

Ingroup identification and relative deprivation: an examination across multiple social comparisons

LINDA R. TROPP* and STEPHEN C. WRIGHT
University of California, Santa Cruz, USA

Abstract

Most research on social identity and relative deprivation has focused on the salience of social identity in social comparisons. In contrast, little research has studied relative deprivation in relation to one's identification with the ingroup, and across a variety of comparison targets. Using samples of Latino and African-American respondents, the present study investigated ingroup identification and relative deprivation in comparisons with Ingroup Members, Other Minorities, and Whites. High-Identification respondents felt more group deprivation than Low-Identification respondents in comparisons with both Other Minorities and Whites. High-Identification respondents also reported more personal deprivation than Low-Identification respondents when comparing themselves with Whites and less personal satisfaction when comparing themselves with Other Minorities, yet they generally expressed satisfaction in comparisons with Ingroup Members. Results suggest that ingroup identification and comparison targets are important considerations for deprivation research, as one's relationships with targets may be associated with outcomes of social comparisons. Copyright © 1999 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present research was to investigate relationships between ingroup identification and individuals' reports of relative deprivation, across differing targets of social comparison. Theories of relative deprivation and social identity share a common connection to theories of social comparison (Walker & Pettigrew, 1984), as they propose that people compare themselves with others to evaluate their position in the social world (see Kawakami & Dion, 1995, for an extended discussion). Indeed, social comparisons among ingroup and outgroup members is a major theme in both relative deprivation theory (see Olson, Herman & Zanna, 1986) and social identity theory (see Tajfel, 1981).

*Correspondence to: Linda R. Tropp, Department of Psychology, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, USA. e-mail: ltropp@cats.ucsc.edu

Recent attempts to empirically link these two theoretical perspectives (e.g. Smith, Spears & Oyen, 1994; Kawakami & Dion, 1993) have tended to focus on the situational salience of group membership in social comparisons, while individuals' feelings of identification with the ingroup have remained relatively understudied. We propose that attention be paid to ingroup identification, as the value which individuals grant to their group memberships is likely to correspond with their assessments of deprivation in intergroup and intragroup social comparisons. Additionally, we share the view of others that relative deprivation needs to be studied with respect to different levels of analysis (e.g. Walker & Pettigrew, 1984; Smith & Pettigrew, 1998, unpublished manuscript) and across a number of comparison targets (e.g. Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987; Martin, 1986), as the varying nature of social comparisons may produce differences in assessments of deprivation. Using samples from two disadvantaged groups, the present study examines relationships between ingroup identification and relative deprivation across multiple social comparisons.

Relative Deprivation and Social Comparisons

Relative deprivation has been defined as one's sense of deprivation in comparisons with other individuals or social groups (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). In particular, relative deprivation research has focused on feelings of deprivation among members of disadvantaged groups (e.g. Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972), which result from comparisons with relatively advantaged individuals or groups (Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Rather than reflecting objective circumstances, this deprivation stems from individuals' subjective assessments of their own situation, in relation to the perceived situation of others (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987). Feelings of deprivation also denote a sense of entitlement among the disadvantaged, in that they feel they deserve the circumstances that have been granted to others (Crosby, 1984).

Personal and Group Levels of Analysis

An important theoretical clarification concerns the distinction between personal and group levels of analysis in relative deprivation research. Runciman (1966) regarded egoistic (personal) deprivation as that which develops from comparisons with other individuals, while fraternal (group) deprivation results from comparisons between one's group and other social groups. This distinction between personal and group deprivation has been particularly useful in predicting individuals' inclinations toward collective action. Group deprivation, and not personal deprivation, is linked to individuals' perceptions of social injustice (Martin, 1986; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972), interest in collective action (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983), and support for programs which can enhance the welfare of one's group (Tougas & Veilleux, 1988).

Social Comparisons in Social Identity Research

Similarly, research from a social identity perspective has distinguished between comparisons with ingroup members (i.e. intragroup) and comparisons with outgroup members (i.e. intergroup) (see Tajfel, 1981). When group categories are salient,

individuals accentuate similarities between themselves and fellow ingroup members, and exaggerate differences between the ingroup and outgroups (Simon, Pantaleo & Mummendey, 1995). Individuals also make social comparisons that favor the ingroup when group identities are salient (Brewer, 1979) and when they identify with the ingroup (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990), as they strive to maintain positive views of their group (Tajfel, 1981).

Integrating Research on Social Identity and Relative Deprivation

Recent attempts to link research on social identity and relative deprivation have emphasized the personal–group distinction, through focusing on how the relative salience of personal and group identities can influence social comparisons (e.g. Smith *et al.*, 1994; Kawakami & Dion, 1993). For example, Kawakami and Dion (1993) have proposed that salient personal identities lead individuals to engage in interpersonal comparisons, which can produce feelings of personal relative deprivation. On the other hand, salient group identities lead individuals to engage in intergroup comparisons which can result in feelings of group relative deprivation.

While this integration advances our understanding of social comparison processes, there are three important limitations in this research.

Ingroup Identification and Social Comparisons

One concern associated with this integration pertains to its exclusive focus on the salience of social identities, and the failure to consider individuals' feelings toward the groups to which they belong. Social identities are valued by individuals, and are therefore significant for individuals' self-conceptions, beyond their salience in specific social situations (Deaux, 1993; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Indeed, Tajfel (1981) stated that both one's awareness of group memberships and one's emotional attachment to groups are essential components of one's social identity, and it has recently been argued that these factors should not automatically be equated (Hinkle & Brown, 1990). Thus, toward the integration of research on social identity and relative deprivation, it would be insufficient to study only the situational *salience* of social identity, or the degree to which the identity is made prominent within the social comparison. Rather, it is necessary to also study levels of *identification*, or the degree to which an individual feels a psychological attachment and commitment to their group (see Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1997).

