

Prosocial Behavior in Intergroup Relations: How Donor Self-Construal and Recipient Group-Membership Shape Generosity

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This research examines the interplay of self-construal orientation and victim group-membership on prosocial behavior. Whereas consumers primed with an independent self-construal demonstrate similar propensities to help needy in-group and out-group others, an interdependent orientation fosters stronger commitments to aid in-group than out-group members. This interaction holds in both individualistic (i.e., the United States) and collectivistic (i.e., China) nations and seems driven by a belief system. For interdependents, the prospect of helping needy in-group (relative to out-group) members heightens the belief that helping others contributes to their own personal happiness, which in turn increases their propensity to act benevolently. Such in-group/out-group distinctions do not seem to operate among independents. The article concludes by discussing the theoretical implications of our findings for the cross-cultural, intergroup-relations, and prosocial literatures before deriving insights for practice.

When a natural disaster strikes, consumers often face numerous requests (through advertisements and news coverage) to help devastated communities. To this effect, \$180 million was recently contributed to the Japan tsunami relief, \$1.4 billion to Haiti's earthquake assistance, and \$5.3 billion to Hurricane Katrina aid (Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University 2011). But despite the apparent magnitude of these numbers, the reality is that only a small percentage of people who view these requests proceed to aid rescue and rebuilding

efforts. What factors, then, influence consumers' decisions to help victims of natural disasters and other disadvantaged populations? Contributing new insights to existing work on the topic (Fennis, Janssen, and Vohs 2009; Liu and Aaker 2008; Smith, Faro, and Burson 2013; Zhou et al. 2012), the present research tackles this question by investigating the interplay of self-construal and victim origin on prosocial behavior.

Fundamental to people's emotional and cognitive responses, *self-construal* characterizes the extent to which people consider themselves separate from versus connected to others (Escalas and Bettman 2005; Fiske et al. 1998; Hofstede 1980; Hong 2009; Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1991b; Shen, Wan, and Wyer 2011). This mental representation of personhood has been shown to activate distinct dispositions. Whereas an *independent* self-construal highlights the personal and centralizes individuals as the unit of analysis, an *interdependent* self-construal highlights the social and contextualizes individuals as parts of socially connected units. Unsurprisingly, then, interdependents are more likely to emphasize social roles, obligations, and relationships (Chiu and Hong 2007; Oyserman, Sakamoto, and Lauffer 1998; Shen et al. 2011). Consistent with this view, studies have found positive correlations between interdependence and charitable behavior (Moorman and Blakely 1995; Skarmeas and Shabbir 2011; Swaminathan, Page, and Gürhan-Canli 2007).

Drawing on cross-cultural psychology, however, the pre-

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sent article qualifies this previously documented main effect of self-construal on charitableness. Building on the notion that interdependents may not necessarily feel more connected to and inclusive of *all* others (Iyengar and Lepper 1999; Kitayama et al. 1997), we examine the moderating influence of recipient group-membership (i.e., in vs. out) on the relationship between self-construal and charitable behavior.

Across experiments run in both the United States and China, we manipulated participants' self-construal before observing their prosocial dispositions toward victims of natural disasters. Arguing that independents see themselves as separate from others regardless of others' origin, we predicted that victim group-status (i.e., in vs. out) would be less likely to influence their willingness to help than that of interdependents. Four studies confirmed this proposition and revealed that consumers' charitable proclivities appear driven by lay beliefs of happiness. For interdependents, the prospect of helping needy in-group (relative to out-group) members heightens the belief that helping others contributes to their own personal happiness, which in turn increases their propensity to act benevolently. This is not the case for independents, for whom the benefits of giving for happiness appear similar regardless of recipients' group-status.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Every day consumers make dozens of decisions and perform as many behaviors seemingly aimed at maximizing their utility. On the face of it, these decisions and behaviors seem quite personal. Preferences, tastes, likes, and dislikes all appear to result from idiosyncratic goals and desires shaped by individual inclinations and reactions to context. Mounting research in cross-cultural psychology suggests, however, that consumers' choices are also colored by their social representation of what it means to be a thriving, well-adapted person within society (Oyserman et al. 1998). To this effect, the ways in which consumers organize their experiences, make sense of themselves, and decide what seems right, natural, and commendable depend on how these concepts are represented, both within a society in general and within the specific sociocultural niche individuals occupy in that society (Kagitçibasi 1996; Oyserman et al. 1998). One important key to understanding these colored representations of what it means to be a thriving, well-adapted person within society is the degree to which people differ in terms of self-construal (Hong 2009; Markus and Kitayama 1991b; Schwartz 1990). In the next section, we briefly review the nature of self-construal to provide the basis of our own hypotheses and highlight our contributions to the prosocial literature.

Self-Construal and Prosocial Behavior

Self-construal characterizes the extent to which one considers oneself separate from versus connected with others (Chen, Brockner, and Katz 1998; Escalas and Bettman 2005; Fiske et al. 1998; Hofstede 1980; Markus and Kitayama 1991b; Shen

et al. 2011). Consumers marked by an independent self-construal tend to be less connected to their social context; they seek to affirm their unique selves and advance their own goals. Because their focus largely revolves around self-achievement, relationships are individual-based and not strictly necessary. Independents initiate and maintain relationships with others mostly when these relationships are enjoyable or valuable (Fiske 1990; Sampson 1988); cooperation is high when others keep providing benefits to the self (Cushman 1990; Gergen 1991).

In contrast, consumers marked by an interdependent self-construal are inclusive of others as harmonious relationships give meaning to their lives and selves. Interdependents exhibit a stronger need for connectedness; they strive to fit in and be attentive to others (Chiu and Hong 2007; Hong et al. 2001). Their dedication to balanced relations is such that personal happiness often derives from promoting group welfare (Markus and Kitayama 1991b; Oyserman and Markus 1993; Shen et al. 2011; Singelis 1994; Triandis 1995; Wyer, Chiu, and Hong 2009). As such, one might expect interdependents to be more generous when facing calls for help from needy others. Consistent with this view, studies have found positive correlations between interdependence and charitable behavior (Moorman and Blakely 1995; Skarmeas and Shabbir 2011; Swaminathan, Page, and Gürhan-Canli 2007; Winterich and Barone 2011).

The present work asks, however, whether this apparent greater generosity by interdependents toward others knows boundaries. More specifically, we examine whether *intergroup relations* might moderate interdependents' charitable intentions as they contemplate a plea for help. Recent research suggests indeed that people tend to be more benevolent toward in-group members (i.e., psychologically close others). To this effect, a review of interest-free loans made via the Kiva initiative to entrepreneurs in the developing world found that lenders tend to favor borrowers who are similar to them (e.g., with the same gender, occupation, and first-name initial; Galak, Small, and Stephen 2011). Seeking to deepen our understanding of (intergroup) helping behavior, the present article investigates whether and why self-construal and victim group-membership (i.e., in-group vs. out-group) interact to influence consumer charitableness.

