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What is This?

# Responses to Endorsement of Commonality by Ingroup and Outgroup Members: The Roles of Group Representation and Threat

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## Abstract

Two experiments integrated research on the roles of common identity and social norms in intergroup orientations. Experiment 1 demonstrated that learning that ingroup members categorized the ingroup (Spaniards) and outgroup (Eastern European immigrants) within a common identity (European) produced more positive intergroup orientations toward immigrants. By contrast, learning that outgroup members held the same position elicited less positive orientations compared with a condition in which the information came from a neutral source. The effects were mediated by one-group representations. Experiment 2 also found that endorsement of a common identity generated more positive intergroup orientations when it was expressed by ingroup than outgroup members and revealed how this effect may be sequentially mediated by personal one-group representations and symbolic threat.

Traditional research on contact theory, emphasizing the importance of direct contact, has concentrated on identifying the critical features of personal encounters (e.g., equal status interaction, common goals) necessary to ameliorate discrimination (see Allport 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). However, recent work addressing the question of *why* contact reduces discrimination has further examined the mechanisms by which contact improves intergroup attitudes. Focusing on the underlying mechanisms theoretically illuminates the dynamics of intergroup discrimination and suggests alternative interventions for improving intergroup relations even when intergroup contact is not direct. The present research was designed to expand understanding of the processes that lead to more positive attitudes and to integrate two lines of research, on common identity and perceptions of ingroup norms, to offer new conceptual insights into improving intergroup orientations.

The common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2011) emphasizes the importance of social categorization in the development, maintenance, and change of intergroup attitudes. This model builds on a substantial literature demonstrating that categorizing others as members of one's own group (the ingroup) or another group (the outgroup) has profound psychological effects (Brewer, 2007; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Tajfel & Forgas, 2000; J. C. Turner, Sachdev, & Hogg, 1983). People show more spontaneous positive affective responses to ingroup than outgroup members, think more deeply and favorably about ingroup members, and respond more cooperatively to ingroup members (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010, for a review). Thus, when others who were formerly viewed primarily in terms of their outgroup membership become categorized as members of a common, superordinate ingroup, they benefit from the forces of ingroup favoritism: They are perceived and responded to more favorably, and discrimination against them is reduced. Substantial empirical

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evidence supports this basic proposition of the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2011) and demonstrates that the positive effects of direct intergroup contact are mediated, in part, by this process of social recategorization.

Other research has focused on how observing *others'* actions can also improve intergroup relations. Studies of extended contact and different forms of vicarious contact (Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011) have revealed that intergroup contact does not have to be direct and personal to have beneficial effects on intergroup relations. Learning that other ingroup members have outgroup friends (i.e., extended contact; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997) or observing an ingroup member interacting in a positive way with an outgroup member (i.e., vicarious intergroup contact; Gómez & Huici, 2008; Mallett & Wilson, 2010; Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011) also have positive consequences for intergroup orientations.

One of the ways that extended and vicarious intergroup contact improves intergroup attitudes is through its effects on perceptions of ingroup norms (R. N. Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). Gómez, Tropp, and Fernández (2011), for example, demonstrated that the positive impact on intergroup attitudes of learning that an ingroup member had an outgroup friend was mediated by perceiving more positive ingroup norms concerning intergroup relations. In addition, Paluck (2009) demonstrated that positive vicarious contact, portrayed in a radio soap opera in Rwanda, led listeners to perceive more positive norms about intergroup relations and produced more trusting, empathic, and cooperative intergroup orientations. Indeed, these findings are consistent with a significant body of work that generally demonstrates that ingroup norms critically affect intergroup discrimination (see Allport, 1954). People show greater prejudice when they come to perceive, either by being presented with consensus information or by observing others' actions directly or in the media, that intergroup discrimination is more normative (Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994; Simon & Greenberg, 1996). Analogously, people exhibit lower levels of prejudice when they believe that discrimination is normatively condemned (Crandall & Stangor, 2005; Paluck, 2009, 2010; Wittenbrink & Henly, 1996).

The current research was designed to integrate work on common ingroup identity and normative influences on intergroup discrimination by investigating how learning that *others* endorse a common ingroup identity affects intergroup attitudes. This research, consisting of two experiments, examined the role of both, moderating factors (the source of the expression on common identity) and mediating processes (common identity and perceived threat), on intergroup orientations.

Although research on perceptions of social norms and work on personal conceptions of common ingroup identity have proceeded largely independently, these different processes may operate jointly. For example, when group identity is more salient, people attend to and conform more strongly to group norms and punish those who deviate from these norms more severely (Hogg & Reid, 2006; see also research on the black sheep effect, Marques & Paez, 1994). In addition, in earlier research, we obtained initial evidence that people can be systematically influenced by information that *others* perceived members of different groups within a common ingroup identity. In particular, Gómez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner, and Cuadrado (2008, Study 1) found that high school students who learned that other ingroup members categorized students at two different schools within the common identity of "students" showed less ingroup favoritism in evaluations and greater willingness for contact compared with when this information was not presented. However, when high school students received the same information about being seen within a common ingroup identity but *originating from outgroup*, rather than ingroup members, they displayed *greater* ingroup favoritism and *less* willingness to engage in intergroup contact than did those who were not presented with this information.

The current research was designed not only to extend this line of inquiry by examining the processes that underlie the effects obtained by Gómez et al. (2008) but also to investigate two different (although potentially related) mediating mechanisms. One potential mechanism is personal representations of a common ingroup identity (investigated in both Experiments 1 and 2); the other possible mechanism is the feelings of threat, which may be decreased or increased depending upon whether common identity is endorsed by another ingroup or an outgroup member (examined in Experiment 2).

