

# The Strategic Side of Out-Group Helping

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The act of helping is a way of sharing information and expertise, a means of redistributing wealth, and the primary tool by which people take care of less fortunate others. We often do this, as a society, out of genuine empathic concern for others (Batson, 1994), sometimes augmented by reciprocity beliefs (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Hardy & van Vugt, 2006). Recently researchers have begun to recognize the importance of group membership in the study of helping behaviors (e.g., Hopkins, Reicher, Harrison, Cassidy, Bull, & Levine, 2007; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, & Siem, 2006; Stürmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005). A growing body of evidence is showing that people are not necessarily less willing to help members of other groups (thus there is no clear evidence pointing in the direction of an in-group bias in helping; Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005); however, the *reasons* for helping out-group members as opposed to in-group members do differ substantially (Stürmer et al., 2006). Some of the motives for out-group helping can be labeled “prosocial,” for example when they are rooted in the belief that we share a common bond with the out-group (e.g., Levine et al., 2005). However, oftentimes out-group helping is beneficial only to the in-group and to the self as a member of that group, potentially even at the expense of the out-group who is the recipient of help. These in-group-serving motives for out-group helping are the central focus of the current chapter.

The argument that helping may be advantageous to the provider of help as well as to the recipient of help is not new. For example, Gil Clary, Mark Snyder, and their colleagues have already argued that

many acts of volunteerism occur because volunteer behavior provides several benefits to the individual (Clary & Snyder, 2002; Clary et al., 1998; Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000). These functions of volunteerism include new learning experiences and career-related benefits, the opportunity to engage in activities that are valued by important others, the reduction of guilt about being more fortunate than others, and the opportunity for self-esteem enhancement. Clary et al. (1998) state that planned helpfulness “engages processes that encourage individuals to look inward to their own dispositions, motivations, and other personal attributes for guidance in deciding whether to get involved in helping, in the selection of a helping opportunity, and in the maintenance of helping over an extended course of involvement” (p. 1529). The decision to engage in a helping relationship, and to remain involved in that relationship, is thus determined in part by the extent to which this helping relationship meets the helper’s needs.

When the helping context is transformed from an interindividual to an intergroup context, it is no longer the individual’s needs but the group’s needs that are most salient. In a salient intergroup context, the decision to help a member of another group is determined by the extent one’s needs *as an in-group member* are met. Since groups exist by virtue of their distinctiveness from other groups, group members are often concerned with the need to differentiate their group from other groups – that is, to stress their group’s distinctiveness and portray their group as better than relevant comparison groups. Positive distinctiveness contributes to collective self-esteem and strengthens members’ ties with their group (cf. social identity theory or SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, groups – like individuals – do not exist in social isolation. Smaller groups are nested within larger groups, such as departments within an organization, or states within a nation. Groups also form alliances and agree to cooperate with other groups in order to strengthen their position. The need for positive distinctiveness, which is often achieved through intergroup competition, thus needs to be met within the overarching framework of interdependence and intergroup cooperation. This mutual dependency requires members from different groups to collaborate – for example by sharing information and exchanging help when necessary. However, these acts of cooperation may be driven, in part, by more strategic or in-group-serving motives, which stem from the need for independence and positive distinctiveness.

Helping relations are complicated. On the surface, they can be viewed (and intended) as prosocial behavior. Below the surface, the exchange of help can serve to challenge or maintain social dominance relations.

Nadler and Halabi (2006) have argued that helping relations are inherently unequal social relations. This is because helping is typically associated with power, dependence, and with valued commodities such as the possession of resources, knowledge, and skills. The act of helping serves to underline an existing inequality. That is, by providing help, the helper can (re)affirm his or her position as independent and high status, and the helpee is portrayed as dependent and low status. This is particularly the case when the type of help concerns dependency-oriented help. *Dependency-oriented help* provides a full solution to the problem, is less concerned with the recipient's autonomy, and reflects the helper's view that the needy cannot help themselves. In contrast, *autonomy-oriented help* is partial and temporary, it is aimed at empowering the helpee, and assumes that, given the appropriate tools, recipients can help themselves (Nadler & Halabi, 2006). When an intergroup status difference is perceived as stable and legitimate, members of high-status groups are willing to provide dependency-oriented help to members of low-status groups, and the latter are also quite willing to seek this type of help from the former. However, when the status difference is unstable and illegitimate, members of high-status groups become even more motivated to provide dependency help to members of low-status groups, whereas the latter are far less willing to seek or accept this type of help (Nadler, 2002). The struggle for social dominance thus becomes particularly prominent when status relations are subject to change, and is expressed most clearly through an increased willingness to provide, and a decreased willingness to seek dependency-oriented help.