Ingroup Identification and Group Relative Deprivation

Research from a social identity perspective has shown that individuals high in identification favor their ingroup (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990) are more committed to their ingroup (Ellemers *et al.*, 1997), and desire more for their ingroup (Wann & Branscombe, 1995) than individuals low in identification. As such, it might be predicted that the highly identified would report greater deprivation in intergroup comparisons than those low in identification.

Recent work has provided some support for this prediction. Abrams (1990) conducted a longitudinal study, to determine causal relationships between ingroup identification and relative deprivation among Scottish youth. His findings showed that ingroup identification was a significant predictor of group deprivation, and in turn, these two factors predicted more nationalistic attitudes. Further, Petta and Walker (1992) studied the relationships between relative deprivation and ethnic group identification among Italian immigrants in Australia. These authors found that ethnic group identification was most strongly associated with perceptions of group deprivation, while only weakly associated with personal deprivation. One goal of the present study is to replicate these general relationships between ingroup identification and group deprivation, with survey responses from members of two disadvantaged groups in the United States (Latinos and African-Americans).

Social Comparisons with Advantaged and Disadvantaged Targets

A second concern involves the targets of social comparison used in relative deprivation research. Typically, research has studied reports of deprivation among members of a disadvantaged group, in comparisons with a single, and relatively advantaged, outgroup. However, research on relative deprivation has shown that characteristics of the comparison target, such as their relative advantage or disadvantage, can influence the extent to which individuals will feel deprived (see Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Indeed, individuals are likely to perceive more deprivation in comparisons with more advantaged targets, and less in comparisons with targets who are similar to themselves (see Crosby, 1984). To some extent, research from a social identity perspective has also demonstrated that outcomes of social comparisons can vary greatly, depending on the perceived advantage or status of the comparison target (e.g. Crocker, Thompson, McGraw & Ingerman, 1987).

Incorporating these themes, the present study will include comparisons with both relatively advantaged outgroup targets and targets from other disadvantaged outgroups. Consistent with research on relative deprivation, we predict that individuals will report more deprivation in comparisons with clearly advantaged targets than in comparisons with other disadvantaged targets. While a social identity perspective would predict that highly identified individuals will report more deprivation than those who are not highly identified, we also predict an interaction between identification and the target of comparison. Highly identified individuals should report even greater deprivation in comparisons with clearly advantaged targets than in comparisons with targets from other disadvantaged groups. Consequently, we predict that the difference between respondents high and low in identification will be greater in comparisons with clearly advantaged targets than in comparisons with other disadvantaged targets.

Types of Social Comparisons in Relative Deprivation Research

Another goal of this study is to address a third concern, regarding the types of comparisons examined in research on social identity and relative deprivation. In prior research, there has been an implicit notion that individuals will engage in either

interpersonal comparisons (when personal identities are salient) or intergroup comparisons (when group categories are salient). However, this simple personal–group distinction may be problematic, as it does not take into account situations where people express personal deprivation in comparisons with members of other social groups. Smith and Pettigrew (1998) have instead proposed the use of three comparisons in relative deprivation research: (1) comparisons between oneself and a fellow ingroup member; (2) comparisons between oneself and an outgroup member; and (3) comparisons between one's group and other social groups (see Walker & Pettigrew, 1984, for an even more expansive model). Unlike comparisons (1) and (3), which are regularly used in research on social identity and relative deprivation, comparison (2) introduces a context where both personal and group levels may be relevant.

To illustrate this point, it may prove useful to compare two sets of findings involving ingroup identification and personal deprivation. Results from the Petta and Walker (1992) study suggest that ingroup identification is most strongly associated with group, and not personal, deprivation. At the same time, findings reported by Crosby, Cordova and Jaskar (1993) suggest that highly identified individuals may report greater personal disadvantage than individuals low in identification. This inconsistency appears to be due to a difference in the focus of respondents' assessments across these studies. Respondents in the Crosby *et al.* (1993) study appear to have focused on their disadvantage as *group members* within the larger society, thereby implying a comparison between themselves as group members and the rest of the population (i.e. a self–outgroup comparison). In contrast, Petta and Walker (1992) generated personal-level comparisons between the individual and other ingroup members (i.e. a self–ingroup comparison).

The present study will address this issue by including two types of personal-level comparisons (self–outgroup and self–ingroup), along with the common group-level comparisons (ingroup–outgroup). Based on the results from these two studies, we expect differences in reports of deprivation across self–outgroup and self–ingroup comparisons, in relation to levels of ingroup identification. Social identity theory would propose that individuals' reports of deprivation will vary, depending upon whether they perceive the comparison to be intergroup or intragroup in nature. Correspondingly, we propose that in self–outgroup comparisons, highly identified individuals will report more deprivation than individuals low in identification. However, in self–ingroup comparisons, highly identified individuals should not differ from individuals low in identification in their reports of deprivation.

Exploring Relationships between Personal and Group Deprivation

At the same time, these social comparisons can be considered from another perspective. Rather than solely interpreting comparisons on either the personal or group level, comparisons can also be conducted across these levels to examine differences in reported deprivation when the focus of the comparison is on one's group, or on oneself as a member of that group. A parallel body of research has revealed that individuals consistently report more discrimination toward their group than toward themselves as individual members of that group (e.g. Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam & Lalonde, 1990). In intergroup comparisons, it is possible that individuals would

similarly report more deprivation on the group level (i.e. in ingroup–outgroup comparisons) than on the personal level (i.e. in self–outgroup comparisons; see Crosby, 1984). This study will investigate patterns in reports of deprivation across ingroup–outgroup and self–outgroup comparisons, and with respect to ingroup identification and varying targets of social comparison.

