

“We Are, Therefore We Should”: Evidence That In-Group Identification Mediates the Acquisition of In-Group Norms¹

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In 2 field studies ($Ns = 71$ and 113), we tested the prediction that in-group identification would mediate the acquisition of group norms by new group members. Study 1 demonstrated that participants surveyed after a team-development program reported greater awareness of in-group norms of teamwork and cooperation, compared to those surveyed at the start. Moreover, there was evidence that this effect was mediated by increased in-group identification. Study 2 replicated this finding, and showed that the effects were specific to the norm of teamwork. Acquisition of alternative norms of individualism and competitiveness did not increase after participation in the program, and did not correlate with identification. Practical implications and future work are discussed.

Conformity to and acceptance of social standards and group norms has been a recurring theme in social psychology (Asch, 1952; Cialdini, 2001; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996, 1997; Newcomb, 1943; Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 2000; Sherif, 1936/1965; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Relatedly, several strands of research have highlighted the importance of processes of socialization within a social group in explaining the acquisition of group-based norms and behavior (Guimond, 2000; Guimond & Palmer, 1996; Moreland, 1987; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). However, as Guimond (2000) pointed out, relatively little research has directly examined the processes underlying the acquisition of group norms by (new) members of that group. The present paper aims to build on previous

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research on this topic by highlighting the role of in-group identification in the acquisition of group norms.

Social Identity and Self-Stereotyping

The social identity approach, and self-categorization theory in particular (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), suggests that group members' identification with a group is a vital condition for their acquisition and internalization of that group's norms and values. Specifically, self-categorization theory suggests that when individuals come to define themselves in terms of a group identity, then they will learn or form stereotypical norms and values of that category and will assign these norms and values to themselves and to other group members (Oakes, Haslam, Morrison, & Grace, 1995; Turner et al., 1987). This is central to self-categorization theory's analysis of social influence (Turner, 1991), which suggests that influence within groups is exerted to the extent that individuals categorize themselves as group members and perceive themselves (and others) in terms of the shared stereotype that defines the ingroup (Turner, 1982). The result is that group members are influenced by group norms because they stereotype themselves in terms of group membership; in other words, normative influence stems from self-categorization and identification with the group (Turner, 1982, 1985).

It follows from this analysis that the more strongly identified an individual is with the group, then the more accepting he or she will be of that group's norms. The contingency of in-group norms on in-group identification has most frequently been operationalized as a moderation effect, whereby the relationship between group norms and norm-consistent attitudes and behavior is stronger for group members who are highly identified with the group (Guimond, 2000; Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002; Jetten et al., 1996, 1997; McAuliffe, Jetten, Hornsey, & Hogg, 2003). With regard to socialization, Guimond's (2000) study of prospective military officers in Canada found that, consistent with prevailing beliefs within this military group, majority (Anglophone) group members became significantly more negative toward out-groups. Crucially, this shift was moderated by their identification with the Canadian Forces Officers group, such that the movement toward the in-group norm was greater among those who identified more strongly with the group.

The Mediating Role of In-Group Identification in Socialization

Self-categorization theory suggests that in addition to the moderating role that identification exerts in more established groups, it is through

identification with a group that new members come to acquire its norms (Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Turner et al., 1987). This is because the process of depersonalization and self-stereotyping—whereby the salience of a social identity leads group members to take on the norms, values, and other prototypical aspects of the group—requires the internalization of a group membership.

For new members of a group, such as an organization (and, indeed, for members of new groups), this internalization is not automatic and is likely to develop over the early stages of group membership, during which time socialization plays an important role. As well as involving learning about group norms and group-relevant skills (Moreland, 1987), most socialization processes are, therefore, also about the formation of a sense of shared (organizational) identity (Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005; Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005).

The development of a sense of shared identity is facilitated by both deductive (top-down) and inductive (bottom-up) processes that, while analytically and empirically distinct, tend to work in tandem in many natural settings (including that of the present research) in which “new” group members have both a social category membership to reference (e.g., an organization or a university department, in the present case) and the opportunity to offer individual contributions in the context of group activity. Accordingly, we suggest that these processes mean that socialization is likely to increase in-group identification, as well as the acquisition of in-group norms.

