The social functions of in-group bias
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Chapter 5

General Discussion and Conclusions

The seven studies presented in this thesis were conducted in order to test a contextual-functional model of in-group bias. The key features of this approach are: 1. the distinction between an identity and an instrumental function of in-group bias; 2. the analysis of the contextual determinants of these two functions; and 3. the assessment of additional psychological processes (e.g., effort and self-esteem) that are associated with these functions. In the final chapter of this thesis we first provide a summary of the main results, followed by the general conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of these results. The conclusions are separated into three sections: one about each of the two functions, and one about the general approach. The final section of the chapter deals with some of the limitations of the current analysis, and provides suggestions for further research on this topic.

Summary of the Results

The identity function of in-group bias described here is based on social identity approaches to inter-group relations (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) and concerns the creation and expression (and thereby confirmation) of a positive social identity. The instrumental function of in-group bias was based on instrumental approaches to inter-group relations (e.g., Levine & Campbell, 1972; Rabbie, 1993; Sherif & Sherif, 1969; Tajfel & Turner, 1986¹) and was conceptualized as the facilitating role that in-group bias can have during a process of social change.

In Chapter 2 the function of in-group bias in defining a group's identity (identity creation) was examined, together with the function of increasing group distinctiveness in anticipation of an inter-group competition (an instrumental function). It was shown that in the

¹ The social identity theory of inter-group relations by Tajfel and Turner is mentioned here both as an identity approach and as an instrumental approach. As explained in Chapter 1, this theory comprises both the identity aspects of inter-group relations (in particular the research with the minimal group paradigm) and the instrumental aspects of inter-group relations (e.g., the collective action strategy for the enhancement of group status).
initial stage of a minimal group study the relative “meaningless-ness” of the inter-group situation triggered in-group bias. An explanation for this was given in terms of the search for meaning and group distinctiveness. However, after this motive had been satisfied, in-group bias was not absent or dysfunctional; rather, when later in the experiment an inter-group competition was introduced, participants also showed higher levels of in-group bias, in line with a more instrumental function of in-group bias. In sum, “meaningless” inter-group contexts triggered in-group bias motivated by a search for meaning, whereas realistic inter-group competition triggered in-group bias for instrumental reasons.

In Chapter 3, identity and instrumental functions were examined in a more “social” context, that is, in reaction to group status differences, the stability of these differences, and the context (intra-group versus inter-group) in which in-group bias was communicated. This shift to more meaningful inter-group circumstances was also reflected in the particular identity-function that was addressed in this chapter: the expression and thereby confirmation of one’s social identity. It was found that in-group bias for identity-expressive reasons was most relevant for stable high status groups. Moreover, in-group bias for instrumental reasons was more prevalent in low status groups and was dependent on the interplay between status stability and the communication context. When status differences were unstable people only used in-group bias for instrumental reasons in an intra-group context. This was in line with the proposition that under these (insecure) circumstances in-group bias might also motivate members of the outgroup for collective action if they were to witness the expression of in-group bias. In stable low status groups (groups who had presumably “nothing to lose”) in-group bias was displayed for instrumental reasons regardless of communication context.

In Chapter 4, the social context was even more involving: Group membership was based on real groups and the focus was on verbal (and thereby expressive) forms of in-group bias. It was shown that although the identity-expressive function applies to both social groups and social categories, the instrumental function was somewhat more prevalent in groups than in categories. Moreover, it was shown that identity-expression as a function of in-group bias was more prevalent when the value of the group was positively reinforced, whereas the instrumental function was more relevant when the group’s value was threatened.