Summary of Research Goals and Hypotheses

The present study examined relationships between relative deprivation and ingroup identification among members of two traditionally disadvantaged groups (Latinos and African–Americans), in comparisons with ingroup members, members of other disadvantaged groups (Other Minorities), and members of a clearly advantaged group (Whites). Three sets of hypotheses were tested, involving (1) group-level comparisons, (2) personal-level comparisons, and (3) relationships between group-level (ingroup–outgroup) and personal-level (self–outgroup) social comparisons.

Group-level Comparisons

First, we predict that individuals high in identification would report more group deprivation in comparisons with outgroup members than individuals low in identification. We also predict that individuals would report more group deprivation in comparisons with clearly advantaged outgroup members (Whites) than in comparisons with members of other disadvantaged outgroups (Other Minorities). Finally, we predict an interaction between ingroup identification and the targets of comparison, such that reports of deprivation among individuals high and low in identification would differ more greatly in comparisons with clearly advantaged targets (Whites) than in comparisons with other disadvantaged targets (Other Minorities).

Personal-level Comparisons

We also predicted that highly identified individuals would report more personal deprivation in comparisons with outgroup members (self–outgroup comparisons) than those low in identification. However, we predict that individuals high and low in identification would not differ significantly in comparisons with ingroup members (self–ingroup comparisons). Additionally, we propose that individuals would report more personal deprivation in comparisons with clearly advantaged outgroup members (Whites) than in comparisons with other disadvantaged outgroup members (Other Minorities). Finally, we predict an interaction between ingroup identification and the targets of comparison, such that reports of deprivation among individuals high and low in identification would differ more greatly in comparisons with clearly advantaged targets (Whites) than in comparisons with similarly disadvantaged targets (Other Minorities).

Relationships between Group-level and Personal-level Comparisons

We hypothesized that individuals would report higher levels of deprivation in group-level (ingroup–outgroup) comparisons than in personal-level (self–outgroup) comparisons. Relationships between reports of ingroup–outgroup deprivation and self–outgroup deprivation will also be explored, in relation to ingroup identification and across different targets of social comparison.

METHOD

Sample

A total of 176 Latino and 126 African–American respondents were recruited for participation from three universities in central California. Respondents were recruited through campus organizations, mailings, psychology courses, or were approached individually by members of the research team.

Measures

The items of interest in this study were gathered as part of a larger survey of identity and intergroup attitudes,¹ Respondents completed surveys at home, in small groups in a laboratory setting, or in classroom settings.

Ingroup Identification

Ingroup identification was assessed using a standardized 7-item composite measure, which included: (1) the four-item Identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), adapted for ethnic group membership; (2) the Inclusion of Ingroup in the Self measure (Tropp & Wright, 1998, unpublished manuscript), also adapted for ethnic group membership; (3) a single item from the Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (Cheek, Tropp, Chen & Underwood, 1994), regarding the importance of racial/ethnic identity to one's sense of self; and (4) a single item regarding identification with one's racial/ethnic group. Reliability coefficients for this composite measure of Ingroup Identification were 0.88 among Latino respondents and 0.75 among African–American respondents. Possible scores ranged between 1 and 7, with greater values indicating higher levels of ingroup identification.

Relative Deprivation

Using items adapted from Vanneman and Pettigrew (1972), Relative Deprivation (RD) was assessed for five separate social comparisons: two group-level comparisons

¹In this survey, measures of ingroup identification preceded measures of relative deprivation.

and three personal-level comparisons. The Group RD items asked respondents to make social comparisons: (1) between the situation of their ethnic ingroup and that of other disadvantaged outgroups, ('Other Minorities'); and (2) between their ethnic ingroup and a clearly advantaged outgroup ('Whites'). The Personal RD items asked respondents to make social comparisons: (1) between their own personal situation and that of other members of their ethnic ingroup; (2) between their personal situation and that of other disadvantaged outgroups ('Other Minorities'); and (3) between their personal situation and that of a clearly advantaged outgroup ('Whites').

As many have noted the importance of measuring both cognitive and affective components of RD (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984), separate items were used to assess cognitive and affective components for each of the five comparisons. For each comparison, the cognitive items concerned *perceptions* of deprivation ('Would you say you are better or worse off than . . .'), and were scored on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (worse off) to 9 (better off). The affective items concerned *emotional responses* to the situation ('How angry or satisfied are you about your situation relative to . . .') and were scored on a scale ranging from 1 (very angry) to 9 (very satisfied). Scores on the cognitive and affective RD items were averaged for each comparison target, and these averages were used as the measures of deprivation in data analysis. Responses to the RD items were also reverse-scored for data analysis, so that higher values would correspond with increased feelings of deprivation.

It should further be noted that neutral responses to the RD items fell at the midpoint of each scale (i.e. 5 on a 9-point scale). Consequently, values below the midpoint denote a sense of 'satisfaction' with one's situation, while values above the midpoint denote a sense of 'deprivation'. Hence, the terms 'satisfactory' and 'deprivation' will be used to refer to individuals' responses throughout the remainder of this paper.

Demographic Items

Respondents were also asked to state their age and gender, and to indicate their family's socio-economic status, using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (lower working class) to 7 (upper class).

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine the demographic composition of each ethnic sample. Subsequently, three primary sets of analyses were conducted. The first set of analyses examined relationships between Group RD and Ingroup Identification in comparisons with Other Minorities and Whites. The second set of analyses investigated relationships between Personal RD and Ingroup Identification in comparisons with Ingroup Members, Other Minorities, and Whites. Finally, Personal RD items and Group RD items were averaged separately and analyzed, to compare reports of ingroup-outgroup deprivation and self-outgroup deprivation in comparisons with Other Minorities and Whites.

