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Exit, Loyalty, and Collective Action Among Workers in a Simulated Business Environment: Interactive Effects of Group Identification and Boundary Permeability

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Past research on the effects of boundary permeability and tokenism *(open boundaries with restricted access) suggests that when options for individual mobility exist, members of low status groups tend to exit their group and attempt to enter higher status groups. We hypothesized that the effects of boundary permeability on preferences for individual vs. collective action would depend upon prior levels of in-group identification, such that people who are more identified with their group would remain loyal and choose collective action, even under conditions of high boundary permeability. To test this hypothesis, a 2 (High vs. Low Group Identification) × 2 (High vs. Low Permeability) experimental design was employed to assess preferences for exit and loyalty in the context of a simulated business environment. For both rating measures and behavioral choices, the interaction hypothesis was supported. Implications for group loyalty and strategies of tokenism are discussed.*

KEY WORDS: collective action; group loyalty; social dilemma; social identity; tokenism.

The social world provides a seemingly endless series of choices between doing what is beneficial for oneself and what is beneficial for one's group (e.g., Dawes, 1980; Etzioni, 1995; Kramer and Brewer, 1984; Mansbridge, 1990). Such dilemmas are especially acute for members of low status or failing groups, as they are forced to decide whether to exit their group and pursue strategies of individual mobility, on the one hand, or to maintain group loyalty and pool their efforts to improve

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their situation collectively, on the other hand (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje, 1997; Hirschman, 1970; Tajfel, 1975). To take one example, workers must often choose between investing in individual opportunities for organizational advancement vs. collective efforts to bargain for unionized benefits. Because of differences in status and power between labor and management, workers frequently realize that their collective opportunities outweigh individual benefits, but only if they are able to sustain cooperation and solidarity. Thus, many workers choose to make collective contributions to unions as an alternative to seeking individual mobility. Group goals are frequently reinforced through social pressures toward loyalty and cooperation, because unions must inhibit defection and the pursuit of individual goals at the expense of the group.

According to theories of social identification and self-categorization, human actions may be located on a behavioral continuum ranging from the individual-level to the group-level (e.g., Kramer, 1991; Tajfel, 1981; Turner and Oakes, 1989). That is, specific situations may be expected to pull for either individually self-interested behavior or for collectively prosocial behavior. Consistent with this formulation, Kramer and Brewer (1984) demonstrated that raising the salience of collective, superordinate identities increased levels of individual restraint and conservation for the public good. Other studies of social dilemmas similarly indicate that allowing group members to interact with one another and to discuss their choices significantly increases subsequent rates of cooperation (e.g., Dawes, McTavish, and Shaklee, 1977; Dawes, van de Kragt, and Orbell, 1988).

Social identity theory has been particularly useful for understanding when members of low status groups will "stick with" their group and when they will exercise their "exit" option (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997; Ellemers, Wilke, and van Knippenberg, 1993; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Wright, Taylor, and Moghaddam, 1990). In general, it has been argued that people are "pragmatic" and that they "work at that form of status improvement that appears to be most feasible, given the characteristics of the situation" (Ellemers et al., 1993, p. 777). What this means is that members of low status groups are sensitive to aspects of the system or structure that convey whether or not it is possible to move up from one group to another. Thus, the bulk of research in this area addresses the "permeability of group boundaries" (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993, 1997; Ellemers, van Knippenberg, de Vries, and Wilke, 1988; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Wright et al., 1990; Wright and Taylor, 1998).

