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The Potential Role of Ingroup Identification in Rooted Intergroup Conflicts

Gruplar Arası Köklenmiş Çatışmalarda İç Grup Özdeşiminin Potansiyel Rolü

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Abstract

In recent years, the literature on intergroup conflict has increasingly focused on strategies aimed at resolving long-standing, deep-rooted, and violent intergroup disputes. However, the majority of these studies concentrate on conflict cases that occur between relatively homogeneous groups and in which cycles of violence have largely subsided, failing to adequately consider contexts where asymmetrical power relations and representational inequalities are central. This article examines how reducing ingroup identification among members of advantaged groups can enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in such contexts. It argues that ingroup identification reinforces conflict through perceptions of ingroup uniqueness, outgroup homogeneity, and value-based differentiation between groups. When these perceptions are weakened, strategies such as social justice initiatives, positive intergroup contact, constructive dialogue, negotiation and mediation, as well as recategorization and decategorization, may become more effective. The article presents a structured, stepwise pre-intervention model designed to support this process and suggests that reducing the dominance of social identity within individual self-concept can facilitate cognitively grounded, solution-oriented reappraisal and change.

Keywords: Conflict Deescalation, Conflict Resolution, Identification, Ingroup Identification, Intergroup Conflict.

Öz

Son yıllarda gruplar arası çatışma literatüründe, uzun süreli, derinleşmiş ve şiddet içeren gruplar arası anlaşmazlıkların çözümüne yönelik stratejiler öne çıkmaktadır. Ancak bu çalışmaların büyük bölümü, homojen yapıya sahip gruplar arasında gerçekleşen ve şiddet döngüsünün büyük ölçüde yatıştığı çatışma örneklerine odaklanmakta; asimetrik güç ilişkilerinin ve temsiliyet eşitsizliklerinin belirleyici olduğu bağlamları yeterince dikkate almamaktadır. Bu makalede, bu tür çatışmalar bağlamında, avantajlı grup üyelerinde grup içi özdeşleşmenin azaltılmasının çatışma çözüm stratejilerinin etkinliğini nasıl artırabileceği tartışılmaktadır. Makalede grup içi özdeşleşmenin; iç grubun benzersizliği, dış grubun homojenliği ve gruplar arası değer farklılıklarına dair algılar yoluyla çatışmayı pekiştirdiği savunularak, bu algıların zayıflatılması durumunda, sosyal adalet, olumlu gruplar arası temas, yapıcı diyalog, müzakere ve arabuluculuk, yeniden kategorizasyon ve dekategorizasyon gibi stratejilerin daha etkili hâle geleceği öne sürülmektedir. Makale, bu süreci destekleyecek şekilde yapılandırılmış aşamalı bir müdahale ön-modeli sunmakta ve bu modelin, grup kimliğinin bireysel benlik üzerindeki baskın etkisini azaltarak çözüm odaklı bilişsel yeniden yapılanmayı destekleyebileceğini ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çatışmanın Azaltılması, Çatışma Çözümü, Özdeşleşme, İç Grup Özdeşimi, Gruplar Arası Çatışma.

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Factors such as limited resources, incomplete or inaccurate information, biased information processing, destructive competition, group-based or intergroup emotions that fuel conflict, social fragmentation, cultural and societal discord, and heightened perceptions of intergroup difference constitute the main causes of intergroup conflicts. Strategies such as establishing positive intergroup contact, employing mediators or negotiators, ensuring justice through equitable distribution, addressing group classification processes, and initiating communication with the outgroup are commonly used to reduce the number of conflicts. This study discusses the possibility that, before any of these strategies are implemented, reducing ingroup identification among members of advantaged groups may increase the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies to be used.

Theoretical Background

Intergroup conflict is defined as systematic violent behavior enacted by groups of two or more individuals driven by incompatible goals and strategic interests (Cordell & Wolff, 2013). Although various definitions exist for intergroup conflicts involving physical violence and relatively large groups (Burton, 1987; Niv-Solomon, 2016), the term intractable conflict has become increasingly prevalent in recent years (Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2003; Kriesberg, 1998). However, this conceptualization is open to criticism on several grounds.