Together, the aforementioned points suggest that new group members who participate in socialization activities will not only acquire in-group norms, but will do so to the extent that a sense of identification with the group is engendered. In other words, identification should mediate the impact of such activities on new group members’ appreciation and acceptance of in-group norms (for similar points regarding attitudes, behavior, and individual productivity in groups, see Van Dick, Hirst, Grojean, & Wieseke, 2007; Worchel, Rothgerber, Day, Hart, & Butemeyer, 1998).

This is not to downplay the importance of other processes related to self-categorization that influence group members’ tendencies to act in terms of in-group norms. In particular, we do not mean to present a reified definition of group norms as being “fixed” or given. Rather, the norms and values that define an in-group—and, indeed, the scope of the in-group category itself—are contextually defined and will, therefore, vary depending on salient intergroup comparisons (Haslam & Turner, 1992; Turner et al., 1987). Notwithstanding the role of intergroup comparisons in shaping perceptions of what it means to be an in-group member, our point here is that acquiring the in-group norms that emerge in a particular context will, for

new members of the group, increase as their sense of identification with the in-group develops. This specific aspect of identification's role in group life is distinct from its moderating effects among more established group members. Although it has generally been assumed or treated as a given in the context of self-categorization research, to our knowledge it has not been demonstrated empirically—or even directly tested—in the context of natural groups.

While the relationship between norm acquisition and identification is likely to be a reciprocal one for established group members, the issue of how norm acquisition occurs in the first instance is an important one, particularly in terms of its implications for how “roles” or group memberships come to guide behavior (Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Van Dick et al., 2007). On the basis of previous work on the contingency of norm acceptance on in-group identification, and the development of in-group identification among “new” group members, we hypothesize that socialization will facilitate the acquisition of in-group norms to the extent that it facilitates identification with the group (i.e., indicating individuals' readiness to define themselves in terms of that group membership).

The aim of the present research, therefore, is to test this hypothesis in a field setting among new group members who had little previous opportunity to learn about the group's norms. Both studies were conducted among first-year psychology undergraduates who took part in a team-building program at a British university. This program was introduced to students as a “one-day intensive course, focusing on working in groups and team-building,” and was intended to foster cooperative, team-based norms, as well as a sense of shared identity among new students.

In keeping with this aim, the program took place during the students' first week at university, before the commencement of lecture courses and tutorials, and before completion of any collective or individual assignments associated with the psychology degree course. Therefore, the students were new group members taking part in activities intended to establish in-group norms of teamwork and cooperation. We propose the following:

Hypothesis 1. Taking part in the course will increase in-group identification and the acquisition of a norm of teamwork.

Hypothesis 2. The increase in acquisition of the norm of teamwork will be explained (i.e., mediated) by the increase in in-group identification.

In Study 2, we aim to replicate this finding and examine whether these effects are specific to the norm promoted by the team-building course.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Study participants were 71 first-year psychology students. Sex and age were not directly recorded, but approximately 80% of the sample was female. The modal age of the sample was 18 years.

Team-Development Course

The team-development course was designed and implemented by an independent company that specializes in courses centered on team-building activities. The students were quasi-randomly assigned (on the basis of their tutorial groups, of which they were not yet aware) to take part in the course on one of two days, and participated in various team-building exercises under the instruction of tutors (postgraduate psychology students). The stated aim of the course was “to develop an understanding of the key skills needed for effective teamwork by working together using problem solving, planning, and reviewing techniques in order to develop an effective process to tackle the projects and workshops during the year.” The opening session of the course made this aim clear to all participants, and tutors were instructed to reiterate these objectives during and after each exercise.

Measures

In-group identification (i.e., with the School of Psychology) was measured using three items ($\alpha = .79$) from the scale employed by Doosje, Ellemers, and Spears (1995). The responses were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Participants were also asked to rate three “qualities” (in-group norms) in terms of their importance to in-group members ($\alpha = .71$). These qualities are *being group-focused*, *being team oriented*, and *wanting to work with others to achieve goals*. The responses were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

Procedure

Of the sample, 32 participants attended Day 1, and 39 participants attended Day 2 of the team-development course. Both days' activities were

identical. The 32 participants from Day 1 completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the day, before the introductory session. The 39 participants from Day 2 completed the questionnaire after the final activity of the day. Thus, there were two independent conditions (i.e., before and after). To prevent any prompting about the nature of the day's activities, the participants from Day 1 were explicitly told not to reveal the nature of the day's activities, or their thoughts about them, to the students who would be attending on Day 2.