Self-Construal and Group-Membership

Our central proposition is that interdependents may not necessarily be more benevolent than independents. We argue that, unlike independents', interdependents' generosity may depend in part on the (mis)match between donors' and recipients' group-membership. That is, if needy others were no longer perceived by interdependents to belong to their in-group, less benevolence might be expected. Support for this claim can be found in the cross-cultural literature, which shows that, while interdependents are generally motivated to integrate themselves with and meet the expectations of others, they do so mostly when these others are considered relevant (e.g., family members, peers; Heine and Lehman 1997; Iyen-

gar and Lepper 1999; Kitayama et al. 1997). Providing further evidence for our hypothesis, works by Oyserman (1993) and Triandis (1995) suggest that in societies marked by interdependent worldviews, social dynamics made up of only in-group members tend to foster collaboration. In contrast, when social dynamics feature members of out-groups, social obligation becomes minimal and can sometimes be replaced by a sense of competition or conflict.

Hence, when consumers face a plea for assistance by survivors of a natural disaster, we argue that victims' group-membership (i.e., in-group vs. out-group) should moderate the influence of self-construal orientation on prosocial behavior. Because an independent orientation affirms the individual as a separate and autonomous agent (Markus and Kitayama 1991b), we do not expect victims' group-status to impact independents' donations. In contrast, because an interdependent orientation heightens attention to, mindfulness of, and care for fellow in-group members, we reckon that victim group-membership should moderate interdependents' willingness to help. Put formally, consumers marked by an interdependent self-construal should be willing to donate more to in-group than out-group victims whereas counterparts marked by an independent self-construal should be less likely to discriminate between the two.

To account for this imbalance (i.e., why interdependents give more to in-group than out-group victims while independents give similarly), we propose that a belief system is at play. Mounting research suggests that acting charitably can promote personal well-being and happiness (Aknin et al. 2011; Anik et al. 2010; Duclos et al. 2014; Dunn, Aknin, and Norton 2008; Field et al. 1998). Supporting this notion, prior work finds that individuals often help others to reap intrapsychic rewards, such as feeling good for having done a good deed (Andreoni 1990) or relieving distress caused by witnessing suffering (Cialdini, Darby, and Vincent 1973). Since people almost universally act to maximize their happiness (Kesebir and Diener 2008; Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar 2012), it is not surprising that people would give more in situations where they believe that doing so would make them happier. Thus, beliefs about the potential for good deeds to bring people personal happiness can have an important influence on whether they engage in these deeds. To this effect, Duclos et al. (2014) found that people's beliefs about the efficacy of donating time (or money) to repair bruised self-esteem can mediate the effect of ego-threats on prosocial behavior. Similarly, people's beliefs about how happy they will feel from certain decisions in economic games has been shown to predict whether they will act generously in these games (Haselhuhn and Mellers 2005; Mellers et al. 2010; O'Connor et al. 2002).

While a great deal of work emphasizes the importance of cognitions about personal happiness in prosocial decision making, it is worth noting that beliefs about happiness (or how happiness itself is defined) can vary across cultures (Tsai, Knutson, and Fung 2006). As noted earlier, one important factor influencing what it means to be a thriving, well-adapted person within society is self-construal (Heine and Lehman

1997; Hong 2009; Markus and Kitayama 1991b; Schwartz 1990). To this effect, we expected that independents and interdependents might hold different beliefs regarding the benefits for personal happiness of acting charitably. For independents, because they naturally see themselves as more separate from others (regardless of others' group-status), we predicted that the origin of help recipients (i.e., in-group vs. out-group) should have little bearing on the degree to which they believe that prosocial behavior will bring them happiness. In contrast, because interdependents define themselves contextually and relative to the people with whom they feel psychologically close (i.e., members of their in-group), occasions to promote in-group welfare and cohesiveness via charitable acts should be viewed as fulfilling. As a result, we predicted that interdependents should see greater prospects for personal happiness from helping in-group than out-group members. This, in turn, should increase their willingness to help fellow in-group (but not out-group) members. Four experiments were designed to test these hypotheses.

Overview of Studies and Results

Study 1 manipulated white Americans' self-construal before observing their prosocial proclivities toward tornado survivors of either the same or a different race. Whereas donors marked by an independent self-construal donated equivalently to in-group and out-group victims, counterparts primed with an interdependent disposition donated more readily to fellow white than to black victims. Adapting this procedure for Chinese consumers, study 2 replicated these findings while shedding light on the mediating role of lay beliefs in the interaction between self-construal and victim group-status. We found that independents' view of charitable behavior as a vector for personal happiness depends little on the origin of the people intended to receive help. In contrast, interdependents see the potential of helping to promote their happiness quite differently. For the latter, aiding needy others holds greater promise for personal fulfillment when these others are part of their in-group. This marked in-group versus out-group difference increased interdependents' disposition to help fellow in-group (i.e., Sichuan) members over out-group (i.e., Haitian) members. Seeking to complement the mediation data of study 2 with moderation evidence, study 3 manipulated the hypothesized mediator to replicate and reverse the interactive effects documented previously. Finally, seeking to go beyond race (studies 1 and 3) and country of origin (study 2) to manipulate group-membership, study 4 used political orientation (i.e., Democrat vs. Republican) in a dictator-game paradigm to document once more how generosity varies predictably as a function of donors' self-construal and receivers' group-membership. In sum, across four experiments using a variety of (i) procedures and operationalizations, (ii) samples (in age, income, occupation, and cultural orientation), as well as (iii) both hypothetical and real donation measures, we report consistent evidence documenting when and why self-construal and group-membership interact on consumer charitableness. Putting these

findings in context, our work contributes to the literature as follows.

Work in cross-cultural psychology suggests that one's notion of group-membership can vary as a function of cultural orientation. To this effect, surveys by Rhee, Uleman, and Lee (1996) found general, chronic, culture-based differences between Koreans and Americans in how they relate to in-group and out-group others as a function of kinship. Extending this effort, our work contributes direct experimental evidence that asymmetric in-group/out-group distinctions between independents and interdependents can be situationally primed.

These different dispositions can, in turn, have distinct consequences for prosocial cognitions and behavior. To this effect, we show that independents' view of charitableness as a vector for personal happiness does not rely on intended recipients' group-membership (i.e., regardless of recipients' group-status, independents anticipate similar returns on happiness from giving). For interdependents, in contrast, assisting needy others is believed to be more fulfilling when these others are part of their in-group. Hence, adding to recent research linking sympathy to charitableness (Hung and Wyer 2011; Small, Loewenstein, and Slovic 2007), the findings reported here highlight a new and somewhat ironic driver of prosocial behavior; namely, consumers can donate money because they believe it will make them (not just the recipients) happy.

Finally, our empirical work sheds light on an aspect often overlooked in self-construal research, the directionality of effects between independents and interdependents. By comparing independents' and interdependents' generosity (toward in-group vs. out-group others) to that of control participants, our findings speak to the notion of in-group favoritism versus out-group discrimination to describe interdependents' asymmetrical benevolence. This conceptual insight holds important implications for how charities may raise money for victims that are markedly different from donors. We revisit these issues in the general discussion.

STUDY 1: GROUP-MEMBERSHIP ALTERS EFFECTS OF SELF-CONSTRUAL ON GENEROSITY

The purpose of study 1 was to examine the conditions under which interdependents may be more versus less charitable than independents. To this end, we tested whether victim group-membership moderates the influence of self-construal on consumer donation behavior.

