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Group motives in threatening contexts: When a loyalty conflict paradoxically reduces the influence of an anti-discrimination ingroup norm

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Abstract

The influence of pro- versus anti-discrimination ingroup norms on Swiss nationals' attitudes towards foreigners was investigated as a function of national identification and perceived material ingroup threat. As predicted, results revealed a significant interaction between identification and threat: High identifiers showed a more negative attitude than low identifiers mainly when perceived threat was high. In other words, high identifiers conformed to the pro-discrimination norm, but showed a counter-conformity effect for the anti-discrimination norm. Additional results revealed that high identifiers actually disagreed with the anti-discrimination norm when perceived threat was high, but that they were more attached to the ingroup. These findings suggest that when the ingroup norm is not an appropriate response to an ingroup threat (i.e. anti-discrimination norm), high identifiers find themselves in a loyalty conflict: they are unable to simultaneously conform to the group norm and protect the group. This conflict was resolved through a compensatory mechanism: High identifiers distanced themselves from the ingroup norm in order to protect the group (i.e. by increasing negative attitudes towards foreigners) but reinforced other ingroup ties (i.e. by increasing attachment to the ingroup values). Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

What does it mean to be, or to act, as an authentic ingroup member? Of course, there are many ways to answer this question. For example, being Swiss would mean that one feels Swiss and identifies with Swiss people, that one defends Swiss identity and Swiss prerogatives against potential threats, and that one thinks and acts as a Swiss (i.e. in the same fashion as the majority of Swiss people). Whereas these and other aspects of identity are expected to co-occur, they may sometimes be in conflict and need to be negotiated. For instance, being tolerant towards outgroups may constitute a normative behaviour that conflicts with the motivation to protect ingroup identity from the threat introduced by an outgroup. How do group members deal with situations in which motivations to conform and defend the ingroup are in opposition? The present research examines this kind of loyalty conflict by focusing on two factors potentially moderating conformity to norms related to intergroup relations, namely perceived ingroup threat and ingroup identification.

Group Conformity and Perceived Threat

It is accepted that social norms are generally influential (e.g. Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & Turner, 1990; Asch, 1956; Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Insko, Drenan, Solomon, Smith, & Wade, 1983; Sherif, 1936, 1954; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001), but that their degree of influence varies as a function of several factors. For instance, normative influence appears to be moderated by the salience of the norm (e.g. Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren,

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1990), awareness of individual-norm discrepancies (e.g. Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991; Dutton, 1976; Katz & Glass, 1979; Muñoz-Rojas, Falomir, Invernizzi, & Leuenberger, 2000; Pérez & Mugny, 1996), and ingroup identification (e.g. Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997).

Past research also suggests that perceived ingroup threat moderates conformity to group norms, and does so as a function of the extent to which the norm provides an appropriate answer to such a threat. For instance, Jetten et al. (2002) found that group norms appeared to be more influential when a threat to ingroup identity was salient, but conformity was observed mainly for a norm strengthening group cohesion and support (i.e. a collectivistic rather than individualistic group norm). Jetten, Spears, & Manstead (1996, Study 2) also found that, compared to an anti-discrimination group norm, a pro-discrimination norm was more influential (i.e. it increased intergroup discrimination) when the outgroup was discriminating against the ingroup (see also Platow, Mills, & Morrison, 2000).

More relevant for the present research, Falomir, Muñoz-Rojas, Invernizzi, and Mugny (2004) observed that Swiss nationals conformed to an anti-discrimination ingroup norm (i.e. they reduced discrimination against foreigners) when the outgroup was perceived as non-threatening (i.e. when foreigners were not perceived as taking jobs nor increasing nationals' unemployment). However, the same norm did not obtain any influence, and a counter-conformity effect even tended to appear, when the outgroup was perceived as threatening (Study 2). Regarding the pro-discrimination norm, no influence was observed in these studies, suggesting that participants' initial level of discrimination was sufficiently adapted to the group standard even under threat conditions. This last finding also suggests that the cultural norm against prejudice and discrimination (e.g. Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994; Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996) renders pro-discrimination ingroup norms less influential, at least in the intergroup conflict conditions specific to this paradigm.

