

Who is to blame? The relationship between ingroup identification and relative deprivation is moderated by ingroup attributions

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Abstract

Contradictory evidence can be found in the literature about whether ingroup identification and perceived relative deprivation are positively or negatively related. Indeed, theoretical arguments can be made for both effects. It was proposed that the contradictory findings can be explained by considering a hitherto unstudied moderator: The extent to which deprivation is attributed to the ingroup. It was hypothesised that identification would only have a negative impact on deprivation, and that deprivation would only have a negative impact on identification, if ingroup attributions are high. To test this, attributions to the ingroup were experimentally manipulated among British student participants (N = 189) who were asked about their perceived deprivation vis-à-vis German students, yielding support for the hypotheses.

There is no shortage of groups which rebel against their deprived status. To name but a few examples, Scots routinely complain about their status vis-a-vis the English, Muslim youths riot in Bedford and other British towns to draw attention to their situation, and East Germans often grumble about their situation vis-a-vis West Germans. Yet, there are also many examples of social groups who are objectively deprived but who are not propelled into action to address their situation (Crocker & Major, 1989). This can be observed for various ethnic groups as well as for women (Crosby, 1982; Zagefka & Brown, 2005). Moreover, the question of what leads people to rebel has been of great concern to both researchers and politicians (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Simon, 2004). An interesting question in this context is the relationship between identification with one's social group and deprivation felt on behalf of this group. Will those who are more strongly identified with their group be likely to feel more or less relative ingroup deprivation on important dimensions, and therefore feel more compelled to act?

A central idea at the heart of two major theories of intergroup relations is that perceived comparative outcomes play a causal role in determining group members' attitudes and behavioural intentions towards other groups. Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) proposes that people's feelings of (dis)satisfaction and hence their intergroup attitudes stem primarily from subjective comparisons between ingroup attainments and aspirations (Gurr, 1970; Olson, Herman & Zanna, 1986; Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002). Aspirations are thought to be determined either by comparisons with the attainments of other groups or by reference to the ingroup's past (Brown & Zagefka, 2006). Similarly, Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that ingroup members' collective self-esteem and hence their desire to engage in positive intergroup differentiation are derived mainly from comparisons with relevant outgroups (Brown, 2000; Tajfel &

Turner, 1986). Such a hypothesis rests on some necessary minimal group identification with the ingroup.

Both RDT and SIT place central importance on the concept of perceived comparative outcomes, which are linked to deprivation (in RDT) and identification (SIT). However, an interesting and rather neglected question is the likely relationship between people's feelings of relative deprivation and their level of identification. As we will show, the available empirical evidence is rather contradictory and explanatory theorising is notable by its absence. In this paper we seek to clarify some of this confusion by suggesting that an important moderator of the deprivation-identification relationship is the extent to which ingroup members make internal (i.e. ingroup) attributions for their deprived condition.

*Ingroup identification.* The point of departure for SIT is that in particular contexts a given ingroup matters for its members – they identify with it. Presumably, groups matter to their members to different degrees. That is, people's strength of group identification can vary. Many conceptualizations of ingroup identification have been proposed, distinguishing different facets of the concept (e.g. Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Ellemers, Kortekaas & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Leach et al., 2008; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008). Yet, despite this diversity of measurement approaches, there is some convergence amongst them that, as originally suggested by SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), identification should be seen as comprising both cognitive and affective components, and these tend to be strongly related (e.g. Brown, Condor, Matthews, Wade, & Williams, 1986). Hence, for someone with a high ingroup identification, group membership is an important aspect of

his/her self concept (cognitive component), and he/she will also feel positively about this group membership (affective component).