Participants, Design, and Procedure

Using an all-white American panel (drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk), we randomly assigned 292 consumers (average age = 35; 60% female) to one of four conditions following a 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) \times 2 (victim group-status: in vs. out) between-subjects design. Under the pretense of an advertising study, we manipulated self-construal by asking participants to read

and visualize themselves in a short story written either in the autonomous first-person singular (e.g., *I, my, me*) or in the inclusive first-person plural form (e.g., *we, our, us*). This task is known to shift self-construal's equilibrium, making aspects of independence or interdependence more salient regardless of chronic orientation (Brewer and Gardner 1996; Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee 1999). To assess self-construal, manipulation checks asked participants the extent to which reading the story made them think (i) about themselves and (ii) about others (e.g., friends, family). Answers were collected on likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot).

To assess prosocial intentions, we then asked participants to review an appeal from Global Relief, a fictitious charity collecting money to help victims of natural disasters. The ad concluded by asking participants to visit the charity's website to make a donation (see the top two panels of the appendix). Participants reported from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very) their likelihood to donate to Global Relief. Since our sample was composed exclusively of white Americans, the ad manipulated victims' group-membership by featuring pictures of either white (in-group) or black (out-group) victims from the recent tornados that struck the United States. The pictures included in each advertisement were similar in most aspects (e.g., content; victims' age, gender, apparent suffering) except race. Multiple affect-related pretests (e.g., nervous, excited, bad, good, depressed, relaxed) confirmed that the two sets of pictures did not generate different levels of mood or arousal (all $t < 1.49$, NS).

Results

Manipulation Checks. To examine our experimental procedure, we submitted our manipulation checks to a one-way analysis of variance. We hoped that, relative to independents, interdependents would exhibit a greater propensity to think about others. Consistent with this prediction, participants primed with the pronouns *we, us, and our* reported having in mind friends or family much more than their counterparts primed with *I, me, and my* ($M_{\text{Interdependent}} = 3.7$ vs. $M_{\text{Independent}} = 2.5$; $F(1, 290) = 35.15, p < .001$). Since the pronouns *we, us, and our* inherently include "*I + others*," we expected slight differences (if any) would emerge in terms of how much the two groups thought of themselves. Yet, we found independents were more likely to think about themselves than their interdependent counterparts ($M_{\text{Independent}} = 4.9$ vs. $M_{\text{Interdependent}} = 4.0$; $F(1, 290) = 16.99, p < .001$). Finally, to confirm participants' relative self-construal orientation, we computed a difference score by subtracting how much they thought about others from how much they thought about themselves. More diagnostic than the first two, this aggregate measure revealed that independents were indeed much more self-focused than interdependents ($M_{\text{Independent}} = 2.4$ vs. $M_{\text{Interdependent}} = .3$; $F(1, 290) = 81.97, p < .001$). Since all studies yielded similarly successful results, we refer the reader to table 1 for a statistics summary of our self-construal manipulation checks.

TABLE 1
STUDIES 1–4: SELF-CONSTRUAL MANIPULATION CHECKS

Manipulation checks	Independents	Sign predicted	Interdependents	F-value	p-value
Study 1 (United States):					
Thoughts about others	2.5	<	3.7	$F(1, 290) = 35.15$	< .001
Thoughts about self	4.9	\geq	4.0	$F(1, 290) = 16.99$	< .001
Aggregate (self-others)	2.4	>	.3	$F(1, 290) = 81.97$	< .001
Study 2 (China):					
Thoughts about others	2.5	<	3.3	$F(1, 270) = 19.45$	< .001
Thoughts about self	4.1	\geq	3.7	$F(1, 270) = 2.30$.13
Aggregate (self-others)	1.6	>	.4	$F(1, 270) = 26.75$	< .001
Study 3 (United States):					
Thoughts about others	2.5	<	4.0	$F(1, 540) = 102.63$	< .001
Thoughts about self	4.4	\geq	4.1	$F(1, 540) = 3.26$.07
Aggregate (self-others)	1.9	>	.1	$F(1, 540) = 94.50$	< .001
Study 4:					
Thoughts about others	2.4	<	4.0	$F(1, 282) = 58.26$	< .001
Thoughts about self	4.3	\geq	3.9	$F(1, 282) = 3.87$.05
Aggregate (self-others)	1.9	>	-0.1	$F(1, 282) = 61.71$	< .001

Willingness to Donate. A two-way analysis of variance on participants' likelihood to donate revealed no main effects. On average, independents and interdependents were just as willing to donate to tornado victims ($M_{\text{Independent}} = 2.9$ vs. $M_{\text{Interdependent}} = 2.7$; $F < 1$, NS). Similarly, black and white victims were just as likely to elicit donations ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 2.7$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 2.9$; $F < 1.7$, NS).

As predicted, however, a significant interaction emerged ($F(1, 288) = 4.07$, $p = .045$); see table 2 and fig. 1). Planned contrast analyses revealed that, while victim group-status did not matter for independents ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 3.0$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 2.4$; $F < 1$, NS), it did for independents ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 2.4$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 3.1$; $F(1, 288) = 5.73$, $p = .017$). That is, whereas independents were just as likely to help regardless of victims' origin, interdependents were more likely to donate to in-group (i.e., white) victims than to out-group (i.e., black) victims.

Discussion

The findings of study 1 support our theorizing. Consumers marked by an interdependent self-construal are not necessarily more prone to help needy others than those marked by an independent self-construal. Rather, we find that, whereas independents aid in-group and out-group victims equivalently, interdependents are more likely to donate to in-group (i.e., white) than out-group (i.e., black) members.

Prior research suggests that self-construal correlates highly with country of origin (Escalas and Bettman 2005; Oyserman, Coon, and Klemmeier 2002). Whereas independence prevails in regions whose cultural orientation is described as "individualistic" (e.g., Europe, North America, and Australia), interdependence is more dominant in "collectivistic" cultures (e.g., Asia; for a review, see Cross, Hardin, and Gercek-Swing [2011]). To this effect, one of the goals of study 2 was to examine the replicability of our findings in a different cultural context.

STUDY 2: BELIEFS ABOUT HAPPINESS DRIVE DONATION BEHAVIOR

Using an all-white sample of US consumers, study 1 demonstrated the moderating influence of victim group-membership in the relationship between self-construal and charitable behavior. Hoping to extend these results, we designed study 2 with four goals in mind.

First, we sought to examine whether a similar behavioral pattern would emerge with consumers from a predominantly interdependent country. Hence, after studying Americans in study 1, we adapted the procedures of study 2 for a sample of Chinese consumers.

Second, we sought to examine the mechanism underlying our results. To account for why interdependents give more to in-group victims than to out-group victims while independents give similarly, we proposed that a belief system was at play. Reconciling research from the prosocial and self-construal literatures, we first posited that showing kindness and generosity toward others can/does stimulate personal happiness (Anik et al. 2010; Duclos et al. 2014; Dunn et al. 2008; Field et al. 1998). But because independents see themselves less contextually and more separate from others in the world, we predicted that help recipients' origin (i.e., in-group vs. out-group) should create few differences in independents' beliefs about the degree to which donating would make them happy. In contrast, because interdependents define themselves contextually and relative to the people with whom they feel psychologically close (i.e., members of their in-group), opportunities to foster group welfare and harmony through charitable acts should hold promise for personal fulfillment. Consequently, we predicted that interdependents should see greater prospect for personal happiness from helping in-group than out-group members. This, in turn, should increase their likelihood to help fellow in-group (over out-group) members.