To summarize, the results of these studies suggest that group norms are more influential when they provide guidelines adapted to the context and to the perceptions, values and motives of group members (see Weber, 1922/1995; Zelditch, 2001). In other words, group members do not conform blindly. People seem to be motivated to defend their views against normative principles when these principles contradict personal or moral standards (Hornsey, Majkut, Terry, & McKimmie, 2003; see also Jahoda, 1959). They seem to adopt normative principles more easily when the norm fits the perceived intergroup context, but they may resist or even show counter-conformity when the norm is unsuitable.

These considerations suggest that in some circumstances, group members may be placed in a kind of *loyalty conflict* when the group norm is not adapted to a threatening intergroup context (see also Jetten et al., 1996, 1997). Their motivation to adapt their behaviour to the norm may conflict with their motivation to protect their group against the threatening context. For example, imagine a Swiss national who perceives that most Swiss citizens have positive attitudes towards foreigners but who also perceives this outgroup as threatening ingroup privileges. This person may be motivated to show both a positive attitude towards foreigners (i.e. a conformity effect, but that means to increase ingroup threat) and a negative intergroup attitude (i.e. to safeguard the ingroup, but that means to show counter-conformity). However, these two motivations are in conflict, since both strategies mean that to some extent one is not loyal to one's group.

The Moderating Role of Group Identification

Group identification may constitute a powerful moderator of whether group members feel such a loyalty conflict. Indeed, different predictions can be established for ingroup identification as a function of perceived threat. On the one hand, greater identification should increase motivation to defend ingroup identity and its prerogatives (e.g. Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). One can therefore expect more negative attitudes towards foreigners among high identifiers when the outgroup is perceived as threatening (e.g. Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Levine & Campbell, 1972; Voci, 2006). On the other hand, greater identification should also increase members' endorsement of normative principles (e.g. Christensen, Rothgerber, Wood, & Matz, 2004; Jetten et al., 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1991), in particular when members perceive threat (e.g. Jetten et al., 2002, Study 3; see also Levine & Campbell, 1972). Accordingly, when ingroup threat is high there should be no conflict with the pro-discrimination norm since high identifiers can conform and protect their group at the same time. However, when ingroup threat is high and the ingroup norm is anti-discrimination, conformity and ingroup defence are opposed and high identifiers should be more in conflict than low identifiers.

How can high identifiers manage such a conflict? There is consistent evidence that high identifiers feel more committed to their group and show more group-level responses when their group is threatened, whereas low identifiers are more likely to show individual-level responses (Ellemers et al., 2002). Accordingly, we propose that high identifiers, as compared to low identifiers, should be more concerned with group stakes and challenges than with individually matching group norms, and that they should then be more sensitive to whether or not normative principles are beneficial to the group. When group-related motives are in conflict (e.g. when conformity to an anti-discrimination group norm prevents group protection), high identifiers should act according to the best interests of the group, that is, they should disregard the maladaptive norm. However, this lack of conformity does not have to be considered as a genuine disengagement with the group since high identifiers solve the conflict in the best interests of the group. Therefore, we anticipate that they should solve the loyalty conflict by displaying alternative pro-ingroup behaviours in order to compensate for their lack of conformity and testify their attachment to the group.

Overview and Hypotheses

Participants were all Swiss nationals. National identification was assessed at the pre-test, and perceived threat (low vs high) and ingroup norm (anti- vs pro-discrimination) were manipulated as in Falomir et al. (2004). Attitude towards foreigners, agreement with ingroup norm, and ingroup attachment constituted the main dependent measures. On the basis of the previous considerations, a two-way ingroup identification by perceived threat interaction effect is anticipated regarding attitude towards foreigners. High identifiers, as compared to low identifiers, should manifest a greater negative attitude towards foreigners when threat is high rather than when threat is low.

