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Owning Up to Negative Ingroup Traits:

How Personal Autonomy Promotes the Integration of Group Identity

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Abstract

Our experiences, attributes, and behaviors are diverse, inconsistent, and often negative. Consequently, our capacity to assimilate divergent experiences – particularly negative aspects – is important to the development of a unified self. Whereas this process of integration has received attention at the level of personal identity, it has not been assessed at the level of group identity. *Objective:* We examined the mechanisms involved in integrating positive and negative ingroup identities, as well as related outcomes. *Method:* In three experiments, participants (N=332) high and low in autonomy identified either positive or negative aspects of their ingroup, and then indicated the extent to which they integrated the attribute. *Results:* Those high in personal autonomy integrated both positive and negative identities, whereas those low in autonomy acknowledged only positive identities. Study 2 showed that, regardless of identity valence, those high in autonomy felt satisfied and close with their group. Conversely, those low in autonomy felt less close and more dissatisfied with their group after reflecting on negative identities. Finally, reflecting on a negative identity reduced prejudice, but only for those high in autonomy. *Conclusions:* Owning up to negative group traits is facilitated by autonomy and demonstrates benefits for ingroup and intergroup processes.

Keywords: identity integration; autonomous motivation; group processes; social identity; group identification

He who views himself only positively remains static instead of experiencing growth.

G.W. Allport, 1948

When a student who views herself as excellent in math receives a failing grade on an algebra class, she is challenged to acknowledge this unpleasant information that conflicts with her self-concept. In response to the undesired course feedback, she may employ a tactic of defense – she may ignore, deny, or compartmentalize the threatening information (for instance she may insist the class was unfairly graded); or, she may engage in a process of integration – where the challenging facts are acknowledged, organized, and harmonized with existing self-knowledge about her math abilities in other areas. Within classic and contemporary personality theory, these two basic processes of *defense* and *integration* are central to the development of the self, with integration extending substantially more benefits than defense (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2002). Indeed, the capacity to coordinate and assimilate various aspects of identity, experience, and belief is a cornerstone of adaptive functioning.

Despite the importance of integration in the study of personality and *personal* identity – such as in the example above, research has not focused on the role of integration at the level of *group* identity. How do group members self-organize challenging aspects of their ingroup identity? For instance, although many Caucasian Americans may agree that many members of their ethnocultural ingroup are privileged or racist, to what extent do they take ownership of these characteristics, as opposed to making excuses, downplaying their importance, or denying that they are representative of the group as a whole?

Here, we use a self-determination theory approach (Deci & Ryan, 1985a) to examine the integrative process as it unfolds within group identity. We suggest that, just as our personal self-concept is subject to conflict, inconsistency, and threat, all of which beg some form of strategic

identity consolidation, so too is group-based self-knowledge. That is, we propose that the healthy development of group identity is dependent upon the successful integration of the various discrepancies, incongruences, and challenges inherent to being a group member. Indeed, the objective acknowledgment of *negative* ingroup attributes may be a particularly important marker of the group identity integration process. That is, whereas positive identities are easy to accept because they afford comfort and promote a positive self-image, negative identities are more challenging to integrate because they are painful and undermine self-esteem (Pals, 2006). In this research, we expect that the capacity to integrate group-relevant information – particularly when it is negative or threatening – should exert various ingroup and intergroup benefits.

Identity Integration in Personality

Long traditions in personality psychology have underscored the significance of integration within the self. For instance, Freud (1923) was concerned with the integration of the unconscious within the self, and suggested that the ego serves the purpose of assimilating the various (often oppositional) components of experience. Maslow (1954) described the integrative process of self-actualization as a mature manner of functioning in which individuals openly perceive reality and come to accept their own human nature with all its contradictions and flaws. Similarly, Rogers (1963) described the integration process as the natural tendency toward unconditional self-awareness. These classic views argue that the development of a coherent sense of self rests on the incorporation and consideration of the complexity and frequent disagreeableness of self-relevant experiences, thoughts, and characteristics.

More recently, research based on the self-determination theory (SDT) approach to personality and identity has suggested that integration is a fundamental and ongoing process through which people come to understand and accept who they are, and through this find

coherence and synchronization in their beliefs, behaviors, emotions, values, and identities (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This assimilation and organization of experience exerts a positive effect on wellbeing (including vitality and life satisfaction; Ryan & Deci, 2012; Weinstein, Deci, & Ryan, 2011), and the integration of identity-relevant goals has been shown to promote mental health and effectiveness (e.g., Koestner, Otis, Powers, Pelletier, & Gagnon, 2008; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Soenens, Berzonsky, Dunkel, Papini, & Vansteenkiste, 2011). For instance, Weinstein and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that individuals who recognized and integrated conflicting aspects of their identity – that is, both positive and negative elements – showed greater feelings of relatedness and energy compared to those who defended against the undesirable aspects of their identity. Although initially painful, taking ownership over shameful personal attributes and regrettable past actions enables people to fully accept who they are and to learn from experience. Conversely, intolerance to threatening self-relevant information breeds defensive and biased processing that serves mainly to protect the fragile ego at the expense of open learning about the self (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988). Indeed, defending against potentially negative or threatening aspects of identity can be costly because it interferes with the search for meaning and growth (Niemiec, et al., 2010; Pals, 2006; Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & La Guardia, 2006).

Thus, the process of integration has received significant theoretical attention in personality psychology. And although integration has traditionally been difficult to study experimentally, its importance in the development of a healthy identity has begun to receive empirical support (Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011; Weinstein et al., 2011, Hodgins et al., 2010). Given the centrality of integration in the development of *personal* identity, we wondered whether integration might also be important to *group* identity. Indeed, such a fundamental process as

integration should also be relevant to identity derived from group membership. Because group membership and group identity are not uniform and static self-definitions, but rather represent ever-changing and often turbulent connections with the social world, it stands to reason that individuals interpret inconsistencies in group identity in different ways. Thus, the first major goal of this work was to investigate the previously unexamined process of *group identity integration* by assessing the motivational processes involved in the integration of positive versus negative group characteristics.

Motivational Antecedents of Identity Integration: The Role of Autonomy

A central focus of self-determination theory is the analysis of *how* identities become integrated within the self (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT asserts that the integrative process is facilitated by feelings of personal *autonomy* (Ryan, 1995), a motivational experience wherein people act in accordance with what they personally value and enjoy. When autonomously motivated, people benefit from a sense that they personally endorse, or fully stand behind, their behavior, feelings, attitudes, and relationships. Crucially, autonomy entails deep personal ownership of, or responsibility for, one's emotions, decisions, thoughts, and behavior. Recent evidence suggests that autonomy predicts the integration of divergent and threatening aspects of personal experiences and personal attributes (Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2011; Weinstein & Hodgins, 2009). In addition, autonomously functioning individuals are mindful and accuracy-motivated; flaws, mistakes, and discrepancies are approached for the insight they provide (Legault & Inzlicht, 2013). Rather than being ego-involved and protective, autonomously oriented people face reality openly. In contrast, those who are low in autonomy are less likely to integrate experiences, especially when those experiences are threatening

(Hodgins, Brown, & Carver, 2007). Indeed, ego-protection and defensiveness tend to be high – which forestalls integration (Hodgins & Knee, 2002).