The first issue is that nearly all conceptualizations reflect a Western or Global North perspective. In the context of the generalizability problem (Henrich et al., 2010), focusing solely on a specific cultural context restricts the scope of understanding the phenomenon. A second issue concerns the empirical basis of these conceptualizations, which are often drawn from a limited number of cases. Leading scholars in the field (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2006; Fisher, 1990; Kelman, 2007) have conceptualized intergroup conflict primarily through cases such as Israeli-Palestinian, Protestant-Catholic, White-Black, Tutsi-Hutu, or Serb-Bosniak relations. In many of these examples, the violent phases of conflict have largely subsided, intervention programs have been implemented, or group-related authorities have attempted to resolve the conflict through the use of power. Therefore, the empirical foundation dominating the intergroup conflict literature can be critiqued for its homogeneity and similarity.

Third, such conflicts tend to avoid addressing chronic yet under-discussed characteristics, such as the restriction of minority languages in public spaces, the denial of conflict due to asymmetrical international representation that diverts global attention, and the framing of conflict as a one-sided issue, alongside the treatment of the right to self-determination as a taboo (Kaufman, 2013).

In conclusion, the current literature largely reflects the characteristics of specific cultural contexts and tends to overlook cultural diversity and contextual variation in conflict analysis. Understanding these alternative experiences can help reveal the unique dynamics that single-centered approaches often miss. These overlooked elements pose direct threats to group-based social identities, which in turn strengthen ingroup attachment and radicalize perceptions of the outgroup. In this context, focusing on ingroup identification as a meta-concept in conflict resolution may reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and negative attitudes toward the outgroup, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of solution-oriented strategies.

The purpose of this article is to advance a theoretically grounded preintervention account of how reducing ingroup identification among members of advantaged[i] groups may increase the effectiveness

of conflict resolution in contexts marked by asymmetric power and representational inequalities. Specifically, the argument is that lowering identification works through three linked mechanisms: attenuating perceived ingroup uniqueness, increasing recognition of outgroup heterogeneity, and foregrounding values shared across groups. Building on these mechanisms, the article derives testable implications for five families of strategies social justice initiatives, positive intergroup contact, constructive intergroup dialogue, mediation and negotiation, and recategorization and decategorization and presents a structured, stepwise pre-intervention model to guide practice. The scope is conceptual and integrative, clarifying boundary conditions and synthesizing existing evidence rather than reporting new empirical data, and the approach aims to reduce the dominance of social identity within the self concept without requiring the abandonment of group identities. In what follows, how ingroup identification underpins these dynamics and why attenuating it is a promising pre-intervention target are detailed.

Intergroup Differentiation and Conflict

When the difference between two groups is strongly perceived by one of them, it prevents the application of resolution strategies and leads to the prolongation of the conflict. One of the most fundamental variables in the distinction between ingroup and outgroup is ingroup identification. In contexts where rooted conflicts take place, individual identity and social identity are tightly intertwined (Staub, 1998). However, Brewer (1991) emphasizes that a healthy self-concept requires optimal distinctiveness between individual and social identities. As social identity becomes dominant in shaping behavior, individuals' ability to evaluate situations through their individual identity diminishes (Fisher & Kelman, 2011). This dominance of social identity is associated in the literature with high ingroup identification (Tropp & Wright, 2001). As identification increases, the distinction between ingroup and outgroup deepens (Çoksan et al., 2022), and the existing conflict is perceived as more severe (Riketta, 2005).

Identification that develops through collective identity leads a group to view itself as different from others in terms of beliefs, values, and norms, and as unique in its internal features (David & Bar-Tal, 2009). In this process, group members engaging in comparison tend to see their own values and moral characteristics as superior to those of the outgroup (Reicher et al., 2008). Moreover, increased intergroup differentiation raises the risk of conflict (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005). The outgroup is perceived as simple and homogeneous, while the ingroup is seen as diverse and complex (Linville & Fischer, 1998). This perception makes it easier to generalize limited observations about outgroup members to the group as a whole (Boldry et al., 2007).

