

Social Psychology of Prejudice:

*Historical and
Contemporary Issues*

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Historical and Modern Perspectives on Group Competition

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It has long been assumed within social psychology that group competition plays a critical role in relations among groups. Sherif (1966) observed, "Intergroup relations are potently determined by the process of interaction *between* the groups" (p. 15). Yet current research on intergroup relations often fails to examine group competition as a central basis for intergroup attitudes and behavior (cf. Bobo, 1999; Pratto, 1999; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In this chapter, we address this limitation by presenting our recent model of group competition that merges historical and current theorizing on intergroup relations, and by describing two areas in which we have examined the role of group competition in intergroup attitudes and behavior.

We first review historical perspectives on group competition, focussing on Realistic Group Conflict Theory (e.g., Levine and Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966). Then, we describe our Instrumental Model of Group Competition (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998) that ties together historical assumptions about group competition with more recent theorizing in the area.

Following this discussion, we review our relevant research in two very different domains, intergroup attitudes and individual performance. With respect to intergroup attitudes, we examine the role of group competition and zero-sum beliefs (beliefs that the more one group obtains, the less is available to other groups) in causing unfavorable attitudes toward immigrants and immigration (Esses et al., 1998, 2001). In terms of individual performance, we explore the role of group competition in the

domain of group-relevant influences on intellectual achievement (Danso & Esses, 2001, 2002). In the concluding section of this chapter, we highlight additional domains in which the role of group competition might be profitably investigated.

Realistic Group Conflict Theory

The basic premise of Realistic Group Conflict Theory is that prejudice and discrimination have their roots in perceived conflicts of interest between groups (e.g., LeVine & Campbell, 1972). The importance of realistic group conflicts in determining intergroup attitudes and behavior was noted by Campbell in 1965 in his survey of theories in social psychology, sociology, and anthropology dealing with intergroup relations. A common theme seeming to run across theorizing in the various disciplines was that intergroup attitudes and behavior reflect group interests and are based, at least in part, on the nature of and compatibility of group goals. When group goals are compatible, positive relations should result, whereas when group goals are incompatible, negative relations should result. As Sherif (1966, p. 81) stated,

When members of two groups come into contact with one another in a series of activities that embody goals which each urgently desires, but which can be attained by one group only at the expense of the other, competitive activity toward the goal changes, over time, into hostility between the groups and their members.

Campbell (1965) labelled this perspective “Realistic Group Conflict Theory” to reflect the view that some group conflicts are realistic in that they are based on real competition for scarce resources.

The most relevant premises of this theory are as follows. First, the theory suggests that intergroup threat and conflict increase as the perceived competition for resources increases between groups, and as the conflicting group have more to gain from succeeding. Second, the theory proposes that the greater the intergroup threat and conflict, the more hostility is expressed toward the source of the threat. This hostility helps justify the conflict and the unfavorable treatment of outgroup members. Finally, the theory suggests that when competition over resources is present, proximity and contact increase intergroup hostility, rather than decreasing it (LeVine & Campbell, 1972). It is important to note that the basic premises of this theory do not require that actual competition over tangible resources exists. Rather it is the *perception* of competition that leads to conflict and hostility, and the perceived competition may be over a variety of real and symbolic resources. As stated by Sherif (1966, p. 15),

What determines the positive or negative nature of interaction between groups? In large part, it is the reciprocal interests of the groups involved and their relative significance to the group in question. The issues at stake between groups must be of considerable concern to the groups, if they are to play a part in

intergroup relations. They may relate to values or goals shared by group members, a real or imagined threat to the safety of the group, an economic interest, a political advantage, a military consideration, prestige, or a number of others.

Considerable research evidence has been accrued to support the basic premises of the theory (e.g., Brewer, 1986; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966; Sherif & Sherif, 1953; for reviews see Brown, 1995; Jackson, 1993; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Perhaps the most well-known study supporting Realistic Group Conflict Theory is the Robbers Caves experiment, conducted at Robbers Cave, Oklahoma (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). This was a field study conducted at a boys' summer camp. At the camp, 11-year old boys who had no prior attachments were placed into two groups, and spent time in their separate groups involved in pleasant activities. They called themselves the Eagles and the Rattlers.