Preliminary Analyses

Among Latino respondents, 113 (64%) were female and 59 (34%) were male. Most Latino respondents were between the ages of 19 and 24 years (68%), while 23 per cent were younger than 19 years of age, and 6 per cent were older than 24 years of age.² Among African-American respondents, 85 (68%) were female and 38 (30%) were male. Similar to Latino respondents, most African-American respondents were between the ages of 19 and 24 years (64%), while 23 per cent were younger than 19 years of age, and 10 per cent were older than 24 years of age.³

Overall, Latino respondents reported lower identification with their ethnic group ($M = 5.55$) than African-American respondents ($M = 5.95$), $t(299) = -3.09$, $p < 0.01$. In addition, Latino respondents reported substantially lower family socio-economic status ($M = 2.82$) than African-American respondents ($M = 3.70$), $t(271) = -4.63$, $p < 0.001$.

Ingroup Identification and Relative Deprivation

Based on scores of the Ingroup Identification measure, respondents were classified as either High-Identification respondents (top 40% of responses) or Low-Identification respondents (bottom 40%). Cumulative percentages were used to identify the top 40 per cent and bottom 40 per cent of Ingroup Identification scores within each ethnic sample.⁴ Among Latinos, 71 were classified as High-Identification respondents ($M = 6.59$), and 72 as Low-Identification respondents ($M = 4.38$). Among African-Americans, 55 were classified as High-Identification respondents ($M = 6.79$) and 53 as Low-Identification respondents ($M = 4.98$).

Group Relative Deprivation

A 2 (Ingroup Identification: High/Low) $\times$ 2 (Ethnic Group: Latino/African-American) $\times$ 2 (Comparison Group: Minorities/Whites) mixed-model analysis of variance was conducted for Group RD. Cell means for the entire analysis are provided in the top portion of Table 1.

Ingroup Identification and Social Comparisons

The main effect for Ingroup Identification was significant, $F(1, 237) = 42.48$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.15$. High-Identification respondents reported significantly more group deprivation relative to Whites and Other Minorities than Low-Identification respondents. The main effect for Comparison Group was also significant, $F(1, 237) = 200.22$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.46$; respondents reported more group

²Four Latino respondents (2%) did not state their gender, and six Latino respondents (3%) did not state their age.

³Three African-American respondents (2%) did not state their gender, and three African-American respondents (2%) did not state their age.

⁴As there were slight non-normalities in distributions of respondents' scores, the number of respondents in each Identification group may not precisely equal 40 per cent of each ethnic sample.

Table 1. Mean ratings of RD among High- and Low-Identification respondents from two ethnic samples

Comparison	Latino respondents		African-American respondents	
	Ingroup Identification Low	Ingroup Identification High	Ingroup Identification Low	Ingroup Identification High
Group RD				
Other Minorities	5.44	6.23	5.73	6.78
Whites	6.77	7.94	6.50	7.86
Personal RD				
Ingroup Members	3.73	4.17	3.72	3.99
Other Minorities	4.26	4.79	3.92	4.86
Whites	5.61	7.08	5.03	6.37

deprivation relative to Whites than relative to Other Minorities. These effects were qualified by a significant Ingroup Identification $\times$ Comparison Group interaction $F(1, 237) = 3.98$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. Simple effects tests showed that High-Identification respondents reported more deprivation than Low-Identification respondents in comparisons with Other Minorities ($M = 6.46$ and 5.56 , respectively), $F(1, 241) = 22.90$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.09$, yet this difference between High- and Low-Identification respondents was even greater in comparisons with Whites ($M = 7.90$ and 6.66 , respectively), $F(1, 243) = 42.95$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.15$.

Ethnic Group Differences

In addition, the Ethnic Group $\times$ Comparison Group interaction was significant, $F(1, 237) = 11.91$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$. Simple effects test showed that, in comparisons with Whites, African-American and Latino respondents did not differ significantly in their reports of Group RD ($M = 7.17$ and 7.36 , respectively), $F(1, 243) = 0.86$, $p = 0.36$, $\eta^2 > 0.00$. However, in comparisons with Other Minorities, African-American respondents reported significantly more Group RD ($M = 6.27$) than Latino respondents ($M = 5.84$), $F(1, 241) = 4.87$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$.

Personal Relative Deprivation

A 2 (Ingroup Identification: High/Low) $\times$ 2 (Ethnic Group: Latinos/African-Americans) $\times$ 3 (Comparison Group: Ingroup/Minorities/Whites) mixed-model analysis of variance was conducted for Personal RD. Cell means for the entire analysis are provided in the bottom portion of Table 1.

Ingroup Identification and Social Comparisons

The main effect for Ingroup Identification was significant $F(1, 230) = 27.14$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$, as was the main effect for Comparison Group, $F(2, 460) = 217.52$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.49$. These main effects were also qualified by a significant

Ingroup Identification $\times$ Comparison Group interaction, $F(2, 460) = 12.75$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$ (see Figure 1). Simple effects tests revealed that High-Identification respondents reported somewhat less personal satisfaction⁵ in comparisons with Ingroup Members ($M = 4.09$) than Low-Identification respondents ($M = 3.72$), $F(1, 241) = 3.73$, $p = 0.06$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. At the same time, High-Identification respondents reported substantially less satisfaction in comparisons with Other Minorities than Low-Identification respondents ($M = 4.82$ and 4.11 , respectively), $F(1, 235) = 15.36$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$, and more personal deprivation in comparisons with Whites ($M = 6.78$ and 5.36 , respectively), $F(1, 243) = 42.33$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.15$ (see Figure 1).