Results

Identification

We performed an independent-sample *t* test to examine any differences between the before and after conditions (coded as 0 and 1, respectively) on in-group identification. As predicted, the participants who were surveyed after the program identified more strongly ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 0.91$) with the in-group than did those who were surveyed before the program ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 0.75$), $t(69) = -3.19$, $p = .002$.

In-Group Norms

We also performed an independent-sample *t* test on the team-based norm-acquisition scale. As expected, the participants were more likely to think that a team-based norm was important to in-group members after the program ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 0.89$), as compared to before the program ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 0.59$), $t(69) = -2.25$, $p = .028$.

Mediation Analysis

In order to test the hypothesis that socialization engendered norm acquisition through increasing in-group identification, we tested path models using AMOS 6.0. The first step in testing this hypothesis was to compare fit indexes for the partially mediated and fully mediated models (Holmbeck, 1997). In the second step, we used bootstrapping procedures to test the significance of the hypothesized mediation in the best (in terms of fit and parsimony) model (Shrout & Bolger, 2002; for an example of an analogous procedure, see Lee, Kelly, & Edwards, 2006).

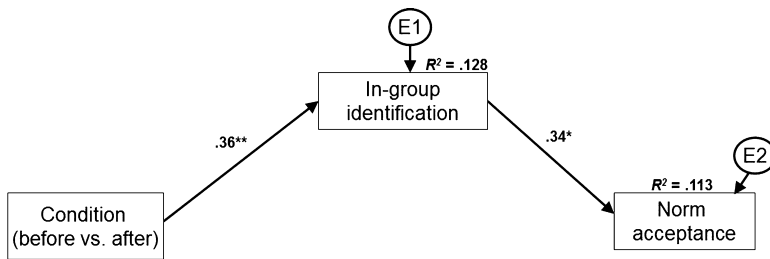


Figure 1. Mediation model: Study 1. Path weights are standardized coefficients. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .005$.

First, we tested the direct relation between the predictor (socialization condition: before vs. after) and the criterion (norm acquisition), which was significant ($\beta = .26, p = .024$). Next, we tested a partially mediated model by adding the paths from socialization condition to identification, and from identification to norm acquisition. As a saturated model, this had perfect fit with the data ($\chi^2_0 = 0$). However, consistent with full mediation, the direct path coefficient from socialization condition to norm acquisition was not statistically significant ($\beta = .16, p = .174$). We then tested a fully mediated model with this path removed. Consistent with full mediation, removal of the condition to norm acquisition path did not significantly worsen the fit of the model ($\Delta\chi^2_1 = 1.82, p = .177$). Thus, parsimony suggests that the fully mediated model is preferable to the partially mediated model. The fully mediated model is illustrated in Figure 1.

We also tested an alternative specification in which norm acquisition was the mediator and identification was the outcome. This failed to show full mediation, with the direct path from condition to in-group identification remaining highly significant when the indirect path through norm acquisition was added. Accordingly, removing the direct path from condition to in-group identification significantly worsened the fit of the model ($\Delta\chi^2_1 = 6.45, p = .011$). Moreover, bootstrapping procedures revealed that the indirect (mediated) path in the partially mediated model was not statistically significant ($p = .069$).

To test the significance of the mediation effect in the fully mediated model, we applied bootstrapping procedures in AMOS 6.0 (for a description of these procedures, see Shrout & Bolger, 2002; for an example of their operation, see Lee et al., 2006). This involved generating 5,000 random bootstrap samples with replacement from the data set ($N = 71$) and testing the model 5,000 times with these samples. This allows a mean mediation effect to be estimated, along with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the estimates. The significance of the mean mediation effect is indicated by whether the value of

0 (i.e., no effect) falls within or outside this confidence interval. If it falls outside, the mediation effect is deemed to be significant at the .05 level. In the present case, the mean (unstandardized) mediation effect was significant ($b = 0.19$, $SE = .089$; 95% CI = .038-.384). The bootstrap approximation for the significance level (p) of the effect was .008.

