

Is self-esteem predictor of in-group bias and out-group discrimination?

MARGARETA JELIĆ

Previous research has found that, in cases of intergroup conflict, people are likely to evaluate their groups more positively than the groups they do not belong to, but are also more ready to derogate the out-group. Two important factors need to be taken into consideration to explain these processes: self-esteem and group status. We explored the role of personal and social self-esteem in predicting in-group bias and out-group discrimination on two conflicted ethnic groups living in Vukovar. Consistent with the Social Identity Theory and Social Dominance Theory our results confirm that group status has impact on the self-esteem level in the way that members of the majority group tend to have higher social self-esteem. Furthermore, individuals with higher social self-esteem are more ready to express show more in-group bias and more out-group discrimination than individuals with low social self-esteem. Personal self-esteem proved to be less important in intergroup context. However, opposite to results of Long and Spears (1997), we suggest that it is individuals with high social and low personal self-esteem who express most in-group bias and out-group discrimination in order to enhance or maintain high social self-esteem and compensate for the lack of self-worth. The importance of environmental and political context for investigating group processes is discussed.

Key words: social self-esteem, personal self-esteem, in-group bias, out-group discrimination, ethnic groups

It is a well-known fact that identification with a certain group influences social behaviour of an individual. This is especially true for perception of out-group members through stereotypes and prejudice, as well as for interaction with them, which can be either biased or discriminatory, depending on evaluation of particular out-group.

Social Identity Theory SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. Basic assumption of SIT is that individuals are motivated to develop positive identity, which gives them a feeling of safety, enhances their self-esteem and feeling of self-worth. However, SIT highlighted the difference between personal and social identity. While personal identity refers to evaluations of ourselves, social identity is a combination of personal evaluation of one's group and perception of how others see and evaluate the group we belong to. Namely, seeing oneself as an in-group member entails assimilation of the self into the in-group category prototype and enhanced similarity to other in-group members and the in-group is cognitively included in the self (e.g., Smith & Henry, 1996). Trust is extended to fellow in-group, but not out-group, members (Insko, Schopler, Hoyle,

Dardis, & Graetz, 1990; Insko et al., 1998). Therefore, positive self-concept can be achieved through individual characteristics (personal identity) as well as the characteristics of the groups one belongs to (social identity). In other words, it is important to evaluate one's own group more positively in comparison to other groups in order to maintain or achieve positive social identity connected with membership in that particular group. In case when the in-group is not evaluated favourably in comparison with the out-group, social identity is negative and individual is motivated to use one of the strategies for maintaining or enhancing social identity. The strategies most commonly used in these situations are in-group bias and out-group discrimination. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), three variables are particularly important for the emergence of in-group favouritism. First, it is the extent to which individuals identify with a certain in-group. It is important to determine whether they have internalized that group membership as an aspect of their self-concept. Second variable is the extent to which the prevailing social context provides ground for comparison between groups. Finally, the third factor is the perceived relevance of the comparison group. Research shows that individuals are likely to display favouritism when the in-group is central to their self-definition and a given comparison is meaningful or the outcome is contestable (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Forgas & Williams, 2001).

It should be emphasized that different methodological paradigms suggest the existence of these two components

Margareta Jelić, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Lučićeva 3, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia. E-mail: mjelic@ffzg.hr (the address for correspondence).

of bias – favouring the in-group and discriminating the out-group - by using independent evaluations of in-group and out-group. In other words, antagonism towards the out-group is not necessarily a part of favouring and enhancing the in-group. While weaker emotions usually imply avoidance of the out-group, stronger emotions imply activity against the out-group and can be used as an excuse for causing damage to the out-group. Most research done so far dealt with the mild form of in-group favouritism, rather than out-group discrimination (Brewer, 1999, 2001). However, by using different methodological strategies as suggested earlier, we might identify more evidence for out-group discrimination. We believe that, in addition to laboratory research with the minimal group paradigm, more research should be done in situations of extreme intergroup conflict.