Research on persuasion has revealed that the opinions of ingroup members influence individuals' attitudes and actions more than the opinions of outgroup members do (Mackie, Worth, & Asuncion, 1990; Worth & Mackie, 1987). Even in the absence of explicit persuasive messages, people tend to be particularly attuned to and influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of ingroup members, and are more likely to conform to their views, attitudinally and behaviorally (Ariyanto, Hornsey, & Gallois, 2006; Hogg & McGarty, 1990; Hogg & Smith, 2007; Terry & Hogg, 1996; J. C. Turner, 1991). According to self-categorization theory (J. C. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; see also Abrams & Hogg, 2010, and J. C. Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), the opinions of ingroup members are particularly persuasive because they are perceived to be more informative about reality than are the opinions of outgroup members, who are perceived to be less trustworthy. Moreover, implicating the key moderating role of self-categorization, the persuasiveness of information from ingroup relative to outgroup members increases when group identities are made more salient (McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson, & Turner, 1994). Thus, we hypothesized in Experiment 1 that information indicating that other members of the ingroup categorize outgroup members within a superordinate identity would reduce intergroup discrimination, and that this effect would be the result of internalizing perceptions of this common group identity endorsed by other ingroup members.

The present research also explored another aspect of the dynamics of learning that others view the ingroup and outgroup within an inclusive, common group identity—the finding from Gómez et al. (2008) that this view expressed by members of the outgroup seemed to arouse more negative intergroup orientations. In the present research, we thus further investigated that such negative responses may be due to the threat to group identity and values (Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009). Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) proposes that people are motivated to maintain the positive distinctiveness of their group relative to other groups. When the distinctiveness of one's group is threatened, people are motivated to reestablish positive and distinctive group identities and thereby maintain relatively high levels of intergroup discrimination (Brown & Wade, 1987) or show increased levels of discrimination (Crisp et al., 2006; Deschamps & Brown, 1983; see also Jetten et al., 1997). Thus, learning that outgroup members claim common identity with ingroup members may arouse feelings of threat, which makes it difficult actually to conceive of outgroup members as part of a common group. Attempts by members of a lower status outgroup, such as by immigrants in the present study, may be especially threatening because their inclusion in the ingroup, in this case the common ingroup, may be perceived to dilute the status of the ingroup (Gómez et al., 2008, Study 2) and undermine core social values of the host society while strategically enhancing the power, status, and resources of the outgroup (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In Study 2, we therefore examined simultaneously the hypothesized roles of personal one-group representations and perceptions of threat in responses to expressions of common identity by ingroup and outgroup members.

## Experiment 1

Gómez et al.'s (2008) research found that when people learned that ingroup members categorized groups within a common identity they developed more positive intergroup orientations, but when they learned that outgroup members categorized groups in the same way, they became more negative in their intergroup orientation. However, these effects were tested in separate studies. Experiment 1 goes beyond the Gómez et al.'s (2008) research by examining the effects of ingroup or outgroup categorization compared with a neutral source categorization condition in the same paradigm, while also testing the extent to which the effects of the source of categorization on intergroup orientations are mediated by differences in which participants personally endorse a one-group representation of the groups.

In this experiment, high school students read a newspaper article about the opinions of citizens of the European Union (EU) that included information that members of (a) the participants' national ingroup (other Spaniards), (b) an outgroup (immigrants from Eastern European EU countries), or (c) a neutral group of professionals (economists, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians from other European countries) categorized citizens from Spain and those from Eastern European countries within a common identity (i.e., as Europeans). Thus, the information about categorization always came from people from the EU, but we varied whether that source of this endorsement of common identity was from participants' national ingroup or another group. We measured the extent to which participants perceived the groups within a common ingroup identity (a one-group representation) and their positive intergroup orientations toward the immigrant group.

We predicted, based on research on the influence of ingroup members on normative perceptions (Ariyanto et al., 2006; Hogg & McGarty, 1990; Hogg & Smith, 2007; Terry & Hogg, 1996; J. C. Turner, 1991) that, compared with the neutral source condition, learning that ingroup members categorized the groups within a common identity would produce more positive intergroup orientations, and that personal endorsement of one-group representations would mediate this effect. However, because learning that outgroup members categorize the groups within a common identity can arouse threats to the ingroup (Jetten et al., 1997; Stephan et al., 2009), we expected that, compared with the neutral source condition, learning that outgroup members categorized the groups within a common identity would produce less positive intergroup orientations, and that weaker one-group representations would mediate this effect.

### Method

*Participants and Design.* Fifty-five high school students (28 male, 27 female, *M* age = 14.83, *SD* = 0.71) from Madrid, Spain, participated in the present study in their classrooms with the consent of their parents. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental categorization source conditions (ingroup source vs. outgroup source vs. neutral source).

*Procedure.* Participants were first informed that the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education was interested in opinions of Spaniards toward immigrants from Eastern European countries that belong to the EU (specifically Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, and Poland). Participants were then asked, ostensibly to acquaint them with the issues, to read a newspaper article, "Is there a European spirit?" The text appeared in the form of a 225-word article in a national newspaper that described a research project supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education and by the European Union and included a map of Europe clearly indicating the location of each of these countries. The newspaper article stated that a group of participants was interviewed to learn their opinion about immigrants from Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, and Poland in Spain. These countries were selected based on pilot testing with a similar sample

of Spanish participants indicating that these countries were perceived to be significantly lower in status than Spain.