It has been argued often that individual exit and mobility is the preferred choice among members of low status groups in general (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1988; Lewin, 1941; Tajfel, 1975, 1978; Taylor and McKirnan, 1984; Wright et al., 1990). That is, social identity theorists have typically assumed that "group members will initially pursue individual mobility and only resort to collective strategies when individual mobility is not feasible" (Ellemers et al., 1993, p. 768). Much of this emphasis can be traced to the influence of Hirschman's pivotal book on *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (Hirschman, 1970), which Tajfel (1975, 1978) used extensively

in refining the assumptions of social identity theory. It would appear that Tajfel may have overemphasized the concepts of exit and voice relative to the concept of loyalty, which, as Hirschman (1970) argued, is important because "it can neutralize within certain limits the tendency of the most quality-conscious customers or members to be the first to exit" (p. 79). Ironically, then, many interpretations of social identity theory appear to have *under*-estimated the power of loyalty and group identification to facilitate cooperation and collective action in the context of status and power differences between groups.

Wright (2001) defined *tokenism* as "an intergroup context in which the boundaries between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups are not entirely closed, but where there are severe restrictions on access to advantaged positions on the basis of group membership." Research on the effects of tokenism supports the conclusion that members of low status groups tend to abandon their own group in favor of individual benefits under conditions of boundary permeability. For instance, Wright et al. (1990) assigned experimental research participants to a low status, disadvantaged group under conditions that either allowed individual mobility from one group to another or prohibited it. Results indicated that people preferred to pursue strategies of individual mobility over strategies of collective action whenever the intergroup boundary was permeable at all, even if only a small percentage of "tokens" were permitted to pass through. Only when individual mobility was made ineffective by instituting a *completely* impermeable boundary did participants choose collective action strategies significantly more often than individual mobility strategies. The major findings have been replicated by Ellemers et al. (1993), Lalonde and Silverman (1994), and Wright and Taylor (1998), among others (see Wright, 2001).

The possibility remains, however, that strengthening loyalty and identification with the group would lead people to resist individual temptations associated with open or partially open ("token") systems of boundary permeability (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997), particularly if their loyalty to the group precedes learning about its inferior status (e.g., Turner, Hogg, Turner, and Smith, 1984). Ellemers et al. (1993) argued that "it is not clear whether collective strategies are only used when individual mobility cannot be achieved" (p. 768) or whether they are appealing under other circumstances. These researchers found that illegitimate treatment of one's group did result in increased identification on the part of group members, but the effects did not carry over to choices of individual vs. collective action strategies. Other evidence is equivocal. Wright and Taylor (1998) found that group interaction did not substantially affect preferences for individual vs. collective action in response to tokenism. There is some indication in the data provided by Lalonde and Silverman (1994) that the manipulated salience of group identification affected the likelihood of choosing some of the behavioral strategies (including collective petitioning) but not others (including the likelihood of individual exit). Other research suggests that in-group identification is capable of increasing group commitment and decreasing the appeal of individual mobility, at least under some

circumstances, such as high category salience (Ellemers et al., 1997) and low accountability (Barreto and Ellemers, 2000).

There is also correlational evidence indicating that in-group identification is associated with the willingness to make individual sacrifices for the sake of the group. For instance, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found that organizational identification predicted "extrarole" prosocial behaviors, such as attending social functions and volunteering for additional tasks that are not part of one's job requirements. Research by James and Cropanzano (1994) demonstrated that "dispositional group loyalty" was associated with enhanced task performance (presumably as a result of increased effort and motivation) in support of group goals under conditions of intergroup competition. A study of trade union membership by Kelly and Kelly (1994) revealed that group identification was the single biggest predictor ($r = 0.81$) of participation in collective action on behalf of the union. Veenstra and Haslam (2000) also observed a strong association between in-group identification and willingness to participate in union activities, especially when the possibility of overt conflict between the union and governmental authorities was made explicit. There are obvious problems with assuming on the basis of correlational research that group identification exerts causal influence over preferences for individual vs. collective action, but these results are suggestive of the possibility that subjective group identification can go far in maintaining group loyalty even when more individualistic alternatives are available.

