

Dominant and non-dominant groups' responses to social change: the economic transformation process in South Africa

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In the field study we examined the assumptions proposed by Social Identity Theory (SIT) that dominant and non-dominant groups differ systematically regarding the functional interaction between beliefs about the intergroup situation and identity management strategies. Participants were university students from three racial groups: blacks ($N = 100$), coloured ($N = 100$), as non-dominant groups, and whites ($N = 100$) as dominant group in post-apartheid South Africa. A multiple group path analysis to test SIT revealed systematic differences between dominant and non-dominant groups regarding the impact of perceived legitimacy on ingroup identification, perceived legitimacy on social competition and on individual mobility. Furthermore, the results showed that ingroup identification differentiates between individual and collective strategies irrespective of the groups' status positions. The results also highlight the different effects (or lack of effects) of the socio-structural variables in the SIT model, which is argued to be determined by the concrete socio-historical context of the respective intergroup relations.

Keywords: dominant versus non-dominant groups; economic transformation; intergroup relations; identity management strategies; social identity theory; status relations

INTRODUCTION

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986) is recognized as an important theoretical approach for studying intergroup relations (Brown, 2000). In terms of Social Identity Theory (SIT), the interaction between the need for a positive social identity and group members' collective beliefs about the social structure of the actual intergroup relationship determine the nature of intergroup relations. Under the condition of negative or threatened social identity, individuals engage in different identity management strategies to achieve, to restore or to maintain positive social identity. The group's choice of identity management strategy is a function of the interaction among its status position, beliefs about the nature of group boundaries, the intensity of ingroup identification and the collective beliefs about the social system and differences regarding status, power and wealth (Turner, 1999, p. 9). This functional interaction has been investigated and specified in numerous experimental studies for both dominant and non-dominant groups (see Ellemers, 2002). As proposed by SIT and stipulated in various studies, dominant and non-dominant groups seem not only to differ in terms of their initial preferences for group strategies vs. individual strategies to maintain or re-establish a positive social identity, but also in respect of the functional interaction between beliefs about the intergroup situation and identity management strategies (Ellemers, 2002).

In the last 20 years, identity management strategies as responses to real, anticipated or feared changes in the interrelations between dominant and non-dominant groups have increasingly been investigated among real groups in concrete societal contexts (Dumont & Louw, 2009). However,

most of these field studies focused either on dominant groups (e.g. Ellemers & Bos, 1998; Niens, Cairns, Finchilescu, Foster, & Tredoux, 2003) or on non-dominant groups (e.g. Campbell, 1995a; 1995b, Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1996; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999). According to Niens and Cairns (2003) studies on identity management strategies that simultaneously investigate and systematically compare their application in both dominant and non-dominant groups within a concrete societal context, are still rare.

In the present field study we investigated, from an SIT perspective, the functional relationship between beliefs about the intergroup situation and identity management strategies in three groups holding different economic status positions but experiencing a government-led transformation process to overcome existing economic intergroup differences. By employing a multiple group path analysis (Byrne, 2004) we aimed to examine the different predictions of identity management strategies made by SIT for dominant and non-dominant groups simultaneously. The present study aimed to contribute to the understanding of how different status groups interact outside the laboratory context when confronted with social change, since the choice of identity management strategies represents intergroup actions/reactions which may determine present intergroup relations as well as the success of government-led transformation processes such as those in South Africa.

Identity management strategies

Tajfel and Turner (1986) identify three clusters of identity management strategies employed in response to negative or threatened social identity, *viz.* individual mobility, social creativity strategies and social competition. Individual mobility represents a strategy by which the individual leaves his/her group to move to a high status group, which means only the situation of the individual is improved and not that of the group as a whole. In social creativity strategies the negative cognitive representation of status differences is changed and thus the salience of the conflict of interest experienced by the non-dominant/dominant group is reduced (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 21). According to Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, and Klink (1998) social creativity strategies can be exhibited as group-level strategies (such as “change of comparison group”, “change of comparison dimension”, “re-evaluation of comparison dimension” and “denial of intergroup differences”) or at individual-level (such as “individualization” and “subordinate re-categorization”). Social competition represents a group strategy to seek positive distinctiveness through direct competition with the outgroup. Since this competitive strategy may lead to changes or even a reversal of the status differences it was conceptualized by Tajfel and Turner (1986, p. 20) as an intergroup strategy that “will generate conflict and antagonism between subordinate and dominant groups insofar as it focuses on the distribution of scarce resources”.

In terms of SIT, aspects such as whether the existing intergroup difference regarding an important comparison dimension is perceived as either legitimate or illegitimate and/or stable or unstable, the perceived status position of the ingroup relative to the outgroup (i.e. dominant vs. non-dominant status position), the perceived permeability of intergroup boundaries and the degree of ingroup identification determine whether group members leave their group, or collectively or individually change their negative cognitive representation of current status differences between ingroup and relevant outgroup, or collectively enter into competition with the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1999).

The primary preference of non-dominant group members seems to be individual mobility except when this strategy is objectively or subjectively impossible (e.g. when group boundaries are impermeable, see Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, De Vries, & Wilke, 1988; or when individuals are highly committed to their group, see Ellemers, Spears, & Doojse, 1997). Members of dominant groups tend to preserve their group's position by engaging in group-level strategies and they apply individual-level strategies only when their group's loss of status seems to be inevitable (Brettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Ellemers, 2002; Guimond, Dif, & Aupy, 2002). However, as can be

predicted on the basis of SIT and several empirical studies, socio-structural variables such as the permeability of intergroup boundaries, and perceived legitimacy and stability of intergroup differences seem to moderate the effect of group status. Impermeable group boundaries increase the likelihood that members of a non-dominant group would apply collective strategies to achieve positive social identity. However, several studies also indicate that, regardless of permeability considerations, non-dominant group members show high ingroup identification and prefer collective strategies to improve their situation, assuming that current intergroup differences are perceived as illegitimate and unstable (Ellemers, 2002; Mummendey, Kessler, *et al.*, 1999; Turner & Brown, 1978).

