when completing questions assessing their attitudes toward multiracial individuals, they were to think of individuals who have one parent who is African American and one parent who is White. The questionnaires of interest for the study were included among other questionnaires unrelated to the current project.

Results

We assessed participants' gender, race, socioeconomic status (SES), and political orientation. There were no significant gender, race, SES, or political orientation differences for allophilia, equality values, or policy support. Moreover, there were no significant interactive effects of gender, race, SES, or political orientation, and as a result, we do not discuss these further.

Recognition

To assess support for social policies to recognize multiracial individuals, we conducted a regression including allophilia, equality, and an interaction term into a single step. Contrary to expectations, the main effect for allophilia was not significant, $t(94) = 0.78$, $p = .43$. However, as predicted, the main effect for equality was significant, $t(94) = 2.77$, $p < .05$, indicating that the more individuals valued equality, the more they supported social policies to recognize multiracial individuals. The Allophilia $\times$ Equality interaction was marginal, $t(94) = 1.83$, $p = .07$. Predicted means were derived from the regression equation in which high and low equality were defined at one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively (Aiken & West, 1991). Inspection of the interaction revealed that the simple slope for low allophilia was not significant, $F(1, 94) = 0.94$, $p = .33$; however, the simple slope was significant for those with high allophilia, $F(1, 94) = 6.76$, $p < .05$, indicating that support for social polices to recognize multiracial individuals as a minority group in society increased as a function of equality. These findings indicating that in the absence of allophilia for the outgroup, valuing equality does not play a significant role in determining recognition policy support.

Assistance

Our second question concerned whether equality values were more strongly associated with support for rights and benefits for multiracial individuals as a function of allophilia and equality. To address this question, we conducted a regression that included allophilia, equality, and the interaction term into a single step with support for social policy assistance as the dependent measure. As predicted, there

was a significant main effect for allophilia, $t(94) = 5.83$, $p < .05$, such that the more participants liked multiracial individuals, the more they supported social policies to increase the rights and the benefits afforded them. Contrary to expectations, the main effect for equality was not significant, $t(94) = 1.33$, $p = .19$. However, most importantly, as predicted, the allophilia $\times$ equality interaction was significant, $t(94) = 2.34$, $p < .05$.

The simple slope for low allophilia was not significant, $F(1, 94) = 0.13$, $p = .83$; however, the simple slope was significant for those high in allophilia, $F(1, 94) = 4.25$, $p < .05$, indicating that social policy support changed as a function of equality. These findings suggest that positive attitudes toward the out-group are necessary for equality to play a significant role in determining assistance in support policy.

Discussion

This research investigated the role of allophilia and equality values on policy support for multiracial individuals. We found that both valuing equality and feeling allophilia were important to policy support, such that the highest levels of support for recognition and assistance were observed for those who both value equality and felt allophilia toward multiracial individuals. The presence of allophilia strengthened the association between equality values and social policy support, and invigorated the latent connection between equality and supporting social policies on behalf of that group.

The observed interaction between allophilia and equality provides an explanation for what might at first seem puzzling: Individuals who espouse equality values and have histories of supporting a particular minority group, but then are not supportive of other groups in need. One potential explanation is that whereas equality values are general orientations toward others and the environment, allophilia is directed toward a specific group. Our data indicate that although an individual might value equality, the individual must also like the group in order to motivate the individual into acting in the group's interest. Past research indicates that feelings toward biracial people influence the amount of support individuals allocate (see Sanchez & Bonam, 2009). Similarly, we found evidence that merely promoting equality values may be of only limited value to engender support for social policies to benefit a minority group. To engender policy support, the degree to which individuals' experience allophilia for the group must also be considered.

Understanding what leads to support of multiracial individuals and other minority groups holds promise not only for the minority groups who might benefit from such recognition, but for the wider society. One type of support we examined was recognition of multiracial individuals as a distinct group. Renn (2009) suggested the need to recognize multiracial individuals as a distinct group. Renn noted that biracial individuals are often not mentioned in discussions of affirmative

action and education policies due to a lack of use or improper use of data about biracial people. Multiracial individuals have dual minority status (Shih & Sanchez, 2005), meaning that they are denied full privileges associated with being White, but they are also denied support given to monoracial minority group members. This dual minority status has important implications for individuals' perceptions of their support needs. Sanchez and Bonam (2009), for instance, found that multiracial individuals are perceived as less minority scholarship worthy than minority monoracial individuals. In this way, the extent to which individuals perceive multiracial individuals as a distinct group may influence the extent to which they perceive the group as worthy of policy support.

As expected, we did not observe differences in how equality and allophilia differ between the White and African-American participants. Although it might be argued that African Americans can sympathize more with the plight of multiracial individuals than can Whites, research has found that multiracial individuals often face rejection from both majority and minority groups in society (Root, 1992, 1996), and are perceived with a mix of positive and negative attitudes (see Sanchez & Bonam, 2009). Moreover, it might be argued that a failure to find an influence of race for the Equality × Allophilia interaction may have resulted from a lack of statistical power. In other words, a difference between African Americans and Whites may exist in the degree to which allophilia interacts with equality values to produce policy support, but the sample was insufficiently large to detect an effect. However, the pattern of means for Whites and African Americans was nearly identical, such that both African Americans and Whites showed a descriptive tendency to advance policy support more when allophilia and equality values were present. We know of no theoretical reason why they would not operate similarly here.

This research examined attitudes toward a particular group of multiracial individuals, multiracial individuals who are African American and White. Because stereotypes and prejudices are not the same for all racial groups, different patterns might emerge when attitudes toward different multiracial groups are the focus of study. African Americans have a particular history of slavery and segregation in the United States. This history indicates that attitudes toward equality for this multiracial group may not be the same as for other multiracial groups that comprise ethnic groups with different historical experiences (e.g., Asian Americans), and for multiracial groups comprising multiple minority ethnic groups. This represents, then, a possible avenue for future work on equality values, allophilia, and social policy support.

The current findings provide provocative implications for the study of interethnic relations. Interethnic relations have been characterized as stymied in recent years (Tuch, Sigelman, & Macdonald, 1999), with little progress made in efforts to equalize opportunities and outcomes among minority groups. However, multiracial individuals present a different challenge to society than do other, traditionally

recognized racial groups. By being connected to two racial groups, multiracial individuals fundamentally challenge the assumptions underlying implicit and explicit racial hierarchies. In doing so, the emergence of a multiracial community presents a range of new possibilities for positive interethnic relations (Linehan, 2000; Welland, 2003) not possible under the traditional ethnic taxonomies permeating policy and society. Gaertner and Dovidio (1999), for example, posited that positive relations are improved by transforming individuals' cognitive representations of others (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Multiracial individuals have the capacity both within themselves and in how they are viewed by others to challenge and fundamentally alter how in-group and out-group cognitive representations are drawn in the context of interracial and interethnic relations. The societal recognition of multiracial people, then, opens up new possibilities for positive intergroup relations among the different ethnic groups to which they are directly connected, and which they in turn, connect.

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TODD L. PITTINSKY is an Associate Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and research director of the Center for Public Leadership. His research investigates the social psychology of positive intergroup attitudes. To date, this work has taken three forms, the study of positive stereotypes, positive prejudices (allophilia), and leadership effects on intergroup liking. He earned his AB in psychology from Yale

University, his MA in psychology from Harvard, and his PhD in organizational behavior from the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Harvard Business School.

R. MATTHEW MONTOYA is a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University. His research interests include intergroup relations and interpersonal attraction.