

Trust and Acceptance in Response to References to Group Membership: Minority and Majority Perspectives on Cross-Group Interactions¹

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This research examined anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions among members of ethnic minority and majority groups, depending on whether an out-group member referred to their group membership. In Study 1, Asian, Latino, and White participants read scenarios describing interactions between them and an in-group member, an out-group member, or an out-group member who referred to their group membership. Participants from each group responded more negatively toward interactions with out-group members when they referred to group membership. These findings were replicated in Study 2 with samples of Black and White participants, also showing that anticipated prejudice partially mediated the effects of out-group members' references to group membership on feelings of trust and acceptance. Implications of these findings are discussed in terms of facilitating intergroup communication and conversations about group differences.

Decades of intergroup research have shown that many positive outcomes can be achieved through intergroup contact (Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, in press). Yet, while most of this research has focused on how the contact situation can be structured to

¹The authors thank Darius Barron, David Dodson, Keith Maddox, and Mari Ortiz-McGuire for their support in participant recruitment and data collection. This research was supported in part by College and Student Projects Fund grants from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a Research Expense Grant from the College of Arts and Sciences at Boston College.

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maximize positive intergroup outcomes (see Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), relatively little work has explored group members' thoughts and feelings as they approach cross-group interactions (see Devine & Vasquez, 1998).

In particular, members of different ethnic groups may be inclined to have different expectations for cross-group interactions, given the different histories of social experiences they bring to the contact situation (Cohen, 1982; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Because of their stigmatized status, members of ethnic minority groups often are confronted with prejudice against their group (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001), and they often anticipate being perceived in terms of their group membership (Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984; Kleck & Strenta, 1980; Piel, 1999). As such, they may grow to feel unsure of how they will be received by others in social interactions (Kramer & Wei, 1999), and they may become mistrusting in their interactions with members of the majority group (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Thus, while people generally respond less favorably toward out-group members relative to members of their own group (see Tajfel & Turner, 1986), we might predict that members of ethnic minority groups would be especially likely to have less positive expectations for cross-group interactions than members of the ethnic majority group.

Still, the broader intergroup implications of stigma and being a target of prejudice remain relatively understudied (Devine & Vasquez, 1998). To date, most of the stigma literature has focused on how being a target of prejudice can affect group members' psychological well-being (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Swim et al., 2001; for a recent review, see Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Although many have theorized about the likely effects of stigma on group members' feelings toward cross-group interactions (Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002), only very recently have studies begun to examine the ways in which minority status and being a target of prejudice might affect social relations between members of minority and majority groups (see Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002; Piel, 2002; Shelton, 2003; Tropp, 2003; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

One goal of the present research is to examine whether members of ethnic minority and majority groups will generally differ in the expectations they have for cross-group interactions. More specifically, this research will focus on group members' anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance as they approach interactions with out-group members.

In recent years, researchers have recognized trust as a crucial element for facilitating positive relations between people within and across group boundaries (see Steele et al., 2002; Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Kramer, 1996). Trust

denotes a willingness to invest oneself in relations with others, with the expectation that those others will respond with consideration and respect (Tyler, 2001). However, establishing such feelings of trust may be particularly difficult among members of ethnic minority groups, as their groups have been subjected to extended histories of prejudice and discrimination from the majority group (see Cohen & Steele, 2002; Purdie, Steele, & Davies, 2004; Steele et al., 2002). As such, we might predict that ethnic minority group members will generally expect to feel lower levels of trust in interactions with out-group members, relative to the expectations of ethnic majority group members.

At the same time, we also can consider cases where members of the ethnic majority group might reveal expectations for cross-group interactions that are comparable to those of members of ethnic minority groups. For example, it seems likely that members of any group might develop negative expectations for cross-group interactions to the extent that they anticipate being perceived and judged in terms of their group membership (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Crocker et al., 1998; see also Goffman, 1963). Moreover, it is possible that any reference to group membership by an out-group member may be interpreted through a negative lens, since people often assume that out-group members will be negatively biased toward their own group (Kramer & Wei, 1999; Krueger, 1996).

Some recent work has suggested that, like members of minority groups, members of majority groups also may be susceptible to threats to their group membership, depending on the ways in which their group membership is emphasized in the intergroup context (e.g., Leyens, Desert, Croizet, & Darcis, 2000; Shih, Ambady, Richeson, Fujita, & Gray, 2002). Thus, while ethnic minority group members generally may have less positive expectations for cross-group interactions, members of both ethnic minority and majority groups might express less positive expectations for cross-group interactions when they have explicit reasons to believe that they are being perceived as group members by members of the other group.

Consistent with this perspective, research has indicated that ethnic majority group members may develop negative responses to cross-group interactions when they believe that minority group members view them negatively (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998), in much the same way that ethnic minority group members have less positive expectations for interactions when they believe that out-group members are prejudiced against them (Tropp, 2003). In these studies, however, group members' responses to cross-group interactions were examined in relation to clear beliefs that out-group members were inclined to evaluate them negatively. The present research extends this work by examining group members' expectations for

cross-group interactions in contexts in which an out-group member simply refers to his or her group membership, even when this reference does not involve an explicit devaluation of the group.