Information presented within the article was systematically varied to represent the three experimental conditions. In the *ingroup condition*, the article reported that, in a representative survey, 80% of Spaniards agreed that immigrants from these countries and Spaniards belong to the same group, "We are all Europeans." In the *outgroup condition*, the article reported that 80% of immigrants from these countries who are living in Spain expressed the sentiment, "We are all Europeans." In the *neutral condition*, participants read about a group of professionals (economists, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians) from different countries of the EU, not specifying the experts' particular nationalities, discussing the EU and immigration in Spain. The article reported that 80% of these experts agreed, based on historical events and contemporary political and economic circumstances, that Spaniards and immigrants from these countries "are all Europeans." After reading the newspaper article, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions about their attitudes and orientations. Participants responded to all items on scales ranging from 0 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*).

The items of interest for the present research were among questions asking students' opinions about the newspaper article and general educational issues, which were included to reinforce the cover story. Some of these items were designed to test whether the experimental manipulation was successful and to assess possible unintended influences in the study, specifically differences across conditions in perceptions of the strength of endorsement for common identity, credibility of the article, and relative status of the ingroup and outgroup.

*Perceptions of the strength of endorsement for common identity* in the article was assessed with the item: "To what extent do you think that [Spaniards or immigrants from Eastern European EU countries, or experts of the European Union in general] who participated in the research presented in the first part of this study included Spaniards and immigrants from Eastern Europe in the same group, that is, Europeans?"

Six items assessed the *perceived credibility of the article* (see Gómez et al., 2008) as (a) credible, (b) convincing, (c) realistic, (d) trustworthy, (e) sincere, and (f) reliable (α = .71).

It was assumed that participants would perceive immigrants as relatively lower in status than Spaniards. To examine how participants perceived the status of immigrants, we asked them to what extent they agreed with the following statements: (a) "The economical, social and cultural levels of immigrants from these countries are superior to Spain" and (b) "The status of immigrants from these countries is higher than the status of Spaniards;" $r(54) = .74$, $p < .001$.

Next, we assessed one potential mediating variable. Participants' *personal representations of common group identity* between Spaniards and Eastern European immigrants

was assessed, as in previous research (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000, 2011), by asking Spanish participants to rate the extent to which they felt that Eastern European immigrants in Spain and Spaniards were "one group." The outcome measure, *positive intergroup orientations*, was developed through pilot testing with separate samples and assessed by participants' responses to a 10-item scale (e.g., "I would be willing to be related to immigrants from these countries," "I would cooperate with immigrants from these countries to solve problems that affect all Europeans," "We should provide social programs that help these immigrants face the problems of our society"). These responses were averaged to produce a composite measure (α = .93). Higher scores indicate more positive intergroup orientations toward immigrants from Eastern Europe.

## Results

*Preliminary Analyses.* No systematic effects were obtained for participant gender across the measures, and thus participant gender was not included in subsequent analyses. As expected, there were no differences between the ingroup, the outgroup, and the neutral source categorization conditions for perceptions of the extent to which people in the article expressed common identity between Spaniards and Eastern European immigrants, $M$s = 4.16 ($SD$ = 0.83) versus 4.41 ($SD$ = 0.79) versus 4.31 ($SD$ = 0.82), respectively, $F(2, 54) = .45$, $p = .64$. Also, the believability of the article, as assessed by the scale representing the six credibility ratings, was comparably high across the conditions, for the ingroup $M$ = 3.72 ($SD$ = 0.36), the outgroup, $M$ = 3.75 ($SD$ = 0.39), and the neutral source, $M$ = 3.71, ($SD$ = 0.41) categorization, respectively, $F(2, 54) = .06$, $p = .94$. In addition, participants in the different conditions consistently disagreed that the outgroup status was superior to the ingroup status, compared with the midpoint of the scale (3), $M$ = 1.70, ($SD$ = 1.05), $t(54) = -9.20$, $p < .001$. As expected, there were no differences between the ingroup, the outgroup, and the neutral source of categorization conditions in their responses to the questions about the status of the outgroup compared with the ingroup, $F(2, 54) = 1.45$, $p = .24$. Overall, as intended, across conditions participants perceived the experimental context in comparable ways.

*Positive Intergroup Orientations, One-Group Representations, and Mediation.* As predicted, a one-way ANCOVA demonstrated a significant effect for positive intergroup orientations, $F(2, 54) = 15.12$, $p < .001$. As shown in the left column of Table 1, Tukey's HSD tests revealed that intergroup orientations were more positive in the ingroup categorization condition than in the neutral source categorization condition, and more positive in the neutral source categorization condition than in the outgroup categorization condition. The analysis of participants' own one-group representations revealed the same effects. Overall, there was a difference among the three conditions, $F(2, 54) = 15.28$, $p < .001$. Participants in the

**Table 1.** The Effects of the Source of the Categorization on Positive Orientations Toward the Outgroup, One-Group Representations, Symbolic Threat, and Realistic Threat

| | Experiment 1 | | | | | | Experiment 2 | | | |
| | Ingroup categorization | | Neutral categorization | | Outgroup categorization | | Ingroup categorization | | Outgroup categorization | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive orientations | 5.36[a] | 0.64 | 4.55[b] | 0.63 | 3.59[c] | 1.46 | 5.16[a] | 1.10 | 2.91[b] | 1.65 |
| One-group representations | 4.26[a] | 1.59 | 3.00[b] | 1.70 | 1.35[c] | 1.41 | 4.86[a] | 1.44 | 1.34[b] | 1.11 |
| Symbolic threat | | | | | | | 1.08[b] | 0.96 | 3.50[a] | 1.15 |

Note: Columns with different superscripts are significant at *p* < .05 from a Tukey's test.

ingroup categorization condition had stronger one-group representations than did those in the neutral source categorization condition, who in turn had stronger one-group representations than those who were in the outgroup categorization condition.