In the framework of Social Identity Theory, self-esteem has been given the central role in explaining intergroup discrimination and bias. Therefore, to investigate the main hypotheses of this theory, a measure of self-esteem connected to a social category that individual belongs to is needed. Most often used scale for measuring social self-esteem is Collective Self-esteem Scale CSES (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Term “collective” instead of “social” was used so to respect the difference between collective and social in American culture; namely, social refers to interpersonal relationships, whereas collective addresses groups. In European tradition, such distinction is unnecessary, as both terms (social and collective) refer to group identity. CSES was developed as a global measure of social self-esteem, but proved to be flexible enough to be adjusted for usage with reference to specific group membership with no change in its psychometric quality. Development of different scales that measure social self-esteem brought about another conceptual and methodological issue. Namely, most researchers began to use newly developed social self-esteem scales, but completely neglected the personal self-esteem, even though earlier research showed that personal self-esteem has relatively small, but significant impact on the intergroup processes (Long & Spears, 1997).

Another major issue concerning self-esteem hypothesis is the unclear expected relationship between self-esteem on one side and in-group bias and out-group discrimination on the other. Namely, self-esteem hypothesis allows both positive and negative correlations between self-esteem and intergroup processes and it is far from clear whether individuals with high or those with low self-esteem should express more in-group bias and outgroup discrimination. Research done by Long and Spears (1997) suggests that individuals with high personal but low social self-esteem express most in-group bias. They also showed that personal and social self-esteem do not have the same effects on behaviour. Low social self-esteem can represent a threat to an individual with relatively high personal self-esteem and result in compensation via in-group bias. Results of this research also emphasized the importance of doing research on real groups and having measures of both personal and

social self-esteem because intergroup context might have an impact on interpersonal level as well (Branscombe & Wann, 1994).

Another prominent theory that tries to explain intergroup behaviour is Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This theory proposes that each society contains ideologies that either promote or attenuate intergroup hierarchies. Individuals with high social dominance orientation - SDO (i.e. who accept ideology of intergroup hierarchies) strongly promote intergroup hierarchies and want their in-groups to dominate their out-groups. According to Social Dominance Theory, men should have a stronger SDO than women and should therefore show greater intergroup bias than women. This was confirmed in many studies (Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000; for reviews, see Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1993; Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991; cf. Gaertner & Insko, 2000). However, on the group level, it is important to distinguish between specific and general SDO (general SDO representing the need for intergroup hierarchies in general, and specific SDO representing the need for in-group domination), especially when considering the relationship between SDO and group status (Jost & Thompson, 2000). Research shows that group status plays important role in shaping attitudes and reactions of members of minority and majority group. For example, Jost & Thompson (2000) found different patterns of correlation of SDO with in-group favouritism. There was a positive correlation between specific SDO and ethnic in-group favouritism for both African and European Americans. However, for European Americans a positive correlation between general SDO and favouritism was found (explained in terms of their efforts to maintain their relatively high status), whereas for African Americans this correlation was negative (because they are trying to improve their relatively low status). Based on these results we can expect members of the majority group (or any other higher status group) to have higher social self-esteem and also to have stronger tendency to express in-group bias and out-group discrimination.

Furthermore, research done so far mostly dealt with non-representative samples like laboratory groups using minimal group paradigm, children whose ethnic identity is not yet fully formed or minority groups. That is why generalisation of those results is almost impossible or at least unjustified. We believe that research on social identity and intergroup relations should include real groups in their everyday settings. Future research should investigate whether the basic assumptions of SIT do apply to real life setting on members of social groups who identify strongly with their groups, and to whom group membership is important and salient in their everyday lives. Since conflict between social groups is strongly related to group identity salience (Bettencourt & Bartholow, 1998), ethnic groups in Croatia provide an ideal setting for investigating intergroup relationships. Namely, the consequences of the war in Croatia include communities profoundly divided along ethnic line and individuals with threatened self-esteem and changes in their value system.

This context allows us to try answering questions like: To what extent does identification with one's ethnic group include derogating other groups, and is this relationship different in minority and/or majority ethnic groups?

AIM

The main aim of this study was to test basic assumptions of the Social Identity Theory and Social Dominance Theory on two conflicted ethnic groups living in the same town.

First, we aimed to examine the relationship between two aspects of self-esteem (personal and social) and in-group bias and out-group discrimination. We hypothesised that both personal and social self-esteem are predictors of in-group bias and out-group discrimination, but that social self-esteem is more relevant for intergroup processes than personal self-esteem. Nevertheless, we expect ethnic identity level to be even stronger predictor of both criteria than social self-esteem. Furthermore, we predicted that in-group bias and out-group derogation would be positively, but not highly correlated.

