Summary

The Effect of Ingroup Identification on Outgroup Attitudes and Behavioral Tendencies: Examples of Cyprus and Turkey

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With increased multiculturalism, ethnic diversity, and immigration around the world, most societies now represent more than one group, which may eventually lead to intergroup conflict and segregation. Such intergroup conflict processes do not only result in physical losses, but they tend to generalize to all different layers of society, affecting group members' perceptions of the ingroup and outgroup (Bar-Tal, 2010; Brewer, 2001). The aim of the current study was to experimentally test the role of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies in two different socio-cultural contexts (Turkish Cypriots' attitudes towards Greek Cypriots in Study 1 and Turkish citizens' attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Study 2), examining outgroup perspective-taking and perceived threat as potential mediators.

Ingroup Identification and Outgroup Attitudes and Behaviors

Past research has consistently shown that the strength of ingroup identification has a critical role in the formation of outgroup attitudes and behaviors. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that ingroup identification is the process of boosting personal-level self-esteem, which leads group members to favor their ingroup over the outgroup (ingroup favouritism; Brewer, 1999). Therefore, according to the theory, ingroup identification is likely to be related to more negative outgroup attitudes and behaviors. Research has shown that Dutch citizens' positive attitudes towards minority group members decreased with increased ingroup identification (e.g., Masson & Verkuyten, 1993; Verkuyten, 2006). Other studies have demonstrated that national identification boosted negative attitudes towards immigrants, especially when ethnic characteristics were salient (Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2011). Previous

research in Turkey has also supported this assumption, demonstrating ethnic group identification to be related to more negative outgroup attitudes and behaviors among Turkish and Kurdish ethnic group members, through increased levels of perceived intergroup conflict and outgroup attribution of responsibility (Bagci & Çelebi, 2017a).

Another group of researchers in the same literature showed that ingroup identification was not directly related to outgroup attitudes and behaviors. According to Brewer (1999), positive emotions towards the ingroup may not directly transform into negative outgroup attitudes, and the main motivation behind negative outgroup behaviors is not hostility towards the outgroup, but liking the ingroup. Mummendey, Klink, and Brown (2001), for example, demonstrated that national identification led to outgroup rejection only when intergroup comparison was made salient. Lyons, Kenworthy, and Popan (2010) indicated that ingroup identification led to more negative outgroup attitudes only among those with moderate and high levels of group-level narcissism.

Moreover, some studies also indicate that ingroup identification may relate to more positive and milder attitudes towards outgroups (e.g., Phinney, 1993). Phinney, Ferguson, and Tate (1997) showed that ethnic group identification was related to more positive ingroup attitudes, which in turn related to more positive outgroup attitudes. In another study, Phinney, Jacoby, and Silva (2007) suggested that group members with achieved social identities are the ones who have overcome an identity crisis and who are securely attached to their identities. Therefore, a strong and secure identification with the ingroup would promote intergroup awareness and understanding, which would consequently result in more positive outgroup attitudes and behaviors.

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Outgroup Perspective-Taking and Perceived Threat

We further aimed to examine two mediators – perspective-taking and perceived threat – as potential drivers of the effect of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies. Past research has suggested that taking the perspective of the other group is an important precursor of positive outgroup behaviors (Batson et al., 1997). Outgroup perspective-taking and empathy have been previously shown to promote outgroup forgiveness and support for multiculturalism in various conflict contexts (Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008; Todd & Galinsky, 2012), while relating to lower levels of negative intergroup processes such as the sense of competitive victimhood and prejudicial attitudes (Andrighetto, Mari, Volpato, & Behluli, 2012; Bagci & Birinci, 2017). Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), through three experiments, demonstrated that experimentally induced perspective-taking led to less ingroup bias and more positive outgroup evaluations, suggesting perspective-taking to be a critical mechanism behind positive outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies.

Contrary to perspective-taking, perceived threat has been suggested to predict negative outgroup attitudes and behaviors. According to Realistic Group Theory (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), intergroup conflict and discriminatory behaviors occur as a result of groups' desires to obtain restricted resources, which eventually leads to anxiety and threat. Research shows that not only materialistic threat, but also the sense of threat towards symbolic values such as religion, language, and culture also influences outgroup evaluations. Empirical research has demonstrated that both materialistic and symbolic threat are related to negative outgroup attitudes, as well as explicit and implicit prejudice (e.g., Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan et al., 2002; Tausch, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2007; Ward & Masgoret, 2006). Other research in Turkey showed that Turks' perceived threat is an important predictor of attitudes towards Kurdish and Armenian minority groups (Bagci & Çelebi, 2017b).

