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STATE, CATEGORY SPECIFIC COLLECTIVE SELF ESTEEM AND INTERGROUP DISCRIMINATION

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ABSTRACT

Much of the research that has revealed that intergroup discrimination can lead to high levels of collective self esteem (CSE) contains features which, in important respects, preclude an accurate investigation of predictions derived from social identity theory. Typically, these studies have tended to incorporate scales assessing global, trait CSE and between subjects designs. To overcome these problems, the present investigation incorporated measures of state, category specific CSE using a within subjects design. Using this procedure one hypotheses was tested. This stated that intergroup discrimination would lead to an increase in state category specific CSE. The hypothesis was supported. Participants (i.e. New Zealanders) who showed intergroup discrimination against Australians (i.e. by allocating more points to anonymous ingroup members than anonymous outgroup members) experienced a sharp increase in state category specific CSE.

At the psychological core of social identity theory (SIT) is the assumption that intergroup discrimination and self evaluation are related (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner, 1999). Two oft cited studies (e.g. Oakes & Turner, 1980; Lemyre & Smith, 1985), do indeed appear to, support the premise that intergroup discrimination can lead to high levels of (global) self esteem (cf. Abrams & Hogg, 1988). A number of other studies, however, reveal that such effects are not always found (e.g. Chin & McClintock, 1993, experiment 1; Hogg & Sunderland, 1991), or in fact show that self esteem may sometimes decrease as a function of discrimination (e.g. Hogg, Turner, Nascimento-Schulze & Spriggs, 1986, experiment 2; Hunter, 1998; see also the review by Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Thus, a major review by Rubin and Hewstone (1998), in conjunction with a series of more recent investigations (e.g. Aberson, Healy & Romero, 2000; Houston & Andreopoulou, in press; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Hunter, 2001; Hunter, O'Brien, 1999; Hunter, Platow, Bell, Kypri & Lewis, 1997, experiment 2; Long &

Spears, 1998; Peterson & Blank, in press; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2001) reveals little unconditional support for the idea that intergroup discrimination functions to elevate self esteem or the related notion that low or threatened self esteem leads to enhanced intergroup discrimination.

In light of such findings, it is perhaps unsurprising therefore that a number of researchers have begun to question the usefulness of self esteem (Brown, 1995; Messick & Mackie, 1989) or suggest that other motivational processes may be more relevant in this regard (Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Others, however, posit that the role of self esteem in the social identity account of intergroup discrimination has yet to be adequately tested (Farsides, 1995; Hunter, Platow, Howard & Stringer, 1996; Hunter et al., in press; Long & Spears, 1997; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). This, it is argued, is because much of the work concerned with investigating the relation between self esteem and intergroup discrimination is incompatible with the requirements of SIT .

Traditionally, many of those working in the field have used scales designed to assess what Rubin and Hewstone (1998) refer to as global, trait and/or personal self esteem. The use of these sorts of measures to assess predictions derived from SIT is especially problematic. This is because the social identity perspective, in seeking to understand the association between intergroup discrimination and self evaluation, emphasizes a model of the self which is multidimensional, context or state dependent and experienced at the level of the social group (Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994). For this reason one obvious explanation for the contradictory findings in this area is simply that researchers have been using inappropriate measures of self esteem.

Cognizant of such problems, researchers have subsequently sought to develop alternative means by which to examine the esteem associated with group membership (e.g. Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Long, Manstead & Spears, 1994; Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Hunter et al. 1996; Platow et al., 1997). One such method has been developed by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). These theorists, in an attempt to assess the esteem associated with social category membership, have recently developed a collective self esteem scale (CSE). Research incorporating the CSE (or, as is most often the case, its private subscale) is in several respects, encouraging with respect to the assumptions of SIT. Thus, the data from several experiments have revealed that category members who engage in various forms of intergroup discrimination are likely to experience higher levels of CSE (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Chin & McClintock, 1993, experiment 2; Hunter, Reid, Stokell & Platow, 2000; Jackson & Smith, 1999, experiment 2; Maass et al., 1996, experiment 1)