To test the hypotheses about the development of group conflict and hostility, competition between the groups was then induced through the use of competitive sports, such as baseball, football, and tug of war. Of importance, there were good prizes for the winning team members, such as camp knives, and no prizes for the losing team members. The dependent measures were obtained through observation of the boys' behavior, including verbal and physical behavior, as well as sociometric choices of the boys, ratings of stereotypes of members of the ingroup and outgroup (e.g., brave, tough, sneaky, stinkers), and judgments of the performance of members of each group.

As competition between the groups developed over time, negative attitudes and behavior toward members of the outgroup became prevalent, including both verbal and physical aggressive behavior. Fistfights and food-fights frequently erupted between members of the two groups, as did singing of derogatory songs. Sherif et al. (1961) wrote, "When the in-group began to be clearly delineated, there was a tendency to consider all others as out-group.... The buildup of negative attitudes was cumulative, with rapid spurts at times, as determined by the nature of the encounter. ... Relations reached the point that the groups became more and more reluctant to have anything to do with one another" (pp. 94-101). These findings provided strong support for the basic premises of Realistic Group Conflict Theory.

The Instrumental Model of Group Conflict

Building on the framework of Realistic Group Conflict Theory, as well as on related, more recent research on group conflict (e.g., Ashmore & Del Boca, 1976; Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1988; Fiske & Ruscher, 1993; Hughes, 1997; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1996), we have developed an Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (Esses et al., 1998, 2001). The model proposes that the combination of perceptions of the availability of valued resources

(resource stress) and the salience of a potentially competitive outgroup leads to perceived intergroup competition. In turn, this perceived competition produces negative affective and cognitive responses, and leads to attempts to remove the source of competition through a variety of strategies.

Resource Stress

Resource stress refers to any perception that, within a society, access to resources may be limited for one's group. The resources involved may include economic resources, such as money and jobs, as well as less tangible resources such as power and prestige, which in practice may be closely aligned with economic resources. The degree of perceived resource stress may be determined by several factors. First, scarcity of resources, whether real or only perceived, will increase the chances that groups will perceive that access to resources is limited. For example, an economic depression or the hoarding of resources by a few individuals may give the impression that there is not enough to go around.

Second, the unequal distribution of resources among groups in a society will likely lead to the perception that, at least for some groups, access to these resources is limited. Lower status groups will feel that they now have limited access to the resources that the society has to offer. In contrast, higher status groups may perceive that, if the hierarchy changes, they could move down the ladder and no longer have ready access to the resources they now possess. In either case, the unequal distribution of resources likely leads to the perception that there is not enough to go around.

Third, the *desire* for an unequal distribution of resources among groups, which is closely aligned with Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), will similarly be related to perceptions of greater resource stress. Individuals who desire a hierarchical structure in society likely believe that resources that are limited are most worth having and of greatest value. By definition, then, some groups will have limited access to these resources. In all three cases - scarcity, unequal distribution of resources, and desire for unequal distribution of resources - what is crucial is the perception that resources are under stress and potentially not available to all groups in sufficient quantities. Resource stress precipitates competition for resources among groups.

Potentially Competitive Outgroup

The second main element of the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict is the presence of a potentially competitive outgroup. Some groups are more likely to be perceived as competitors than are others. Outgroups that are salient and distinct from one's own group are more likely to stand out as potential competitors. Salience and distinctiveness may be determined by factors such as large or increasing size of the group, and novel appearance and behavior (e.g., Quillian, 1995). Potential competitors must also be similar to the ingroup, however, specifically on

dimensions that make them likely to take resources; that is, they must be interested in similar resources and in a position to potentially obtain these resources (see also LeVine & Campbell, 1972).

According to our model, then, whether similar or dissimilar outgroups are seen as potential competitors depends on the dimension in question. For dimensions relevant to obtaining resources (e.g., skills), groups that are similar to the ingroup are more likely to be seen as competitors. For irrelevant dimensions (e.g., ethnicity or national origin), groups that are distinct from the ingroup are more likely to be seen as competitors because visual differences make group identity differences salient. Thus, perceived competition from a particular outgroup may be a function of similarity and dissimilarity of relevant and irrelevant dimensions, as well as the interaction between them. In addition, groups who are very skilled in the domain in question, who have external support for obtaining resources, and who are organized and willing to fight to obtain resources are more likely to be seen as potential competitors due to their enhanced ability to take resources. For example, as we will discuss shortly, *highly skilled* immigrants are particularly likely to be seen as potential competitors for jobs, and this may be exacerbated by the perception that they have government support for their pursuit of employment (e.g., allowed entry into the host country under the employment category).