The Current Study

In summary, the current study aimed to explore the effect of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and approaches and avoidance behavioral tendencies in two different intergroup settings. The current study contributes to the existing literature by a) testing the role of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes experimentally, unlike typical correlational studies in the field (e.g., Masson & Verkuyten, 1993; Mummendey et al., 2001), b) examining our research questions among two different Turkish identification contexts, representing various levels of intergroup conflict and segregation.

In light of the mixed findings in the literature as regards ingroup identification's role in outgroup attitudes, we predicted that two scenarios are plausible. Departing from Social Identity Theory, one can posit that ingroup identification would result in lower outgroup perspective-taking, and increased sense of threat which would in turn deteriorate intergroup relationships (Hypothesis 1). On the other hand, in line with Phinney et al.'s (2007) achieved identity construct, it is possible that the ones who are strongly and securely attached to their social identities would have a greater understanding of outgroups (increased outgroup perspective-taking) and a lower sense of threat, which would consequently ameliorate intergroup relationships (Hypothesis 2).

Study 1

Study 1 was conducted in Cyprus and aimed to test the role of ingroup identification among Turkish Cypriots as regards their attitudes towards Greek Cypriots. Cyprus represents a unique intergroup setting where Turkish and Greek Cypriots experience minimum social contact, despite sharing the same island over the years (Husnu & Crisp, 2010). Although both groups are allowed to pass to the other side since 2004, for many, passing to the other side is regarded as inappropriate (Webster & Timothy, 2006). Ingroup identification is an important concept in this specific setting since research shows that Turkish identification is related to greater support for a separate two-state governmental structure, whereas Cypriot identification is related to greater support for a federal solution (Vural & Rustemli, 2006).

Besides outgroup attitudes, we also investigated outgroup behavioral tendencies which have been shown to play a critical role in intergroup relationships (Wyer, 2010). While approach and avoidance tendencies have been suggested to be automatic processes, research shows that under various circumstances, such as when egalitarian norms have been made salient (Wyer, 2010), or when people have been asked to imagine an intergroup contact (Turner, West, & Christie, 2013), outgroup behavioral tendencies tend to change.

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 117 participants (55 females, 62 males, $M_{age} = 31.22$, $SD = 11.04$) completed online and offline questionnaires in North Cyrpus. After completing the demographic form, participants were randomly allocated to two conditions ($n_{control} = 59$, $n_{experimental} = 58$). In the control group, participants were asked to imagine a recent holiday trip and write the details about this expe-

Table 1. Adjusted Means and Standard Errors across the Control and Identification Groups in Study 1

	Control group	Identification group	F	p
Outgroup perspective-taking	5.54 (.16)	5.07 (.16)	4.29	.04
Perceived threat	4.79 (.14)	4.54 (.14)	1.64	.20
Outgroup attitudes	7.54 (.23)	7.04 (.23)	2.31	.13
Approach tendencies	5.87 (.17)	5.66 (.17)	.75	.39
Avoidance tendencies	1.47 (.16)	1.96 (.17)	4.30	.04

rience (when, where, with whom). In the experimental group, participants were asked to think about a recent experience with Turkish Cypriots that made them proud and happy about being a Turkish Cypriot (Sassenberg & Wieber, 2005): "Please try to remember a situation in which you were happy and proud about several Turkish Cypriots (e.g., Turkish Cypriots winning a competition or being successful). It is important that you don't choose a situation that involves only one Turkish Cypriot, but a situation that involves several Turkish Cypriots. If you can't remember an experience of your own, you can also imagine such a situation. We would like you to remember the details of the situation. When, where and with whom did you experience it? Please describe your feelings about this situation in as much detail as possible."

Manipulation Check

Two items were used as manipulation checks ("I feel connected to Turkish Cypriots" and "I feel that I am a Turkish Cypriot"; Verkuyten, 2005, $r = .74$, $p < .001$). Independent samples t-tests showed that the experimental group reported greater ingroup identification ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.99$) compared to the control group ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.64$), $t(115) = 1.98$, $p = .05$.