Second, we investigated differences in these variables between members of the majority and the minority ethnic group. We hypothesised that, following Social Dominance Theory, members of the majority group would have higher social self-esteem (due to the higher status of their in-group) and would therefore show stronger tendency towards in-group bias and out-group discrimination. We also examined whether predictors of bias and discrimination are different for members of either majority or minority ethnic group.

METHOD

Our research was conducted in the town of Vukovar. The probabilistic cluster sample consisted of 935 participants (males and females, age 13-63), half of which belonged to the majority group (Croats) and half to the minority group (Serbs). Although at the time Serbs were the numerical majority in Vukovar, we consider Croats to be the normative majority and Serbs normative minority as suggested by recent findings on dimensions of majority and minority groups (Seyranian, Atuel, & Crano, 2008). Since Croats gained much more power at all political levels upon the war, they felt as the winners of the war, and their number in Vukovar constantly increased. Data on younger participants was collected at schools during regular classes, and adult data was collected by giving envelopes with questionnaires to school children to take home to their parents or grandparents and return sealed envelopes to school afterwards. Participants completed a questionnaire consisting of the following scales and measures:

1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965). The form that we used contained 10 items (five in positive and five in negative direction) to be responded on a

5-point Likert type scale (potential range 10-50). This scale measures global personal self-esteem and is most widely used measure of self-esteem with good psychometric properties.

2. Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). It is a widely used measure of social self-esteem that is available on the Internet. The scale was translated and adapted for Croatian sample (Jelić, in press; Jelić, 2003). This scale comprises 16 items responded to on a 5-point Likert scale (potential range 16-80). Items of the scale are distributed among four factors (each subscale has four items) that explained 72.3% of total variance in our sample. Subscales measure self-esteem connected to the membership in group, private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem and importance of group membership for identity. Research shows that this scale can be adjusted to measure self-esteem connected to a specific group with no change in its psychometric quality (Andreopoulou & Houston, 2002; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).
3. Ethnic identity scale (NAIT; Čorkalo & Kamenov, 1999). This is a 5-point Likert type scale containing 27 items that measure feeling of belonging to one's ethnic group. Scores vary in theoretical range of 27-135, where higher score indicates higher national identity.
4. Ethnic group barometer. This is an evaluation scale of global attitudes towards two ethnic groups (Croats and Serbs). This type of scale, called barometer, is often used to investigate public opinion or social and political attitudes in various European countries. On a scale from 0-10, participants mark their global attitude towards members of a specific ethnic group (where 0 is very negative and 10 is very positive attitude). Participants were asked to express their attitude towards their own ethnic group and the out-group. The difference between the two (which is normally in favour of the in-group) represents in-group bias.
5. Discrimination against the out-group. This three-item-measure was construed for purposes of this study. The items refer to a behavioural intention to discriminate in an everyday situation. Discrimination items were adjusted to the age of the participants (children or adults) and relevance to the situation in Vukovar (problem of unemployment and discrimination at work, or in school). Participants were asked whether they would complete a certain task only for an in-group member or the group membership would not play an important role. Possible answers were "yes" and "no". Answer implying discrimination against the out-group was given one point and answer suggesting no discrimination was given 0 points. Therefore the total range is 0-3 with higher result indicating greater intention to discriminate against out-group members.
6. Basic demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity).

All scales proved to be understandable to participants regardless of their age. Psychometric characteristics of the scales found on the study sample were satisfactory, with alpha coefficients ranging from .72 for Collective Self-Esteem Scale to .92 for Ethnic identity scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between two aspects of self-esteem, ethnic identity, and in-group bias and out-group discrimination

Descriptive statistical data presented in Table 1 suggest that participants in our study show relatively high personal and social self-esteem, which is a well-known finding in most studies dealing with self-esteem (Bray, 2001; Moeller, 1994; Wiest, Wong, & Kreil, 1998; Wiggins & Schatz, 1994). Our participants also have a strong and salient ethnic identity (see Table 1).

Compared to the data by Ćorkalo and Kamenov (1999), where a sample of 537 members of the majority group (Croats) was examined, our participants show significantly higher level of ethnic identity ($M_2 = 86.75, SD_2 = 20.81; t = 10.17, df = 1012, p = .001$). This can probably be explained by their everyday setting. Namely, Ćorkalo and Kamenov conducted their research exclusively on majority group members and in areas where intergroup conflict was neither an everyday issue nor a part of life. On the other hand, participants in our study live in the same community, and their ethnic identity is very salient in practically everything they do. Specifically, members of the two ethnic groups, although living next to each other, rarely communicate, they go to different churches, read different newspapers, shop in different stores and children attend different schools.