*Perceived relative deprivation.* A key distinction in RDT is between individual deprivation (based on interindividual comparisons) and group deprivation (based on intergroup comparisons, Runciman, 1966; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972). For intergroup relations, the latter construct is central. Numerous different definitions of perceived relative deprivation can be found in the literature (Walker & Smith, 2002), for instance as a discrepancy between expectations and capabilities (Gurr, 1970), as an is-ought discrepancy (Schmitt & Maes, 2002), as including both wanting and deserving as necessary conditions (Olson, Roese, Meen, & Robertson, 1995), or as including the necessary conditions of both negative outcomes and illegitimacy appraisals (Kawakami & Dion, 1995; see Crosby, 1976; and Folger, 1986, for yet other conceptualisations). Many researchers include both a cognitive (i.e. awareness of disadvantage) and affective (anger, dissatisfaction) deprivation component (e.g. Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Petta & Walker, 1992; Tropp & Wright, 1999; Zagefka & Brown, 2005).

*The relationship between identification and deprivation: empirical evidence.* The research evidence on the valence, strength and direction of the association between identification and deprivation paints a decidedly ambiguous picture (Tougas & Beaton, 2002). Tropp and Wright's (1999) data, provided by Latino and African-American respondents, yielded evidence for a positive association. Similarly, Mummendey, Kessler, Klink and Mielke (1999) found a positive association between identification and group deprivation in the form of fraternal resentment for (lower-status) East Germans (vis-à-vis West Germans); Kessler and Mummendey (2002) found identification and resentment of group deprivation to be positively correlated for East Germans; Ellemers

and Bos (1987) found a positive link between identification and group deprivation for Dutch shopkeepers (*vis-à-vis* immigrant shopkeepers); Petta and Walker (1992) found a positive link between perceived deprivation and identification for Italian immigrants in Australia; Duckitt and Mphuthing (2002) found that deprivation positively affected identification; Abrams (1990) found a positive correlation between identification and group deprivation for Scottish participants; and Gurin and Townsend (1986) found a positive correlation between gender identity and collective discontent.

At the same time, Tougas and Veilleux (1988) found no relationship between identification and group deprivation for women; Lalonde and Cameron (1993) also found no link between identification and group disadvantage for immigrants; and Guimond and Dube-Simard (1983) found a zero correlation between identification and (cognitive) perceptions of deprivation for Quebec nationalists (although they did find a link between identification and dissatisfaction).

Evidence for a negative association between identification and deprivation also exists. Abrams (1990) found a negative correlation between identification and self-outgroup deprivation for Scots; Abrams, Hinkle and Tomlins (1999) found a negative effect of anticipated deprivation on identification for Hong Kong residents; and Smith, Spears and Hamstra's (1999) artificial laboratory group participants with higher identification also displayed a tendency to perceive less deprivation. In our own work, we also obtained evidence for a negative association between identification and perceived deprivation among an ethnic minority sample in Britain, and among ethnic minority and majority samples in Germany (Zagefka & Brown, 2005). The variables were also negatively related among two further German majority samples ( $Ns = 317; 116$ ), another German minority sample ( $N = 166$ ), and a further sample of ethnic minority members

from Britain (N = 209, Zagefka, 2004; see also Bornman & Appelgryn, 1999; Trew & Benson, 1996; Veilleux, Tougas, & Rinfret, 1992, for further evidence on the identification-deprivation relationship).

*The relationship between identification and deprivation: theoretical accounts.*

Four opposite predications might be derived from the literature and will be discussed in turn: A positive effect of identification on deprivation, a positive effect of deprivation on identification, a negative effect of identification on deprivation, and a negative effect of deprivation on identification. Indeed, the relationship between identification and deprivation can be expected to have some element of bi-causality (Petta & Walker, 1992; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Tougas & Beaton, 2002). On the basis of social identity theory, which proposes that group members are motivated to obtain positive self-esteem, one might expect a *positive effect of identification on deprivation*. As Tropp and Wright (1999) point out, those who are highly identified are more committed to their ingroup (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997), and desire more for their ingroup (Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Therefore, they might be expected to guard the ingroup's interests more vigilantly, and to be more sensitive to information which reflects negatively on the ingroup (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). In this view, high identifiers should have a radar which is more finely attuned to injustices and disadvantages the ingroup might suffer from, maybe because group identities are more salient to them (Kawakami & Dion, 1993). SIT and stigma researchers also suggest that high identifiers might be more likely to make intergroup (rather than intragroup) comparisons (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Doise, 1988; Major, 1994), and they are therefore in a better position to detect existing group disadvantages. On this basis, one might expect a positive effect of identification on perceived deprivation.