## **The In-Group-Serving Functions of Out-Group Helping**

Group superiority through helping can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Ultimately, all these in-group-serving functions of out-group helping serve to achieve and maintain positive distinctiveness. However, at a more specific level, they do this by tapping into different (albeit related) needs. Based on an overview of existing literature, we propose to distinguish between three types of strategic motives. *Power and autonomy* refers to the motivation to exert power over another group through helping, and the motivation to remain autonomous by rejecting such attempts from other groups. *Meaning and existence* refers to the notion that, through the provision of help, groups can restore the meaningfulness of a threatened group identity. Finally,

*impression formation* involves the motivation to use helping in order to create a positive impression of the in-group, either as a kind and generous group (*warmth*) or as a capable group (*competence*).

### Power and Autonomy

First, the act of helping in and of itself is associated with power differentials and is often threatening to the helpee's need for autonomy (cf. Nadler's model of intergroup helping, 2002). Power is the experience of social influence (Hexmoor, 2002). Autonomy refers to a person's self-governance (Ryan & Deci, 2006) and thus the opportunity to reject social influence if so desired. Helping relationships are often characterized by power inequalities, as the helpee's dependency upon the helper assigns more power to the latter. This is particularly the case with respect to dependency-oriented helping, which has relatively little educational value and implies continued dependency upon the helper. Nadler and Harpaz-Gorodeisky (2006) have argued that an out-group's dependence on the in-group constitutes a behavioral demonstration of the in-group's greater worth. They showed that high-identifying group members can attempt to cope with a threat to their group identity by helping the source of this threat, i.e., the out-group. In doing so, they can regain power and reduce threat.

Probably the ultimate demonstration of helping as an attempt to influence another is captured by the term "overhelping" (Gilbert & Silvera, 1999). Overhelping occurs when people go so far as to deliberately provide unsolicited help to the degree that others perceive the helpee as less qualified than she really is, thus influencing the helpee's public image, against her will, in a negative direction. Providing someone with unsolicited support reflects the helper's view that she is qualified to provide help and that the helpee is lacking an important competence. Receiving unsolicited support has been reported to result in a number of negative consequences. For example, Deelstra, Peeters, Schaufeli, Stroebe, Zijlstra, and van Doornen (2003) found that receiving unsolicited support was even more stressful than being faced with an unsolvable problem. Unsolicited support elicited negative reactions among recipients, which at best turned to "neutral" but not positive when the problem was unsolvable and thus support was unavoidable. In a study among Black and White students, Schneider, Major, Luhtanen, and Crocker (1996) found that Black students who received unsolicited support from a White peer had lower competence-based self-esteem than Black students not receiving this type of help. Interestingly, receiving unsolicited support from a White peer resulted

in more depressed self-esteem among black students than among White students. This finding suggests that it matters not only what type of help is given and under what conditions, but also by whom: an in-group member or a member of the out-group.

The provision of unsolicited support is a clear example of a situation where the reception of help is a threat to the need for autonomy. Although linked, autonomy is not equivalent to independence. That is, receiving help in and of itself need not undermine autonomy – for example, Deci, La Guardia, Moller, Scheiner, and Ryan (2006) showed that receiving autonomy-oriented support from a close friend was positively related to the experience of relationship quality and psychological health. What is crucial to autonomy is the individual's freedom to choose – thus, a person choosing to depend on another may still keep her autonomy. As autonomy is undermined by forces experienced as alien or pressuring, the experience of a need for help could undermine autonomy when the person in need feels she has little choice in matters such as whether she seeks help, who she seeks help from, and what type of help she may receive. The costs of a reduced sense of autonomy are well documented and include reduced performance on tasks that require complicated or creative capabilities (Utman, 1997), ego-depletion (Moller, Deci, & Ryan, 2006), less satisfaction of intrinsic needs (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004), and the experience of poor relationship quality (Deci et al., 2006).

Across a series of studies that tested their model of intergroup helping, Nadler and Halabi (2006) found that, when status relations were unstable, members of low-status groups were least receptive to help from members of high-status groups when the help was dependency oriented. Interestingly, in the short term, dependency-oriented help (defined as providing the recipient with a full solution to the problem) tends to be more instrumental than autonomy-oriented help, which is often operationalized as help in the form of a hint (e.g., Nadler & Halabi, 2006). The denial of dependency-oriented help would indicate the prevalence of the psychological need for autonomy over the instrumental value of (dependency-oriented) help.

