



Understanding how common ingroup identity undermines collective action among disadvantaged-group members[☆]



Elze G. Ufkes^{a,*}, Justine Calcagno^b, Demis E. Glasford^c, John F. Dovidio^d

^a Department of Psychology of Conflict, Risk & Safety, University of Twente, The Netherlands

^b The Graduate Center, City University of New York, NY, USA

^c Department of Psychology, John Jay College, City University of New York, NY, USA

^d Department of Psychology, Yale University, CT, USA

HIGHLIGHTS

- We tested how recategorization affects minority's collective action intentions
- Recategorization into common ingroup identity reduced collective action intentions
- Recategorization into dual identity did not reduce collective action intentions
- These effects were mediated by beliefs of group inequality, anger, and efficacy
- An exclusive focus on commonalities may be harmful for change toward equality

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 13 February 2015

Revised 23 November 2015

Accepted 23 November 2015

Available online 25 November 2015

Keywords:

Anger

Common ingroup identity

Collective action

Group efficacy inequality

Intergroup relations

Minorities

ABSTRACT

Past research has consistently demonstrated that creating a sense of a common ingroup identity can be beneficial for reducing intergroup tensions and creating intergroup harmony. At the same time, however, creating a strong sense of a common ingroup identity has elements that may undermine disadvantaged-group members' motivation for collective action toward social change. In the present paper, we report two experiments that investigated how, compared to salient separate ethnic/racial identities, increasing the salience of a common US identity among Blacks and Latinos results in lower collective action intentions. These effects were mediated by a reduction in group-based anger and group-efficacy beliefs, and, in Experiment 2, reduced recognition of group-based inequality in society as well. Increasing salience of common ingroup and separate group identities simultaneously (a dual identity), however, did not decrease collective action intentions. These results suggest that not recategorization in itself, but an exclusive focus on common ingroup identity undermines motivation for social change.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

A substantial part of intergroup research focused on stimulating societal equality by investigating how increasing harmony reduces bias between groups. As Wright (2009) observed, however, such strategies for reducing intergroup bias potentially undermine many of the responses to intergroup disparities that foment collective action toward social change. Whereas motivations for collective action toward intergroup equality may be stimulated by objective states of disadvantage,

subjective responses to this disadvantage and appraisals of the opportunity for change ultimately determine whether people engage in collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012). The present work – integrating theoretical perspectives on reducing bias (specifically, recategorization) and collective action – investigated when and how values that promote and idealize intergroup harmony affect subjective responses to disadvantage and potentially reduce motivation for collective action among members of traditionally disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, in two experiments we examined the effects of emphasizing separate racial/ethnic identities versus common ingroup identity and dual identity (a combination of both separate and common identity) on collective action motivation among disadvantaged-group members in the United States (Blacks and Latinos). We further investigated the potential mediating role of three antecedents of collective action by members of

[☆] John Dovidio's effort on this project was in part supported by NIH RO1HL 0856331-0182 and 1R01DA029888-01.

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology of Conflict, Risk & Safety, University of Twente, P.O. Box 217, 7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands.

E-mail address: elze.ufkes@utwente.nl (E.G. Ufkes).

disadvantaged groups: group anger, group-efficacy beliefs (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004), and general perceived inequality in society (Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009).

Research on collective action emphasizes how elements associated with intergroup disharmony facilitate collective efforts by members of traditionally disadvantaged groups to improve their group's position. Social identity theory proposed that perceiving group-based disparities as illegitimate and unstable enhances motivations for intergroup competition (Tajfel, 1978). Building on this notion, work on the social identity model of collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2004; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) showed that subjective perceptions of injustice (represented by group anger) and the belief that the group can achieve social change through joint effort (group-efficacy beliefs) are central predictors of collective action, and that both mechanisms are increased by strong subgroup identification among disadvantaged-group members. A potentially complementary perspective further suggests that conditions that promote intergroup harmony can undermine motivation for social change, and thus inhibit collective action, when they distract attention from group-based inequality. Research guided by system justification theory (Van der Toorn & Jost, 2014) reveals, for example, that greater dependence on the social system leads people to legitimate the disparities associated with status quo, thereby inhibiting collective action (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Also, although positive intergroup contact promotes more positive intergroup attitudes and individuated perceptions of members of other groups (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011), it can reduce the likelihood that disadvantaged-group members support collective action for change that benefits their group (Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; Tausch, Saguy, & Bryson, 2015).