Materials

Since previous research has shown intergroup contact to predict outgroup attitudes (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), we controlled for *daily intergroup contact* (Barlow et al., 2012) and *contact quality* (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). For the main scales, the response scale ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*), unless otherwise stated. *Outgroup perspective-taking* was measured by two items (e.g., "I have a good understanding of how Greek Cypriots view the world, Aberson & Haag, 2007, $r = .65$, $p < .001$). *Perceived threat* was assessed by a seven-item threat measure involving threat to both symbolic and materialistic values (e.g., unemployment, cultural values; Florack, Piontowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003, $\alpha = .65$). *Outgroup*

attitudes were assessed by feeling thermometer ranging from 0 to 10 degrees (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993). *Approach and avoidance tendencies* were measured by one item each (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000).

Results

To detect group differences, we used a MANCOVA analysis by using contact as the covariate, group as the main independent variable, and perspective-taking, threat, outgroup attitudes, as well as approach and avoidance tendencies as dependent variables. The multivariate effect of group was non-significant, but the univariate effect of group on perspective-taking, $F(1,112) = 4.29$, $p = .041$, $\eta^2 p = .04$, and avoidance tendencies were significant, $F(1,112) = 4.30$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 p = .04$; such that participants in the identification situation demonstrated reduced outgroup perspective-taking and increased avoidance tendencies compared to the control group (see Table 1 for adjusted means and standard errors across groups).

A further look at the mediational analyses (Process Macro, Model 4; Hayes, 2013) indicated that the indirect effects through perspective-taking were significant as regards outgroup attitudes ($B = -.17$, $SE_{boot} = .13$, 95% CI [-.52, -.005]), approach tendencies ($B = -.13$, $SE_{boot} = .10$, 95% CI [-.44, -.007]), and avoidance tendencies ($B = .09$, $SE_{boot} = .08$, 95% CI [.003, .33]). These findings partly confirmed Hypothesis 1, which suggested the indirect negative effect of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and behaviors.

Study 2

Study 2 replicated Study 1 in Turkey by examining Turkish citizens' attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Syrian refugees. Turkey ranks as the country with the highest levels of Syrian refugee intake around the world, with over 3.5 millions Syrians in the country. While the intake has been suggested to continue within the next 10 years (Tunç, 2015), Turkish citizens have become more and more uneased and threatened with

Table 2. Adjusted Means and Standard Errors across the Control and Identification Groups in Study 2

	Control group	Identification group	F	p
Outgroup perspective-taking	3.43 (.12)	3.43 (.13)	.001	.98
Perceived realistic threat	6.25 (.10)	5.92 (.11)	4.91	.03
Perceived symbolic threat	5.38 (.10)	5.38 (.10)	.001	.97
Outgroup attitudes	30.00 (1.93)	28.23 (2.01)	.40	.53
Approach tendencies	2.21 (.12)	2.26 (.12)	.08	.77
Avoidance tendencies	4.03 (.18)	4.11 (.19)	.10	.75

the influx of this group, especially towards inner cities (Erdoğan, 2014). Previous social-psychological research on attitudes towards Syrians in Turkey indicates that Turkish national identification is associated with higher levels of threat and subtle and blatant prejudice (Bagci & Birinci, 2017; Taşdemir, 2018). Hence, we suggested that in line with Study 1 and the first scenario (Hypothesis 1), Turkish identification should relate to lower perspective-taking and greater sense of threat, which in turn relates to more negative attitudes and behavioral tendencies.

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 319 Turkish nationals (205 female, 113 males, one other, M_{age} = 26.61, SD = 9.48) completed online surveys through various social media tools. After the completion of the demographic form, participants were randomly allocated to two conditions ($n_{control}$ = 166, $n_{experimental}$ = 153). In both groups, participants followed the same procedure as in Study 1, except that in the identification condition, participants were asked to remember about an experience involving Turkish nationals.

Manipulation Check and Materials

The same items used in Study 1 as manipulation checks were used (r = .86, p < .001) and as expected, those in the experimental group identified more strongly with their Turkish identity (M = 5.49, SD = 1.88) compared to those in the control group (M = 5.04, SD = 2.21), t(315.10) = -1.99, p = .047. Contact level (see Study 1), age, socio-economic status, and ethnic group (1 = Turkish, 0 = other) were used as control variables. All scale items were adapted to the Turkish-Syrian setting. A CFA on threat items demonstrated that items loaded on two factors as symbolic (religion, cultural values, language, and political beliefs) and realistic threat (unemployment and economy), therefore threat was represented by two subscales (r = .72, p < .001 for

materialistic threat, and α = .84 for symbolic threat). The feeling thermometer ranged from 0 degrees to 100 degrees, and the same behavioral tendencies items were used (see Study 1).