We tested this notion in two experiments (van Leeuwen, Täuber, & Sassenberg, 2006). Participants in both studies were university students who were led to believe that they were part of a three- or four-person team that was about to participate in a knowledge quiz. The goal of this knowledge quiz was to assess the team's overall level of general knowledge (a relevant performance dimension for university students). Participants would be presented individually with a set of difficult quiz questions. The number of correct answers of all team

members combined would constitute the team's performance, which would subsequently be compared to that of another team currently present in the research laboratory (Study 1) or a team from a rivaling university situated in the same city (Study 2). However, it was also explained that an additional goal of the study was to compare both team's joint performance to that of other paired teams in the study (Study 1) or to that of paired teams from different university cities (Study 2). The task therefore was characterized by a mixed motive structure (Komorita & Parks, 1995), containing both a competitive element (outperforming the other team) and a cooperative element (collectively outperforming other team pairs). Cooperation was enabled through the computerized opportunity to seek help from the other team – which, ostensibly for technical reasons, meant that during the knowledge quiz participants could send requests for help to the other team but not receive requests for help from the other team until a future round of the knowledge quiz. In seeking help, participants could opt between requesting a hint (i.e., autonomy-oriented help) or requesting the complete answer (i.e., dependency-oriented help).

We expected that under conditions of social competition, where the other team had ostensibly challenged the participants' team by describing it as incompetent, participants would be (1) less willing to seek help in general and (2) less willing to seek dependency-oriented help in particular. This is because requesting dependency-oriented help from an out-group that views the in-group as inferior would violate the help seeker's need for autonomy. Help-seeking behavior was compared to a realistic competition condition, where a monetary reward was promised to the best performing team (which should prompt people to seek help when necessary, particularly dependency-oriented help, which has the highest short-term instrumental value). Results from both studies confirmed our hypotheses. In Study 1, participants in the social competition condition indeed sought less help from the other team in general, and less dependency-oriented help in particular, than participants in a realistic competition condition. In Study 2, participants in the social competition condition sought less dependency-oriented help not only compared to participants in the realistic competition condition but also compared to participants in a control condition.

These results attest to the importance of the need for autonomy in the process of help seeking. People may not necessarily object to depending on others for support, but it appears that a number of pre-conditions need to be met so that the exchange can occur on a basis of mutual respect and without the suspicion of ulterior motives that

seem to come into play in more competitive settings. For example, Worchel, Wong, and Scheltema (1989) found that an offer of help from another group following an intergroup competition reduced attraction for the aid giver, whereas the same offer of help increased attraction when it followed independent group work. As we will discuss in more detail, further in this chapter, the provision of help can be a tool through which individuals and groups can compete in asserting superiority.

### Meaning and Existence

A second function of out-group helping refers to its ability to render the provider of help a sense of meaningfulness and purpose. Being able to provide help implies that one is valued and needed. Strong dependency relations often shape our identity to the point where part of who we are is defined by the fact that others depend on us – for example, in the case of parents or nurses. As helping implies a dependency relationship between the aid-recipient and the aid-giver, helping can serve as a tool to provide meaning to one's existence. It follows from this that when the meaningfulness of one's identity is threatened, helping can be used to restore it.

Research on the “Scrooge effect” (Jonas, Schimel, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2002) provides evidence from the interpersonal domain to support the notion that helping can ward off an existential threat. After confronting participants with their own mortality, Jonas et al. (2002) found that participants had more positive attitudes toward important charities and contributed more to a charity supporting an in-group cause.

The question arises whether a threat to the existence of an important in-group will result in a tendency to restore that in-group identity through out-group helping. This question was investigated in two studies that were conducted shortly after the December 2004 tsunami that affected wide areas of Southeast Asia (van Leeuwen, 2007). The hypothesis was tested that a threat to the national identity of the Dutch participants would result in an increased belief that the Dutch government should help the countries victimized by the tsunami. However, given that this tragedy triggered a huge international effort to provide help, a general type of aid such as donating funds would do little to restore the positive distinctiveness of one's national identity if it were overshadowed by similar efforts from other nations. It was therefore expected that the increased desire to help would be limited to domains that were positively and uniquely related to the

threatened national identity. One such domain which is relevant in this context is that of water management, which participants themselves viewed as an internationally acknowledged expertise of the Dutch.