Ingroup and Intergroup Effects of Group Identity Integration

The current work provides new insight into the link between autonomy and intergroup effects. Thus, although past research suggests that autonomous individuals are more likely than nonautonomous individuals to reject group-based inequality (Duriez, Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & De Witte, 2007), little is known about the mechanisms underlying these associations. Moreover, whereas past work on integration at the personal identity level has demonstrated mental health benefits, we suggest that the integration of group identity, particularly negative group identity, will afford benefits at the social level – by facilitating positive group dynamics and improved outgroup perceptions.

In particular, we propose that the ability to maintain a cohesive and representative group identity that openly incorporates the group's inherent variability is an important determinant of the group identification process, and as such, it should exert important effects on group adjustment. Those who fully integrate their ingroup identity (which includes the open acknowledgment of negative traits) should experience greater connection with their group, compared to those who resist integrating challenging or threatening aspects of their group identity. Because group identity integration entails the genuine reflection upon both group strengths and shortcomings, group regard should be unconditional. The lower need to reject, suppress, and compartmentalize group attributes is likely to instill open acceptance of group distinctiveness. In contrast, defensive group identifiers are expected to struggle with or deny the negative elements of their group identity, which could result in a fragmented, incomplete, or reduced feeling of group connectedness.

Related to this idea, we also suggest that group identity integration is important above and beyond traditional measures of group identification. That is, irrespective of the absolute strength of group identification, we suggest that the nature (i.e., integrated vs. defensive) of the identification matters. An individual may strongly identify with his or her group – at least in terms of the "importance" of the group or the magnitude of self-group overlap – but that is not to say that s/he will be more or less integrated. High group identifiers might either deeply acknowledge or defensively reject certain characteristics of their group. We suggest that integration is not purely an evaluative or attachment process (as is identification), but an amalgamative process, whereby one's current group identity accommodates significant features of the ingroup, rather than selectively choosing or denying them. We expect that integration and identification are distinct processes, and that standard measures of group identification are not sufficient to explain the integration process. Indeed, we suggest here that the current view of group identification is incomplete, and that a better understanding of group identity and its effects may be achieved by the consideration of integration, which should be driven by differences in autonomy. It is also important to note that integration of negative group identities does not imply that group members must necessarily agree with or endorse their ingroup's negative experiences, history, or behavior, but rather that they objectively recognize these elements as part of their overarching group identity.

In addition to its positive intragroup consequences, the tendency to nondefensively integrate challenging aspects of group identity is theorized to exert positive intergroup effects as well. In particular, the integration of ingroup shortcomings, as facilitated by feelings of personal autonomy, is expected to play a role in egalitarian attitudes. Indeed, recent work has demonstrated that autonomy promotes more positive outgroup attitudes – although little is

known about the mechanism involved in this effect (Duriez, Meeus, & Vansteenkiste, 2012; Legault & Green-Demers, 2009; Legault, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011). Moreover, past research offers some indirect support for the intergroup benefits of acknowledging negative ingroup attributes. For instance, when high status group members take collective responsibility for their group's misdeeds, they are more likely to seek intergroup forgiveness and make reparations, which is related to more positive outgroup attitudes (Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Brehm, 2004). These findings suggest that understanding of, and responsiveness to, ingroup flaws and culpability may be an important process in perceiving and thinking about other groups.

In sum, there is some evidence that the open acceptance of ingroup shortcomings and biases is advantageous for both ingroup affiliation and outgroup attitudes; however, the motivational antecedents of this "owning up" to negative group traits are unknown. Moreover, although we know that autonomy is linked to more positive outgroup attitudes, there is little understanding of how or why this is the case. Here, we suggest that autonomy should promote the integration of negative ingroup characteristics, which should lead to improved motivation and attitudes toward outgroups. In other words, those high in autonomy should respond to ingroup limitations in a nondefensive way that promotes open-mindedness in relating to outgroup members.

The Present Studies

Firstly, the current set of studies explores the extent to which autonomy predicts group identity integration, that is, the tendency for individuals to integrate both positive and negative ingroup identities. Participants were asked to identify attributes that could possibly reflect their ethnocultural ingroup (Studies 1 and 3) or their lab-created team (Study 2). Thus, each group

member was asked to identify a *group characteristic* that was either positive and pleasing or negative and regrettable. Then, the extent to which they *personally* integrated those characteristics was ascertained. This assessment is based on the finding that, although people may be able to identify certain self-relevant characteristics, they may not fully embrace their importance (Weinstein et al., 2011). We expected that autonomy and identity valence (i.e., positive vs. negative identity condition) would interact, such that highly autonomous individuals would integrate both positive and negative group identities, whereas individuals low in autonomy would assimilate positive but not negative group identities.

The second major objective was to assess whether autonomy would moderate the effect of negative identity on group outcomes. Given that group identity integration is theorized to entail awareness and acceptance of the ingroup despite its negative characteristics, we expected that the interaction of autonomy and identity valence would influence feelings of group relatedness and satisfaction. That is, autonomously motivated individuals were expected to report connection and satisfaction with their group regardless of whether they reflected on positive or negative ingroup identities. In contrast, those low in autonomy were expected to resist the negative qualities of their group, and as such, were anticipated to show less satisfaction and affiliation with their group.

We also hypothesized that the capacity to integrate challenging aspects of group identity (which characterizes the quintessence of autonomous functioning) would be particularly important for the promotion of positive outgroup motivation and attitudes. Based on the literature described above, we anticipated that because highly autonomous individuals possess a tendency to accept and integrate their social identities fully, they would show more autonomous

motivation to be nonprejudiced and less prejudice when confronted with negative ingroup identity.

Study 1

Study 1 sought to assess the relationship between autonomy and the integration of group identity. We expected that autonomous individuals would show integration of both positive and negative ingroup identities. In contrast, we anticipated that less autonomous individuals would resist unpleasant aspects of their group identity.

Method

Participants and Procedure

An a priori power analysis for a small to medium expected effect (f^2=.10) and a power level of 1-β=.90 produced a required sample size of N=88. After discarding two participants who failed attention checks, the sample consisted of 98 American citizens (56 women) recruited online using Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 65 years (M = 39.00; SD = 12.59), and the majority (81%) were Caucasian, with the remaining participants representing Hispanic (3%), East Asian (4%), South Asian (3%), African American (5%), and biracial (3%) backgrounds.

After agreeing to participate in a study of ethnocultural identity, dispositional autonomy was assessed. Next, participants were asked to indicate the ethnic or cultural group with which they primarily identify and a measure of group identification was administered. Respondents were then assigned to either a positive identity or negative identity condition, wherein they were asked to identify either a pleasant or unpleasant characteristic of their ethnocultural group. Participants were reminded to refrain from merely choosing a group stereotype endorsed by the general population, but rather to select a quality they or other group members might use to

describe their group. This was done to activate actual, realistic group characteristics that had the potential to be endorsed by the participant, rather than to trigger broad social stereotypes. Following this *identity valence manipulation*, all participants reported on the degree to which they integrated the ingroup attribute they had identified. Participants received a token of appreciation for their participation ($3.00).