However, SIT also implies an opposite relationship, that is a *positive effect of deprivation on identification*: Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that conflicts of group interests lead to heightened identification, and outgroup threats generally can be expected to increase identification (Dion, 1979). Since perceived group deprivation can be expected to be closely related to perceived intergroup conflict, one might infer that deprivation might increase identification.

At the same time, the prediction of a *negative effect of identification on deprivation* might also be derived from SIT. The theory proposes that the more highly someone is identified, the more motivated he/she should be to see their group in a positive light, and the more diligent he/she should be in the search for information that will make the ingroup appear in a positive light. High identifiers will be more invested in the ingroup, will find it more painful to be exposed to negative information about the ingroup, and will be thus more inclined to turn a blind eye toward information which reflects negatively on the ingroup. Stigma theory (Crocker & Major, 1989) and downward comparison theory (Wills, 1981) also propose that unfavourable comparisons are painful, and that people engage in a number of strategies to avoid them. Since negative information should be all the more painful the more people are identified, high identifiers should be more motivated to avoid being made aware of their group deprivation. As a result, there should be a negative effect of identification on perceived deprivation.

It is also plausible that there might be a *negative effect of deprivation on identification*: Several findings suggest that people identify more with powerful, high status groups (Roccas, 2003; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985, 1987). Hence, to the extent that a

deprived group is usually neither powerful nor of high status, one might expect that identification with deprived groups would be lower.<sup>1</sup>

Given the heterogeneous nature of evidence to date about the identification-deprivation relationship, it seems likely that the link must be moderated by one or more further, hitherto untheorised factors. Firstly, it is noteworthy that the accounts cited above as outlining a positive link between the two variables (e.g. SIT) all tacitly or explicitly assume a degree of intergroup conflict, which characteristically brings about perceived goal interdependence and concerns about fairness between groups. In contrast, the accounts delineating a negative link between the two variables (e.g. SIT again, also Stigma Theory) all share the notion that people will be motivated by self esteem management concerns. Trying to distil this to the most basic difference, one could argue that the two scenarios differ in whether people are primarily driven by *group status* concerns (wanting the best position for their group within the social strata) or *enhancement* concerns (wanting to protect their self esteem and to view the self and the ingroup in a positive light).

*Ingroup attributions as a moderator.* In this research, we wish to focus on a situation where enhancement motives can be assumed to be at the fore, resulting in an inverse relationship between identification and deprivation. In such a situation, we propose that it will be relevant to which extent the ingroup's relative deprivation is attributed internally to the ingroup - that is, how far the ingroup itself is seen as responsible for being deprived. Indeed, attributions for perceived disadvantages can have powerful psychological and behavioural consequences (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002; Weiner, 1980).

If ingroup directed attributions are strong, then identification should negatively affect deprivation. This is because the more highly people are identified, the more they will be motivated to see the ingroup in a positive light, and the more they will find negative information about the ingroup painful. Because high identifiers will be motivated to play down anything negative about their ingroup, and because deprivation which is attributed internally reflects particularly badly on the ingroup, identification will negatively affect deprivation if this deprivation is attributed to the ingroup. If there is little ingroup attribution for the deprivation, however, acknowledging deprivation does not reflect as badly on the image of the ingroup, and there should be no effect of identification on deprivation.