If the dominant position of the ingroup is perceived as illegitimate and is challenged, it becomes unlikely that members of the dominant group would revert to their primary preference of collectively preserving their group's advantaged position. Turner and Brown (1978) found in their experimental study that members of a dominant group showed ingroup bias when their dominant status position was perceived as legitimate and unstable or as illegitimate and stable. However, Turner and Brown (1978, p. 222) referred to it as "an unexpected finding" when the opposite occurred under a condition where intergroup differences were perceived as illegitimate but unstable. The rationale given by the authors was that "[t]heir reaction makes sense if we assume that illegitimately superior groups experience a conflict of values ... and, hence, face certain identity problems in maintaining or accentuating distinctiveness on dimensions perceived as illegitimate" (p. 223).

It was therefore predicted in the present study that intergroup differences perceived as illegitimate and unstable decrease ingroup identification and the likelihood that members of a dominant group act collectively to preserve their dominant status position (e.g. social competition) (H_1), while non-dominant group members are likely to identify strongly with their ingroup and act collectively in order to improve their status position (e.g. social competition) when ingroup differences are perceived as illegitimate and unstable (H_2).

Ingroup identification is often described as the variable in SIT which mediates the relationship between socio-structural variables and identity management strategies (Mummendey, Kessler *et al.*, 1999; Mummendey, Klink *et al.*, 1999). In non-dominant groups it is predicted that perceived illegitimate and unstable intergroup differences increase the identification with the ingroup. Conversely, for dominant groups the opposite is predicted, that is, perceived legitimate and stable or unstable intergroup differences positively impact the degree of ingroup identification. However, a positive association between the strength of ingroup identification and collective strategies in contrast to a negative association with individual strategies has been detected relatively consistently, irrespective of status position (Niens & Cairns, 2003) (H_3).

Since we wish to examine the different predictions made by SIT for dominant and non-dominant groups with real groups that are experiencing societal transformations and are aiming to overcome existing social and economic differences, specific aspects of the present research context need to be taken into account.

The social context of the present study and SIT

After the first democratic elections in 1994 when the black majority gained political power for the very first time, the government's priority was to initiate a governmental-led transformation process aiming to redress social and economic status differences among racial groups in order to reach equality (Alexander, 1999). Social and economic equality among the different racial groups is perceived as a precondition for developing a non-racial society. The specifics of the research context which have to be taken into account when applying a SIT perspective can be summarized as follows:

Intergroup setting

The current societal context of South Africa suggests an intergroup setting in which race groups represent highly salient categories with which people identify strongly (Gibson & Gouws, 1999) and

racial groups represent important reference groups for social comparisons regarding economic wealth which is still unequally distributed among these groups. In an attempt to do justice to the fact that the Western Cape province where the study was conducted is mainly populated by coloured, white and black people, a multi-group design was chosen. To study the choice of identity management strategies in three groups made it necessary to set up a study which could account for all the possible comparison situations. A 3×2 group design was used, i.e. participants from a race group (e.g. white sample) were randomly assigned to one out of two comparison groups (i.e. either with coloured or black comparison group).

Government-led transformation process

As the present study addressed changing intergroup relations resulting from an ongoing transformation process led by government, it was necessary, firstly, to consider the representations the three groups have about the course of the transformation process and consequent changes in intergroup relations regarding economic matters, and secondly, to establish where the majority of participants from these three groups position their ingroup economically in relation to the comparison groups. Identity Management Strategies. Since the aim of the present study was to examine predictions about whether the dominant and non-dominant groups would apply individual vs. collective strategies, we restricted ourselves to investigating the following four strategies: social competition, individual mobility, individualization and super-ordinate re-categorization. The first two strategies represent the extremes of Tajfel's social mobility — social change dimension (Tajfel, 1978) and also represent the most investigated strategies of dominant and non-dominant groups. Individualization and re-categorization, on a higher level, represent strategies by which individuals either shift from a social to personal self-categorization or from an ingroup category to an inclusive category consisting of both ingroup and outgroup (see Blanz *et al.*, 1998). Within the context of the present study, the latter two strategies represent a cognitive shift by which the participants avoid interracial comparisons.

Individual mobility in racial groups

The question that needs to be addressed is whether group boundaries between racial groups are likely to be perceived as permeable, and the answer depends upon whether mobility is defined in physical or psychological terms. In terms of physical mobility one would assume that boundaries of racial groups are likely to be perceived as impermeable since it is nearly impossible to become a member of another racial group (Niens, Cairns, Finchilescu, Foster, & Tredoux, 2003). However, research on individual mobility of women in male-dominated organizations showed that such mobility is possible on a psychological level (see Ellemers, 2002). Ellemers (2002) showed that "individualistic response to social disadvantage, [...] being successful as a woman in a male-dominated organization, entails self-presentations as a non-prototypical group member" (p. 257). Furthermore, Guimond, Dif, and Aupy (2002) demonstrated that members of the non-dominant group tend to display "outgroup love" under conditions of favourable individual outcomes (i.e. being non-prototypical for the ingroup and being more similar to outgroup members). Considering that the participants in the present study were university students who are likely to become an economic elite in comparison with the majority of citizens in the South African society, we used, in accordance with the research of Guimond, Dif, and Aupy (2002), outgroup favouritism as an identity management strategy as it seemed to be "part of a strategy of individual mobility" (p. 756).