Measures of in-group bias and out-group discrimination haven't been used in this form before; therefore we cannot compare our results with results from earlier research. Taking into account that bias is usually considered to be socially undesirable behaviour, we can say that scores on in-group bias measure are relatively high in our sample. However, due to the specific context in which our participants live, this result is in line with expectations that they tend to favour

Table 1
Main descriptive statistics of the study variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min	max
Personal self-esteem	40.49	6.23	17	50
Social self-esteem	61.63	8.27	32	80
National (ethnic) identity	97.75	18.61	37	135
In-group bias	4.28	4.01	-10	10
Out-group discrimination	0.91	1.01	0	3

Table 2
Correlations of personal and social self-esteem with ethnic identity, in-group bias and out-group discrimination

	Ethnic identity	In-group bias	Out-group discrimination
Personal self-esteem	.108**	-.020	-.082*
Social self-esteem	.628**	.348**	.324**

Note. * $p < .005$; ** $p < .001$.

openly their own group over the out-group. On the other hand, participants show relatively low tendency towards the discrimination of the out-group members. This is not surprising considering that out-group discrimination is even less socially accepted behaviour than in-group bias and people are probably not ready to openly admit it. Correlation between in-group bias and out-group discrimination is moderately high ($r = .63, p = .001$), which shows that people who are more ready to express bias in favour of the in-group members are also more ready to express discrimination against out-group members. However, the correlation is only moderate in magnitude which suggests that tendency to see the group we belong to as better than any out-group does not necessarily include tendency to derogate members of the out-groups. To answer our first problem, we looked into relationship between the two concepts of self-esteem and ethnic identity, in-group bias and out-group discrimination.

Correlations of personal and social self-esteem with ethnic identity, in-group bias and out-group discrimination are presented in Table 2. Consistent with earlier research (Luh-tanen & Crocker, 1992), personal and social self-esteem are moderately positively correlated ($r = .37, p = .001$). This is not surprising since both measures refer to the same concept. However, while personal self-esteem is derived from individual characteristics of the participants, social self-esteem emerges from the characteristics and evaluations of the group an individual belongs to. Having in mind that social self-esteem is connected to the social categorisation level, while personal self-esteem is not, we hypothesised that personal and social self-esteem would not have the same or maybe not even parallel effects at the intergroup level. Our results confirm that social self-esteem is more salient and therefore more relevant for intergroup processes and ethnic identity than personal self-esteem. While social self-esteem shows strong positive correlations with ethnic identity, and somewhat lower with in-group bias and out-group discrimination, personal self-esteem shows only very low positive correlation with ethnic identity and very low negative correlation with out-group discrimination.

One should be careful interpreting moderate positive correlation of social self-esteem with ethnic identity because it could also easily be explained by the contextual overlap of items in the two scales. Namely, CSE scale consists of four factors, one of which is directly related to identification with

the in-group. This could have artificially made the correlation between these two variables higher. However, after we excluded the four items concerning identification with own ethnic group from CSES, the correlation with ethnic identity remained positive and high ($r = .62$).

Another intriguing result is a positive correlation of personal self-esteem with ethnic identity but at the same time negative correlation with out-group discrimination. Results suggest that there is a possibility that personal and social self-esteem do not have the same effects at the intergroup level and that personal self-esteem might help explain intergroup relationships and processes. Having higher social self-esteem means being more satisfied with the group we belong to. Hence, it is not surprising that social self-esteem is also correlated with in-group bias, as bias is most often used to enhance or maintain high self-esteem. Moreover, in the context of divided community such as Vukovar, it is hardly surprising that social self-esteem referring to the ethnic group is also correlated with derogation of the other group. On the other hand, although personal self-esteem is only slightly correlated with ethnic identification level it may suggest that stronger sense of personal worth is related to the sense of worth as a member of an ethnic group. However, correlations also suggest that the more we are satisfied with ourselves, the less we have the tendency to derogate or discriminate against other people.