This extension of the research literature is important both for advancing theory on intergroup relations and enhancing its application to real-world contexts. From a theoretical standpoint, examining the impact of references to group membership on expectations for cross-group interactions can further our understanding of the effects of stigma (see Crocker et al., 1998), while also providing insights regarding the role of group membership salience in intergroup contact (see Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Recent work on group membership salience has shown that references to group membership can promote the extent to which positive changes in intergroup attitudes might generalize from intergroup contact (e.g., Brown, Vivian, & Hewstone, 1999; Van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, & Hewstone, 1996). However, relatively little work in this area has examined how references to group membership might affect group members' expectations and feelings about engaging in the cross-group interactions themselves.

These issues also have practical implications for facilitating intergroup communication and discussions of group differences (see Gurin, Peng, Lopez, & Nagda, 1999; Nagda & Zuniga, 2003). Communication often can be strained across group boundaries, as members of different groups may interpret each others' comments and behaviors in line with the experiences and expectations they bring to the intergroup context (see Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Kramer & Messick, 1998). Given that people often are inclined to believe that out-group members tend to be biased against them (Krueger, 1996), group members on both sides of the interaction may interpret seemingly neutral or innocuous references to group membership from an out-group member as being laced with negative intentions (see Kramer & Messick, 1998).

Summary of Research Goals

The primary goals of the present research are to test whether members of ethnic minority and majority groups have different expectations for feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions, and whether group members' responses to cross-group interactions vary depending on whether reference is made to their group membership. These issues are examined in two studies in which members of ethnic minority and majority groups were presented with scenarios describing social interactions. These scenarios vary in terms of the group membership of the interaction partner and whether the partner refers to group membership during the interaction.

Study 1

In the first study, members of ethnic minority and majority groups were assigned to one of three conditions, where they read and responded to scenarios describing hypothetical interactions between them and (a) an in-group member; (b) an out-group member; or (c) an out-group member who made reference to his or her group membership. We predict a main effect of condition, such that group members generally will respond most positively toward interactions with members of their own group, and most negatively toward cross-group interactions with out-group members who make reference to their group membership. At the same time, we predict an interaction between condition and participant ethnic status, such that we expect members of ethnic minority groups to respond more negatively to cross-group interactions than members of the ethnic majority group.

Method

Participants

One hundred sixty-five undergraduate students (62 male, 102 female, 1 participant did not indicate gender) participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 26 years (M age = 19.36 years). Fifty of the participants were Asian, 40 were Latino, and 75 were White.³ Participants were recruited for participation through campus postings and door-to-door solicitation at a public university in the western United States.

Procedure

Participants completed measures individually in either a small group or a private setting. First, participants completed a personal information form in which they stated their age, gender, and ethnicity. Upon completion of the form, the participant returned it immediately to the researcher.

Participants then received a packet of six scenarios, each describing a hypothetical social interaction between the participant and another individual. The scenarios described (a) a chance meeting between the participant and an acquaintance on a bus; (b) making conversation with another person at a potluck supper; (c) receiving assistance from a store employee; (d) seeing

³Data were also collected from 39 students of other racial and ethnic backgrounds as part of a larger study on identity and intergroup relations. Responses from these students were not included in the present analysis since their numbers are too small to conduct meaningful group comparisons.

someone one knows during a visit to an administrative office on campus; (e) visiting a familiar neighbor to ask for a small favor; and (f) asking for directions at a local establishment. Focus groups selected these six scenarios as the most realistic and likely to occur from a larger pool of 10 scenarios developed for this study, with mean scores of 6 or higher on 9-point scales ranging from 1 (*very unrealistic/very rare*) to 9 (*very realistic/very common*).

Half of the scenarios were selected randomly to describe an interaction with a female, and the other half were selected randomly to describe an interaction with a male. Male and female participants showed virtually identical responses to scenarios depicting male and female interaction partners. Thus, participants' responses to all six scenarios will be analyzed together, and no additional discussions of gender effects will be reported.

Using the information provided on the personal information form, the researcher gave participants scenario packets adapted specifically for their ethnic group, while randomly assigning them to one of three conditions regarding the ethnic group membership of their interaction partner. Some participants were assigned to an *in-group* condition in which they read scenarios describing interactions between them and another member of their ethnic in-group. In the *out-group* condition, participants read scenarios in which their interaction partner was a member of the ethnic out-group. In the *out-group reference* condition, participants read scenarios in which their interaction partner was an out-group member, and the out-group partner also made reference to the participant's ethnic group membership during the interaction. This reference to group membership was designed to be neither negative nor derogatory; rather, each reference was designed simply to make participants aware that the interaction partner was thinking about them in terms of their group membership. Thus, along with making group membership relevant to the contact situation (as in the out-group condition), the out-group reference condition induces participants to recognize that group membership is prominent within the mind of their partner during the interaction. An abbreviated version of one of the scenarios, adapted for the different conditions, is provided in the Appendix.