Despite the fact that this pattern of findings is expected for both the pro-discrimination and the anti-discrimination ingroup norm, different theoretical implications are nevertheless considered within norm conditions. Indeed, greater negative attitudes towards foreigners indicate a conformity effect with the pro-discrimination norm, but a counter-conformity effect when the norm is anti-discrimination. On one hand, high identifiers (as compared to low identifiers) are expected to disagree more with the anti-discrimination norm when perceived threat is high. They then should demonstrate more group attachment in order to compensate for their counter-conformity. On the other hand, high identifiers should agree more with the pro-discrimination norm and show more attachment to their group than low identifiers. However, the group is already coping with the outgroup threat (i.e. by discriminating), and their attitude towards foreigners allows them to reveal their group commitment. Since high identifiers are both normative and defensive of their group, no special compensating behaviour is expected for them when the norm is pro-discrimination. Accordingly, we expected a three-way interaction effect between group identification, ingroup threat and ingroup norm with regards to norm agreement and group attachment.

Finally, mediation analyses were performed in order to provide more compelling evidence in support of the anticipated compensatory mechanism predicted under high threat and anti-discrimination norm conditions. We expected that the more participants identify with the ingroup, the more they will disagree with the anti-discrimination norm and show negative attitudes towards foreigners and, as a consequence, the more they will show ingroup attachment. This pattern of findings was not expected when the norm was pro-discrimination.

METHOD

Participants and Design

Participants were 100 women and 40 men (131 were undergraduate university students); mean age was 24.63 ($SD = 7.60$). They were all Swiss nationals, participated voluntarily, and were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions resulting from a 2 (ingroup threat: low vs high) \times 2 (ingroup norm: anti-discrimination vs pro-discrimination) factorial design.

Independent Variables

Ingroup Identification

Three questions measured Swiss identity: 'Do you feel Swiss?', 'Is it important to you to be Swiss?', and 'Do you identify with Swiss people?' Scales ranged from 1 'absolutely not' to 9 'absolutely yes'. A score for national identification was computed by averaging the answers to the three items ($\alpha = .85$; $M = 4.98$, $SD = 2.05$). Participants were divided into two groups on the basis of a median split. Those below the median were classified as 'low identifiers' ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.29$), while those above were classified as 'high identifiers' ($M = 6.85$, $SD = 1.01$). The low identifier and high identifier scores differed significantly from the scale's middle-point, $t(76) = 10.38$, $p < .001$, and $t(62) = 14.52$, $p < .001$, respectively. Main analyses were performed with this median split variable, and analyses treating identification as a continuous variable are presented in footnotes.

Ingroup Threat

Ingroup threat was manipulated as described in Falomir et al. (2004). In low threat conditions, a negative relationship between the increasing proportion of immigrants in Switzerland and the unemployment rate of Swiss nationals was illustrated, whereas a positive relationship was depicted in the high threat conditions. Two items assessed the perception of ingroup threat: 'Foreigners take the jobs of Swiss people', and 'Foreigners and Swiss people are in competition for jobs' (1 = 'absolutely not' and 9 = 'absolutely yes'; $r = .58$; $M = 3.20$, $SD = 2.07$).

Ingroup Norm

Participants were then informed about the results of a study supposedly carried out on a representative sample of the Swiss population. Results from four questions were displayed in figures indicating percentages of responses: 'Do you prefer to favour Swiss people rather than foreigners?', 'Should the percentage of foreigners increase or decrease?', 'Do you agree that foreigners' living conditions should be improved?', and 'Swiss policy towards immigration should be more restrictive or more favourable?'. In the anti-discrimination (vs pro-discrimination) norm condition, participants were informed that 88% of the interviewed people answered 'No' (vs 'Yes') to the first question, 78% answered 'increase' (vs 'decrease') to the second, 75% answered 'Yes' (vs 'No') to the third, and 80% answered 'more favourable' (vs 'more restrictive') to the fourth. One question assessed ingroup norm perception in which participants had to choose between two different sentence endings: 'According to recent statistics, the majority of Swiss are...' followed by the choice of 'in favour of foreign immigrants' or 'in disfavour of foreign immigrants'.

Dependent Variables

Attitude Towards Foreigners

A 9-items scale was used to assess participants' attitude towards foreigners (e.g. 'Many of the foreigners living in Switzerland should return home', 'The naturalization of foreigners should be facilitated in Switzerland' (reverse score), 'My overall evaluation of foreigners is positive' (reverse score)). Scales ranged from 1 'absolutely in disagreement' to 9 'absolutely in agreement'. A mean score was computed for this scale ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.42$; higher values reflect a more negative attitude towards foreigners).