Measures

Trait autonomy. Individual differences in autonomous motivational orientation were ascertained using the autonomous motivation subscale of the General Causality Orientations Scale (GCOS; Deci & Ryan, 1985b). The GCOS consists of 12 vignettes describing interpersonal scenarios, followed by a list of responses ranging in the extent to which they reflect an autonomous motivational disposition, which is thought to represent a relatively enduring aspect of personality. Those scoring high in autonomy show a preference for interest-enhancing and optimally challenging situations. They also display greater self-initiation, take greater responsibility for their own behavior, and tend to interpret social contexts as autonomy-supportive rather than controlling or imposing. For example, when asked to indicate "the most important consideration when embarking on a new career", autonomous individuals favor reasons pertaining to "interest and enjoyment of the work" more highly than "opportunities for advancement" or "worries about failure" (7 point scale, from “not at all likely” to “very likely”). Internal consistency for this measure of autonomy was satisfactory ($\alpha = .80$).

Group identification. Group identification was assessed using Cameron’s (2004) three dimensional model of group identity. Items reflected identity centrality (e.g., “I often think about being an [ingroup member]”); ingroup affect (e.g., “In general I’m glad to be an [ingroup member]”); and ingroup ties (e.g., “I have a lot in common with other [ingroup members]”). In

the current study, internal consistency of the measure was adequate (α = .77 to α = .83). As has been done in past research on group identification (e.g., Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007), the three dimensions were averaged equally to provide a composite (and satisfactory) index (α = .79).

Group identity valence manipulation and subsequent integration. Our group identity integration paradigm was adapted from the personal identity integration paradigm developed by Weinstein et al. (2011). Participants were first asked to take a moment to think about and write down the ethnocultural group with which they principally identify. They were then assigned to either a positive ethnocultural identity or a negative ethnocultural identity condition. In the positive identity condition, participants were asked to think about a positive characteristic of their ethnocultural ingroup. They were instructed to "reflect on and then write down a positive or pleasing quality, characteristic, or attribute that you or other members of your group have used to describe your group, or a positive attribute that your group has demonstrated in the past". Participants were reminded to refrain from merely choosing a group stereotype, but rather to select a quality that might reflect their group. In the negative identity condition, instructions were identical to the positive identity condition, except that participants were asked to reflect on a negative or regrettable quality, characteristic, or attribute that might describe their group, or a quality that their group had demonstrated in the past. Again, participants were asked to choose a quality that they believed might reflect their group, rather than a stereotype held by the broader population. In addition, because we expected that negative identities might be harder to activate, participants in this condition were given the following additional instruction: "We all have some negative attributes – even if we don't always like to admit it. Although it may be hard to think of

negative things about your group, please just try to identify what you think one of those negative things might be".

Following the identity valence manipulation, all participants reported on the degree to which they *integrated* the ingroup attribute they had identified. Integration items reflected distancing versus approaching the attribute, as well as acknowledging the attribute's importance and relevance to group identity. Thus, participants rated seven items on a 6-point scale, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". These items included the following: "I accept that this quality is part of my group's identity", "I think it's important to acknowledge this characteristic of my group" and "I feel distant from this aspect of my group". Reliability on the integration measure was satisfactory, with $\alpha = .75$ for positive identity integration and $\alpha = .79$ for negative identity integration.

Results and Discussion

Group Identity Integration

Effect of Identity Strength on Identity Integration. As a preliminary step in order to demonstrate the distinction between integration and identification, we regressed group identity integration onto group identification (mean-centered), identity valence condition, and their interaction. Not surprisingly, traditional group identification was positively related to the overall integration of group identity, $\beta = .28$, $t(94) = 2.87$, $p = .005$, $f^2 = .089$ – although, this association alone is modest enough to suggest that these are independent constructs. Also, identity valence was related to identity integration, such that positive attributes were more likely to be integrated than negative attributes, $\beta = .29$, $t(94) = 3.00$, $p = .004$, $f^2 = .093$. Crucially, however, identification and identity valence did not interact in predicting integration, $\beta = .08$, $t(94) = 0.85$, $p = .396$, $f^2 = .007$, suggesting that although high group identifiers were generally more likely to

integrate group attributes compared to low identifiers, this effect was constant across attribute valence. That is, both high identifiers and low identifiers were more likely to integrate positive qualities, compared to negative ones. Stated differently, the capacity to integrate negative ingroup characteristics did not depend on the level of group identification. These data suggest that group identification is not sufficient to explain the conditions under which negative group identity is integrated.

Controlling for Identity Status. Given that the content of majority and minority identities might vary systematically, we wanted to examine whether there were group status differences in the extent to which positive versus negative group attributes were integrated. Participants were classified as having a majority (e.g., Caucasian, European, North American, British; 81%) or minority identity (e.g., African American, Mexican; 19%). Results of a 2 (status: minority vs. majority) X 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) between-subjects ANOVA demonstrated that there was no overall effect of identity status on integration, $F(1, 94) = 1.10$, $p = .30$, $\eta p^2 = .01$, nor was there an identity status X identity valence interaction, $F(1, 94) = 2.45$, $p = .13$, $\eta p^2 = .02$. This suggests that there were no significant status differences in the extent to which positive or negative identities were integrated.

Effects of Autonomy and Identity Valence on Identity Integration. Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with the covariates of identity strength and identity status entered in step 1, the main effects of condition (i.e., identity valence) and trait autonomy (mean-centered) entered in step 2, and the valence X autonomy interaction entered at Step 3. Controlling for the effects of identification and group status (described above), individuals higher in trait autonomy were more likely to integrate identities overall (i.e., across valence), $\beta = .59$, $t(94) = 5.04$, $p = .0001$, $f^2 = .18$, and, overall, positive identities were more

integrated/accepted than negative identities, β = .32, $t(94) = 3.70$, $p = .001$, $f^2 = .12$. In addition, these main effects were qualified by a two-way interaction between autonomy and identity valence, β = -.31, $t(93) = -2.68$ $p = .009$, $f^2 = .06$. A simple slopes analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that those low in autonomy (mean-centered autonomy - 1SD) were significantly less likely to integrate negative group identities compared to positive, β = .52, $t(94) = 4.18$, $p = .0001$, $f^2 = .15$. In contrast, there was no difference in the tendency to integrate positive versus negative identity among those high in autonomy (mean-centered autonomy + 1SD), β = .11, $t(94) = 0.85$, $p = .40$. That is, both pleasant and unpleasant ingroup characteristics were acknowledged to a similar degree among autonomous individuals, indicating full identity integration (see Figure 1; Study 1).[1]

These results suggest that those high in autonomy acknowledge both positive and negative ingroup identities, whereas those lower in autonomy endorse positive ingroup qualities, but not negative ingroup qualities. Importantly, the interactive effect of autonomy and identity valence on integration was meaningful, whereas the interaction between traditional group identification and identity valence was not. This helps to suggest that group identity integration and group identification are distinct processes, and that standard measures of group identity strength are not sufficient to explain the integration process. Presumably, individuals can be

[1]We also investigated the possibility that the severity of the self-generated negative group attributes might be different as a function of level of autonomy. From a descriptive perspective, all 47 participants in the negative identity condition offered moderately severe to highly severe negative attributes (thus, the traits were quite negative across all participants). Moreover, all attributes referenced psychological character flaws rather than physical, physiological, or superficial features. After coding for level of negativity (1=slightly negative; 2=moderately negative; 3=severely negative), we did not find significant differences in severity across levels of autonomy, $F(1, 46)=.12$, $p=.73$. Examples of negative traits include: poor, careless, pompous, imperious, cheap, alcoholic, racist, dumb, arrogant, overly sexual, poor-mannered, violent, rude, and lazy.

strongly attached to their group, while also managing group identity in a defensive manner. Instead, autonomy is predictive of the nondefensive integration of conflicting group qualities. Despite this initial finding, it remains to be seen whether this integration process exerts any meaningful effects on group dynamics or intergroup processes.