The aim of the current work was to extend previous research on the potential negative consequences of intergroup experiences, strategies, and interventions that promote intergroup harmony in three ways. The first objective was to investigate the role of a specific element of intergroup contact – recategorization that enhances perceptions of common ingroup identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2012) – on the willingness of racial and ethnic disadvantaged-group members to engage in collective action. Addressing this objective contributes to the debate concerning how level of self-categorization (subgroup versus superordinate group) affects motivation for social change among disadvantaged-group members (Dovidio, Saguy, Ufkes, Scheepers, & Gaertner, 2015).

The second objective was to examine the mechanisms by which recategorization can reduce collective action. Previous work on the role of social identities in predicting collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008) has exclusively focused on the role of separate group identities, not on different types of social categories (e.g., subgroup and superordinate group) of disadvantaged-group members.

The third objective was to test how two forms of recategorization that may be employed to promote intergroup harmony – a common ingroup identity, which de-emphasizes different group or subgroup identities (e.g., a focus solely on American identity) and a dual identity, which recognizes different subgroup identities nested within a common ingroup identity (e.g., Black-Americans) – may have different effects on orientations toward social change.

1.1. Group identity and intergroup differences

With respect to the first objective, there is robust evidence that achieving a sense of common ingroup identity improves intergroup attitudes across a range of intergroup contexts (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2009, 2012; Ufkes, Otten, Van der Zee, Giebels, & Dovidio, 2012). Nevertheless, creating harmony by emphasizing a common ingroup identity among members of disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups (e.g., being American for Black and White Americans) has elements that, theoretically, could undermine their motivation for

collective action. That is, emphasizing common ingroup identity improves intergroup attitudes in part by changing perceptions of separate group identities (“us” and “them”) to one inclusive identity (“we”), making differences between groups less salient (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2012).

Salient intergroup differences, however, are an important precondition for collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Wright & Lubensky, 2009). As suggested by principles from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), stronger separate-group identity increases motivation for collective action because highly identified group members are motivated to defend the position of their ingroup in relation to other groups. Increased salience of the common ingroup identity, which under some circumstances decreases the salience of intergroup differences, may thus reduce the importance of defending the positive ethnic/racial ingroup image among disadvantaged-group members (Reynolds, Jones, O'Brien, & Subasic, 2013). Consequently, disadvantaged-group members may become less sensitive to intergroup inequality. Indeed, Jaśko and Kossowska (2013) found that members of disadvantaged groups were more likely to justify intergroup inequality when common ingroup identity was made salient. Thus, recategorization from separate identities to common ingroup identity could reduce motivation for collective action among disadvantaged-group members.

1.2. Group anger and group-efficacy beliefs

In terms of the second objective, in addition to the direct positive influence of a strong separate group identity, the social identity model of collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) predicts that subgroup identification positively also affects collective action motivation indirectly, through (a) an emotion-focused pathway by increasing group-based emotions, and/or (b) a problem-focused pathway by increasing group-efficacy beliefs. When group membership is more salient, people are more likely to experience group-based emotions (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000) such as anger associated with group grievances when injustice is detected (Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008). In addition, salient group identities empower group members and therefore may increase group-efficacy beliefs (Drury & Reicher, 2005). Emphasizing common ingroup identity rather than separate group identities, however, weakens the sense of distinctive group borders (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989), and therefore would likely reduce both perceptions of group-based anger and group efficacy among disadvantaged-group members. We therefore investigated whether recategorization in terms of common ingroup identity would inhibit collective action intentions through its effect on reduced group anger and/or group-efficacy beliefs.

1.3. Dual identity and collective action

The third objective of the current work was to compare the effects of two different forms of recategorized identities – common ingroup identity (e.g., as American) and a dual identity (e.g., as Black-American or Latino-American) – to a condition making separate group identities salient (e.g., as Black or Latino). Compared to common ingroup identity, both a focus on separate group and on dual identities increase salience of intergroup differences (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009). Thus, in contrast to recategorization in the form of common ingroup identity, a dual identity – which maintains subgroup distinctions – may not interfere with the motivation for collective action. Indeed, previous work found that dual identity was positively related to motivation for social change among disadvantaged-group members (Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon, Reichert, & Grabow, 2013) and elicited greater motivation for social change among disadvantaged-group members than did a common ingroup identity (Glasford & Dovidio, 2011). However, previous work did not compare salient dual identity and common ingroup identity with a, practically more neutral, salient separate group identity. It

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7324429>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7324429>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)