For all three ethnic groups, participants in the in-group condition read scenarios in which the ethnicity of the interaction partner matched that of the participant. In the out-group and out-group reference conditions, Asian and Latino participants received scenarios that described their interaction partner as *White*, and White participants received scenarios that described their interaction partner as either *Asian* or *Latino*. Table 1 shows the distributions of respondents from each ethnic group assigned to each intergroup comparison and condition. Across the three conditions, these distributions allowed for comparisons between Asian and White participants' feelings toward hypothetical interactions with in-group members and

Table 1

Distributions of Participants by Ethnic Group, Intergroup Comparison, and Condition

Asian–White comparisons by condition	Asians	Whites
In-group	17	16 ^a
Out-group	16	14
Out-group reference	17	15
Total (<i>N</i>)	50	45
Latino–White comparisons by condition	Latinos	Whites
In-group	13	16 ^a
Out-group	14	16
Out-group reference	13	14
Total (<i>N</i>)	40	46

^aThe same 16 White participants in the in-group condition were used in both comparisons.

with members of the other group, and Latino and White participants' feelings toward interactions with in-group members and with members of the other group.

After reading each scenario, participants responded to five questions concerning their feelings about interacting with the other person described in the scenario. Specifically, participants indicated the degree to which they (a) felt they could trust the person; (b) would feel respected by the person; (c) would feel that they were treated as an equal by the person; (d) would feel comfortable with the person; and (e) would want to be friends with the person. Responses to these items were rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

By ethnic group, scores on these items were entered into separate principal components analyses with varimax rotation for each scenario. Only one factor emerged for each scenario, accounting for 67% to 90% of the variance among Asian participants; 76% to 89% of the variance among Latino participants; and 60% to 80% of the variance among White participants. Factor loadings ranged from .64 to .97 among Asian participants; .81 to .98 among Latino participants; and .69 to .91 among White participants. Consequently, scores on the five indicators were averaged for each scenario.

Additionally, since scores on the composite measures tended to be highly correlated with each other ($r_s = .30-.77$ among Asian participants;

$r_s = .53-.87$ among Latino participants; and $r_s = .48-.78$ among White participants), a separate principal components analysis was conducted to see whether these composite measures would load onto a single factor across the scenarios. Only one factor emerged from the analysis, accounting for 57% of the variance among Asian participants (factor loadings = $.53-.86$), 71% of the variance among Latino participants (factor loadings = $.69-.91$), and 67% of the variance among White participants (factor loadings = $.67-.90$). Thus, scores on the composite measures were averaged across the scenarios, to create one overall measure of trust/acceptance, with alpha coefficients of $.88$ among Asian participants, $.93$ among Latino participants, and $.92$ among White participants.⁴

Once these materials were completed, participants were debriefed fully and thanked for their participation.

Results

Two separate 2 (Participant Ethnic Status) \times 3 (Condition) ANOVAs were conducted for anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance. The first analysis compares Asian and White participants' anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance across the three conditions. For this analysis, only those White participants who were asked to imagine interactions with in-group members or with Asian out-group members are included. A parallel analysis was then conducted for Latino and White participants, using only those White participants who were asked to imagine interactions with in-group members or with Latino out-group members.⁵

Comparisons Between Asian and White Participants

The 2 (Participant Ethnic Status: Asian/White) \times 3 (Condition: in-group/out-group/out-group reference) ANOVA yields a significant main effect of

⁴It should be noted that patterns of results were identical when participants' responses are analyzed separately for each scenario, and when a combined variable is used to analyze participants' responses across all scenarios, as will be reported in this paper.

⁵In supplementary analyses, friendships with out-group members (see Pettigrew, 1997) and perceived discrimination (see Taylor, Wright, & Porter, 1994) were entered as covariates, as these variables have been shown to relate to expectations for cross-group interactions (see Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Tropp, 2003). Across both analyses, neither of the covariates significantly predicted participants' feelings of trust and acceptance. Additional analyses then tested whether these variables affected trust and acceptance through an interaction with condition. By ethnic group, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted for trust/acceptance, with condition (dummy-coded) entered at the first stage, the two variables entered at the second stage, and interactions between each variable and condition entered at the third stage. Results show that neither variable nor the interaction terms significantly predicted trust/acceptance beyond what could be accounted for by condition at the first stage of analysis.

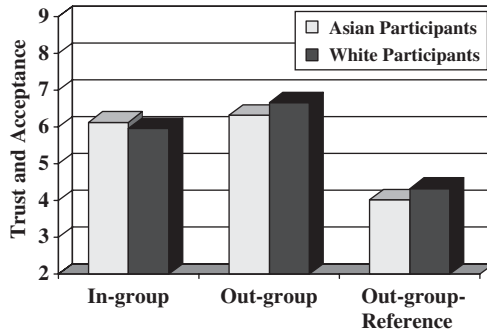


Figure 1. Anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions among Asians and Whites.

condition, $F(2, 89) = 30.74$, $\eta^2 = .41$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 1). Scheffé post hoc comparisons⁶ ($p < .05$) reveal that participants in the in-group and out-group conditions did not differ significantly in their reported feelings of trust and acceptance ($M_s = 5.95$ and 6.46 , respectively). However, participants in the out-group reference condition expected to feel significantly lower levels of trust and acceptance ($M = 4.17$) than did participants in the other two conditions. The main effect of ethnic status, $F(1, 89) = 0.27$, $\eta^2 < .01$, $p = .60$, and the Ethnic Status \times Condition interaction, $F(1, 89) = 0.88$, $\eta^2 < .02$, $p = .42$, were not significant.⁷