Study 2

Study 2 sought to extend Study 1 in various ways. We examined the effect of autonomy on group identity integration as in Study 1. However, we also sought to ascertain the effect of the autonomy by identity valence interaction on group processes. Two indicators of group adjustment were assessed – perceived satisfaction with group decision-making and overall group closeness. In addition, rather than focusing on ethnocultural identity, Study 2 employed an in-lab group formation strategy, where groups were created and tasked with an important collective decision regarding resource allocation (adapted from Van Vugt & Van Lange, 2006). This method of creating groups allowed for a better examination of the process and effect of group identity integration, and allowed us to draw clearer conclusions about the predictive power of autonomy in promoting group identity integration.

Method

Participants and Procedure

An a priori power analysis using the small effect reported in Study 1 (f^2=.06) and a power level of 1-β=.90 produced a required sample size of N=124. One hundred and forty-six students (54 men) from a university in the United Kingdom took part in the study. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 58 years (M = 21.88 years; SD = 4.91). We created groups of 3 to 6 previously unacquainted students, who were solicited to participate in a study on "decisions and life goals". Immediately upon arrival to the lab, students were led to private booths where they completed an

initial assessment of trait autonomy. They were then brought together in a conference room and informed that they would be required to make important decisions together as a team. They were further instructed that they would be discussing economic decisions for eight minutes and that, as a team, they were to come to a single group decision. Group members were provided with one sheet of paper and one pen in order to record their decisions. The experimenter left the room for the discussion period.

This group task was designed to foster a group interaction aimed at shared goals, and thereby build group identity. Participants worked together to decide what percentage of the national UK budget (which they were told was £708 billion) should be spent on such sources as foreign aid spending, with options from 1% to 7%; defense spending, with options including 3% to 9%, and national infrastructure, with options ranging from .1% to .7%. Because participants were asked to come to agreement, the task required discussion, debate, and accommodation by group members.

Following the interactive task, participants were guided to separate lab rooms where they completed a survey. Based on assignment to condition, participants were asked either to report on a positive or a negative characteristic that described their group (i.e., the group with whom they had just interacted). Consistent with their condition assignment, they completed items measuring the extent to which they had integrated the positive or negative group identity. Finally, participants completed a measure of affect and reported on their group satisfaction and closeness.

Measures

Trait autonomy. Trait autonomy was measured at the start of the lab session with the fifteen-item Index of Autonomous Functioning (IAF; Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, 2012).

This scale uses items such as "My whole self stands behind the important decisions I make" and "I often pressure myself" (reverse-scored), paired with a five point 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*completely true*) scale. This measure correlates well with the GCOS used in Study 1 but has been shown to be somewhat more predictive of social and well-being outcomes (Weinstein et al., 2012). This scale showed adequate reliability, $\alpha = .76$.

Group identity integration. Integration was assessed using the same procedure as Study 1, except that, instead of identifying attributes of their ethnic group, participants were asked to identify either positive or negative characteristics of their newly formed group, and, after reflecting on a positive or negative attribute of their group, they were asked to write down a few keywords that described this attribute. Then, as in Study 1, we assessed the extent to which these attributes were integrated. Reliability on the integration measure was satisfactory; $\alpha = .73$ for positive identity integration and $\alpha = .84$ for negative identity integration.

Affect. The Emmons Mood Indicator (Diener & Emmons, 1984) measured affect after the identity valence manipulation. Affect was measured to rule out basic mood effects on integration. Participants rated seven mood-related adjectives using a 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) scale, including "happy", "pleased", "sad" (reverse-scored), and "frustrated" (reverse-scored) ($\alpha = .77$).

Satisfaction with group. After the identity valence manipulation, degree of satisfaction with the group (see Kessler & Hollbach, 2005) was measured using four items, including, "I'm glad to be a member of my group", "I regret being a member of my group" (reverse-scored), and "I feel good about myself when I think about being a member of my group". These items used a six-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Reliability was high, $\alpha = .84$.

Group closeness. Group closeness after the manipulation was measured with a single item adapted from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI; Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994): "How close did you feel to members of your group?", with responses ranging from 1 (*not at all close*) to 7 (*extremely close*).

Results and Discussion

Relative Negative Affect

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with the main effects of condition and trait autonomy (mean-centered) entered in a first step, and their interaction entered in Step 2. Results indicated that those who were assigned to the negative identity condition reported more negative affect following the manipulation, $\beta = .66$, $t(143) = 10.46$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .43$, but there was no effect of trait autonomy on mood, $\beta = .07$, $t(143) = 1.01$, $p = .29$, and the two did not interact, $\beta = .03$, $t(142) = 0.47$, $p = .64$. This suggests that, although negative identity induction diminishes mood, the effect is balanced across levels of motivation. Thus, any interactive effects of motivation and identity valence condition cannot be attributable to self-reported negative mood.

Group Identity Integration

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with the main effects of condition and trait autonomy (mean-centered) entered in a first step, and their interaction entered at Step 2. As in Study 1, results suggested that, while there was no main effect of valence condition, $\beta = .10$, $t(143) = 1.28$, $p = .20$, $f^2 = .01$, individuals high in trait autonomy were more likely to integrate identities (across valence), relative to individuals low in trait autonomy, $\beta = .38$, $t(143) = 4.63$, $p = .0001$, $f^2 = .14$. However, these effects were qualified by a two-way interaction between trait autonomy and condition, $\beta = -.21$, $t(142) = 2.72$, $p = .007$, $f^2 = .09$. As in Study 1, an analysis of

simple slopes at +/-1SD for autonomy (centered) showed that individuals lower in trait autonomy were less likely to integrate negative group identities compared to positive, β = -.31, $t(143) = 2.83$, $p = .005$, $f^2 = .049$. In contrast, there was no effect of identity valence for those high in autonomy, β = -.13, $t(143) = -1.13$, $p = .26$, $f^2 = .007$ (see Figure 1; Study 2). These results suggest that those high in autonomy demonstrate group identity integration. That is, they acknowledge both positive and negative ingroup identities to a similar degree, whereas those lower in autonomy accept positive ingroup characteristics, but show defense against threatening ingroup characteristics. These findings replicate and extend those of Study 1 by demonstrating the interactive effect of autonomy and identity valence on group identity integration using a different type of group (i.e., lab-created vs. ethnocultural). Furthermore, because new group identities were created in the lab, the method used in Study 2 supports the assumption that individual differences in autonomy predict and underlie the group identity integration process.