Moreover, if ingroup attributions are made, then deprivation might also be expected to negatively impact on identification. This is because deprivation particularly reflects negatively on the ingroup if the ingroup is seen to be at least partly responsible for it. Under this condition, people should be motivated to psychologically disengage from the negatively perceived group. If ingroup attributions are absent, however, high deprivation does not necessarily reflect as negatively on the ingroup. Under this condition, deprivation will not lead to the same motivation to disidentify, and one might expect a null effect of deprivation on identification.<sup>2</sup>

These two mechanisms of moderation of the inverse relationship between identification and deprivation by ingroup attributions were tested in a situation where enhancement motives were thought to be relevant, namely by studying British students and their perceived deprivation vis-à-vis German students. It is reasonable to assume that British students would not, for example, perceive a negative interdependence between levels of student debt in Britain and Germany, which would be expected to be linked to

group status concerns. In spite of this absence of intergroup conflict and goal interdependence, we expected German students to be a relevant comparison target which would be interesting and engaging for our participants, given the ongoing debate about tuition fees in Britain and the rather different politics regarding higher education in several continental European countries. This, then, was the intergroup context in which we tested whether ingroup attributions would moderate the association between identification and deprivation, such that the negative link would only emerge if ingroup attributions were present.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred eighty nine psychology students from a British university participated in the study in exchange for course credits (mean age = 20, 155 females, 34 males).

### *Procedure and Measures*

Participants were welcomed by a research assistant who conducted the study. All participants read a short article, allegedly published in a reputable newspaper, to set the scene and manipulate ingroup attributions. There were two conditions (ingroup attributions high versus low), and participants were randomly assigned to conditions (N = 93 in 'ingroup attribution low', and N = 96 in 'ingroup attribution high'). The article was allegedly written by someone called 'Roger Stamp', and cited a report published by the 'Committee of Higher Education in Europe'. The report allegedly found that in both England and Germany, the cost of housing and the size of student fees were identified as two main contributors to financial pressure on students, and that the financial situation of British students was worse than that of German students. It cited that the average debt

upon graduation was higher in Britain than in Germany. The article then went on to manipulate ingroup attributions.

In the 'ingroup attributions high' condition, this situation was reported to be due to the fact that British students spend more money on luxuries like evening entertainment, electronic gadgets, and other costly aspects of modern life. It reported that the disadvantaged financial situation of British students was therefore due to their own behaviour. In the 'ingroup attributions low' condition, the financial situation of British students was reported to *not* be due to the fact that British students spend more money on luxuries like evening entertainment, electronic gadgets, and other costly aspects of modern life. The disadvantaged financial situation of British students was therefore reported to not be due to their own behaviour. The exact wording of the manipulation is given in the appendix. After reading this fictitious information, participants filled out a questionnaire which contained the measures.

*Identification* was measured with an 11-item rating scale adapted from Brown and colleagues (1986, options ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = very much). The items were 'I see myself as a British student'; 'It is important to me to be a British student'; 'I do not have much in common with other a British students' (reversed); 'I am glad to be a British student'; 'Being a British student is important to my sense of self'; 'I identify with other British students'; 'I regret being a British student' (reversed); 'I feel close links with other British students'; 'I feel a certain degree of emotional attachment to British students'; 'I am not proud to be a British student' (reversed); 'I don't feel a strong sense of commitment to the welfare of British students' (reversed);  $\alpha = .85$ . Because identification can be conceptualised as being constituted by the simultaneous presence of different identification facets (such as cognitive and affective components, see Brown et

al, 1986), we have followed others who combine measures of these different components into one composite scale (Abrams, Hinkle, & Tomlins, 1999; Petta & Walker, 1992).

Following others (e.g. Lepore & Brown, 1997), we measured identification after the experimental manipulation because measuring it beforehand could have sensitised the participants to the issues under study and thereby could have led to the interaction of identification with the experimental manipulation in unknown ways. This risk of sensitisation is highlighted in the classic work by Campbell and Stanley (1966). Moreover, identification is a highly stable construct which was not anticipated to be affected by the manipulation. Indeed, analyses confirmed that the experimental manipulation did not have any direct effect on identification (see table 1), which further confirms our chosen order of measurement to be optimal.