Third, for the sake of robustness and generalizability, we

TABLE 2
STUDIES 1–4: INDEPENDENTS' AND INTERDEPENDENTS' DONATIONS TO IN-GROUP VERSUS OUT-GROUP RECIPIENTS

	Recipient group status		Contrasts
	In group	Out group	
Study 1:			
Independents	2.84	= 2.99	$F < 1.0$, NS
Interdependents	3.07	> 2.41	$p = .017$
Study 2:			
Independents	\$32.20	= \$35.27	$F < 1.1$, NS
Interdependents	\$36.34	> \$29.93	$p = .029$
Study 3:			
Control:			
Independents	3.24	= 3.26	$F < .1$, NS
Interdependents	3.69	> 2.68	$p = .003$
Conditional:			
Independents	3.65	> 3.07	$p = .075$
Interdependents	3.64	> 3.20	$p = .058$
Unconditional:			
Independents	4.31	= 3.71	$F < 1.7$, NS
Interdependents	3.95	= 4.12	$F < 1.2$, NS
Study 4:			
Independents	\$17.75	= \$16.85	$F < 1.0$, NS
Interdependents	\$18.25	> \$15.30	$p = .023$

aimed to replicate our earlier results with a more consequential measure of prosocial intentions. To this end, study 2 examined donation behavior with real economic implications for respondents.

Fourth, and last, because prior research finds sympathy can sometimes play a role in charitable behavior (Fisher, Vandebosch, and Antia 2008; Hung and Wyer 2011; Small and Loewenstein 2003; Small et al. 2007; Small and Simonsohn 2008), study 2 sought to examine whether this affective variable could provide a viable alternative explanation to the more cognitive mechanism theorized earlier on lay beliefs of happiness.

Participants, Design, and Procedure

Two hundred and seventy-two students from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology took part in study 2. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions following a 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) \times 2 (victim group-status: in vs. out) between-subjects design. Upon manipulating self-construal using the same task as in study 1, we invited participants to read an appeal by Global Relief, the same fictitious organization collecting money for victims of natural disasters used for study 1. Since respondents were now southeast Chinese, however, participants in the in-group (out-group) victims condition saw pictures of earthquake survivors from the Sichuan province (Haiti). Once again, the pictures featured in each condition were similar in most aspects (e.g., content; victims' age, gender, apparent suffering) except race (see the bottom two panels of the appendix).

To assess prosocial incline, we then asked participants to make a real, potentially consequential, decision for them-

selves. To this effect, respondents were informed that, as a token of appreciation for coming in, the experimenter would randomly draw participant names to receive HK\$100 (i.e., about US\$13). Based on this, respondents were asked to indicate ex ante how much money (if any) they would commit to Global Relief if they were to win in the lottery.

To test the hypothesized mediator, we then recorded the extent to which participants believed that donating money can promote their own personal happiness (1 = not at all; 7 = very much; Duclos et al. 2014; Dunn et al. 2008; Field et al. 1998). This participant-centered approach was modeled on the hedonic rating procedure used to study how expected pleasure (i.e., self-interest) explains behavior in economic games (Haselhuhn and Mellers 2005; Mellers et al. 2010). Simple measures of how happy people imagine themselves feeling from taking certain actions has been shown to predict behavior well because people act in accordance with what they believe will maximize their own pleasure.

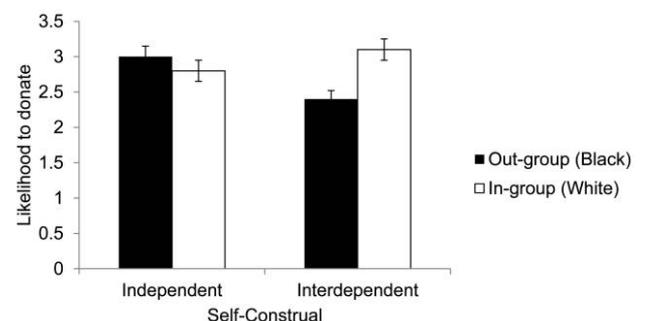
Finally, to examine whether differential feelings of sympathy toward victims might also explain differences in charitable donations, we borrowed Small et al.'s (2007) sympathy scale. With respect to the Global Relief ad reviewed earlier, we asked respondents to indicate how upsetting the situation was to them, how sympathetic they felt toward the cause, and how touched they were by the situation described. Answers were collected on likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely).

Results

Amount Donated. A two-way analysis of variance revealed no main effects. On average, independents exhibited neither more nor less willingness to help earthquake victims than interdependents ($M_{\text{Independent}} = \33.90 vs. $M_{\text{Interdependent}} = \33.18 ; $F < 1$, NS). Similarly, Haitian victims were neither more nor less likely to elicit donations than their Sichuan counterparts ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = \$32.68$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = \$34.46$; $F < 1$, NS). More pertinent for our theorizing, however, we

FIGURE 1

STUDY 1: EFFECTS OF SELF-CONSTRUAL AND VICTIM GROUP-STATUS ON LIKELIHOOD TO DONATE TO TORNADO VICTIMS (WHITE AMERICAN DONORS)



again observed a significant interaction ($F(1, 268) = 5.08, p = .025$). As expected, planned comparisons revealed that, while victim group-status did not influence independents' donations ($M_{\text{In-group}} = \$32.20$ vs. $M_{\text{Out-group}} = \$35.27; F = 1.03, \text{NS}$), interdependents contributed significantly more to fellow Chinese than to out-group Haitians ($M_{\text{In-group}} = \$36.34$ vs. $M_{\text{Out-group}} = \$29.93; F(1, 268) = 4.82, p = .029$). See figure 2.

Mediation. To account for why interdependents exhibit a greater propensity to help in-group victims than out-group victims while independents do not, we tested whether participants' belief that donating money promotes personal happiness mediates prosocial behavior. Consistent with our hypothesis, a bootstrap analysis using 5,000 samples (Hayes 2009; Hayes, Preacher, and Myers 2011; SPSS Macro PROCESS, Model 7; group-status coded as 0 = out-group, 1 = in-group; self-construal coded as 0 = independent, 1 = interdependent) revealed that beliefs about happiness mediate the interaction in the predicted direction. Specifically, we find a significant indirect effect for the interdependent self-construal condition (indirect effect = 2.08, SE = 0.95; 95% CI = [0.53, 4.34]) such that donating to in-group (relative to out-group) victims increases beliefs that donating money promotes personal happiness ($a = 0.63$), which in turn increases donations ($b = 3.09$). In contrast, no significant indirect effect was found for the independent self-construal condition as donations to in-group and out-group victims did not differ (indirect effect = .59, SE = 0.91; 95% CI = [-1.12, 2.59], includes 0). In sum, interdependents believed that giving would make them happy more so when giving to in-group victims than to out-group victims, which caused them to donate more to fellow Chinese than to out-group Haitians. No such difference existed for independents, who believed that donating to in-group victims or out-group victims would make them equally happy. For illustration, see mediation means in table 3.

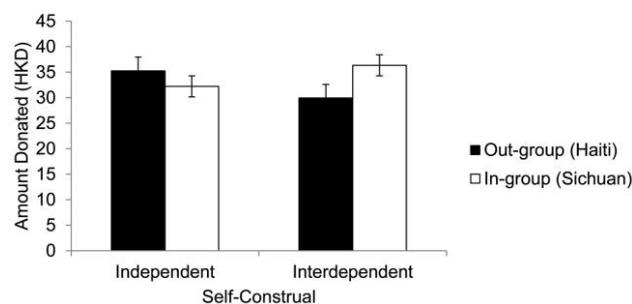
Sympathy. Analogous bootstrap procedures revealed that the above interaction was not mediated by sympathy (indirect effect = 0.1387, SE = 0.77; 95% CI = [-1.4524, 1.7085], includes 0). Hence, sympathy appears to be an improbable explanation for our findings.

