

Summary

Motivations Attributed to Having a Social Identity and Intergroup Attitudes

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In social psychology, the in-group identification has often been considered to explain the inter-group attitudes (Cairns, Kenworthy, Campbell, & Hewstone, 2006). More recently, researchers emphasized the role of the motivations underlying the in-group identification (self-esteem, distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, and efficacy) (Brewer, 2007; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013; Vignoles, 2011; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006). It was shown that depending on the context of inter-group relations (relations with the immigrants), a given social identity (national identity) might be more likely to be associated with a given underlying motivation (continuity) (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). In a frame of optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991, 1993), Brewer (2007) argued that in the contexts of inter-group conflict or threat, the motivations of distinctiveness and belonging are relatively important. On the other hand, according to the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it is the need for self-esteem that governs the people's inter-group behavior. In the recent years, researchers focused on the perceptions of in-group continuity (e.g., Jetten & Wohl, 2012) and in-group efficacy (Fritsche et al., 2013) to explain the inter-group attitudes. In this way, it seems important to explore which motivations of social identity are stronger predictors in the context of inter-group relations (Vignoles, 2011).

The present study aims to investigate how different motivations of social identity predict the different manifestations of inter-group attitudes towards different groups in Turkey. In this study, attitudes towards the Kurds, Europeans, and Syrian refugees are regarded in terms of the in-group favoritism and perception of conflict or threat. It is expected that the self-esteem attributed to having a Turkish identity would be stronger predictor for the in-group favoritisms (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the context of relations with the Kurds, distinctiveness and belonging would appear as stronger predictors (Brewer, 2007). In the context of relations with the Syrian refugees, the distinctiveness (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Tajfel, 1981) would appear as a stronger predictor and, besides, the continuity may appear as a predictor (Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014). In the context of relations with the Europeans, the belonging (Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens & Paladino, 2000; Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino & Sacchi, 2002) would appear as a stronger predictor and, besides, the efficacy may appear as a predictor (Fritsche et al., 2013). The study also examines the role of perception of conflict or threat as a mediator variable in the relationship between the relevant motivation of social identity and the in-group favoritism.

According to the social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the motivation for self-esteem does have an important role in the understanding of inter-group attitudes. This theory proposes that in order to have a positive social identity and, thus, enhance their self-esteem, individuals tend to express the in-group favoritism. That is, they tend to evaluate their in-groups more positively compared to the out-groups, which are meaningful for the value and/or existence of the in-group.

In addition to the self-esteem, social identities have been associated with the motivations, such as distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, and efficacy (Breakwell, 1996; Brewer, 1991, 1993, 2007; Vignoles, 2011; Vignoles et al., 2006). In a frame of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), self-esteem hypothesis proposed two corollaries: 1) In-group favoritism should enhance self-esteem 2) People with lower self-esteem should express more in-group favoritism (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). However, the studies generally provided support for the Corollary 1 (e.g., Verkuyten, 2007) and researchers suggested that in the examination of inter-group attitudes (in a frame of SIT), it is important to deal with the social and situational

self-esteem instead of the personal and stable self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). In a parallel way, the present study deals with the self-esteem attributed to having a Turkish identity (also see Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) and it is expected that the self-esteem would be a stronger predictor for the in-groups favoritisms of the study.

The motivation for the distinctiveness refers to the individuals' need for differentiation and uniqueness. It has also been suggested two hypotheses for the relations between the distinctiveness and in-group favoritism: *reactive distinctiveness* (in-group favoritism should increase with lower of inter-group distinctiveness) and *reflective distinctiveness* (in-group favoritism should increase with higher of inter-group distinctiveness) (Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). Researchers showed that in the situations of real life inter-group relations (vs. minimal group relations), people tend to show reaction to the lower levels of inter-group distinctiveness (or inter-group similarity) via increasing the in-group favoritism (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Tajfel, 1981). On the other hand, Li and Brewer (2004) showed that when participants emphasized the distinctiveness and superiority of the in-group, compared to the well-being of, and attachment to the in-group, they were more likely to exclude the immigrants. In this study, it is expected that the distinctiveness attributed to having a Turkish identity would predict the perception of (cultural) threat with the Syrian refugees (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Tajfel, 1981). In addition, focusing on the distinctiveness of Turkish identity (and implying superiority of it), participants may express more perception of the threat with the Syrian refugees (Li & Brewer, 2004).