Differences between majority and minority group

We expected differences in all variables between majority and minority group members. In line with research done within the framework of Social Identity Theory and Social Dominance Theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994), results of the one-way ANOVA confirm our hypothesis that majority group mem-

bers have, on the average, higher social self-esteem and social identity, and show higher tendency for in-group bias and out-group discrimination than minority group members (see Table 3). Interestingly and unexpectedly, members of the majority group at the same time have lower personal self-esteem than members of the minority group. As personal and social self-esteem are moderately positively correlated, we expected majority group members to have higher personal self-esteem than minority group members. Lower personal self-esteem of majority group members could be a consequence of the fact that most of the members of the majority group were refugees and only recently returned to their hometown, and this refugee status probably lowered their self-esteem.

Before interpreting these results, we checked for possible interactions between variables. To test the main prediction that social self-esteem is a better predictor than personal self-esteem of both in-group bias and out-group discrimination regardless of group status, a three-way ANOVA was conducted in 2 (social self-esteem) \times 2 (personal self-esteem) \times 2 (group status: majority vs. minority) factorial design. This analysis yielded the main effect of both personal self-esteem ($F_{bias} = 2.818, p < .049$; $F_{discrimination} = 9.677, p < .002$), social self-esteem ($F_{bias} = 76.746, p < .001$; $F_{discrimination} = 75.403, p < .001$) and the main effect of group status ($F_{bias} = 192.425, p < .001$; $F_{discrimination} = 99.452, p < .001$) for both bias and discrimination. Also, significant interactions Social self-esteem \times Group status ($F_{bias} = 6.776, p < .009$; $F_{discrimination} = 10.302, p < .001$) were found.

These results give the answer to the main question of our research – which type of self-esteem (personal or social) is responsible for intergroup bias when measured on two real conflicted groups of different status. The effect size (partial Eta squared - η_p^2) of social self-esteem is greater than the effect size of personal self-esteem for both bias ($\eta_p^2_{social\ self-esteem} = .104$; $\eta_p^2_{personal\ self-esteem} = .004$) and discrimination ($\eta_p^2_{social\ self-esteem} = .103$; $\eta_p^2_{personal\ self-esteem} = .014$). While the size of the effect of social self-esteem on in-group bias and out-group discrimination can be characterised as large, the effect size of personal self-esteem for both in-group bias as well as out-group discrimination is small (Cohen, 1988), which leads to conclusion that in-group bias and out-group discrimination are defined primarily by the social self-esteem level. Impact of personal self-esteem level has proved to be smaller but significant for out-group discrimination, and only marginally significant for in-group bias.

If we look at our results from the personal self-esteem perspective, results suggest that personal self-esteem has significant impact on out-group discrimination whereas its impact on in-group bias is only marginally significant. Therefore we can conclude that people express similar intensity of in-group bias regardless of their personal self-esteem level. On the other hand, low personal self-esteem is related to higher tendency to discriminate against the out-group members.

Table 3

Differences between majority and minority ethnic groups in personal and social self-esteem level, ethnic identity level, in-group bias and out-group derogation

	Group status	M	SD	F	df	p
Personal self-esteem	Majority	39.88	6.395	-2.821	989	.005
	Minority	41.00	6.049			
Social self-esteem	Majority	62.57	8.019	3.144	874	.002
	Minority	60.81	8.470			
National (ethnic) identity	Majority	100.45	19.253	5.592	859	.001
	Minority	94.47	17.196			
In-group bias	Majority	6.27	3.652	16.160	988	.001
	Minority	2.58	2.937			
Out-group discrimination	Majority	1.37	1.281	11.849	1011	.001
	Minority	.54	.959			

As for social self-esteem, one must be careful when interpreting the results because of the interaction with the group status. In order to determine exactly which differences are significant we tested the interaction of social self-esteem and group status for both in-group bias and out-group discrimination by creating new grouping variable called interaction. Oneway ANOVA was used to analyse the relationship of the new variable with the dependent measures – in-group bias ($F=87.853, p=.001$) and outgroup discrimination ($F=55.085, p=.001$). Post hoc procedure showed that all differences between cell means are significant for in-group bias whereas for out-group discrimination significant differences were found between all means but one – majority group members with low social self-esteem and minority group members with high social self-esteem. As expected, tendency towards in-group bias and out-group discrimination were significantly higher for members of the majority ethnic group and for participants with high social self-esteem as already shown by the significant main effects of these variables. Moreover, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, members of the minority ethnic group with low social self-esteem significantly differ in their readiness to express in-group bias and out-group discrimination from the members of the majority group with high social self-esteem.