Perceived Group Competition

A central feature of the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict is that it is the *combination* of resource stress and the presence of a potentially competitive outgroup that leads to perceived group competition. We suggest that perceived group competition has both cognitive and affective underpinnings. The cognitions associated with group competition involve zero-sum beliefs - beliefs that the more the other group obtains, the less is available for one's own group. There is a perception that any gains that the other group might make must be at the expense of one's own group. The emotions accompanying these beliefs may include anxiety and fear.

We consider our model to be an instrumental model of group conflict because we suggest that attitudes and behavior toward the competitor outgroup reflect attempts to remove the source of the competition. There are at least three general strategies, reflecting different degrees and types of direct antagonism, that may be undertaken toward this end. First, a group may attempt to decrease the competitiveness of the other group. This may take the form of expressing negative attitudes and attributions about members of the other group (including negative traits and values), in an attempt to convince both one's own group and other groups of the lack of worth of the competitor. As a result, members of one's own group may feel less of a sense of competition from the group and, in fact, the group may come to fulfil this prophecy and come to be less competitive. Attempts to decrease the competitiveness of the other group may also entail overt discriminatory behavior toward group members, as

well as opposition to social programs that may help to increase the competitiveness of the other group.

A second strategy that may be used to remove the source of the competition is to attempt to increase either the actual or perceived competitiveness of one's own group. This may take the form of increased motivation to perform well in the relevant domain or merely self-aggrandizement at the group level, in an attempt to convince one's own group and other groups of the ingroup's entitlement to the resources in question. This may also include endorsement of social policies that maintain benefits for the ingroup. Finally, a third possible strategy for reducing competition with another group is to avoid that group by decreasing proximity. A group may deny other groups access to its territories (e.g., deny immigration) or may itself move to a different location. In either case, the competition, or the salience of the competition, may be reduced.

Because the enactment of these strategies takes place within a larger social context, the specific strategies that are utilized depends on both the perceived likelihood of success, and the perceived costs and benefits associated with each strategy within the larger context. This may explain why intergroup attitudes and behavior may be seen to change over time against a backdrop of consistent group competition. In addition, it is possible that the use of these strategies occurs in a relatively non-self-reflective manner, and that, at times, the nature of the motivation is obscured by more egalitarian-seeming justifications.

The major roots of this model in Realistic Group Conflict Theory are evident. For example, the basic premise, like Realistic Group Conflict Theory, is that perceived group competition leads to negative intergroup attitudes and behavior. Similarly, the proposal that these negative attitudes and behaviors are instrumental, expressed in the service of reducing the threat, follows from Sherif's (1966) discussion of the functional utility of stereotypes expressed toward outgroups. The model expands on Realistic Group Conflict Theory, however, in its level of detail, and in proposing a central role for individual difference variables, particularly Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994). In the sections that follow, we summarize research that has provided support for the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict in two different domains: (a) determinants of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in North America, and (b) group-relevant influences on the intellectual test performance of White individuals.

Group Competition and Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration

Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are of considerable national importance. At the same time that worldwide migration has increased substantially in the last few decades (United Nations, 2002), immigration into the United States and Canada has met with some resistance and has at times resulted in tension between immigrants and

members of host populations. Indeed, Gallup poll data collected in the United States show that a sizeable proportion of Americans (e.g., 49% in June 2002; Jones, 2002) believe that immigration to the United States should be decreased, with somewhat lower levels in Canada (e.g., 33% in March/April 2002; Aubry, 2002). Yet recent census data show that high levels of immigration to North America are necessary in order to maintain population levels required for a strong economy and workforce (e.g., Armstrong, 2002). Thus, positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are essential in order to promote social harmony and national well-being.

