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Original Research Reports

Agentic and Communal Interaction Goals in Conflictual Intergroup Relations

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Abstract

Members of conflicting groups experience threats to different identity dimensions, resulting in the need to restore the aspect of identity that was threatened. Do these needs translate into specific goals in social interactions? In the present research, we examined the hypotheses that (1) experiencing one's ingroup as illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized arouses agentic goals (to act and appear assertive and confident) when interacting with the advantaged or victimizing group, while (2) experiencing one's ingroup as illegitimately advantaged or perpetrating transgressions arouses communal goals (to act and appear warm and trustworthy) when interacting with the disadvantaged or victimized group. Study 1 (N = 391) generally supported both hypotheses across diverse intergroup contexts involving gender, national/ethnic, and consumer identities. Study 2 (N = 122) replicated this pattern in a context of occupational identities. Study 2 further showed that the effect of ingroup role on agentic and communal intergroup goals was not moderated by participants' general dispositional preferences for agentic and communal goals in interpersonal interactions, thus demonstrating how ingroup role exerts a distinct and robust influence on goals for interactions with other groups. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: needs-based model, interaction goals, intergroup conflict, agency, communion

Non-Technical Summary

Background

How people want to interact (e.g. acting friendly or acting dominant) with members of other groups may not only be influenced by their personality (i.e., stable preferences for certain kinds of behavior), but also by the social role of their ingroup. Especially when groups are in conflict, their members should be influenced by their group's role of being either a victim or disadvantaged, or being a perpetrator or illegitimately advantaged when interacting with the respective other group.

Why was this study done?

With our work, we build on previous research which provided preliminary support for the assumption that group members who feel that their group is treated unfairly or even victimized by another group will try to regain power and control by acting dominantly, whereas group members who feel that their group has harmed another group or enjoys illegitimate advantage will act in friendly ways in order to be accepted by the other group despite their immoral actions or illegitimate advantage. Since previous research tested these assumptions only indirectly or only for very specific situations, we aimed to show that very different groups in very different contexts may pursue similar goals as soon as they feel that their group is either victimized/disadvantaged or perpetrating transgressions/advantaged.

What did the researchers do and find?

We conducted two online surveys in which participants were reminded of their membership in various real-world groups. Specifically, we referred to situations in which one of participants' groups was in conflict with another group (e.g. we reminded participants of their German nationality and referred to situations in which Germany was in conflict with the U.S. or Greece). Then, we asked participants how important it was to them to behave in certain ways, for example to be friendly or dominant towards the respective other group. Our results showed that when participants felt that their group was victimized or disadvantaged, it was important to them to behave dominantly toward the perpetrator or advantaged group, whereas when participants felt that their group was perpetrating transgressions or illegitimately advantaged, it was important to them to act in friendly ways towards the victimized or disadvantaged group. Furthermore we showed that the effect of the ingroup's social role was independent of participants stable preferences to be friendly or dominant with other people, that is, even participants who were chronically low in dominant behavior in their interpersonal encounters responded with increased dominance when they were reminded of their membership in a group that was victimized or disadvantaged.

What do these findings mean?

Our findings highlight the importance of the social context for peoples' behavioral goals; that is, identifying as a member of a certain group will influence what kind of behavior is viewed as right and important. When feeling that one's group is treated unfairly or even victimized by another group, people will try to regain power and control by acting dominantly, whereas when feeling that one's group has harmed another group or enjoys illegitimate advantage (e.g. has greater access to certain resources), people will act in friendly ways in order to be accepted by the other group despite their immoral actions or illegitimate advantage. These results illustrate how groups want to interact with each other after a conflict or in the face of social inequality. Thus, the results will inform efforts of mediation, conflict resolution, and reconciliation.

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This article examines how group members prefer their group to interact with other groups when their intergroup relations are characterized by transgressions or illegitimate inequality. We pursue the idea that a group's social role might determine their interaction goals across diverse contexts. For example, women earning less than men showing the same performance, consumers perpetuating inhumane working conditions in low-wage countries by buying cheap textile products, and German authorities failing to investigate right-wing violence against immigrants – all of these examples refer to intergroup conflicts that differ in many ways but potentially share psychological consequences.

One characteristic of such conflicts is that, besides the competition about tangible resources, the conflicting parties experience threats to basic psychological needs, such as the need for positive esteem and a worthy identity (Burton, 1969). Kelman (1999) differentiates two major types of threats that can encumber the positive identities

of the involved parties during a conflict: “the view of one’s self as weak and vulnerable, and the view of one’s self as violent and unjust” (p. 593). This twofold conceptualization of feeling weak and vulnerable on the one hand or violent and unjust on the other hand aligns with the two fundamental dimensions of social cognition (the “Big Two”) – namely, (deficient) agency, which refers to competence, assertiveness, and decisiveness, and communion, which refers to benevolence, trustworthiness, and morality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005).

The parties involved in a conflict typically differ in the extent to which they view themselves as weak and vulnerable, that is, experience a threat to their agentic identity, or as violent and unjust, that is, experience a threat to their communal identity. Specifically, according to the needs-based model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015), a group’s social role within a conflict determines the specific type of identity threat experienced by its members. Originally developed for contexts characterized by direct violence (i.e., where conflicting groups concretely aggress against each other; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009), the model posits that victims and perpetrators experience different threats to their ingroup’s positive identities following transgressions: Whereas members of victimized groups experience threat to their agentic identity – namely, sense of power, control, and self-determination, members of perpetrator groups experience threat to their communal identity – namely, sense of being morally adequate actors, who are socially accepted by their community (as social exclusion is the sanction imposed upon those who violate moral standards; Tavuchis, 1991).

Similar threats are assumed for members of disadvantaged and advantaged groups in context of structural inequality (i.e., contexts that are characterized by “systematic inequalities in the distribution of economic and political resources”, Christie, 1997, p. 323). Consistent with this idea, the stereotype content model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) posits that disadvantaged groups are often perceived as warm but incompetent (representing a threat to their agentic identity), whereas advantaged groups are often perceived as competent but cold and immoral (representing a threat to their communal identity). Importantly, members of advantaged and disadvantaged social groups seem to experience these divergent identity threats especially when they perceive the disparity between groups as illegitimate (Shnabel & Ullrich, 2013; Siem, von Oettingen, Mummendey, & Nadler, 2013). If status differences are perceived as normative and justified, then intergroup relations can be described as non-conflictual and group-based disparities should be experienced as less threatening to the social identities of advantaged and disadvantaged group members (e.g., Caddick, 1982; Tajfel, 1978). Perceiving that one’s group is in an advantaged or disadvantaged position for illegitimate reasons, however, should make group members vulnerable to social identity threats (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979) with members of advantaged groups likely experiencing a threat to their communal identity, and members of disadvantaged groups likely experiencing a threat to their agentic identity. Supporting this reasoning is the finding that in interracial (but not intra-racial) interactions black and Latino-Americans (lower status groups in the U.S.) were motivated to be respected, whereas white Americans (a higher status group) were motivated to be liked (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010).

Obviously, contexts of direct violence and structural inequality differ in many respects, such as the nature and severity of transgressions. Being wounded in a military operation is not the same as being viewed as incompetent and discriminated against in an employment setting. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two types of contexts is not always clear-cut (e.g., do police shootings of unarmed black Americans represent direct violence or structural inequality?). Moreover, according to the Big Two theorizing (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014), in both types of contexts the threats posed to the identities of the involved groups fall under the overarching categories of agency (for victim

and disadvantaged groups) and communion (for perpetrator and advantaged groups) (see [SimanTov-Nachlieli, Shnabel, & Nadler, 2013](#)).

According to social identity theory, feeling threatened regarding one's positive social identity results in the motivation to overcome this threat and restore a positive self-concept ([Tajfel & Turner, 1979](#)). Building on this idea, the needs-based model ([Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, 2015](#)) highlights that for a positive identity, *both* the agentic and the communal identity dimensions need to be unscathed. One way of restoring a *specific* threatened identity-dimension is to highlight characteristics of one's ingroup that are associated with this dimension in the interaction with the respective outgroup. For example, being motivated to restore the ingroup's agentic identity, one might want to act and appear assertive, decisive, and confident, whereas being motivated to restore the ingroup's communal identity, one might want to show concern for the other parties' welfare or willingness to compromise. This reasoning accords with self-determination theory ([Deci & Ryan, 2000](#)) which posits that people generally strive to satisfy their basic psychological needs in their actions and are motivated to behave in ways that they perceive as reflecting who they want to be. In the present research we focused on these agentic and communal "interaction goals" and how they are affected by the ingroup's perceived social role of being either illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized, or illegitimately advantaged or perpetrating, respectively.