Beyond cognitive differentiation, structural boundary conditions further entrench separation and sustain conflict. A second reason for intergroup differentiation lies in group boundaries that prevent individual mobility. This form of differentiation, driven by high ingroup identification, rigidifies the boundaries between groups and restricts transitions. Disadvantaged group members, especially those with low levels of representation, cannot achieve individual mobility due to these impermeable boundaries. This leads them to perceive more threats and to become further involved in conflict (Cook-Huffman, 2009). The literature highlights that in times of high differentiation, disadvantaged group members are unable to benefit from group permeability (Hill et al., 1994). Preventing individual mobility creates feelings of deprivation, hopelessness, and injustice among group members (Hammond & Yung, 1993). When boundaries become impermeable, strong identification and lack of permeability reinforce each other, since disadvantaged members tend to show higher levels of identification (Lalonde & Silverman, 1994). As a result, increased intergroup differentiation weakens ties between groups. This lack of connection

makes it more difficult to resolve ongoing conflicts (Lim et al., 2007). Taken together, these cognitive and structural pathways indicate that high identification is a leverage point; accordingly, I next clarify what *reducing identification* means.

Reducing Ingroup Identification

As noted above, ingroup identification is associated with the impermeability of intergroup boundaries, the perceived uniqueness of ingroup values, and the perception of the outgroup as homogeneous. Therefore, it can be argued that reducing the level of ingroup identification may weaken members' tendency to see their own group as unique, and that reminding them of the diversity among outgroup members may hinder the use of stereotypes. In parallel, as the social distance between groups decreases, the permeability of intergroup boundaries may increase (Jackson et al., 1996), and the intensification of information flow may facilitate the acceptance of intergroup conflict resolution strategies and enhance their effectiveness.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by reducing the level of identification. This expression refers to three main objectives: (a) decreasing the perceived similarity between the individual and other members of their ingroup, (b) decreasing the perception that outgroup members are highly similar and homogeneous, and (c) emphasizing shared values between groups to reduce the perceived distinction between them. This conceptualization aligns with the multidimensional ingroup identification framework proposed by Leach and their colleagues (2008). Conceptually, reducing the level of identification means lowering the influence of the criteria outlined in Rothbart and Korostelina's (2009) model of collective axiology. These criteria include the perceived homogeneity of outgroup behaviors and perceptions, the perceived immutability of their values and beliefs, and the perceived distance of the outgroup category. Similarly, the mutual intergroup differentiation model supports the idea that relationships can evolve from competition to cooperation while preserving the positive aspects of each group's social identity (Jetten et al., 2004). The proposal in this study to reduce the distinction between ingroup and outgroup directly reflects this approach: lowering ingroup identification for members of advantaged groups in order to strengthen perceived intergroup similarity, while preserving a sense of identity that sustains social capital. In other words, the aim is to reduce the prominence of social identity within the individual's self-concept, without suggesting that advantaged group members abandon their identities or values. In doing so, the influence of collective axiology criteria can be weakened, and identification-based practices can be used to promote content that reduces mutual intergroup differentiation. Although these mechanisms can touch both parties, practical leverage and ethical considerations suggest prioritizing advantaged-group members, as explained next.

Why Should Ingroup Identification Target Advantaged Group Members?

As stated above, reducing ingroup identification does not imply that individuals abandon their social identities or develop entirely new ones. Rather, the goal is to weaken perceptions such as ingroup homogeneity and outgroup homogeneity, while preserving the positive dimensions of social identity. In this form, reducing identification does not harm social capital.

Labeling parties in protracted conflicts as either perpetrators or victims does not lead to functional outcomes. In fact, such labels may hinder reconciliation processes (Worchel & Coutant, 2008). In violent conflicts, both parties tend to consistently view themselves as peaceful victims (Fisher & Kelman, 2011). This reinforces the belief that the world is a dangerous place and leads to aggressive reactions shaped by inflexible cognitive schemas. As a result, individuals may become perpetrators in subsequent cycles of violence (Staub, 1998). Increasing the effectiveness of resolution strategies by

reducing identification among those who are systematically cast in the role of perpetrators due to asymmetrical power relations is essential to break these behavioral patterns.