Two items measured perceived *relative deprivation*. Participants were asked to think about the financial situation of British students overall. Items were ‘How do you think British students are doing financially’ (1 = not at all well to 7 = very well) and ‘How satisfied are you with the financial situation of British students’ (1 = not at all satisfied to 7 = very satisfied). Both items were subsequently reversed so that high values indicate greater perceived deprivation;  $r = .71, p < .001$ . This measure emulates other approaches which measure the cognitive and affective components of deprivation (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983) and which combine the different components into one composite scale (e.g. Tropp & Wright, 1999).

Two items functioned as a manipulation check for *attributions to the ingroup*: ‘Differences in the consumer spending of British and German students contribute to the financial situation of British students compared to German students’; and ‘The fact that British students spend so much money on lifestyle choices contributes to the financial

situation of British students compared to German students' (1 = not at all to 7 = very much;  $r = .79, p < .001$ ). The questionnaire also contained some demographic questions and some additional items not of relevance in the present context. Upon completion of the study, participants were thanked and debriefed.

## Results

*Manipulation check.* An ANOVA was conducted with the experimental factor with two levels as independent variable and ingroup attributions as the dependent variable. This yielded a highly significant effect,  $F(1, 187) = 77.31, p < .001$ . As expected, ingroup attributions were higher in the 'ingroup attribution high' condition,  $M_s = 5.51$  vs.  $3.37$ . Bi-variate correlations and variable means are provided in table 1. Predictors in the following regression analyses were centred around the mean. Step-wise linear multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. The main effects were always entered in step 1, and the interaction between the predictors was always entered in a subsequent step in the analysis.

*Moderation of the effect of identification on deprivation.* To examine whether the effect of identification on perceived relative deprivation was moderated by experimentally manipulated ingroup attributions, deprivation was regressed on identification, experimental condition (coded 0 vs. 1), and their interaction. This yielded a nonsignificant  $R^2$  at the first step;  $R^2 = .01, F(2, 184) = 1.21, ns$ ; but a significant  $R^2$  change at the second step;  $\Delta R^2 = .02, F(3, 183) = 3.97, p < .05$ . The beta for identification was  $\beta = -.08, ns$ ; the beta for condition was  $\beta = .07, ns$ ; but the beta for the interaction term was  $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ . To interpret the interaction, the relationship between identification and deprivation was compared between experimental conditions. For those in the low ingroup attribution condition, when predicting deprivation from

identification the effect was not significant,  $\beta = .04$ , *ns*. In the high ingroup attribution condition, the effect was significant,  $\beta = -.23$ ,  $p < .05$ . Hence, as expected, identification was only associated with less reported deprivation if it was attributed to the ingroup.

*Moderation of the effect of deprivation on identification.* To examine whether the effect of perceived relative deprivation on identification was moderated by condition, identification was regressed on deprivation, condition, and their interaction. This yielded a nonsignificant  $R^2$  at the first step;  $R^2 = .008$ ,  $F(2, 184) = .73$ , *ns*; and a marginally significant  $R^2$  change at the second step;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(3, 183) = 3.26$ ,  $p < .08$ . The beta for deprivation was  $\beta = -.08$ , *ns*; the beta for condition was  $\beta = -.02$ , *ns*; and the beta for the interaction term was  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $p < .08$ . Of necessity, the relationship between identification and deprivation in the two conditions were unchanged from those reported above (.04 and -.23 respectively).