A more schematic summary of the research presented in this thesis is provided in Table 5.1. In the next section we will turn to what can be concluded from these results, starting with the identity function.
### Table 5.1
**Summary of the Main Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Identity-creation</th>
<th>Identity-expression</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Creating positive and meaningful group-distinctiveness</td>
<td>Confiming and &quot;celebrating&quot; positive group-distinctiveness</td>
<td>Facilitating inter-group competition/social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>High group status</td>
<td>Low group status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>determinant</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group reinforcement</td>
<td>Group threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>determinant</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological</strong></td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Self-esteem/Pride</td>
<td>Effort in inter-group competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group type</strong></td>
<td>Social groups/Social categories</td>
<td>Social groups/Social categories</td>
<td>Social groups &gt; Social categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction of</strong></td>
<td>Differentiation per se</td>
<td>In-group favoritism</td>
<td>In-group favoritism/Out-group derogation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>in-group bias</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of</strong></td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Material/Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>in-group bias</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter in this</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>2/3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>thesis</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusions I: The Identity Function

As stated above, an important feature of the current approach is that it is directed at defining the circumstances under which in-group bias has one or the other function. What can be concluded about the circumstances under which in-group bias serves identity-creation or identity-expression? Identity-creation seems to occur in situations in which the content of the
social categorization is relatively meaningless, as in the MGP (see Chapter 2). In other words, in situations in which the primary goal is to make sense of the social situation, in-group bias may help to "...explain to oneself in the simplest and most convenient way ... the relations between groups" (Tajfel, 1969, p. 80). As a result, when meaning increases and when there is no other reason to show in-group bias, the urge to show such bias decreases. It should be noted that identity-creation as a function of in-group bias is not a "fancy lab phenomenon" but is also relevant for real groups. That is, outside the lab one can think of occasions on which one is confronted with a new social category in relation to which in-group bias can help to give a sense of differentiated meaning. An example is a random division of a class, after which the different sub-groups work on similar projects. Under these circumstances one is likely to observe not only overt expressions of in-group favoritism, but also a search for meaning behind these expressions (e.g., "We are the best group because..."

Turning to the identity-expressive function of in-group bias, it was shown that this function is especially likely to operate in stable high status groups (Chapter 3) and more generally, under circumstances that reinforce the positive value of one's group (Chapter 4). This is an important finding because although prior research has indicated that in-group bias is highest for (stable) high status groups (Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001), the motivational processes that drive in-group bias under these circumstances have remained somewhat ambiguous. For example, at the theoretical level SIT has been primarily directed at creating (Tajfel, 1978) or enhancing (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) one's social identity. Moreover, although Leach, Snider, and Iyer (2001) have recently described gloating as an important social process among privileged groups, the relation with the identity-expressive function of in-group bias has not yet been explored.

That the processes involved here can have serious consequences is well illustrated by the Christmas message in 2000 of King Albert of Belgium. This address caused considerable commotion because it contained mildly political statements which it is highly uncommon for a king to make. The following passage refers to the election victory at that time by the ultra-right "Flemish Block" party in Belgium:

"... therefore I want to share with you some considerations after my recent visit to our troops in Kosovo.... When one travels across the Balkans the destruction currently threatening our continent as a result of extreme nationalism and xenophobia takes one's breath away. This should prompt us to be alert to every form of racism or exaggerated glorification of the own identity."
(emphasis added).
Thus although in-group bias can be the result of uncertainty, it can also be the result of too much certainty and confidence in one’s group. And although in-group bias can stem from frustration and deprivation, it can also be the result of feelings of superiority and pride in one’s own identity.

In sum, the current research has shown the identity-creative function of in-group bias to be the result of the relatively meaningless social categorization (often assumed but rarely demonstrated) and the identity-expressive function of in-group bias to follow from having one’s positive social identity reinforced. This latter process has been demonstrated previously (Bettencourt et al., 2001) although the precise mediating process had not been explicated. Beyond the circumstances under which identity functions operate, some additional conclusions can be drawn, and these will now be discussed.