Comparisons Between Latino and White Participants

The 2 (Participant Ethnic Status: Latino/White) \times 3 (Condition: in-group/out-group/out-group reference) ANOVA yields a significant main effect of condition, $F(2, 80) = 59.15$, $\eta^2 = .60$, $p < .001$. However, unlike in the Asian–White comparison, this effect is qualified by a significant Ethnic Status \times Condition interaction, $F(2, 80) = 15.02$, $\eta^2 = .27$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 2). Scheffé post hoc comparisons ($p < .05$) were conducted among participants from the two ethnic groups. Latino participants in the out-group condition reported that they expected to feel significantly lower levels

⁶Scheffé post hoc comparisons are used when comparisons involve more than two conditions. When only two conditions are compared, t tests are used.

⁷Inspection of the means reveals that White participants responded somewhat more positively toward interactions with Asian out-group members than toward interactions with in-group members. A direct comparison shows a tendency for White participants in the (Asian) out-group condition to respond more positively ($M = 6.65$) than those in the in-group condition ($M = 5.78$), $t(28) = -1.92$, $p = .07$.

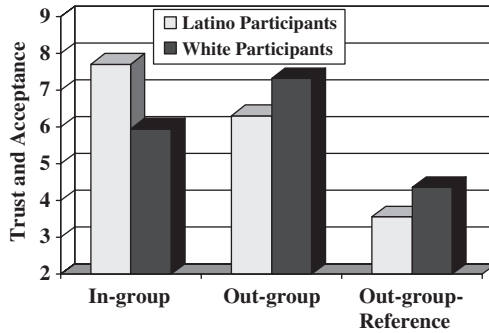


Figure 2. Anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions among Latinos and Whites.

of trust and acceptance than did those in the in-group condition. Additionally, Latino participants in the out-group reference condition expected to feel substantially lower levels of trust and acceptance than did those in either of the other two conditions. By contrast, White participants in the out-group condition expected to feel greater levels of trust and acceptance than did those in the in-group condition, while White participants in the out-group reference condition expected to feel substantially lower levels of trust and acceptance than did those in the other two conditions.

It is also interesting to note that, among those in the out-group condition, Latino participants reported lower levels of trust and acceptance ($M = 6.38$) relative to White participants ($M = 7.29$), $t(28) = -2.14$, $p < .05$. Latino participants also tended to report lower levels of trust and acceptance in interactions with out-group members who made reference to their group membership ($M = 3.54$), relative to White participants ($M = 4.41$), $t(25) = -1.92$, $p = .06$.

Discussion

The results from Study 1 offer preliminary support for our prediction that people generally will anticipate greater feelings of trust and acceptance with members of their own group, while anticipating the lowest levels of trust and acceptance with out-group members who refer to their group membership. However, these findings do not specify a process by which out-group members' references to group membership will contribute to lowered feelings of trust and acceptance.

We have proposed that out-group members' references to group membership might lead people to feel that they are being targeted on the basis of

their group membership (see Crocker et al., 1998; Goffman, 1963), which could provoke the perception that out-group members are prejudiced against their group (see Kramer & Messick, 1998; Tropp, 2003). Thus, a second study will test whether references to group membership from out-group members enhance the perception that out-group members are prejudiced against their own group, and whether this perception predicts their feelings of trust and acceptance with out-group members.

Additionally, although the central goal of this research is to examine the effects of references to group membership from out-group members, the second study compares responses to references from in-group and out-group members. Study 1 only examined how people respond when out-group members refer to group membership; as such, it is unknown whether people will respond more or less negatively when an out-group member refers to his or her group membership, as compared to when an in-group member refers to his or her group membership. Other work has suggested (see Haslam, McGarty, & Turner, 1996; Mackie & Queller, 2000) that people are generally less willing to trust comments from out-group members than from in-group members, along with being less accepting of criticism from out-group members than from in-group members (see Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002). Similarly, we might expect that people would be less accepting of references to group membership from out-group members than from in-group members, which is an issue to be explored in Study 2.

It also should be noted that the findings from Study 1 only partially supported the prediction that ethnic minority participants would anticipate lower feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions than ethnic majority participants. While the predicted pattern emerged in comparisons between Latino and White participants, comparisons between Asian and White participants reveal similar degrees of anticipated trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions. It is conceivable that feelings of trust and acceptance will vary among ethnic minority and majority groups, depending on the specific intergroup relationship in question. Study 2, therefore, extends the research to examine feelings of trust and acceptance among Black and White participants to see whether the predicted patterns of effects will emerge in this distinct intergroup context.

Study 2

Study 2 asks Black and White participants to read and respond to scenarios that vary in terms of (a) whether the people described in the scenarios are members of participants' own group or the out-group, and (b) whether these people do or do not refer to participants' group membership. We

predict an interaction between partner group membership and reference condition, such that people will be especially likely to anticipate lower trust and acceptance when references to group membership come from out-group members, as compared to when they come from in-group members.