Discussion

In this study, we tested the hypotheses that taking part in this course would increase in-group identification and the acquisition of a norm of teamwork (Hypothesis 1), and the increase in acquisition of this norm would be explained (i.e., mediated) by the increase in in-group identification (Hypothesis 2). The results provide good initial support for these hypotheses. In particular, there was evidence that the effect of participation in a socialization program on group members' acquisition (in terms of recognizing their importance to in-group members) of in-group norms was accounted for by increased identification with the in-group. Moreover, these data were collected in a field setting from members of a pre-existing group, lending the results a high level of ecological validity.

While the results of Study 1 are encouraging, there is clearly scope for extending its focus. In particular, we focused only on one norm, related to the perceived value of teamwork. While this is obviously relevant to the nature of the socialization program, it might be argued that in only measuring the acquisition of one norm, it remains possible that participants simply wanted to indicate their recognition of any norm with which they were presented at the end of the program. It should be said here, though, that the employment of a between-subjects design increases our confidence that the effects were not simply the result of demand characteristics associated with a within-subjects test-intervention-retest design. Nevertheless, it might be argued that increased identification invokes acquiescence to any norm with which participants were presented in the questionnaire, rather than acquisition of a norm that is specifically relevant to the socialization process. This is an issue that we address in Study 2 by extending our focus to include alternative norms that may be available to members of this particular group.

Study 2

As well as replicating the effects of Study 1, our aim in Study 2 is to examine whether the effect of socialization, mediated by identification, is specific to the norm of teamwork in this group. We hypothesize that if the

effects evident in Study 1 were, indeed, indicative of norm acquisition, then they should only occur in relation to the norm(s) emphasized by the socialization program (teamwork, in this case), and not in relation to alternative norms.

In order to test this possibility, we conducted a second field study with a fresh sample of participants from the same group that was used in Study 1. Specifically, we sampled from a new intake of students to the psychology program, 1 year after the first study. We employed the same method used in Study 1, but this time measured the extent to which participants acquired two other norms (in addition to teamwork) that are likely to be available to this sample of largely middle-class university students; namely, an individualistic norm (e.g., Jetten et al., 2002) and a competitive norm (e.g., Jetten et al., 1996, 1997).

Method

Participants

Study participants were 113 first-year psychology students. Sex and age were not directly recorded, but approximately 80% of the sample was female. The modal age of the sample was 18 years.

Team-Development Course

As in Study 1, the students were randomly assigned to take part in the course on one of two days, and they participated in various team-building exercises under the instruction of tutors (postgraduate psychology students). Again, the stated aim of the course was “to develop an understanding of the key skills needed for effective teamwork by working together using problem solving, planning, and reviewing techniques in order to develop an effective process to tackle the projects and workshops during the year.” The opening session of the course made this aim clear to all participants, and tutors were instructed to reiterate these objectives during and after each exercise.

Measures

In-group identification (i.e., with the School of Psychology) was measured using the same three items that we employed in Study 1 ($\alpha = .72$). In addition to the three team-based norm items ($\alpha = .78$), the participants also rated the

importance to in-group members of two other norms. Acquisition of an individualistic norm was measured using the items *being an independent thinker* and *being individual-focused* ($r = .36, p < .001$). Acquisition of a competitive norm was measured using the items *being competitive* and *wanting to win at all costs* ($r = .44, p < .001$). As with the team-based norm items, these were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

Procedure

In this study, 62 participants attended Day 1 and 51 attended Day 2 of the team-development course. Both days' activities were identical. The 62 participants from Day 1 completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the day, before the introductory session. The 51 participants from Day 2 completed the questionnaire after the final activity of the day. To prevent any prompting about the nature of the day's activities, the participants from Day 1 were explicitly told not to reveal the nature of the day's activities—or their thoughts about them—to students who would be attending on Day 2.

Results

Identification

We performed an independent-sample t test to examine any difference between the before and after conditions (coded as 0 and 1, respectively) on in-group identification. As predicted, the participants who were surveyed after the program identified more strongly ($M = 6.14, SD = 0.73$) with the in-group than did those who were surveyed before the program ($M = 5.62, SD = 0.64$), $t(111) = -4.20, p < .001$.