Although it is not claimed here that the identity-function is the most important function of in-group bias, there is evidence that this function is the more general one, and takes precedence over others in the sense that it needs to be in place before others can come into play. Several findings speak to this conclusion. First, in Chapter 2 it was shown that when participants were confronted with a group goal but did not have the opportunity to differentiate their new social category from the out-group, they were reluctant to work for the group. This is in line with the proposition that groups need some sense of differentiated meaning before instrumental actions can be instigated. A second finding that illustrates the basic character of the identity-creation function of in-group bias is the fact that when the opportunity to differentiate was blocked at an early stage of Study 2.2, the motivation to differentiate transferred to a later stage. Third, and in line with the first two points, in Chapter 4 it was shown that the identity-expressive function was prevalent to an equal extent in social groups and social categories (whereas the instrumental function was more prevalent in groups than in categories, see below). The absence of an asymmetry with regard to identity-expression in social groups and categories illustrates the general applicability of this function. Finally, and also in line with its general character, it appeared that the identity functions were especially served by in-group bias along more general and abstract dimensions, such as trait ratings. In sum, these findings illustrate that the motivations to know and to show what one’s group is about apply to all kinds of groups and form the basis for all further group action.

What can be concluded about the direction of in-group bias when it serves identity-functions? In line with earlier research, it was shown in Chapter 2 that with regard to identity-creation positive differentiation per se is more important than its basic components (i.e., in-group favoritism and out-group derogation; see Brewer, 1979; Brewer & Silver, 1978; Jetten, 1997; Tajfel, 1978). However, in order to express one’s social identity, in-group favoritism appeared to be more prevalent than out-group derogation. This was also in line with previous
research showing that in-group favoritism directly serves identity functions because it shows the
group to be a *positive* distinctive unit (Reynolds, Haslam, & Turner, 2000).

With regard to psychological processes that guide identity-functions it can be concluded that
these include self-focused feelings and emotions such as pride and self-esteem. In-group
bias for identity-creation (Chapter 2) and identity-expression (Chapter 3) resulted in higher self-
esteeem. This was in line with the social identity rationale that the accomplishment or
confirmation of positive group distinctiveness results in higher levels of self-worth derived from
that particular group membership. These two demonstrations of “Corollary 1” of the *self-
esteeem hypothesis* (i.e., in-group bias leads to enhanced self-esteem) are particularly noteworthy
because of the controversial status of this hypothesis (Long & Spears, 1997; Rubin &
Hewstone, 1998). However, these results are in line with the proposition that self-esteem is
especially likely to be enhanced by in-group bias when it serves an identity-function. This means
that taking the specific functions in-group bias serves into account may shed more light on the
mixed evidence for the self-esteem hypothesis.

**Conclusions II: The Instrumental Function**

Throughout the work presented here there was strong evidence for an instrumental
function of in-group bias after the value of one’s group was threatened in either a temporary
(Chapter 4) or a chronic (i.e., as the result of inclusion in a low status group; Chapter 3) way.
This is in line with the observations that people often respond to threats to their social identity by
engaging in in-group bias (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999) and are especially
likely to engage in collective action against an out-group when the group’s status is perceived to
be inferior (e.g., Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That in-group bias under these
circumstances is more than a simple autonomous emotional reaction but rather an active
preparation for social change was illustrated by the fact that it was associated with an increased
willingness to invest effort in the inter-group competition.

Research on the instrumental function of in-group bias has also revealed the more *strategic*
dimensions of this phenomenon (Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; Spears & Lea,
1994; see also Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Ellemers, Van Dyck, Hinkle, & Jacobs, 2000). It was
proposed that under certain circumstances the expression of in-group bias may be counter-