There is some indirect evidence suggesting that members of victimized and perpetrating groups pursue different interaction goals. To illustrate, in a study assigning participants' ingroups to the social roles of either victim or perpetrator (e.g., by reminding Jewish and German participants of the Holocaust, see [Shnabel et al., 2009, Study 2](#)), participants read messages allegedly sent by representatives of the respective other party. Those messages reaffirmed the participants' ingroup's agency or communion: Whereas the agency-reaffirming message mentioned participants' ingroup's "right to be strong and proud in their country and have the power to determine their own fate", the communion-reaffirming message highlighted moral-social acceptance for participants' ingroup and understanding that "it is not easy for [participants' ingroup] to live with the past". From perpetrators' more positive reactions (i.e., higher willingness to reconcile with the outgroup) to communion-reaffirming compared to agency-reaffirming messages it was concluded that they experienced a heightened need to restore their communal identity, whereas from victims' more positive reactions to agency-reaffirming (compared to communion-reaffirming) messages it was concluded that they experienced a heightened need to restore their agentic identity. The same approach was successfully used in contexts of structural inequality, referring to (Study 1) or manipulating (Study 2) the status of student participants' universities by pointing to unequal chances for admission to graduate programs ([Shnabel, Ullrich, Nadler, Dovidio, & Aydin, 2013](#)).

An advantage of this technique is that it points to a useful intervention in conflictual intergroup relations: Sending identity-restoring messages can ameliorate identity threats, which in turn can improve intergroup relations. A limitation of this approach is that the assumed needs have only been *inferred* from participants' responses to agency- or communion-reaffirming messages. Making such an inference is problematic, given the distinction between processes of identity *definition* – cognitively defining oneself as a symbolic object with particular characteristics and descriptive labels, and identity *enactment* – behaviorally acting out aspects of one's identity ([Vignoles, 2011](#)). For example, perceiving oneself as a powerless victim may lead to a heightened need for agency (as predicted by the needs-based model), but at the same time to non-agentic (submissive, unassertive) behavior that is consistent with the labeling of oneself as a victim (see for example, inertia effects following the experience of humiliation; [Ginges & Atran, 2008](#)). Hence, a direct empirical examination of group members' interaction goals is necessary.

Preliminary evidence for an effect of social role on people's communal and agentic interaction goals comes from two experiments conducted by Siem et al. (2013) in contexts of structural inequality. Both experiments manipulated status differences and their legitimacy. The first experiment used a minimal group paradigm, while the second experiment referred to status differences between real world groups, namely clinical psychologists and social workers (a lower status group in this occupational context) or psychiatrists (a higher status group). In the study that used the minimal group paradigm, illegitimacy was manipulated by giving one group an unfair advantage (i.e., permission to use a calculator in a math test) over the other (vs. equal conditions); in the study that used real world groups, illegitimacy was manipulated by describing the status differences as unfair (e.g. by referring to the similar tasks conducted by the different professional groups) or fair (e.g. by referring to the different training of the different professional groups). As expected, only in the illegitimacy conditions did disadvantaged group members express a higher need for agency and a lower need for communion compared to advantaged group members. While these studies provide tentative support for our assumptions, they are not without limitations. Specifically, they relied on ad-hoc created, study-specific measures of needs, and focused on only two different intergroup contexts (one of which was a somewhat artificial minimal group context). For contexts of direct violence, there is no direct evidence for the effect of social role on interaction goals at all.

In summary, our work builds on previous research which showed only indirectly that members of victimized and perpetrator groups experience different goals (to be agentic or communal, respectively) following a conflict depending on their group's social role (Shnabel et al., 2009) and on research which provided preliminary support for the notion that members of illegitimately (dis-)advantaged groups experience very similar goals, again, depending on the social role of their group (Siem et al., 2013). With the present research, we aimed to test the robustness of the supposed effect by examining two questions: First, does the effect of social role on agentic and communal goals occur in different contexts (which, however, all meet the prerequisites for the applicability of the needs-based model hypotheses, that is illegitimate harm or inequity), and second, does the effect of social role on agentic and communal goals occur regardless of individuals' habitual interpersonal interaction goals (which may be opposed to the interaction goals individuals are predicted to pursue as members of a specific group).

The Present Research

We conducted two studies using different contexts to submit our main hypotheses, derived from the needs-based model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015), to two different critical tests. Reflecting the importance of systematic conceptual replications for external validity and construct validity (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), the first test addressed the generality of the model's prediction that – in intergroup interactions – members of illegitimately disadvantaged or victim groups will have stronger agentic but weaker communal goals than members of the corresponding illegitimately advantaged or perpetrator groups. Previous research using ad-hoc measures has provided initial support for this prediction in a context of structural inequality (Siem et al., 2013). Study 1 extended this research by systematically testing the influence of ingroup role on agentic and communal interaction goals across five highly diverse contexts of intergroup transgressions or illegitimate inequality using a rigorous, previously validated measure of interaction goals (i.e., the Circumplex Scales of Intergroup Goals; Locke, 2014).

Study 2 aimed to replicate and extend Study 1. Specifically, Study 2 tested whether and how the effect of the ingroup's role (i.e., illegitimately disadvantaged or advantaged) on group members' goals for intergroup interactions is influenced by their *general* preferences for pursuing agentic and communal goals in their interpersonal interactions. Social categorization theory predicts that when membership in a particular social group becomes salient,

a process of depersonalization occurs such that people adopt that group's norms and values (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, in intergroup contexts that highlight group membership, one's intergroup goals should be determined by the ingroup's role in that situation. However, the question remains as to whether, beyond this main effect of ingroup role suggested by self-categorization theory and the needs-based model, one's personal disposition to pursue agentic or communal goals moderates the effect of ingroup role. To examine this question, which has never been empirically tested before, we assessed participants' dispositional tendencies to seek agency and communion in interpersonal interactions before manipulating their ingroup's social role. Furthermore, as a partial replication of Siem et al.'s (2013) work, Study 2 experimentally manipulated the (il)legitimacy of status differences. We expected to replicate the described effect of social role on agentic and communal goals only if status differences are perceived as illegitimate.

Together, the present studies aimed to (a) provide a systematic and comprehensive account of how intergroup interaction goals depend on which roles groups occupy within contexts of illegitimate intergroup inequality and transgressions, and (b) explore whether and how goal pursuit at the interpersonal level affects goal pursuit at the group level.

Study 1

Using participants' actual membership in various "real world" groups, Study 1 tested the prediction that participants reminded of their membership in an illegitimately disadvantaged or victim group would prefer their group pursue more agentic but less communal interaction goals than participants reminded of their membership in the corresponding illegitimately advantaged or perpetrator group across five diverse intergroup contexts involving gender, national/ethnic, and consumer identities.

Method

Participants and Design

Psychology students ($N = 404$) at a large German public distance teaching university voluntarily participated in an online survey in exchange for course credit. Thirteen participants were excluded from analyses because they either did not complete the survey or indicated that they did not respond seriously; thus, the final sample included 391 participants (304 female, 87 male, $M_{\text{age}} = 32.22$, $SD = 9.56$). While 282 participants were of German descent, 109 participants indicated that either they or their parents or grandparents were immigrants.

Participants' nationality/ethnicity and gender were used to assign them to the different cells of the 2 (Role [illegitimately disadvantaged/victim, illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator]) \times 5 (Context [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]) between-subjects design¹. Contexts referred to discrimination of immigrants in Germany (Context 1), right-wing violence (Context 2), an international transgression (Context 3), exploitative consumption (Context 4), and gender discrimination (Context 5) (for detailed descriptions of the context variable and its operationalization, see below; for a verbatim description, see Table A1a). In the discrimination of immigrants context, 51 migrant participants were assigned to the illegitimately disadvantaged condition (41 female, 10 male) and 36 non-migrant participants to the illegitimately advantaged condition (28 female, 8 male). In the right-wing violence context, 58 migrant participants were assigned to the victim condition (49 female, 9 male) and 40 non-migrant participants to the perpetrator condition (31 female, 9 male). In the remaining conditions, which only included non-migrant participants, there were 28

participants in the victim condition (21 female, 7 male) and 32 participants in the perpetrator condition (24 female, 8 male) in the international transgression context, 30 participants in the victim condition (22 female, 8 male) and 41 participants in the perpetrator condition (32 female, 9 male) in the exploitative consumption context, and 30 female participants in the illegitimately disadvantaged condition and 11 male participants in the illegitimately advantaged condition in the gender discrimination context.

Note that while Contexts 1, 2 and 5 used participants' membership in natural groups (i.e., immigrants vs. non-migrants; women vs. men) and should therefore be considered as quasi-experimental, in Contexts 3 and 4 all participants were randomly assigned to a condition that presented their ingroup as either illegitimately disadvantaged/victimized or illegitimately advantaged/perpetrating transgressions.ⁱⁱ

Procedure and Measures

After providing demographic information, participants read short one-sentence statements which reminded them of their ingroup's role in the various contexts. The contexts referenced several controversies in the German media involving conflictual intergroup relations characterized by illegitimate group inequality or transgressions. Following the manipulation, participants completed the following measures using 5-point scales (1 = *not true at all/not important* to 5 = *completely true/very important*). At the end of the survey, participants were fully debriefed.