This possibility is further supported by research on social dilemmas, in which individual incentives are pitted against collective welfare (e.g., Dawes, 1980; Kramer, 1991; Kramer and Brewer, 1984). For instance, providing opportunities for group discussion has been shown to significantly increase the prevalence of prosocial forms of cooperation (Dawes et al., 1977, 1988), although the reasons for this increase have not been definitely established. Orbell, van de Kragt, and Dawes (1988) found that the opportunity for group members to make cooperative promises to one another played some role in discussion-induced cooperation, but only when promises were universal, that is, when all group members explicitly agreed to cooperate. The authors concluded that an identity-based account of cooperation (e.g., Kramer and Brewer, 1984) may help to explain why group discussion is capable of inducing cooperation in situations in which no explicit promises are made. Specifically, Orbell et al. (1988) mentioned the possibility that, "Discussion promotes cooperation because it promotes group identity, leading individuals to substitute group regardfulness for egoism as a principle guiding their choices" (p. 818). Similarly, Dawes et al. (1988) speculate that "it is the solidarity—not commitments *per se*—that leads to the higher level of cooperation" (p. 94).

In summary, there is strong evidence that when people must choose between what is beneficial for the self vs. their group, they often make the "selfish" choice as long as individual mobility (boundary permeability) is possible, even if it is only possible to a limited degree. However, there is accumulating evidence suggesting that strong in-group identification may be a powerful countervailing force that

encourages people to stick with their group. Thus, we hypothesize that effects of boundary permeability should be weaker for people who are high in group identification than for people who are low in group identification. That is, we argue that loyalty to the group could lead highly identified members to forsake opportunities for individual advancement even under "open boundary" conditions, which have generally been shown to elicit individualistic preferences for exit and mobility (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993, 1988; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Taylor and McKirnan, 1984; Wright, 2001; Wright et al., 1990; Wright and Taylor, 1998). Our hypothesis, therefore, is an interaction hypothesis. Group identification and boundary permeability were expected to interact in such a way that the effects of group permeability on preferences for individual vs. collective action would depend upon prior levels of group identification.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

In an experimental simulation of the situation faced by workers who must choose between individual and collective forms of advancement, we investigate the possibility that identity-based group solidarity is sufficient to induce preferences for collective action (over individual mobility), even under circumstances that typically lead to strong preferences for individual mobility (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993, 1988; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Taylor and McKirnan, 1984; Wright et al., 1990; Wright and Taylor, 1998). More specifically, we hypothesized that group identification would moderate the effects of boundary permeability on decisions to invest in individual vs. collective strategies for improvement. This interaction hypothesis was assessed in the context of a 2 (Permeable vs. Impermeable Group Boundaries) $\times$ 2 (Low vs. High In-Group Identification) between-participants factorial design. The permeability of group boundaries was manipulated by increasing or decreasing the ease with which members of a low status group of workers could join the higher status group of managers. Following prior research (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, and Pomare, 1990; Kramer and Brewer, 1984; Mackie, 1986), we manipulated the strength of in-group identification by raising the psychological salience of the in-group (or not), allowing group interaction (or not), and introducing collective interdependence (or not).

METHOD

Research Participants

Seventy-two male and female undergraduate students of a prestigious university in the northeastern United States participated in small groups of three or four. Each group was randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions. The students received either $6.00 or course credit for participating.

Procedure

Research participants were met at the door of the building by the experimenter, who appeared to check a list to determine which of two groups each participant had been assigned to. In reality, all participants were assigned to the same group and sent to the same room. The illusion that another experimental group existed was created to (a) build credibility for the cover story, which was to include a group of "managers," and (b) provide the basis for in-group identification by making an out-group salient.

The apparent presence of an out-group. To reinforce the perception that there were two groups involved in the experiment (cf. Wright et al., 1990), several other steps were taken, in addition to informing the participants directly. Once all of the participants arrived, the experimenter made a phone call, allegedly to the room in which the other group was participating, to coordinate starting times. While the participants were completing the consent forms, a female undergraduate confederate appeared at the door and stated that she was there for the experiment. The experimenter, after checking the list, told her that she was in the wrong place and directed her to the location of the other group. By creating a (fictitious) out-group, the minimum requirements for participants being able to identify as members of their assigned group (e.g., Sherif and Sherif, 1969; Tajfel, 1978) were met before group members learned of their inferior status. None of the participants expressed suspicion about the existence of the other group.