Results

A MANCOVA analysis was performed with age, ethnic group, contact, and SES as covariates, group as the main independent variable, and perspective-taking, symbolic and realistic threat, outgroup attitudes, as well as approach and avoidance tendencies as the dependent variables. The multivariate effect of condition was not significant, however the univariate effect of condition on perceived realistic threat was significant, F(1,297) = 4.91, p = .028, $\eta^2 p$ = .02. Table 2 displays adjusted means and standard errors across conditions.

We further investigated indirect effects through perceived realistic threat and found that ingroup identification led to lower levels of realistic threat which in turn significantly predicted outgroup attitudes (B = 2.15, SE_{boot} = 1.00, 95% CI [.33, 4.27]), approach tendencies (B = .10, SE_{boot} = .05, 95% CI [.01, .19]), and avoidance tendencies (B = -.18, SE_{boot} = .09, 95% CI [-.37, -.03]).

General Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the role of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies across two different socio-cultural contexts using outgroup perspective-taking and perceived threat as two potential mediators. Findings demonstrated that ingroup identification led to lower levels of outgroup perspective-taking in the context of Turkish Cypriots, which in turn related to less positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Greek Cypriots (Hypothesis 1), confirming the indirect negative role of ingroup identification on outgroup processes in Cyprus (Study 1). As opposed to these initial findings, in the Turkish context, we found that experimentally increased ingroup identi-

fication led to lower levels of perceived realistic threat, which consequently led to more positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Syrian refugees, confirming Hypothesis 2 and Phinney et al.'s (2007) suggestion that a secure and strong ingroup identification promoted positive intergroup relationships.

While the current study draws attention to the powerful role of ingroup identification in predicting outgroup attitudes and behaviors, findings about the role of ingroup identification were mixed and dependent on the context, which can be explained by a number of mechanisms. First, the Cyprus context represents a highly conflictual intergroup setting where conflict has been part of the island's history for a long period of time (MacGinty, 2010), whereas the Turkish-Syrian intergroup context has only emerged within the last 10 years, representing a relatively less conflictual setting. Second, the 'outgroup' status of the groups involved in the two studies was different such that Greek and Turkish Cypriots constitute two fairly equal groups (in terms of power) in Cyprus, whereas power assymetries in the Turkish context are more visible, considering the 'refugee' status of immigrants in the country. Moreover, the level of Turkish identification in the two contexts seemed to be different, showing a stronger attachment to Turkish identities in Turkey, constituting a plausible explanation for the differentiation of the findings across the two settings.

Furthermore, we also detected differences in terms of the mediating mechanisms involved. While in the Cypriot context, perspective-taking was the explanatory process for the role of ingroup identification, in the Turkish context, perceived realistic threat was the potential driver of the identification effects. Accordingly, since the two communities in Cyprus live in segregated areas, perspective-taking and the understanding of the outgroup may be a more relevant mediator than perceived threat. On the other hand, with increased numbers of Syrian refugees in Turkey, the sense of threat towards materialistic values such as unemployment may play a more important role in these associations. Nevertheless, our findings in Turkey are contrary to other previous correlational research demonstrating ingroup identification to predict more negative attitudes towards Syrians (e.g., Bagci & Birinci, 2017). The reasons for these inconsistencies may include different methodologies used such that past research involved correlational studies. In contrast, we used an ingroup manipulation where only a positive aspect of ingroup identification was made salient. Previous research has shown social identities to be beneficial for group members to the extent to which they provide various social identity needs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and belonging (Haslam, Jetten, & Haslam, 2012). Therefore, our manipulation may have increased self-es-

teem and self-efficacy among participants leading them to display a more tolerant view of the other group.

Findings should be evaluated critically as our effect sizes were small. Future research may attempt to increase ingroup identification with stronger strategies including visual or perceptual stimuli. We also tested only two potential mediators, but future research may incorporate various other processes such as conflict perception and intergroup anxiety. Although studying our research questions across different settings allows us to test the generality of the findings across settings, the two intergroup settings we examined involved various differences in terms of group status, intergroup conflict, and socio-cultural environment. Further research may explore the same research question by involving different intergroup contexts in similar socio-cultural settings.

In summary, the current study showed the differential function of ingroup identification on outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies in two different contexts. While ingroup identification among Turkish Cypriots decreased perspective-taking and led to more negative outgroup attitudes and behavioral tendencies towards Greek Cypriots, the same manipulation led Turkish citizens to perceive a lower level of realistic threat, which in turn improved positive outgroup attitudes, increased approach behaviors, and decreased avoidance tendencies. Further research is needed to fully understand the function of ingroup identification for conflictual intergroup relationships.

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