

## Research article

# A new American dilemma? The effect of ethnic identification and public service on the national inclusion of ethnic minorities

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### Abstract

*Three experiments integrate research from political science and social psychology to examine the consequences of two competing visions of American national identity. American identity has been defined not only in terms of shared ethnocultural heritage originating in Europe (the ethnocultural prototype) but also in terms of shared commitment to civic service (the civic responsibility prototype). Three experiments tested the consequence of highlighting each of these national prototypes on perceivers' inclusion of ethnic minorities as legitimately American. Experiments 1–3 showed that highlighting ethnic minorities' allegiance to their ethnic subgroup (versus downplaying it) challenges the ethnocultural prototype and makes ethnic minorities appear less American. Process data showed that this effect was mediated by increased threats to American distinctiveness. By contrast, emphasizing ethnic minorities' national service (versus local community service) highlights ethnic minorities' fit with the civic responsibility prototype and makes ethnic minorities appear more American (Experiments 2–3). Process data showed that this effect was mediated by enhanced American distinctiveness. Collectively, these experiments highlight how inclusion of ethnic minorities in the nation can wax and wane depending on which definition of national character is salient in the social context. Copyright © 2012 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

For decades, political scientists have examined the ways in which people define the central character of their nation. In some countries, national character is defined by shared ethnic, religious, or linguistic heritage, whereas in other countries, it is defined by shared commitment to core ideals, values, and standards (Hahn, Judd, & Park, 2010; Schildkraut, 2007; Smith, 1988, 2001). For example, in contrasting the national character of Germany and France, Brubaker (1992) argued that nationality in Germany has been traditionally based on shared ethnic descent, whereas nationality in France has been built upon shared values and political ideals. Whereas some countries possess only one salient definition of national character, others possess multiple definitions of their nationality (e.g., Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009; Pehrson, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009; Smith, 2001; Wakefield et al., 2011). One example of a nation with multiple definitions of nationality is the USA, which is sometimes defined in terms of a shared commitment to specific ideals and public service, whereas at other times, in terms of shared ethnocultural heritage originating in Europe. We predict that these competing visions of the nation are likely to have very different effects on how Americans view ethnic minorities within their country.

Today, Americans face a dilemma about how to define their national group: Should American identity be strictly defined by citizens' shared commitment to civic engagement or by

shared ethnic culture rooted in Anglo-European traditions? Defining American character in terms of the former vision is likely to expand the boundaries of who is construed as legitimately American because many individuals can fulfill civic responsibilities and engage in public service. In contrast, defining American character in terms of the latter vision is likely to restrict the boundaries of who belongs because only a subset of individuals can lay claim to European heritage. These competing visions of American identity represent two very different *prototypes* of the USA. This contemporary dilemma in the USA about how to define one's national character is reminiscent of an older 20th century dilemma described in Gunnar Myrdal's (1944) famous book, *An American Dilemma*, which spoke about the psychological tension between White-Americans' commitment to democratic principles and their simultaneous support for the subjugation of ethnic minorities.

The idea that social groups have defining characters or prototypes was proposed many years ago by social identity and self-categorization theories that used this term to describe the central attributes that characterize the most representative members of a group (Abrams, Hogg, & Marques, 2005; Hogg, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Building on the concept of group-based prototypes, we ask the question—What happens when subgroups (such as ethnic groups)

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Portions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology at San Antonio in January 2011 and at the Annual Meeting for the International Society of Political Psychology at San Francisco, CA, in July 2010.

exemplify or violate specific prototypes of the superordinate group (such as a nation)? Are subgroups included versus excluded depending on which prototype of the nation is made salient? What psychological processes underlie the systematic expansion versus contraction of the national group? We examine these questions in the context of American nationality to test how two very different prototypes of the national group influence the inclusion of ethnic minorities as legitimate citizens of the USA.

## WHO IS AMERICAN? MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES OF AMERICAN IDENTITY

The USA was founded as a land of immigrants that provided freedom and opportunity to individuals who were willing to subscribe to core American values (e.g., individualism, liberty, democracy, egalitarianism, and industriousness), fulfill civic responsibilities, and serve the public good (Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997, 2001). However, starting in the late 1800s with increased waves of immigrants from different parts of Europe, a different vision of American identity began to emerge involving ethnocultural sentiments under which only Anglo-Protestants were believed to possess the “essence” of American character (Citrin, Haas, Muste, & Reingold, 1994; Citrin et al., 1990; Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1988, 1997, 2001).

Today, political scientists argue for at least three distinct national prototypes of the USA (Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Dagger, 1997; Held, 1996; Huntington, 1981, 2004; Mirel, 2002; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997; also see Dovidio, Gluszek, John, Dittmann, & Lagunes, 2010; Pehrson, Brown et al., 2009; Pehrson, Vignoles et al., 2009). First, as mentioned earlier, the *nativist ethnocultural* view calls for an ethnic definition of nationality whereby “true” Americans are citizens who have European-Christian roots (Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997). Although this prototype was originally Anglo-Protestant in nature a century ago, by the mid 20th century, it had broadened to include most Judeo-Christians of European heritage (Hartmann, Zhang, & Wischstadt, 2005; Warner, 1993). In its extreme form, the ethnocultural prototype implies that citizens who do not share European cultural origin can never gain the status of being authentically American. In its milder form, it implies that ethnic minorities must assimilate to European cultural norms in order to fit in (i.e., speak English only, embrace Judeo-Christian religious and cultural traditions, etc.; Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Citrin, Sears, Muste, & Wong, 2001; Huntington, 2004; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997). Second, the *civic responsibility* prototype (often called *civic republicanism*) emphasizes that a core characteristic of Americans is that they embrace service to their nation and community. By this account, true Americans are politically conscious citizens who work for the betterment of American civil society (Dagger, 1997; Held, 1996; Mirel, 2002; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997). Third, the *liberalism* prototype emphasizes individual rights and reverence to core American values such as individual freedom, privacy, equality, and industriousness

(Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Mirel, 2002; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997).

National surveys and laboratory experiments reveal that Americans often endorse several of these national prototypes simultaneously. For example, nationally representative surveys show that Americans’ conceptualization of their nationality includes a mixture of a commitment to public service (e.g., the conviction that one must work for the betterment of the community), nativist ethnocultural sentiments (e.g., the conviction that citizens must shed their “foreign-ways” and assimilate to European cultural practices, speak only English, or become Christian), and a subscription to core American values (e.g., the conviction that one must pursue success through hard work and treat people fairly; Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Schildkraut, 2007). Laboratory studies have also found that although Americans perceive public service and embracing core values as defining aspects of what it means to be American, they implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) attribute American identity more easily to Whites than Blacks, Latinos, and Asians, thereby tacitly revealing an ethnocultural vision of who is American (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Devos, Gavin, & Quintana, 2010; Dovidio, Gluszek et al., 2010; Tsai, Mortensen, Wong, & Hess, 2002; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010).

In the current research, we focus on two of the aforementioned prototypes and examine how they shape the inclusion versus exclusion of various ethnic groups within the superordinate nation.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we ask, how do the *civic responsibility* prototype and the *ethnocultural* prototype affect perceivers’ construals of ethnic minority groups as legitimately American?

## THE LINK BETWEEN GROUP PROTOTYPES AND POSITIVE DISTINCTIVENESS

According to social identity and self-categorization theories (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner & Oakes, 1989; Turner et al., 1987), people’s membership in social groups are essential to their self-concept. People are, therefore, motivated to view their ingroup as unique and *positively distinct* relative to other social groups (Abrams et al., 2005; Brewer, 1991; Brown, 2000; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Hogg, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). One way in which group members maintain an image of their ingroup as unique and distinctive is by upholding the ingroup prototype, emphasizing the distinctiveness of the ingroup from various outgroups, and accentuating intergroup boundaries (Abrams et al., 2005; Hogg, 1993, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Reid & Hogg, 2005; Turner & Oakes, 1989; Turner et al., 1987).