Manipulation of in-group identification. Groups assigned on a random basis to the "low identification" condition received an introduction to the first task stating that (a) the purpose of the experiment was to study how people solve problems while in the presence of other people, (b) they were to work individually, (c) they had 15 min to complete the task, and (d) at the end of the semester, prizes would be awarded to the four *individuals* who gave the best solutions. By contrast, participants assigned to the "high identification" condition received an introduction stating that (a) the purpose of the experiment was to study how people solved problems in groups, (b) for purposes of comparison, they would have 7 min to work on a problem individually and then 8 min to work on the same problem as a group to come up with a consensual solution, and (c) at the end of the semester, prizes would be given to the members of the *group* that had produced the best solution. In this manner, participants in the low identification condition were independent, competing as individuals to win a prize, and their interaction was minimal. Participants in the high identification condition, however, were interdependent, in competition with other groups to win a prize, and they engaged in social interaction during the problem-solving task.

Problem-solving task. All participants were asked to work on Johnson and Johnson's "Winter Survival Problem" (Johnson and Johnson, 1991). This "wilderness" problem requires participants to rank a number of items according to the

items' usefulness in helping passengers of a crashed plane to survive under extremely inhospitable conditions. Because the participants in the high identification condition were required to explain and justify their decisions to the other group members, participants in the low identification condition were also asked to write explanations and justifications for their solution. This measure was taken in attempt to equate (as much as possible) the two types of groups in terms of accountability, decision-making quality, and actual time spent working on the problem.

Filler task. A second task, which involved a series of Kahneman and Tversky (1973) type decisions, was included as a filler task to reduce the chance that participants would later perceive a connection between the first and third tasks.

Experimentally induced group status. After completing the filler task, participants were told that they would be separated temporarily before they began the third task. They were then led to separate cubicles and handed an introductory sheet that stated:

> This experiment centers around solving problems in a mildly stressful situation. While problem solving has been widely studied, little research has been done on problem solving in real-life situations, such as one would find in a business environment. Since we cannot completely replicate a real-life situation, we will retain only a few of the more important aspects. First, problem-solving will be done in groups. Second, success will be rewarded. Third, the two groups will differ in their "status"; common to most organizations, one group's work (e.g., management) is often considered to be more important than another group's work (e.g., factory worker).

Participants were told that the problems for this third task were anagrams, some of which were more difficult than others. Each anagram would be associated with a point value. If the group solved enough anagrams to earn 100 points, then the members of that group would be entered into a prize lottery to be drawn at the end of the semester. Prizes included free pizza at a popular student hangout and movie tickets for a local theater. Finally, participants were told that their group had been randomly assigned to the "Laborer" position and the other group (ostensibly participating in a different room) had been assigned to the "Management" position. To emphasize the status difference between the Management and Laborer groups, participants were further instructed that

> Although the difficulty of the anagrams given to both groups will be the same, the Management group's work will be considered more important and thus worth 50% more points (e.g., an anagram worth 10 pts. for the Laborer group will be worth 15 pts. for the Management group). In the past, every group in the Management position earned enough points to enter their members in the lottery. The groups in the Laborer position have not been so fortunate.

Thus, all participants were led to believe that they were members of a lot status and relatively disadvantaged group.

Manipulation of permeability and strategy options. Next, each participant was told that as a member of the Laborer group, s/he had an opportunity to improve her/his position by performing well on a preliminary set of anagrams. Participants received a sheet of paper that informed them they would have 3 min to work

on the preliminary anagrams, and it described two strategy options they could use to improve their position. One of the options represented individual mobility and the other option, collective action. It was in the description of the individual mobility option that the permeability of the group boundary was manipulated. The participants in the "permeable boundary" condition were told:

> (1) You can choose to join the Management group based on how well you do on the preliminary anagrams. Based on points associated with each anagram, if you make *15 out of 35 possible points in 3 minutes*, you can work with the Management group during the problem-solving session and share in their advantage (i.e., due to the high amount of points their anagrams are worth, you will get in the lottery).