Our recent research on determinants of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in the United States and Canada demonstrates the important role of key elements of the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict, resource stress and the presence of a potentially competitive outgroup, in causing unfavorable immigration attitudes. In our research, we utilized fictitious media portrayals of immigration to experimentally manipulate perceived resource stress and competition between immigrants and non-immigrants (Esses et al., 1998, 2001; Jackson & Esses, 2000) and we assessed individual differences potentially relevant to chronic perceptions of resource stress and group competition (e.g., Social Dominance Orientation). We then examined effects on attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, and willingness to help immigrants.

Experimentally-Induced Competition

In one set of studies, we assessed attitudes and prosocial orientations toward immigrants and immigration. Prior to this assessment, participants were asked to read an editorial on immigration to familiarize them with the issue. The primary independent variable in this research, which was introduced in the editorial, was related to resource stress and the presence of a relevant outgroup: Participants were presented with an editorial describing immigrants' successes in a competitive economic climate or an editorial that discussed immigrants in general without mention of this issue. In some studies, to explore attitudes uncontaminated by previous experience or biases, the editorial also included a description of Sandirians (actually a fictitious immigrant group), who were presented in very positive terms (e.g., hard-working, family-oriented). Participants were asked to respond to a number of questions about the editorials, including indicating their attitudes toward immigrants and their support for immigration. In the relevant studies, participants were also asked specifically about their attitudes toward Sandirians and support for Sandirian immigration. In addition, they were asked to complete a measure assessing endorsement of two potential types of help for immigrants to adjust to life in their new country: direct assistance and empowerment (see Jackson & Esses, 2000). Direct assistance involves giving resources directly to immigrants, whereas empowerment involves helping immigrants to help themselves.

As hypothesized, participants who read the editorial focusing on the successful participation of skilled immigrants in a difficult job market were more likely to indicate that immigration decreases the number of jobs available to people already living in the country (suggesting a belief in competition for jobs – more for one group means less for other groups). With respect to attitudes toward immigrants, the normally commendable quality of being able to succeed in a competitive employment market actually made them less attractive. Participants who read about the competitive job market and immigrants' successes in the workplace expressed less favorable attitudes toward immigrants and were less willing to endorse immigration.

Participants who read about the successes of immigrants in a competitive job market were also less favorable in their attitudes toward Sandirians and were less supportive of Sandirian immigration to their country. Moreover, these participants, compared to those in the control condition, interpreted the positive characteristics of Sandirians in a less favorable light. Characteristics such as hard-working and family-oriented were no longer considered quite as positive. For example, some participants interpreted hard-working as working to the exclusion of everything else, and interpreted family-oriented as caring only about the welfare of family members (Esses et al., 1998, 2001; Esses, Jackson, & Nolan, 1996). Thus, the impact of perceived group competition on immigration attitudes occurred at both the general level and at the level of responses to a specific immigrant group.

The manipulation of group competition in the editorial also influenced prosocial orientation toward the group. Although participants who read the two different editorials did not differ in their endorsement of direct assistance for immigrants, participants who read about immigrants' success in the competitive job market were less willing to endorse assistance that would empower immigrants. This set of findings is especially noteworthy because empowerment in particular is likely to be perceived as potentially increasing immigrants' ability to stand on their own and further compete for resources with members of the host population. This finding supports our suggestion that the responses to successful immigrants demonstrated in these studies may be an indication of attempts ultimately to reduce perceived group competition.

Social Dominance Orientation

Within the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict, we proposed that people who perceive more strongly that their group's access to scarce resources is legitimately privileged will experience greater resource stress and consequently exhibit more negative reactions toward immigrants. In particular, individuals who support an unequal distribution of resources in society – those high in Social Dominance Orientation – are likely to perceive that competition among groups is the norm (see also Altemeyer, 1998; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). In the present context, these

individuals may view their group as deserving primary or exclusive access to the resources available within their country and believe that immigrants are competing for these resources. In turn, these beliefs may lead to negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration.

To assess how individual differences in orientations to an unequal distribution of resources among groups may supplement or moderate the effects of situational influences on resource stress, several of our studies conducted in both Canada and the United States included a measure of Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 1994; see also Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) along with our measures of immigration attitudes (Esses et al., 1998, 2001; see also Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994). Social Dominance Orientation showed strong negative correlations with attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. Social Dominance Orientation was also negatively correlated with willingness to empower immigrants, but not with willingness to provide direct assistance for immigrants. As with the effects described above regarding media portrayals of immigrants, this latter finding again suggests that responses to immigrants may function as an attempt to reduce immigrants' competitiveness and to maintain the dominance of the host population. In general, the relations with Social Dominance Orientation strongly parallel the effects of our manipulation of perceived group competition.