In spite of the opposite signs of the main effects of personal and social self-esteem, interaction between them is not significant. This testifies to the impact that social self-esteem has on in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Individuals with high social self-esteem will be more biased in favour of their own ethnic group and discriminate more against other ethnic groups regardless of their personal self-

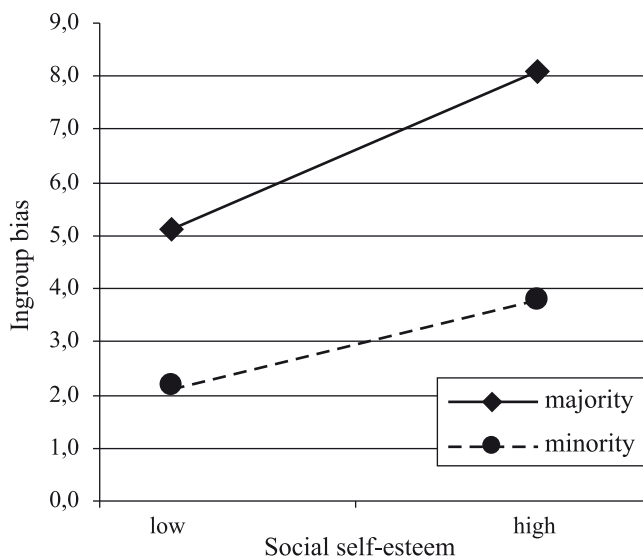


Figure 1. Tendency for in-group bias depending on social self-esteem level for members of majority and minority ethnic group

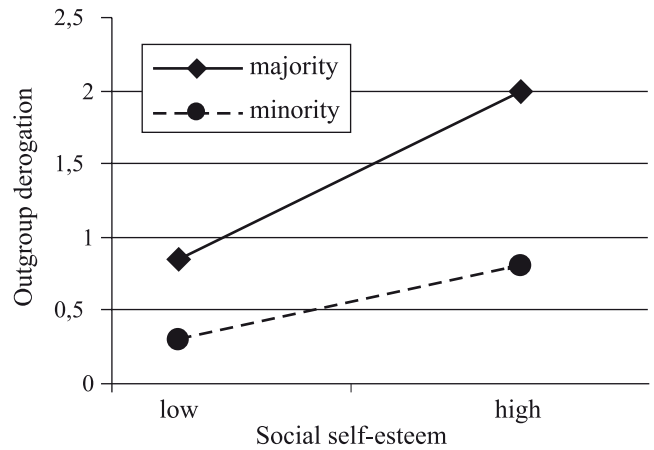


Figure 2. Tendency for out-group derogation depending on social self-esteem level for members of majority and minority ethnic group

esteem level. Even though the interaction between personal and social self-esteem is not significant, the opposite signs of the main effects of personal and social self-esteem is an intriguing result worth taking a closer look at. Namely, results suggest that individuals who have high social but low personal self-esteem will express even more in-group bias and out-group discrimination than those whose both social and personal self-esteem is high. This result is opposite to our initial hypothesis based on research done by Long and Spears (1997) who used the same self-esteem scales in their research and showed that individuals with high personal self-esteem tend to experience low social self-esteem as a threat to their identity and therefore to react with in-group bias and out-group discrimination to protect their identity. Our results suggest that it might be individuals with high social and low personal self-esteem who express most in-group bias and out-group discrimination. This result, although not expected, is not entirely surprising. We find it even logical in a psychological sense. Namely, low personal self-esteem individuals see themselves as less worthy than other people and are not satisfied with the way they are. Having in mind that all people are motivated to establish and retain positive self-concept, which implies high self-esteem, these individuals compensate for their low personal self-esteem through membership in a certain group. Therefore, it is of extreme importance to them to evaluate their own group in a positive way. Furthermore, when the group in question is ethnic group, one cannot simply replace it for another, more positive group, and comparison dimensions are usually imposed by the environment. In such situations in-group bias and out-group discrimination are the quickest and the easiest way to achieve positive distinctiveness of the group one belongs to. By derogating out-groups and enhancing the in-group, an individual enhances or maintains high social self-esteem and compensates for the lack of self-worth. On the

other hand, individuals with high personal self-esteem can put accent on their personal qualities. Satisfied with them, they have no reason to experience the fact that their group is not perceived as extremely positive in comparison to other groups as a threat. Besides, it is possible that low social self-esteem retracts them from intergroup comparison. It is easier for them to focus on their personal qualities to feel worthy than on achieving positive distinctiveness of the in-group. It is exactly those individuals who are least ready to express in-group bias and out-group discrimination because their high personal self-esteem buffers possible threat of low social self-esteem.