Participants in both studies were first presented with a bogus newspaper article describing the position of the Netherlands within the European Union (EU). Half of the participants read that this position was secure and that the Netherlands was a well-respected member of the EU (low identity threat). The other half of the participants, however, read that this position was under threat, and that it would only be a matter of time before the Netherlands was assimilated within the larger context of the EU and disappeared (high identity threat). Participants were subsequently introduced to a second, ostensibly unrelated study in which their beliefs about Dutch aid to the victims of the tsunami were assessed.

Results from both studies showed that participants in the high threat conditions were more strongly in support of help in the domain of water management (e.g., providing help with building storm surge barriers and flood protection systems) than participants in the low threat conditions. Moreover, their endorsement of water management help was related to a reduction in perceived identity threat in the high threat condition, indicating that expressing the desire to provide water management help to the areas affected by the tsunami served to restore the threatened national identity.

### Impression Management

A third in-group-serving function of out-group helping refers to the fact that helping can create a favorable group impression. When groups strive to portray themselves as different from and better than other groups, acts of helping can be a subtle yet very effective tool to this end. In fact, when competitive and cooperative motives operate simultaneously, helping is arguably a very effective impression management tool, where under the guise of prosocial intentions groups can demonstrate their superior competence through helping.

In the stereotype content model, *warmth* and *competence* are described as the primary dimensions underlying stereotypes (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). People who are perceived as warm and competent elicit uniformly positive emotions and behavior (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2006). Interestingly, the act of helping can score high on both dimensions, demonstrating warmth as well as competence. This is because helping is typically viewed as an act of kindness, as morally valued behavior. At the same time, helping can serve to demonstrate

a group's competence, for example with respect to specific knowledge or skills. There are many ways in which helping can serve to create a positive impression. In the following, we will distinguish between the motivation to portray the in-group as warm, kind, or generous and the motivation to emphasize group competence by demonstrating knowledge or skills.

#### *Demonstrating warmth*

A central assumption of SIT is that favorable comparisons with relevant out-groups contribute to a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Positive in-group stereotypes help to positively differentiate the in-group from other groups. *Meta-stereotypes* are beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about the in-group (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). When confronted with others' negative impression of the in-group, people are motivated to employ persuasive strategies in order to modify this meta-stereotype (Klein & Azzi, 2001).

Hopkins and colleagues (Hopkins et al., 2007) proposed that helping would be particularly effective in disconfirming stereotypes that portray the in-group as having specific antisocial characteristics. In other words, helping can be an act of communication through which people can demonstrate their generosity to doubting others. They tested this notion in three studies conducted among Scottish participants. First, they showed that Scots believe they are perceived as mean by the English, and think that helping may be a good way to refute this stereotype. In a second study, Scots described themselves as more generous in terms of charitable giving in response to a salient English meta-stereotype of Scots as mean. In the third study of this paper they subsequently demonstrated that this effect is not limited to descriptions of the in-group and behavioral intentions, but translates into actual helping behavior as well. When the mean stereotype was salient, participants expressed higher levels of helping (operationalized as giving to charity) toward out-group members, but not toward in-group members. This latter finding is consistent with the argument that helping is an act of communication: Through helping out-group members, people attempt to modify their view of the in-group stereotype. Helping the in-group is only weakly diagnostic of such qualities (such behavior is to be expected from any group; Hopkins et al., 2007).

In the research conducted by Hopkins et al. (2007), participants were confronted with a specific stereotype content – that is, their Scottish in-group was described as mean by the English out-group. Their behavior in response was aimed at refuting this stereotype by demonstrating

acts of generosity, or describing the in-group in those behavioral terms. Importantly, these acts of generosity were not directed at the out-group holding the negative meta-stereotype (the English), but either at foreigners in general (Study 1), at no group in particular (i.e., donating to charity, Study 2), or at members of another out-group (the Welsh, Study 3). This is of course not surprising as learning of another group's negative view of the in-group likely evokes some feelings of hostility, thus suppressing the inclination to favor that out-group through acts of generosity, despite the desire to portray the in-group as such. As described earlier in this chapter, we (van Leeuwen et al., 2006) also found that group members were unlikely to seek (dependency-oriented) help from an out-group that had previously described the in-group in unfavorable terms.

In a field study, we tested the notion that helping could also occur in response to a more general belief that the in-group is evaluated by a relevant out-group (van Leeuwen & Oostenbrink, 2005). That is, in line with research on meta-stereotypes (Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000), we reasoned that the *potential for evaluation* in and of itself is a sufficient condition for group members to be motivated to portray their in-group in a favorable manner. Moreover, because group members are not confronted with an out-group's negative view of the in-group, there would be no reason why their helping should not be directed at the out-group that is evaluating them. In fact, in line with Hopkins et al.'s (2007) argument that helping is a form of communication, it could be argued that it is most effective in creating a positive group impression or refuting a negative impression when it is directed at the out-group that is forming (or reforming) that impression.