To test the central hypothesis that one-group representations would mediate the effect of the experimental manipulation on positive intergroup orientations, we created two dummy-coded variables (one with the ingroup condition coded 1 and the other conditions coded 0; the other with the outgroup condition coded 1 and the other conditions coded 0), representing the three-level experimental manipulation of source of endorsement of common group membership (ingroup, outgroup, and neutral conditions). We included these two dummy-coded variables simultaneously as predictors in regression analyses, which tested the effect of (a) the ingroup categorization condition versus the neutral source categorization condition and (b) the outgroup categorization condition versus the neutral source categorization condition.

In one regression analysis, both the contrast testing the ingroup versus the neutral condition, $b = .81$, $SE = .314$, $p = .013$, and the contrast testing the outgroup condition versus the neutral condition, $b = -.96$, $SE = .323$, $p = .004$, significantly predicted behavioral intentions. In a second regression, the contrasts testing ingroup versus the neutral condition, $b = .66$, $SE = .268$, $p = .017$, and the outgroup condition versus the neutral condition, $b = -.86$, $SE = .276$, $p = .003$, also significantly predicted one-group representations. Consistent with the hypothesized mediation, in a third regression, which included the two dummy-coded variables and one-group representations as predictors, the ingroup versus neutral contrast, $b = .40$, $SE = .284$, $p = .165$, and the outgroup versus neutral contrast, $b = -.43$, $SE = .301$, $p = .161$, did not have significant effects, while one-group representations did, $b = .62$, $SE = .139$, $p < .001$. Following Hayes and Preacher (2012; MEDIATE Macro), we tested the indirect effects of the two dummy-coded variables simultaneously on behavioral intentions through one-group representations. The bootstrapped estimate of the indirect effects with 95% confidence (*n* boots = 5,000) was between .073 and .959 and between −.972 and −.200 for the difference between the ingroup and neutral

categorization conditions and for the difference between the outgroup and neutral categorization conditions, respectively. Because zero is not in the 95% confidence intervals, the indirect effects in both cases are different from 0 at the *p* < .05 level (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

## Discussion

The results of Experiment 1 help integrate and extend previous work on both common ingroup identity and ingroup norms. However, the model previously has focused on first-person influences, such as perceptions of interdependence between groups and perceived distinctions between groups. The current work provides direct empirical evidence of the processes that underlie how learning that *others* perceive the ingroup and outgroup within a common ingroup identity influences intergroup orientations. Specifically, we found that when other ingroup members (but not outgroup members nor neutral sources) endorse common identity with the outgroup, people internalize one-group representations, and these personal one-group representations mediate positive intergroup orientations. As self-categorization theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; J. C. Turner et al., 1987) suggests, when social identity is salient people readily internalize ingroup norms and group values become their own. Thus, although the source of the idea of common identity is other ingroup members, the mechanism that translates ingroup norms into positive intergroup orientations is the same as the one that operates in direct contact experiences—personal one-group representations.

Experiment 1 also complements previous work on vicarious contact (e.g., observing how others respond in intergroup contexts; Gómez & Huici, 2008; Mazziotta et al., 2011) by identifying an additional mediator. Although inclusion of the other in the self has previously been identified as a mediator of extended contact effects (Dovidio et al., 2011; J. C. Turner et al., 1997; Wright et al., 1997), the present research identifies the mediating role of an element of collective identity. Specifically, a one-group representation refers to perceptions of group membership (collective identity), whereas inclusion of other in the self represents a perception of interpersonal

closeness (an aspect of individual identity). The distinction between collective and personal identity processes is fundamental in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (J. C. Turner et al., 1987), with distinct implications. According to self-categorization theory, when collective identity is salient, people perceive themselves and other ingroup members in group-prototypic ways, experiencing depersonalized attraction rather than interpersonal attraction based on particular similarities between individuals (Hogg & Hains, 1996). Thus, the effect of learning that others think of the ingroup and an outgroup within a common identity may increase attraction toward members of another group as a whole while reducing attention to interpersonal differences that might otherwise inhibit the development of positive intergroup relations.

It is also possible that one-group representations play a role in other forms of indirect contact, such as imagined intergroup contact. Imagining contact by mentally simulating interaction with a member of another group (Crisp & Turner, 2009, 2010) may encourage people to perceive norms for positive intergroup relations more strongly and develop one-group representations. Thus, the present research suggests several avenues for productive research in potentially theoretically integrative ways.

One additional stimulating finding from Experiment 1 is that, conceptually replicating Gómez et al. (2008), learning that ingroup members viewed the ingroup and outgroup members within a common ingroup identity had a positive impact on intergroup relations, while the same information from an outgroup source negatively affected intergroup orientations. Moreover, beyond earlier findings, these divergent effects appeared to occur because information about ingroup members produced stronger personal one-group representations, whereas the information about outgroup members reactively weakened personal one-group representations. Experiment 2 was designed to examine more directly the role of one of these types of threat—symbolic threat to core values. Symbolic threat refers to potential challenges and changes to a group's central values, belief systems, morality, and ideology posed by another group (Stephan et al., 2009). Symbolic threat is particularly relevant to responses to immigrants (Esses, Dovidio, & Hodson, 2002). Experiment 2 therefore directly (a) addressed whether symbolic threat is aroused to a greater extent when outgroup, compared with ingroup members endorse common identity and (b) explored alternative ways in which the one-group representations and symbolic threat may influence intergroup orientations.