A model was developed to compare dominant and non-dominant groups (see Figure 1). The predictors in the model are (a) perceived stability–instability of economic intergroup differences, and (b), perceived legitimacy–illegitimacy of economic intergroup differences. Ingroup identification is defined as a mediator, while the identity management strategies social competition, outgroup favouritism, individualization, and super-ordinate re-categorization represent the criterion variables (see Figure 1).

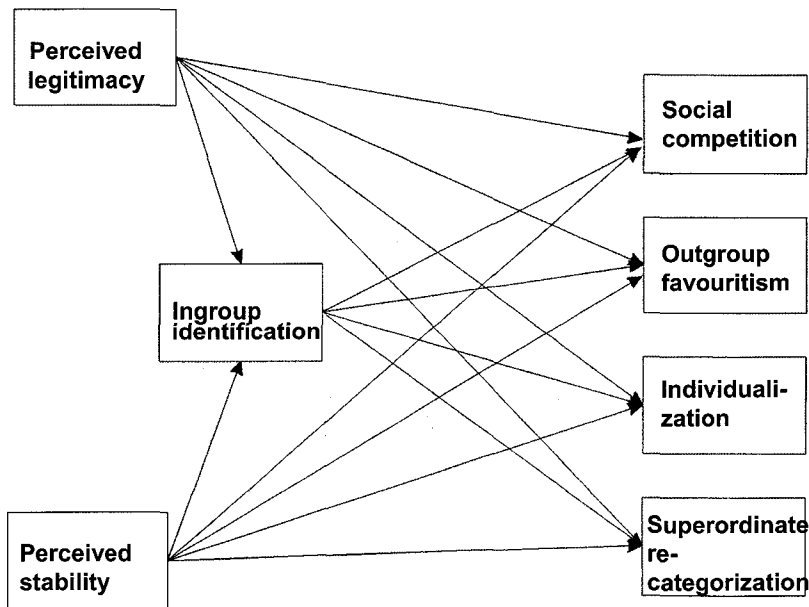


Figure 1. SIT-model with two socio-structural variables as predictors, identification as a mediator, and four identity management strategies as criteria

METHOD

In 2004/2005, a study investigating South African students' perceptions of the post-apartheid transformation process and coping strategies to deal with these changes was conducted at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. Ethical clearance for the research project was obtained from both universities.

Participants

A total of 300 students participated in the study representing three race groups: blacks ($N = 100$), coloureds ($N = 100$) and whites ($N = 100$). The average age of the participants was 20.74 years ($SD = 2.22$; $n = 299$). There were no group differences regarding the average age. A total of 58% ($n = 174$) participants were female and 42% ($n = 126$) were male. The gender distribution in the black and white sample did not differ significantly (black sample: 43 male and 57 female; white sample: 58 male and 42 female). In the coloured sample female participants dominated significantly (25 male and 75 female).

Measuring instruments

Perceptions of the transformation process and economic status position

The groups' perceptions of the transformation process and their economic status position were measured by applying the Intergroup Perception Ladder representing an adaptation of Cantril's Self-Anchoring Striving Scale (Finchileseu & De la Rey, 1991). Participants were presented with a drawing of a ladder with 12 rungs (labelled from 0 to 11) and asked to imagine that this ladder represents economic status in South Africa. The top step represents the best economic status one could imagine while the bottom step represents the worst. The task of the participants was to indicate in their opinion, on which step the ingroup and the respective comparison group stood in the past (15 years ago). They also had to indicate where the ingroup and respective comparison group stand

today, which step each group would reach in the future (in 15 years time), and on which step they should ideally stand. The ingroups' perceptions of their current economic status position as dominant, equal or non-dominant relative to the comparison group were computed from the perceived difference of the economic level (in terms of steps on the ladder) between ingroup and outgroup (i.e. positive differences, zero-difference, and negative difference).

Predictor variables of the SIT model

The socio-structural variables were operationalized according to Mummendey, Klink *et al.* (1999). Perceived stability was assessed by three variables ("The current economic differences between ingroup and outgroup people will remain stable for a long time", "The current economic differences between ingroup people and outgroup people are not easy to change", "The current economic differences between ingroup people and outgroup people are not just temporary"). Cronbach's alphas for the stability construct (using Spearman-Brown prophecy formula for double length) were $\alpha = .76$ with the coloured sample, $\alpha = .81$ with the white sample and $\alpha = .88$ with the black sample. Perceived legitimacy as second socio-structural variable was measured by two items ("Current economic differences between ingroup and outgroup people are just", "It is justified, that ingroup people are doing better in economic matters than outgroup people"). This construct showed rather weak inter-item correlation ranging between $r = .21$ ($p < .05$) for the white sample to $r = .27$ ($p < .05$) for the black sample. The inter-correlation for the coloured sample was not significant. The higher the scores in both measures the more stable and legitimate are intergroup differences perceived. The correlations between the two socio-structural variables were not significant for any of the three groups. Ingroup identification was measured by three items suggested by Mummendey, Klink *et al.* (1999) that capture primarily the cognitive and the emotional component of Tajfel's (1982) definition of social identity ("I identify as belonging to ingroup people", "I feel strong ties with ingroup people", "I identify with ingroup people"). The scale had adequate reliabilities with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .77 (coloured sample) to .87 (white and black sample).