Role and context manipulation — The intergroup conflicts used in all five contexts were heavily covered by the German media at the time we collected the data (summer 2014). Even though the five contexts were very diverse, the manipulation texts were formally identical. Each consisted of two sentences of the following form: "As you know [clarification of relationship between the participant's ingroup and the outgroup; e.g., "immigrants are disadvantaged compared to Germans"]. How should we [participant's ingroup; e.g., "Germans"] behave towards [respective outgroup; e.g., "immigrants"] in your opinion given this fact?" Because the needs-based models' hypotheses can be transferred from contexts of direct violence to contexts of structural inequality only when the groups' inequality is perceived as illegitimate, contexts referring to group inequality involved inequalities we expected most participants would perceive as illegitimate. [Table A1a](#) presents the verbatim manipulations in all conditions. Below, for the benefit of readers who are unfamiliar with the five contexts that we used, we describe each of them in more detail. Note, however, that the participants read only the short sentence described above and not the detailed descriptions below.

The first context referenced the relationship between immigrants and the non-migrant majority in Germany. The manipulation text reminded participants of the general structural disadvantage of immigrants compared to non-migrants, thus assigning non-migrant participants to the advantaged role and immigrant participants to the disadvantaged role by using the identical manipulation text in both role conditions. At the time we collected the data, the discrimination of immigrants – especially in the job market – was heavily discussed in the German media (e.g., [Lüpke-Narberhaus \[2014, March 26: "Keiner will einen Ali im Team haben"/"Nobody wants to work with Ali"\]; "Joe Biden nennt Deutschland ausländerfeindlich"/"Joe Biden calls Germany xenophobic" \[2014, June 11\]](#)).

The second context referred to the concrete transgressions of the far-right German terrorist group "Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund" (NSU; national-socialist underground) that murdered nine immigrants from Turkey and Greece between 2000 and 2006. In the course of the trial against NSU, massive investigative blunders by German authorities were revealed and intelligence agencies were criticized for underestimating the threat of right-wing extremism and for failing to convey its findings more publicly. Importantly, the manipulation text in that condition

referenced the investigative shortcomings rather than the NSU murders itself, because we assumed that most German participants would identify with German authorities (and feel guilty for their failures) but not with the terrorist group. As in the first context, non-migrant participants were assigned to the perpetrator role and immigrant participants to the victim role by using the identical manipulation text in both role conditions.

The third context reminded (non-migrant) German participants of international transgressions in which Germany assumed either a victim or a perpetrator role. The victim condition involved the United States National Security Agency (NSA) espionage scandal during which the NSA bugged Angela Merkel's mobile phone. The perpetrator condition involved Germany's refusal to pay reparations for 200 Greek civilians who were killed by the Nazis during WWII. Similar to the second context, this condition referenced German authorities' refusal to pay the reparations and not the killings itself. We acknowledge that the situations in the two conditions of Context 3 differ in several ways beyond the social role of the ingroup. Nevertheless, they are comparable in that both cases referred to a concrete transgression involving another nation (i.e., USA or Greece).

The fourth context asked German participants to think about their identity as consumers. In the victim condition, they were reminded of a recent media revelation that Google illegally used information involuntarily provided by its consumers. Thus, this condition addressed a potential threat to participants' control (over their privacy) and exposure to unjust treatment, constituting a victim position. In the perpetrator condition, participants were reminded of the consequences, in terms of inhumane working conditions, caused by their consumption of cheap textile products from low-wage countries. As in Context 3, victim and perpetrator conditions differ in several ways, but are nevertheless comparable in that both cases referred to consumer identities.

Finally, the fifth context was identical for both advantaged (men) and disadvantaged (women) roles and concerned women unfairly earning less than men showing the same performance.

To make sure that the participants understood the referenced contexts and the role their ingroup played, we asked them to indicate their knowledge about it using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *no knowledge at all* to 5 = *very good knowledge*. In all contexts, participants' knowledge varied around the scale's midpoint, reflecting "average knowledge". The only exception was Context 3 (Germans' refusal to pay reparations for perpetration in Greece during WWII), in which the average score was below the midpoint ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.82$), reflecting only "little knowledge."

Manipulation check — Participants indicated their agreement with two items assessing perceptions of the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role ("In this context, I see my group as having the perpetrator role," "My group has acted immorally in this context"; $r(354) = .66$, $p < .001$) and two items measuring perceptions of the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim role ("In this context, I see my group as having the victim role," "My group has been treated unjustly in this context"; $r(346) = .70$, $p < .001$). In order to create one manipulation check index, we subtracted the averaged illegitimately disadvantaged/victim score from the averaged illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator score so that negative values reflect greater salience of the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim role (i.e., feeling part of a victimized or illegitimately disadvantaged group) and positive values reflect greater salience of the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role (i.e., feeling part of a perpetrator or illegitimately advantaged group).

Because perceiving the inequality between the groups as illegitimate is a precondition for the applicability of hypotheses derived from the needs-based model (Siem et al., 2013), we chose contexts that we expected most people would perceive as involving illegitimate harms or inequities. To check whether the precondition of illegiti-

macy perceptions was met, we assessed perceived legitimacy of the described contexts with a single item using a 5-point scale (1 = *not legitimate* to 5 = *absolutely legitimate*; see Table A1b for the items, which were adapted to each respective study context).

Interaction goals — To assess agentic and communal interaction goals, we used the Circumplex Scales of Intergroup Goals (CSIG; Locke, 2014), a 32-item measure that assesses a diversity of goals reflecting all possible mixtures of agentic and communal tendencies and that has been successfully applied to a variety of intergroup contexts (Aydin, Ullrich, Siem, Locke, & Shnabel, 2018; Locke, 2014; Locke & Heller, 2017; SimanTov-Nachlieli, Shnabel, Aydin, & Ullrich, 2018). The following text preceded the CSIG items, and varied as a function of experimental condition: “*When we [ingroup] interact with [outgroup], it is important to me that...* e.g. “...we show concern for their welfare”, “...we understand their point of view” (example communal items) or “...we are assertive”, “...we appear confident” (example agentic items). Participants rated the importance of each goal on 5-point scales ranging from 1 = *not important* to 5 = *very important*.

The items were translated into German by two independent translators; the final version was back-translated by a native speaker, reaching a very high correspondence with the original version, verified by its author. Agentic and communal dimension scores theoretically range from -4 to +4; in Study 1, participants’ agency scores ranged from -2.14 to 2.65 ($M = 0.25$, $SD = 0.78$) and their communion scores ranged from -0.56 to 4.00 ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.83$). The reliabilities of the agentic and communal dimensions were .83 and .88, respectively, and the CSIG’s fit to a circumplex model was significant (that is, items representing similar goals were more strongly positively correlated than items representing different goals. For detailed information on how we tested the circumplex structure and calculated agentic and communal dimension scores, see <https://osf.io/zatfb/>).

Results

The data (<https://osf.io/zexg3/>) and the syntax (<https://osf.io/pqncx/>) we used in Study 1 are available at the Open Science Framework. See Table A2a for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the independent and main dependent variables used in Study 1. As explained above, our aim was to probe the generalizability of the social role effect on interaction goals across different intergroup contexts, which would be statistically reflected in a significant main effect of social role and either a non-significant or an ordinal interaction between role and context. In an ordinal interaction, the magnitude of the social role effect would vary across the different context levels, but – in contrast to a disordinal interaction – the direction of the social role effect would be the same at all context conditions (see Aiken & West, 1991). In order to test this interaction, the data from all five contexts were combined in one analysis. A further advantage of this joint analysis of Contexts 1-5 is the higher statistical power to detect the expected effect of role on agentic and communal interaction goals. We used Bonferroni correction to compensate for the increased probability of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis when carrying out multiple post hoc comparisons.

Manipulation Check

To check the effectiveness of the role manipulation, we subjected our manipulation check index to a 2 (Role [illegitimately disadvantaged/victim, illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator]) \times 5 (Context [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]) ANOVA which revealed a significant main effect of role, $F(1, 343) = 127.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$, and a significant role \times context interaction, $F(4, 343) = 7.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. The main effect of context was not significant, $F(4, 343) = 2.16$, $p = .073$, $\eta^2 = .03$. All post hoc comparisons were in the expected direction; that is, all means in the illegitimately

disadvantaged/victim conditions were negative, indicating a greater salience of the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim role, whereas all means in the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator conditions were positive, indicating a greater salience of the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role. Differences between the groups were all significant, except in Context 1 (see Table 1), where our manipulation failed to induce different role perceptions in illegitimately disadvantaged and advantaged participants (immigrants and non-migrants, respectively).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Social Role and Effect Sizes of the Social Role Manipulation (Study 1)

Context	Disadvantaged role			Advantaged role			<i>t</i> (347)	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
1	51	-0.04	0.89	36	0.53	0.77	2.27	.024	0.08, 1.06	0.50
2	58	-0.38	1.07	40	0.37	1.16	3.17	.002	0.29, 1.22	0.66
3	28	-1.09	1.19	32	0.79	1.51	6.31	< .001	1.29, 2.47	1.64
4	30	-1.05	0.92	41	1.05	1.13	7.56	< .001	1.56, 2.65	1.84
5	30	-1.52	1.54	11	0.73	1.52	5.57	< .001	1.45, 3.04	1.96

Note. The disadvantaged conditions subsume illegitimately disadvantaged and victimized roles, and the advantaged conditions subsume illegitimately advantaged and perpetrator roles. Due to Bonferroni correction, only simple effects test with a *p*-value less than .01 are considered significant. Effect sizes are based on the root of the mean squared error from the ANOVA, which puts all simple main effects on a common metric.