Thus, participants in that condition needed to earn less than 50% of the possible points to join the higher-status group. In contrast, the participants in the "impermeable boundary" condition were told that they would have to earn all 35 points (100%) to join the management group. As reported below, participants in the former condition did in fact perceive individual mobility to be easier than the participants in the latter condition.

The second option given to the participants was one in which they could achieve higher status through collective action. Specifically, they were told:

> (2) You can choose to contribute the points you make from working on the preliminary anagrams to a group pool. If enough members of the Laborer group contribute their points so that the *group pool is at least 45 points* [for three member groups, 60 points for four member groups], the Laborer group will be elevated to a Management position (i.e., the anagrams the Laborer group completes during the problem-solving session will be worth as much as the Management group's and the members of the Laborer group will get in the lottery).

The participants were told that they would have to choose one of the options, and that they would have to make that choice before beginning the anagram task (i.e., they could not "try for" individual mobility and then if they failed, contribute their points to the group pool; or vice versa). Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which each of the two options (individual mobility and collective action) was appealing on 9-point scales, and then each person privately told the experimenter which option he or she had chosen to pursue. Because participants were individually isolated before learning about the individual vs. collective action choice, any effects of prior group interaction and discussion on cooperative behavior are not attributable to explicit promise-making, as in previous studies (e.g., Dawes et al., 1988; Orbell et al., 1988). Thus, our experimental procedure insured that any discussion-induced cooperation would be due to group solidarity and identification rather than agreements or promises to cooperate.

Participants were given one final questionnaire, which included two questions about the degree to which they thought each option would lead to the desired consequences; these served as manipulation checks. Participants were then brought back together and debriefed collectively.

RESULTS

Prior to conducting statistical analyses, two precautions were taken to minimize unwanted sources of bias in the data. First, the experimental procedure was such that there was statistical dependency in the data (Judd and McClelland, 1989). Specifically, the experimental conditions were manipulated between groups (not individuals), and there are likely to be some differences among the groups. To address this issue, all analyses were conducted with groups as the unit of analysis ($N = 20$). Second, when they signed up for the study, participants were asked not to sign up for the same session as a friend. Because friends would have additional motivations to choose collective action, we planned to conduct the sessions with groups of strangers. However, in 8 of the 20 groups, at least two of the participants reported in the debriefing that they were well acquainted with another person in the group. Thus, all analyses were conducted with "friends" as a covariate to control for this potential bias in the results.

Manipulation Checks

To check whether the participants assigned to the permeable boundary condition actually believed that it would be easier to join the Management group compared with participants assigned to the impermeable condition, a 9-point scale at the end of the experiment assessed participants' perception of the likelihood that individuals who chose the individual strategy would succeed and join the Management group. A 2 (High vs. Low Group Identification) $\times$ 2 (High vs. Low Boundary Permeability) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with "friends" entered as a covariate. This analysis yielded only a main effect of boundary permeability, indicating that participants assigned to the permeable condition expected individual mobility to be more successful ($M = 6.37$) than did participants assigned to the impermeable condition ($M = 4.69$), $F(1, 15) = 17.08$, $p < 0.001$, PRE[5] $= 0.53$. Thus, the manipulation of boundary permeability was effective.