In sum, there was some indication that the effect of deprivation on identification was moderated by ingroup attributions, such that high perceived deprivation only led people to disidentify from the group if they attributed the deprivation to the ingroup, i.e. if they thought the ingroup is to blame for it. However, this evidence was not as strong as for the other causal direction, that is for the effect of identification on deprivation being moderated by ingroup attributions.<sup>3</sup>

## Discussion

We started off reviewing the contradictory evidence for the relationship between identification and deprivation, which seems to sometimes be positive, sometimes inverse, and sometimes non-existent. We then reviewed prior theoretical accounts of the relationship, and noted that from this previous theorising one might expect effects of opposite valence and direction. We observed that positive effects have been predicted

mainly in settings where intergroup conflict exists, likely leading to goal interdependence, and resulting in concerns about group status. In contrast, negative effects have been predicted mainly in settings where enhancement motives can be expected to be at the fore. We suggested that prevalent motives/concerns will play a crucial role in shaping the valence of the relationship. We then focussed our empirical efforts on a situation where enhancement motives were assumed to be particularly relevant, and tested whether under this condition the identification-deprivation link is moderated by ingroup attributions. As expected, stronger identification was only associated with less reported deprivation (and – to a lesser extent – vice versa) if ingroup attributions were high. When ingroup attributions were low, the effects of identification and deprivation on each other became non-significant.

It is obvious that empirically we only addressed part of our theory, and it is worth fleshing out somewhat more the anticipated relationships for the other part of the theory, i.e. where the identification-deprivation link is thought to be positive, and to discuss how our theory maps onto the previous research findings.

As foreshadowed in the introduction, we propose that in situations where intergroup conflict and goal interdependence are salient, concerns about the status of the ingroup will be more pressing than enhancement concerns, potentially rendering the identification-deprivation link positive. As indicated above, those who identify more strongly might desire more for their ingroup which might lead to increased perceptions of deprivation (Tropp & Wright, 1999), and deprivation might increase identification just like the existence of an external threat can lead to people rallying around the flag (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Again, however, whether the mutual positive effects emerge might depend on a range of potential moderators. Some of these have already been emphasised

previously. Of note, the perceived permeability of group boundaries and the perceived stability of the social strata have been highlighted by SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

According to this account, the inclination of disadvantaged group members to rebel against their status will depend on the perceived permeability of group boundaries because group members are only thought to rebel if individual mobility strategies do not present a feasible option (Wright & Taylor, 1998). Consequently, one could propose that deprivation will *only increase* identification if perceived permeability is low, because if it is high people can be expected to prefer individual mobility strategies and hence to disengage from the ingroup. Further, the stability of the social strata is thought to be important because only if conditions are relatively unstable will cognitive alternatives – i.e. the notion that things might be changed – become available. Relatedly, the importance of a belief that change can be brought about has also been highlighted by work on collective action, which proposes that action will not be taken if resources and opportunities to bring about change are seen to be lacking and if action therefore does not seem efficacious (Klandermans, 2001). Based on this, one might propose that identification will *only increase* deprivation if perceived stability is low, or if social change appears possible. Under these conditions, deprivation might be emphasised by group members in order to underline the need for change and to propel others into action. In contrast, if social change does not appear possible, there is no benefit for high identifiers to emphasise deprivation, and they should be expected to refrain from doing so.

Of course, SIT has inspired a large amount of research. Therefore, more previous research has focussed on the effects of SIT's structural variables and the potential moderators of a positive mutual effect of identification on deprivation and vice versa (e.g.

Boen and Vanbeselaere, 2000; Jetten, Spears and Manstead, 1997; Kessler & Mummendey, 2002). This is partially why in our present effort we sought to highlight the moderation of a negative effect, by focussing on a situation commensurate with enhancement concerns. However, clearly a systematic and comprehensive test of our theoretical approach is to date still outstanding, and this will be an important issue for future research.

How, then, does our theoretical model map onto previous research?

Unfortunately, many of the previous studies did not measure or report the moderators highlighted by us. However, our account would suggest that Tropp and Wright's (1999) ethnic minority participants in the USA, as well as Mummendey et al.'s (1999) and Kessler and Mummendey's (2002) East Germans, and Abrams' (1990) Scots in the UK context, all would have been more concerned about their objective group status than about self enhancement. Moreover, we would suggest that for the positive effects to emerge in these settings rather than to be zero, perceived permeability was probably low, and stability would have been high.