We also checked whether the precondition of illegitimacy perceptions was met. With scores ranging from *M* = 1.23, *SD* = 0.43 to *M* = 2.88, *SD* = 0.97 on a 5-point scale, participants in all conditions perceived the described contexts as rather illegitimate. In eight of ten conditions, perceived legitimacy was significantly below the scale midpoint, the exceptions being immigrant participants assigned to the victim condition in Context 2 (failure to investigate right-wing violence context) and non-migrant German participants assigned to the perpetrator condition in Context 3 (transgression against Greek civilians context). Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of perceived legitimacy in all experimental conditions.ⁱⁱⁱ

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Legitimacy of Group Inequality (Study 1)

Role	<i>n</i>	Context 1		Context 2		Context 3		Context 4		Context 5	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disadvantaged/victim	197	2.70	0.81	2.88	0.98	1.75	0.84	2.63	0.89	1.23	0.43
Advantaged/perpetrator	160	2.58	0.77	2.64	0.90	2.75	0.92	2.49	0.75	1.64	0.81

Agentic Interaction Goals

To examine the effect of role and context on agentic interaction goals, a 2 × 5 ANOVA was conducted. The results revealed significant main effects of role, $F(1, 347) = 142.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$, and context, $F(4, 347) = 7.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. Furthermore, the two-way interaction was significant, $F(4, 347) = 8.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, indicating that the effect of role varied across contexts. Figure 1 illustrates the nature of this ordinal interaction (in which the effect of role, albeit in different size, was in the same direction in all five contexts).

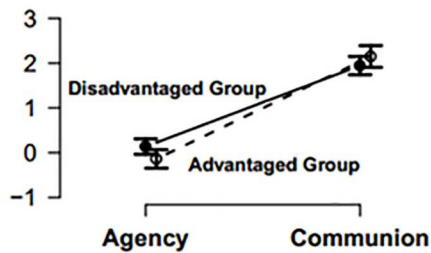
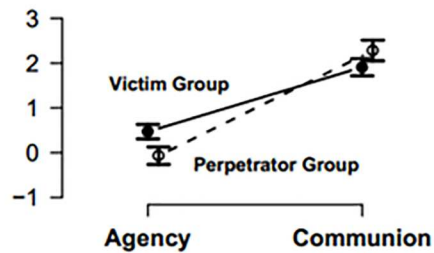
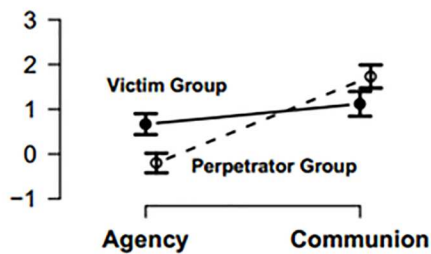
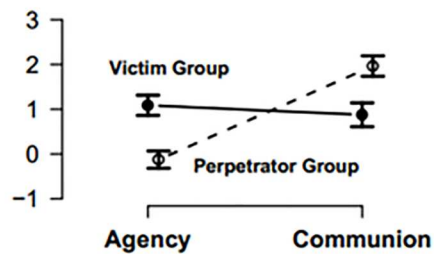
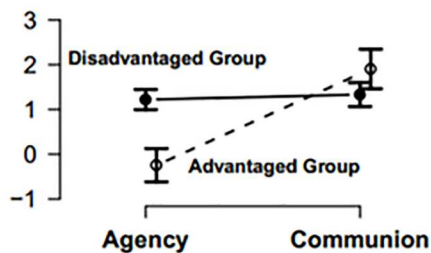
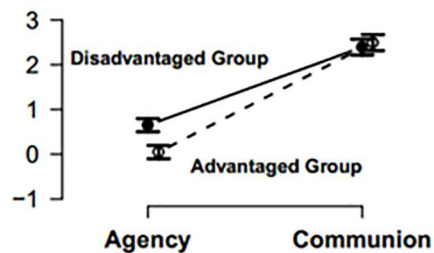
Study 1: Discrimination of Immigrants**Study 1: Right-Wing Violence****Study 1: International Transgressions****Study 1: Consumer Relations****Study 1: Gender Discrimination****Study 2: Occupational Status Disparity**

Figure 1. Means and 95% confidence intervals of agency and communion vector scores in the different contexts of Study 1 and 2.

Note. For the sake of comparability with contexts of Study 1, un-residualized scores are shown for Study 2.

All post hoc comparisons were in the expected direction (see Table 3 for means and standard deviations) and all were significant except for Context 1 (discrimination of immigrants). That is, participants reminded of the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim role of their ingroup expressed stronger agentic interaction goals than participants reminded of the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role of their ingroup. Removing the participants who scored above the midpoint of the perceived illegitimacy scale ($n = 39$, and two participants with missing values) did not change the pattern of results.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Agentic and Communal Goals and Effect Sizes of the Social Role Manipulation (Study 1 [Contexts 1-5], and Study 2)

Context	Agentic Goals								Communal Goals							
	Disadvantaged		Advantaged		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>d</i>	Disadvantaged		Advantaged		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Study 1																
1	0.14	0.54	-0.14	0.59	2.02	.044	0.01, 0.55	0.44	1.94	0.80	2.15	0.72	-1.26	.208	-0.52, 0.11	-0.27
2	0.47	0.58	-0.07	0.63	4.17	< .001	0.28, 0.79	0.86	1.91	0.92	2.28	0.70	-2.44	.015 ^a	-0.68, -0.07	-0.50
3	0.67	0.64	-0.20	0.66	5.33	< .001	0.55, 1.19	1.38	1.12	0.70	1.73	0.73	-3.18	.002	-0.99, -0.23	-0.82
4	1.09	0.50	-0.13	0.81	8.03	< .001	0.92, 1.51	1.93	0.88	0.64	1.96	0.68	-6.08	<.001	-1.44, -0.74	-1.47
5	1.22	0.73	-0.25	0.50	6.63	< .001	1.03, 1.90	2.33	1.33	0.62	1.90	0.46	-2.18	.030	-1.09, -0.06	-0.77
Study 2																
	0.65	0.50	0.05	0.51	6.62	< .001	0.42, 0.78	1.21	2.39	0.66	2.49	0.75	-0.78	.434	-0.35, 0.15	-0.16

Note. The disadvantaged conditions subsume illegitimately disadvantaged and victimized roles, and the advantaged conditions subsume illegitimately advantaged and perpetrator roles. Study 1: $df = 347$. Due to Bonferroni correction, only simple effects test with a p -value less than .01 are considered significant. Effect sizes are based on the root of the mean squared error from the ANOVA, which puts all simple main effects on a common metric. Study 2: $df = 120$. Effect sizes are determined by calculating the mean difference between un-residualized agency and communion intergroup scores of advantaged and disadvantaged participants and dividing the result by the pooled standard deviation.

^aRemoving the participants who scored above the midpoint of the perceived illegitimacy scale led to a significant contrast between victimized and perpetrator participants with regard to communal goals in Context 2 (victim condition: $M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.94$, perpetrator condition: $M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.70$; $t(306) = -2.81$, $p = .005$).

Communal Interaction Goals

For communal intergroup goals, a 2×5 ANOVA revealed significant main effects of role, $F(1, 347) = 43.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$, and context, $F(4, 347) = 14.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$, and a significant two-way interaction, $F(4, 347) = 3.77$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .04$. In two contexts (i.e., international transgressions [Context 3], and exploitative consumer relations [Context 4]), participants reminded of the perpetrator role of their ingroup showed significantly higher communal intergroup goals compared to participants reminded of the victim role of their ingroup (see Table 3). In the other three contexts (i.e., discrimination of immigrants [Context 1], failure to investigate right-wing violence [Context 2], and gender discrimination [Context 5]), even though the effects were in the expected direction, illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator and illegitimately disadvantaged/victim participants did not differ significantly with regard to communal intergroup goals. Figure 1 depicts the effect of social role on communal intergroup goals in all contexts. Removing the participants who scored above the midpoint of the perceived illegitimacy scale slightly changed the pattern of results in favor of our hypothesis, in the sense that the difference in communal goals between immigrant participants (i.e., the victimized group) and non-migrants participants (i.e., the perpetrator group) was also significant in Context 2 (i.e., failure to investigate right-wing violence, see Table 3).

Discussion

The results of Study 1 generally supported our theorizing. As hypothesized, participants generally reported stronger agentic interaction goals when their ingroup occupied an illegitimately disadvantaged/victim role, and they tended to show stronger communal interaction goals when their ingroup occupied an illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role. Social role showed predominantly large effects on agentic goals, the effect on communal goals varied de-

pending on the context: While all comparisons were in the expected direction, only two out of four comparisons were significant after Bonferroni correction, yielding large effects.