## Experiment 2

Experiment 2 used the same basic design and procedures used in Experiment 1, with two main changes. First, besides one-group representations, we also assessed symbolic threat as a potential mediator of the effect of the ingroup/outgroup categorization manipulation. Second, because we were interested in the dynamic relationships among one-group representations, threat, and intergroup orientations, we compared the ingroup categorization condition to the outgroup categorization condition, for which Experiment 1 implicated the role of threat; there was no neutral source categorization condition in this study.

In general, perceptions of threat predict more negative orientations toward other groups (see Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006), whereas representations of others within stronger one-group identities predict more positive orientations toward others formerly seen only in terms of their membership in an outgroup. Also, integrated threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009; Stephan & Stephan, 2000) distinguishes between realistic threat, which involves a concern about a loss of resources or physical harm, and symbolic threat, which involves concerns about group differences in morals, values, standards, and beliefs (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Riek et al., 2006; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999). In pilot work with focus groups, high school students reported that they were primarily concerned about the threats to cultural values and differences posed by immigrants, aspects of symbolic threat, and not particularly concerned about issues related to realistic threat, as job competition and tax burden. Thus, the empirical focus in Experiment 2 was on symbolic threat.

We hypothesized, based on the reasoning and the findings of Experiment 1, that Spanish participants would have more positive intergroup orientations toward immigrants when they learned that the majority (80%) of ingroup members endorsed a superordinate identity (Europeans) involving Spaniards and Eastern European immigrants than when the majority of outgroup members endorsed this common identity. We also expected that, as in Experiment 1, when considered alone, one-group representations would mediate the effect of the source of categorization on intergroup orientations.

However, we further examined alternative ways that expressions of common identity with immigrants by outgroup versus ingroup members can shape intergroup orientations. Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, and Lamoreaux (2010) further demonstrated that one-group representations reduce intergroup discrimination in part by reducing intergroup threat. From this perspective, the endorsement of a common identity between Spaniards and immigrants by ingroup than outgroup members might be expected to create stronger one-group representations, which lowers feelings of symbolic threat, thereby leading to more positive intergroup behavioral intentions. We note that whereas Riek et al. (2010) directly manipulated categorization of the groups as one group or separate groups, the present work investigated the role of a vicarious process—learning that others (ingroup or outgroup members) categorize the groups within a common identity.

Alternatively, it is possible that expressions of common identity, particularly when expressed by immigrants (outgroup members) rather than by Spaniards (ingroup members),

would arouse greater symbolic threat. When this information comes from members of a lower status outgroup, it is likely to be perceived by participants as an illegitimate, self-serving attempt to (a) increase outgroup status at the expense of ingroup members' status (Haunschild, Moreland, & Murrell, 1994; Terry & Callan, 1998) and (b) to change the core values of the ingroup rather than assimilate with the group's values (Dovidio et al., 2010). By contrast, identical information from ingroup members could, because of more positive expectations (Mallett & Wilson, 2010; Pearson et al., 2008) and attributions (Hewstone, 1990), be perceived as more positively motivated and less threatening. This line of reasoning thus suggests that endorsement of a common identity by outgroup members relative to ingroup members would produce greater levels of symbolic threat, which could then inhibit the formation of one-group representations with the outgroup, thereby leading to less positive behavioral intentions toward the outgroup.

## Method

*Participants.* Seventy high school students (34 boys, 36 girls, $M$ age = 14.48, $SD$ = 1.83) from Madrid, Spain, participated in the present study in their classrooms with the consent of their school and parents.

*Procedure.* The design and procedure of Experiment 2 were very similar to those of Experiment 1. With respect to the design, however, there were only two conditions for the source of categorization: Participants were randomly assigned to either an ingroup source or an outgroup source condition. In Experiment 2, which was also described as a survey of Spaniards' opinions about immigrants from Eastern European countries that belong to the EU, participants read the newspaper article that was used in Experiment 1. Identical to the ingroup and outgroup categorization conditions in Experiment 1, the article reported that 80% of Spaniards (ingroup categorization condition) or 80% of immigrants living in Spain (outgroup categorization condition) agreed that immigrants from these countries and Spaniards belong to the same group.

After reading the newspaper article, participants were asked to respond on scales ranging from 0 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*) to a series of questions about their attitudes and orientations as they did in Experiment 1.

Among questions asking students' opinions about the newspaper article and general educational issues, we included the same measures as those in Experiment 1: perceptions of the strength of endorsement for common identity, credibility of the article (α = .73), and disagreement with statements that the outgroup was higher in status than the ingroup ($r$ = .85, $p$ < .001).

Next, we assessed two potential mediating variables: *personal representations of common group identity* (with the same item we used in Experiment 1), and then *symbolic*

*threat*. Symbolic threat was measured by responses to a three-item scale adapted from Stephan et al. (1999): "The beliefs and values of people from these countries regarding moral and religious issues are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Spaniards," "The values and beliefs of people from these countries regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of most Spaniards" (reverse-scored), and "The beliefs and values of people from the other country regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Spaniards." These responses were averaged to produce a composite measure (α = .88). *Intergroup orientations* were measured with the same 10-item scale used in Experiment 1 (α = .96).