In-Group Norms

We performed independent-sample t tests on each of the norm-acquisition measures (i.e., team-based norm, competitive norm, individualistic norm). As expected, participants were more likely to think that a team-based norm was important after the program ($M = 5.82, SD = 0.91$), as compared to before ($M = 5.38, SD = 0.96$), $t(111) = -2.46, p = .016$. There was no difference between the before condition ($M = 5.30, SD = 0.99$) and the after condition ($M = 5.31, SD = 1.05$) in the extent to which participants thought that an individualistic norm was important ($t < 1$). Likewise, there were no signifi-

cant differences between the before and after conditions on measures of the importance of a competitive norm ($M_s = 2.73$ and 1.19 , $SD_s = 3.11$ and 1.34), $t(111) = -1.65$, $p = .121$.

Mediation Analysis

Correlations between in-group identification and the norm-acceptance scales are reported in Table 1. Following the procedure of Study 1, the first step was to test the direct relation between the predictor (socialization condition: before vs. after) and the criterion variables (norm acquisition). In order to do so, the path model illustrated in the top portion of Figure 2 was tested. This model mirrors the t tests reported previously, but with the additional feature that it allows covariance between the outcome variables. As a fully saturated model, this model had perfect fit with the data ($\chi^2_0 = 0$). The results mirrored those of the t tests, with condition being a significant predictor of team-based norm acquisition ($\beta = .23$, $p = .014$), but not of individualistic norm acquisition ($\beta = .01$, $p = .936$), nor of competitive norm acquisition ($\beta = .15$, $p = .116$).

Next, we tested a partially mediated model by adding the paths from socialization condition to identification, and from identification to norm acceptance. Consistent with full mediation, the direct path coefficient from socialization condition to team-based norm acquisition was no longer statistically significant ($\beta = .13$, $p = .180$). The paths between socialization condition and identification ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$) and between identification and team-based norm acquisition ($\beta = .27$, $p = .005$) were also significant. No other paths were significant.

We then tested a fully mediated model, which is illustrated in the lower portion of Figure 2. Removing the direct paths between socialization condi-

Table 1

Study Means and Correlations: Study 2

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Identification	5.86	0.73	—		
2. Team norm acceptance	5.58	0.96	.31***	—	
3. Individual norm acceptance	5.31	1.01	.15	.29**	—
4. Competitive norm acceptance	2.90	1.27	.04	-.05	.15

** $p < .005$. *** $p < .001$.

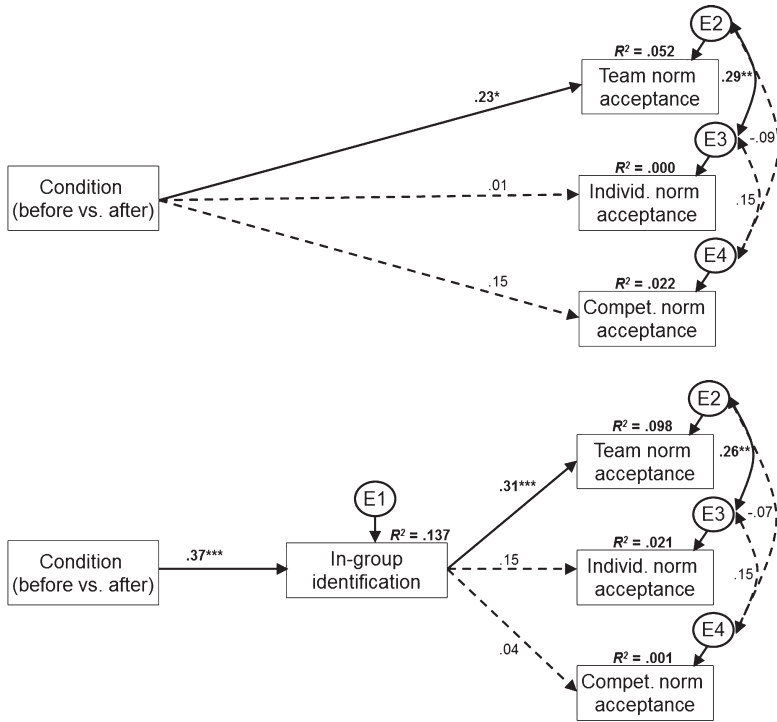


Figure 2. Direct effects (upper portion) and mediated effects (lower portion): Study 2. Path weights are standardized coefficients. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .005$. *** $p < .001$.

tion and norm acquisition did not significantly worsen the fit of the model ($\chi^2_3 = 5.96, p = .113$). Thus, parsimony suggests that the fully mediated model is preferable to the partially mediated model.