Ethnic Group Differences

In addition, the Ethnic Group $\times$ Comparison Group interaction was significant, $F(2, 460) = 4.22$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. Simple effects tests showed that Latino and African-American respondents reported similar levels of Personal RD in comparisons with Ingroup Members ($M = 3.96$ and 3.88 , respectively), $F(1, 241) = 0.20$, $p = 0.65$, $\eta^2 > 0.00$ and Other Minorities ($M = 4.53$ and 4.39 , respectively), $F(1, 235) = 0.53$, $p = 0.47$, $\eta^2 > 0.00$. However, in comparisons with Whites, Latino respondents reported significantly more Personal RD ($M = 6.41$) than African-American respondents ($M = 5.75$), $F(1, 243) = 7.89$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$.

Relationships Between Group-level and Personal-level Deprivation

For the following analyses, only group-level and personal-level comparisons with Other Minorities and Whites were used. These analyses were conducted to examine possible relationships between individuals' assessments of deprivation in ingroup-outgroup and self-outgroup comparisons.⁶

A 2 (Ingroup Identification: High/Low) $\times$ 2 (Ethnic Group: Latinos/African-Americans) $\times$ 2 (Comparison Group: Minorities/Whites) $\times$ 2 (Focus of Comparison: Ingroup-Outgroup/Self-Outgroup) mixed-model analysis of variance was conducted, to explore possible relationships between ingroup identification, the targets of social comparisons, and reports of ingroup-outgroup and self-outgroup deprivation.

The main effect for Focus of Comparison was significant, $F(1, 228) = 308.55$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.58$. Overall, respondents tended to report more deprivation in ingroup-outgroup comparisons ($M = 6.62$) than in self-outgroup comparisons ($M = 5.27$). In addition, the Focus of Comparison $\times$ Comparison Group interaction was significant, $F(1, 228) = 8.63$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$ (see Figure 2). *Post-hoc* comparisons showed a significant difference in reports of ingroup-outgroup deprivation and self-outgroup deprivation in comparisons with Whites ($M = 7.26$ and 6.07 , respectively), $F(1, 231) = 128.17$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.35$. However, this difference was even greater in comparisons with Other Minorities, $F(1, 231) = 175.59$, $p < 0.001$,

⁵Again, it should be noted that RD items were scored on 9-point Likert type scales, ranging from 1 (worse off) to 9 (better off), with neutral responses falling at the midpoint of the scale.

⁶Comparisons with Ingroup Members were excluded, since there were no group-level comparisons available for this comparison target.

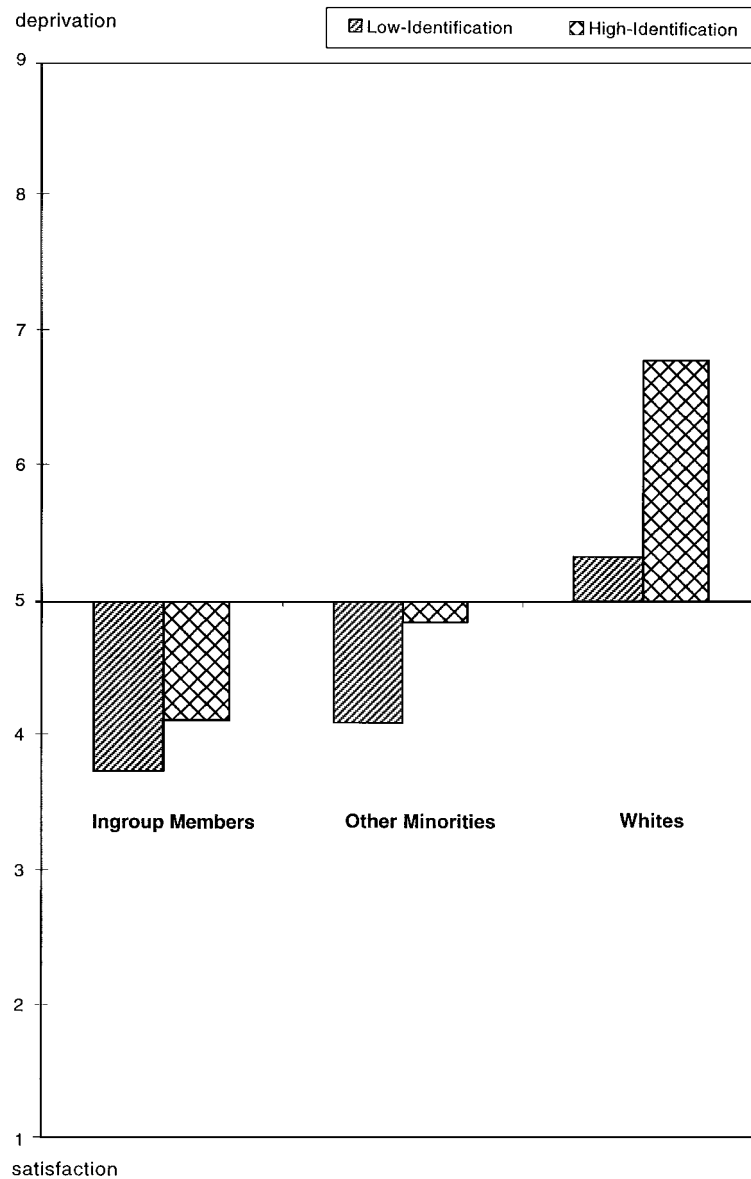


Figure 1. RD among High- and Low-Identification respondents, in comparisons with Ingroup Members, Other Minorities, and Whites

$\eta^2 = 0.43$, as respondents also reported deprivation in the ingroup–outgroup comparison ($M = 5.99$) and satisfaction in the self–outgroup comparison ($M = 4.46$).