Consistent with this idea, studies show that people favor group members who exemplify the ingroup prototype over

<sup>1</sup>Because our primary goal was to manipulate national prototypes that would directly influence inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities in the national group, we selected the two prototypes that we thought would have the strongest effect on national inclusion. Although liberalism is a core dimension of American identity, we did not think manipulating ethnic groups’ fit or lack thereof with this dimension would have the strongest effect on inclusion/exclusion in our studies.

others who do not fit the prototype as well. Prototypical ingroup members are perceived to be more influential and effective leaders than non-prototypical members (Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; Hogg & Van Knippenberg, 2003). Prototypical members are also presumed to be more loyal to the ingroup and, as a result, preferentially hired to protect the ingroup's safety compared with equally qualified non-prototypical members (e.g., Hogg & Van Knippenberg, 2003; Yogeewaran & Dasgupta, 2010). Furthermore, people feel justified in excluding non-prototypical members from a superordinate group compared with prototypical members (e.g., Wenzel, 2001). Clearly, prototypical group members benefit from their central status in the group, whereas non-prototypical members are marginalized.

### How Distinctiveness Threat Influences Social Judgment

Given the importance of prototypes and the motivation to maintain positive distinctiveness, not surprisingly, threats to ingroup distinctiveness (i) accentuate intergroup differentiation (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten et al., 1997, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; also see Spears, Jetten, & Scheepers, 2002), (ii) enhance perceptions of ingroup homogeneity (Simon & Brown, 1987; Simon & Pettigrew, 1990; Wilson & Hugenberg, 2010), (iii) motivate individuals to allocate more resources to ingroups over outgroups (e.g., Diehl, 1988; Moghaddam & Stringer, 1988), and (iv) increase ingroup favoritism (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten et al., 1997, 1998; Roccas & Schwartz, 1993; Warner, Hornsey, & Jetten, 2007).<sup>2</sup> Additionally, research focusing on within-group dynamics has also found that individuals who deviate from the norms, values, and practices of their ingroup are harshly penalized by fellow members, presumably for threatening the positive distinctiveness of the ingroup (see black sheep effect; Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988).

Building on the aforementioned past work, we sought to examine how ethnic subgroups within a superordinate category are treated if their members deviate from the norms, values, and practices (i.e., the prototype) of the superordinate group. Do subgroups (e.g., ethnic groups) who do not fit the prototype of a superordinate group (e.g., a nation) threaten the positive distinctiveness of the superordinate group? Does this, in turn, motivate the exclusion of that subgroup as a way of regaining ingroup uniqueness?

### How Distinctiveness Enhancement Influences Social Judgment

A corollary of distinctiveness threat—that is, *distinctiveness enhancement*—is also likely to influence whether perceivers

<sup>2</sup>Although some studies show that low levels of distinctiveness between one's ingroup and related outgroups can *increase* intergroup bias (e.g., Diehl, 1988; Moghaddam & Stringer, 1988; Roccas & Schwartz, 1993), other studies have shown that low levels of intergroup distinctiveness can also *decrease* intergroup bias (e.g. Grant, 1993; Henderson-King, Henderson-King, Zhermer, Posokhova, & Chiker, 1997; Jetten et al., 1998). However, of particular importance in the current work, a meta-analysis by Jetten et al. (2004) suggests that when a superordinate category is made salient, people are more likely to show bias toward a subgroup that is too distinct from one's own subgroup; this bias disappears when both subgroups within the superordinate group appear relatively similar to one another.

include or exclude subgroups subsumed within a larger superordinate group. Group members may be motivated to include subgroups that highlight the distinctiveness of their superordinate ingroup (distinctiveness enhancement). Although distinctiveness threat has received research attention, we could not find any empirical work articulating and testing the effect of distinctiveness enhancement on perceptions of fellow ingroup members. In the current research, we sought to examine how ethnic minority groups within a superordinate nation are treated if they promote a specific prototype of the superordinate nation. Do ethnic minority groups that exemplify a prototype of the superordinate nation enhance positive distinctiveness of the nation? Does this, in turn, motivate inclusion of that ethnic group with the superordinate nation?

## GOALS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

### The Ethnocultural Prototype, Distinctiveness Threat, and Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities

The first goal of the current research was to examine the role of *distinctiveness threat* on perception of who is authentically American. We predict that ethnic minorities who identify with their ethnic roots would arouse distinctiveness threat in the eyes of White-American perceivers because they would be seen as diluting the ethnocultural prototype of the USA. Distinctiveness threat, in turn, is predicted to exacerbate exclusion of the ethnic minority group from being seen as true Americans.

Indirect support for our prediction comes from Kaiser and Pratt-Hyatt (2009) who found that White-Americans express greater prejudice toward ethnic minorities who are strongly, as opposed to weakly, identified with their ethnic group. Similarly, White students are significantly more likely to help a Black student who identifies as a university student only (de-emphasizing his racial identity) rather than when he identifies as a Black person (emphasizing his racial identity) or as a Black student (emphasizing both racial and student identities; Dovidio, Gaertner, Shnabel, Saguy, & Johnson, 2010). These findings suggest that White-Americans perceive individuals who emphasize their ethnic identity more negatively than others who downplay their ethnicity.

The present research complements and extends past work in two ways. First, whereas past research demonstrates how an individual's ethnic identity influences perceivers' evaluation of him or her, we investigated whether one individual's ethnic identity colors perceivers' opinion of the entire ethnic group; thus, our focus was on perceivers' tendency to generalize from the individual member to the entire ethnic group. Second, we tested whether highlighting (rather than downplaying) minority ethnic identity increases perceived threats to national distinctiveness, and if this in turn serves as the psychological process that increases subsequent rejection of minority groups as not legitimately American.

### The Civic Responsibility Prototype, Distinctiveness Enhancement, and Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities

An equally important goal of the present research was to examine whether *distinctiveness enhancement* promotes the national

inclusion of ethnic minorities as legitimately American. We predicted that ethnic minorities are most likely to be included as American if they are seen as exemplifying the alternative civic responsibility prototype. Public service is one characteristic that drives perceptions of American exceptionalism defined as a nation with a unique character that is distinct from other countries (Mirel, 2002; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007). Ethnic minority individuals who live up to this ideal are likely to enhance the positive distinctiveness of America, and as such, their ethnic groups are likely to be especially included in the national group.

At face value, promoting national inclusion by using the civic responsibility prototype shares some resemblance to the common ingroup identity model (CIIM; Dovidio, Gaertner, Hodson, Houlette, & Johnson, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Research on the CIIM has shown that encouraging group members to recategorize themselves into one superordinate group can expand group boundaries and reduce bias against individuals who were previously considered outgroup members (Dovidio et al., 2005; Dovidio et al., 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993). Applying the CIIM to our research, one might imagine that encouraging Whites to focus on their common national identity with ethnic minorities would be enough to enhance their inclusion as American. However, on the basis of other research suggesting that Whites have doubts about the national loyalty of ethnic minorities (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010), we predict that ethnic minorities will only be seen as truly American if they highlight their national allegiance by specifically engaging in *national service* rather than any type of local community service. Only high impact national service on the part of ethnic minority individuals will highlight the distinctiveness of American character, which in turn will motivate White-Americans to embrace these individuals and their entire ethnic group as legitimately American.

## Overview of Experiments

Three experiments using varied ethnic groups examined how exposure to target individuals who either exemplified or violated American national prototypes influenced the degree to which their entire ethnic group was construed as American. We examined national inclusion both implicitly and explicitly across these studies in hopes of capturing converging evidence across multiple measures. We also examined the underlying processes motivating national inclusion via distinctiveness threat and enhancement.

### EXPERIMENT 1

Participants were exposed to biographies of six Americans, all of whom were engaged in high impact professional work that benefited the nation (this was held constant across all targets). We manipulated the race of targets (White-American or Asian-American) and their ethnic identification (they were strongly ethnically identified or ethnic identification was not mentioned). Target individuals in all four conditions fit the civic responsibility prototype, but only those in the White target conditions fit the ethnocultural prototype. In addition to these 4 conditions,

we also included a control condition that served as a baseline without any person relevant information. Thus, the experimental design was a  $2 \times 2 + 1$  between-subjects factorial. After reading the descriptions, participants completed implicit measures that assessed the degree to which they perceived Asian relative to White ethnic groups as authentically American.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 252 Whites (169 females and 83 males) from Massachusetts participated in the experiment for course credit. All participants were U.S. citizens between the ages 18 and 33 years ( $M = 20.80$  years).

### Manipulation of Target Individuals' Race and Ethnic Identification

We created biographies of six highly accomplished White-Americans and Asian-Americans whose professional work contributed to the betterment of the USA and promoted the civic responsibility prototype. Asian and White targets were matched by profession and public stature. Participants read biographies for all six of these target individuals. They included scientists, athletes, government officials, military personnel, and journalists. In all biographies, we mentioned both the ethnicity and nationality of these targets.