Satisfaction with Group

We regressed reported group satisfaction (after the group interaction and manipulation) onto identity valence condition, trait autonomy (centered), and their interaction. Those high in autonomy demonstrated a greater tendency to feel satisfied with their group, compared to those low in autonomy, β = .17, $t(143) = 1.95$, $p = .05$, $f^2 = .017$. There was no effect of identity valence on satisfaction, β = .13, $t(143) = 1.53$, $p = .13$, $f^2 = .016$. Trait autonomy interacted with valence condition, β = -.19, $t(142) = 2.33$, $p = .02$, $f^2 = .037$ (see Figure 2), indicating that those low in autonomy (-1SD) felt more satisfied with their group after reflecting on a positive identity than on a negative one, β = .32, (143) = 2.74, $p = .007$, $f^2 = .049$. In contrast, those high in autonomy (+1SD) were likely to feel satisfied with their group under any circumstance, β = -.09, $t(143) = -0.68$, $p = .26$, $f^2 = .003$. Thus, those low in autonomy felt less satisfied when confronted

with negative ingroup information, whereas those high in autonomy felt satisfied with their group regardless of whether they had recalled a positive or negative ingroup identity.

Perceived Group Closeness

A final model regressed perceived closeness onto condition, trait autonomy (mean-centered), and their interaction. Neither main effect was significant (autonomy: β = .13, $t(143) = 1.51$, $p = .13$, $f^2 = .014$; condition: β = .04, $t(143) = 0.41$, $p = .68$, $f^2 = .001$). However, as seen in Figure 2, these two independent variables interacted, β = -.19, $t(142) = -2.26$, $p = .026$, $f^2 = .035$. An analysis of simple slopes showed that those low in autonomy (-1SD) felt less close after attempting to integrate a negative identity than a positive one, β = .22, $t(143) = 1.87$, $p = .06$, $f^2 = .024$. Conversely, individuals high in autonomy felt relatively close regardless of assignment to identity valence condition, β = -.17, $t(143) = -1.39$, $p = .17$, $f^2 = .013$. In other words, whereas those low in autonomy felt worse about their group after focusing on a negative group attribute, those high in autonomy did not. In fact, reflecting on negative ingroup qualities actually increased feelings of closeness for those high in autonomy, although this trend was not significant. This suggests that autonomy may indeed promote openness and resilience to negative group characteristics and more unconditional group regard. It is interesting to note that, rather than causing the internalization of ingroup negativity, integration of group shortcomings appears to promote positive group affect.

Study 3

As in the previous studies, Study 3 assessed the interactive effect of autonomy and identity valence on group identity integration. However, in this study we also moved beyond ingroup processes to the intergroup domain by examining outgroup-directed motivation and prejudice. Given that group identification processes often implicate feelings about other group

members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and that autonomy has been associated with positive outgroup attitudes (Legault & Green-Demers, 2012), we tested the hypothesis that those high in autonomy would show more context-specific autonomous motivation to be nonprejudiced and less implicit bias – particularly when reminded of negative ingroup attributes. As in Studies 1 and 2, we reasoned that autonomous individuals tend to be more aware and accepting of their ingroup shortcomings compared to those low in autonomy. As such, we reasoned that the autonomous integration of challenging aspects of group identity (i.e., negative attributes) would be *especially* predictive of reduced prejudiced responding. That is, the open integration of ingroup flaws should diminish perceived intergroup threat and subsequent defensive responding to outgroups. Conversely, those low in autonomy should experience group identity threat with more aversion, forestalling identity integration, and displaying more unfavorable outgroup attitudes. Whereas we expected that high autonomy would predict a decrease in prejudice when reflecting on negative compared positive identity, we did not expect to observe this trend among those low in autonomy.

Method

Participants and Procedure

An a priori power analysis using the small to medium effect reported in Study 2 (f^2=.09) and a power level of 1-β=.90 produced a required sample size of N=97.Undergraduates (N = 87) from a small university in Northern New York completed the study (including 31 women and 56 men). Participants' age raged from 17 to 24 years (M_{age} = 18.94; SD = 1.26) and they were 83% Caucasian, 6% Black, 5% East Asian, and 6% Latino/a.

In order to assess the extent to which individuals integrated the positive and negative aspects of their ingroup identity, Study 3 followed the same procedure as Studies 1 and 2. That

is, dispositional autonomy was ascertained, and the degree to which participants integrated positive versus negative group attributes was evaluated. However, Study 3 also examined the effects of motivation and identity valence on outgroup-related phenomena – namely, the motivation to regulate outgroup prejudice and the expression implicit racial bias.

Measures

Trait autonomy. As in Study 2, individual differences in autonomy were examined using the Index of Autonomous Functioning (Weinstein et al., 2012). Internal consistency of the autonomy measure was satisfactory (α = .75).

Group identity integration. Once again, participants were assigned to conditions and asked to identify either a positive or negative characteristic of their ethnocultural identity (see Study 1). Following the identity valence manipulation, all participants reported on the degree to which they integrated the ingroup attribute they had identified (α = .81 for positive identity integration (7 items) and α = .80 for negative identity integration; 7 items).

Motivation to be nonprejudiced. Type of motivation underlying the desire to be nonprejudiced toward other ethnic and cultural groups was assessed using the Motivation to be Nonprejudiced Scale (Legault, Green-Demers, Grant, & Chung, 2007). This instruments targets various motivations for regulating prejudice, including intrinsic motivation (e.g., "I avoid prejudice because I enjoy relating to other groups"), integrated regulation (e.g., "I avoid prejudice because open-mindedness is part of who I am"), identified regulation (e.g., "…because I value nonprejudiced and equality"), introjected regulation (e.g., "…because I would feel ashamed if I were prejudiced"), external regulation (e.g., "…because I feel pressure from others to be nonprejudiced"), and amotivation (e.g., "I don't know why I bother trying to avoid being prejudiced"). Previous research has shown that autonomous forms of motivation to be

nonprejudiced (i.e., intrinsic, integrated, and identified) predict less explicit and implicit prejudice compared to less autonomous forms (i.e., introjected, external, and amotivated; e.g., Legault et al., 2007; Legault & Green-Demers, 2012). In the present study, internal consistency of the MNPS subscales ranged from $\alpha = .79$ to $\alpha = .88$. To calculate an index of relative autonomous motivation to be nonprejudiced, dimensions of the MNPS were weighted according to their relative position on the self-determination continuum and then summed. As per previous studies using this technique (e.g., Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991; Legault et al., 2007), autonomous forms of motivation to be nonprejudiced were assigned weights of +3, +2, and +1, and weights for the nonautonomous forms were specified as –1, –2, –3.

Implicit race bias. Implicit race bias was measured using the Race-Face Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), which assesses the strength of association between racial categories and positive/negative attributes. The task requires sorting stimuli (i.e., attributes and faces) into two pairs of categories (e.g., Black and Pleasant OR White and Unpleasant). Past research on the IAT effect has suggested that people tend to sort stimuli with relative speed and accuracy when Black-Unpleasant and White-Pleasant share the same response keys (compared to Black-Pleasant and White-Unpleasant) – suggesting that these concepts are strongly associated (e.g., Greenwald et al., 1998; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). Importantly, this race bias effect has demonstrated good reliability (Greenwald et al., 2009) and has been linked to racial discrimination (McConnell & Leiboild, 2001). In the current study, the D scoring algorithm was used to calculate implicit race bias scores. The use of D scores to assess IAT effects has been widely recommended because it uses a metric that is calibrated by each respondent's latency variability (thereby reducing artifacts associated with

general cognitive skill and speed of responding; Cai, Sriram, Greenwald, & McFarland, 2004; Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003).