Discussion

Mirroring study 1, study 2 found that participants' willingness to assist earthquake victims depends on the interactive effects of self-construal and victim group-status. Once again, whereas independents' generosity was not influenced by victims' group-membership, interdependents donated significantly more to in-group (i.e., Sichuan) victims than to out-group (i.e., Haitian) victims. Moreover, study 2 found that the interaction of self-construal and victim group-status on generosity was mediated by the degree to which participants believe that helping others promotes one's own personal happiness. In contrast, different levels of sympathy toward victims could not explain our results. Hence, by replicating our

FIGURE 2

STUDY 2: EFFECTS OF SELF-CONSTRUAL AND VICTIM GROUP-STATUS ON DONATIONS TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS (CHINESE DONORS)



earlier findings using actual commitments to donate, study 2 lends further credence to the robustness of our effect and its underlying process.

STUDY 3: MANIPULATING BELIEFS ABOUT HAPPINESS ALTERS DONATIONS

Study 2 provided process evidence by measuring the causal influence of lay beliefs in our findings. Seeking further support for our theoretical account, we sought to reproduce and moderate our results using an experimental route. Accordingly, study 3 was designed to manipulate the very mediator shown to articulate the interactive effects of self-construal and victim group-status on prosocial behavior.

Deriving predictions from our theorizing, we stood to reason the following. If independents do indeed demonstrate similar generosity to in-group and out-group victims because they expect a similar "return on happiness" from helping either group, then feeding independents information suggesting otherwise (e.g., that personal happiness is bolstered by helping in-group victims but not necessarily out-group victims) should make them act more like interdependents. Conversely, if interdependents do indeed exhibit greater charitableness toward in-group victims than out-group victims because they see greater potential for their own fulfillment, then feeding interdependents information suggesting that such in-group/out-group distinctions do not actually matter for personal happiness should make them act more like independents.

Participants, Design, and Procedure

To test the above predictions, 546 consumers from an all-white American panel (drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk; average age = 30; 50% female) were randomly assigned to one of 12 conditions following a 3 (beliefs about helping: unconditionally-good-for-happiness vs. conditionally-good-for-happiness vs. control) \times 2 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) by 2 (victim group-status: in

TABLE 3
STUDY 2: MEDIATION MEANS

	Recipient group-status		Contrasts
	In group	Out group	
Independents	4.80	= 4.62	$F = .52, p = .47, NS$
Interdependents	4.90	> 4.27	$F(1, 268) = 6.80, p = .01$
Contrasts	$F = .16, p = .69, NS$		$F = 2.13, p = .15, NS$

vs. out) between-subjects design. Under the pretense of a reading comprehension task, participants commenced the experiment by reviewing one of three research reports. Our intent here was to manipulate (or not) participants' lay beliefs about the boosting properties of helping behavior for one's own happiness. Citing recent studies, the "unconditionally-good" condition purported all acts of kindness to be fulfilling (i.e., bolstering of happiness) regardless of recipients' group-membership. In contrast, its "conditionally-good" counterpart reported that acts of kindness are personally fulfilling mostly if they go toward in-group members (e.g., people similar to ourselves or with whom we feel psychologically close). The "control" condition merely related the benefits of learning foreign languages for long-term academic success (Duclos, Wan, and Jiang 2013). Of note, to avoid differences in elaboration across conditions, all three reports mirrored one another in structure, syntax, and length.

After reflecting on their respective article, participants proceeded as in study 1. Upon completing the self-construal manipulation, participants reviewed an appeal by the Global Relief foundation calling to aid recent tornado survivors in the United States (see top two panels of the appendix). The ad featured pictures of either white (in-group) or black (out-group) victims. Participants reported their likelihood to donate on likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very).

Results

Manipulation Checks. Since participants completed the reading comprehension task before the self-construal manipulation, we examined here the effectiveness of the latter subject to a potential interaction. As expected, however, a 3 (beliefs about helping) \times 2 (self-construal) ANOVA revealed nothing more than a main effect of self-construal ($F_{\text{beliefs}}(2, 540) = 2.47, NS$; $F_{\text{self-construal}}(1, 540) = 94.50, p < .001$; $F_{\text{beliefs} \times \text{self-construal}}(2, 540) = .02, NS$).

Willingness to Donate. A 3 \times 2 \times 2 ANOVA on willingness-to-donate revealed main effects of victim group-status ($F(1, 534) = 8.91, p = .003$) and beliefs about helping ($F(2, 534) = 12.70, p < .001$). But more pertinent for our theorizing, these effects were qualified by a three-way interaction ($F(2, 534) = 3.69, p = .03$). To understand the nature of this three-way interaction, we examine the planned comparisons within each separate "beliefs" condition (see table 2).

Among control participants, the interactive effects of self-

construal and victim group-status paralleled those witnessed in our previous studies. In addition to a main effect of victim group-status ($M_{\text{In-group}} = 3.47$ vs. $M_{\text{Out-group}} = 2.97$; $F(1, 182) = 4.27, p = .04$), the usual interaction emerged ($F(1, 182) = 4.55, p = .03$). That is, whereas independents were just as likely to donate regardless of victims' origin ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 3.26$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 3.24$; $F(1, 182) = .002, NS$), interdependents were significantly more benevolent toward fellow whites than out-group blacks ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 2.68$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 3.69$; $F(1, 182) = 8.80, p = .003$). To the extent that reading about foreign languages constitutes a neutral filler task, this control condition replicates the procedure and findings of our previous experiments.

Among participants who read the "conditionally-good-for-happiness" article (e.g., that helping others promotes personal happiness if recipients and helpers belong to the same in-group), only a main effect of victim group-status emerged ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 3.14$ vs. $M_{\text{In-group}} = 3.65$; $F(1, 176) = 5.16, p = .02$). This means that both independents and interdependents exhibited a greater likelihood to assist in-group victims than out-group victims. Said differently, the absence of a main effect by self-construal ($F(1, 176) = .06, NS$) and, more importantly, the absence of a self-construal by victim group-status interaction ($F(1, 176) = .09, NS$) suggests that interdependents and independents both showed greater benevolence toward victims of their in-group. In sum, independents in this condition behaved as interdependents normally do.

Finally, among participants who read the "unconditionally-good-for-happiness" article, no main effects (self-construal: $F(1, 176) = .01, NS$; victim group-status: $F(1, 176) = .80, NS$) and no interaction ($F(1, 176) = 2.41, p > .122$) emerged. This absence of differences suggests that reading about the "return on happiness" from helping others regardless of others' origin negated interdependents' usual preference toward in-group members. In other words, interdependents in this condition behaved as independents normally do.

Discussion

Our theorizing posits that lay beliefs about happiness contribute to explaining why interdependents give more to in-group than to out-group victims while independents give similarly. The mediation evidence produced by study 2 was supportive of this account. Hoping to garner convergent evidence, study 3 directly manipulated the very beliefs hypoth-

esized to articulate the relationship between self-construal, group-membership, and prosocial behavior. As hoped, beliefs about the degree to which helping others promotes personal happiness moderated the interaction documented across studies. Three conclusions may be derived.