Targets' ethnic identification was manipulated by including a few sentences that emphasized their strong identification with their ethnic heritage or these sentences were replaced with generic information that made no reference to ethnic identification. For example, in the strong ethnic identification condition, two race-matched biographies stated, "Some of his fondest childhood memories come from dinner conversations with his parents and siblings in Japanese [German]. As a child, his parents always encouraged him to speak Japanese [German] as a way of preserving his Japanese [German] heritage. Eric [Peter] believes that this emphasis has helped him maintain a connection to his ethnic heritage."

In the conditions where no ethnic identification information was provided, the aforementioned language became "Some of his fondest childhood memories come from dinner conversations with his parents and siblings. As a child, his parents always encouraged him to grow his vocabulary and communicate effectively. Eric [Peter] believes that this emphasis has helped him in his professional career." All biographies emphasized that target individuals were Americans of either Asian (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) or European (Irish, German, British, and Norwegian) descent. In the control condition, participants read six descriptions of similar length about American national parks and nature reserves (Yellowstone National Park, Arches National Park, etc.). These descriptions made no reference to ethnic groups.

### Measures

*Implicit Construal of Asians versus Whites as American.* An Implicit Association Test (IAT) was used to measure the relative strength with which White versus Asian-Americans were

associated with American nationality, using response latency as an indirect indicator of psychological inclusion as American (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). This IAT was modeled after Devos and Banaji (2005) and Yogeeswaran and Dasgupta (2010). Six East-Asian faces and six White faces were used to represent the racial groups (three males and three females within each group). Six American symbols (e.g., American flag) and six foreign symbols (e.g., Egyptian pyramids) were used to represent nationality. These images were all taken from previous research (Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010). If participants implicitly view Whites more than Asians as American, they should be significantly faster to group together White faces and American symbols and also group together Asian faces and foreign symbols (White + American | Asian + Foreign) compared with the opposite combinations (White + Foreign | Asian + American). Thus, the IAT served as a relative measure of inclusion in the superordinate national group.

**Manipulation Checks.** To ensure that the ethnic identification manipulation worked, participants were asked two questions about each individual they read about: (i) "To what extent do you think this individual identifies with his or her ethnic group?" and (ii) "To what extent do you think this individual is loyal to his or her ethnic group?" Similarly, to ensure that participants perceived target individuals as exemplifying the civic responsibility prototype equally regardless of race, they were asked two questions: (i) "To what extent do you think this individual works for the betterment of the country?" and (ii) "To what extent do you think this individual contributes to the country?" Participants responded to all questions on 7-point scales anchored by 1 (*Not at all*) and 7 (*Very Much*).

### Procedure

Participants were recruited under the guise of a "memory and hand-eye coordination study." Participants in the four experimental conditions saw pictures and biographies of either Asian-Americans or White-Americans whose ethnic identification was made salient or not. Participants in the control condition read descriptions of nature reserves. Next, all participants completed an IAT assessing the degree to which they implicitly construed Whites versus Asians as American. Finally, they completed the manipulation checks, a demographic measure, after which they were debriefed.

## Results

### Manipulation Checks

A 2 (Race of Target: Asian versus White)  $\times$  2 (Ethnic Identification: Strong identification versus No information) analysis of variance (ANOVA) using perceived ethnic identification as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect of Ethnic Identification such that participants exposed to individuals who were strongly identified with their ethnic group did in fact perceive them as being more ethnically identified ( $M=5.74$ ) than those exposed to identical individuals whose ethnic identification was downplayed ( $M=4.59$ ),  $F(1, 182)=60.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.27$ . This effect was not moderated by Race of Target,  $F(1, 182)=2.40$ ,  $p=.12$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.01$ .

Thus, participants identified both White and Asian targets as more ethnically identified in the strong identification condition compared with the no information condition.

Another ANOVA using perceived national service as the dependent variable showed that target individuals of both races were seen as equally engaged in national service ( $M=6.00$  for Asian-Americans;  $M=6.07$  for White-Americans),  $F < 1$ . Moreover, the interaction between Race of Target  $\times$  Ethnic Identification was also non-significant, indicating that all target individuals, regardless of their race or ethnic identification, were seen as equally engaged in national service,  $F(1, 182)=1.69$ ,  $p=.20$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.01$ .

### Implicit Construal of Asians versus Whites as American

Using the algorithm proposed by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003), we calculated the IAT  $D$  score to provide an index of the strength of association between American nationality and White versus Asian ethnicity such that larger scores would indicate greater implicit exclusion of Asians relative to Whites.

A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using IAT  $D$  scores as the dependent variable revealed a significant 2-way interaction between Race of Target  $\times$  Ethnic Identification,  $F(1, 195)=3.93$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.02$  (Figure 1). Simple effects analyses conducted on Asians and Whites separately revealed that participants exposed to Asian-Americans whose ethnic identification was downplayed were *less* likely to exclude this ethnic group from the national category (IAT  $D=0.80$ ;  $SD=0.39$ ) compared with others exposed to identical individuals who were strongly identified with their ethnicity (IAT  $D=1.00$ ;  $SD=0.47$ ),  $t(95)=-2.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d=0.46$ . In contrast, implicit construals of Whites as American did not change regardless of whether White targets were strongly ethnically identified (IAT  $D=1.02$ ;  $SD=0.39$ ) versus when no ethnic identification information was provided (IAT  $D=1.06$ ;  $SD=0.44$ ),  $t < 1$ . In both cases, participants were equally fast at associating White with American.

The four experimental conditions were also compared with the baseline control condition (nature reserves). Only one condition was significantly different from the baseline control: Asian-Americans whose ethnic identification was downplayed significantly reduced national exclusion (IAT  $D=0.80$ ;

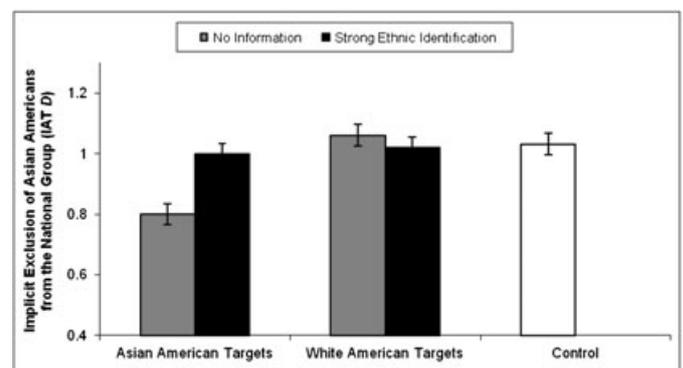


Figure 1. Effect of Target Race and Ethnic Identification on the implicit national exclusion of Asian-Americans from the national group

$SD=0.39$ ) compared with the control condition (IAT  $D=1.03$ ;  $SD=0.43$ ),  $t(108)=2.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d=0.56$ . None of the other three conditions were different from the control ( $ps > .70$ ).

## Discussion

Experiment 1 provided initial evidence suggesting that ethnic minorities were perceived as more American when their ethnic identity was downplayed compared to when they were strongly identified with their ethnic group. This psychological burden did not affect White ethnics—they were seen as equally American regardless of whether they appeared strongly identified with their European ancestral roots or unidentified with it. These data suggest that because of the ethnocultural prototype of American nationality, one way for Asian-Americans to be viewed as more authentically American is if their life stories downplay ethnic identity so that their lack-of-fit in relation to the ethnocultural prototype is minimized. Importantly, even though these Asian-Americans exemplified the civic responsibility prototype, showing attachment to their ethnic group seemed to erase the benefit of national service. However, White-Americans did not bear the same burden: They were free to identify with their ethnic roots or not without sacrificing their national inclusion.

Although Experiment 1 is promising, an important interpretational ambiguity remains. Because all ethnic minorities portrayed in the biographies were involved in serving the national good, it is unclear if their ethnic group were construed as more American in the condition where no ethnic identification information was provided because appearing detached from their ethnicity reduced their lack-of-fit to the ethnocultural prototype, or because their stellar national service increased their fit to the civic responsibility prototype, or both. This question was addressed in the next experiment.