We tested the significance of the hypothesized mediation effect from socialization condition through identification to team-based norm acquisition using the same procedure described in Study 1. Consistent with our mediation hypothesis, the mean (unstandardized) mediation effect was significant ($b = 0.22; SE = .095; 95\% CI = .062-.427$). The bootstrap approximation for the significance level (p) of the effect was .002.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 replicate those of Study 1, thereby providing further support for the hypothesis that in-group identification mediates the

acquisition of in-group norms by new members of a group. They also go beyond those of Study 1 in showing that, as expected, this process applied only to the relevant norm of teamwork. Specifically, acquisition of alternative norms of individualism and competitiveness did not increase as a result of socialization, and did not correlate with identification. This increases our confidence that the results in relation to the norm of teamwork did not simply reflect acquiescence to whatever norms were presented in the questionnaire following an intervention that increased identification. Rather, norm acquisition related specifically to the content of socialization.

It is worth noting that the perceived importance of the alternative norms of individualism and competitiveness did not actually decrease among those sampled after the program, nor did they correlate negatively with in-group identification. This presumably reflects the fact that the socialization program did not explicitly identify these types of behavior as anti-normative. Rather, it simply did not address them directly at all. For this reason, it appears that norms of teamwork and individualism or competitiveness do not necessarily sit in a hydraulic or mutually exclusive relationship, where one precludes the other. Indeed, the results of this study actually indicate a positive correlation between acceptance of norms of teamwork and individualism, suggesting that they can even be compatible (e.g., in allowing the expression of individual concerns within a team; see Postmes et al., 2005).

More generally, it is also the case that group identification does not automatically preclude individualistic behavior in any generic sense. Indeed, there is evidence that strong in-group identification can result in increased levels of individualism, if individualism is seen as normative for a salient in-group (Jetten et al., 2002; McAuliffe et al., 2003). Instead, in-group identification explains the acquisition of specific group-relevant norms, and does not relate to the acquisition of norms that have not been encouraged or discouraged as part of socialization.

General Discussion

A key goal of much social psychological theorizing and research has been to develop an understanding of how roles or group memberships come to guide behavior. As previous research on socialization processes has attested, a vital step in fulfilling this goal is to investigate how new members of social groups (e.g., organizations) come to acquire the norms and values of those groups. Likewise, the role of in-group identification in group life has been the focus of much research. However, comparatively little attention has been paid to the role that in-group identification plays in processes of socialization, particularly among new group members. The present study investigated

this underresearched issue by testing the hypothesis that in-group identification mediates the effect of socialization on norm acceptance.

The results of both studies support this hypothesis, indicating that identification accounted for the impact of participation in a team-building program on participants' acquisition of in-group norms of cooperation and teamwork. This is consistent with the prediction that participation in the program would lead to increasing identification with the group, which, in turn, would lead to acquisition of the group's norms. Moreover, Study 2 provided evidence that this effect pertained only to the relevant norm of teamwork, and not to alternative norms of individualism and competition.

This is consistent with self-categorization theory's conceptualization of group formation, and again underlines the vital role of identification in understanding how social norms function (Jetten et al., 1997; Reicher & Haslam, 2006). In particular, these results are consistent with a body of research that has shown that accepting and acting on group norms is contingent on identification with that group (Guimond, 2000; Jetten et al., 1996, 1997; McAuliffe et al., 2003; Oakes et al., 1995; Postmes et al., 2000). However, while previous studies have shown that identification moderates the extent to which group members adhere to their group's norms, the novelty of the present research has been to present evidence from a field setting that it is through identification with a group that new group members come to acquire the norms of the group (Postmes, Haslam et al., 2005; Postmes, Spears et al., 2005; Turner et al., 1987): an aspect of the identification–norm relationship that is distinct from the role of identification as a moderator.

In more practical terms, the present findings offer an insight into socialization processes among new members of social groups, such as organizations, and speak in particular to the issue of how new group members come to acquire and live by their new in-group's norms and values. The main implication here is that identification is not only a key determinant of when established group members adhere to organizational norms (Van Dick et al., 2007), but also of how those norms are acquired in the first place.