First, via its control condition (i.e., after participants read a neutral article on the benefits of learning foreign languages), study 3 replicated our earlier findings. That is, whereas interdependents demonstrated similar dispositions to aid tornado survivors regardless of the latter's race, interdependents turned significantly more benevolent toward in-group (i.e., white) victims than toward out-group (i.e., black) victims. Second, by challenging the belief that all aid is equal (e.g., by suggesting that aiding out-group members may not be as fulfilling as helping fellow in-group members), we managed to instill in independents the same in-group favoritism usually exhibited by interdependents. Third, and last, by suggesting that acts of kindness toward others in general (i.e., regardless of recipients' group-membership) may increase personal happiness, we managed to make interdependents act more like independents by negating preferences toward the in-group. In sum, manipulating beliefs about the return on happiness from giving overrode the effect of self-construal.

Collectively, the mediation and moderation evidence provided by studies 2 and 3 expands our understanding of when and how donors' self-construal and recipients' group-membership interact on consumers' prosocial tendencies. For the sake of generalizability, however, we set out to test in our last study the robustness of our findings using a new set of procedures, manipulations, and measures. So doing, we also aimed to examine whether interdependents' greater benevolence toward in-group members is in fact more akin to in-group favoritism or out-group discrimination.

STUDY 4: DIRECTION OF THE EFFECT IN DIRECT DONATIONS

Looking to go beyond prosocial behavior in the form of contributions to relief agencies (i.e., tornados in studies 1 and 3, earthquakes in study 2), we sought to examine the generalizability of our findings by investigating direct, one-to-one donations. To this effect, we tested whether the interactive effects of donors' self-construal and victims' origin on charitableness documented earlier would replicate in a context where consumers engage in peer-to-peer giving (i.e., without an intermediating organization). To this end, study 4 uses a new set of procedures and manipulations as well as personally consequential measures of generosity (i.e., the dictator game; Small and Loewenstein 2003). A second goal of this experiment was to examine more closely the asymmetric dispositions primed by self-construal (i.e., whether interdependents exhibit in-group favoritism or out-group discrimination; Aboud 2003; Brewer 1979, 2007; Levin and Sidanius 1999). So, to gain further insight into the directionality of our effects, we added control conditions (for both self-construal and recipient group-status) to the present study.

Participants, Design, and Procedure

Four hundred and twenty-six consumers from a North American online panel (drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk; average age = 29; 47% female) were randomly assigned to one of nine conditions following a 3 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent vs. control) \times 3 (recipient group-status: in vs. out vs. control) between-subjects design. Following the general structure of a dictator game (Bolton, Katok, and Zwick 1998; Camerer and Thaler 1995), we recruited participants to play a "decision-making game" for which they would be paired (allegedly) with an online interaction partner. Each pair of participants was allocated a lump sum of \$40 before being divided into a "decision maker" and a "decision receiver." The duty of the decision maker consisted of allocating these \$40 in any way he wished between himself and the decision receiver. To be able to observe prosocial incline, all participants were assigned (supposedly randomly) the role of decision maker. And to make our task consequential, participants learned that, upon completing the experiment, the researchers would randomly select pairs of participants and pay them according to the outcome of their game. Hence, participants were reminded that their responses might have financial consequences for themselves and their counterpart.

So would-be partners could know a bit about each other, participants next completed a short questionnaire about themselves (e.g., citizenship, favorite color, favorite smell, political orientation). Once pairing was complete, answers were to be exchanged across players. Based on prior research (Brewer 1979; Osborne, Davies, and Duran 2008) and pre-test data of our own, we chose to manipulate group-membership via political orientation. Accordingly, if a participant assigned to the in-group (out-group) condition reported agreeing with Republican views, s/he would later be paired with a Republican (Democrat) partner, and vice versa. Of note, participants in the control condition of the group-status manipulation skipped this part of the study; the procedure took them directly from the general instructions to the self-construal manipulation described next.

Upon finishing their profile questionnaire, participants learned that the pairing process was near completion and that their online partner would become available momentarily. In the meantime, they were asked to complete a brief advertising study (i.e., our self-construal manipulation) for which they read and visualized themselves in a short story written either in the autonomous first-person singular (e.g., *I, my, me*) or in the inclusive first-person plural form (e.g., *we, our, us*; see study 1). Of note, participants in the control condition of the self-construal manipulation skipped this part of the study to proceed directly to the next step.

Upon completing the self-construal manipulation, participants in the in-group and out-group (but not the control) conditions of the group-status manipulation learned that the pairing process was finally complete and discovered the profile of their alleged partner. To this effect, subjects in the in-group (out-group) condition learned that their counterpart shared the same (opposite) political orientation. Using 1 (not

at all) to 7 (very much) likert scales, participants then answered nine questions intended to confirm their perceptions of in-groupness/out-groupness vis-à-vis their partner (e.g., likelihood to call this person "one of your own," likelihood this person would be part of your "in-group," how close do you feel to this person) before proceeding to the allocation task. See table 4 for a chronological summary of the procedure.

Results

Manipulation Checks. Once again, a one-way ANOVA confirmed the effectiveness of our self-construal manipulation (see table 1). Although prior literature and pretests of our own already confirmed the effectiveness of political orientation as a manipulation of group-membership (Brewer 1979; Osborne et al. 2008), we sought corroborating evidence in the present study. To this end, we averaged participants' answers to nine questions ($\alpha = .91$) intended to assess participants' perceptions of in-groupness/out-groupness vis-à-vis their partner. As expected, a 3 (self-construal: independent vs. interdependent vs. control) \times 2 (recipient group-status: in vs. out) ANOVA revealed that being associated with an individual who shared the same (vs. opposite) political views fostered perceptions of in-groupness (vs. out-groupness; $M_{\text{In-group}} = 4.61$ vs. $M_{\text{Out-group}} = 3.81$; $F(1, 276) = 47.37, p < .001$). No main effect of self-construal ($F(2, 276) = .086, p = .918$) and no interaction ($F(2, 276) = 2.07, p = .13$) emerged.

Amount Donated. A two-way ANOVA revealed no main effects (self-construal: $F(2, 417) = .46, p = .955$; recipients' group-status: $F(2, 417) = 1.85, p = .159$) but a significant 3-by-3 interaction on the amount allocated by decision makers to their partner ($F(4, 417) = 2.66, p = .032$; see fig. 3). Accordingly, we proceeded with a series of planned comparisons aimed at testing our theorizing.

The first contrasts of interest consist of comparing interdependents' donations as a function of their assigned partner. As expected, we found no differences across the three groups; independents gave away the same amount of money regardless of their partner's group (i.e., $M_{\text{Control}} = 18.32 \approx M_{\text{Out-group}} = 16.85 \approx M_{\text{In-group}} = 17.75$; all pairwise contrasts with $p \geq .262$). The same was not true, however, for inter-

dependents. A second set of planned contrasts revealed indeed that interdependents donated substantially less to out-group members ($M_{\text{Out-group}} = 15.30$) than to either in-group ($M_{\text{In-group}} = 18.25$; $p = .023$) or control ($M_{\text{Control}} = 19.32$; $p = .001$) counterparts. The latter two groups did not differ from each other ($p = .41$). Once again, these analyses suggest that recipients' group-membership influences interdependents' but not independents' generosity.