The study was conducted on the campus grounds of the two universities in Amsterdam: the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the VU University Amsterdam (VU). Students from both universities were approached at either a busy or a quiet location on their own university campus by a male experimenter. The experimenter briefly introduced himself as a student of the participant's own university (thus as an *in-group* member) or as a student from the other Amsterdam university (an *out-group* member). He then explained that he was writing a thesis on how students from the other university view students from the participant's university (i.e., *activation of out-group evaluation potential*), or that he was writing a thesis on computer facilities at universities (*control* condition). He then indicated that he was looking for directions to the university's information center. As dependent variable, we assessed participants' willingness to provide the experimenter with directions. This measure was created as follows. A total

of 170 participants were approached with an initial request for directions. Participants who complied with this request were subsequently given another request, i.e., to draw a map with directions. Those who drew a map were then asked to walk the experimenter to the exit of the current building and point him in the right direction. After doing so, a small sample of participants even spontaneously offered to accompany the experimenter to his intended location. For each time a help request was granted (or help spontaneously given), participants scored 1 point. The resulting measure is thus a variable running from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating no help and 3 indicating a maximum amount of help given in response to the experimenter's request(s).

The results demonstrate the importance of evaluation potential in helping. As expected, the potential for out-group evaluation yielded higher levels of helping compared to the control condition only when the helpee presented himself as an out-group member but not when he presented himself as an in-group member. This effect was most pronounced when the helping interaction occurred on relatively quiet locations (perhaps the presence of an audience diffuses responsibility for creating a positive group impression, cf. bystander research, Levine et al., 2005). Together, these data lend support to the notion that the potential for evaluation by another group can cause group members to behave in a more helpful manner. The fact that this behavior was specifically targeted at an out-group member (but not, or to a lesser extent, at an in-group member) is in line with our reasoning that, through helping, people can communicate to relevant out-groups an impression of their in-group as warm and helpful.

#### *Demonstrating competence*

In the previous section we presented research in which helping, due to its positive moral connotations, served to convey to other groups an image of the in-group as warm and generous. In this section we will focus on another communicative aspect of helping: a demonstration of competence. In their strive toward positive distinctiveness, groups can achieve positive comparisons through the display of important group qualities. A particularly suitable manner to achieve this is through out-group helping. Through helping, the helper can demonstrate important knowledge or skills that the helpee is currently lacking and is in need of. The act of helping underlines this difference and assigns higher status to the helper (Nadler, 2002). This is particularly the case with dependency-oriented help, where the recipient is provided with a solution to the current problem but not empowered to solve similar future problems. In contrast, autonomy-oriented help empowers the

helped and ultimately serves to improve the helpseeker's qualifications in dealing with similar problems in the future. If the aim is to demonstrate the in-group's superior competence, the provision of dependency-oriented help would suit this goal best (cf. van Leeuwen et al., 2006).

In two experiments (van Leeuwen & Täuber, in prep.), we tested the notion that members of low-status groups who experience their current low-status position as subject to change will be motivated to demonstrate their competence through helping in an attempt to change the status quo. The paradigm we used in these studies is similar to that described earlier in this chapter (see also van Leeuwen et al., 2006). That is, participants believed that they were member of a small team consisting of three or four students from their own university, and that they were competing with other universities in a knowledge quiz. After the first part of the quiz, they received feedback about their team's performance in comparison to a team from a rival university in the same town. Participants learned either that their team had outperformed the other team (high in-group status) or that it had performed worse than the other team (low in-group status). They then entered the second round of the knowledge quiz, consisting again of a number of difficult quiz questions. Because an additional goal of the study was to compare the teams' joint performance to that of other paired teams from different university cities (ostensibly), an opportunity for cooperation was created by enabling participants to help the other team by sharing one or more of their answers to the quiz questions. The situation that was thus created contained both competitive and cooperative motives.