Criterion variables of the SIT model

In the present study four identity management strategies were studied: (i) social competition, (ii) outgroup favouritism, (iii) individualization, and (iv) super-ordinate re-categorization. Most of these strategies were formulated according to studies conducted by Blanz *et al.* (1998), Mummendey, Klink *et al.* (1999), Mummendey, Kessler *et al.*, (1999), Niens *et al.* (2003), and Ellemers and Bos (1999). In all cases the response format was a 7-point scale, on which participants were asked to indicate how much they disagreed or agreed with the statements presented (1 = disagree strongly to 7 = agree strongly).

Social competition was measured by two items ("Ingroup people should demonstrate that they are the more successful group in terms of economic status", "I want ingroup people to demonstrate that they are the superior group in terms of economic status") which correlated significantly for all three groups (all $ps < .01$): $r = .85$ for the white sample, $r = .75$ for the coloured sample, and $r = .67$ for the black sample.

Outgroup favouritism was measured by two items ("If new jobs arise in the next few years, ingroup people will make sure that these jobs will be filled with outgroup people rather than with ingroup people", "South Africa has long been invested in Black Economic Empowerment. Ingroup people will fight for outgroup people continuing this investment also in the future"). The two items also correlated significantly, although not as strong as in the case of social competition, in the coloured sample ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and in the white sample ($r = .20$, $p < .05$). The correlation between the two items in the black sample did not reach significance.

The construct individualization was measured by three items ("I regard myself as a single person rather than as a member of a certain group of people", "I would rather have nothing to do with any of the racial groups in South Africa, including my own", "I usually do not consider myself as

belonging to any racial group"). The Cronbach's Alpha = .60 (using Spearman-Brown prophecy formula for double length) for the white sample, $\alpha = .79$ for the coloured sample and $\alpha = .57$ for the black sample.

Super-ordinate re-categorization was measured with the two items: "I consider myself as South African" and "I consider myself as black/white/coloured". The score of this measurement was formed by the differences between the second and the first item.

The criterion variables individualization and outgroup favouritism correlated positively ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), and social competition and re-categorization on a higher level correlated negatively ($r = -.21$, $p < .05$) for the coloured sample. In the white sample, negative correlations emerged between social competition and outgroup favouritism ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$), and social competition and individualization ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$). The criterion variables were uncorrelated in the black sample.

Procedure

The study was conducted in several group sessions. The black and white participants were recruited at the University of Cape Town while the coloured sample was recruited from the University of the Western Cape. In order to control the impact of interracial interactions during the group sessions the study was organized in such a manner that the three race groups were investigated separately. The participants were provided with an introduction informing them about the goal of the study, the researchers involved in the study, how anonymity was ensured, the procedure of payment, and the structure of the questionnaire. Participants then filled out the questionnaire and were compensated with a nominal amount afterwards. The participants of the three groups were randomly assigned to one of two outgroup comparison conditions, e.g. black participants compared either with white South Africans ($n = 50$) or with coloured South Africans ($n = 50$) and so on. Consequently, two versions of the questionnaire (that differed in respect to the addressed comparison group) were developed for each group.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

Economic status positions

Since we studied three groups experiencing changes in their intergroup relations resulting from a government-led transformation process, it was necessary to understand how these three groups perceive the change of their economic status relative to those of the outgroups over the last 15 years, how they anticipate the relative status to change in the next 15 years and what the ingroup's economic status relative to the two outgroups should ideally be.

Figure 2 depicts the perception of white participants. The ingroup as past and current dominant group is perceived as having lost economic status and as going to continue losing economic status relative to the outgroups in the future. It is assumed that in 15 years time status differences between the three racial groups would be insignificant. Asked about the ideal economic status relations, white participants answered with equality.

Coloured participants perceive their economic position in the past and today significantly below the relative position of the two outgroups (see Figure 3). For the future, coloured participants anticipated that black South Africans are going to achieve an economic status significantly above coloured and white South Africans, who are expected to be sharing the same status position. When asked what the economic position of the three groups should ideally be, coloured participants also answered with equality.

As Figure 4 indicates, black participants perceive that the ingroup and coloured people have improved their status position over the last 15 years, but the differences with the white people are still perceived as significant. Black participants expect a continuous gain in economic status for the ingroup and coloured people, yet both groups are not perceived to reach the same status position as white people in 15 years hence. The ideal economic status positions of the three racial groups are perceived as equal.