Results and Discussion

Group Identity Integration

As in Studies 1 and 2, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted with the main effects of condition and trait autonomy (mean-centered) entered in a first step, and their interaction entered in a second step. Main effects at Step 1 showed that, whereas there was no effect of valence condition, β = .12, t(83) = 1.17, p = .25, f^2 = .015, individuals higher in trait autonomy (+1SD) were significantly more likely to integrate identities overall (i.e., across valence), β = .31, t(83) = 2.95, p = .004, f^2 = .094. This main effect was qualified by an interaction between autonomy and identity valence, β = -.21, t(82) = -2.40, p = .04, f^2 = .045. An analysis of simple slopes revealed that those scoring low in trait autonomy (-1SD) were significantly less likely to integrate negative group identities compared to positive, β = .34, t(83) = 2.30, p = .02, f^2 = .058. In contrast, there was no meaningful difference in integration of positive versus negative identities for those high (+1SD) in autonomy, β = -.09, t(83) = -.60, p = .55, f^2 = .004 (see Figure 1; Study 3). Replicating Studies 1 and 2, these results suggest that those high in autonomy are able to integrate negative ingroup identities, whereas those low in autonomy are not.

Motivation to be Nonprejudiced

We regressed motivation to be nonprejudiced (i.e., the weighted and summed relative index) onto identity valence condition, trait autonomy (mean-centered), and their interaction. The main effect of autonomy on motivation to be nonprejudiced was significant, indicating that those high in autonomy (+1SD) demonstrated more context-specific autonomous motivation to be

nonprejudiced, compared to those low (-1SD) in autonomy, β = .33, $t(83) = 3.24$, $p = .002$, $f^2 = .13$. There was also a "marginal" effect of valence, indicating that, overall, those who activated negative identities felt more motivated to be nonprejudiced compared to those who activated positive identities, β = -.18, $t(83) = -1.82$, $p = .07$, $f^2 = .035$. The interaction between trait autonomy and identity condition was not significant at Step 2 (β = -.13, $t(82) = -1.28$, $p = .20$, $f^2 = .016$), likely because we anticipated an ordinal rather than disordinal interaction and the observed power of the analysis was relatively low. Nonetheless, an analysis of simple slopes (+/- 1SD) revealed that the facilitative effect of negative identity on motivation to be nonprejudiced was only true for autonomous individuals, β = -.31, $t(83) = -2.19$, $p = .03$, $f^2 = .048$ (see Figure 3). In contrast, motivation to be nonprejudiced was not affected by identity condition for those low in autonomy, β = -.05, $t(83) = -0.38$, $p = .70$, $f^2 = .002$. These results suggest that negative group identity activation increases autonomous motivation to be nonprejudiced for autonomous individuals, but has no effect on intergroup motivation among less autonomous individuals. For autonomous individuals, reflecting on negative aspects of the ingroup (compared to positive) promotes personal motivation to learn from and interact with other groups and enhances the value of nonprejudice.

Implicit Race Bias

IAT D scores (Greenwald et al., 2003) were regressed onto motivational orientation (mean-centered), identity valence condition, and their interaction. There was a main effect of autonomy, suggesting that those high in autonomy demonstrated less implicit bias than those low in autonomy, β = -.21, $t(83) = -2.01$, $p = .05$, $f^2 = .053$. In addition, a marginal main effect of identity valence condition demonstrated that those who reflected on negative ingroup attributes showed somewhat less implicit race bias than those who reflected on positive ingroup attributes,

β = .19, $t(83) = 1.86$, $p = .07$, $f^2 = .043$. Although the two-way interaction was not significant (likely due to the lack of a cross-over/ordinal interaction and relatively low power), β = .05, $t(82) = 0.47$, $p = .64$, $f^2 = .002$, an analysis of simple slopes revealed that the effect of the valence manipulation only held true for autonomous individuals (see Figure 3). That is, those high in autonomy (+1SD) showed a trend for less implicit bias when they reflected on negative, compared to positive ingroup qualities, β = .28, $t(83) = 1.92$, $p = .06$, $f^2 = .039$. Conversely, those low in autonomy (-1SD) displayed comparable implicit bias regardless of whether they reflected on positive or negative ingroup qualities, β = .13, $t(83) = 0.91$, $p = .37$, $f^2 = .009$. Thus, although both highly autonomous and less autonomous individuals showed similar prejudice after recalling positive group attributes (perhaps because the manipulation enhanced the WHITE + GOOD association), when asked to recall negative ingroup characteristics, those high in autonomy displayed a notable drop in implicit prejudice. It may be that negative identity integration activated the WHITE + BAD association among autonomous individuals, which reduced pro-white bias. Those low in autonomy, however, resisted negative group identity, which may have left the WHITE + BAD association (and subsequent prejudice) unchanged. These findings complement results for motivation to be nonprejudiced, and suggest that autonomous individuals may be more equipped to acknowledge and contend with negative ingroup information. This increased receptivity to negative group-relevant information, in turn, appears to reduce intergroup biases. Conversely, the current results suggest that those low in autonomy are more likely to ignore (potentially important or informative) ingroup shortcomings, at the expense of outgroup motivation and regard.

General Discussion

Across three studies, we demonstrate that those high in autonomy – that is, those who tend to pursue need-satisfying activities, whose values and goals are self-initiated, and whose interests and activities are governed by feelings of choice, volition, and personal responsibility – are more likely to recognize and integrate both positive and negative ingroup qualities. In contrast, all three studies offer clear evidence that those low in autonomy – that is, those who feel ruled by both internal and external pressure or who lack personal causality – are likely to resist negative ingroup attributes while accepting positive attributes. Our findings are consistent with past studies of identity integration, which suggest that autonomy promotes greater recognition of personal shortcomings and negative past experiences (Hodgins et al., 2010; Weinstein et al., 2011), as well as increased awareness and acceptance of negative affect (Inzlicht & Legault, 2014), deeper acknowledgement of performance errors (Legault & Inzlicht, 2013), and better detection of self-integrity threat (Legault, Al-Khindi, & Inzlicht, 2012). Unlike past work, however, we demonstrate the importance of human autonomy in the development of an integrated and healthy *group* identity and we extend the process of identity integration to the group level, showing new implications for ingroup and outgroup affect and behavior. In general, our findings speak to the need to better understand group identification and group dynamics by considering the process of integration.

Integration Promotes Group Affiliation

Study 2 showed that, whereas those low in autonomy felt less satisfaction and closeness with their group after reflecting on a negative compared to positive ingroup identity, those high in autonomy felt close and satisfied with their group regardless of the valence of activated identity. Presumably, the integration of group identity permits unconditional group acceptance – including its flaws and regrettable characteristics. Rather than harming group affiliation, the

integration of negative group qualities actually improves group relatedness. Ironically, it is the denial of negative ingroup attributes that forestalls positive group affiliation. It is, however, important to interject a caveat here. We do not under any circumstance intend to suggest that individuals should necessarily internalize a negative or stigmatized identity. It is important to distinguish between the honest appraisal/reconciliation of perceived group attributes and the internal deflection/introjection of stigma that is externally forced upon marginalized groups through stereotypes, inequality, and oppression. Here, we contend that integration refers to the recognition of misgivings in the service of self-improvement and growth, *not the internalization of negative identity*. Similarly, although those high in autonomy may acknowledge ingroup flaws, they do not enact them. Rather, recognition of shortcomings is a step toward adjusting and correcting them. Results from Study 2 suggest that autonomy allows one to better handle or navigate negative aspects of identity by first coming to terms with them, which serves the overarching aim of creating a cohesively *positive* social self. Our results suggest that people who integrate negative aspects of their group get more relatedness from their group, which satisfies the need for relatedness and increases well-being (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Can Integration Improve Intergroup Relations?