In four of five contexts, we effectively induced a sense of illegitimate disadvantage or victimization, or illegitimate advantage or perpetration. The stronger the role manipulation's impact on participants' experience of their ingroup as illegitimately advantaged or perpetrator versus disadvantaged or victim (as reflected in the effect sizes of the manipulation check), the stronger its impact tended to be on participants' agentic and communal motives. In Context 1, where our role manipulation failed (i.e., immigrant participants did not perceive their ingroup as "treated unfairly" or "victimized", and non-migrant participants did not perceive their ingroup as "immoral" or having a perpetrator role, compared with the respective outgroup), we likewise failed to induce changes in agentic and communal goals — a result that is congruent with our general reasoning.

Our findings are valuable theoretically because they show that across very diverse contexts, strategies to strive for a positive self-concept (by either highlighting agentic or communal aspects of the ingroup's identity) critically differ between illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized and illegitimately advantaged or perpetrating groups. This finding can be considered as complementing social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) by showing that illegitimately disadvantaged or victim and advantaged or perpetrator groups all suffer inferiority in social comparisons, albeit on different identity dimensions, namely agency and communion, respectively. Research on social identity theory has previously considered the case of perceived inferiority of high status groups on status-irrelevant dimensions (e.g., Terry, 2001), but the possibility that such an identity threat would translate into communal interaction goals given perceived illegitimacy has received little attention.

The practical value of these results is that knowing how those groups typically behave towards each other can help guide structured encounters between conflicting groups, such as "dialogue group" interventions based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). Typically, such interventions focus on increasing intergroup mutual acceptance (e.g., by encouraging personalized contact aimed at friendship formation; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). Our findings suggest that this focus may satisfy the goals of members of perpetrator or illegitimacy advantaged groups, but leave the goals of members of victim or disadvantaged groups unaddressed. This may explain why members of victim or illegitimately disadvantaged groups tend to be less satisfied from intergroup contact interventions (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). As such, our findings offer valuable insights to practitioners planning such encounters, suggesting that they should include components that allow the expression of agentic, not just communal goals. Furthermore, our findings raise the question of how illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized groups will respond to communal behavior shown by the illegitimately advantaged or perpetrator group, and how members of the latter group respond to agentic behavior shown by illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized groups — an important direction for future research, since relations between groups who share a common space are likely to be shaped more by the "natural" behavior of outgroup members than by the exchange of thoughtful messages by outgroup representatives.

Unexpectedly, non-migrant participants did not show stronger communal tendencies compared to immigrants in the contexts of structural inequality (discrimination of immigrants, Context 1) and a direct transgression (failure to investigate right-wing violence, Context 2). However, these non-significant differences do not seem to be due to un-communal non-migrants in these contexts, but rather highly communal immigrants. In those two contexts, the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim group (i.e., immigrants) yielded a different pattern of results compared to illegitimately disadvantaged/victim participants in Contexts 3-5 (i.e., international transgression, exploitative con-

sumer relations, gender discrimination). Specifically, whereas illegitimately disadvantaged/victim participants in Contexts 3-5 showed a relatively balanced ratio of agentic and communal goals, illegitimately disadvantaged/victim participants in Contexts 1 and 2 (i.e., immigrant participants) clearly prioritized communion over agency (notwithstanding the increased agentic intergroup goals in the context of right-wing violence). Apparently, it was paramount for those participants to highlight their communal identity dimension when interacting with members of the non-migrant German majority. A possible explanation is that “the generic immigrant” is perceived as both low in agency *and* low in communion (Lee & Fiske, 2006). Participants with a migration background may be intuitively aware of this stereotypical view of them and thus feel threat over both core dimensions of their identity.

A potential limitation is the small sample size of some of the sub-samples. Post-hoc power analyses revealed that the statistical power to detect at least *one* out of ten effects assumed to be large ($d = .80$) was 99%. However, the power to detect all *ten* effects (i.e., the effect of role on both agentic and communal intergroup goals in five studies) was only 7%. Thus, it is possible that we have missed some of the effects even if they were large. In the light of these considerations of statistical power, we refrain from putting too much emphasis on the absence of any particular effect. Instead we acknowledge that our non-significant results are inconclusive. For example, given that especially the sub-sample of male participants in Context 5 was very small ($n = 11$), replicating the gender comparison with a reasonably large sample will be necessary to conclude whether or not agentic and communal goals differ between men and women as hypothesized.

Another limitation may be seen in the incommensurability of Contexts 3 (international transgression) and 4 (exploitative consumption) with regard to the different social roles. As a consequence, there may have been other variables (besides the social role of one’s ingroup) that influenced the results (see the General Discussion for a more detailed analysis). Indeed, the main effect of context on both agentic and communal interaction goals and the significant interactions between role and context suggest that participants responded differently to the various context conditions. Nevertheless, and most important for our purpose, the effect of social role on agentic and communal goals was in the predicted direction across all studies. Similarly, although one might be concerned that we subsumed social identities that were characterized by either illegitimate (dis-)advantage (i.e., structural inequality) or perpetrator- and victimhood (i.e., direct violence) across highly diverse contexts, the consistency of the *overall pattern* of results supports our reasoning and offers compelling evidence of the generalizability of the hypothesized role effect on intergroup goals.

Study 2

Study 2 focused on the effects of one’s ingroup’s role on interaction goals in a context of structural inequality, and pursued two main aims. The first aim was to test the combined influence of both individual (i.e., “self”) and group (i.e., “social”) identity on agentic and communal intergroup interaction goals. Thus, in Study 2 we measured pre-existing preferences to pursue agentic or communal interpersonal goals before manipulating participants’ ingroup’s role. This allowed us to examine how goals dispositionally pursued on the individual level (i.e., “*In general it is important to me to act...e.g. friendly*”) relate to interaction goals pursued between groups in a particular context (i.e., “*When [ingroup] interacts with [outgroup], it is important to me that we act...e.g. friendly*”) and whether dispositional interpersonal goals moderate the impact of group role on intergroup interaction goals (e.g., is the effect of experiencing one’s ingroup as illegitimately disadvantaged on agentic interaction goals stronger for members who generally prefer to be agentic?).

A second aim of Study 2 was to manipulate – rather than simply measure – legitimacy of group disparity in order to examine its proposed moderating effect on the relationship between social role and intergroup interaction goals (Shnabel & Ullrich, 2013; Siem et al., 2013). Specifically, we tested whether the increase in the communal and agentic goals among the advantaged and disadvantaged (respectively) would only occur when inequality is presented as illegitimate.

Recall that the intergroup contexts used in Study 1 were selected so that most participants would perceive the situation as illegitimate. Therefore, our hypothesis regarding the effect of social role was a main effect hypothesis in Study 1. In contrast, because in Study 2 the legitimacy of the status difference was varied, our hypothesis regarding the effect of social role was an interaction hypothesis. The effect of social role as seen in Study 1 should be stronger when legitimacy is low rather than high. Given that our hypothesis regarding the effect of social role implied a two-way interaction, the three-way interaction including dispositional goals represented the crucial test if the predicted effect would occur regardless of individual's dispositional tendencies to pursue agentic and communal goals.

Method

Participants and Design

Undergraduate psychology students ($N = 139$) of a large German university voluntarily completed two paper-pencil questionnaires. Seventeen participants who completed only one questionnaire were excluded from analyses. Thus, the final sample included 122 participants (97 female, 25 male, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.22$, $SD = 3.38$). Participants were randomly assigned to the cells of a 2 (Role [disadvantaged, advantaged]) \times 2 (Legitimacy [low, high]) between-subjects design.

Procedure and Measures

In the first survey, we assessed participants' basic demographic information and dispositional interpersonal goals. To avoid fatigue and consistency effects, the second survey, which included the experimental manipulation and the assessment of intergroup goals, was administered one week later.

Dispositional interpersonal goals — The general tendency to pursue agentic and communal interaction goals on an individual level was assessed with the German version of Locke's (2000) Circumplex Scales of Interpersonal Values, namely, *Das Inventar zur Erfassung Interpersonaler Motive* (Thomas, Locke, & Strauß, 2012). Given Locke's (2000, p. 250) definition of *interpersonal values* as "preferences for outcomes or modes of conduct" and the conceptual similarity between the CSIG and CSIV, we refer to the construct the CSIV measures as *interpersonal goals* (instead of *values*). Respondents indicate how generally important it is during interpersonal interactions for them to experience each of 64 outcomes or modes of conduct (e.g., "I appear confident", "I not get into an argument") on 5-point scales ranging from 1 = *not important* to 5 = *very important* (i.e., the same response scale as the CSIG). Participants' interpersonal agency scores ranged from -1.51 to 2.05 ($M = 0.07$, $SD = 0.54$) and their interpersonal communion scores ranged from -0.47 to 3.23 ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.66$). The reliabilities of the agentic and communal dimensions were .82 and .89.