Taking the research by Long and Spears as a starting point and not entirely confirming their results made us rethink possible relationships between these variables as well as possible reasons for different results. Namely, our analyses haven't yielded significant interaction between personal and social self-esteem, only a trend in the opposite direction from the one suggested by Long and Spears. Although we find our results even more intuitively and psychologically sensible, we were wondering what might have caused such a difference. We believe that research done so far lacks wider perspective. It is important to investigate whether results from the laboratory research really can be generalised to real groups such as ethnic groups in our research. Furthermore, we find it important not just to investigate the relationship between variables, but also to determine how important these individual variables, such as self-esteem level, really are for intergroup processes altogether. It is possible that some other social variable is more important than any individual characteristic. Well-known facts about group influence on an individual attest to this. Therefore, the question remains how large the impact of individual variables on intergroup attitudes really is. Is socio-political context more important than self-esteem level of each individual? Regression analysis offers a more direct answer to the question how important self-esteem actually is for intergroup attitudes in a social context of two conflicted ethnic groups living together in a divided community.

Predictors of in-group bias and out-group discrimination in majority and minority groups

Due to the significant differences between majority and minority groups in self-esteem level and ethnic identification level, as well as on in-group bias and out-group discrimination, separate regression analyses were conducted for majority and minority group members with in-group bias and out-group discrimination as criteria. We aimed to investigate whether predictors of bias and discrimination are different for conflicted groups of different status.

In the first step demographic variables were entered: age and gender of the participants. In the second step two aspects of self-esteem- personal and social- were added. Fi-

nally, ethnic identification level was entered into regression equation.

As can be seen in Tables 4 and 5, selected variables accounted for more variance of in-group bias than of out-group discrimination. One possible explanation is that out-group discrimination is socially unacceptable behaviour and is therefore not easily explained by demographic data, ethnic identification and self-esteem. However, we should also consider a possibility that our measure of out-group discrimination, consisting of only three items, is not reliable enough or not sensitive enough. Future research should address this issue by adding more items to this measure or by finding implicit measures of out-group discrimination.

Age and gender of participants accounted for small, but significant percentage of variance for both in-group bias and out-group derogation and for both groups regardless of their status. However, age of participants has more impact than gender, in direction of higher tendency towards both bias and discrimination among younger participants. One cannot help asking why children, who are too young to have any personal memories of the war, show stronger tendency to derogate the out-group than the adults. It is worth noting that those children, unlike the adults, have no memories of living in a non-divided social world (Ajduković & Čorkalo Biruški, 2008). Segregated schooling in Vukovar most probably caused other forms of social division as well and maybe even made discrimination as a normative behaviour

Table 4
Results of the hierarchical regression analyses for majority and minority group participants: effects of socio-demographic variables, personal and social self-esteem and ethnic identity level on in-group bias

	Majority group		Minority group	
	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Age	-.121	-2.193*	-.241	-4.599***
Gender	-.217	-3.922***	-.060	-1.146
R ²	.060***		.062***	
Age	-.098	-1.907	-.214	-4.137***
Gender	-.124	-2.385*	-.041	-0.797
Personal self-esteem	-.088	-1.578	.023	0.409
Social self-esteem	.437	7.760***	.233	4.132***
R ²	.161***		.058***	
Age	-.123	-2.904**	-.156	-3.283**
Gender	-.032	-0.727	-.014	-.306
Personal self-esteem	.003	0.067	-.064	1.252
Social self-esteem	-.031	0.540	-.103	-1.603
Ethnic identity level	.645	11.875***	.520	8.556***
ΔR^2	.247***		.156***	
R ²	.459***		.265***	

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 5

Results of the hierarchical regression analyses for majority and minority group participants: effects of socio-demographic variables, personal and social self-esteem and ethnic identity level on out-group discrimination