In contrast, Abrams' et al.'s (1999) Hong Kong residents, as well as our various ethnic minority samples in Germany and the UK (Zagefka, 2004; Zagefka & Brown, 2005) would have been more concerned about enhancement, and ingroup attributions would have been quite high in these settings. To take our own data as an example, this pattern seems plausible. Our participants were reasonably young (mainly teenagers), and one might imagine that they might have been more motivated by hedonistic concerns (enhancement) than group status and fairness. Also, it is plausible to assume that they would have attributed deprivation to the ingroup, given how widespread hierarchy

justification ideologies appear to be (e.g. Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Wright & Taylor, 1998).

It is considerably more difficult to speculate about the dynamics of the settings which yielded zero correlations, given that they are proposed to emerge under a number of different conditions. For example, it is possible that Togas and Veilleux's (1988) women were concerned with their group status, but that the stability of the social strata (as highlighted by SIT) was so high that no positive effects emerged. Equally, it is possible that these women were concerned with enhancement, but that ingroup attributions were so low that no negative effects emerged. Because of these different possibilities, and the fact that our proposed moderators have not been tested in one parsimonious effort, further research is urgently needed.

In terms of broader theoretical implications of our work, we believe of the most important suggestions to come out of our model is that future work, both in the SIT and the RDT tradition, would be well advised to attempt to either measure or manipulate people's prevalent motives. We suggest that different intergroup situations, e.g. whether intergroup conflict is salient or not, will lead to very different prevalent motives. Specifically, the question of whether people are primarily motivated by advancing the objective position of their ingroup or by feeling good about themselves will have important effects on their identity dynamics and potentially their behaviour. Prevalent motives are an aspect which to date is still very underresearched in intergroup relations, and this will hopefully be rectified in future research efforts.

The empirical aspect of this paper has some notable strengths and weaknesses. One obvious limitation is that we focussed only on a student category. Although we have no theoretical reason to believe that the mechanisms demonstrated here would not be

applicable to other social groups (e.g., ethnic or national categories), further studies would have to be conducted to establish this point. Another limitation is that our design cannot account for the causal direction of the link between identification and deprivation. Although we assumed, based on the findings of others, that there is some element of bi-causality to this relationship (e.g. Tougas & Beaton, 2002), it is nonetheless possible that the causal effect is stronger in one direction than the other (de la Sablonnière & Tougas, 2008). More research would need to be conducted to achieve greater certainty in this regard.

Nevertheless, an important contribution of this paper is that it presents an inaugural exploration of moderators of the identification-deprivation relationship. While some theoretical accounts of this relationship have been offered by deprivation researchers (e.g. Petta & Walker, 1992; Tougas & Beaton, 2002; Walker, 1999), none of these have focussed on moderating effects. In doing this, this paper not only advances current theorising, but also presents an account of how the hitherto inconsistent empirical findings about the relationship between the two variables can be reconciled.

One issue worthy of further exploration is the relationship between perceived discrimination and identification, which in some ways mirrors what has been discussed for the deprivation-identification link. Perceived discrimination is related to perceived relative deprivation but it is somewhat broader: Deprivation can be described as one type of discrimination, namely economic discrimination. However, other types of discrimination exist. Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey (1999) and Schmitt, Branscombe and Postmes (2003) found positive relationships between discrimination and identification (see also Sellers & Shelton, 2003). However, others have found the two concepts to be unrelated (Lee, 2003; Verkuyten, 2002). Yet some other findings (e.g.

Verkuyten, 2003) would suggest that perceived discrimination and identification are negatively related: Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz and Federico (1998) found that identification and legitimising ideologies are negatively related for minority members; and Major and colleagues (2002) found that identification and perceived ease of individual mobility was negatively related for minority members. Many factors might explain these divergent findings, but one explanation could be that the discrimination-identification relationship is also moderated by the extent to which discrimination is not only attributed to external unfairness but also to internal, ingroup factors. While it is beyond the scope of the present work to test this, this might be an interesting investigation for the future.