## EXPERIMENT 2

Experiment 2 was driven by four goals. First, we manipulated the degree to which target individuals fulfilled the civic responsibility prototype—that is, their professional work was framed as serving the good of the local community versus serving the good of the nation as a whole. Local service involved serving one's workplace, city, or state (i.e., service was not directed at one's ethnic group in particular). This manipulation allowed us to test whether national inclusion of ethnic minorities depends on *any* public service that exemplifies civic responsibility or whether ethnic minorities have to overcome doubts about their national allegiance by *specifically* engaging in work that benefits the nation in order to exemplify the civic responsibility prototype. Second, we orthogonally manipulated target individuals' ethnic identification (i.e., targets were framed as strongly identified with their ethnic group, or ethnic identification was not mentioned) in order to investigate the independent effect of each national prototype—ethnocultural prototype versus civic responsibility prototype—on the construal of ethnic minorities as American. Third, we extended beyond implicit construals of nationality to also measure whether such sentiments are expressed explicitly. On the

basis of recent research suggesting that Asians and Hispanics are both explicitly and implicitly perceived as less American than Whites (e.g., Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Devos & Banaji, 2005; Devos et al., 2010; Dovidio, Gluszek et al., 2010), we expected both implicit and explicit measures to yield similar results. Finally, Experiment 2 focused on a different ethnic minority group—Hispanic-Americans—to ensure the generalizability of the findings of Experiment 1 to other ethnic minority groups. We did not use a White-American comparison group because Experiment 1 had established that manipulating construals of White individuals did not change how American this group was perceived to be.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 208 Whites (152 females and 56 males) from Massachusetts participated in exchange for course credit. All participants were U.S. citizens between the ages 18 and 28 years ( $M=19.90$  years).

### Manipulation of Target Individuals' Ethnic Identification and Public Service

Similar to Experiment 1, targets were presented as strongly ethnically identified or no ethnic identification information was provided. In addition, we manipulated the type of public service portrayed in the biographies. Target individuals' professional work was framed as benefiting the nation versus the local community. The national service condition was similar to Experiment 1. In the local service condition, we modified the same biographies slightly so that targets' work was framed as benefiting their workplace, neighborhood, city, or state (not nation). For example, in the national service condition, one biography stated, "Luis Alvarez is a Hispanic-American physicist whose pioneering work greatly assisted in the creation of energy efficient technologies bringing glory to American scientists from around the world." In the local service condition, the same description was changed as follows: "Luis Alvarez is a Hispanic-American physicist whose pioneering work greatly assisted in the creation of energy efficient technologies bringing glory to scientists at his university."

In total, there were four types of biographies that orthogonally manipulated targets' ethnic identification (strong ethnic identity versus no information) and public service (national versus local service) plus a baseline control condition that exposed participants to descriptions of American nature reserves. In the experimental conditions, we used biographies of six Hispanic-American individuals who were scientists, government officials, journalists, athletes, or military officers (similar to Experiment 1). All biographies explicitly stated that these individuals were Americans of Hispanic descent.

### Measures

*Implicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American.* An IAT similar to the one used in Experiment 1 assessed the relative strength of association between American nationality and Hispanic versus White ethnicity.

*Explicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American.* Participants completed five self-report items assessing the extent to which they believed Hispanics and Whites were authentically American; these items were adapted from Devos and Banaji (2005). Specifically, they indicated the extent to which they perceived each group to (i) be patriotic, (ii) feel loyal to the USA, (iii) respect America's political institutions and laws, (iv) defend the USA when criticized, and (v) be American. All items were rated on a scale of 1 (*Not at all*) to 7 (*Extremely*).

*Manipulation Check.* Similar to Experiment 1, participants completed two sets of measures assessing the extent to which they perceived target individuals as ethnically identified (two items) and working for the betterment of the country (two items).

### Procedure

Similar to Experiment 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of five conditions. After reading the biographies of Hispanic-American individuals (in the experimental conditions) or reading about nature reserves (in the control condition), all participants completed implicit and explicit measures (counter-balanced) assessing the degree to which they viewed Hispanics and Whites as American. This was followed by manipulation checks and a demographic measure, after which participants were debriefed.

## Results

### Manipulation Check

A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using perceived ethnic identity as the dependent variable revealed that participants who saw individuals framed as strongly ethnically identified did in fact perceive them to be more identified with their ethnic group ( $M=5.58$ ) than others who saw individuals whose ethnic identification was not mentioned ( $M=4.63$ ),  $F(1, 144)=29.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.17$ . This effect was not moderated by Type of Civic Responsibility,  $F < 1$ .

A second  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using national service as the dependent measure revealed that Hispanic targets who engaged in national service were in fact perceived as working for the betterment of the country more ( $M=6.03$ ) than their counterparts engaged in local community service ( $M=5.12$ ),  $F(1, 144)=35.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.20$ . This effect was not moderated by Ethnic Identification,  $F < 1$ .

### Implicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American

Similar to Experiment 1, an IAT score was calculated to capture the degree to which participants implicitly construed Hispanics versus Whites as American such that larger IAT  $D$  scores indicated greater exclusion of Hispanics from the national group (i.e., construing Hispanics as less American). A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using IAT  $D$  scores as the dependent variable revealed two significant main effects for Type of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification, but no interaction effect,  $F < 1$  (Figure 2, panel A). Specifically, exposure to Hispanics engaged in national service significantly reduced

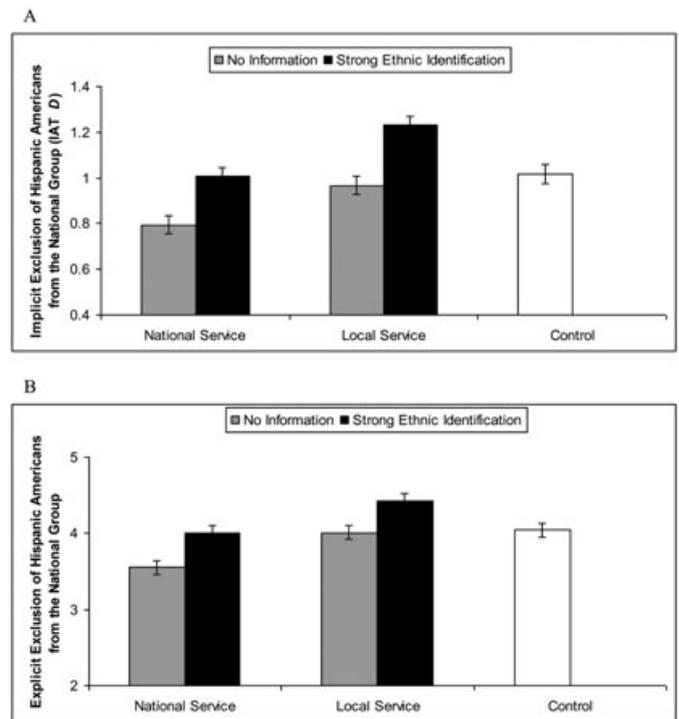


Figure 2. (A) Effect of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification on the implicit national exclusion of Hispanic-Americans from the national group. (B) Effect of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification on the explicit national exclusion of Hispanic-Americans from the national group

national exclusion of this ethnic group (IAT  $D=0.90$ ;  $SD=0.39$ ) compared with identical individuals engaged in local service (IAT  $D=1.11$ ;  $SD=0.44$ ),  $F(1, 159)=9.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.06$ . Moreover, exposure to ethnically identified Hispanics significantly exacerbated national exclusion of this group (IAT  $D=1.13$ ;  $SD=0.45$ ) relative to identical individuals whose ethnic identification was not made salient (IAT  $D=0.88$ ;  $SD=0.37$ ),  $F(1, 159)=13.95$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2_p=.08$ .

Finally, we compared IAT  $D$  scores in each of the four experimental conditions with the baseline control condition. Replicating Experiment 1, results confirmed that seeing Hispanic targets whose ethnic identity was downplayed and whose work served the nation significantly attenuated exclusion of Hispanics (IAT  $D=0.79$ ;  $SD=0.30$ ) relative to the control condition (IAT  $D=1.02$ ;  $SD=0.45$ ),  $t(83)=2.64$ ,  $p=.01$ ,  $d=0.60$ . In contrast, seeing Hispanic targets who strongly identified with their ethnicity and whose work served the local community significantly exacerbated exclusion of Hispanics (IAT  $D=1.23$ ;  $SD=0.43$ ) compared with the control condition (IAT  $D=1.02$ ;  $SD=0.45$ ),  $t(92)=-2.36$ ,  $p=.02$ ,  $d=0.48$ . The other two experimental conditions were not different from the control condition ( $ps > .60$ ).

### Explicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American

After reverse coding items such that larger numbers would indicate greater exclusion of Hispanics, a composite was created by averaging five items representing participants' explicit beliefs about Hispanics as American ( $\alpha=.87$ ). Similar to the implicit findings, a  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA revealed two significant main effects for Type of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic

Identification, but no interaction on explicit construals,  $F < 1$  (Figure 2, panel B). The main effect of Type of Civic Responsibility revealed that participants who saw Hispanics engaged in national service reported less national exclusion of this group ( $M = 3.78$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ) relative to others who saw Hispanics engaged in local service ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ),  $F(1, 156) = 6.05$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .04$ . The main effect of Ethnic Identification showed that participants who saw ethnically identified Hispanics reported more exclusion of this group ( $M = 4.24$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ) relative to others who saw Hispanics whose ethnic identification was downplayed ( $M = 3.77$ ;  $SD = 1.18$ ),  $F(1, 156) = 6.00$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .04$ .

Finally, we compared explicit beliefs in each of the four experimental conditions with the baseline control condition. Similar to the implicit findings, results confirmed that seeing Hispanic targets whose ethnic identity was downplayed and whose work benefited the nation marginally attenuated explicit national exclusion of Hispanics ( $M = 3.55$ ;  $SD = 1.26$ ) compared with the control condition ( $M = 4.04$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ),  $t(81) = 1.88$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $d = 0.41$ . In contrast, seeing Hispanic targets who identified with their ethnicity and whose work served the local community marginally exacerbated explicit national exclusion ( $M = 4.43$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ) compared with the control condition ( $M = 4.04$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ),  $t(91) = -1.71$ ,  $p = .09$ ,  $d = 0.36$ . The other two conditions were not different from the control condition ( $ps > .80$ ).

A similar composite score was created to represent participants' explicit beliefs about Whites as American ( $\alpha = .82$ ) such that larger numbers indicated greater exclusion of Whites from the national fold. This was used as a dependent variable in an ANOVA using Ethnic Identification x Type of Civic Responsibility as independent variables. Results revealed that varying Hispanic targets' ethnic identity and civic responsibility had no bearing on the degree to which Whites were seen as American (all  $F_s < 1$ ).

## Discussion

Experiment 2 highlights a dilemma faced by ethnic minorities who wish to be recognized as authentically American by the majority group. In order for them to be seen as American, they need to distance themselves from their ethnic roots. Appearing "too ethnic" highlights their deviance from the ethnocultural prototype, making them appear less American in the eyes of the majority group. Second, they need to emphasize their fit with the civic responsibility prototype; but here too, there is an obstacle. Ethnic minorities have to exemplify this prototype in a stringent manner by serving the nation. Serving a local community is not seen as sufficient for national inclusion even though any type of public service ought to be enough to fit the civic responsibility prototype. Although these findings highlight the effects of emphasizing ethnic minorities' fit or lack thereof with distinct national prototypes, an important question remains: What psychological mechanism may underlie these effects?

## EXPERIMENT 3

Experiment 3 sought to shed light on the psychological processes responsible for perceivers' shifting construals of

ethnic minorities as more or less American. We propose that the systematic exclusion or inclusion of ethnic groups is motivated by the degree to which group members are perceived to respectively threaten or enhance the distinctiveness of America as a nation. As social identity research would suggest, individuals may be motivated to highlight the uniqueness of their ingroup in one of two ways: (i) by promoting the ingroup's prototypic features that accentuate the difference between the ingroup and other outgroups (distinctiveness enhancement) or (ii) by protecting ingroup boundaries from the diluting influence of non-prototypic members who are thought to weaken the central character of the ingroup (distinctiveness threat; Branscombe et al., 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten et al., 1997, 1998, 2004). Applied to the present research, we propose that seeing a few ethnic minorities embrace their ethnic identities (thus undermining the ethnocultural prototype) will trigger distinctiveness threat and increase White-Americans' fears that American culture is being diluted by foreign practices. Perceived threat, in turn, will motivate the rejection of target individuals' entire ethnic group from the national identity. In contrast, seeing a few ethnic minorities engage in high impact national service (thus highlighting the civic responsibility prototype) will trigger distinctiveness enhancement and bolster the perception that Americans have exceptional qualities compared with citizens of other nations. Distinctiveness enhancement, in turn, will motivate the inclusion of these individuals' entire ethnic group within the national identity.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 181 Whites (123 female and 58 male) from Massachusetts completed the study in exchange for course credit. All participants were U.S. citizens between the ages 18 and 27 years ( $M = 20.10$  years).

### Manipulation of Target Individuals' Ethnic Identification and Public Service

Similar to Experiment 2, we manipulated target individuals' ethnic identification (strong versus not specified) and public service (national versus local). However, in order to ensure that exemplars in both the national and local service conditions were perceived to be equally successful and of equal status, we modified the biographies from Experiment 2 in such a way that these individuals held the exact same professional position, but their work was framed as specifically benefiting the country or their local community. For example, when their work was framed as benefiting the nation, participants read about a Hispanic-American physicist whose research was described as "helping in the creation of more energy efficient technologies that will reduce America's dependence on foreign oil." When the same individual's work was framed as benefiting their local community, participants read about the same Hispanic-American physicist whose research was described as "helping in the creation of more energy efficient technologies that will generate grants for the university." By doing so, we could ensure that differences between these two conditions could not be attributed to differences in perceived

success or status.<sup>3</sup> The names and occupations of the Hispanic individuals used in this experiment were identical to the ones used in Experiment 2.

### Measures

*Implicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American.* The same IAT used in Experiment 2 assessed the relative strength of association between American nationality and Hispanic versus White ethnicity.

*Explicit Construal of Hispanics as American.* We strengthened the explicit measure by including a larger set of items. In total, nine items (including the five items used in Experiment 2) assessed the extent to which participants believed that Hispanic-Americans belong in the USA, are patriotic to the USA, feel loyal to the USA, love the USA, respect America's political institutions and laws, defend the USA when criticized, work for the country's best interests, are born in the USA, and are American ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Distinctiveness Threat.* Participants completed a measure assessing the extent to which they feared that the target individuals they read about threatened America's distinctiveness in the world (three items). On a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Very much*), participants indicated the extent to which the target individuals they read about "Blur the boundaries between who is American and who is foreign", "Have a negative impact on America's uniqueness in the world", and "Reduce the separation between who is American and who is foreign" (three items;  $\alpha = .90$ ). These items were adapted and modified from a distinctiveness threat measure used by Warner et al. (2007).

*Distinctiveness Enhancement.* Participants also completed a measure assessing the extent to which they perceived that the target individuals they read about enhanced America's distinctiveness in the world (two items). Using a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Very much*), participants indicated the extent to which the target individuals they read about "Enhance America's uniqueness in the world" and "Demonstrate Americans' exceptional work ethic" ( $\alpha = .92$ ). These items were based on a survey by Citrin et al. (1994) that identified people's beliefs in American exceptionalism.

*Manipulation Check.* Similar to the previous experiments, participants completed manipulation checks to assess the perceived ethnic identification and national service of the individuals they read about.

### Procedure

Similar to the previous experiments, participants were randomly assigned to one of five conditions. After reading the biographies, participants in the experimental conditions

<sup>3</sup>We conducted a pilot test to ensure that the professions of target individuals who engaged in national service and local community service were perceived as equally prestigious and influential ( $N=25$ ). Participants rated these target individuals on the extent to which these individuals' professional work was perceived as prestigious, important, and influential (three items;  $\alpha > .80$  for all biographies) using a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Extremely*). Results revealed that the professional work of target individuals who engaged in national service ( $M=4.71$ ) and local community service ( $M=4.64$ ) was perceived as *equally* prestigious,  $F < 1$ ,  $p > .80$ .

completed measures assessing the extent to which target individuals threaten versus enhance national distinctiveness. Participants in the control only read the descriptions of nature reserves. Then, all participants completed measures assessing their implicit and explicit construals of Hispanics as American in counterbalanced order. This was followed by manipulation checks and a demographic measure, after which they were debriefed.

### Results

#### Manipulation Check

A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using perceived ethnic identification as the dependent variable confirmed that participants exposed to targets whose ethnic identification was made salient did perceive them as being more ethnically identified ( $M=5.53$ ) than others whose ethnic identification was not mentioned ( $M=4.44$ ),  $F(1, 139)=31.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .19$ . This effect was not moderated by Type of Civic Responsibility,  $F < 1$ .