Finally, the Focus of Comparison $\times$ Ethnic Group interaction was significant, $F(1,230) = 7.52$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$. *Post-hoc* tests revealed that African–American respondents reported slightly, yet not significantly, higher levels deprivation in ingroup–outgroup comparisons ($M = 6.69$) than did Latino respondents ($M = 6.57$), $t(239) = -0.76$, $p = 0.45$. In contrast, Latino respondents reported more deprivation

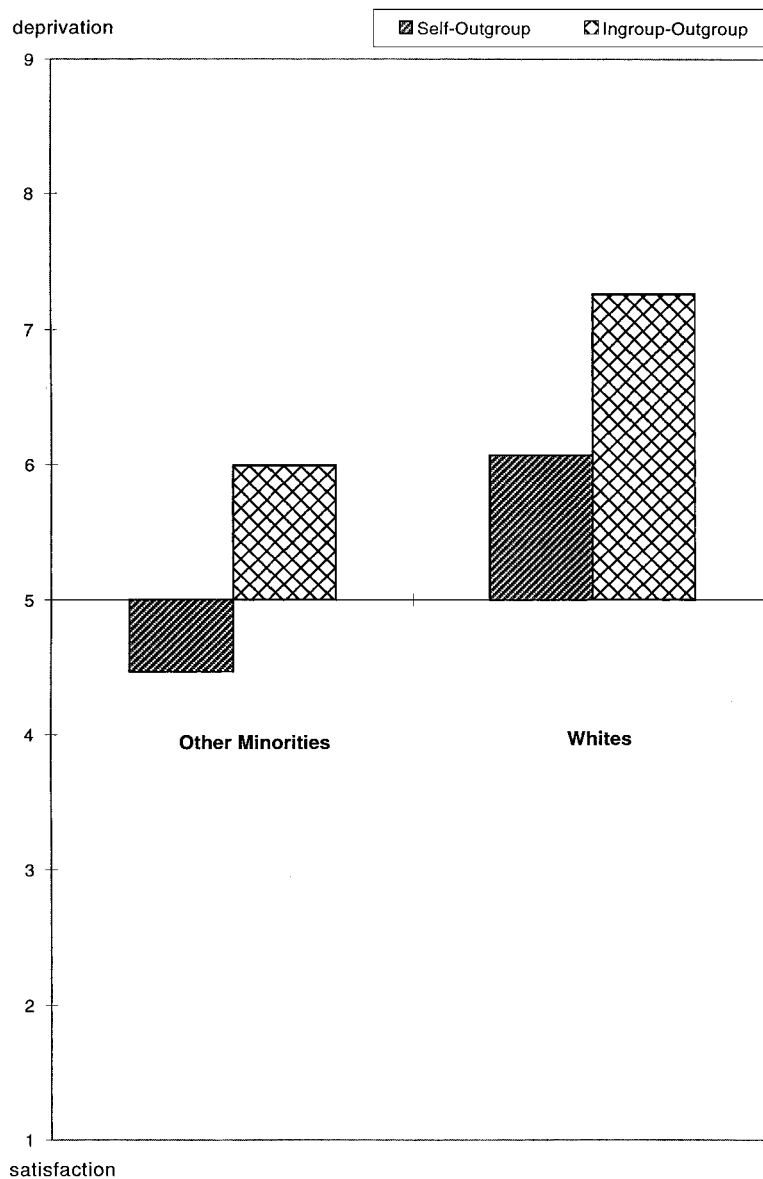


Figure 2. Ingroup-outgroup and self-outgroup assessments of deprivation in comparisons with Other Minorities and Whites

in self-outgroup comparisons ($M = 5.43$) than did African-American respondents ($M = 5.04$), $t(233) = 2.18$, $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

Overall, results from this study indicate that ingroup identification and the relative advantage of comparison targets are clearly associated with individuals' reports of relative deprivation.

Ingroup Identification and Social Comparisons

As predicted, High-Identification respondents reported more group deprivation in comparisons with both outgroups than did Low-Identification respondents. High-Identification respondents also reported more personal deprivation in comparisons with Whites, and less personal satisfaction in comparisons with Other Minorities, than Low-Identification respondents. Additionally, High-Identification respondents reported slightly less personal satisfaction in comparisons with Ingroup Members than did Low-Identification respondents. Although no differences were predicted in comparisons with Ingroup Members, the results are generally consistent with the social identity perspective. When group membership becomes highly valued or salient, individuals are more likely to promote the interests of their group in intergroup comparisons (Kawakami & Dion, 1993; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990).

It is possible that relationships between group identification and relative deprivation would vary across contexts, depending upon the salience of the outgroup, and of the intergroup comparison. For example, when a certain outgroup—and the corresponding intergroup relationship—is highly salient, group members high and low in identification might show more similar reports of deprivation relative to the outgroup, as they would both likely to respond to the context as group members (Tajfel, 1981). On the other hand, differences between those high and low in identification might still exist, as both could become even more aware of (and dissatisfied with) the position of their own group than they had previously been. Future research should examine potential changes in these relationships when the salience of the outgroup is varied.

With respect to the present study, it is important to note that respondents were explicitly *asked* to make certain intergroup comparisons across a series of survey items. Consequently, specific intergroup comparisons were made particularly salient for all respondents (i.e. both those high and low in group identification). One might therefore ask whether, without prompting, group members high and low in identification would be inclined to make different types of social comparisons. It is conceivable that group members high in identification may be more inclined to make intergroup comparisons than those low in identification, since they are more oriented toward thinking of themselves and others in terms of group memberships (Kawakami & Dion, 1995). This question should be pursued using more open-ended measures of deprivation than those traditionally used in deprivation research, so that respondents will neither be influenced by, nor restricted to, the social comparisons raised by particular survey items.