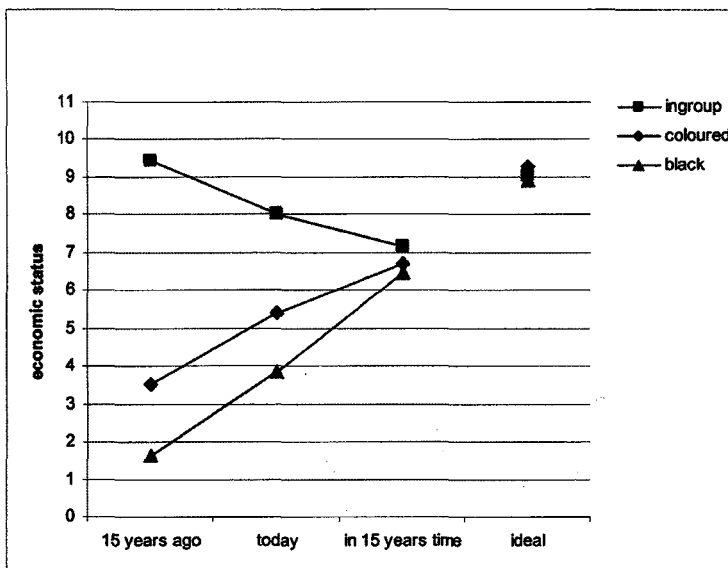


Figure 2. Changes in economic status positions perceived by white participants

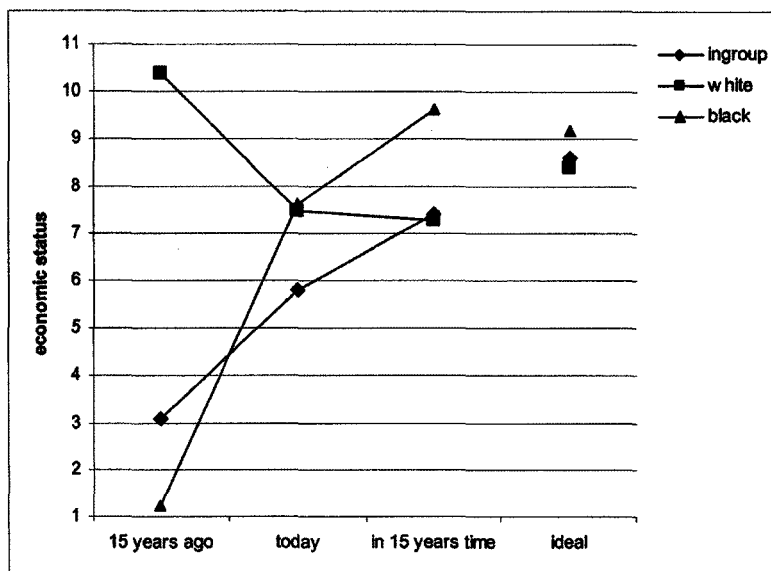


Figure 3. Changes in economic status positions perceived by coloured participants

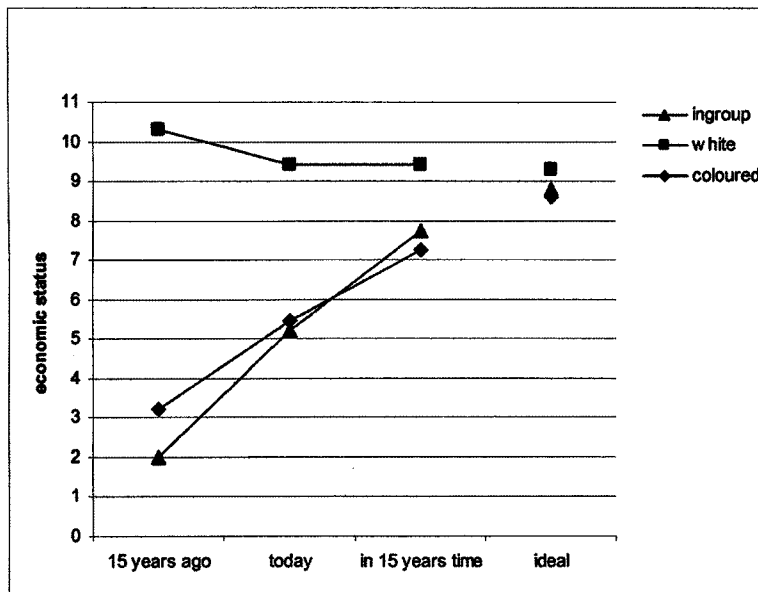


Figure 4. Changes in economic status position perceived by black participants

Mean comparisons of the perceived status relations as summarized in Table 1 support the above outlined descriptive results in that white participants perceive on average their ingroup as the current economically dominant group relative to the two outgroups. Coloured participants perceive their ingroup on average as a non-dominant group, while most black participants proclaim on average their ingroup to be a non-dominant group in comparison with white people but of equal status in comparison with coloured people. As we were interested in investigating the choice of identity management strategies of dominant and non-dominant groups from a SIT perspective, we included in the following analysis only those participants who perceive current economic differences between the ingroup and the outgroup as either positive (i.e. indicating an advantaged economic position of the ingroup) or negative (i.e. indicating a disadvantaged economic position of the ingroup). In total, 85 white participants perceived their ingroup as economically advantaged. The majority of coloured ($n = 66$) and black ($n = 70$) participants perceived their ingroup as a non-dominant group.

Intragroup differences

Since the present study was based on a 3×2 group design, i.e. participants of each of the three race groups were randomly assigned to one of two comparison groups, it was necessary to test whether the perceptions of the system-components, ingroup identification and identity management strategies (dependent variables), differed irrespective of the status position *vis-à-vis* the comparative outgroup (independent variables). The Pillai's Trace criterion of the MANOVA test — which represents a robust measurement — resulted in an overall $F(350, 1060) = 5.20, p < .001$, indicating a multivariate main effect. A Bonferroni adjustment was applied which revealed no significant intragroup ($ps > .05$) but significant intergroup differences ($ps < .05$), indicating that the comparison condition did not affect the perceptions of the system-components, ingroup identification and the identity management strategies. Since no intragroup differences emerged the sub-samples were summarized into: the white sample representing a dominant group, and the coloured and the black sample representing two non-dominant groups. Table 2 depicts the mean scores on measures of all variables for all six comparison conditions and the relevant F values.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the economic status positions perceived by white, coloured, and black participants for ingroup in comparison with outgroups