On the other hand, advantaged group members are individuals who benefit from the current situation, control resources, and have a tendency to protect the status quo (Jost et al., 2004). Maintaining the status quo reinforces their sense of privilege and superiority. When ingroup identification is strong, these individuals tend to defend the current hierarchy more rigidly, as it protects both their identities and their material advantages. Therefore, reducing ingroup identification among advantaged group members may weaken their defensive stance toward the status quo and increase their openness to change (Saguy et al., 2009). In other words, when ingroup identification is lowered, change no longer implies a core identity loss, which reduces defensive system-justifying motives and zero-sum appraisals of concessions (Saguy et al., 2009). Because advantaged groups typically control resources and decision procedures, they can implement compromise at comparatively lower subjective and material cost once identity threat is attenuated, especially when change is framed as consistent with fair process and long-term stability (Tyler, 2000). Lower identification also increases empathy and humanization toward the outgroup and reduces moral disengagement, which makes cooperative strategies such as dialogue, negotiation, and contact more acceptable (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014). Finally, continued conflict imposes reputational and economic costs that are salient to advantaged groups; when defensive motives weaken, these instrumental considerations further tilt preferences toward resolution. In this sense, the claim is conditional rather than categorical. Advantaged-group members are more likely to adopt conflict-resolution strategies when identification is lowered and solutions are framed to preserve valued identities while addressing structural inequalities. Hence, interventions targeting ingroup identification are more effective when they focus on advantaged group members, since they are more likely to accept and adopt conflict resolution strategies.

In addition, focusing on advantaged group members has practical implications for eliminating structural barriers stemming from power asymmetries. In contexts of high power imbalance, no matter how much the disadvantaged group's attitudes or behaviors change, the resolution process may be blocked unless the advantaged group is willing to allow progress (Pratto et al., 2006). Reducing ingroup identification among advantaged group members can help dismantle structural barriers and resistance rooted in power inequality. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of adopting and implementing policies or strategies that address the needs of disadvantaged groups (Dovidio et al., 2009). In this regard, reducing identification among the advantaged group can directly contribute to reducing resistance to structural change and improve the effectiveness of resolution strategies.

Furthermore, from the perspective of promoting empathy and humanization of the outgroup, targeting advantaged group members is particularly meaningful. High ingroup identification reduces empathy toward outgroup members and increases tendencies toward dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). When ingroup identification among advantaged group members is reduced, their capacity for empathy may increase, and negative attributions toward the outgroup may diminish (Batson et al., 2002). This can lead to greater engagement in conflict resolution strategies such as dialogue, negotiation, and positive intergroup contact (Halperin et al., 2011). Therefore, reducing ingroup identification in advantaged group members may foster empathy and facilitate conflict resolution processes.

As previously mentioned, perceiving the outgroup as heterogeneous prompts ingroup members to reassess their own social identity, which in turn can reduce identification. Recognizing the diversity within the outgroup facilitates acceptance of differences and increases cooperation (Worchel & Coutant,

2008). The perception that outgroup members are not all the same is associated with more positive attitudes toward them (Turner et al., 2007). Brown and Hewstone's (2005) integrative theory of intergroup contact also suggests that perceived typicality of outgroup members can act as a moderating variable in reducing intergroup differentiation. Emphasizing similarities between groups can likewise reduce ingroup identification. Awareness of shared values softens the rigid boundary between "us" and "them" (Reykowski & Cislak, 2011). Perceived similarity in beliefs and behavior promotes trust and friendship (Deutsch, 1999). Acceptance of differences fosters cooperation (Worchel & Coutant, 2008). Weingarten (2003) argues that belief in shared faith can prevent dehumanization. Finally, shared beliefs and common ideas are key components of social change (Granberg, 1987).

Ingroup Identification and the Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies

Social Justice

As previously noted, the unequal distribution of limited resources leads individuals to perceive the situation as unjust. When this is the primary source of conflict, reorganizing the distribution of resources can help rebuild a sense of justice among individuals and reduce the number of conflicts (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). However, when power imbalances are taken into account, it becomes clear that the redistribution of resources depends directly on authority. Therefore, it is often not feasible for third parties to implement this as an effective strategy. On the other hand, in cases where the conflict is denied, it becomes apparent that the existing distribution of resources benefits the advantaged group with higher representation. Despite all these limitations, it is still possible to foster a sense of justice among group members without direct intervention in the structures of authority.