## Results

*Preliminary Analyses.* No systematic effects were obtained for participant gender across the hypothesized mediators (one-group representations and symbolic threat), and the dependent measure (positive intergroup orientations). Thus, participant gender was not included as an independent variable in the subsequent analyses. In addition, as expected, there were no differences between the ingroup and the outgroup source categorization conditions for perceptions of the extent to which people in the article expressed common identity between Spaniards and Eastern European immigrants, $Ms$ = 4.23 ($SD$ = 0.84) versus 4.06 ($SD$ = 0.80) respectively, $F(1, 69)$ = .76, $p$ = .39. Also, the credibility of the article was comparably high across the conditions, for the ingroup $M$ = 3.75 ($SD$ = 0.41), and the outgroup source, $M$ = 3.68, ($SD$ = 0.37) categorization, respectively, $F(1, 69)$ = .51, $p$ = .48. Finally, as expected, there were no differences between the ingroup, and the outgroup source of categorization conditions in their disagreement with the items that immigrants were higher in status than Spaniards, $F(1, 69)$ = 1.08, $p$ = .30. Participants in the different conditions consistently disagreed that the outgroup status was higher than the ingroup status, compared with the midpoint of the scale (3), $M$ = 1.89, ($SD$ = 0.86), $t(69)$ = −10.73, $p$ < .001. Overall, as intended, participants perceived the experimental context in comparable ways between the ingroup, and the outgroup source categorization conditions.

*Positive Intergroup Orientations, One-Group Representations, Symbolic Threat, and Mediation.* The right-hand column of Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for positive orientations toward the outgroup, one-group representations, symbolic threat, as well as tests of the ingroup versus the outgroup categorization conditions.

As predicted, participants in the ingroup categorization condition, compared with those in the outgroup categorization condition, displayed significantly more positive intergroup orientations toward immigrants, stronger one-group representations, and lower levels of symbolic threat (see Table 1).

**Table 2.** Correlation Matrix, Experiment 2

| | Ingroup versus outgroup source of categorization | One-group representations | Symbolic threat |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ingroup versus outgroup source of categorization | — | | |
| One-group representations | .81*** | — | |
| Symbolic threat | −.76*** | −.82*** | — |
| Intergroup orientations | .63*** | .63*** | −.72*** |

***p < .001.

Of primary theoretical interest in the present study were the potential psychological processes that may mediate the differential response to the source of the categorization in Spanish participants' positive orientations toward immigrants. As expected, in terms of the zero-order correlations (see Table 2), stronger one-group representations and lower levels of symbolic threat were associated with more positive intergroup orientations. One-group representations and symbolic threat were, as anticipated, inversely related.

To directly test the hypothesis that one-group representations and symbolic threat would sequentially mediate the effect of the experimental manipulation on positive intergroup orientations, we conducted path analyses with observed variables using the maximum likelihood estimation method with the program Lisrel 8.7 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999). We used path analysis instead of SEM because, as Kline (2005) explains, latent variable (structural equation) models require a ratio of cases to parameters of at least 10:1, and preferably 20:1 to produce acceptably stable estimates and therefore, as recommended, used path analysis instead. The size of our sample falls far short of this standard. We examined the fit of the models tested using the $\chi^2$ test, the comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) to assess model fit. Satisfactory fit is indicated by a nonsignificant $\chi^2$, CFI ≥ .95, RMSEA ≤ .06, and SRMR ≤ .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1998).

Figure 1 shows the estimated model with standardized path coefficients for the test of the hypothesized path of the manipulation of ingroup versus outgroup endorsement of common identity through one-group representations and then symbolic threat to intergroup orientations, the theoretical model suggested by the Riek et al. (2010) research. Specifically, the path model depicted in Figure 1, which demonstrates good fit with the data, reveals that the manipulation of ingroup versus outgroup source of categorization directly predicts stronger one-group representations and less threat. The effect of stronger one-group representations on more positive intergroup orientations occurs primarily, and as predicted, through reduced threat. The model presented in Figure 1, in which the manipulation of ingroup versus outgroup source of categorization directly predicts stronger one-group representations and less
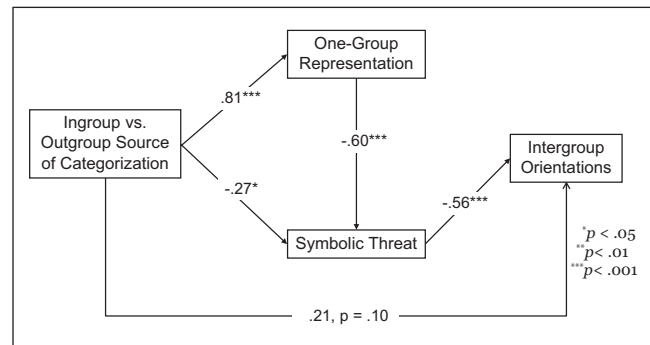


**Figure 1.** Tests of the hypothesis that the effect of stronger one-group representations resulting from ingroup versus outgroup categorization on more positive intergroup orientations would occur through reduced threat
*p = .05. ***p = .001.

symbolic threat, and the effects of one-group representations on positive intergroup orientations is indirect through lower levels of symbolic threat fits the data well, $\chi^2(1) = .01$, $p = .93$, RMSEA = 0.00 (0.0-0.094), CFI = 1.00, IFI = 1.004, GFI = 1.0, SRMR = 0.001, $R^2 = .53$. Consistent with the hypothesized mediation, the direct path from the manipulation of ingroup versus outgroup categorization and intergroup orientations is not significant. Although, as reported earlier, there is a significant zero-order correlation between one-group representations and intergroup orientations, including the direct path from one-group representations to intergroup orientations along with the other effects (which would create a saturated model), this path (.01) is nonsignificant ($p = .93$).