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2 In the research presented in this thesis we did not examine Corollary 2 of the self-esteem hypothesis (i.e.,
threatened or low self-esteem leads to in-group bias). It should be noted that this part of the hypothesis is most
remote from the original formulations of SIT (indeed, Turner even claims that it was never part of the theory;
Turner, 1999). Furthermore, the support for this corollary is scarce (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). Finally, from
the current perspective it can be predicted that high rather than low self-esteem leads to identity-expression (see
also Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). For all these reasons, we did not examine Corollary 2 in the current work.
productive in promoting social change because it may provoke and thereby stimulate the out-group. On the basis of the present research it can be concluded that this is especially the case in unstable inter-group contexts. This makes sense if one considers that under these circumstances groups have most to lose and that provoking the out-group may have disastrous consequences. Two findings from the current research speak to this conclusion. First, it appeared that under unstable (low status) conditions people expressed in-group bias only in an intra-group context (Chapter 3) or directed it explicitly to an in-group audience (Study 4.2)\(^3\). Second, under unstable conditions it appeared that people used more subtle and soft forms of in-group bias (i.e., in-group favoritism as opposed to out-group derogation) for instrumental reasons. Thus, it appears that people use in-group bias strategically for instrumental reasons, especially under insecure inter-group circumstances.

Although from a more “classic” social identity perspective it can be predicted that collective action is the more viable option under unstable low status positions, in the current research there was also evidence for instrumental action under stable low status conditions. Under these conditions it appeared that people used even more extreme means (i.e., out-group derogation) in order to force a change in the status quo. This is in line with the proposition that under stable low status conditions it is not enough to promote the in-group further up the status-ladder; it is also necessary to bring the out-group down a peg or two (i.e., by sabotaging their performance during the inter-group competition). This finding is also in line with numerous examples from world history of chronically deprived groups who revolt against the out-group to improve their position. Thus with regard to the direction of in-group bias for instrumental reasons it can be concluded that more in-group favoring forms are used when status differences are seen as unstable, whereas more out-group derogating forms are used when status differences are seen as stable (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Although at first sight this latter finding may seem to conflict with classic formulations of SIT, it should be noted that Tajfel (1978) stated that totally stable conditions (e.g., with no “cognitive alternatives” for the present situation) are rare and even very difficult to imagine. Therefore, it is probably better to speak about more rather than less stable situations than about unstable and totally stable situations.

As mentioned above, some of the circumstances leading to in-group bias or collective action have already been described by social identity theory. However, this theory has been silent about how in-group bias can facilitate social change. The current research has identified three ways in which in-group bias can fulfill an instrumental function. First, it was shown in Chapter 2 that in-group bias can fulfill an instrumental function by increasing group distinctiveness during inter-group competition. In other words, even without any direct relation between in-group bias

\(^3\) In Study 4.2 status stability was not explicitly manipulated, although both conditions (one’s team being one goal ahead or behind) are relatively unstable.
and social change, differentiating between in-group and out-group can be functional in instrumental terms. In this way, in-group bias was explained as “sharpening” group boundaries, and in terms of raising feelings of solidarity with the in-group.

A second way in which in-group bias can constitute an instrumental function was demonstrated in Chapter 3. In the research presented there it was shown that in-group bias on the allocation of material resources may prepare the group for social change in material terms. This is in line with resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) which has stressed the importance of acquiring certain resources in order to obtain social change.

The third way in which in-group bias can fulfill an instrumental function was illustrated by the research in Chapter 4. There it was shown that verbal expressions of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation can have a stimulating function when groups engage in inter-group competition. In these terms, in-group bias can mobilize and motivate the in-group for collective action against the out-group. It should be noted that in Study 3.3 there was already a foretaste of this kind of instrumental function. In addition to more direct social change facilitation by means of material in-group favoritism (described above) the expression of symbolic in-group bias seemed also to have an instrumental function in the unstable low status intra-group condition. Communicating symbolic claims of in-group superiority may have been functional in restoring hope and motivating the in-group for the second round of the inter-group competition.

Because these different forms of instrumental in-group bias were addressed in three different lines of research, it is difficult to tell which form will be adopted under which circumstances. Of course, these different forms do not preclude each other and will often occur in combination. Further research should explore in greater detail the circumstances under which one or the other form prevails. Obviously, for the direct facilitation of social change by means of material in-group bias it is necessary that the group has access to these resources. One limitation for this strategy in low status groups (i.e., groups for which social change is the most necessary) is that they often have less access to material resources due to a lack of power. Other factors that may pose limitations to certain forms of instrumental action are legitimacy constraints or audience factors. For instance, explicit in-group stimulation by means of verbal claims of in-group superiority may be particularly sensitive to audience constraints (and thus to the strategic considerations outlined above).