To examine the possible role of group competition in the relations described above, we conducted an additional series of studies in both Canada and the United States to investigate directly factors mediating the relation between Social Dominance Orientation and immigration attitudes. These studies specifically focused on the potential roles of beliefs in zero-sum competition between groups in the Social Dominance Orientation - immigration attitude relation. We expected that zero-sum beliefs would play a mediating role for two reasons. First, our earlier findings for high social dominance-oriented individuals closely paralleled those obtained for individuals who had undergone a manipulation of perceived group competition, suggesting the possibility of a parallel process. Second, Sidanius et al. (1994) have previously suggested that Social Dominance Orientation involves "a view of human existence as zero-sum and relentless competition between groups" (p. 999).

In our studies, we utilized a measure of zero-sum beliefs developed specifically for this research (see Esses et al., 1998). Our measure was based on items previously utilized by Bobo and Hutchings (1996) to examine perceptions of competition among racial groups in Los Angeles county, and included items designed to tap into perceived zero-sum competition with immigrants for economic resources (e.g., "When immigrants make economic gains, Canadians already living here lose out economically") and power (e.g., "The more power immigrants obtain in Canada, the more difficult it is for Canadians already living here"). The

economics and power items were very highly correlated and, thus, were included in a single measure.

We found that Social Dominance Orientation was strongly related to the zero-sum beliefs. High social dominance-oriented individuals were especially likely to believe that gains for immigrants mean losses for non-immigrants. In addition, further analyses demonstrated that the zero-sum beliefs *mediated* the relation between Social Dominance Orientation and negative attitudes toward immigration, unwillingness to empower immigrants, and, to a lesser extent, unfavorable attitudes toward immigrants. These findings support our hypothesis that people higher in Social Dominance Orientation are relatively biased against immigrants and immigration *because of* the perception that relations with immigrants have zero-sum outcomes.

In summary, supportive of the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict, these findings demonstrate that perceived group competition, whether situationally induced or a function of chronic belief in zero-sum relations among groups, is strongly implicated in negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. We have demonstrated that media presentations of the success of immigrants in a competitive economic market can induce perceptions of competition with immigrants and, thus, lead to unfavorable immigration attitudes. Similarly, individuals who are high in Social Dominance Orientation chronically tend to see the world as a place in which groups compete for resources, and in particular see immigrants as competing for resources with non-immigrants, again leading to unfavorable immigration attitudes. In the next section, we consider how contexts that may arouse intergroup competition can also influence people's motivations and, ultimately, their performance in intergroup situations.

Group Competition and the Intellectual Test Performance of White Individuals

Recent research on stereotype threat has demonstrated the potentially debilitating influence of group-relevant factors on the intellectual test performance of minority group members (e.g., Steele, 1997; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). In particular, individuals who are members of a group for whom a negative stereotype exists may experience stereotype threat when they are placed in a situation in which there is a potential for fulfilling the stereotype. As a result, their performance in the relevant domain declines (see Steele, 1997; Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, when race is salient, Black individuals who are taking a test of intellectual ability may experience stereotype threat and underperform in comparison to their ability level (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

At the same time that race-relevant features of the testing environment may impair the performance of Blacks in the intellectual domain, is it possible that group competition and threat may *improve* the performance of Whites in this domain? According to the Instrumental

Model of Group Conflict, when group members perceive that another group is competing with them in a relevant domain, one strategy that they may undertake to reduce the sense of competition is to work especially hard to improve their own group's performance. Thus, if White individuals perceive that Blacks are competing with them, potentially successfully, in the intellectual domain, they may be especially motivated to perform well themselves in order to reduce the threat of competition.