Social Comparisons and the Relative Advantage of Comparison Targets

Respondents also reported more group and personal deprivation in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities. Further, the difference between High- and Low-Identification respondents' reports of deprivation appeared to be greater in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities. Inspection of the means provided in Figure 1 shows larger differences between High- and Low-Identification respondents in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities. In addition, the effect size reported for the difference between

High- and Low-Identification respondents was over twice as great in the comparison with Whites (0.15) than in the comparison with Other Minorities (0.06). These findings provide some support for our prediction that High-Identification respondents would report more deprivation than Low-Identification respondents as the perceived disparity between their group and the outgroup increased.⁷

It is further interesting to note a distinction in responses to the two outgroup targets, with respect to reports of personal deprivation. Respondents generally reported *satisfaction* (and not deprivation) in their comparisons with Other Minorities, while they reported *deprivation* in comparisons with Whites. Social identity theory would predict that people would be biased toward their groups in intergroup comparisons, even when group memberships are arbitrarily assigned (e.g. Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971). It is therefore surprising that most of these respondents stated that they were relatively *satisfied* in comparisons with Other Minorities.

This pattern of findings may be due to a combination of factors. First, these findings may reflect a fairly realistic assessment of inequalities which currently exist in the United States. While the respondents belong to traditionally disadvantaged groups, they may feel that they have been granted opportunities (e.g. the opportunity to attend a university) which have been limited for other ingroup members and members of other disadvantaged groups. Thus, these respondents might regard themselves as relatively 'advantaged' in comparisons with ingroup members and members of other disadvantaged groups.

At the same time, it is conceivable that respondents' reports of personal deprivation were low in comparisons with Other Minorities, because the boundaries of group membership between the ingroup and this 'outgroup' are less clearly delineated. Although the comparison with 'Other Minorities' may suggest an outgroup comparison (through the use of the term 'Other'), it may also denote a sense of shared experience or group membership in being fellow 'Minorities'. Thus, the social comparison with 'Other Minorities' may not clearly establish one's status as an 'ingroup' or 'outgroup' member, but may to some degree involve a comparison between two ingroups, which vary in degrees of specificity and personal relevance for the individual (see Stryker, 1977). For example, some Latinos may identify strongly with more specific ethnic labels, such as 'Puerto Rican' or 'Chicano' (Hurtado, Gurin & Peng, 1994), while also regarding themselves as part of a larger 'Latino' community, or part of an even more inclusive community of 'Minorities'. Therefore, in future research, it may be necessary to assess not only the individuals' sense of identification with the specific ingroups in question, but also their sense of affiliation with other groups used in the social comparisons.

Additionally, due to the vagueness and breadth of the term 'Other Minorities', it is difficult to determine the exact nature of comparisons with Other Minorities, as respondents might have compared themselves to members of a variety of groups. Future research would therefore be advised to more clearly define the targets of social

⁷Although redundant with the analyses reported previously, an additional 2 (Ingroup Identification: High/Low) $\times$ 2 (Ethnic Group: Latinos/African-Americans) $\times$ 2 (Comparison Group: Minorities/Whites) mixed-model analysis of variance was also conducted, to examine ratings of Personal RD solely in relation to outgroup targets. Even when excluding the ingroup comparison, the Ingroup Identification $\times$ Comparison Group interaction was significant, $F(1, 231) = 8.95$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$. This result indicates that the difference between High- and Low-Identification respondents' reports of Personal RD was significantly greater in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities.

comparisons. For example, additional research might ask respondents to compare their situation to that of members of *specific* minority outgroups (e.g. Chinese Americans, Native Americans), to create measures of deprivation which are more sensitive to the unique social relationships between respondents' groups and other minority groups.

Ethnic Group Differences in Assessments of Relative Deprivation

Some differences emerged between the Latino and African-American samples with respect to their assessments of personal and group deprivation. Overall, African-American respondents reported more group deprivation in comparisons with Other Minorities, while Latino respondents tended to report more personal deprivation. At least in part, these differences may reflect the distinct social realities which face respondents in these two groups. Latino respondents tended to report lower family socio-economic status than African-American respondents, and this may correspond with greater feelings of deprivation on the personal level. At the same time, the collective disadvantage of African-Americans has been long-standing and widespread in the United States (West, 1994), which could understandably be associated with greater reports of deprivation on the group level.

Relationships between Personal and Group Deprivation

The present study also revealed some noteworthy relationships between individuals' assessments of personal and group deprivation. First, respondents consistently reported more group-level (ingroup-outgroup) deprivation than personal-level (self-outgroup) deprivation, a pattern parallel to the discrepancy found in reports of personal and group discrimination (Taylor *et al.*, 1990). Results from this study also indicated that the magnitude of the difference between ingroup-outgroup and self-outgroup deprivation was associated with the relative advantage of the comparison target. Across both samples, the magnitude of this difference was *smaller* in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities. This finding is due primarily to greater reports of personal (self-outgroup) deprivation in comparisons with Whites than in comparisons with Other Minorities. These results may reflect a relationship between one's willingness to report personal deprivation and one's degree of disadvantage relative to a comparison target. Other research has suggested that individuals may be more likely to report disadvantage on a personal level when their disadvantage is relatively obvious or extreme (e.g. Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995). Similarly, respondents in this study may have been more inclined to report personal deprivation in comparisons where their disadvantage was more evident. The conditions under which individuals will report deprivation should continue to be explored in future research.

Finally, it should be noted that, as this study is correlational in nature, causal relationships cannot be concluded from the results reported here. Additional research is necessary to determine directions of causality between ingroup identification and feelings of deprivation across different types of social comparisons.