Two final conclusions can be drawn with regard to the instrumental function. The first is that this function is more prevalent in social groups than in social categories. This was in line with the proposition that social groups are often defined by instrumental goals. Moreover, the fact that social groups often allow for more direct communication between their members than do social categories implies that it is easier for groups than for categories to direct and coordinate behavior to instrumental goals. Second, when people are given both the opportunity
for collective action through in-group bias or for social creativity by stressing alternative dimensions, they prefer the first option over the second. Although social change may often be more difficult to accomplish, in the end it also yields more benefit than does social creativity. Indeed, within society there seem to be some “cardinal” dimensions (e.g., educational accomplishments) which are very difficult to compensate for by means of alternative dimensions (athletic accomplishments).

Conclusions III: The Contextual-functional Model

Several things can be concluded in more general terms about the current motivational approach. The main message of the current analysis is that in-group bias is not always one and the same thing but can serve different functions under different circumstances. Taking into account the diversity in functions and forms of in-group bias will not only lead to a better understanding of this phenomenon, but can also help to solve (seemingly) contradictory results in the literature. Examples of this are the circumstances under which in-group bias enhances self-esteem, or the circumstances under which low or high status groups are more likely to show in-group bias.

A second more general conclusion concerns the social nature of the motivations underlying in-group bias. In addition to more individualistic functions, the current research has shown that in-group bias can also be linked to the facilitation of group goals such as social change or the collective celebration of in-group superiority. Related to the social nature of (motivations for) in-group bias, the current work has also revealed the social and strategic factors that elicit such motives. In combination, the link between in-group bias and group goals, and the context-dependence of the functions that emerge from that link, illustrate the social character of motivations for in-group bias.

Third, the research that was conducted here clearly shows that in-group bias is not always an end-state or outcome of motivational processes, but can itself be the motivator. For example, in-group bias can constitute a process in the course of which social change (the goal) is served rather than being a goal in itself.

Fourth, the current model helps to integrate the different approaches to in-group bias. At a more abstract level, the two functions that were discerned here can be seen as representing two different approaches to in-group bias. The identity and instrumental approaches within inter-group relations have often been seen as incompatible with each other. However, as we have argued here, these different approaches are best seen as being concerned with different aspects of in-group bias. By specifying the circumstances under which the two functions apply, the current model helps to specify the strong features of a certain approach and also to reveal its
limitations, and to define the circumstances under which one or the other approach provides the better explanation for in-group bias.

Finally, the current work has identified several **mediational processes** between contextual determinants and the expression of in-group bias. In some of the previous research on this topic, the exact motivational processes have been ambiguous or unspecified (i.e., the expression of in-group bias was in itself taken as evidence for one or the other motive). In the work presented above we sought to relate in-group bias to explicit measures of its functions and to other indicators of specific motivational processes (self-esteem, effort) that may guide it.

Although the diversity of in-group bias is one of the main themes here, this does not mean that “anything goes” and that in-group bias is by definition functional. Indeed, in Chapter 3 there was evidence that when in-group bias seemed less suitable for obtaining social change (because under unstable inter-group contexts it may also motivate the out-group) people responded by expressing fairness. Stressing the equality of the two groups may be functional in peping up the in-group (by stressing that work needs to be done in order to accomplish positive group-distinctiveness) without provoking the out-group. Moreover, in Chapter 4 there was even direct evidence of *dysfunctional* in-group bias. It was found here that the more “anger-regulating” route leading to in-group bias was incompatible with the more functional route to in-group bias in terms of provoking social change.