	Whites (W)			Coloureds (C)			Blacks (B)		
	ingroup	C	B	ingroup	W	B	ingroup	W	C
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Past	9.45 (1.68)	3.52 (1.84)	1.64 (1.24)	3.09 (2.31)	10.38 (0.97)	1.24 (1.97)	1.98 (1.94)	10.3 (1.05)	3.20 (2.20)
Present	8.00 (1.67)	5.39 (1.69)	3.86 (1.76)	5.79 (1.86)	7.46 (2.33)	7.60 (2.23)	5.21 (2.31)	9.42 (1.43)	5.44 (1.90)
Future	7.14 (2.18)	6.70 (1.7)	6.48 (2.36)	7.41 (2.26)	7.28 (2.68)	9.64 (1.55)	7.76 (2.15)	9.42 (1.26)	7.26 (1.79)
Ideally	9.20 (1.93)	9.31 (2.1)	8.98 (1.83)	8.59 (2.23)	8.42 (1.98)	9.26 (1.68)	8.81 (2.24)	9.34 (2.21)	8.62 (2.26)
<i>F</i> statistics ^a	<i>F</i> s (1, 218.5–2024.2) > 77.58, <i>p</i> s < .001			<i>F</i> s (1, 92.93–1771.5) > 22.58, <i>p</i> s < .001			<i>F</i> s (1, 49.61–2307.41) > 12.02, <i>p</i> s < .01		
<i>F</i> statistics ^b	<i>F</i> s (1, 0.1–14.58) < 2.9, <i>p</i> s > .05			<i>F</i> s (1, 0.56–14.96) < 3.52, <i>p</i> s > .05			<i>F</i> s (1, 1.2–9.63) < 2.01, <i>p</i> s > .05		

Note: Means and standard deviations in italics indicate no significant differences relative to the ingroup. *F* Statistics^a provide summary of the *F* statistics indicating significant differences, while *F* statistics^b summarise *F* statistics indicating non-significant differences.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of socio-structural variables, ingroup identification and identity management strategies for the three groups by considering the respective comparison situation as well as the summarized groups

Ingroups	White: Dominant group		Coloured: Non-dominant group		Black: Non-dominant group		<i>F</i> statistics	
	Coloured	Black	White	Black	White	Coloured		
	(<i>n</i> = 46) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>n</i> = 39) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>n</i> = 33) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>n</i> = 33) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>n</i> = 44) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	(<i>n</i> = 25) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		
Perceived stability	4.06 (1.31)	3.52 (1.12)	3.71 (1.29)	4.84 (1.28)	4.00 (1.56)	3.20 (1.49)	<i>F</i> s (5, 4.87– 34.79) > 2.21 <i>p</i> s < .05	
Perceived legitimacy	2.71 (1.30)	3.14 (1.32)	3.46 (1.15)	3.77 (1.38)	3.27 (1.47)	3.34 (1.24)		
Ingroup identification	4.28 (1.43)	4.79 (1.30)	4.70 (1.30)	4.75 (1.49)	5.24 (1.62)	5.14 (1.70)		
Outgroup favouritism	3.98 (1.15)	3.38 (1.09)	2.78 (1.22)	3.43 (1.43)	3.11 (1.23)	3.24 (0.91)		
Social competition	1.40 (0.62)	2.15 (1.39)	3.56 (1.63)	3.46 (1.75)	3.65 (1.68)	3.04 (1.28)		
Individualisation	4.50 (1.28)	4.60 (1.29)	4.23 (1.46)	4.17 (1.62)	3.00 (1.52)	2.72 (1.24)		
Super-ordinate recategorization	0.54 (2.55)	0.43 (1.89)	1.54 (2.08)	1.33 (2.56)	0.70 (2.28)	0.76 (2.37)		
								ns

Note: ns = *p* > .05

Main analysis

To test our three hypotheses (H_{1-3}) we conducted a multiple group path analysis following the three step procedure as suggested by Byrne (2004) using AMOS 4 Graphics.

Table 3. Explained variance and path coefficients of the path analysis of SIT model for different status groups

Dependent variables	Ingroup identification	Outgroup favouritism	Social competition	Individualization	Superordinate re-categorisation
Dominant group comparing with non-dominant group (white sample, $n = 86$)					
Variance predictors	9%	5%	16%	22%	15%
Ingroup identification		.04	.21*	-.44***	-.36**
Stability	-.01	-.01	.04	-.18†	-.03
Legitimacy	.31**	-.22*	.28**	.04	-.06
Non-dominant group comparing with dominant group (coloured sample, $n = 66$)					
Variance predictors	8%	2%	24%	13%	25%
Ingroup identification		-.14	.40 ***	-.34**	-.50***
Stability	.12	-.04	.07	.10	.09
Legitimacy	-.25*	-.04	-.18	-.22†	-.09
Non-dominant group comparing with dominant group (black sample, $n = 70$)					
Variance predictors	13%	11%	9%	5%	18%
Ingroup identification		.16	.18	-.23†	-.29*
Stability	.15	.06	.09	.01	-.25*
Legitimacy	-.33**	.34**	-.17	-.04	.07

Note: Model specification: since correlations between the criterion-variables were found with two groups the model was set up in a manner which allowed correlations among all criterion variables. The path coefficients are the standardized direct effects-estimates.

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Step 1. The Goodness-of-fit statistics of the three-group unconstrained model showed a very good fit indicating that the data fit the hypothesized model: $\chi^2(3) = 0.453$, $p = .929$; NFI = 1.000; CFI = 1.000 and RMSEA = .000). Since the estimation of the baseline models involves no between-group constraints, the data can be analysed separately for each group. Table 3 provides a summary of the paths analysis results for each group. As the results indicate for the dominant group (i.e. white participants), ingroup identification (9%) was positively influenced by the perceived legitimacy of intergroup differences, which is in line with H_1 . Also in line with H_1 is the finding that perceived legitimacy had a positive and direct impact on social competition (16%) but it had a negative impact on outgroup favouritism (5%), i.e. perceived legitimacy of economic differences increases the likelihood that social competition is applied, while perceived illegitimacy of economic differences makes outgroup favouritism more likely. The use of social competition is also associated with an increased positive ingroup identification, which confirms H_3 . Under the condition of the perception of unstable intergroup differences and less ingroup identification, members of the dominant group are more likely to exhibit the strategy individualization (22%), which is in line with H_1 and H_3 . Also in line

with H_3 is the finding that the strategy super-ordinate re-categorization (15%) is significantly impacted by negative ingroup identification.