To the extent that helping is used to demonstrate existing knowledge, there should be a difference between providing answers that reflect participants' real knowledge (i.e., their own answers to the quiz questions) and providing answers that do not reflect that knowledge but that are nonetheless helpful (i.e., sending answers that come from a file on the experimenter's computer). Moreover, if the motive is to demonstrate existing knowledge, more help should be given to the extent that this knowledge is actually present. That is, participants performing poorly in the knowledge quiz are unlikely to share their own answers with the other team as these answers may be incorrect and thus not a good demonstration of knowledge (on the contrary). The results from this study confirm these expectations. Participants' own knowledge level was only significantly and positively related to the amount of help given to the other team among members of low-status groups who could help by sharing their own answers. No such association was found among members of high-status groups, nor among

participants from low-status groups who could help only by sharing the experimenter's answers. Moreover, in the low group status condition, team identification and team-based collective self-esteem were higher among participants who could share their own answers than among participants who could only share the experimenter's answers. This finding speaks against an individual mobility strategy in which participants may want to distance themselves from their low-status in-group by demonstrating how they deviate (in a positive manner) from that group. It is on the other hand consistent with a social change strategy which assumes that effort on behalf of the group is required to change the status quo – as indicated by raised levels of identification and self-esteem (Ellemers, van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990).

In a follow-up study, we replicated the finding of a positive relationship between own knowledge and sharing own answers among members of low-status groups. We also included a condition where group members were given the opportunity to offer help to the other team, instead of responding to a request for help. Offering help is a more proactive form of helping, and is arguably associated with feelings of confidence in one's own competence and/or the perception of incompetence of the help recipient. Only in the high group status condition was participants' own knowledge found to be positively related to the amount of help they offered to the other team. No such association was found in the low group status condition. Put differently, to the extent that the helpers were qualified, members of low-status groups were more likely to respond to a request for help, whereas members of high-status groups were more likely to offer their help. Moreover, offering help was predicted by the perceived recipient's need for help in the high status condition but not in the low status condition. This finding is interesting as it suggests that an offer of help is motivated by different factors than the provision of help in response to a direct request. Offering help to someone is potentially a very kind and useful strategy as it saves the helpee the (sometimes humiliating) step of having to ask for help. However, whether the consequences are intended or not, in its most extreme form, the offering of unsolicited help can make the recipient feel incompetent (Schneider et al., 1996) and appear incompetent in the eyes of others (Gilbert & Silvera, 1999).

Whereas the provision of help can demonstrate a group's competence, the search for help can threaten the group's image as it sends a signal that the group is lacking this competence. In the remainder of this section, we will describe three studies in which we investigated

how groups juggle the competing motives of a strong need for help on the one hand, and the psychological threat associated with seeking help on the other hand (see Täuber & van Leeuwen, 2007).

In the first of these studies, we tested the notion that publicly seeking help can be experienced as a threat to the reputation of a high-status group. For this purpose, German research participants were asked whether and to what extent German industrial organizations should seek support from and cooperate more with Chinese enterprises. We also assessed the extent to which they believed that such help seeking was visible to members of the out-group, and their feelings of threat regarding Germany's reputation as a higher-status group (based on economic standards). Findings confirmed that perceived reputation threat was positively associated with perceived visibility. Moreover, as perceived reputation threat increased, the reported need to demonstrate independence vis-à-vis the out-group increased, which, in turn, strongly suppressed the willingness to seek help. Thus, acting publicly was perceived as threatening by members of a high-status group. In line with expectations, reputation threat indirectly suppressed help seeking via an increased need to demonstrate the in-group's independence vis-à-vis the low-status out-group.

The previous study showed how members of existing high-status groups can feel threatened by the prospect of having to request help in public. We further explored this notion in two laboratory experiments, using the knowledge quiz paradigm described earlier. We hypothesized that being in need of help is particularly threatening for high-status groups. This is because, when status relations are subject to change, members of high-status groups are under pressure to keep up their high performance level in order to reaffirm their group's competence. Thus, being unable to perform without help creates a dilemma, as requesting help can damage their reputation perhaps as much as delivering a lower performance without help. In situations such as these, members of high-status groups typically suffer the burden of their good reputation, putting them under constant pressure to perform without help. Of course, members of low status also suffer psychological losses when seeking help (cf. Nadler, 2002), but their expected performance level is lower and they risk "only" the affirmation of their low-status position whereas members of high-status groups risk losing their advantaged position.

To disentangle the competing needs for the instrumental value of help and the threat associated with seeking help, we manipulated the extent to which a request for help would be visible to the helper. That is, participants (from either low- or high-status groups) could either

send requests for answers on the quiz questions to the other team (i.e., help is visible), or they could obtain the other team's answers without their knowledge (i.e., spying on the other team). Results showed that this visibility manipulation had a stronger effect on help-seeking behavior by members of high-status groups compared to members of low-status groups. That is, most answers were sought by members of high-status groups who could spy on the other team. This level of help seeking dropped significantly when members of high-status groups could only publicly request answers. The difference between requesting and spying answers was much smaller in the low group status condition. Moreover, seeking help under visible conditions was associated with higher levels of threat in the high status condition but not in the low status condition.