Moreover, in addition to assessing trust and acceptance, Study 2 also includes a measure of anticipated prejudice from interaction partners to see whether perceptions of partners' prejudice mediate the effects of out-group members' references to group membership on feelings of trust and acceptance. At the same time, we also predict an interaction between partner group membership and participant ethnic status, such that the tendency to anticipate less trust and acceptance with out-group members will be stronger among ethnic minority participants than among ethnic majority participants.

Method

Participants

Black and White participants were recruited for participation from undergraduate classes and student organizations at two private universities in the eastern United States. Altogether, 67 Black participants (21 male, 46 female) and 75 White participants (17 male, 68 female) took part in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 22 years ($M = 19.52$ years).

Procedure

Using the same procedures as in Study 1, participants received a packet of scenarios, each describing a hypothetical interaction between themselves and another individual. Since responses to the scenarios showed high levels of internal consistency in Study 1, only four of the six scenarios were used in Study 2 (2 depicting interactions with males, 2 depicting interactions with females) to shorten the duration of participation in the study.

Using demographic information collected before the distribution of packets, each participant was assigned randomly to one of four conditions, depending on the group membership of interaction partners described in the scenarios and whether those partners made a reference to the participant's ethnic group. Participants assigned to the *in-group* condition read scenarios describing interactions with another member of the participant's own ethnic in-group. Thus, Black participants read scenarios describing interactions with a Black partner, and White participants read scenarios describing interactions with a White partner. By contrast, participants assigned to the

out-group condition read scenarios describing interactions with members of the ethnic out-group. Thus, Black participants read scenarios describing interactions with a White partner, and White participants read scenarios describing interactions with a Black partner. Additionally, participants assigned to the *reference* condition read scenarios in which the partner made a reference to the participant's group membership during the interaction, while those assigned to the *no-reference* condition read scenarios in which the partner did not refer to the participant's group membership. Thus, through these procedures, Black and White participants were assigned randomly to one of four experimental conditions in a 2 (Participant Ethnic Status) \times 2 (Partner Group Membership) \times 2 (Reference Condition) factorial design.

Measures

Following each scenario, participants completed the five items used in Study 1 to assess feelings of trust and acceptance with the person described in the scenario. Item scores were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*), and they were combined and averaged across the scenarios to create an overall measure of trust/acceptance ($\alpha = .84$ among Black participants; $\alpha = .76$ among White participants). After they completed items in response to each scenario, participants also indicated the extent to which they believed the people in the scenarios were prejudiced against their ethnic group on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Results

Trust and Acceptance With Partner

A 2 (Participant Ethnic Status: Black/White) \times 2 (Partner Group Membership: in-group/out-group) \times 2 (Reference Condition: group membership/control) ANOVA was conducted for participants' anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance. Significant main effects were found for reference condition, $F(1, 138) = 65.84, p < .001$, and participant ethnic status, $F(1, 138) = 8.56, p < .01$. Overall, participants anticipated less trust and acceptance with partners who made a reference to their group membership ($M = 4.88$) than when no reference was made ($M = 6.50$). Additionally, Black participants were generally less likely to anticipate feelings of trust and acceptance with their partners ($M = 5.45$), as compared to the anticipated feelings of White participants ($M = 6.11$).

However, both of these effects were qualified by two-way interactions involving partner group membership. Specifically, the Partner Group

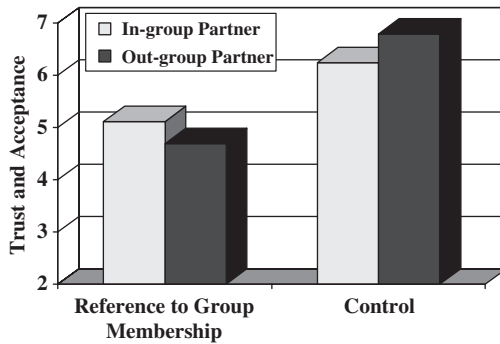


Figure 3. Anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance with in-group and out-group partners across the reference conditions.

Membership \times Reference Condition interaction was significant, $F(1, 138) = 29.05$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 3). Although participants generally expected to feel less trust and acceptance with partners who made a reference to group membership, this effect was especially pronounced for participants who anticipated interactions with out-group members, $t(72) = 6.64$, $p < .001$, as compared to those who anticipated interactions with in-group members, $t(75) = 4.16$, $p < .001$.

The Partner Group Membership \times Participant Ethnic Status interaction was also significant, $F(1, 138) = 4.20$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 4). Black participants generally anticipated less trust and acceptance in interactions with out-group members than with in-group members ($M_s = 4.80$ and 6.02 , respectively), $t(64) = 3.36$, $p < .001$, whereas White participants generally anticipated greater trust and acceptance with out-group members than with in-group members ($M_s = 5.60$ and 6.60 , respectively), $t(78) = -3.40$, $p < .001$. All remaining effects were not significant.