Ingroup Norm Agreement

Three questions assessed participants' agreement with the ingroup norm ('Do you think the opinion of the Swiss majority is legitimate?', 'Do you think the opinion of the Swiss majority is appropriate?', 'Do you agree with the opinion of the

Swiss majority?'; 1 = 'absolutely not' and 9 = 'absolutely yes'). Scores were averaged to obtain an index of norm agreement ($\alpha = .93$, $M = 4.30$, $SD = 2.59$).

Ingroup Attachment

Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al., 1987) posits that people categorize themselves and others at different levels: the superordinate level of humanity (defining one's human identity), the basic intergroup level (defining one's social identity based on group membership), and the subordinate level of self (defining one's personal identity). This theory also claims that the level of categorization depends on the context. For instance, when the context increases group level salience, one is more likely to shift from superordinate- or subordinate-self descriptions to group-self descriptions. Accordingly, three items assessed participants' attachment to Swiss identity and values in connection with the superordinate level of categorization: 'To what extent do you identify...' (1 = 'to humanity' and 9 = 'to Swiss people'), 'To what extent do you feel...' (1 = 'you are a citizen of the world' and 9 = 'you belong to Switzerland'), and 'To what extent do you endorse...' (1 = 'universal values' and 9 = 'specific Swiss values'). A measure of ingroup attachment was computed by averaging the answers to the three scales. Given the comparative nature of the measure, ingroup attachment was overall low ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.72$).

RESULTS

Ingroup Norm Perception

In the anti-discrimination norm condition, the majority of Swiss people was perceived as more pro-foreigner ($n = 65$; 94.2%) than anti-foreigner ($n = 4$; 5.8%), whereas in the pro-discrimination norm condition it was perceived as more anti-foreigner ($n = 67$; 95.7%) than pro-foreigner ($n = 3$; 4.3%), $\chi^2 = 112.42$, $p < .001$. Indeed, only seven participants did not correctly complete the norm information, but they were not excluded from the main analyses since preliminary analyses showed similar findings when excluding them.

Ingroup Threat Perception

The 2 (identification) \times 2 (norm) \times 2 (threat) ANOVA performed on perceived threat scores revealed an expected significant main effect for ingroup threat, $F(1, 131) = 40.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$; foreigners were perceived as more threatening in the high threat condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 2.20$) than in the low threat condition ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.52$). The analysis also showed a significant effect for ingroup identification, $F(1, 131) = 5.53$, $p < .02$, $\eta^2 = .04$: low identifiers perceived foreigners as less threatening ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.95$) than high identifiers ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 2.16$). Finally, the analysis also showed a significant identification by threat interaction, $F(1, 131) = 5.44$, $p < .03$, $\eta^2 = .04$. There was a significant difference between high and low identifiers in the high threat conditions ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 2.15$, and $M = 3.60$, $SD = 2.07$, respectively), $p < .001$, but not in the low threat conditions ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.30$, and $M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.69$, respectively), $p > .90$.

Attitude Towards Foreigners

The same ANOVA performed on the attitude towards foreigners scores showed a significant main effect for ingroup identification, $F(1, 132) = 32.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$; high identifiers ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.42$) had a more negative attitude than low identifiers ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.22$). The analysis also revealed a significant main effect for ingroup norm, $F(1, 132) = 12.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$; the attitude was more negative in the anti-discrimination norm condition ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.55$) than in the pro-discrimination norm condition ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.23$). Finally, the expected ingroup

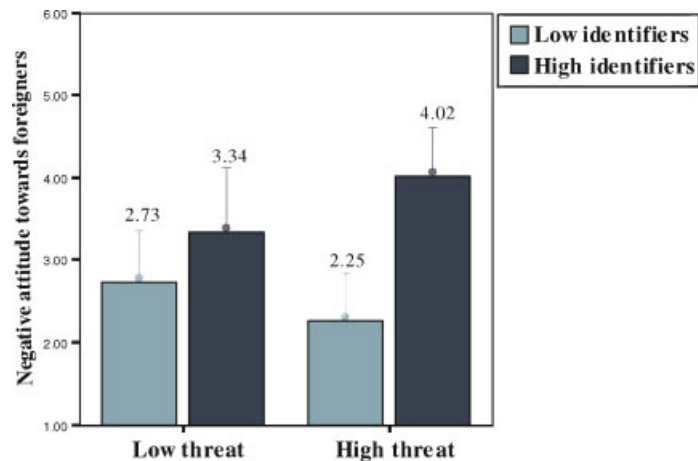


Figure 1. Negative attitude towards foreigners as a function of ingroup identification and ingroup threat (error bars show standard deviation)