Another ANOVA using perceived national contributions as the dependent variable showed that target individuals described as serving the nation were seen as making a bigger national contribution ( $M=5.26$ ) than individuals described as serving the local community ( $M=4.58$ ),  $F(1, 139)=16.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ . This effect was not moderated by targets' Ethnic Identification,  $F < 1$ .

#### Implicit Construal of Hispanics versus Whites as American

A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA using IAT  $D$  scores as the dependent variable replicated results from the previous experiment showing two significant main effects for Type of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification, but no interaction effect (Figure 3, panel A). A significant main effect of Type of Civic Responsibility showed that participants who saw Hispanics engaged in national service were significantly *less* likely to exclude this group from the nation (IAT  $D=0.81$ ;  $SD=0.50$ ) relative to others who saw identical individuals engaged in local service (IAT  $D=1.09$ ;  $SD=0.47$ ),  $F(1, 148)=11.45$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ . In addition, a significant main effect of Ethnic Identification revealed that participants who viewed ethnically identified Hispanics were significantly *more* likely to exclude this group from the nation (IAT  $D=1.08$ ;  $SD=0.49$ ) relative to others who viewed identical individuals whose ethnic identification was downplayed (IAT  $D=0.82$ ;  $SD=0.49$ ),  $F(1, 148)=9.62$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .06$ .

We also compared implicit construals of Hispanics in each experimental condition with the control condition. Seeing Hispanic targets whose ethnic identity was downplayed *and* whose work served the nation elicited the least exclusion (IAT  $D=0.68$ ;  $SD=0.55$ ) relative to the control condition (IAT  $D=0.94$ ;  $SD=0.45$ ),  $t(68)=2.13$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d=0.52$ , whereas seeing Hispanic targets who strongly identified with their ethnicity *and* whose work served the local community elicited the most exclusion (IAT  $D=1.19$ ;  $SD=0.51$ ) relative to the control condition (IAT  $D=0.94$ ;  $SD=0.45$ ),  $t(73)=-2.20$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $d=0.52$ . The other two conditions were no different from the control condition ( $ps > .80$ ).

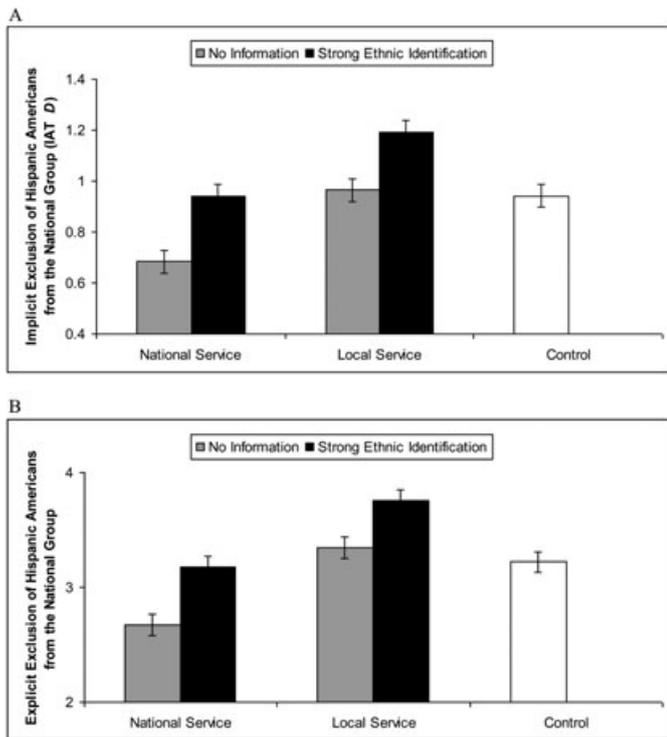


Figure 3. (A) Effect of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification on the implicit national exclusion of Hispanic-Americans from the national group. (B) Effect of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification on the explicit national exclusion of Hispanic-Americans from the national group

#### Explicit Construals of Hispanics as American

After reverse coding items, a composite for explicit beliefs about national inclusion was created by averaging the nine items ( $\alpha = .92$ ) such that larger numbers indicated greater exclusion of Hispanic-Americans. A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA revealed two significant main effects for Type of Civic Responsibility and Ethnic Identification, but no interaction effect,  $F < 1$  (Figure 3, panel B). Mirroring the implicit findings, a main effect of Type of Civic Responsibility revealed that participants who saw Hispanic individuals engaged in national service were less likely to exclude Hispanics as a group from the nation ( $M = 2.91$ ;  $SD = 0.94$ ) relative to others who saw identical individuals engaged in local service ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ),  $F(1, 140) = 12.98$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .09$ . Similarly, the main effect of Ethnic Identification showed that participants who saw ethnically identified Hispanic individuals were significantly more likely to exclude this ethnic group from the national group ( $M = 3.50$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ) compared with those who saw Hispanics whose ethnic identification was downplayed ( $M = 2.98$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ),  $F(1, 140) = 6.61$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .05$ .

When each of the experimental conditions were compared with the baseline control, results revealed that Hispanic targets whose ethnic identity was downplayed and whose work served the national group attenuated explicit national exclusion of Hispanics ( $M = 2.67$ ;  $SD = 0.96$ ) relative to the control condition ( $M = 3.23$ ;  $SD = 0.98$ ),  $t(66) = -2.33$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $d = 0.58$ . In contrast, seeing Hispanic targets who identified with their ethnicity and whose work served the local community strengthened explicit national exclusion of Hispanics ( $M = 3.76$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ) relative to the control condition

( $M = 3.23$ ;  $SD = 0.98$ ),  $t(71) = 2.07$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.48$ . The other two experimental conditions were no different from the control condition,  $ps > .60$ .

#### Does Distinctiveness Threat Mediate the Relation between Seeing Ethnically Identified Minorities and National Exclusion?

Mediation analyses were conducted to test whether distinctiveness threat served as one underlying process responsible for increasing national exclusion (cf. Baron & Kenny, 1986). A series of regressions showed that exposure to strongly identified Hispanics (versus others whose ethnic identification was not mentioned) significantly increased distinctiveness threat,  $b = 0.70$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $p = .001$ , and also exacerbated the implicit exclusion of Hispanics from the national group,  $b = 0.26$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $p < .01$ . When distinctiveness threat was statistically controlled, the predictive effect of seeing ethnically identified Hispanics on implicit exclusion was significantly reduced ( $b = 0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $p = .03$ ) as confirmed by a Sobel test ( $z = 2.40$ ,  $p = .02$ ), indicating partial mediation (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2003; Sobel, 1982; Figure 4, panel A).

A similar set of regressions was conducted using explicit construals as the dependent variable. Mirroring the implicit analyses, regressions revealed that exposure to ethnically identified Hispanics (versus others whose ethnic identification was not mentioned) significantly heightened distinctiveness threat,  $b = 0.70$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $p = .001$ , and also exacerbated the explicit exclusion of Hispanics from the national group,  $b = 0.51$ ,  $SE = 0.18$ ,  $p < .01$ . When distinctiveness threat was statistically controlled, the predictive effect of seeing ethnically identified Hispanics on explicit national exclusion was significantly reduced ( $b = 0.36$ ,  $SE = 0.18$ ,  $p = .05$ ) as confirmed by a Sobel test ( $z = 2.07$ ,  $p = .04$ ), indicating partial mediation (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2003; Sobel, 1982; Figure 4, panel B).<sup>4</sup>

#### Does Distinctiveness Enhancement Mediate the Relation between Seeing Ethnic Minorities Who Exemplify Civic Responsibility and National Inclusion?

A series of regressions were conducted to test whether distinctiveness enhancement served as one underlying process responsible for increased inclusion. Results showed that exposure to Hispanics engaged in national (rather than local) service significantly enhanced the perceived distinctiveness of America as exceptional,  $b = 0.66$ ,  $SE = 0.28$ ,  $p = .02$ , and also attenuated the implicit exclusion of Hispanics from the national group,  $b = -0.28$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $p = .001$ . When distinctiveness enhancement was statistically controlled, the predictive effect of such exposure on implicit exclusion was significantly reduced ( $b = -0.18$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $p = .02$ ) as confirmed by a Sobel test ( $z = -2.04$ ,  $p = .04$ ), indicating partial mediation (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2003; Sobel, 1982; Figure 5, panel A).