Study 3 speaks more specifically to the idea that owning up to negative ingroup traits in particular may promote more positive outgroup attitudes and motivations. Results of Study 3 should be interpreted with caution because the interaction between autonomy and identity valence in predicting outgroup motivation and bias was not significant. Nonetheless, when we evaluated specific comparisons, we found that negative group identity activation increased autonomous motivation to be nonprejudiced and decreased race bias among autonomous individuals, but had no effect on intergroup motivation or bias among less autonomous

individuals. This pattern of results is somewhat different from those of Studies 1 and 2, suggesting divergent effects of integration on ingroup and intergroup processes. Whereas the pernicious effect of negative ingroup information on ingroup evaluation was absorbed by autonomy through integration (Study 2), this openness to ingroup shortcomings actually promoted more positive outgroup attitudes in Study 3. In contrast, those low in autonomy do not appear to have openly attended to ingroup imperfections in order to improve outgroup motivation and attitudes.

Various lines of research correspond to the idea that openness to negative self-relevant information might improve intergroup relations. For instance, a growing body of work suggests that the more competitive and status-oriented forms of identification with a group predict more defensiveness and more ingroup bias, whereas identification stemming from the inherent and autonomous experience of being a group member (without denial or distortion) predicts greater wellbeing and more positive attitudes toward outgroups (e.g., Amiot, & Sansfaçon, 2011; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). Furthermore, integration may benefit high and low status group members in different ways. For instance, high status group members who readily acknowledge the wrongdoing of their group and who express collective guilt or empathy are more likely to seek intergroup forgiveness and reparation (Powell et al., 2005; Schmitt et al., 2004). Our findings support this idea while also suggesting that these effects may be particularly pronounced when individual autonomy is high. For low status groups, on the other hand, evidence suggests that the process of calling attention to the ingroup's inferior position can in fact constitute a first step in seeking social change (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Unlike high status group members who tend to legitimize their loftier social position (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Pratto et al., 2000), members of low status groups are

relatively willing to acknowledge the shortcomings of their group – mainly because reality constraints prevent them from outrightly claiming ingroup superiority (Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, & Simons, 1997; Jost & Burgess, 2000). It may be that the detection of inadequacy or shortage (however illegitimate) constitutes a first step in improving group status as well as intergroup rapport.

Integrating Self-Determination Theory and Intergroup Approaches

Although it is well established that autonomy plays an important role in the development of personality, motivation, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985a, 2000, 2002), the current research adds to this literature in revealing, for the first time, the key role of autonomy in social identity integration, group adjustment, and intergroup relations. That is, autonomy drives the tendency to fully recognize social identities in all their complexity and inconsistency. This has important implications for group and intergroup dynamics. Specifically, whereas the social identity approach (SIA; e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that, in order to bolster self-esteem, people are motivated to maximize the positive characteristics of their ingroup and minimize negative characteristics, the current findings suggest that this pattern is less pronounced for those high in autonomy. In addition, we build on SIA in a surprising but complementary way: Whereas bolstering ingroup identity tends to inflate outgroup derogation – we note that a balanced recognition of ingroup flaws can do the opposite, and improve outgroup attitudes.

In addition to extending the integrative process to the group level, we also expand the intergroup approach by adding complexity to the construct of social identification. The current findings point to the ambiguousness of typical conceptualizations of social identity. That is, traditional formulations neglect to consider the course of integration. As demonstrated in Study 1, traditional identification did not interact with integration, suggesting that both high and low

identifiers were less likely to integrate negative ingroup qualities than positive ones. The fact that standard measures of group identification do not capture identity integration processes might help to explain why the links between group identification and intergroup variables are often inconclusive (e.g., Duckitt, 2006; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Pettigrew et al., 1998).

Addressing Current Limitations

Although statistical power was adequate in Studies 1 and 2, it was low in Study 3 – which could account for the null interaction effects. Although results of Study 3 should be interpreted with some degree of caution, to contextualize these different effects across studies, we meta-analytically computed a weighted average effect based on the interaction effects from all three studies for every dependent variable (Cumming 2014), $\overline{ES}$ = .405 (with 95% CI from .198 to .612). This suggests that the interaction between identity valence and autonomy is small to medium, but nonetheless exists for different identity constructs and different types of outcomes. Still, more work is needed to understand the role of negative identity in outgroup attitudes.

Future Research and Applications

This research is a promising first step in exploring the effects of integration and the acknowledgement of negative group identity on group processes and intergroup relations, but more work is needed. For instance, how might collective ownership of group traits and experiences promote personal responsibility in relating to outgroups? The study of defensiveness in intergroup relations is critical. Defensive responding or avoidant coping refers to avoidance of threatening emotional material and generally reflects a defensive form of regulation that involves ignoring, distorting, or escaping threatening stimuli. The extent to which group members are defensive and avoidant of the more challenging aspects of their group identity may be a critical factor driving prejudice. Finally, the present findings also offer clear strategies to curtail

prejudice. Indeed, the simple exercise of reflecting on the regrettable characteristics of one's group may alleviate defensive responding to outgroups and reduce automatic racial bias, particularly when autonomy is high.

Conclusion

Every day, people are faced with the problem of coordinating their emotions, experiences, attitudes, cognitions, attributes, and behaviors. Sometimes these features are consistent with pre-existing self-knowledge and worldviews, and sometimes they are not. Healthy and unified functioning is critically dependent upon the capacity to organize the complexity and vastness of identity into a meaningful and recognizable whole. This research demonstrates that group identity is also complex, inconsistent, and often difficult to navigate and accept. Yet, when people feel a sense of autonomy, they can integrate and consolidate even the most unpleasant and painful aspects of belonging to a group. By recognizing such flaws, they can learn and grow. This remarkable human capacity promotes ingroup ties and enhances outgroup attitudes.

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Figure 1. The Effect of Motivational Orientation and Identity Valence on Group Identity Integration. Positive = Positive identity condition; Negative = Negative identity condition.