identification by ingroup threat interaction was also significant, $F(1, 132) = 9.52, p < .002, \eta^2 = .06$ (see Figure 1). High identifiers showed a more negative attitude than low identifiers when threat was low ($M = 3.34, SD = 1.55$, and $M = 2.73, SD = 1.24$, respectively), $p < .05$, and this difference was stronger when threat was high ($M = 4.02, SD = 1.18$, and $M = 2.25, SD = 1.16$, respectively), $p < .001$. Indeed, high identifiers displayed a more negative attitude when the threat was high rather than low, $p < .04$, whereas no difference was observed for low identifiers, $p = .11$. As expected, the three-way interaction was not significant, $F(1, 132) = 0.89, p = .35, \eta^2 = .01$.¹

Ingroup Norm Agreement

The ANOVA performed on norm agreement revealed a significant main effect for ingroup norm, $F(1, 132) = 97.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .42$. Participants agreed more with the anti-discrimination ingroup norm ($M = 6.01, SD = 2.33$) than with the pro-discrimination ingroup norm ($M = 2.66, SD = 1.56$). Results also showed a significant ingroup norm by ingroup identification interaction, $F(1, 132) = 22.73, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, and a significant threat by identification interaction, $F(1, 132) = 8.97, p < .003, \eta^2 = .06$. However, and as expected, the three-way interaction between norm, threat and identification also reached significance, $F(1, 132) = 6.31, p < .02, \eta^2 = .04$ (cf. Figure 2).²

In the pro-discrimination norm condition, the analysis only showed a significant ingroup identification effect, $F(1, 132) = 8.43, p < .004$: low identifiers agreed less with this norm ($M = 2.06, SD = 1.23$) than high identifiers ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.64$). Concerning the anti-discrimination norm condition, a main effect for identification, $F(1, 132) = 14.64, p < .001$, and an identification by threat interaction effect, $F(1, 132) = 14.66, p < .001$, were significant. No difference was observed between high ($M = 6.06, SD = 2.81$) and low ($M = 6.06, SD = 2.01$) identifiers when the threat was low, $p > .95$, but high identifiers ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.82$) agreed less than low identifiers ($M = 7.19, SD = 1.13$) with the anti-discrimination norm when the threat was high, $p < .001$. Finally, participants agreed more with the anti-discrimination norm than with the pro-discrimination norm in all conditions, $ps < .01$, except when both ingroup identification and threat were high, $p < .36$.

¹The same ANOVA performed with identity as a continuous variable showed the same effects: the norm main effect, $F(1, 132) = 9.82, p = .002$, the identification main effect, $F(1, 132) = 26.37, p < .001$ and the identification by threat interaction effect, $F(1, 132) = 7.01, p = .009$, were significant. The three-way interaction was not significant, $F(1, 132) = 0.28, p = .60$.

²Given the strong effect of ingroup norm induction, Levene's test of equality of error variances was significant, $F(7, 132) = 4.47, p < .001$. However, contrasts without assuming the equality of variance raised the same effects described here. The same analysis using identification as a continuous variable confirmed the reported effects. The norm main effect, $F(1, 132) = 106.01, p < .001$, the norm by identification interaction effect, $F(1, 132) = 10.94, p < .001$, the threat by identification interaction effect, $F(1, 132) = 6.13, p < .02$, and the three-way interaction effect, $F(1, 132) = 4.69, p < .04$, were significant.