We also considered the alternative model in which greater symbolic threat predicts weaker one-group representations, leading to less positive intergroup orientations. This model is illustrated in Figure 2. Although the separate paths are significant, the direct path from the ingroup versus outgroup categorization manipulation to intergroup orientations remains significant. Although a direct test of the two models is not possible because the alternative models have the same degrees of freedom, we note that for this model, each of the fit indices failed to attain a satisfactory value: $\chi^2(1) = 12.46$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.391 (0.210-0.609), CFI = .946, IFI = .948, GFI = .924, SRMR = 0.053, $R^2 = .44$.
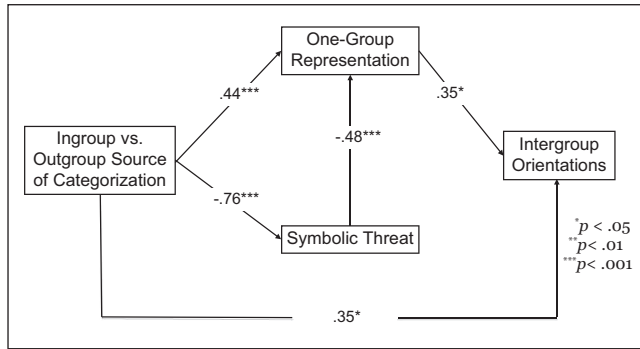
**Figure 2.** Tests of the alternative hypothesis that the effect of reduced threat resulting from ingroup versus outgroup categorization on more positive intergroup orientations would occur through stronger one-group representations
*p = .05. ***p = .001.

However, we note that the comparison of these models should be interpreted cautiously. In addition to the fact that the models cannot be compared directly statistically, we note the model depicted in Figure 1 does not include the path from one-group representation to intergroup orientation, and the model depicted in Figure 2 does not include the path from symbolic threat to intergroup orientations. In a fully saturated model, symbolic threat negatively predicts intergroup orientations ($-.55$, $p < .01$), the path from one-group representations to intergroup orientations is nonsignificant ($.01$, $p = .93$), and the direct path from the manipulation to intergroup orientations is not significant ($.20$, $p < .17$). Nonetheless, while previous work (Riek et al., 2010) offers a theoretical rationale for how one-group representations can improve intergroup orientations by reducing threat, a bidirectional influence, in which greater symbolic threat inhibits the development of one-group representations, which then produces less positive evaluations, remains possible.

## Discussion

Experiment 2 replicated the basic effect that learning that ingroup members endorse a common identity between Spaniards and immigrants produces more positive intergroup orientations than learning that outgroup members express this common identity. These findings support previous research demonstrating the powerful role of ingroup norms, in particular, for improving intergroup relations (Crandall & Stangor, 2005). We note that our results do not represent a direct social modeling effect: There was no explicit information about ingroup members' orientations toward outgroup members, only about their endorsement of common identity.

Understanding the role of ingroup norms in intergroup relations has important conceptual implications. It illuminates a basic process by which social forces and group identity influence intergroup attitudes even in the absence of

direct contact (R. N. Turner et al., 2008). As self-categorization theory (see Abrams & Hogg, 2010; McGarty et al., 1994; J. C. Turner et al., 1987) proposes, people are particularly responsive to ingroup norms; norms expressed by ingroup members are more likely to be internalized (Hogg & McGarty, 1990; McGarty et al., 1994; J. C. Turner, 1991) and may be viewed with less suspicion (Insko et al., 2001).

Moreover, Experiment 2 extended both our earlier research (Gómez et al., 2008) and Experiment 1 by further illuminating the mediating processes involved. Like Experiment 1, learning that a higher proportion of ingroup members categorized outgroup members within a common identity predicted stronger one-group representations. However, we also considered a second mediating mechanism in Experiment 2, the effect of the manipulation on reducing symbolic threat. As depicted in Figure 1, the manipulation of ingroup versus outgroup categorization did, as expected, influence symbolic threat. Although stronger one-group representations had a significant zero-order correlation with positive intergroup orientations, similar to the result observed in Experiment 1, when the effects of symbolic threat were considered simultaneously, the path from one-group representations to positive orientations was not significant in the path analysis, implicating an indirect effect (Riek et al., 2010). Consistent with a substantial body of work (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), reduced symbolic threat predicted more positive intergroup orientations. This pattern of findings is also consistent with a growing body of literature on intergroup emotions (Smith & Mackie, 2010) that suggests that attributions and cognitive assessments (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007) arouse specific emotions, which then are the more proximate determinants of behavior. Thus, whereas much of the work on the common ingroup identity model has emphasized the primary role of cognitive representations of the groups on intergroup orientations, our findings reinforce the value of examining the role of intergroup emotions associated with one-group representations (Johnson et al., 2006; Riek et al., 2010) as an additional link to intergroup orientations.