In the coloured sample as non-dominant group intergroup differences perceived as illegitimate increased ingroup identification (9%), which is in line with H_2 , and — although marginal — the strategy individualization (13%). Ingroup identification shows a positive path to social competition (24%), while negative paths to the two individual strategies individualization and super-ordinate re-categorization (25%), which is in line with H_3 .

Black participants' ingroup identification (13%) was predicted by perceived illegitimacy of intergroup differences, which is in line with H_2 . The perception of intergroup differences as legitimate increases the likelihood for outgroup favouritism (11%). Negative ingroup identification revealed as predictor for the strategies individualization (5%) and super-ordinate re-categorization (18%), which supports H_3 . In addition, the use of the strategy super-ordinate re-categorization is even more likely when existing economic differences are perceived as unstable.

Step 2. In order to conclude that the outlined and predicted differences between dominant group and non-dominant groups reach statistical significance, the model was tested for path invariance across groups by imposing a cross-group equality constraint on all path estimates. The analysis of the chi square differences between the fit of the baseline model and the fit of the model with constraints on the path estimates revealed that the following three equality constraints did not hold across the three groups: the path between legitimacy and ingroup identification (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(2) = 20.044, p < .001$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(5) = 20.497, p = .001$; NFI = .993; CFI = .995 and RMSEA = .119), the path between legitimacy and social competition (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(2) = 10.880, p < .01$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(5) = 11.333, p = .045$; NFI = .996; CFI = .998 and RMSEA = .076), and the path between legitimacy and outgroup favouritism (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(2) = 11.224, p < .01$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(5) = 11.677, p < .05$; NFI = .996; CFI = .998 and RMSEA = .078). However, in order to specify which of the three groups differed from each other with respect to the found non-invariant path coefficients, further group comparisons were conducted.

Step 3. Firstly, a group comparison between the two non-dominant groups was computed (coloured vs. black sample). The analysis of the chi-square differences between the fit of the unconstrained model ($\chi^2(2) = 0.367, p = .832$; NFI = 1.000; CFI = 1.000 and RMSEA = .000) and the fit of the constrained model did not reveal any significant values. Secondly, we compared the models between the dominant group and the black non-dominant group. Chi-square differences emerged between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2(2) = 0.178, p = .915$; NFI = 1.000; CFI = 1.000 and RMSEA = .000) and all three identified paths: legitimacy to ingroup identification (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(1) = 15.991, p < .001$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(3) = 16.168, p < .01$; NFI = .992; CFI = .993 and RMSEA = .169), legitimacy to social competition (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(1) = 6.317, p = .012$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(3) = 6.494, p = .090$; NFI = .996; CFI = .998 and RMSEA = .076), and legitimacy to outgroup favouritism (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(2) = 11.224, p < .01$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(5) = 11.677, p < .05$; NFI = .996; CFI = .998 and RMSEA = .078). Finally, the dominant group was compared with the coloured non-dominant group. The analysis of Chi-square differences between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2(2) = 0.361, p = .835$; NFI = 1.000; CFI = 1.000 and RMSEA = 0.000) and the constrained model revealed significant differences in two previously identified non-invariant path coefficients: legitimacy to ingroup identification (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(1) = 11.473, p < .01$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(3) = 11.834, p < .01$; NFI = .994; CFI = .996 and RMSEA = .140), and legitimacy to social competition (Chi-square differences: $\chi^2(1) = 7.229, p < .01$; Model indices for constrained model: $\chi^2(3) = 7.591, p = .055$; NFI = .996; CFI = .998 and RMSEA = .101).

The group comparisons revealed that the dominant group differed significantly from the two non-dominant groups in respect to the paths legitimacy and ingroup identification and the paths legitimacy and social competition and legitimacy and outgroup favouritism, which support H_1 and H_2 .

The results also showed that ingroup identification differentiates between individual and collective strategies irrespective of the groups' status position, which supports H₃.

DISCUSSION

The three groups under investigation agreed in perceiving the past intergroup situation (i.e. economic inequality) and in perceiving how the intergroup relations should ideally be (i.e. economic equality), but they differ in their perceptions on what has been achieved so far and what will be achieved in 15 years time. White participants conceptualized the ongoing changes as *symmetrical adaptation*, in that white participants perceive the economic resources of the country as being limited and as such an increase of the economic status of coloured and black people automatically means a decrease of the economic status of white people. Coloured participants, on the other hand, expected South Africa to become an economically stratified *majority vs. minority society*, in which the ingroup and white South Africans as minorities are perceived as holding a non-dominant position in the future. In contrast, black participants perceived not only the present but also the future economic changes as *unfinished asymmetrical adaptation* because the dominant group (i.e. white people) is perceived as retaining its current economic position (which at the same time defines the "ideal position" all groups should achieve) while, despite the improvement of the economic status of the former oppressed groups, the ingroup and coloured people are not expected to reach the same status position as white people presently or 15 years hence. In the light of the diverse perspectives of the government-led transformation project, these results not only have certain socio-economic implications, they illustrate clearly that social psychological processes come into play as individuals' perceptions of a transformation project seem to be a function of their group membership.