Interestingly, participants assigned to the permeable condition were also less likely to believe that enough points would be contributed to the group pool to allow the group as a whole to achieve management status ($M = 4.81$), compared with participants assigned to the impermeable condition ($M = 6.85$), $F(1, 15) = 20.92$, $p < 0.001$, $PRE = 0.58$. Thus, group members *expected* others to choose individual mobility over collective action under conditions of boundary permeability. Lay theorizing, therefore, appears to anticipate the "tokenism" findings of Wright et al. (1990) and others. There were no main or interactive effects of group identification on the perceived efficacy of either individual or collective action strategies. This

[5]PRE is the proportional reduction in error that is obtained by adding this parameter to the statistical model (see Judd and McClelland, 1989). It therefore reflects the size of the effect.

rules out the possibility that high group identifiers would be more likely than low group identifiers to "stick with" their group out of rational self-interest, insofar as high and low identifiers (within the same permeability condition) were equally likely to believe that individual mobility would be possible and that collective action would be successful.

Ratings of Individual and Collective Action Strategies

The main prediction was that preferences for collective action over individual mobility would depend on both the permeability of group boundaries and participants' levels of in-group identification. Specifically, we hypothesized that boundary permeability would exert stronger effects on behavioral preferences among people who were weakly identified with their group compared with people who were strongly identified. Weak identifiers would be likely to take advantage of "open" boundaries to exit their group under conditions of permeability, whereas strong identifiers were expected to remain loyal to their group even in the face of opportunities for individual mobility.

A 2 (Group Identification) $\times$ 2 (Boundary Permeability) ANCOVA (with friends as a covariate) was conducted on participants' ratings of the attractiveness of each of the two strategies (individual and collective action). For ratings of the collective action strategy, there was a significant main effect of boundary permeability, reflecting the fact that participants in the permeable condition found collective action to be less appealing than did participants in the impermeable condition, $F(1, 15) = 11.81$, $p < 0.01$, $PRE = 0.44$. This main effect provides a conceptual replication of past research (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Wright et al., 1990).

As hypothesized, however, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction involving group identification and boundary permeability, $F(1, 15) = 5.48$, $p < 0.05$, $PRE = 0.27$. Observed means are presented in Table 1. A focused contrast test confirmed that collective action was perceived to be significantly *less* attractive for participants in the low identification/high permeability condition and that none of the other three conditions differed from one another, $F(1, 15) = 19.18$, $p < 0.001$,

Table 1. Mean Ratings of the Attractiveness of Individual and Collective Action Strategies as a Function of Group Identification and Boundary Permeability

	Low group identification		High group identification	
Strategy	Low permeability	High permeability	Low permeability	High permeability
Collective action	7.50_a	5.57_b	7.35_a	6.86_a
Individual mobility	4.98_a	5.67_a	5.00_a	5.38_a

Note. Ratings were made on 9-point scales, with higher numbers indicating greater perceived attractiveness. Within rows, means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Mean Proportion of Group Members Who Chose Collective Action over Individual Mobility as a Function of Group Identification and Boundary Permeability

	Permeability of group boundaries	
Group identification	Low	High
Low	0.94_a	0.50_b
High	0.95_a	0.78_a

Note. Means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < 0.05$.

$PRE = 0.56$. Ratings of the individual mobility strategy did not differ significantly as a function of experimental condition; this strategy was rated as moderately appealing in all conditions (see Table 1), all F values < 1.0.

Behavioral Choices of Individual and Collective Action Strategies

To examine the effects of group identification and boundary permeability on participants' actual choices of strategy, the same 2×2 ANCOVA was conducted on the proportion of participants in each group who chose the collective action strategy over individual mobility. Mean proportions are listed in Table 2. Once again, there was a significant main effect of permeability, indicating that people assigned to the permeable condition were significantly less likely to opt for collective action than were people assigned to the impermeable condition, $F(1, 15) = 18.53$, $p < 0.001$, $PRE = 0.55$. The main effect was again qualified by a significant interaction between group identification and boundary permeability, $F(1, 15) = 4.71$, $p < 0.05$, $PRE = 0.24$. Focused contrast testing revealed that participants in the low group identification/high boundary permeability condition were significantly less likely than people assigned to the other three conditions to engage in collective action, $F(1, 15) = 26.24$, $p < 0.0001$, $PRE = 0.64$. Thus, for both strategy ratings and for actual behaviors, a permeable (open) boundary led members to exit their groups only when group identification was low. When people identified strongly with their groups, they remained loyal to them and opted for collective action rather than individual mobility, even when they believed that individual mobility was more likely to be successful than collective action.