In spite of the encouraging nature of these findings, the experiments referred to above contain features which, in important respects, are problematic for SIT. The first of these problems is especially pertinent to the work of Branscombe and Wann, Chin and McClintock and Jackson and Smith. In large part, this is due to the way in which these researchers have attempted to assess CSE. Following Luhtanen and Crocker (see also Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990), who use the scale to assess "a general cross-group tendency to have a positive social identity" (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992, p. 304) each of the aforementioned authors have elected to examine the CSE associated with all the social groups people belong to (i.e. global CSE). With regard to

predictions derived from SIT, there is, however, no logical reason why discrimination against one particular outgroup (i.e. Klees in the Chin & McClintock study, Russians in the Branscombe & Wann study and West Virginians in the Jackson & Smith study) should cause the esteem derived from a host of completely unrelated categories (e.g. those based on gender, ethnicity, religion and/or class) to be enhanced. Rather as has been argued by Abrams (1992) and others (e.g. Long et al., 1994, Long & Spears, 1997; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998), what one would expect, from the perspective of SIT, is that when the members of a "specific" social category (e.g. New Zealanders) engage in the successful display of intergroup discrimination against a relevant outgroup (e.g. Australians) it is only the CSE associated with that specific social category (and not others) that should be affected.

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A second problem associated with the research investigating the link between intergroup discrimination and subsequent levels of CSE relates to the fact that the CSE was designed to measure stable, individual differences in CSE (see Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992, p. 303). The pertinent issue here, as noted by Long and Spears (1997) and Rubin and Hewstone (1998), is that within the SIT framework group based esteem is considered to be state dependent (i.e. affected by evaluations of the self which are made in the immediate situation, see also Turner et al., 1994). It follows therefore that to provide a proper test of those predictions which may be derived from SIT, it is necessary that we assess social identity derived self esteem in the present context. Put simply we should measure state rather than trait CSE (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

So far in our discussion, we have focused on two of the criticisms that may be leveled at the work in this field. Although one aim of the current investigation is to produce a methodology that will overcome these problems, an additional less cited criticism is also relevant. This shortcoming, originally noted by Abrams and Hogg (1988 p. 319), is based on the fact that many of the studies conducted in this field (regardless of the way in which the self is conceptualized) contrast the self esteem levels of those who do and do not display diverse forms of intergroup discrimination (cf. Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Hunter et al., 1996). Arguing that self esteem is a relative state, Abrams and Hogg stress here that if discrimination does lead to changes in self evaluation, this change (strictly speaking) should be discerned from a previously existing state. Thus, self esteem should be measured as part of a within subjects design as opposed to a between subjects design.

In summary, although a number of recent studies have revealed that intergroup discrimination can lead to high CSE each contains features which, in important respects, preclude an accurate investigation of predictions properly derived from SIT. Typically, these studies have tended to incorporate measures assessing global, trait CSE in a between subjects design. To overcome these problems, the present investigation assessed state category specific CSE prior to and following the display of intergroup discrimination. One hypothesis were subsequently tested. This stated that intergroup discrimination would lead to an increase in state category specific CSE.

METHOD

Participants

Ninety students attending the University of Otago took part in this study. All identified with and were born in New Zealand. The sample comprised approximately equal numbers of men and women. Because the study focused on national identity, gender was not examined as a variable. Conditions were run in groups of twenty or more.

Design

Experimental participants were given the opportunity to show intergroup discrimination by allocating different amounts of points to anonymous New Zealanders (ingroup members) and Australians (outgroup members). Control group participants were constrained to be fair towards ingroup and outgroup targets in so far as they were forced to allocate equal numbers of points to anonymous New Zealanders and Australians. Prior to and following the administration of the allocation tasks all participants completed scales assessing state category specific collective self esteem (CSE). This formed a 2 (condition: experimental/control) x 2 (CSE measurement: pre allocation to post allocation) mixed model factorial.

Materials and procedure

The study was introduced as being concerned with self perception, social judgment and behaviour. Participants were told that during the course of the investigation they would complete a number of response booklets and then engage in a short behavioural exercise. In an attempt to facilitate social identity salience (and thereby preclude this variable as a potential cause of self esteem change, see Abrams & Hogg, 1988 for a review) participants were informed that the study was specifically concerned with groups of New Zealanders and Australians. To further heighten this effect, and also control anticipated interaction time amongst ingroup and outgroup members, attention was drawn to the behavioural exercise that was to be carried out at the end of the study. This (bogus) exercise was said to involve a five minute interaction with ingroup members (i.e. New Zealanders) and a five minute interaction with outgroup members (i.e. Australians). Australians were said to be involved in an identical experiment being carried out simultaneously in an adjacent room. To ensure anonymity of responding, participants chose a code number from a box that was passed round the room. Participants were required to record this code number and the social group (i.e. New Zealanders) to which they belonged on each of their response booklets. Communication amongst participants was discouraged whilst the study was in progress.