The motivation for the belonging was proposed as a fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which refers to the individuals' need for the acceptance of others (Vignoles, 2011). Previous studies showed that groups, which are perceived in unity and wholeness, are likely to meet people's need for belonging (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002). In addition, such groups increased people's tendency to openly express in-group favoritism (Effron & Knowles, 2015). In this study, it is expected that the more participants attribute the feelings of belonging to having a Turkish identity, the more they would be likely to perceive the threat with the Europeans, who can be regarded as a superordinate group (Hortaçsu & Cem-Ersoy, 2005). In addition, the belonging, along with the self-esteem, may appear as a significant predictor for the in-group favoritisms of the study (Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002).

According to the optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991, 1993), the groups that meet the individuals' need for distinctiveness meet also their need for belonging. Brewer (2007) defined the motivations of dis-

tinctiveness and belonging as the safety motives, which gain importance in the contexts of inter-group conflict or threat. In this study, it is expected that both the distinctiveness and belonging would appear as stronger predictors for the perception of conflict with the Kurds, who can be regarded as a part of Turkish identity or subordinate group (Altun, 2013; Taşdemir & Öner-Özkan, 2016b).

More recently, researchers examined the inter-group attitudes in relation with the need for continuity (Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013), which refers to the people's need for the sense of transcendence across time and place (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). The study in Holland, for example, showed that the more people emphasized on the in-group continuity, the more they expressed negative attitudes toward the immigrants, which were likely to be perceived as threatening the continuity of the in-group (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014). In this study, it would be explored whether the continuity, besides the distinctiveness, predict the perception of threat with the Syrian refugees, who came to the country later.

The motivation for the efficacy refers to the people's need for a sense of competency, control, and power (Breakwell, 1996). Researchers showed that when people's sense of individual control was threatened, they tended to express more in-group favoritism (Fritsche et al., 2013). It was also claimed that based on the need for efficacy, people may construct their national identities in different ways; for instance, they emphasize their national victories in sports or value their national independence and power, etc. (Breakwell, 1996; Cinnirella, 1996; Lyons, 1996). In this study, it would be explored whether the efficacy, besides the belonging, predict the perception of threat with the Europeans.

The research have shown that the inter-group attitudes may be explained via the motivations of having a social identity as self-esteem, distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, and efficacy (Brewer, 1991, 1993, 2007; Fritsche et al., 2013; Pickett & Brewer, 2001; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Vignoles, 2011). The study in Turkey found that participants attributed the meanings to having a Turkish identity in terms of the motivations of self-esteem, distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, and efficacy (Taşdemir & Öner-Özkan, 2016b). The present study aims to investigate how these motivations attributed to having a Turkish identity predict the intergroup attitudes in Turkey for the Kurds, Europeans, and Syrian refugees in terms of the in-group favoritism and perception of threat or conflict. In addition, the role of the perceived conflict or threat is examined as a mediator variable in the relevant relationship. Researchers argued that individuals attempt to manage their feelings of the motivations of social identity (e.g., via the in-group

favoritism) when they are disrupted (Vignoles, 2011). In the study, the effect of the in-group identification is controlled for and the hypotheses are identified as follows:

1) Among the others, the self-esteem would predict the in-group favoritism for the Kurds, Europeans, and Syrian refugees. Besides, the belonging may predict the in-group favoritism for the Kurds, Europeans, and/or Syrian refugees,

2) Among the others, the distinctiveness would predict the perception of threat with the Syrian refugees. Besides, the continuity would predict the perception of threat with the Syrian refugees,

3) Among the others, the belonging and distinctiveness would predict the perception of conflict with the Kurds,

4) Among the others, the belonging would predict the perception of threat with the Europeans. Besides, the efficacy would predict the perception of threat with the Europeans,

5) The perception of threat or conflict would mediate the relation between the relevant motivation of social identity and the relevant in-group favoritism.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty seven university students (109 women; 47 men) from Anadolu University participated in the study. Their age changed between 18-27 ($M = 20.99$, $SD = 1.66$).

Measures

To measure the social identity motivations attributed to having a Turkish identity, items were developed based on the themes determined by Taşdemir and Öner-Özkan (2016b). Perceived conflict with the Kurds and perceived threat with the Europeans were measured with the items developed by Taşdemir and Öner-Özkan (2016a) regarding the perceptions of inter-group relations in Turkey. Perceived threat with the Syrian refugees was measured with the items taken from Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman (1999), which were adapted to Turkish culture by Balaban (2013). Two items, one from Esses, Dovidio, Semanya and Jackson (2005) and the other from Li and Brewer (2004), were used to measure the in-and out-group evaluations.