The third, and last, set of planned contrasts consisted of comparing control, independent, and interdependent participants while keeping constant recipients' group-status. In donations to in-group counterparts, we found that none of the three cells differed from one another (i.e., $M_{\text{Control}} = 17.96 \approx M_{\text{Independents}} = 17.75 \approx M_{\text{Interdependents}} = 18.25$; all pairwise contrasts with $p > .7$). The same was not true, however, in donations to out-group counterparts. Whereas control participants ($M_{\text{Control}} = 18.07$) did not differ from independents ($M_{\text{Independent}} = 16.85$; $p = .354$), who themselves did not differ from interdependents ($M_{\text{Interdependent}} = 15.30$; $p = .225$), control and interdependent participants differed from each other (i.e., interdependents donated substantially less to out-group members than did control participants; $p = .033$). These findings suggest that the in-group/out-group distinctions characterizing interdependents' (but not independents') donations are in fact more consistent with the notion of out-group discrimination than that of in-group favoritism.

Discussion

Experiments 1–3 assessed prosocial behavior by soliciting funds on behalf of nonprofit organizations (i.e., tornado relief in studies 1 and 3, earthquake relief in study 2). In contrast, the present study tested whether the interaction of donors' self-construal and recipient origin on charitable behavior would extend to direct, one-to-one decisions. Adapting the dictator-game paradigm for our purpose, we designed a procedure amenable to manipulating both factors (i.e., donors' self-construal and recipients' group-membership) before observing participants' benevolence. As expected, study 4 yielded conclusions supportive of our theorizing. That is, whereas an independent self-construal fostered no preference for giving to in-group or to out-group counterparts, consumers marked by an interdependent orientation exhibited greater generosity toward in-group than out-group members. Furthermore, though interde-

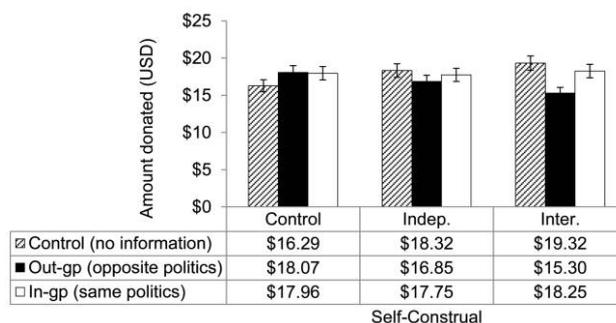
TABLE 4

STUDY 4: PROCEDURAL STEPS BY CONDITION

Steps	Completed by:
1. General introduction to the rules, format, and consequences of the game	All participants
2. Group-status manipulation (pt. 1): completion of profile questionnaire	Participants in the in-group and out-group (but not control) conditions
3. Self-construal manipulation and manipulation checks	Participants in the independent and interdependent (but not control) conditions
4. Group-status manipulation (pt. 2): partner's profile is revealed	Participants in the in-group and out-group (but not control) conditions
5. Allocation task	All participants

FIGURE 3

STUDY 4: EFFECTS OF SELF-CONSTRUAL AND RECIPIENT GROUP-STATUS ON DIRECT, ONE-TO-ONE DONATIONS



pendents' donations to out-groups did not differ significantly from independents', interdependents donated significantly less than control participants to out-group counterparts. These pairwise comparisons suggest that interdependents' greater benevolence toward in-group members (over out-group members) may in fact be better characterized as out-group discrimination than in-group favoritism.

Three conclusions may be derived. First, by replicating our earlier findings using a new set of procedures and manipulations as well as personally consequential measures of charitableness, these results highlight the robustness and generalizability of our effects. Second, whereas our previous studies solicited donations on behalf of visibly needy victims of natural disasters, the anonymity of the dictator game minimizes the possibility of identification/connection with recipients. More generally, the affect-poor nature of the game reduces arousal and offers a context wherein the determinants of giving tend to be more cognitive (Small and Loewenstein 2003). Third, and last, the findings of study 4 align with the mechanism tested in studies 2 and 3. Indeed, since participants had total control over the allocation of money between themselves and their partner, aside from a desire to conform to some sort of equity norm (which would be distributed across conditions), a likely motive for giving away money would be that it ultimately contributes to their own sense of general happiness. We revisit the irony of this phenomenon in the next section by discussing the perhaps self-serving motives that sometimes underlie altruistic behavior.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Aiming to contribute at the intersection of three literatures, this research examined the interactive effects of self-construal orientation and intergroup relations on prosocial behavior. Bringing to bear a realistic scenario wherein Caucasian Americans reviewed an ad urging them to donate money for survivors of a natural disaster, study 1 found that individuals marked by an independent self-construal demonstrated equivalent dispositions toward helping in-group and out-group victims. In con-

trast, counterparts primed with an interdependent construal donated more readily to fellow white than to black victims. Adapting this procedure for Chinese consumers, study 2 replicated these findings while shedding light on the mediating role of lay beliefs in the process. Seeking to complement the mediation data of study 2 with moderation evidence, study 3 manipulated directly the hypothesized mediator to replicate and reverse the interactive effects documented previously. Finally, following manipulations of group-membership via ethnicity (studies 1 and 3) and nationality (study 2), a fourth study used political ideology (i.e., Democrat vs. Republican) to replicate earlier findings and shed complementary insights into disintermediated, peer-to-peer donations. Hence, using a variety of (i) designs, procedures, and manipulations, (ii) populations (in age, income, occupation, and cultural orientation), as well as (iii) hypothetical and consequential measures of prosocial behavior, this article begins to articulate when, how, and why donors' self-construal and recipients' group-membership interact on charitable behavior.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

As alluded to earlier, self-construal can activate quite distinct dispositions. An independent orientation highlights the personal and centralizes individuals as the unit of analysis. In contrast, an interdependent construal underscores the social and contextualizes individuals as parts of socially connected units, thereby stressing social roles, obligations, and benevolent relationships (Oyserman et al. 1998). Building, however, on the notion that interdependents may not necessarily feel more connected to and inclusive of *all* others (Iyengar and Lepper 1999; Kitayama et al. 1997), we showed that recipient group-status (i.e., in vs. out) can moderate the relationship between self-construal and charitable behavior. Hence, from a theoretical perspective, our work provides direct experimental evidence that asymmetric in-group/out-group distinctions between independents and interdependents can be primed not only culturally (Rhee et al. 1996) but also situationally.

To account for our results, we showed that lay beliefs about the happiness resulting from giving were at play. Like

interdependents, independents do perceive group boundaries and differentiate between in-group and out-group members (i.e., group-membership does not go unnoticed, as shown in study 4). For independents, however, their view of charitable behavior as a vector for personal happiness depends little on the origin of the people intended to receive help. Their lesser propensity to see themselves contextually (i.e., in relation to others) is such that the benefits of giving to others for personal happiness appear more or less the same regardless of recipient group-status. As a result, their prosocial proclivities are unaffected by recipients' group-membership. In contrast, interdependents see the potential of helping to promote their happiness quite differently. For the latter, aiding needy others holds greater (lesser) promise for personal fulfillment when these others are part of their in-group (out-group). This marked in-group versus out-group difference explains interdependents' asymmetric propensity to help. We would be remiss here if we did not note the irony of the phenomenon whereby part of interdependents' generosity is actually driven by somewhat selfish or self-serving motives.