DISCUSSION

Past research suggests that when options for individual mobility exist (i.e., when group boundaries are "open" or "permeable"), people are likely to abandon their group in favor of personal opportunities (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993, 1997, 1988; Lalonde and Silverman, 1994; Wright et al., 1990; Wright and Taylor, 1998).

Preferences for individual mobility over collective action have been observed even under conditions of "tokenism," that is, when boundaries are almost but not completely impermeable (see Wright, 2001). These findings may be contrasted with the conclusions drawn from research on social dilemmas, which suggests that people may be willing to incur individual risks to promote the collective welfare under conditions of strong group identification (e.g., Dawes et al., 1988; Kramer, 1991; Kramer and Brewer, 1984; Orbell et al., 1988). Our study suggests that prior group identification is indeed capable of leading people to resist the temptation of individual exit associated with permeable group boundaries. Under conditions expected to elicit relatively strong group identification (including elements of social interaction, task cooperation, and group distinctiveness), we found that 78% of group members favored collective action over individual mobility, even when leaving the group was relatively easy.

These results indicate that group loyalty is indeed an important value that can "neutralize" exit tendencies, as Hirschman (1970) suggested. They also indicate that there may be limits to the efficacy of "tokenism" as a strategy to be used by employers and others to weaken group solidarity and to encourage individual mobility instead (e.g., Wright, 2001). For the same reasons that people who are strongly identified with labor unions and other groups and organizations are willing to make individual sacrifices to participate in collective action (e.g., Kelly and Kelly, 1994; Veenstra and Haslam, 2000) and contribute to public goods (e.g., Etzioni, 1995; James and Cropanzano, 1994; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986), it appears that strong group identification leads people to forego individual opportunities for mobility in favor of a collective pooling of resources. Thus, promoting a few "tokens" from lower status groups may be a highly effective strategy for motivating people and persuading them that the system is fair and legitimate when group solidarity is relatively low (e.g., Wright, 2001), but our results suggest that it will fall on deaf ears when group solidarity is sufficiently high.

Of course, there are inherent limitations in generalizing from the results of any single study and its particular methods. The fact that Wright and Taylor (1998) failed to obtain effects of group identification on preferences for individual vs. collective action in response to the situation of tokenism suggests that the matter may not be closed. In the case of our experiment, it is possible that the student participants may not have been sufficiently motivated to improve their chances to enter the lottery or join the high status group. The fact that these students were, objectively speaking, quite advantaged in "real life" may mean that their needs for status improvement or material rewards were not acute enough for them to be tempted to exit their group in favor of individual mobility. We readily acknowledge that the "stakes" involved in our experimental simulation were not as high as those typically found in professional settings. Nevertheless, the fact that 50% of our participants who were assigned to the low identification/high permeability condition did avail themselves of the opportunity to engage in individual mobility

does suggest that, at least under certain conditions, participants were motivated to improve their situations through individual opportunities to "move up."

Future research is needed to determine the social psychological mechanisms that explain why highly identified group members prefer collective action over individual mobility. Specifically, it is not clear whether strong group identification "pulls" people toward cooperation because of liking, familiarity, and commitment, or whether it "pushes" people away from defection and individualistic strategies as a result of accountability and fear of being considered a "traitor." We suspect that both sets of processes are involved and that groups are capable of regulating individual behavior through rewards and punishments. In addition, people may come to define themselves in terms of valued group memberships (e.g., Turner and Oakes, 1989), in which case betrayals of the group may be psychologically experienced as self-betrayals. It is not possible to determine on the basis of our study whether highly identified group members were motivated by a desire to maintain contact and solidarity with fellow group members or by a fear of betraying their teammates or even by a fear of betraying themselves and their own values. What is fairly clear, however, is that they chose loyalty over exit.

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