Since the majority of white participants perceived their ingroup as the current dominant group, while most of coloured and black participants positioned their ingroups as non-dominant relative to the comparison groups we decided to merge the racial subgroups and to continue the analysis for the three racial groups representing different status groups: white sample as dominant group, coloured sample as non-dominant group and black sample as non-dominant group. As predicted for non-dominant groups, perceived illegitimacy of economic differences increased ingroup identification, while in the dominant group perceived illegitimacy of economic differences decreased ingroup identification. The results of the multiple group path analysis revealed statistically significant differences between the dominant group and the two non-dominant groups (but not between the two non-dominant groups) confirming the theoretically assumed differences in the interrelation between perceived legitimacy and ingroup identification for dominant and non-dominant groups. In contrast, our results on perceived stability of intergroup differences indicated no significant predictive power on ingroup identification, suggesting that the perception of legitimacy of economic differences rather than the perception of stability of economic differences represents the crucial factor in determining ingroup identification in the present dominant and non-dominant groups. These results mirror a tendency found in other studies: whether intergroup differences are perceived as stable or unstable seems to have little influence on ingroup identification, while perceived intergroup differences as legitimate or illegitimate appear to strongly influence ingroup identification (Brettencourt *et al.*, 2001). Interestingly, Mummendey, Klink *et al.* (1999) found in their field study with East Germans as non-dominant group relative to West Germans that perceived stability but not legitimacy emerged as predictor for ingroup identification. Mummendey, Klink *et al.* (1999) reasoned that this result might have been caused by a perception of illegitimacy that was not associated with the outgroup, in that, although East Germans perceive intergroup differences between themselves and West Germans as illegitimate, West Germans are not perceived to be responsible for these differences. For obvious reasons the situation is different within the South African context as illegitimacy is likely to be associated with white South Africans due to historical reasons (Duckitt & Mphuthing, 2002).

In terms of SIT it was further hypothesised that for dominant and non-dominant groups the interrelation between the perception of legitimacy and stability of economic differences and identity

management strategies differs systematically. These systematic differences between dominant and non-dominant groups were confirmed in the present study in respect of two interrelations: perceived legitimacy and social competition, and between perceived legitimacy and outgroup favouritism. In line with SIT, it was shown that social competition is predicted by perceived legitimacy of intergroup differences in the dominant group and that in that the dominant group differs significantly from the two non-dominant groups. Outgroup favouritism becomes likely for members of the dominant group, given that intergroup differences are perceived as illegitimate, while it becomes the strategy of choice for members of the non-dominant group in the condition where intergroup differences are perceived as legitimate.

Outgroup favouritism was understood in the present study as form of individual mobility, which, according to SIT, should be associated with dis-identification with the ingroup (Tajfel, 1978). Our results did not reveal this assumed interaction in either the dominant or the two non-dominant groups. One could argue that outgroup favouritism with members of a non-dominant group — as suggested by Guimond, Dif, and Aupy (2002) — represents only a “part of a strategy of individual mobility” (p. 756) which seems to be more strongly associated with outgroup love (i.e. positive identification with the outgroup) than with ingroup hate (i.e. negative identification with the ingroup). The interrelation between perceived illegitimacy of economic differences and outgroup favouritism in the dominant group implies that guilt by association (Leach, Snider & Iyer, 2002) might be the most appropriate explanation since the white South Africans might be seen as historically responsible for the Apartheid system, and thus for the economic disparity among racial groups. The negative correlation between social competition and outgroup favouritism in the white sample suggests an interpretation in terms of which outgroup favouritism is seen as an effort towards restitution (Learch *et al.*, 2002). The general perception on the ongoing transformation process as symmetrical adaptation shared by the white sample suggests also that outgroup favouritism might be seen as an equalizing effort.

The interrelation between perceived legitimacy of economic differences and outgroup favouritism found in the black non-dominant group suggests that some participants of the black sample perceive existing economic differences between the ingroup and the outgroup from a rather a-historical perspective. The underlying rationale could be that since outgroup members were and are more successful economically, they might be perceived to be more suitable for appointment in jobs than ingroup people are perceived to be. However, whether these outlined explanations represent appropriate rationales for our finding, needs to be tested in future studies.

Our results indicated that over all three groups, negative ingroup identification is significantly associated with the two individual-level strategies, individualization and superordinate re-categorization. In the dominant group it was found — as predicted by SIT — that ingroup identification is positively interrelated to the collective strategy, social competition. Furthermore, the results of the multiple group path analysis confirmed invariance between ingroup identification and individual and collective strategies over all three groups, which can be seen as an empirical confirmation for our assumption that ingroup identification differentiates between individual and collective strategies, irrespective of the group's status position.

Since our hypotheses were tested in a specific field setting, which is obviously less controlled than a laboratory setting, it is necessary to address three major limitations of the present study. With regard to the sample, it needs to be stressed that non-probabilistic sampling was used in the present study, which may represent particular perceptions of the South African population. With regard to the measurements, the scales used in the present study showed relatively low reliability coefficients, which may have impacted the data analysis. Finally, additional measures such as outgroup identification as well as participants' perceived individual economic position, would have strengthened the findings with respect to outgroup favouritism in the present study.

Despite these limitations, the overall results provided evidence that dominant and non-dominant groups differ systematically regarding the functional interaction between beliefs about the intergroup

situation and ingroup identification, and regarding beliefs about the intergroup situation and identity management strategies. The present findings support Turner's (1999) argument that the examination of the effects of theoretically important socio-structural variables is a crucial key to a comprehensive understanding of dominant and non-dominant groups' responses to changes in their intergroup relations.

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