Results

Results showed that in-group identification (Step 1) and social identity motives (Step 2) explained 39% of the variance for in-group favoritism for Kurds [$\Delta R^2 = .26$, $F(41, 470) = 15.95$, $p < .000$]; 35% of the variance

for Europeans [$\Delta R^2 = .21$, $F(29, 259) = 12.88$, $p < .000$]; and 36% of the variance for Syrian refugees [$\Delta R^2 = .27$, $F(29, 535) = 13.84$, $p < .000$]. Hierarchical regression analyses showed that in-group favoritisms were predicted by self-esteem ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$ for Kurds; $\beta = .34$, $SE = .13$, $p < .01$ for Europeans; $\beta = .42$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$ for Syrian refugees). In addition, in-group favoritism for Kurds ($\beta = .27$, $SE = .12$, $p < .01$) and Syrian refugees ($\beta = .22$, $SE = .11$, $p < .05$) were predicted by belonging.

Independent variables explained 36% of the variance for conflict perceived with the Kurds [$\Delta R^2 = .28$, $F(29, 301) = 13.92$, $p < .000$]. Both distinctiveness ($\beta = .21$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$) and belonging ($\beta = .28$, $SE = .11$, $p < .01$) predicted conflict perceived with the Kurds.

Independent variables explained 32% of the variance for perceived threat with the Europeans [$\Delta R^2 = .21$, $F(11, 298) = 11.17$, $p < .000$]. Perceived threat with the Europeans was predicted by belonging ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$).

Independent variables explained 20% of the variance for perceived threat with the Syrian refugees [$\Delta R^2 = .17$, $F(9, 832) = 6.33$, $p < .000$]. Perceived threat with the Syrian refugees was predicted by distinctiveness ($\beta = .27$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$).

Unexpectedly, social efficacy and continuity did not emerge as a significant predictor for the relevant dependent variables. Results also showed that perception of the conflict mediated the relation between belonging and in-group favoritism for Kurds ($B = .33$, $SE = .06$, $CI [.22, .46]$).

Discussion

After controlling for the effect of in-group identification, the results showed that among the others, self-esteem, distinctiveness, and belonging predicted the inter-group attitudes in Turkey. The in-group favoritism for all of the groups was predicted by the self-esteem, which showed consistency with the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-esteem hypothesis (corollary 1) (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

The belonging predicted also the in-group favoritism for the Syrian refugees. Those, who tended to associate having a social identity with the feelings of belonging, were more likely to evaluate the Syrian refugees less positively compared to the Turks. Researchers showed that individuals perceiving their in-groups in unity and cohesion are more likely to express the in-group favoritism (Castano et al., 2002; Effron & Knowles, 2015; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). In this study, the results showed that both the self-esteem and belonging predict the in-group favoritism for the Syrian refugees.

The distinctiveness and belonging together predicted the perception of conflict with the Kurds, which mediated the relation between the belonging and in-group favoritism. Regarding the long lasting controversial and conflicting situation with the Kurds (Dixon & Ergin, 2010), these results may suggest that participants, who emphasized the distinctiveness and belonging, and thus the feelings of safety (Brewer, 2007), in regard to the Turkish identity, were likely to be concerned with the relations with Kurds, who can be regarded as a part of Turkish identity or a subordinate group in Turkey (Altun, 2013; Taşdemir & Öner-Özkan, 2016b).

The belonging predicted the perception of threat with the Europeans. Those, who emphasized that Turkish identity provides with the feelings of unity and wholeness, were more likely to perceive cultural (“Western countries try to assimilate Turkish identity”) and realistic threat (“Western countries have designs against Turkey’s territory”) with the Europeans. These results may suggest that participants perceived the influence of the Europeans on the integrity and unity of Turkish identity relatively negative (Smith, 2001), given that the Europeans can be seen as a superordinate group in Turkey (Hortaçsu & Cem-Ersoy, 2005). On the other hand, the efficacy did not appear as a significant predictor, besides the belonging, for the perception of threat with the Europeans.

The distinctiveness predicted the perception of threat with the Syrian refugees. Participants, who emphasized the distinctiveness of Turkish identity, were more likely to accept the ideas, such as Syrian refugees are not similar to the Turks in the ways of life and they can cause damage on the Turkish culture, etc. In a frame of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), researchers argued that when in-group members perceive a threat to the uniqueness of their own culture (perception of inter-group similarity or low inter-group distinctiveness), they tend to express more negative inter-group attitudes (Wright, 2011). Accordingly, the relevant results may suggest that Syrian refugees, who came from the country in a similar region with Turkey, may increase the perception of inter-group similarity among Turkish participants and thus their sensitivity towards the distinctiveness of their in-group identity or culture (Jetten, Spears & Manstead, 1997; Tajfel, 1981). In addition, focusing on the distinctiveness of Turkish identity, participants might express relatively negative attitudes towards the Syrian refugees, who are the newcomers in the country (Li & Brewer, 2004). On the other hand, the continuity did not appear as a significant predictor, besides the distinctiveness, for the perception of threat with the Syrian refugees.