Such efforts include steps aimed at preserving and increasing resources. For example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play significant roles in this process. NGOs help establish platforms for dialogue in regions where conflict persists (Hassouna, 2016). Staub (2003) emphasizes the importance of encouraging bystanders who are not directly involved in the conflict to advocate for fair distribution as a means to build societies that care for one another. In this way, economic well-being may also contribute to psychological well-being. Members' perceptions of constructive justice and their hopes for the future can be strengthened (Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Reducing ingroup identification can indirectly support this strategy. For instance, following the reduction of identification levels, increased intergroup permeability may help establish an acceptable and shared collective history between ingroup and outgroup members. This step plays an important role in the development of a sense of justice (Staub, 2003). A broader understanding of justice can contribute to the prevention of future conflicts (Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Perceptions of what is fair and legitimate influence individuals' behavior regarding the distribution of resources (Tyler, 2013). The reduction in identification levels, which narrows intergroup distance, may provide an opportunity to reevaluate relationships and make less biased judgments about what is fair or legitimate.

Positive Intergroup Contact

When two groups of equal status come together with a shared goal through mutual cooperation, and this interaction is supported by an authority figure, it constitutes what is referred to as positive intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1998). Positive contact is one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations. Interaction with outgroup members has been shown to alter perceptions toward them (Cook, 1985; Hewstone & Lord, 1998; Miller, 2002). Building friendly relationships with outgroup members helps break down stereotypes (Pettigrew, 1998) and reinforces positive attitudes (Wright et al., 1997). However, individuals with high levels of ingroup identification may interpret

negative experiences during intergroup contact as threatening, which can transform competition into conflict (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). However, individuals with high levels of ingroup identification may interpret negative experiences. In such cases, even when contact is negative, reducing identification may prevent the escalation of conflict. A shared goal and direct interaction can also facilitate forgiveness of the outgroup for past acts of violence (Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Lowering identification may increase both intergroup permeability and the number of shared values perceived between groups. As a result, positive contact may help reduce resistance and promote forgiveness of violent acts committed by the outgroup. Finally, meta-analyses have confirmed that intergroup contact significantly reduces prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006).

Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup dialogue is a form of joint engagement that enables individuals from different social groups to discuss contentious issues. Dialogue encourages social and cultural groups to cooperate and to accept one another along with their differences (Zuniga et al., 2014). By addressing the distinct needs of different groups, dialogue contributes to the de-escalation of conflict (Shnabel et al., 2009) and promotes tolerance (Jonas, 2009). The primary function of intergroup dialogue is to allow individuals to update their knowledge by listening to members of the other group and, in doing so, to revise their judgments and evaluations about the outgroup. For example, in conflict situations, both parties tend to feel that their social identity is under threat. For this reason, intergroup dialogue plays a role in alleviating this perception of threat. However, parties involved in asymmetric power dynamics have different social identity needs. For instance, those who hold power, namely advantaged group members, may need to preserve a positive moral image of themselves, whereas disadvantaged or underrepresented groups may seek to strengthen the image of their personality (Pratto & Glassford, 2008). Building on these differentiated identity needs, dialogue can also open space for moral-repair processes that translate identity reassurance into concrete relational change.

Moreover, intergroup dialogue provides a cognitive space to address processes such as apology, forgiveness, and confronting past experiences. When trust has been damaged by conflict, an apology from the perpetrating party can be highly effective in rebuilding it (Kim et al., 2004). Acknowledging responsibility makes the apology even more powerful (Kim et al., 2006). Accepting an apology also offers victims the opportunity to release psychological burdens (Al-Mabuk et al., 1995). Forgiveness helps individuals replace negative thoughts with positive ones (Cehajic et al., 2008). Finally, acknowledging past negative experiences can help de-escalate conflict (Gibson, 2004).

Dialogue also fosters multiculturalism and pluralism, encouraging parties to become more open toward one another. Learning about and becoming familiar with other cultures facilitates the understanding of different behavioral patterns. The experience of multicultural dialogue allows participants to recognize multiple interpretations of similar events. As a result, both ingroup and outgroup members develop cognitive flexibility when evaluating the other group (Pedersen, 2006).

The literature shows that outgroup members tend to be trusted less (Foddy et al., 2009). Reducing the level of ingroup identification makes it easier to rebuild mutual trust between groups. If the perpetrating party does not apologize after committing acts of violence, the belief in a peaceful future may be undermined (Tomlinson et al., 2004). A lower level of identification may increase the likelihood that perpetrators will offer an apology, which can in turn contribute to the resolution of the conflict. These dynamics clarify why reducing identification can increase the perceived legitimacy and feasibility of dialogue-based resolution.