For organizational practice, this suggests that efforts at socializing new members should focus not only on providing information about the norms, values, and practices of the organization (Levine & Moreland, 1991; Moreland & Levine, 1982), but also on fostering a sense of identification with the organization. As the findings of other research have attested, knowledge of norms and values does not guarantee their acceptance as a guide to action. Rather—as with organizational commitment more generally (Christ, Van Dick, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2003; Haslam et al., 2006; Van Dick et al., 2004, 2007)—this requires a sense of identification with the organization, providing a basis from which it is accepted as part of new members'

self-concepts. In these terms, presenting information about organizational norms and values will be most effective when it goes hand in hand with activities and practices that serve to increase new members' sense of identification with the organization per se (Postmes, Haslam et al., 2005; Postmes, Spears et al., 2005). Moreover, as in the present case, the synthesis or consistency between organizational norms and the precise content of activities designed to foster identification is likely to be important. In other words, socialization is likely to be most successful where activities simultaneously provide an opportunity for a sense of community or togetherness, but also speak to the specific norms of the organization (e.g., emphasizing cooperative teamwork, rather than competitive individuality).

Although the present results provide evidence of the mediating role of in-group identification in the acquisition of in-group norms, additional data would also increase our understanding of the nature of this process. First, behavioral data could be used to supplement the norm measures employed here, as a way of testing the extent to which norm acceptance actually impacts on (intragroup) interaction and behavior more generally. Second, a longitudinal design could help to establish the long-term impact of socialization programs on intragroup behavior. In particular, it could be the case that the opportunity to act in situations that demand norm-consistent behavior (teamwork, in the present case) may help to sustain those norms, whereas they may be undermined if future interactions are structured in terms of, say, the value of individual endeavor or interpersonal competition. In short, the likelihood of particular norms being sustained may depend on the extent to which future intragroup interactions speak to their relevance and meaningfulness.

While the field setting of the present research is clearly a strength in terms of ecological validity, it also leaves open the possibility of examining how these processes operate in different settings and with different types of groups. In particular, the present setting involved new group members who had chosen to join the group in question, but were unaware of the specific norms of the group. In other cases, it could be that some individuals' group memberships are selected because they are aware of and agree with the norms of that group. For example, an individual may choose to join a particular charitable organization because he or she agrees with its benevolent norms, and thus comes to identify with that organization. Alternatively, it may be the case that group membership is assigned, rather than directly chosen. What role might identification play in these situations?

Although it is clearly the case that agreeing with a group's norms can serve to bolster identification with that group, we would suggest that, consistent with the hypotheses tested in this paper, identification also plays a role earlier in this process. Specifically, a priori acquisition of a particular set of

norms (e.g., to help particular groups in need of charity) is itself likely to be predicated upon a (social) identification with a particular social and political standpoint vis-à-vis those out-groups. Moreover, while normative information may be available to new group members, their acquisition of those norms (in terms of recognition and acceptance) arguably presupposes psychological group membership (i.e., identification). This is also likely to be the case for group memberships that are assigned, rather than chosen. Specifically, learning about the norms of a group to which one has been assigned is only likely to lead to their acceptance and internalization if one also begins to identify with the group. Likewise, when these norms are unclear (e.g., when the group itself is also new), then it might also be the case that identification increases the extent to which group members invest effort in forming group norms in the first instance (e.g., Postmes et al., 2000).

The present findings speak to one particular aspect of what is, in reality, an ongoing dynamic between identification and in-group norms in applied settings, such as organizations. Whereas changes in the nature of an existing in-group's norms might well impact on longstanding group members' identification with an erstwhile in-group (e.g., Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2006; Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003; Sani, 2005; Sani & Reicher, 1998, 1999, 2000), we have presented evidence that supports the idea that new members of a social group will acquire its norms to the extent that they come to identify with that group. The present findings provide an important insight into socialization processes within groups. In particular, they suggest that rather than merely being a matter of providing and learning information regarding group norms, socialization is effective to the extent that it engenders a sense of identification with the group; something that itself cannot be taken for granted (Reicher & Haslam 2006). As argued elsewhere (Brown, 2000; Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999), social identities are meaningful representations of self without which group and organizational life are impossible, and it is only through identification with a group that its norms and values come to be seen by its members as meaningful aspects of the self and as a basis for social action.

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