Anticipated Prejudice From Partner

A separate 2 (Participant Ethnic Status: Black/White) \times 2 (Partner Group Membership: in-group/out-group) \times 2 (Reference Condition: group membership/control) ANOVA was conducted for participants' expectations that partners would be prejudiced against their ethnic group. A significant main effect was observed for participant ethnic status, $F(1, 130) = 9.77$, $p < .01$, such that Black participants generally expected partners to be more prejudiced against their group ($M = 3.45$) than White participants ($M = 2.53$). The main effect for partner group membership was also

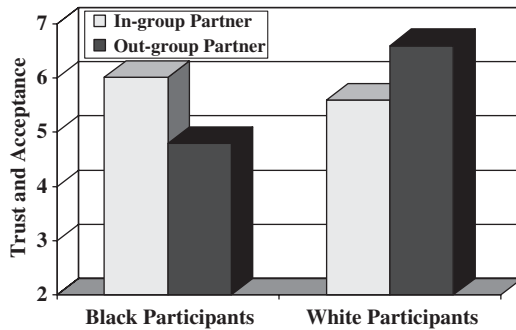


Figure 4. Anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance with in-group and out-group partners among Black and White participants.

significant, $F(1, 130) = 4.69, p < .05$, such that participants expected out-group partners to be more prejudiced against their group ($M = 3.26$) than in-group partners ($M = 2.66$). Additionally, the main effect for reference condition was significant, $F(1, 130) = 25.03, p < .001$. Participants anticipated greater prejudice from their partners when they made a reference to group membership ($M = 3.77$) than when no reference to group membership was made ($M = 2.41$). All remaining effects were not significant.⁸

Additional analyses were then conducted to examine whether perceptions that partners are prejudiced would mediate the effects of their references to group membership on participants' feelings of trust and acceptance (see Baron & Kenny, 1986). Preliminary analyses show that perceptions of partners' prejudice significantly predicted feelings of trust and acceptance for those participants who anticipated interacting with an out-group partner ($\beta = -.68$), $t(69) = -7.55, p < .001$, but not for those who anticipated interacting with an in-group partner ($\beta = -.18$), $t(72) = -1.56, p = .12$. Thus, tests of mediation were conducted only for participants who responded to scenarios describing interactions with out-group partners.

Figure 5 shows the standardized coefficients for this model. The model shows that references to group membership from an out-group partner directly and negatively contributed to lower feelings of trust and acceptance ($\beta = -.62$), $t(73) = -6.64, p < .001$. References to group membership also appear to have enhanced the perception that out-group partners are

⁸Although the Partner Group Membership \times Reference Condition interaction did not reach statistical significance, $F(1, 130) = 1.93, p = .17$, supplementary analyses show that references to group membership from out-group members tended to evoke greater perceptions of prejudice ($M = 4.10$) than did references to group membership from in-group members ($M = 3.39$), $t(55) = -1.79, p = .08$.

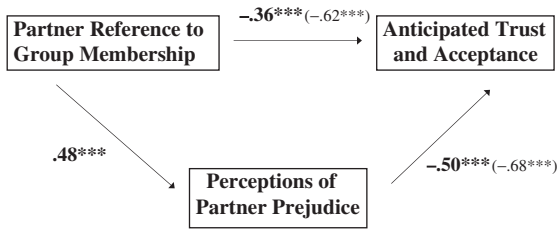


Figure 5. Perception of out-group partners' prejudice as a mediator between manipulated references to group membership and feelings of trust and acceptance. In cases where two sets of numbers are presented, numbers appearing outside the parentheses are standardized coefficients when reference to group membership and perceived prejudice are entered simultaneously as predictors for trust and acceptance. Numbers appearing within parentheses are standardized coefficients representing total effects between trust and acceptance and the predictor variable in question. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

prejudiced against one's group ($\beta = .48$), $t(69) = 4.56$, $p < .001$, at the same time as this perception predicted lower feelings of trust and acceptance ($\beta = -.68$), $t(69) = 7.55$, $p < .001$. When entered simultaneously as predictors, both the reference manipulation and perceptions of partners' prejudice continued to predict trust and acceptance (β s = $-.36$ and $-.50$, respectively), t s (69) = -3.81 and -5.39 , p s $< .001$, although the reference manipulation became a significantly weaker predictor (Sobel test, $z = -3.90$, $p < .001$). Thus, perceived prejudice partially mediated the relationship between the reference manipulation and participants' anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance with out-group partners.

Discussion

Extending the findings from Study 1, the results from Study 2 show that while participants generally responded negatively to references to group membership, participants were especially likely to report low levels of trust and acceptance when out-group members referred to their group membership. Moreover, the results from Study 2 indicate that perceptions of partners' prejudice partially mediated the effects of out-group members' references to group membership on feelings of trust and acceptance. Specifically, references to group membership from out-group members appear to have provoked the perception that out-group members are prejudiced against one's group, which in turn contributed to lower feelings of trust and acceptance in anticipated interactions with those out-group members. Together, these findings suggest that in addition to the effects of explicit prejudice from the out-group (see Tropp, 2003), even relatively innocuous references to group membership from out-group members may lead people

to feel that they are being targeted negatively on the basis of their group membership (see Crocker et al., 1998; Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984).