Negotiation and Mediation

As high identification elevates perceived outgroup threat and zero-sum appraisals, negotiation is less viable unless identity threat is first attenuated. In situations where cultural or societal factors hinder negotiation, mediators and negotiators may take on a central role. Pruitt (2011) defines negotiation as a form of communication used to reach an agreement in order to reduce conflict. Mediation, on the other hand, is an extended form of negotiation that involves third-party participation in the process. Zartman (1996) argues that in order for negotiation to occur, a communication bridge must be established between the groups and certain non-conflictual preconditions must be accepted. Mediators contribute to the reduction of conflict by facilitating intergroup negotiations. Mediation is particularly common in the Middle East. For example, Kelman (1992) trained high-level country representatives and scholars in mediation and enabled them to take on mediating roles in local conflicts. As previously mentioned, high levels of identification reinforce negative views toward the outgroup. Therefore, reducing ingroup identification may weaken such negative attitudes. As a result, lowering the level of identification can strengthen positive attitudes toward negotiation.

Recategorization and Decategorization

The final strategy for reducing intergroup conflict involves recategorization and decategorization. hese strategies directly target the mechanisms above by lowering ingroup prototypicality, increasing recognition of outgroup heterogeneity, and foregrounding shared values. These strategies also help weaken perceptions of intergroup differentiation. They are also closely linked to positive intergroup contact (see Pettigrew, 1998). Recategorization refers to the process by which individuals reclassify their social identity and begin to perceive themselves as members of the other group (Gaertner et al., 1993). When conflicting groups reframe themselves within a shared superordinate identity, intergroup prejudice (Crisp et al., 2003) and conflict (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014) tend to decrease. Reducing ingroup identification also means diminishing the dominance of group identity. When social identity occupies a smaller space within the individual self, it becomes easier for individuals to adopt alternative categorization strategies.

How Would a Sample Model Work?

Based on the theoretical account and evidence reviewed above, we propose a structured, stepwise pre-intervention model for reducing intergroup conflict in settings marked by asymmetric power and representational inequalities. This model includes three sequential modules: (1) reducing perceived ingroup prototypicality, (2) reducing perceived outgroup homogeneity, and (3) foregrounding cross-group value overlap. The sequencing and operationalization are original to this article; individual elements are adapted from prior literatures on contact, dialogue, recategorization, and moral repair. Below we outline the modules, specify session activities and deliverables, and state the intended mechanism of change for each.

In other words, according to the definitions of group and rooted conflict, the first question regarding the reduction of identification is how to motivate groups to participate in negotiations. This section addresses that question and then discusses how it could be implemented, using examples from existing conflict resolution strategies in the literature. Emphasizing that both groups can gain mutually is important for motivation. Listing the costs of the conflict is also considered a starting point for building motivation. Demonstrating to both sides how the conflict harms their own group and offering them attractive shared opportunities encourages them to pursue reconciliation (Pruitt, 2011; Zartman, 1977). At this stage, framing the goal as creating a better future for children can serve as an effective common

ground (Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Kelman (2004) highlights the importance of developing general moral principles to achieve peace. In this context, emphasizing that negotiation may help children learn moral values may help persuade the parties. Consistent with the framework, the model proceeds in three steps that respectively reduce perceived ingroup similarity, reduce perceived outgroup homogeneity, and foreground cross-group value overlap.

Secondly, offering incentives may increase participation. Given the characteristics of intergroup conflicts focused on in this article, it can be assumed that the parties will have different needs. For example, offering material support to disadvantaged group members in exchange for participation in negotiations may motivate them to contribute to the resolution process, especially given their inability to access a fair share of limited resources. Similarly, providing incentives that meet the needs of advantaged group members may encourage their participation as well. Rosenberg (2005), for instance, argues that identifying needs and developing appropriate plans accordingly can motivate parties to work toward conflict resolution. The reduction of identification can be implemented as follows.

