

## **Abstract**

Two explanations of why shared group membership promotes cooperation in social dilemmas were compared. According to the fear-greed model of social identity proposed by Simpson (2006), shared group membership reduces greed but not fear, and, thus, should promote altruistic behavior toward in-group members in the absence of fear. According to the group-heuristic model proposed by Yamagishi and colleagues, altruistic behavior toward in-group members is a “ticket” to enter a generalized exchange system; people are not predicted to behave altruistically when it is made salience that no system of generalized exchange operates in the group. We tested these models in a dictator game experiment with two conditions. In the common knowledge condition, either model predicts greater altruism toward in-group recipients. In the unilateral knowledge condition—when the dictator knows the group membership of the recipient, but the recipient does not know the membership of the dictator—the fear-greed model predicts greater altruism toward in-group recipients. In contrast, the group heuristic model does not predict such in-group bias in altruism since. The results of the experiment clearly support the group heuristic model.