While results depicted in Figure 1, guided by previous theoretical and empirical work (Riek et al., 2010), suggested the sequence of effects from the manipulation to one-group representation to threat and then to intergroup orientations, we acknowledge that alternative processes may also be involved. As illustrated in Figure 2, although the fit with the data is less satisfactory, it is still quite plausible that symbolic threat aroused by outgroup members claiming common identity might inhibit the development of a common identity, which then leads to less positive intergroup orientations. We acknowledge that the inclusion of a neutral group control condition, like we included in Experiment 1, would help address these alternative possibilities. Indeed, both processes may operate, but differentially as a function of whether ingroup or outgroup members endorse the common identity. Participants may conform with and internalize ingroup views

but may reject and oppose the views of the outgroup, with whom they expect to disagree—a social influence argument in line with self-categorization theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Hogg & McGarty, 1990; McGarty et al., 1994; J. C. Turner, 1991). Thus, different processes occur for ingroup and outgroup communications: Ingroup views lead to conformity and one-group representations, and through those to reduced threat and more positive intergroup orientations. In contrast, outgroup views raise suspicion, lead to perceptions of threat, and hence rejection of the outgroup views, reduced one-group representations, and less positive orientations. This interpretation suggests a dual-process model. For ingroup views, the effect is first on one-group representations, through which then symbolic threats are reduced; but for outgroup views, the effect is first on symbolic threat, because of which one-group representations are rejected and reduced. Future research that includes a neutral source control group would be particularly valuable because it can assess the mediating process for ingroup and outgroup sources separately. We also note that our findings concerning symbolic threat in the processes we studied do not suggest that other forms of threat, such as identity threat related to challenges to group distinctiveness (Crisp et al., 2006; Jetten et al., 1997) are unimportant. Both may operate in parallel or in concert to shape intergroup orientations as a function of ingroup versus outgroup categorization.

## Conclusion and Implications

The two experiments in the current line of research replicate the basic effect of Gómez et al. (2008) that learning that ingroup members categorize the ingroup and the outgroup within a common superordinate identity produces more positive intergroup orientations than similar gestures by outgroup members. In fact, as revealed in Experiment 1, expressions of common identity—at least by members of a lower status outgroup—can elicit more negative intergroup reactions compared with a control condition.

However, the present studies also extend this line of research and integrate it theoretically with work on normative influences in intergroup orientations. Supportive of our hypothesis about how learning of others' perceptions affects personal endorsement of common identity, in both of our experiments participants had stronger one-group representations when ingroup members categorized the ingroup and outgroup within a common identity. One-group representation was a significant mediator of more positive intergroup orientations in Experiment 1, but, when considered simultaneously with symbolic threat in Experiment 2, the effect was indirect, through symbolic threat. This finding supports a growing literature showing generally that the effects of cognitive assessments of groups on intergroup behavior may be substantially mediated by the emotional reactions they arouse (Cuddy et al., 2007; Smith & Mackie, 2010) and indicating more specifically that one-group representations

improve intergroup relations by reducing the experience of intergroup threat (Riek et al., 2010).

As the work of Gómez et al. (2008, Study 2) implicated, threat (either symbolic or to distinctiveness) may be particularly likely to be aroused when the outgroup is lower in status than the ingroup, as appears to be the case, based on the significant disagreement with the statements about the outgroup being higher in status than the ingroup in the current two experiments. Participants in both studies disagreed significantly with the statement that the immigrant outgroup had higher status than Spaniards. Perhaps because of the restricted range in participants' perceptions of the relative status of the immigrant outgroup in the present research, supplementary analyses in Experiments 1 and 2 that included status as a moderator did not alter our results: The main effect of perceived status and interactions involving this variable were not significant (all $p$s > .30). Nevertheless, it is possible that, because outgroup status can influence the nature and intensity of perceived threat (Gómez et al., 2008), further research that manipulates group status may further illuminate how expressions of common identity expressed by ingroup or outgroup members can influence intergroup orientations.

Although the path model in Experiment 2 that best fits the data was one in which stronger one-group representations predicted lower levels of symbolic threat, it is possible that in other contexts and with other manipulations, different directional effects might be obtained: Greater threat could inhibit the development of a one-group representation. Further research might thus explore the possibility that other manipulations, particularly ones likely to generate threat directly, could negatively impact one-group representations and their consequent influence on behavioral orientations. For example, the size of the outgroup and perceptions that the outgroup will likely increase in size have proven to be a source of threat. According to Social Identity Theory, instability of status relations arouses social identity threat (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Scheepers, 2009), which may be especially strong when the outgroup is larger. For instance, a perception of immigrants as a larger group predicts greater threat, which in turn leads to stronger anti-immigrant prejudice (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010).

Theoretically, the present research also contributes to the literature on indirect forms of contact (Eller, Abrams, & Zimmermann, 2011). Previous work on extended contact suggests that learning that ingroup members have outgroup friends reduces discrimination toward the outgroup by creating greater personal feelings of closeness with the outgroup (Gómez et al., 2011); the present research also reveals that representations of the groups within a common identity may represent an additional path for understanding how indirect forms of contact can improve intergroup relations.

Practically, the current research offers a novel option for intervention. Even when ingroup members might not have outgroup friends, information that ingroup members

conceive of the groups within a common ingroup identity can initiate cognitive responses (more inclusive representations) and affective processes (reductions in intergroup threat) that are sufficient to create more positive and cooperative orientations toward the outgroup. In the wake of intense conflict (as in Rwanda; Paluck, 2009), changing perceptions of social norms—what other ingroup members think and feel—may be a critical first step toward changing personal intergroup attitudes, which may be anchored by aversive personal experiences, negative feelings, and cultural stereotypes.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

## Funding

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