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Booklet 1: Pre allocation state category specific CSE

Aside from demographic details (e.g. date, place of birth, nationality), the first booklet presented to participants contained Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) private collective self esteem subscale (CSE). This particular CSE subscale is designed to assess the extent to which people evaluate the social groups to which they belong. The questions comprising this subscale, are thus, deemed to

be a close approximation of Tajfel's (1982) conception of social identity (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990, p. 63, see also the review by Long & Spears, 1997). As such, this subscale thought to be an effective measure of social identity based self esteem (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). Given that the scale is "easily adapted" to assess the esteem associated with a specific social identity (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994, p. 511), and in line with the rationale of the current investigation, the four items comprising this questionnaire were modified to refer to one particular social identity (e.g. "I feel good about being a New Zealander" and "I often regret that I am a New Zealander"). Half of the items were scored in the reverse order. Although the CSE was designed to measure stable, individual differences in collective esteem (see Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992, p. 303) to provide a proper test of those predictions which may be derived from SIT, the CSE subscale used in the present study was modified so that social identity related self esteem was assessed in the immediate context. Thus, participants were required to respond to all questions on the basis of how they "now feel"and "not as [they] usually feel." Responses were recorded on a 7 point Likert scale (1=agree strongly, 7=disagree strongly). Higher scores reflect more positive levels of state category specific CSE.

Booklet 2: Allocation matrices and post allocation state category specific CSE

The second response booklet presented to participants contained 12, 13 choice, distribution matrices. Following other researchers in this area (e.g. Hogg & Sunderland, 1991; Platow, Harley, Hunter, Hanning, Shave & O'Connell, 1997) the matrices for those assigned to the experimental condition measured the pulls of MD on MJP + MIP (i.e. maximum difference on maximum joint profit and maximum in group profit), FAV on MJP (i.e. ingroup favouritism on maximum joint profit), F on FAV (i.e. fairness on favouritism) and their inverse. Points were allocated to anonymous ingroup and outgroup members. As recommended by Diehl (1989) and Platow et al. (1997) we used the difference in total points allocated to ingroup and outgroup members (rather than pull scores) as an index of intergroup discrimination. After Lemyre and Smith (1985) and Chin and McClintock (1993) the matrices for those assigned to the control condition were identical to those in the experimental condition with the exception that participants were required to allocate equal numbers of points to ingroup (i.e. New Zealanders) and outgroup (i.e. Australians) members. Thus, whilst participants in the experimental condition were presented with the opportunity to show intergroup discrimination (i.e. by means of their allocation task) participants in the control condition were constrained to show fairness (i.e. by means of their allocation task).

Immediately following completion of the matrices participants completed the same private CSE subscale as presented in the first response booklet. Participants were also asked to explain what they thought the study was really about, if they thought there was anything odd or unusual about the study and whether they wished to comment on any aspect of the study. Participants were then debriefed and thanked for taking part.

RESULTS

Intergroup discrimination: In order to assess the levels of discrimination shown by participants in the experimental condition a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the number of points allocated to ingroup and outgroup members. Ingroup members

(M=207.80, sd=25.60) were awarded more points than outgroup members (M=171.09, sd=21.29, F(1, 44)=26.87, p<.001).

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State category specific CSE: Following the procedures used by other researchers in this broad area (e.g. Hunter et al., 1996, 1997) a 2 (condition: experimental/control) x 2 (time of CSE measurement: pre allocation to post allocation) mixed model analysis of variance (with repeated measure on the last factor) was conducted in order to examine the extent to which intergroup discrimination led to elevated state category specific CSE. Cell means are presented in Table 1. A main effect was found for time of CSE measurement (F(1, 88)=14.49, p<.001). This effect was, however, qualified by the expected interaction found between condition and time of CSE measurement (F(1, 88)=12.18, p<.002). Planned comparisons of the pre and post allocation CSE scores of those assigned to experimental and control conditions revealed an effect for those in the experimental condition (t(44)=4.62, p<.0005) but not the control condition (t(44)=.26, p>.79). Participants who were given (and took) the opportunity of engaging in intergroup discrimination experienced an increase in state category specific CSE. Correlations between all the variables for experimental and control participants may be seen in Appendix A.