Race of Test Administrator, Social Dominance Orientation, and Whites' Intellectual Test Performance

To examine this issue, we conducted several studies in which we manipulated the race of test administrator, Black versus White, and determined the effect on the intellectual test performance of White students. We reasoned that Whites might perceive successful-appearing Black test administrators as a threat to their dominance in the intellectual domain and, therefore, be especially motivated to maintain their dominance through superior test performance. That is, in line with the Instrumental Model of Group Competition, threat of competition from minority group members and a desire to maintain group status might cause White students to be especially motivated to prove the worth of their group, and thus to perform well on an intellectual ability test when tested by a Black, rather than a White, experimenter. As discussed earlier, individuals who are high in Social Dominance Orientation chronically see the world as involving competition between groups, and thus might be especially likely to show this effect.

We found considerable support for our hypotheses. First, across several studies, we found that White students performed better on a standardized test of intellectual ability when it was administered by a Black, rather than a White, experimenter (Danso & Esses, 2001, 2002). This effect was moderated by Social Dominance Orientation, such that the tendency to perform well when tested by a Black test administrator was especially evident in participants who were higher in Social Dominance Orientation. In two of these studies we included a manipulation of expectation of receiving individual feedback on the test, and found no effects of this manipulation. This supports our assumption that that it is the motivation to perform well on behalf of one's group, rather than on behalf of oneself as an individual, that motivates these effects. In addition, in one study we included a measure of attitudes toward Blacks, rather than Social Dominance Orientation, and we did *not* find that attitudes toward Blacks moderated the race of experimenter effect. This suggests that it is not negative attitudes toward Blacks per se that promoted higher performance when tested by a Black person, but in the case of high Social Dominance Orientation, the need to dominate and the belief in competition between groups.

Based on these findings, we suggest that when White test takers are put in a situation that makes salient the perception that Blacks are making

progress in the academic domain (a domain that has typically been dominated by Whites), they are especially motivated to perform well in order to prove their group superiority and maintain their group dominance (Danso & Esses, 2001). In the current context, this perception is made salient when a successful-appearing Black individual is in the role of test administrator. This interpretation of the findings is supported by the fact that individuals who are high in Social Dominance Orientation and see the world in zero-sum terms are especially likely to show the race of experimenter effect.

Group Affirmation and Motivation

To further test our hypotheses regarding the role of group competition and the motivation for group dominance, we conducted an additional study in which we provided participants with an opportunity for group affirmation prior to administering the test of intellectual ability (Danso & Esses, 2002). We expected that if group competition and threat to group dominance drove our previous effects, an opportunity for affirmation of Whites' high intellectual ability prior to taking the test would reduce or eliminate the need for Whites to prove their group's worth in the presence of a Black experimenter. This would result in no difference in performance as a function of the race of the test administrator.

To some extent, this hypothesis is based on self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988), which suggests that self-reflective thoughts that focus on positive attributes or accomplishments of the self reduce the consequences of threats to the self (see Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000; Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000; Tesser & Cornell, 1991). In a similar way, in the current research we attempted to use group-affirmation to counteract the effects of perceived competition and threat to group status. We focused on *group-affirmation*, rather than on self-affirmation, however, because of our contention that it is the need to maintain higher *group* status that motivates Whites to perform well in the presence of a Black experimenter. Group-affirmation, as proposed here, involves reassurance of favorable evaluations for one's social group or perceptions of a high status position for one's social group. If group affirmation reduces the threat of competition induced by the presence of a high status Black test administrator, and consequently reduces the need to demonstrate higher performance when tested by a Black individual, it should similarly reduce the effect of the race of test administrator on the intellectual test performance of White individuals.

To test this hypothesis, prior to taking an intellectual ability test with a Black or a White test administrator, White participants read a passage designed to affirm their groups' high intellectual ability, high income level, or a control passage. In particular, participants read one of three "United Nations development report" passages. In the intellectual ability affirmation condition, participants read a passage that highlighted

Canada's top position in the latest United Nations development report on member nations, and applauded the Canadian educational system for producing students with sharp intellectual abilities, particularly the majority White population in Canada. In the income affirmation condition, participants read a passage that highlighted Canada's top position in the latest United Nations development report on living standards of member nations, and mentioned that Canadians enjoy high standard of living because of their high income levels, particularly the majority White population in Canada. In the control condition, participants read a passage about the United Nations development report that did not mention Canada's achievements. The passage simply indicated that a report had been released, and stated that the report found that most countries have made significant progress in their living conditions.