Role and legitimacy manipulation — In the second survey, we manipulated ingroup role and legitimacy of status disparity using Siem et al. (2013) procedure. First, participants imagined themselves now employed as clinical psychologists in a mental health institution. Then, they read a bogus excerpt of a newspaper article describing

the professional standing of clinical psychologists in such institutions. Depending on the experimental condition, this article compared participants' ingroup either to psychiatrists or to social workers, representing – in this professional context – outgroups that are relatively advantaged or disadvantaged (in terms of prestige, influence in patient-related decisions, salaries, etc.). Furthermore, the text included a manipulation of legitimacy of status differences by presenting the status differences as either legitimate (e.g., by emphasizing the more comprehensive education of members of the advantaged group) or illegitimate (e.g., by emphasizing that members of the advantaged and the disadvantaged group have an equally comprehensive education; see the [Appendix](#) for the full manipulation text).

Manipulation check — To ensure that the manipulation referred to a social category (clinical psychologists) that is psychologically meaningful for participants, we asked participants how important the subject of clinical psychology was to them (1 = *no importance* to 4 = *highest importance*). Furthermore, using two items, $r(121) = .61$, $p < .001$, participants were asked whether it was easy for them to imagine themselves in the described situation as clinical psychologists (“It was easy for me to put myself in the position of a clinical psychologist”, “I could hardly imagine the professional contact with physicians/social workers” (reversed), 1 = *not true at all* to 5 = *completely true*).

Four items, taken from [Siem et al. \(2013\)](#), assessed perceptions of group disparity between clinical psychologists and psychiatrists/social workers (e.g., “[Psychologists/psychiatrists] have a higher status in institutions for psychiatric and psychosomatic illnesses compared to [social workers/psychologists]”; $\alpha = .84$) on 5-point scales (1 = *not true at all* to 5 = *completely true*). Responses were recoded so that, in both conditions, higher scores reflected perceptions of advantaged status. Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they thought that the disparity between psychologists (i.e., their ingroup) and psychiatrists/social workers was justified, using a single-item scale ranging from 1 = *absolutely unjustified* to 5 = *absolutely justified*.

Interaction goals — Agentic and communal intergroup interaction goals were assessed using the German version of the CSIG; the reliabilities of the agentic and communal dimensions were .73 and .86. Participants' agency scores ranged from -1.46 to 1.96 ($M = 0.35$, $SD = 0.58$) and their communion scores ranged from 0.65 to 3.85 ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.70$). The CSIG items were introduced as follows: “When we (future) psychologists interact with [psychiatrists/social workers], it is important to me that... e.g. “we are friendly”.

Results

The data (<https://osf.io/5ecg7/>) and the syntax (<https://osf.io/pvk7n/>) we used in Study 2 are available at the Open Science Framework. See [Table A2b](#) for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the independent and main dependent variables used in Study 2.

Relevance of Social Category

Participants indicated that clinical psychology was important to them ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.71$; significantly above the neutral 4-point scale midpoint, $t(121) = 5.63$, $p < .001$) and they found it rather easy to imagine themselves in the described situations as clinical psychologists ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.96$; significantly above the neutral 5-point scale midpoint, $t(121) = 5.38$, $p < .001$). Thus, the social category of clinical psychologists was salient and psychologically relevant to our participants.

Manipulation Checks

A 2 (Role [disadvantaged, advantaged]) \times 2 (Legitimacy [low, high]) ANOVA with perceived ingroup role as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect of the role manipulation, $F(1,118) = 175.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .60$. The legitimacy manipulation, $F(1,118) = 1.15$, $p = .287$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and the two-way interaction, $F(1,118) = 0.01$, $p = .929$, $\eta^2 = .00$, were not significant. As intended, participants perceived their ingroup (future clinical psychologists) as more advantaged when compared with social workers ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.56$) than when compared with psychiatrists ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.63$).

An analogous 2 \times 2 ANOVA with perceived legitimacy as the dependent variable revealed significant main effects of the legitimacy manipulation, $F(1,117) = 11.84$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .092$, and the role manipulation, $F(1,117) = 12.09$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .094$. The two-way interaction was not significant, $F(1,117) = 0.44$, $p = .508$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$. As intended, participants in the low legitimacy condition perceived the group disparity as less legitimate ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.76$) than participants in the high legitimacy condition ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.69$). However, with means ranging between $M = 1.76$ ($SD = 0.74$) and $M = 2.64$ ($SD = 0.68$) in the four cells, perceived legitimacy was significantly below the 5-point scale's midpoint in *all* conditions ($ps \leq .01$). The main effect of the role manipulation on perceived legitimacy indicates that advantaged participants perceived group disparity as more legitimate than disadvantaged participants – a finding consistent with previous research (Siem et al., 2013; see also Hornsey, Spears, Cremers, & Hogg, 2003; Weber, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2002).

Agentic Interaction Goals

To test whether the dispositional preferences for interpersonal agency and communion moderate the impact of social role on agentic intergroup interaction goals, we conducted a multiple regression analysis, regressing agentic intergroup goals on agentic and communal dispositional interpersonal goals (z-standardized so that lower order effects can be readily interpreted as average effects, see Dawson, 2014), the role manipulation and the legitimacy manipulation (both effect-coded), as well as the respective two-way and three-way interactions (see Table 4).

A prerequisite for testing a three-way interaction is to include all the two-way interactions in the analysis. However, we have no theoretical grounds to expect significant two-way interactions between agentic or communal dispositions and the legitimacy manipulation.

Agentic interpersonal goals, $b = .09$, $SE = .05$, $p = .076$; 95% CI [-0.01, 0.18], and communal interpersonal goals, $b = .01$, $SE = .05$, $p = .835$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.11], had no significant main effect on agentic intergroup interaction goals. As expected, and consistent with Study 1, the average effect of the social role manipulation on agentic intergroup goals was negative, $b = -.30$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.39, -0.21], indicating that participants in the disadvantaged condition showed higher agentic intergroup goals compared to participants in the advantaged condition. Also consistent with Study 1, the effect of social role on agency was rather large (Cohen's $d = 1.21$). The legitimacy manipulation had no effect on agentic intergroup goals, $b = .00$, $SE = .05$, $p = .942$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.10]. None of the two-way- and three-way interactions were significant (see Table 4). That is, irrespective of participants' dispositional preferences for interpersonal agency and communion, and irrespective of the perceived illegitimacy of status differences, a disadvantaged ingroup role increased the pursuit of agentic intergroup goals.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Agentic and Communal Interaction Goals From Agentic and Communal Interpersonal Goals, Social Role, and Legitimacy of Group Inequality (Study 2)

Predictor	Agentic goals (CSIG)			Communal goals (CSIG)		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	CI	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	CI
Agentic interpersonal goals (CSIV)	.09	.05	-.01, .18	.00	.06	-.12, .12
Communal interpersonal goals (CSIV)	.01	.05	-.09, .11	.33**	.06	.21, .45
Social role	-.30**	.05	-.39, -.21	.11	.06	-.00, .22
Legitimacy	.00	.05	-.09, .10	-.06	.06	-.17, .06
Role × legitimacy	-.06	.05	-.15, .03	.02	.06	-.09, .13
Agentic goals × role	.05	.05	-.05, .15	-.01	.06	-.13, .11
Communal goals × role	-.09	.05	-.19, .00	.06	.06	-.06, .17
Agentic goals × legitimacy	.02	.05	-.08, .12	-.11	.06	-.23, .01
Communal goals × legitimacy	-.07	.05	-.17, .02	-.12*	.06	-.23, -.00
Agentic goals × role × legitimacy	-.02	.05	-.11, .08	.03	.06	-.09, .15
Communal goals × role × legitimacy	-.05	.05	-.15, .04	.06	.06	-.06, .18
Total R^2	.35**			.32**		

Note. The social role manipulation was effect-coded (*disadvantaged* = -1, *advantaged* = 1), the legitimacy manipulation was effect-coded (*illegitimate* = -1, *legitimate* = 1), interpersonal goals were z-standardized.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Communal Interaction Goals

An analogous multiple regression with communal intergroup interaction goals as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect of communal interpersonal goals, $b = .33$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.45], such that participants with a general tendency to act communally with other individuals also reported stronger communal intergroup goals. There was no effect of agentic interpersonal goals on communal intergroup interaction goals, $b = .00$, $SE = .06$, $p = .964$, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.12]; see Table 4. Unexpectedly, although advantaged participants tended to show higher communion towards the outgroup than disadvantaged participants did, the effect of role manipulation was not statistically significant, $b = .11$, $SE = .06$, $p = .056$; 95% CI [-0.00, 0.22], and was weaker than that observed in Study 1 (Cohen's $d = 0.16$). As in the analysis of agentic interaction goals, the legitimacy manipulation had no significant effect on communal intergroup interaction goals, $b = -.06$, $SE = .06$, $p = .317$; 95% CI [-0.17, 0.06]. The only significant (and unexpected) interaction was between dispositional preferences for interpersonal communion and the legitimacy manipulation, $b = -.12$, $SE = .06$, $p = .049$; 95% CI [-0.23, -0.00], such that participants who strongly valued interpersonal communion (+1SD) showed heightened communal intergroup goals when assigned to the illegitimate condition, $b = -.17$, $SE = .08$, $p = .036$; 95% CI [-0.34, -0.01], whereas participants who did not value interpersonal communion (-1SD) were unmoved by the legitimacy manipulation, $b = .06$, $SE = .08$, $p = .459$; 95% CI [-0.10, 0.22].