Conclusion

The primary results from this study establish strong associations between ingroup identification, the relative advantage of comparison targets, and individuals' reports of deprivation. In group-level comparisons, High-Identification respondents reported more deprivation than Low-Identification respondents. In personal-level comparisons, High-Identification respondents reported substantially less satisfaction with their situation relative to outgroup targets, while reporting more satisfaction relative to ingroup targets. The present study points to an important new direction for continued research on relative deprivation, as well as providing a conceptual link between central themes of relative deprivation and social identity theory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Thomas Pettigrew, Heather Smith, Iain Walker, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D. (1990). Political identity: Relative deprivation, social identity, and the case of Scottish nationalism. Economic and Social Research Council 16–19 Initiative Occasional Paper no. 24. Social Statistics Research Unit, City University, London.
- Brewer, M. B. (1979). Ingroup bias in the minimal group situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, **86**(2), 307–324.
- Cheek, J. M., Tropp, L. R., Chen, L. C. & Underwood, M. K. (1994). Identity orientations: Personal, social, and collective aspects of identity. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August.
- Crocker, J. & Luhtanen, R. (1990). Collective self-esteem and ingroup bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **58**(1), 60–67.
- Crocker, J., Thompson, L. L., McGraw, K. M. & Ingerman, C. (1987). Downward comparison, prejudice, and evaluations of others: Effects of self-esteem and threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **52**(5), 907–916.
- Crosby, F. (1984). Relative deprivation in organizational settings. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, **6**, 51–93.
- Crosby, F., Cordova, D. & Jaskar, K. (1993). On the failure to see oneself as disadvantaged: Cognitive and emotional components. In M. A. Hogg & D. Abrams (Eds), *Group motivation: Social psychological perspectives* (87–104). New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Deaux, K. (1993). Reconstructing social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, **19**(1), 4–12.
- Ellemers, N., Spears, R. & Doosje, B. (1997). Sticking together or falling apart: Ingroup identification as a psychological determinant of group commitment versus individual mobility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **72**(3), 617–626.
- Guimond, S. & Dube-Simard, L. (1983). Relative deprivation theory and the Quebec nationalist movement: The cognition–emotion distinction and the personal–group deprivation issue. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **44**(3), 526–535.

- Hinkle, S. & Brown, R. J. (1990). Intergroup comparisons and social identity: Some links and lacunae. In D. Abrams & M. A. Hogg (Eds), *Social identity theory: Constructive and critical advances* (48–70). New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Hurtado, A., Gurin, P. & Peng, T. (1994). Social identities: A framework for studying the adaptations of immigrants and ethnics: The adaptations of Mexicans in the United States. *Social Problems*, **41**(1), 129–151.
- Kawakami, K. & Dion, K. L. (1993). The impact of salient self-identities on relative deprivation and action intentions. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, **23**(5), 525–540.
- Kawakami, K. & Dion, K. L. (1995). Social identity and affect as determinants of collective action: Toward an integration of relative deprivation and social identity theories. *Theory and Psychology*, **5**(4), 551–577.
- Luhtanen, R. & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, **18**(3), 302–318.
- Martin, J. (1986). The tolerance of injustice. In J. M. Olson, C. P. Herman & M. P. Zanna (Eds), *The Ontario Symposium: Vol. 4. Relative deprivation and social comparison* (217–242). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Olson, J. M., Herman, C. P. & Zanna, M. P. (1986). *The Ontario Symposium: Vol. 4. Relative deprivation and social comparison*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Petta, G. & Walker, I. (1992). Relative deprivation and ethnic identity. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, **31**(4), 285–293.
- Ruggiero, K. M. & Taylor, D. M. (1995). Coping with discrimination: How disadvantaged group members perceive the discrimination that confronts them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **68**(5), 826–838.
- Runciman, W. G. (1966). *Relative deprivation and social justice: A study of the attitudes to social inequality in 20th century England*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Simon, B., Pantaleo, G. & Mummendey, A. (1995). Unique individual or interchangeable group member? The accentuation of intragroup differences versus similarities as an indicator of the individual self versus the collective self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **69**(1), 106–119.
- Smith, H. J., Spears, R. & Oyen, M. (1994). 'People like us': The influence of personal deprivation and group membership salience on justice evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, **30**(3), 277–299.
- Stryker, S. (1977). Developments in 'two social psychologies': Toward an appreciation of mutual relevance. *Sociometry*, **40**(2), 145–160.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P. & Flament, C. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, **1**(2), 149–178.
- Taylor, D. M. & Moghaddam, F. M. (1987). *Theories of intergroup relations: International social psychological perspectives*. New York: Praeger.
- Taylor, D. M., Wright, S. C., Moghaddam, F. M. & Lalonde, R. N. (1990). The personal/group discrimination discrepancy: Perceiving my group, but not myself, to be a target for discrimination. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, **16**(2), 254–262.
- Tougas, F. & Veilleux, F. (1988). The influence of identification, collective relative deprivation, and procedure of implementation on women's response to affirmative action: A causal modeling approach. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, **20**(1), 15–28.
- Vanneman, R. D. & Pettigrew, T. F. (1972). Race and relative deprivation in the urban United States. *Race*, **8**(4), 461–486.
- Walker, I. & Pettigrew, T. F. (1984). Relative deprivation theory: An overview and conceptual critique. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, **23**(4), 301–310.
- Wann, D. L. & Branscombe, N. R. (1995). Influence of level of identification with a group and physiological arousal on perceived intergroup complexity. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, **34**(3), 223–235.
- West, C. (1994). *Race matters*. New York: Vintage.

Copyright of European Journal of Social Psychology is the property of John Wiley & Sons Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.