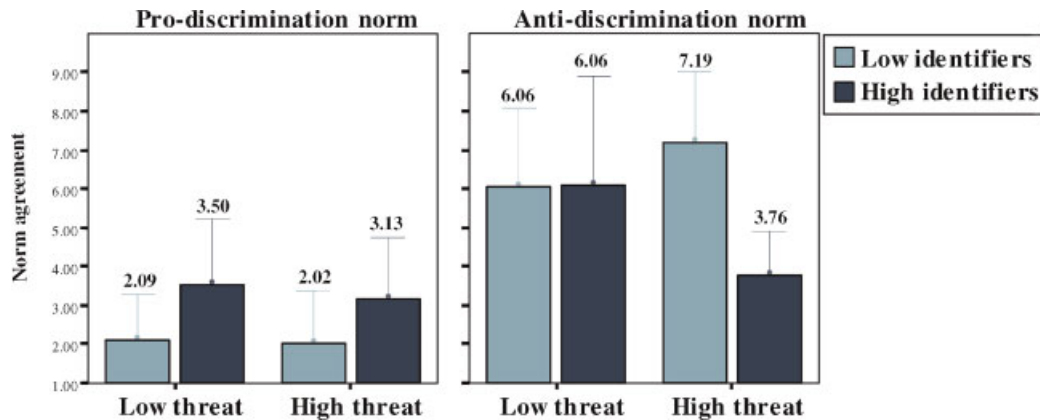


Figure 2. Agreement with ingroup norm as a function of ingroup identification, ingroup norm and ingroup threat (error bars show standard deviation)

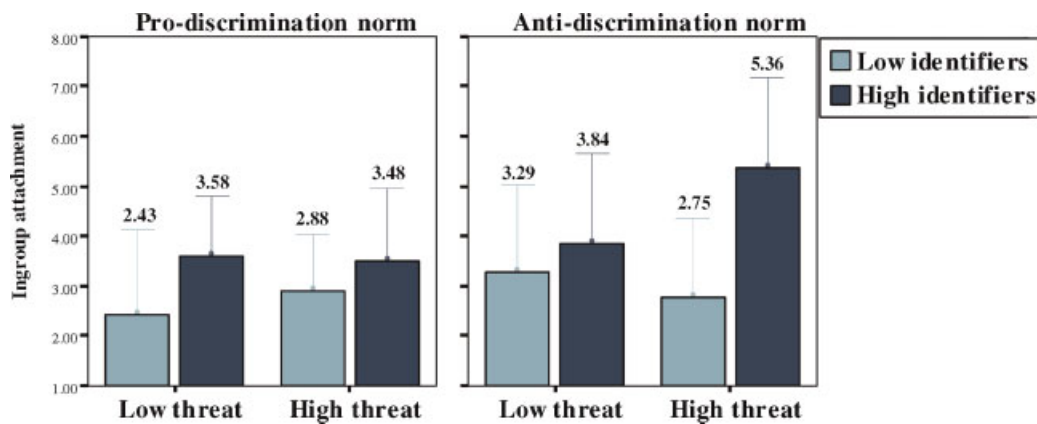


Figure 3. Ingroup attachment as a function of ingroup identification, ingroup norm and ingroup threat (error bars show standard deviation)

Ingroup Attachment

The ANOVA performed on the ingroup attachment scores revealed significant main effects for norm, $F(1, 129) = 6.69$, $p < .02$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and identification, $F(1, 129) = 19.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$. Ingroup attachment was higher for high identifiers ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.68$) than low identifiers ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.60$), and also higher for the anti-discrimination norm ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.89$) than the pro-discrimination norm ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.49$). Furthermore, and as expected, the three-way interaction effect was also significant, $F(1, 129) = 5.46$, $p < .03$, $\eta^2 = .04$ (cf. Figure 3).³ Once again, only the main effect for identification reached the significance level in the pro-discrimination norm condition, $F(1, 129) = 5.05$, $p < .03$; high identifiers ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.33$) showed stronger attachment to the ingroup than low identifiers ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.51$). With regards to the anti-discrimination norm condition, the effect for ingroup identification was significant, $F(1, 129) = 12.81$, $p < .001$, but as expected this effect was qualified by the ingroup threat, $F(1, 129) = 6.67$, $p < .02$. Ingroup attachment was higher for high identifiers ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.79$) than for low identifiers ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.60$) when threat was high, $p < .001$, but not when threat was low, $p < .29$ ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.80$, and $M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.72$, respectively). Furthermore, high identifiers were more attached to the ingroup when the threat was high than when it was low, $p < .001$.