When no opportunity for group affirmation was provided, participants tested by a Black experimenter performed significantly better on the ability test than did those tested by a White experimenter, replicating our earlier findings. In contrast, when an opportunity for affirmation of Whites' intellectual ability was provided, there was no significant difference between participants tested by a Black experimenter and those tested by a White experimenter, and the pattern of results was somewhat reversed. Results in the income affirmation condition were similar to those in the control condition, although they were not significant.

Taken together, the findings support our contention that perceived group competition and a desire for group dominance in the academic domain may cause White test-takers to perform especially well in the presence of a high status Black test administrator. Thus, whereas stereotype threat *impairs* the performance of minority group members for whom the stereotype is relevant, our research demonstrates that threat of competition and the desire to maintain group dominance may *enhance* the performance of dominant group members. This creates a situation in which the academic performance of Blacks may be impaired when they are primed with race and group competition, whereas the academic performance of Whites will be enhanced. As a result, disparities between the groups are maintained.

Summing Up and Future Research Directions

The findings described here demonstrate that by examining perceived competition for resources, status, and power, we can gain insight into group conflicts and disparities that continue to plague us in the 21st century. Thus, just as Realistic Group Conflict Theory was useful for explaining group conflict and strife in the mid 1900s (e.g., relations among nations; Sherif, 1966), the theory and our more recent Instrumental Model of Group Conflict can inform us about present day

relations among groups (e.g., relations among a variety of ethnic groups in North America).

We have applied this theorizing here to understanding negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, and to understanding disparities in the academic achievements of Blacks versus Whites. It is likely, however, that our theorizing may apply to many other intergroup relations in society. For example, previous research indicates that a desire to protect group interests, and competition over power, wealth, and status, may influence Whites' degree of support for racial policies in the United States (e.g., Bobo, 1983, 1988; Hughes, 1997; Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1996; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996). Group competition is likely to have a similar role to play in relations among other ethnic groups in society, and in willingness to support policies that may be seen as potentially improving the competitiveness of other groups. This may involve relations among ethnic minority groups (see also Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Semenya & Esses, 2002), as well as relations between majority group members and other minority groups. Research addressing the role of group competition in relations among a variety of ethnic groups and in support of relevant social policy is thus warranted.

Relations between men and women may also be affected by perceptions of competition for power and other resources (see also Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997). For example, as women make progress in achieving positions of high status and authority in society, men may experience an increased sense of competition with women, and may work to remove this source of competition. This may play out in support for social policies that are seen as benefiting women, as well as in attitudes toward women. Thus, an additional area in which a focus on group competition may prove fruitful is in examining relations between men and women.

In conclusion, despite being somewhat neglected in the latter part of the 20th century, realistic group conflict and competition between groups are just as important today for explaining and perhaps reducing intergroup bias as they were 50 years ago. As Sherif (1966, p. 152) explained, "Friendship and enmity between groups are group functions, not reducible to the ups and downs of interpersonal relations among individual group members.... The limiting condition in the rise of images and actions between two or more groups is the positive or negative nature of the functional relations between them." The Instrumental Model of Group Conflict is based on this assumption, as well.

We also concur with Sherif (1996) as to the promise of intergroup approaches for improving group relations. Sherif (1996, p. 153) concluded, "The sufficient condition for the rise of intergroup hostility gives us leads for finding effective measures for reducing hostility. If hostile attitude and deed are the outcome of groups confronting one another with incompatible and mutually exclusive claims, conversely, the

reduction of hostility must depend on intergroup action to achieve goals that are desired by all parties and that require their cooperation.” Recent perspectives on intergroup contact (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000) and on the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) support this view of measures for improving intergroup relations. Our findings regarding the effects of group affirmation also suggest that, consistent with the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict, enhancement of the ingroup may be an effective strategy for reducing the perception of resource stress and group competition, and ultimately intergroup conflict (see also Brewer & Brown, 1998). Indeed, this is one of the basic premises of the Canadian Multiculturalism policy, as proposed by then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau: “Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, this can be founded on confidence in one’s own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions.” Moreover, Sherif’s (1996) functional perspective and our instrumental model need not be pitted against more recent perspectives on intergroup relations that focus on the role of values and more symbolic forms of bias (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Sears & Henry, 2000). Rather, they can be seen as complementing each other as we work together to promote social harmony.

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