Additionally, the results from Study 2 show that Black participants were generally more likely to anticipate less trust and acceptance with out-group members, relative to White participants. These findings mesh with other recent perspectives suggesting that members of ethnic minority groups are especially likely to approach cross-group interactions with distrust (see Cohen & Steele, 2002; Steele et al., 2002), along with being consistent with the findings for Latino participants in Study 1.

At the same time, like Study 1, the results from Study 2 show that White participants anticipated feeling somewhat greater trust and acceptance with out-group members than with members of their own group. Although this finding runs counter to other research demonstrating that people typically show a preference for members of their own group (see Tajfel & Turner, 1986), it suggests that other important issues must be considered when examining relations between members of different status groups.

General Discussion

The present research examined anticipated feelings of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions among members of ethnic minority and majority groups, depending on whether a reference to group membership was made during a hypothetical interaction. The results indicate that, compared to interactions with out-group members in general, participants expected to feel less trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions with an out-group member who made reference to their group membership. This finding was consistent for members of three distinct ethnic minority groups (i.e., Asians, Latinos, and Blacks) and for ethnic majority group members who responded to interactions with each of these groups (i.e., Whites). This consistency is important because it suggests that the effect is not limited to members of ethnic minority groups, who are regularly confronted with prejudice and reminders of their group's devaluation (Goffman, 1963; Swim et al., 2001). Rather, the results suggest that, depending on the context, members of any group might feel reduced trust and acceptance if an out-group member makes reference to their group membership.

At the same time, it is important to note that group members did not respond negatively to all cross-group interactions. The results show that members of all four ethnic groups generally expected to feel high levels of trust and acceptance in interactions with out-group members, with mean scores well above the midpoint on the scale. Rather, group members only demonstrated clearly negative expectations for cross-group interactions when given an explicit reason to believe that out-group members were

perceiving them in terms of their group membership. Thus, although group members often anticipate negative responses from the out-group (see Kramer & Messick, 1998), both ethnic minority and majority group members still demonstrated an openness to engaging in interactions with members of the other group.

As such, this general trend may be seen as encouraging because it suggests the potential for members of different groups to anticipate feelings of trust and acceptance as they approach cross-group interactions. Still, the broader findings from this research caution that we must be careful in how references to group membership are introduced in the contact situation, to keep from inhibiting these initial feelings of trust.

Thus far, social psychological research has tended to employ references to group membership as a means to achieve and generalize positive outcomes from intergroup contact (e.g., Brown et al., 1999; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1996), with relatively little attention to how such references are likely to be received by the group members themselves. But future research should grant more attention to the ways and contexts in which such references to group membership are made, as these factors may affect the meanings associated with those references (see Deaux, 2000). For example, in the present research, references to group membership were made in contexts in which they were not related directly to the goals of the cross-group interaction, and in which only limited information was available regarding their likely intent. It may be that in such cases, where other contextual information is absent, references to group membership by an out-group member may be especially likely to be interpreted as being based in negative intentions (see Kramer & Wei, 1999; Krueger, 1996).

By contrast, references to group membership that occur during discussions of group differences and social inequalities might be interpreted with more positive intentions (see Nagda & Zuniga, 2003), and may even facilitate cross-group understanding (see Lee, 1996). Thus, future research is needed to examine the ways in which references to group membership are made during cross-group interactions, to gain a better understanding of how such references are likely to be interpreted by group members on both sides of the interaction, and to promote feelings of trust and effective communication across group boundaries.

While participants from all groups tended to respond negatively when an out-group member referred to their group membership, some patterns of results varied among members of different ethnic groups. These divergent trends serve as important reminders of the need to consider both commonalities across groups, as well as potential differences in perceptions and relations between members of different ethnic groups (see Gurin et al., 1999).

More specifically, Latino participants (Study 1) and Black participants (Study 2) expected to feel greater trust and acceptance in interactions with in-group members, relative to their expectations for interactions with a White out-group member. Overall, these findings are consistent with the prediction that people will respond more favorably to interactions with in-group members than with out-group members, as people tend to feel greater attraction to members of their own group when group membership is relevant to the social context (see Hogg & Hains, 1996; Tajfel, 1981). It is also interesting to note that Latino and Black participants expected to feel less trust and acceptance in interactions with Whites than White participants expected in interactions with Latinos and Blacks. These findings are consistent with the prediction that members of ethnic minority groups will tend to have less positive expectations for cross-group interactions relative to members of the ethnic majority group, given the prejudice and devaluation they regularly face in the broader society (see Goffman, 1963; Jones et al., 1984).

However, other comparisons yielded findings that did not conform to the predicted patterns of results. For example, in Study 1, Asian participants reported that they expected to feel comparable levels of trust and acceptance in interactions with in-group members and with out-group members. And in direct contrast to Latino and Black participants, White participants reported that they expected to feel greater trust and acceptance in interactions with out-group members than in interactions with in-group members.