³The same analysis using identification as a continuous variable confirmed the reported effects. The norm main effect, $F(1, 129) = 4.17$, $p < .05$, the identification main effect, $F(1, 129) = 9.81$, $p < .002$, and the three-way interaction effect, $F(1, 129) = 4.70$, $p < .04$, were significant.

Mediation Analyses

A series of regression analyses were performed for high threat conditions using ingroup identification (continuous score) as the independent factor, ingroup attachment as the dependent variable and either norm agreement and attitude (separately) as mediators. Since ingroup attachment was not predicted by ingroup identification when the norm was pro-discrimination, $\beta = .18$, $p = .31$, neither norm agreement nor attitude can be considered mediators for this condition. Regarding the anti-discrimination norm condition, identification predicted ingroup attachment, $\beta = .56$, $p = .001$, disagreement with the norm, $\beta = -.55$, $p < .002$, and attitude, $\beta = -.55$, $p = .002$. When identification and norm agreement were considered together, norm disagreement significantly increased ingroup attachment, $\beta = -.44$, $p < .02$, and the effect of identification was significantly reduced, $\beta = .31$, $p = .08$, Sobel $z = 2.10$, $p < .04$. When identification and attitude were considered together as predictors, attitude significantly predicted ingroup attachment, $\beta = .48$, $p = .008$, while identification did not, $\beta = .28$, $p < .11$, $z = 2.26$, $p < .03$. To summarize, mediation analyses showed that, in high threat conditions, norm agreement and attitude mediated the effect of identification on ingroup attachment when the norm was anti-discrimination but not when it was pro-discrimination.

DISCUSSION

The present research examined the effect of ingroup identification, perceived ingroup threat and group norm (i.e. pro-discrimination vs anti-discrimination) on Swiss nationals' attitudes towards foreigners. We predicted and found a significant interaction between identification and threat, independently of the group norm. More specifically, high identifiers showed more negative attitudes than low identifiers mainly when the ingroup threat was high. This finding suggests that, in ingroup threatening conditions, high identifiers are influenced by the pro-discrimination norm, but that they display a counter-conformity effect when the norm is anti-discrimination. Indeed, additional results showed that high identifiers actually disagreed with the anti-discrimination norm when perceived threat was high. Despite the fact that participants were university students and overtly against discrimination, when the threat was high, their agreement with the anti-discrimination norm was as low as their agreement with the pro-discrimination norm. Overall, these findings provide consistent evidence for the hypothesis that high identifiers actively oppose, rather than disregard, the anti-discrimination norm when this norm is considered inappropriate for coping with the threat introduced by the outgroup, thereby confirming the existence of a counter-conformity effect.

We also predicted that this counter-conformity effect might place high identifiers in a kind of loyalty conflict since past research consistently showed that they are strongly motivated to endorse normative principles (e.g. Christensen et al., 2004; Jetten et al., 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). We then anticipated that high identifiers should testify their group commitment by strengthening their group ties in order to compensate for their deviance from the group norm. Accordingly, results confirmed that high identifiers showed a greater attachment to ingroup values and identity, specifically in the counter-conformity condition (i.e. when perceived threat was high and the ingroup norm was anti-discrimination). Finally, mediation analyses confirmed that in such a condition, norm disagreement and attitude towards foreigners actually mediated the effect of identification on ingroup attachment. In other words, high identifiers were, to some extent, obliged to betray their group (i.e. to act against the anti-discrimination norm) even if it was for a good reason (i.e. in order to protect the group against the threat), and they had to compensate for such an apparent lack of loyalty by increasing their ingroup attachment.

These results confirm those observed by Falomir and colleagues (2004) by showing that conformity is not a universal drive, but rather an adaptive mechanism activated as a function of the individual and group needs. Indeed, conformity does not appear unless the norm constitutes a group adaptive answer to the threat introduced by the intergroup context. However, the present results also extend previous findings in two ways. First, they demonstrate that the interactive effect of ingroup norm and ingroup threat observed in this previous work differed depending on the participants' prior level of ingroup identification. The observed findings suggest that high identifiers are overall more group-oriented than low identifiers (i.e. no significant effects were observed for low identifiers as a function of ingroup norm and ingroup threat). Compared to low identifiers, high identifiers conformed to the group when the norm provided an adapted answer to the intergroup context (i.e. when the threat was high and the norm was pro-discrimination). However, they did not show

conformity when the norm did not provide an appropriate response to the social context (i.e. when the threat was high and the norm was anti-discrimination).