In a follow-up study, we included a manipulation of legitimacy of the status difference to test the assumption that it is indeed the prospect of change that is driving these effects. Help-seeking behavior (i.e., requesting an answer or spying) was manipulated within subjects in this study, thus allowing participants the choice whether to seek help and, if so, whether to send a public request or to spy. The results were in line with expectations and revealed that members of high-status groups spy more than members of low-status groups when the status difference is illegitimate but not when it is legitimate. Together, these results suggest that members of high-status groups who are in need of help experience a particularly strong dilemma between the desire to uphold their high performance level (which requires them to seek help) and the fear of damaging their reputation through seeking help.

## Discussion

Intergroup relations are often characterized by an element of competition, in which groups strive to positively distinguish themselves from other groups. The result is a tendency to favor in-group members over out-group members in various domains. Combined with the frequently held belief that "groups should take care of their own," it is easy to imagine why researchers and laypeople alike would expect to find in-group favoritism in helping. Indeed, negative attitudes toward out-groups are often accompanied by reduced tendencies to help (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic, Matoka, Johnson, & Frazier, 1997; Gaertner, Dovidio, & Johnson, 1982; Jackson & Esses, 1997; Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, & Reicher, 2002; Levine et al., 2005). Recently, however, researchers have begun to argue for a more nuanced

view of intergroup helping (e.g., Stürmer et al., 2005, 2006). People do not necessarily help in-group members more than out-group members – rather, what differs is the underlying motivation to help out-group members as opposed to in-group members. By acquiring a better insight into the motives for helping members of different groups, we can further our understanding of the conditions underlying positive intergroup behavior.

This chapter presents an overview of strategic motives for out-group helping. The need for power and independence, the need to affirm the meaningfulness of a group identity, and the need to create a positive group impression are a set of (interrelated) motives with a few characteristics that require further attention in the remainder of this chapter. First, the proposed classification into three motives should be viewed neither as exclusive, nor as all-encompassing. We acknowledge that there is a certain degree of overlap between these motives, and that there will be situations in which it is difficult to distinguish between them. For example, the quest for a meaningful identity is served to some degree by exerting power over another group and assuring its dependency upon the in-group. There may be also other strategic motives for helping that are not included in the framework outlined above. In addition, it is important to note that these motives may not be chronically present or active, but that they can be triggered under specific conditions, for example when an intergroup status inequality is considered unstable and illegitimate (Nadler & Halabi, 2006). The proposed framework should not be treated as a rigid model in which all in-group-serving motives for out-group helping can be neatly classified into one category or another; rather, it is proposed here to help researchers and practitioners to recognize and interpret various motives which contribute to those forms of out-group helping that can be viewed to be in the in-group's interest.

Another important characteristic of the strategic motives listed in this chapter is the fact that they are all, by definition, located at the level of the in-group. This notion has important consequences with respect to potential interventions aimed at promoting intergroup tolerance. Researchers operating in the domain of problematic intergroup relations have often suggested that one way to promote positive intergroup attitudes and behavior is by inducing a perception of the aggregate as one common in-group instead of two clearly distinct groups (e.g., Gaertner et al., 1999; Levine et al., 2002; Levine et al., 2005). Indeed, to the extent that a reluctance to help out-group members originates from negative out-group attitudes or a mere tendency to favor the in-group, it could be very effective if group members were

made aware of the fact that, at a higher level, they all belong to the same inclusive group. As a nice illustration of this point, Levine et al. (2005, Study 2) showed that Manchester United supporters who were induced to think of themselves in terms of a higher-order inclusive category (soccer fans) were equally likely to offer help to Liverpool fans as to Manchester United fans in an emergency, whereas both were helped significantly more than strangers who could not be identified as soccer fans. By contrast, when their perceptual focus was on their membership as Manchester United fans, they were less likely to offer help to Liverpool fans compared to Manchester fans (Study 1).