It is possible that the especially positive responses of Whites may be a result of social desirability concerns, such that they are motivated to report positive responses to cross-group interactions to keep from seeming biased against members of ethnic minority groups (for an extended discussion, see Plant & Devine, 1998). At the same time, there may be other explanations that could help to account for the observed patterns of effects. For example, it is important to note that positive responses on the outcome measure are not favorability ratings, but rather reflect the degree to which group members expect to feel trust and acceptance in interactions with out-group members.

In line with other work describing the benefits of high status in social interactions (see Forsyth, 1999; Levine & Moreland, 1998), it could be that Whites' higher status grants them the privilege of having relatively positive expectations for how they will be received by members of ethnic minority groups. Thus, it is conceivable that, as a result of their higher status (see Marger, 1997; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), ethnic majority group members in fact would expect to experience greater trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions than would members of ethnic minority groups.

Such an interpretation also might contribute to understanding the observed differences in patterns of responses among Latino, Black, and Asian participants. While all three groups are commonly categorized as *minorities* and tend to have lower status than do Whites, Asians are perceived to have considerably higher social status than do Latinos and Blacks (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, compared to other ethnic minority groups in the United States, Asians have experienced relatively high rates of integration with Whites, as demonstrated through such indicators as residential integration and intermarriage (Marger, 1997). Together, these factors might help to explain why Asian participants reported that they would expect relatively equal levels of trust and acceptance in interactions with in-group members and White out-group members, whereas Latino and Black participants indicated that they would expect to feel greater trust and acceptance with members of their own group.

Still, further research is needed to provide more direct tests of these possibilities, where perceived differences in group status could be examined in conjunction with minority and majority group members' expectations for cross-group interactions. Similar comparisons also might be conducted among members of distinct ethnic minority groups (e.g., Asian, Latino, and Black participants) to examine how differences in perceptions of their group's social status would correspond with their feelings about interaction with each other.

Additionally, future research is needed to test these effects in relation to actual, rather than imagined, cross-group interactions. One limitation of this research is that group members responded only to hypothetical cross-group interactions, and people's beliefs about how they would be likely to respond to situations can sometimes differ from their actual responses (see Ross & Nisbett, 1991). Still, by asking participants to respond to hypothetical cross-group interactions, these studies were able to control for variance that is commonly introduced by real interaction partners. In each study, every participant read the same set of scenarios with interaction partners who behaved identically across the conditions, varying only in terms of their group membership and whether they referred to the participant's group membership. And results from these studies show that even these few alterations could produce dramatic changes in how group members expected to feel during the imagined interactions. Nonetheless, future research should continue to explore whether different patterns of effects might emerge in relation to hypothetical and actual cross-group interactions.

Conclusion

The present research examined anticipated trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions among members of ethnic minority and majority groups,

depending on whether a reference to group membership was made by a member of the out-group. While some patterns of effects differed across the groups, the results consistently indicate that group members expected to feel substantially lower levels of trust and acceptance in cross-group interactions where reference to their group membership was made by an out-group member. Thus, as an initial test, the findings from these studies provide strong evidence that group members may have different expectations for cross-group interactions, depending on the way in which their group membership is introduced in the contact situation.

As we continue to encourage dialogues and close relationships across group boundaries (Lee, 1996; Nagda & Zuniga, 2003; Pettigrew, 1997), we must continue to find ways for members of different groups to refer to group membership and to discuss group differences openly. Therefore, future research is needed to explore different strategies by which group membership can be acknowledged in intergroup contexts (see Hebl & Kleck, 2002), to encourage feelings of trust and acceptance (see Purdie et al., 2004), and to facilitate the development of positive outcomes from intergroup contact.

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Appendix

Below is an abbreviated version of a sample scenario, with adaptations for the three conditions. Changes in wording across the three conditions have been italicized. For these examples, "Asian" will be used to refer to the ethnic in-group and "White" will be used to refer to the ethnic out-group.

Sample Scenario

Imagine that on your way home from class, you start thinking about housing for next fall. You and four of your friends have decided that you want to live together (in the dorms), but none of you are really sure how to go about it. You decide to go to the housing office. When you walk in, there are a few people working at the desk....

In-Group Condition

One of them is your roommate's girlfriend, *who is also Asian*. She looks up, sees you, and smiles. You ask her if she's busy, and she shakes her head

and waves you over to her. You ask her how you and your friends can go about getting housing together. She warns you it will take her a couple of minutes to explain, and she begins to go through the procedures. When she's done, you take a fall housing packet and thank her.

Out-Group Condition

One of them is your roommate's girlfriend, *who is White*. She looks up, sees you, and smiles. You ask her if she's busy, and she shakes her head and waves you over to her. You ask her how you and your friends can go about getting housing together. She warns you it will take her a couple of minutes to explain, and she begins to go through the procedures. When she's done, you take a fall housing packet and thank her.

Out-Group Reference Condition

One of them is your roommate's girlfriend, *who is White*. She looks up, sees you, and smiles. You ask her if she's busy, and she shakes her head and waves you over to her. You ask her how you and your friends can go about getting housing together. She warns you it will take her a couple of minutes to explain, and she begins to go through the procedures. When she's done, you take a fall housing packet and thank her. Then she asks, "So, *being Asian*, which building do you want to live in next year?"