Taking the model one step further, it can be linked to other functional approaches within social psychology. For instance, the distinction between an identity-expressive and a utilitarian (i.e., instrumental) function of attitudes may apply here (Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1990). Although there are important differences between the functions of in-group bias, on the one hand, and those of attitudes, on the other (e.g., the approach by Katz is more about the function of *having* an attitude whereas the current work is more about the functionality of *expressing* in-group bias), it is possible that at a more abstract level they represent more general functions of social behavior.

The distinction between functions of in-group bias can also be linked to other topics within the field of inter-group relations. For instance, group identification may in itself fulfill identity or instrumental motives (see Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Cotting, 1999, for a functional approach to group identification). This brings us to the final section of this thesis, which deals with some of the limitations of the current approach as well as some possibilities for further research.
Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The present analysis has illustrated some of the functional aspects of in-group bias as well as the context-dependence of motivations underlying this important inter-group phenomenon. However, it is not claimed that all contextual determinants for all motivations for in-group bias have been addressed. A first possible limitation of the current work concerns its exhaustiveness in terms of the different functions of in-group bias. It is important to note that this is not a limitation of the current approach in more general terms (indeed, as noted above, a strength of the current model is that it is not based on a single process). Nevertheless, other research can explore the contextual determinants of other functions of in-group bias. For instance, in-group bias may also fulfill a normative or social-adjustment function. In these terms people may display in-group bias because they think that other's expect them to do so, or in order to get accepted in a group (see also Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995).

A second possible limitation of the present work concerns the contextual side of the model. Another crucial variable for the expression and the functionality of in-group bias is the legitimacy of differences in group status (Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993; Jost, 2001). For example, it can be predicted that in-group bias for instrumental reasons is especially likely to arise within low status groups when status differences are perceived as illegitimate. In turn, in-group bias as identity-expression is especially likely within high status groups when status differences are seen as legitimate (Leach et al., 2001). Another classic SIT variable concerns the permeability of group boundaries (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Ellemers et al., 1993; Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990). This factor may be especially useful for distinguishing between individual and group functions of in-group bias.

Another aspect of the model that could be addressed concerns the emotional aspects of in-group bias. Apart from anger, pride, and self-esteem, future research could be directed at other emotional states as indicators of certain functions of in-group bias (e.g., schadenfreude, which is an important determinant of out-group derogation; Spears, Leach, Branscombe, Doosje, & Scheepers, 2000). Furthermore, the dysfunctional aspects of in-group bias (and the functional aspects of fairness) could be addressed in future research. Although a start has been made with Study 3.3, other research might address further the ways in which the expression of fairness could contribute either to a positive social identity, or to instrumental goals like social change.

At the more general experimental level, there are also other options for testing the functionality of in-group bias. For instance, future research could address actual changes in psychological states (e.g., emotions, effort) when goals are approached or fulfilled by means of in-group bias. In the current work the instrumental function was always measured when the inter-group competition was still in progress. Another way of showing that behavior is indeed
functional in facilitating certain goals would be to demonstrate that in-group bias and its emotional antecedents decline after the competition has ended. (Indeed, this was the reason why there is a bi-directional path, and thereby a feedback-loop, between motives and goals in Figure 1.2.)

In sum, the current approach has developed a new way of looking at the motivational aspects of in-group bias; beyond single processes, and beyond individualistic drives. In terms of content, the model has addressed the ways in which in-group bias can help to create, celebrate, or challenge social reality. Identity-creation by means of in-group bias was demonstrated when the content of one’s social identity was relatively meaningless. Moreover, the celebration of positive group distinctiveness by means of in-group bias was found in situations where the positive value of one’s group was reinforced. Finally, in-group bias as a way of challenging the status quo (i.e., serving an instrumental function) was found under group threatening situations resulting, for example, from inclusion in a low status group. By recognizing the diversity of in-group bias, the current approach leads not only to more insight into the motivational basis of this phenomenon, but also to regarding prior research in a new light. It will also help to resolve controversies in the literature, and to promote theoretical integration. In terms of process, the current approach has presented a general framework to which other variables can be easily added. This should ultimately lead to a better understanding of the causes and consequences of in-group bias, and its functions for the individual and for the group.