Figure 1 depicts the agentic and communal intergroup interaction goals of participants assigned to the disadvantaged and advantaged groups in Study 2.

Discussion

Consistent with social categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), Study 2 demonstrated that in a context of illegitimate intergroup disparity, participants' agentic interaction goals were determined by their ingroup's situational

role but not by their dispositional goals when interacting with other individuals. In line with Study 1 and the needs-based model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015), perceiving the ingroup as illegitimately disadvantaged (vs. advantaged) evoked agentic interaction goals. Unexpectedly, the effect of social role on communal interaction goals was not significant, such that perceiving the ingroup as illegitimately advantaged (vs. disadvantaged) evoked only a tendency toward stronger communal interaction goals, perhaps because people are already highly motivated to behave communally in contexts of collegial relations (see the high scores for communal goals in Study 2 compared to the contexts in Study 1 in Figure 1). Still, this result is consistent with Study 1, in which social role had more influence on group members' agentic goals than their communal goals – an issue that we further consider in the General Discussion.

Interestingly, participants' dispositional preferences had a stronger effect on communal than on agentic intergroup interaction goals. This finding is consistent with Locke (2014) who reported higher correlations between interpersonal and intergroup goals for the communal dimension, $r(122) = .49, p < .001$, than for the agentic dimension, $r(122) = .12, p = .174$. Explaining this difference remains a topic for future research.

Unexpectedly, the legitimacy manipulation did not moderate the results of social role as it did in Siem et al. (2013). As reported above, even though the analysis revealed a significant main effect of this manipulation on the legitimacy manipulation check, perceived legitimacy scores in all conditions were on the *illegitimate* side of the scale (i.e., significantly below the scale midpoint). Whereas the sample used by Siem et al. (2013) was drawn from a university which offers only one of the relevant study majors (i.e., psychology), participants of the present study were students of a university that offers all three study majors (i.e., psychology, medicine, and social work), and their exposure to students from these other majors may have made it more difficult to convince them that a *legitimate* status disparity could exist between these groups. Whatever the reason, based on this sample, we cannot address the question as to whether perceived legitimacy of status differences (low vs. high) acts as a moderator of the social role effect on interaction goals as shown by Siem et al. (2013).

Interestingly, we did observe an unexpected interaction between the legitimacy manipulation and the dispositional preference for communal interpersonal interactions, such that participants with high (vs. low) preference for interpersonal communion showed an increase in communal intergroup goals when assigned to the illegitimate condition (irrespective of whether the illegitimate disparity between their ingroup and the outgroup advantaged or disadvantaged them). One possible explanation is that illegitimate status disparities is the type of potentially conflictual situation that heightens communal persons' inclination to strive for harmonious relationships and heightens uncommunal persons' inclination to become guarded and self-protective.

General Discussion

The present research systematically examined how group members' pursuit of interaction goals depends on their ingroup's role as illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized versus illegitimately advantaged or perpetrating transgressions. Drawing on the needs-based model's theorizing (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) and initial findings (Siem et al., 2013), two studies demonstrated that interaction goals vary as a function of the ingroup's social role; specifically, members of illegitimately disadvantaged and victim groups showed stronger agentic goals and weaker communal goals compared to members of illegitimately advantaged and perpetrator groups. Thus, although sometimes disadvantage and victimization can evoke helplessness (e.g., Ginges & Atran, 2008; Mummendey,

Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999) and advantage and perpetration can evoke heartlessness (e.g., Bandura, 1999; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002), the current results bolster the observation that people who feel that their group has been unfairly disadvantaged or victimized will pursue goals that help them reestablish agency, and people who feel that their group has been unfairly advantaged or perpetrating will pursue goals that help them reestablish communion.

Study 2 additionally examined whether and how (i.e., directly or as a moderator) individuals' dispositions to seek agency and communion in their interpersonal interactions would influence their agentic and communal goals within intergroup interactions. In the case of communion, consistent with Locke (2014), an individual's general disposition to value communion in his/her interpersonal interactions directly predicted the value placed on communion in interactions between the ingroup and other groups. In the case of agency, the ingroup's role in a given context shaped group members' agentic intergroup goals regardless of their preexisting interpersonal dispositions: Even group members who were chronically low in pursuing agentic interaction goals in their interpersonal encounters responded with increased agentic intergroup goals when assigned to the disadvantaged condition. These findings are broadly consistent with research conducted in the intergroup emotions theory framework (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993), which revealed a moderate overlap between individual and group emotions but also meaningfully distinct profiles of emotions triggered by the mere contemplation of group membership compared to individual emotion profiles (Seger, Smith, & Mackie, 2009; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007).

Taking both Study 1 and Study 2, involving six different contexts, into account, the overall effects of social role were medium to large by conventional standards (mean effect size^{iv} Cohen's $d = 1.14$ for agency, $d = -0.53$ for communion). Thus, in line with the self-categorization perspective (Turner et al., 1987), our results underscore the importance of social context in modulating agentic and communal goals.

A potential limitation of both studies is that we only assessed participants' *understanding* of their ingroup's role – but not their *identification* with their ingroup – within each scenario. Previous research showed that group-based emotions such as collective guilt depend on identification with the respective group (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Maitner, Mackie, & Smith, 2007; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). Thus, future research might examine whether or to what extent ingroup identification moderates the relationship between ingroup role and intergroup goals.

Even though there seems to be growing consensus that the fundamental dimensions of agency and communion can characterize almost every aspect of social interaction (Abele & Wojciszke, 2019), there is quite a debate over which dimension is "the bigger one of the big two" (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011). By default, when the relationship is harmonious rather than conflictual or threatening, communal information seems to be preferentially processed. That is, both the self and the ingroup (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007) and the other person or group (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008) will be primarily judged with respect to the "other-profitable" communion dimension. However, research suggests that as soon as there is conflict between individuals or groups, the "weaker" party will experience an increased need to maintain or regain its agency, which brings the "self-profitable" agentic dimension to the foreground (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014; SimanTov-Nachlieli et al., 2018). Consistent with that reasoning, the effects of the ingroup's role were twice as large for agentic interaction goals as for communal interaction goals in the present research.

In conclusion, the results of the present studies provided robust support for the hypothesized association between experiencing the ingroup as illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized and experiencing increased agentic intergroup

interaction goals; and it provided some mixed support for the hypothesized association between experiencing the ingroup as illegitimately advantaged or perpetrating transgressions and experiencing increased communal intergroup interaction goals (i.e., the effect of social role on communal goals was not always significant). Understanding the motivational ramifications of self-categorizations as a member of an illegitimately disadvantaged or victimized group or an illegitimately advantaged or perpetrator group is likely to be an important component of any efforts to advance positive intergroup relations and social progress – ranging from structured encounters between members of conflicting groups (i.e., contact interventions), to collective apologies or media campaigns to promote social harmony.

Notes

i) Among German participants, there was a condition ($n = 34$) originally intended to inform us about group members' baseline agentic and communal intergroup goals (i.e., without assigning them to a particular ingroup role condition). We thought that including this condition would allow to conclude, for example, not only that members of illegitimately disadvantaged/victim groups pursue more agentic goals than members of illegitimately disadvantaged/perpetrator groups, but also that this difference stems from an increase among the disadvantaged/victims (rather than a decrease among the advantaged/perpetrators). In this condition, participants were asked "How should we Germans behave towards other nations?" without referring to a specific outgroup. However, participants in this condition showed significantly lower agentic interaction goals than participants in the illegitimately disadvantaged/victim condition in four of five contexts ($ps < .001$). Moreover, communion scores in this condition did not differ from communion scores of participants assigned to the illegitimately advantaged/perpetrator role in three of five contexts (international transgression $p = .652$, exploitative consumption $p = .064$, gender discrimination $p = .317$). In hindsight it appears that the chosen context was not truly neutral as intended; possibly due to the history of the Second World War and the unease they might experience with regard to Germany's dominant international role, Germans are prone to conceptualize their nation as perpetrator or illegitimately advantaged in relation to other nations. As such, this condition could not reliably inform us about baseline levels of goals; thus, this condition was dropped from subsequent analyses.

ii) The online survey used the web-based platform "EFS survey", which can adjust the randomization process based on participants' demographical features such as nationality and gender (e.g., whereas participants with migration background were *only* assigned to contexts 1 and 2, assignment was randomized between these two contexts).

iii) To examine whether perceived legitimacy was influenced by the role manipulation [disadvantaged/victim, advantaged/perpetrator] and/or the study context [1, 2, 3, 4, 5], we ran a 2×5 ANOVA on perceived legitimacy which revealed a non-significant main effect of role, $F(1, 345) = 3.44$, $p = .065$, $\eta^2 = .01$, a significant main effect of context, $F(4, 345) = 17.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$, and a significant role \times context interaction, $F(4, 345) = 6.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Perceived legitimacy did not differ depending on the social role, except in context 3 (i.e., international transgressions), where participants in the perpetrator condition perceived their ingroup's behavior as more legitimate (or rather less illegitimate) than participants in the victim condition perceived the outgroup's behavior, $t(345) = 4.63$, $p < .001$.

iv) Weighted average effect sizes (see DeCoster, 2009; Equations 8.1-8.2) for agency (95% CI of weighted average effect size [0.94, 1.34]) and communion (95% CI of weighted average effect size [-0.73, -0.34]).