Our findings also shed light on an aspect often overlooked in self-construal research, the directionality of effects between independents and interdependents. To describe interdependents' unequal generosity between in-group and out-group members, one may posit either in-group favoritism or out-group discrimination. To this effect, our results vis-à-vis the control condition in study 4 suggest that the latter may be more appropriate. This conceptual insight is important as it has implications for how charities can better raise money for victims markedly different from donors (more on this below).

From a managerial and societal perspective, the present work may interest relief agencies and nonprofit organizations at large. Since 2008's slowdown of the world economy, governments around the globe have experienced major difficulties to meet their budget constraints, to the point sometimes of seeing their creditworthiness downgraded (e.g., the United States, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Iceland). As a result, funding for many welfare programs (e.g., education, health, the environment, aid to developing nations) was cut back substantially, leaving nonprofit organizations to assume missions traditionally financed by governments. Facing more responsibilities in rough economic times is not without challenges for nonprofits. From a managerial standpoint, then, our findings provide nonprofits (and their advertising agencies) actionable insights into the psychology of donors to help them design more efficient communication campaigns. For example, when selecting photographs for their ads, it would be useful for aid organizations to match recipients of help to donors' profiles in interdependent contexts so as to highlight the fact that they are from the same in-group and thereby elicit more donations. Although race is often a powerful determinant of group-membership, other dimensions (e.g., demographic, psychographic, geographic, or behavioral variables) may also be used to foster among donors feelings of psychological proximity with those who need their assistance. Conversely, reminders of recipients' out-group sta-

tus shall be avoided, particularly when addressing donors with known interdependent dispositions (e.g., Asians). Finally, appeals suggesting that giving money helps solidify societal bonds and benefits donors' sense of happiness and satisfaction may also drive contributions from interdependents, with no counterproductive effect foreseeable for independents.

Limitations and Future Directions

That we witnessed similar behavioral responses from consumers in both the United States and China underscores our findings' reliability. We would be remiss, however, if we did not call to the fore interesting patterns in our data. Although it was outside the scope of this article to further investigate these patterns, we hope others will be inspired to do so.

First, comparing data across countries, our manipulation checks reveal that American respondents reported on average more self-focused thoughts than their Chinese counterparts. This was true above and beyond the self-construal conditions to which they belonged (i.e., US participants primed with an interdependent construal were still more self-focused than Chinese participants primed with an independent construal). Although this baseline difference between the two countries is not surprising in and of itself, it nonetheless raises the question of whether and how differences across cultures affect the way in which interdependence acts to moderate donation intentions for in-group versus out-group others.

Second, though prior work in the self-construal literature has reported more or less positive correlations between interdependence and prosocial behavior, the evidence for this main effect remains mixed and is often impeded by methodological issues (i.e., absence of baseline condition; Moorman and Blakely 1995; Skarmeas and Shabbir 2011). As a result, even when a correlation is found, it remains difficult to determine whether interdependence nurtures greater benevolence or independence fosters egoism. Illustrative of the mixed evidence surrounding the relationship between self-construal and prosocial behavior, most of the studies by Winterich and Barone (2011) failed to find a main effect of interdependence for prosocial pricing schemes (e.g., knowing that 15 cents of a full-price item will go to charity vs. getting a 15-cent discount). What the authors cleverly identify instead are the specific conditions under which an interdependent orientation leads consumers to favor coupons that benefit others over themselves (e.g., when the said charity is "congruent" with respondents' identity by being affiliated with their university). Although admittedly the present article examines markedly different behaviors from those examined by Winterich and Barone (2011), both works concur in qualifying the positive association generally assumed between interdependence and charitableness. Similar nuances might arise from investigating the interplay of self-construal with personality dimensions (e.g., need for conformity, need for approval), gender (Winterich, Mittal, and Ross 2009), and social (dis)integration (Duclos et al. 2013, Mead et al. 2011). Alternatively, situational (e.g., public vs.

private giving) or cultural (e.g., size and nature of the collective among interdependents; Brewer and Gardner 1996) considerations may also warrant further enquiry.

Third, as our findings suggest, reminding interdependents of the benefits of charitableness for their own happiness may in turn foster their generosity. Future research might investigate, however, whether certain circumstances bound this effect. As pointed out by Anik and colleagues (2010), focusing donors on the benefits of giving can also backfire if intrinsic motivation is replaced by economic considerations. To this effect, studies have shown that donations may actually decrease if donors are given a gift (Falk 2007), if someone matches their donation (Meier 2007), or if the benefits to the self are overly explicit (Fisher et al. 2008; White and Peloza 2009). In sum, more research is needed to examine how these different constructs interact with self-construal and group-membership and how charities can best motivate giving. On the face of it, it seems possible that independents would be more receptive to self-focused appeals (Cushman 1990; Gergen 1991; Winterich and Barone 2011), while interdependents would be more susceptible to other-focused communications (as long as these others are in-group members).

In closing, we hope that this work will help spur interest in how self-construal orientation and intergroup relations interact to influence prosocial behavior. Beyond consumers' propensity to donate money, a variety of other behaviors may be of interest for social scientists (e.g., volunteerism, blood and organ donation, food drives). Similarly, the nature of the cause at stake may also reserve surprises and challenges for consumer researchers and practitioners alike. Indeed, though human victims certainly lend themselves to in-group versus out-group dynamics, more research is needed to examine whether and how environmental or animal-welfare organizations (e.g., Greenpeace, Peta) may benefit or suffer from donors' self-construal orientation.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

Research assistants at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology collected the data of studies 1–4 on behalf of the first author. Data collection took place from 2011 to 2013 either at HKUST or online (i.e., Amazon's Mechanical Turk). Studies 1 and 4 were analyzed by research assistants under the supervision of the first author. Studies 2 and 3 were analyzed by the second author.

APPENDIX FIGURE A1

STUDIES 1–3: IN-GROUP VERSUS OUT-GROUP MANIPULATIONS

<p>U.S. TORNADOS</p>  <p>A few months ago, several devastating tornados struck the Southern U.S., killing over 300 people and leaving hundreds of others homeless. Some communities were struck more severely than others. Please help <i>Global Relief</i> provide much-needed food, supplies, and medicine for vulnerable children and devastated families suffering in the aftermath of these tornados.</p>  <p>Donate your funds now at: www.GlobalRelief.org</p> 	<p>U.S. TORNADOS</p>  <p>A few months ago, several devastating tornados struck the Southern U.S., killing over 300 people and leaving hundreds of others homeless. Some communities were struck more severely than others. Please help <i>Global Relief</i> provide much-needed food, supplies, and medicine for vulnerable children and devastated families suffering in the aftermath of these tornados.</p>  <p>Donate your funds now at: www.GlobalRelief.org</p> 
<p>SICHUAN EMERGENCY</p>  <p>Several months ago, a devastating earthquake struck the Sichuan Province in China, killing over 100,000 people and leaving 1 million others homeless. Please help <i>Global Relief</i> provide much-needed food, supplies, and medicine for vulnerable children and devastated families suffering in the aftermath of this earthquake.</p>  <p>Donate your funds now at: www.GlobalRelief.org</p> 	<p>HATI EMERGENCY</p>  <p>Several months ago, a devastating earthquake struck Port-au-Prince, Haiti, killing over 100,000 people and leaving 1 million others homeless. Please help <i>Global Relief</i> provide much-needed food, supplies, and medicine for vulnerable children and devastated families suffering in the aftermath of this earthquake.</p>  <p>Donate your funds now at: www.GlobalRelief.org</p> 

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