Practitioners should be familiar with the group's values, norms, and traditions in order to reduce group prototypicality. The goal at this stage is to reduce the salience of features that participants believe they share with other group members. Participants share the values and thoughts of ingroup members with the practitioner. During this process, participants do not communicate with one another. After each participant states these features, the practitioner shares different characteristics reported by other group members. These steps are repeated over two sessions per day. At the end of the activity, the practitioner distributes a certificate of participation. This certificate includes feedback indicating that the participant exhibits traits different from other members. This step may reduce perceived ingroup prototypicality and weakens the assumption that 'we are all the same.'

In the second step, the same group reconvenes. Participants are asked to list the characteristics of members of the group with which they are in conflict and to indicate how much they believe they share in common with those individuals. After each participant's turn, the practitioner corrects any misinformation or biased cognitive processes related to the outgroup. The focus in this session is on the diversity of outgroup members. In the second session, participants engage in a discussion (for example, about food culture), moderated by the practitioner. The practitioner encourages everyone to speak and records statements that suggest the outgroup is homogeneous. After the discussion, these assumptions are refuted. This process continues until the second session concludes. Once the activity is completed, participants are again given a certificate of participation, which includes feedback emphasizing the diversity of the outgroup. This helps weaken the perception that the outgroup is homogeneous. This step may reduce perceived outgroup homogeneity and challenges stereotype-consistent generalization.

The group comes together again for the third step. In the first session, participants explain the values and characteristics that hold their group together. Then they are asked to conduct a similar evaluation for the outgroup. In the second session, participants are encouraged to discuss to what extent these values and characteristics overlap between the groups. The practitioner takes note of the values participants attribute to the ingroup and the outgroup, as well as comments that imply differences or similarities between them. On the second day, the practitioner presents these ingroup and outgroup values, similarities, and differences as themes. Participants are then informed that, although the two groups are perceived as different, ingroup values are also embraced by outgroup members. For example, they might be told that both groups share a traditional food or dance. At this stage, visual materials can be used. Using images from daily life makes the message more impactful. This step may foreground shared values, shrinking the symbolic boundary between 'us' and 'them.

In the second session, participants are informed that some elements they believed to be exclusive to the outgroup are actually also common in the ingroup. A pre-recorded visual material showing similarities between the two groups is then presented. After this, participants are asked to list the features that distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup. The practitioner then asks ingroup members to provide examples that challenge and disprove the stereotypical ideas expressed by other participants about the outgroup. Information coming from ingroup members has a stronger impact on behavior change (Brewer, 2011). At the end of the day, the practitioner gives another certificate containing feedback that highlights similarities between the ingroup and the outgroup. It can be argued that messages related to conflict resolution strategies may be more easily internalized in cognitive schemas through such an activity, and that individuals would show less resistance to these messages as a result. In sum, the three modules constitute an author-proposed pre-intervention model intended for small-group delivery that prepares the ground for, and increases the effectiveness of, subsequent resolution strategies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical pre-model proposed here operates as a bottom-up process, as it is designed for small groups. Its aim is to provide individuals with a space to share experiences with other ingroup members from their own communities. These individuals can then become local collaborators. Staub and Pearlman (2001) note that local collaborators can contribute to the conflict resolution process. During periods of low participation, in addition to the motivation strategies discussed above, reminding individuals of their past positive experiences with outgroup members may help increase their motivation (see Mallet & Wilson, 2010).

As ingroup identification among advantaged group members is reduced, perceptions that (a) ingroup members are uniquely distinct, (b) the outgroup is homogeneous, and (c) ingroup and outgroup members differ significantly in terms of shared values are also likely to diminish. Consequently, individuals' tendency to favor their own group in social comparisons may also decrease. This shift can enhance the positive effects of several conflict resolution strategies, including (1) social justice, (2) positive intergroup contact, (3) constructive intergroup dialogue, (4) mediation and negotiation, and (5) recategorization and decategorization. This suggests that focusing on reducing ingroup identification as an a priori intervention may be a useful approach to support the effectiveness of intergroup conflict resolution efforts.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

This study is a review study, and no data was collected from any participants. Therefore, ethics committee approval and consent are not required for this study.

Author Contributions

The author solely conducted the review and wrote the manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Notes

[i] The term advantaged group is used to denote the party that, in the focal domain, is granted greater access to and control over material resources, formal political representation, coercive capacity, and agenda setting in public discourse. The term disadvantaged group is used to denote the party with systematically lower access on these dimensions. These labels are to be understood as relational and context specific rather than as essential traits of fixed categories.