Second, the present research also extends previous findings by showing that high identifiers may sometimes find themselves in a sort of group dilemma or loyalty conflict when the ingroup norm runs against the group's best interests (i.e. when the out-group is perceived as threatening and the norm does not provide an appropriate answer to that). High identifiers are not only motivated to conform to the group norm but to protect the group as well. In line with social identity perspectives (e.g. Ellemers et al., 2002), we observed that protecting the group seemed to be more important for these members than upholding the norm. Even if they chose to safeguard their group, they also betrayed it to a certain extent by acting in opposition to the group norm. Accordingly, they needed to compensate for their deviance by strengthening group ties.

Our discussion of the present findings turns, first, to the measure of ingroup attachment. Scales anchored on one end by universal values and on the other end by Swiss values. As a consequence, high scores represent both attachment to the Swiss identity and rejection of the universal identity. Since the measure of ingroup attachment should be disentangled from human identity, given that the constructs are often positively correlated, the present findings should be replicated with a less confounded measure of ingroup attachment. Despite this limitation, it is also important to note that group attachment was assessed through such a comparative measure merely in order to strengthen the specificity of categorization as Swiss. Indeed, this measure makes identification to Swiss nationality more difficult and specific than an independent measure. Assessing ingroup attachment while rejecting universal values constitutes therefore a harder way to show participants' motivation to testify their attachment to the group.

Second, what can we say about low identifiers? Low identifiers' attitudes were generally more positive and did not vary as a function of perceived threat. One first explanation for this finding is that low identifiers generally perceived foreigners as less threatening than high identifiers, and that threat (as it was operationalised in the current study) worked above the required minimum level of threat. However, we rather assumed that low identifiers would be less likely to conform to their group norm and defend their group material and symbolic resources. Accordingly, they merely agreed with the anti-discrimination norm, and disagreed with the pro-discrimination norm, probably because these norms respectively matched and mismatched their personal egalitarian and anti-discrimination values. Since they acted in accordance with personal guidelines rather than group related motives, their attitudes were more positive and independent of the social context. Since there is a question of causality when identification is merely measured rather than manipulated, it would be of value to disentangle the effect of personal values from that of group related motives in future research.

To our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine the compensatory mechanism activated in order to solve the loyalty conflicts between conformity and group defence motives. However, a similar paradox can be found in previous studies of social identity processes. On the one hand, this paradox is consistent with work examining how group members often have to balance opposing desires such as the need to belong and the need to be different (Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). In individualistic cultures where satisfaction of independence and non-conformity is enhanced, conformity to individualistic norms may conflict with the desire to have social and group attachments. Therefore, group members seem to resolve this conflict by explaining their behaviours in different ways: they are motivated to regard themselves as independent and non-conformist, but also loyal to their group (Hornsey & Jetten, 2005). On the other hand, past research already showed that high identifiers are more likely to self-stereotype in terms of ingroup attributes (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997), perceive their own group as more homogeneous (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997), and stick by their group (Ellemers et al., 1997) in spite of low status. These findings fit the idea underlying the present research that high identifiers, as compared to low identifiers, will make self sacrifices for their group (e.g. deviate from the group) when this group is threatened. The present research extends these previous findings by showing that the sacrifice seems, on one level, to be inconsistent with group prescriptions (e.g. deviance), while on another level, it is in the service of the group's interests. In the present paradigm, of course, such a sacrifice is against foreigners' interests in any case.

To conclude, we would like to stress that the present findings are in line with the notion that the contents of social identity are constantly negotiated (e.g. Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). On the one hand, group members may conform to or disapprove of their group depending on their personal ties with the group, their personal values, and the extent to which they perceive their group actions as appropriate for coping with the social context. On the other hand, they can also strengthen or weaken their group ties in order to react to external threats (Levine & Campbell, 1972) and compensate for their own non-compliance. Despite the complexity of these dynamics, the present research provided findings that may enrich our understanding of social identity processes.

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