A similar series of regressions were conducted using explicit construals as the dependent variable. Mirroring the implicit analyses, results revealed that seeing Hispanics

<sup>4</sup>A similar series of regressions tested whether distinctiveness threat mediated the relationship between national versus local service and decreased exclusion of Hispanics from the national group; these analyses revealed a non-significant pattern of results at both the implicit and explicit levels ( $ps > .20$ ).

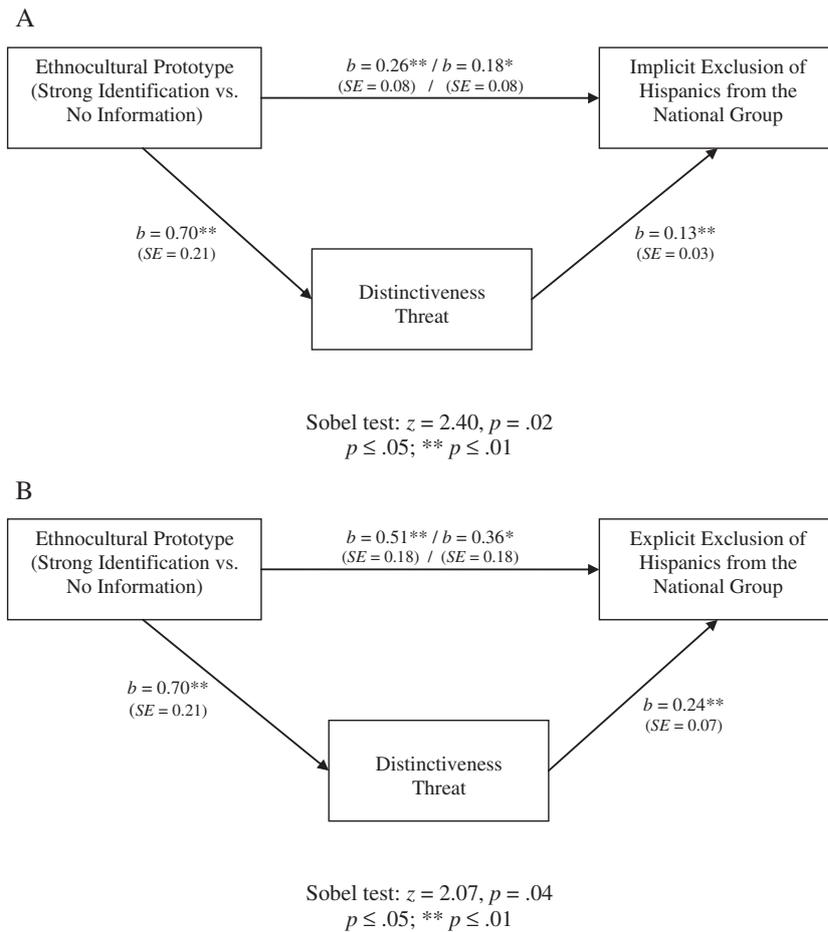


Figure 4. (A) Distinctiveness threat mediates the relationship between seeing ethnically identified minorities and implicit national exclusion. (B) Distinctiveness threat mediates the relationship between seeing ethnically identified minorities and explicit national exclusion

engaged in national (rather than local) service enhanced the perceived distinctiveness of the America as exceptional,  $b = 0.66, SE = 0.28, p = .02$ , and also attenuated explicit exclusion of Hispanics from the national group,  $b = -0.67, SE = 0.18, p < .001$ . When distinctiveness enhancement was statistically controlled, the predictive benefit of seeing Hispanics engaged in national service on explicit national inclusion was significantly reduced ( $b = -0.52, SE = 0.17, p = .01$ ) as confirmed by a Sobel test ( $z = -2.00, p = .05$ ), also indicating partial mediation (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2003; Sobel, 1982; Figure 5, panel B).<sup>5</sup>

**Discussion**

In sum, Experiment 3 shed light on the motivational processes underlying the psychological inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities from the national group. Highlighting ethnic minorities’ lack-of-fit with the ethnocultural prototype by emphasizing their allegiance to an ethnic subgroup *threatens* the perceived distinctiveness of American culture because of fears that non-White or “foreign” cultural practices will dilute American culture; these threats in turn exacerbate both implicit and explicit exclusions of ethnic minorities from the national group. By contrast, highlighting ethnic minorities’ fit with the

civic responsibility prototype by emphasizing their national service *enhances* the perceived distinctiveness of American culture by increasing beliefs in America’s uniqueness in the world. Such enhanced national distinctiveness, in turn, attenuates both implicit and explicit exclusions of ethnic minorities from the national group.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The current research creates a synergy between two social science disciplines by: (a) identifying the conditions under which people psychologically expand or contract the boundaries of their nation; and (b) shedding light on why such boundary shifting occurs. Three experiments focused on two prototypes that define the USA—the ethnocultural prototype (i.e., real Americans embrace Anglo-European traditions) and the civic responsibility prototype (i.e., real Americans fulfill their civic duties by engaging in public service). We investigated the ways in which highlighting ethnic groups’ fit or lack thereof with these competing national prototypes shifts perceivers’ construals of these groups as legitimately American. Second, we examined two underlying processes that explain *why* these prototypes differentially affect the perceived legitimacy of ethnic minorities’ inclusion as American. We found that when ethnic minority individuals embrace their ethnic heritage (thereby deviating from the ethnocultural prototype of the USA), it *threatens* the distinctive character

<sup>5</sup>A similar set of regressions tested whether distinctiveness enhancement mediated the relationship between ethnic identification and increased exclusion of Hispanics from the national group; these analyses revealed a non-significant relationship at both the implicit and explicit levels ( $ps > .20$ ).

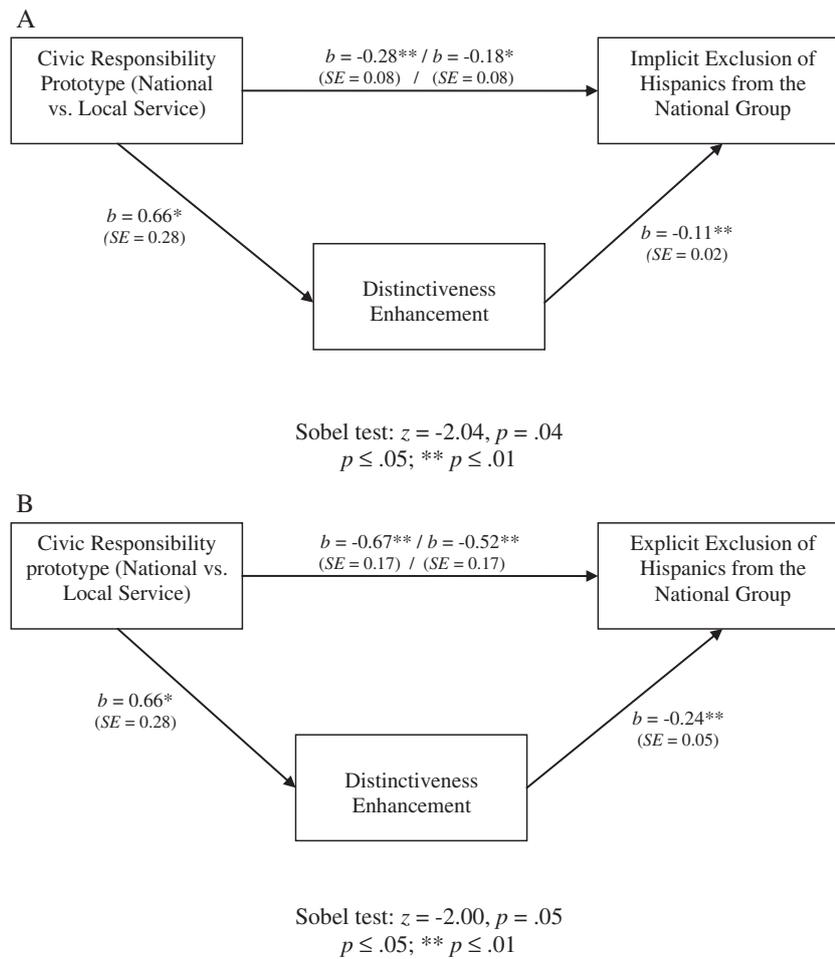


Figure 5. (A) Distinctiveness enhancement mediates the relationship between seeing ethnic minorities who exemplify civic responsibility and implicit national inclusion. (B) Distinctiveness enhancement mediates the relationship between seeing ethnic minorities who exemplify civic responsibility and explicit national inclusion

of the USA that, in turn, motivates White-Americans to implicitly and explicitly exclude that ethnic group from the national identity. On the other hand, when ethnic minorities work for the betterment of the country (thereby exemplifying the civic responsibility prototype of the USA), it *enhances* and gives legitimacy to the distinctive character of the USA that, in turn, motivates White-Americans to implicitly and explicitly include that ethnic group in the national identity.