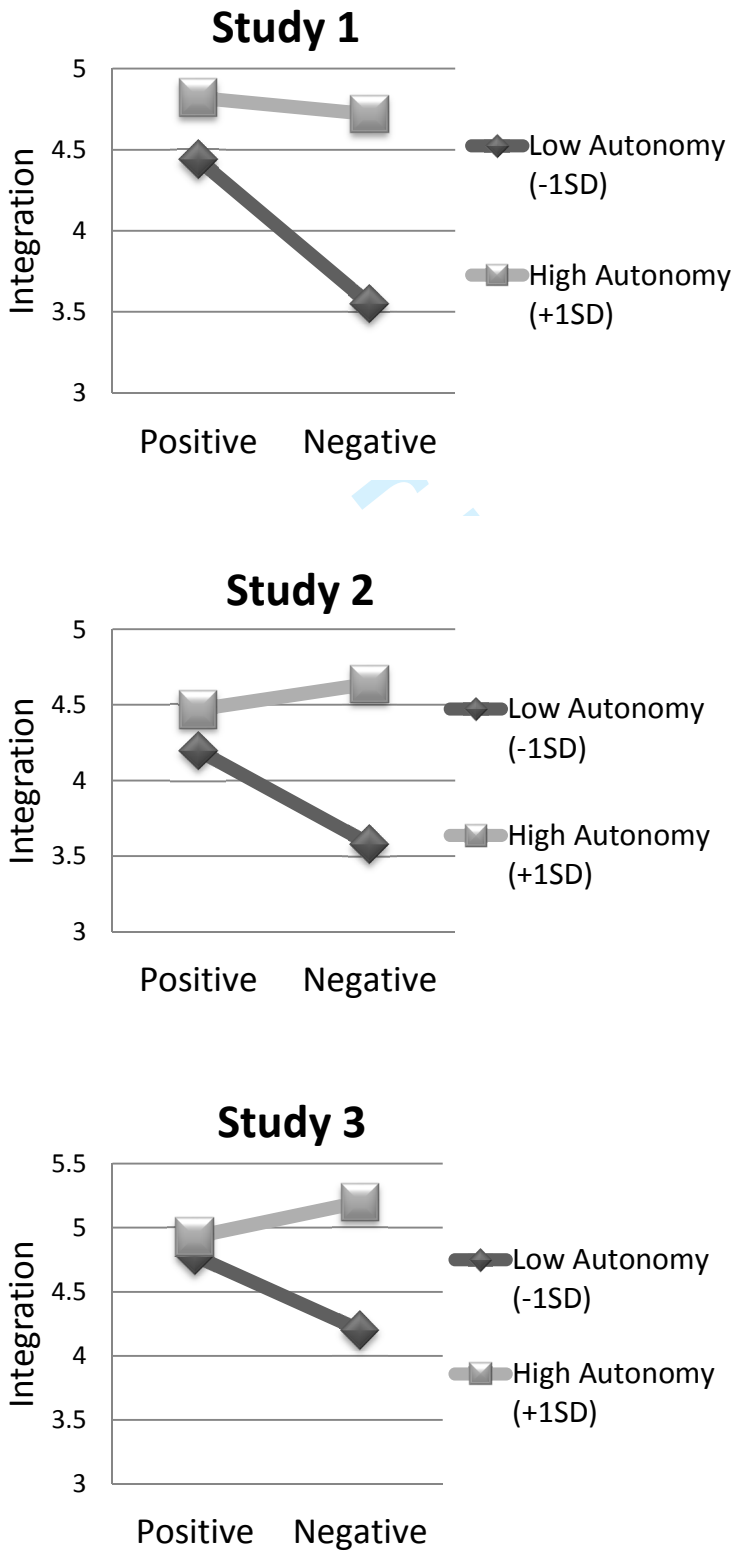
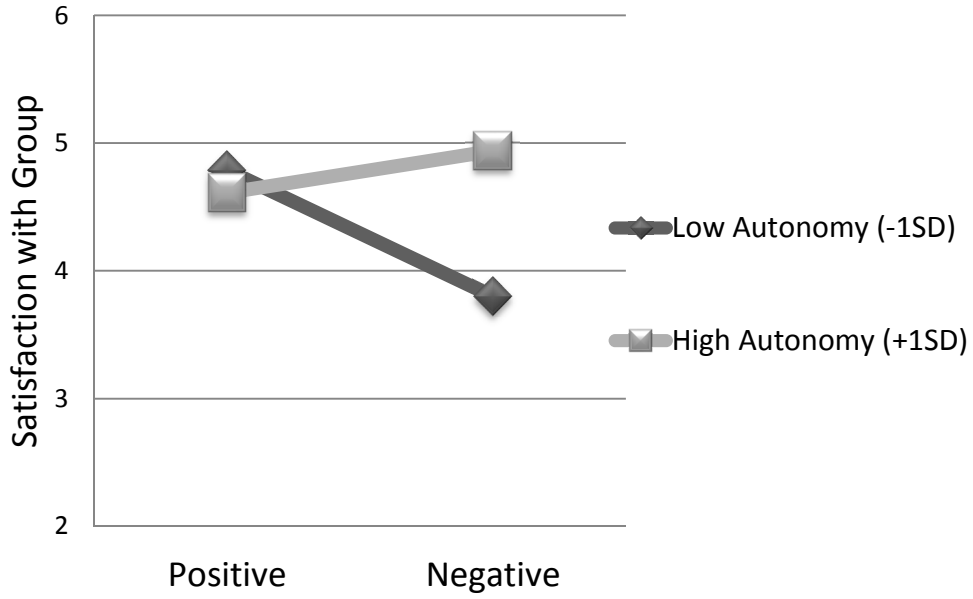


Figure 2. The Effect of Motivational Orientation and Identity Valence on Ingroup Processes
Positive = Positive identity condition; Negative = Negative identity condition.



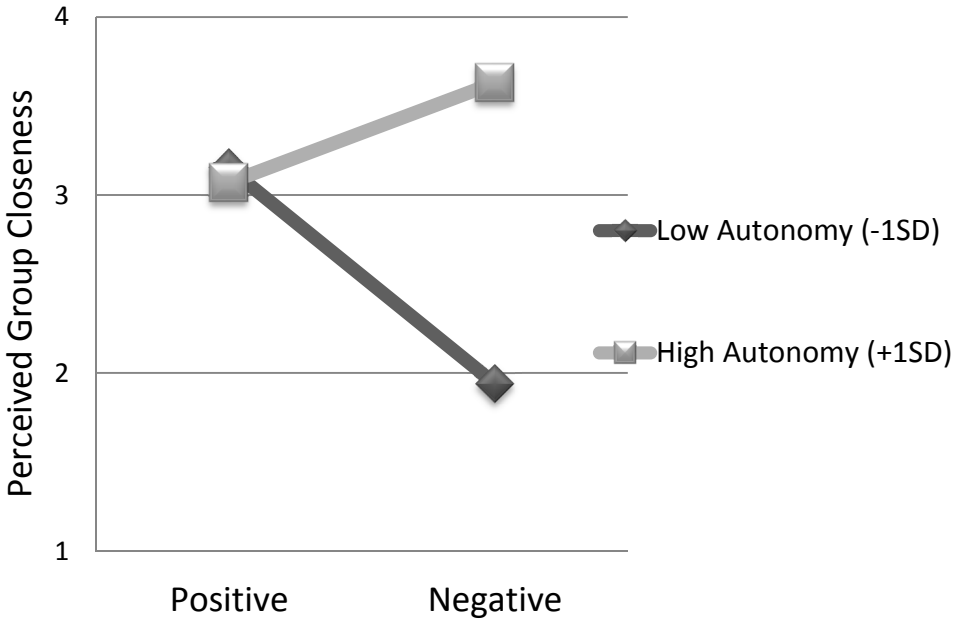


Figure 3. The Effect of Motivational Orientation and Identity Valence on Outgroup Perceptions. Positive = positive identity condition; Negative = negative identity condition.