An important practical implication of these findings is that attributions to the ingroup should be considered by people trying to instigate collective action. It has been shown that both perceived deprivation and ingroup identification need to be present in order for action participation to occur (Simon et al., 1998). However, these two conditions appear to be directly and negatively linked whenever a low ingroup status is attributed to the ingroup. Those interested in fostering movement participation might therefore benefit from directly communicating to group members that internal attributions are not indicated, in order to improve engagement with the collective cause.

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## Footnotes

1 Not all researchers have focussed on the direct link between identification and deprivation. Some have conceptualised identification as a moderator of the effects of deprivation on variables like collective action and intergroup attitudes (Kawakami & Dion, 1993; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Smith et al., 1999). These processes need not be mutually exclusive, but they might be at play simultaneously.

2 Many conceptualisations of deprivation include a 'fairness' component, i.e. the attribution of the ingroup's shortfall to some external, unfair factor. It should be noted that this component of deprivation is conceptually distinct from the proposed moderator, attributions to the ingroup. Whether or not something is attributed to factor 'a' can often be empirically orthogonal to the question of whether the same thing is also attributed to factor 'b'. Theoretically, ingroup deprivation can be attributed simultaneously externally (unfairness) and internally (ingroup's contribution), only externally, only internally, or to neither type of factor. For example, if someone believes the inferior position of his/her ingroup is attributable to discrimination, this person might still believe that the inferior position is or is not also due to laziness: the level of external attribution and the level of internal attribution will be empirically distinct.

3 Two additional analyses were performed to assess the role of perceived similarity between the self and other ingroup members. Firstly, a median split was performed on the third identification item ('I do/don't have much in common with other ingroup members'). This variable was then used as an additional factor in an ANOVA with the

manipulation as IV and the manipulation check as DV. No interaction was observed between the two factors ( $F = .002$ , ns), indicating that perceived similarity did not moderate the effectiveness of the manipulation. Secondly, the main analyses were repeated with an identification measure which did not include the two identification items which suggest similarity (item 3 'I don't have much in common with' and item 8 'I feel close links with',  $\alpha = .84$  for the reduced scale). The pattern of results obtained with this reduced identification scale was the same as that reported in the paper, which further suggests that similarity did not impact on the results.

Additional analyses were also performed to test whether the affective and cognitive identification items would show different effects. Firstly, a factor analysis confirmed that affective and cognitive identification items did not load on two separate factors. Correspondingly, building two separate scales for the cognitive and affective items resulted in a worse alpha than that of the whole scale. When conducting four further regressions to re-run the two regression analyses reported above with the two separate scales, the interactions did not reach significance. This is unsurprising, given that both the theoretical conceptualisation of identification and the psychometric properties of the scale suggest that the two components should not be analysed separately.

Table 1

	Manipulation (coded 0, 1)	Ingroup attributions manipulation check	Deprivation	Means
Ingroup attributions manipulation check	.54 ***			4.28
Deprivation	.07	.07		3.68
Identification	-.02	-.15 *	-.09	5.07

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

## Appendix

The comparative wording of the ‘ingroup attribution low’ versus ‘ingroup attribution high’ conditions:

... ‘Another prime factor considered in the report is the specific pattern of student consumer behaviour. Here, the conclusion is clear: Student consumer spending is (pretty much in line / way out of line) with other EU countries and (cannot really / can) account for the comparatively bad financial situation of British students. British students are holding increasingly materialistic attitudes. (But compared to / compared to) German students the British are (no bigger spenders / particularly keen) on evening entertainment, electronic gadgets, and other costly aspects of modern life. So, the disadvantaged situation of British students (does not seem to / seems to) be due to their own behaviour’.