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Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Data Availability

For both studies datasets are freely available (see the [Supplementary Materials](#) section).

Supplementary Materials

The following supplementary materials are freely available for the present paper via the OSF project page (<https://osf.io/tvd79/>): Full datasets and syntaxes for both studies as well as detailed information on how the authors tested the circumplex structure and calculated agentic and communal dimension scores.

Index of Supplementary Materials

Aydin, A. L., Ullrich, J., Siem, B., Locke, K. D., & Shnabel, N. (2018). *Dataset Study 1.sav (Version: 1)* [Supplementary materials]. <https://osf.io/zexg3/>

Aydin, A. L., Ullrich, J., Siem, B., Locke, K. D., & Shnabel, N. (2018). *Syntax_Study1.sps (Version: 1)* [Supplementary materials]. <https://osf.io/pqncx/>

Aydin, A. L., Ullrich, J., Siem, B., Locke, K. D., & Shnabel, N. (2018). *Dataset Study 2.sav (Version: 1)* [Supplementary materials]. <https://osf.io/5ecg7/>

Aydin, A. L., Ullrich, J., Siem, B., Locke, K. D., & Shnabel, N. (2018). *Syntax_Study2.sps (Version: 1)* [Supplementary materials]. <https://osf.io/pvk7n/>

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Appendix: Manipulation Text Study 2

Please read now carefully a part of an article from the weekly paper "Die ZEIT", published on 28th May 2012, concerning the role of different occupational groups in medical centers.

One vocation – two perspectives

[...] Health as well as care and treatment of physically and mentally impaired people are increasingly important in our society. Especially in times of the economic crisis, the number of those who suffer from burnout-syndrome, depression or psychosomatic illnesses rises rapidly. Different occupational groups, e.g. physicians and psychologists, are confronting this issue.

In a study throughout Germany, carried out by the Emnid institute for the "ZEIT", these occupational groups/professions were compared with each other in psychiatric and psychosomatic medical centers, concerning different criteria. The study showed that psychiatrists have more influence on decisions concerning the patients compared to psychologists. Furthermore, physicians enjoy a higher reputation among the remaining clinic staff, and also their monthly gross income is on average 1000 euros above the one of psychologists.

Illegitimate condition:

Although physicians' and psychologists' tasks differ in content, the fact that both professions still bear the same responsibility shows that the differences mentioned above are unjustified: For the patients, both groups play an indispensable role in their recovery process. The education of both occupations is very comprehensive and in the course of the patients' diagnosis, consultation, therapy and reintegration, psychologists are equally important as physicians. Moreover, according to the study results, both professions spend on average the same amount of time in direct contact with the patients. According to Helmut Kreiner, manager of the (specialist) clinic for psychiatry and psychotherapy Gauting GmbH, "The existing status differences are therefore mostly unfounded". [...]

Legitimate condition:

These differences are not quite unjustified, taking into account the fact that physicians have – in addition to their psychotherapeutic duties – other areas of responsibility, such as the somatic examination and the medication, and therefore often bear more responsibility than psychologists. Due to their usually broader education, in many clinics they play a more important role in the patients' recovery process. Moreover, according to the study results, physicians spend on average more time in direct contact with the patients than psychologists. According to Helmut Kreiner, manager of the professional clinic for psychiatry and psychotherapy Gauting GmbH, "The existing status differences are therefore not quite unfounded." [...]

Table A1a

Social Role Manipulations (CSIG Instructions) Used in Study 1

Context	Disadvantaged/victim role	Advantaged/perpetrator role
1	As you know, immigrants are disadvantaged compared to Germans in many different contexts. How should we <i>immigrants</i> behave towards <i>Germans</i> in your opinion given this fact?	As you know, immigrants are disadvantaged compared to Germans in many different contexts. How should we <i>Germans</i> behave towards <i>immigrants</i> in your opinion given this fact?
2	As you know, different immigrant organizations criticize the massive shortcomings regarding the investigation of the NSU killings. How should we <i>immigrants</i> behave towards <i>Germans</i> in your opinion given this fact?	As you know, different immigrant organizations criticize the massive shortcomings regarding the investigation of the NSU killings. How should we <i>Germans</i> behave towards <i>immigrants</i> in your opinion given this fact?
3	As you know, the NSA has conducted extensive espionage in Germany and even bugged Merkel's mobile phone. How should we <i>Germans</i> behave towards <i>Americans</i> in your opinion given this fact?	As you know, Germany refuses to pay reparations for the 200 civilians killed by the Waffen-SS in Greece in 1944. How should we <i>Germans</i> behave towards <i>Greeks</i> in your opinion given this fact?
4	As you know, corporations like Google financially enrich themselves by using information involuntarily provided by us consumers. How should we <i>consumers</i> behave towards <i>corporations like Google</i> in your opinion given this fact?	As you know, by buying cheap textile products, we consumers cause people (and even children) from low-wage countries to work under inhumane conditions. How should we <i>consumers</i> behave towards <i>low-wage countries</i> in your opinion given this fact?
5	As you know, showing the same performance, women earn less than men in many fields. How should we <i>women</i> behave towards <i>men</i> in your opinion given this fact?	As you know, showing the same performance, women earn less than men in many fields. How should we <i>men</i> behave towards <i>women</i> in your opinion given this fact?

Table A1b

Legitimacy Manipulation Checks Used in Study 1

Context	Disadvantaged/victim role	Advantaged/perpetrator role
1	To what extent do you consider the behavior shown by the Germans toward immigrants as legitimate?	To what extent do you consider the behavior shown by the Germans toward immigrants as legitimate?
2	To what extent do you consider Germany's behavior as legitimate?	To what extent do you consider Germany's behavior as legitimate?
3	To what extent do you consider the behavior shown by the NSA – respectively the USA – as legitimate?	To what extent do you consider Germany's behavior as legitimate?
4	To what extent do you consider the behavior of international corporations such as google as legitimate?	To what extent do you consider the behavior of us consumers as legitimate?
5	To what extent do you consider the disadvantage of women in the work context as legitimate?	To what extent do you consider the disadvantage of women in the work context as legitimate?

Table A2a

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Between the Independent and Main Dependent Variables Used in Study 1 (N = 391)

Variable	M	SD	Range		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			potential	actual							
1. Female	–	–	–	–							
2. Age	32.22	9.56	–	17 – 72	.00						
3. Migration	–	–	–	–	.09	-.06					
4. Social role	–	–	–	–	-.10	-.02	-.48**				
5. MC social role	-0.06	1.39	-4 – 4	-4 – 4	-.09	.06	-.08	.49**			
6. Perc. legitimacy	2.45	0.96	1 – 5	1 – 5	-.08	-.11*	.16**	.08	.05		
7. Agency	0.25	0.78	-4 – 4	-2.14 – 2.65	.05	-.00	.05	-.42**	-.50**	-.15**	
8. Communion	1.76	0.83	-4 – 4	-0.56 – 4.00	-.10	-.08	.13**	.17**	.33**	.07	-.36**

Note. MC = Manipulation check.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table A2b

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Between the Independent and Main Dependent Variables Used in Study 2 (N = 122)

Variable	M	SD	Range		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			potential	actual									
1. Female	–	–	–	–									
2. Age	21.22	3.38	–	18 – 45	.10								
3. Social role	–	–	–	–	-.17	.09							
4. Legitimacy	–	–	–	–	-.06	.11	.02						
5. MC social role	3.08	0.93	1 – 5	1 – 5	.11	-.07	-.77**	.05					
6. MC legitimacy	2.22	0.76	1 – 5	1 – 4	.21*	-.09	-.30**	-.30**	.31**				
7. Agency (CSIV)	0.07	0.54	-4 – 4	-1.51 – 2.05	-.03	-.02	.03	-.13	-.00	-.00			
8. Communion (CSIV)	1.85	0.66	-4 – 4	-0.47 – 3.23	-.00	-.05	.14	.10	-.14	-.29**	-.08		
9. Agency (CSIG)	0.35	0.58	-4 – 4	-1.46 – 1.96	-.24**	.16	.52**	-.01	-.43**	-.16	.12	.05	
10. Communion (CSIG)	2.44	0.70	-4 – 4	0.65 – 3.85	-.05	-.01	-.07	.13	.05	-.15	-.06	.49**	-.06

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.