Table 1. Experimental and Control participants pre allocation and post allocation state specific collective self esteem (CSE)

Condition	Pre allocation CSE	Post allocation CSE
Experimental	21.58 (4.14)	24.13 (2.54)***
Control	22.62 (3.99)	22.72 (4.10)

Note, Higher scores denote more positive self esteem.
(Experimental, N=45, Control, N=45).
*** p<.0005 Increase in state specific CSE from pre allocation to post allocation by t-test.

DISCUSSION

Previous research demonstrating that the display of intergroup discrimination can lead to high CSE (as opposed to personal self esteem) has tended to utilize scales assessing global, trait CSE and between subjects designs. In an attempt to redress these issues, the current study incorporated measures of state category specific CSE which were administered as part of a within subjects design. One hypothesis was subsequently tested. This stated that intergroup discrimination would lead to an increase in state category specific CSE. The hypothesis was supported. New Zealanders who showed discrimination in favor of the ingroup (i.e. by allocating more points to New Zealanders than Australians) experienced elevated levels of state category specific CSE.

The results of the current analyses are consistent with those reported by Branscombe and Wann (1994), Chin and McClintock (1993, experiment 2) and Jackson and Smith (1999). Each of these studies found higher levels of collective self esteem amongst those who engaged in diverse forms

of intergroup discrimination (i.e. the derogation of a threat relevant outgroup, forced discrimination and ingroup favoring evaluations). Given, however, that the researchers in each of these studies assessed trait global CSE, we would argue that the research outlined in the present study has allowed a more accurate investigation of those predictions which may be properly derived from SIT. Thus, in keeping with SIT, the results of the present research indicate that when the members of a "specific" social category (i.e. New Zealanders) display intergroup discrimination (by allocating more point to the ingroup) than a relevant outgroup (i.e. Australians), it is the esteem associated with this "specific" social category (i.e. New Zealanders) and not others (such as those based on religion, class, sporting team membership) that is elevated at the particular time in question.

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In demonstrating that the display of intergroup discrimination can lead to elevated levels of state, category specific CSE, the findings outlined in the current investigation speak to the concerns of those who question the relevance of self esteem in explaining group based prejudice (e.g. Brown, 1995; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Messick & Mackie, 1989). In coming to this conclusion we would nevertheless stress that it is not our intention to imply that intergroup discrimination and self esteem will be associated under all circumstances (see Abrams & Hogg 1988, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) to question the relevance of the other important contextual variables which are undoubtedly involved in hostility between groups (e.g. Platow & Hunter, 2001; Tajfel, 1982) to suggest that self esteem is the only or indeed the primary motive involved in intergroup behaviour (e.g. Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1999; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Rather, what we are saying is that social identity and self evaluation processes, assessed in the appropriate manner, are necessary factors in any comprehensive account of intergroup antagonism.

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APPENDIX A. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ALL THE VARIABLES USED IN THE CURRENT STUDY SEPARATELY BY EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL CONDITIONS

Experimental Condition

	Ingroup points	Outgroup points	CSE 1	CSE 2
Ingroup points		-.88**	.07	.19
Outgroup points	-.88**		-.03	-.16
CSE 1	.07	-.03		.51*
CSE 2	.19	-.16	.51*	

Ingroup points = points allocated to the ingroup
Outgroup points = points allocated to the outgroup
CSE 1. Pre allocation state specific CSE
CSE 2 Post allocation state specific CSE

Control Condition

	Ingroup points	Outgroup points	CSE 1	CSE 2
Ingroup points		1.00	-.09	-.04
Outgroup points	1.00		-.09	-.04
CSE 1	-.09	-.09		.64*

CSE 2	-.04	-.04	.64*	

Ingroup points = points allocated to the ingroup
Outgroup points = points allocated to the outgroup
CSE 1. Pre allocation state specific CSECSE 2 Post allocation state specific CSE

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