In Levine's research, a salient in-group–out-group distinction resulted in the tendency to favor in-group members over out-group members with respect to offering help in an emergency. By recategorizing to a higher level of inclusiveness (soccer fans in general), in-group favoritism was eliminated (or rather, diverted to a higher level). However, when helping an out-group is viewed to directly benefit the in-group, as is the case with the strategic motives for out-group helping listed in this chapter, the situation changes. In the case of strategic motives for out-group helping, diverting attention away from the in-group–out-group categorization to a more inclusive common identity should reduce the extent to which helping serves to fulfill any of these motives. As a consequence, recategorizing to a more inclusive level could reduce, rather than increase, out-group helping. For example, in the research by Hopkins et al. (2007) described earlier in this chapter, Scottish participants were more inclined to help the Welsh in an attempt to counteract the English stereotype of the Scots as mean. The helping behavior thus served to communicate a more positive image of the Scots. To serve this strategic purpose, it appears crucial that Scottish–English categorization is salient, for only then can the behavior be perceived as descriptive of the Scots (and not the English, or British citizens in general). When the motive for helping out-group members is located at the in-group level, out-group helping should be promoted by enhancing the salience of this in-group–out-group categorization, while recategorizing to the level of a common in-group should reduce the willingness to help (former) out-group members. Future research might focus on empirical tests of this line of reasoning.

Another characteristic of the strategic motives listed in this chapter is the fact that they all imply that helping out-group members is beneficial to the in-group. However, there are differences in the extent to which this in-group benefit is accompanied by out-group harm, which ultimately has important consequences for the extent to which it is desirable to promote these motives for helping. In the tsunami

study, for example (van Leeuwen, 2007), participants wanted their government to help the victimized countries particularly in those domains that were uniquely and positively associated with their threatened national identity. To the extent that this type of help is useful for the recipient it can be considered as a win/win situation – the out-group receives instrumental help, and the benefits for the in-group (in reaffirming a threatened national identity) are not at the expense of the out-group. Other situations with a win/win potential are those where helping is used to create an impression of the in-group as warm and prosocial. For example, helping visiting students from another university find their way to an information center (van Leeuwen & Oostenbrink, 2005) is beneficial both to the visiting student and to the helper in terms of generating a positive impression of the in-group. Although it is certainly possible for groups to compete over which one is the most warm and kind, occasions where helping as a demonstration of such warmth is experienced by the recipient as damaging and hostile are probably rare (in fact, we can think of no examples). More specifically, portraying the in-group as warm and kind by helping another group does not automatically suggest that the recipient group is cold or unkind.

The situation is different when the competition is not about which group is the most kind, but about which group is the most competent. This is because helping another group with the aim of demonstrating the in-group's competence can simultaneously communicate that the recipient of help lacks this particular competence (at least in the eyes of the helper). For the helper, this only further serves their cause, as the in-group, by comparison, is viewed as more competent. The helpee, on the other hand, is facing a dilemma in which accepting help may be beneficial in instrumental terms, but it will also be at the expense of their group's image. Probably the most detrimental motive for out-group helping occurs when help is used to gain power or control over the out-group. Receiving unsolicited support causes stress (Deelstra et al., 2003) and lowers competence-based self-esteem (Schneider et al., 1996).

It seems rather clear that under normal circumstances help should not be offered or provided when it is psychologically harmful to the recipient, to the point where the help is rejected if possible or other (feasible) forms of help are greatly preferred. However, it is nonetheless worthwhile to consider the potential merits of those forms of strategic out-group help that have the potential of benefiting both the provider and the recipient of help. When caution is taken to respect the recipient's needs – both at the instrumental level and at the

psychological level – there is great potential in simultaneously acknowledging the added value of helping for the helper’s needs. This is because acts of help that reflect genuine altruism are difficult to accomplish and even harder to sustain – perhaps even more so at the intergroup level where behavior tends to be more competitive in nature (Wolf, Insko, Kirchner, & Wildschut, 2008). Moreover, there are limits to the effectiveness of other tools that may promote out-group helping. Decategorizing, defined as viewing out-group members as separate individuals in order to overcome in-group bias, is difficult to accomplish with large out-groups or when help cannot easily be targeted at separate individuals. Along similar lines, recategorizing or emphasizing common identities whilst downplaying subgroup identities is not always possible, and often undesirable. For example, departments within an organization can have different and sometimes conflicting goals, such as production and sales. Downplaying the different departments’ needs in favor of a shared cooperative goal not only distracts people from accomplishing these (functional) goals, it often backfires and promotes intergroup conflict in a collective attempt to (re)establish a distinctive group identity (Eggins, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2002). It is therefore important that we further our study of the conditions under which people are motivated to help out-group members – not because they are viewed as separate individuals, not because they are viewed as fellow in-group members at a higher level of inclusiveness, but exactly because they are seen for what they are: out-group members.