These findings complement recent research by Wakefield et al. (2011), which demonstrated that making salient a civic as opposed to an ethnic conception of one's national group increased helping behavior toward ethnic minority individuals. Complementing this research, our data reveal that emphasizing ethnic minorities' fit or lack thereof with distinct national prototypes can both implicitly and explicitly impact the extent to which these minority groups are construed as legitimate members of the nation. Moreover, our data demonstrate that these inclusion and exclusion are systematically driven by the extent to which these ethnic minority individuals are perceived as threatening or enhancing the distinctiveness of the national group.

These findings also extend past work on the ingroup projection model in which researchers have manipulated the representation of a superordinate group as simple versus complex and found that priming a complex representation of the superordinate group decreases the tendency for ingroup

prototypicality and, in turn, increases positive attitudes toward various subgroups relative to priming a simple representation of the superordinate group (Waldzus, Mummendey, & Wenzel, 2005; Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel, & Weber, 2003). Complementing this work, we manipulated the specific content of the prototype associated with a superordinate group to examine how highlighting different prototypes has differing implications for majority group members' construals of ethnic minorities within the superordinate nation.

### Embracing Non-White Ethnic Identity Violates the Ethnocultural Prototype and Makes Ethnic Minorities Seem Less American

Using data from political science suggesting that a key prototype of American identity is ethnoculturalism (Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997), we tested whether variations in the ethnic identification of White versus ethnic minority individuals would make salient their fit (or lack thereof) with this ethnocultural prototype and, in turn, affect how legitimately American their entire group appears to be. The current work revealed that emphasizing the ethnic identity of non-White individuals (i.e., challenging the ethnocultural prototype) made their entire ethnic group appear less American compared with equivalent individuals whose ethnic identification was not mentioned. However,

emphasizing the ethnic identity of White individuals in an equivalent manner did not make their entire ethnic group seem any less American because most White ethnic identities are consistent with the ethnocultural prototype. Additionally, our data suggest that one of the reasons for greater exclusion of ethnic minorities from the superordinate national group is that ethnic minorities who embrace their heritage are seen as threatening the distinctive character of the USA.

These findings extend recent research (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner et al., 2010; Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009) demonstrating that White-Americans express more negativity toward minority individuals who emphasize their ethnic identity compared with others who do not. Our research demonstrates that strong ethnic identity does not only impact evaluations of minority individuals but is generalized to the ethnic group as a whole. Moreover, our data point to an underlying mechanism driving group-based rejection: When minorities emphasize their ethnic heritage, their entire ethnic group is perceived as less American because they threaten the positive distinctiveness of the national group. These experiments provide process-oriented evidence demonstrating that ethnic group members who deviate from the prototype evoke distinctiveness threat that, in turn, elicits rejection of these groups as a way of sharpening national boundaries. These findings extend prior work on the black sheep effect (Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988) because we show that entire subgroups (beyond specific individuals) may be treated as “black sheep” if they do not conform to the group prototype. Additionally, we also provide evidence about distinctiveness threat as the psychological process driving social exclusion.

### **Emphasizing National Service Promotes the Civic Responsibility Prototype and Makes Ethnic Minorities Seem More American**

Given the complexity of national groups, it is not surprising that there are several competing prototypes of American character (Citrin et al., 1990, 1994; Schildkraut, 2003, 2007; Smith, 1988, 1997). In the present research, we argue that it is more plausible for ethnic minorities to fit the civic responsibility prototype than the ethnocultural prototype. Indeed, our findings reveal that minority individuals were construed as more American if they fit the civic responsibility prototype by engaging in national service. Public service enhanced their inclusion only when their service was directed at the nation and not the local community probably because ethnic minorities need to overcome doubts about their national allegiance (cf. Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Pickett & Brewer, 2005; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010). These data point to some limits of the CIIM (Dovidio et al., 2005, 2009) by demonstrating that for American ethnic minorities, highlighting their common identity in a superordinate nation is not sufficient to elicit acceptance from majority group members. They may have to “prove” their national loyalty by engaging in service that benefits the country as opposed to their local community.

On the optimistic side, Experiment 3 points to an important mechanism responsible for greater inclusion of ethnic minorities—enhancement of ingroup distinctiveness. When

ethnic minorities provide high impact national service, their work bolsters the distinctiveness of the American spirit as unique and exceptional. Enhanced ingroup distinctiveness, in turn, motivates perceivers to welcome that target’s ethnic group into the superordinate nation state. Although this finding is broadly consistent with social identity theorizing on people’s motivation to maintain positive ingroup distinctiveness (Brown, 2000; Ellemers et al., 2002; Hogg, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), we did not find any prior empirical evidence that demonstrates the role of distinctiveness enhancement on inclusion. As such, our findings fill an important gap in the literature by illustrating the influence of distinctiveness enhancement, a corollary to distinctiveness threat.

### **Theoretical Connections with Other Literatures**

The present research contributes to a burgeoning body of research showing that implicit attitudes and beliefs about social groups are not fixed and immutable representations in one’s mind, but rather are remarkably malleable (for a review, see Blair, 2002; Dasgupta, 2009). For example, encountering counterstereotypic members of stigmatized groups decreases implicit prejudice and stereotypes (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001). Relatedly, encountering outgroup members in social contexts that are stereotype-inconsistent decreases implicit bias, whereas encountering the same individuals in contexts that are stereotype-consistent increases bias (Barden, Maddux, Petty, & Brewer, 2004; Rudman & Lee, 2002; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 2001). Moreover, increasing the salience of ingroup–outgroup boundaries or the salience of perceivers’ own group identity also increases implicit bias (Mitchell, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003; Sassenberg & Wieber, 2005). Whereas the research described above focused on shifting implicit *attitudes and beliefs* about specific groups, the present research examines how emphasizing ethnic minorities’ fit or lack thereof with distinct national prototypes can expand versus contract the boundaries of the national group. Although the motivational mechanisms at play in the present research are threat versus enhancement of national distinctiveness, different processes are likely to be at play when it comes to changing other types of implicit prejudice and stereotypes.

Like much of the research outlined earlier, it is unclear how long-lasting the effects of these manipulations may be. Because national inclusion and exclusion were assessed immediately after exposure to target individuals who exemplified or violated distinct national prototypes, it is unclear whether these effects would be weakened if assessed after an extended period. Dasgupta and Greenwald (2001) found that exposure to admired Blacks and disliked Whites reduced implicit prejudice toward Black Americans even 24 hours after initial exposure, suggesting that these findings may last beyond a short 30-minute lab session. However, this may largely depend on what other exposure participants experience over that time—If participants are exposed to ethnic minorities working for the betterment of the country or embracing their ethnic heritage in other contexts of their everyday life, it may accordingly shift the extent to which these ethnic groups are included versus excluded from the nation.

## A New American Dilemma and its Implications for Intergroup Relations

In closing, we return to a new dilemma faced by pluralistic nations around the world such as the USA, Canada, Germany, France, Netherlands, UK, and many others. Such nations have to decide whether they want their national identity be strictly defined by a shared ethnocultural vision or by a shared commitment to particular values and public service. The choice nations make will have broad implications for who among their citizens will be fully integrated into society and who else will be relegated to the margins. If the ethnocultural vision of nationality prevails, it will open up ethnic minorities to suspicion and discrimination especially in social contexts where patriotism and national loyalty are salient (e.g., Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010). However, if the civic responsibility prototype prevails, people from diverse groups are likely to be perceived as legitimate members of the nation as long as they fulfill their basic civic responsibilities and contribute to the betterment of the country.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Kaylin Ayotte, Christi Anne-King, Christina Beebe, Alison Eccleston, Alyssa Gaudet, Rachel Genesky, Elizabeth Gentile, and Lindsay Quinones for serving as experimenters. Thanks to Ronnie Janoff-Bulman and Michael Parker for their thoughtful comments and statistical advice on a previous version of this manuscript.

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