	Majority group		Minority group	
	β	t	β	t
Age	-.152	-2.757**	-.303	-5.916***
Gender	-.227	-4.129***	-.103	-2.010*
R ²	.072***		.103***	
Age	-.124	-2.437*	-.276	-5.359***
Gender	-.132	-2.559*	-.099	-1.952
Personal self-esteem	-.118	-2.150*	-.147	-2.632**
Social self-esteem	.449	8.050***	.148	2.646**
R ²	.165***		.025**	
Age	-.147	-3.404**	-.241	-4.790***
Gender	-.046	-1.043	-.084	-1.692
Personal self-esteem	-.034	-0.722	-.122	-2.257*
Social self-esteem	.074	1.250	-.049	-0.721
Ethnic identity level	.596	10.777***	.306	4.736***
ΔR^2	.211***		.054***	
R ²	.376***		.079***	

Note. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

for children. Adults, on the other hand, are aware of the fact that discrimination is socially undesirable behaviour; they remember living in a multiethnic community before the war and hence do not have such a strong tendency to discriminate against the out-group now the war has ended.

Although not as strong predictor as age, gender has proven to be important predictor (with males showing greater tendency towards both in-group bias and out-group discrimination than females) until social self-esteem and ethnic identity level is entered into regression equation.

Personal and social self-esteem together can account for 6% of variance for bias and 3% for discrimination for minority group, and 16% of variance for bias and 17% for discrimination for majority group. Beta coefficients are higher for majority ($\beta_{\text{bias}} = .428, p = .001$; $\beta_{\text{discrimination}} = .445, p = .001$) than for minority group ($\beta_{\text{bias}} = .229, p = .001$; $\beta_{\text{discrimination}} = .159, p = .002$). However, only social self-esteem is significant predictor of both in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Personal self-esteem, on the other hand, predicts out-group discrimination and has no crucial role in predicting in-group bias. Higher personal self-esteem leads to less tendency to discriminate against the out-group, but more so for the minority group members ($\beta_{\text{minority}} = -.162, p = .002$; $\beta_{\text{majority}} = -.120, p = .022$). Once again, these results confirm that social self-esteem plays more important role in intergroup relations than personal self-esteem. While higher social self-esteem level facilitates bias toward the in-group and discrimination

of the out-group, higher personal self-esteem has little or no impact on in-group bias, but reduces the tendency towards out-group discrimination. These analyses further underline the results of the ANOVA conducted earlier.

After ethnic identification level was added in the third step of the regression analysis, social self-esteem seized to predict in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Personal self-esteem remained significant predictor of out-group discrimination. In other words, only ethnic identification level and participants' age remained predictors of in-group bias. Out-group discrimination is predicted by personal self-esteem, ethnic identification level and participants' age. Ethnic identification level is the best single predictor of both in-group bias and out-group discrimination and can account for 25% of variance of in-group bias in majority group and about 16% in minority group. When it comes to out-group discrimination, ethnic identity explains 21% of criterion variance for majority group and 5% for minority group. Individuals with higher ethnic identification level are more ready to express bias towards the in-group members and to discriminate against the out-group members than individuals with lower ethnic identification level, regardless of the status of their group. There is, however, a difference in the size of β coefficients for groups of different status with β coefficients being higher for majority group members.

Somewhat surprisingly, personal and social self-esteem levels are far from crucial in predicting intergroup processes. Only for minority group members is personal self-esteem level predictor of discrimination toward the out-group with high self-esteem individuals expressing less discrimination. High correlation with ethnic identification can explain why social self-esteem directly predicts neither intergroup bias nor discrimination. Only when ethnic identification is left out of the regression analysis, self-esteem predicts in-group bias and out-group discrimination, which suggests that ethnic identity level might be a complete mediator of social self-esteem. We conducted additional regression analysis with personal and social self-esteem as predictors and ethnic identification level as criterion. Personal and especially social self-esteem levels showed to be strong predictors of ethnic identity: 40% of ethnic identification variance could be explained by personal and social self-esteem together for both groups. It is possible that personal and social self-esteem have an impact on in-group bias and out-group discrimination via ethnic identity and future research should address this question. Naturally, social self-esteem, which is connected to the ethnic group that individual belongs to, is a far better predictor of ethnic identity level ($\beta_{\text{minority}} = .675, p = .001$; $\beta_{\text{majority}} = .667, p = .001$) than personal self-esteem ($\beta_{\text{minority}} = -.098, p = .028$; $\beta_{\text{majority}} = -.144, p = .003$).

Taken together, our results suggest that variables related to the specific intergroup context, such as ethnic identification and membership in a majority or minority group are more important predictors of in-group bias and out-group discrimination than individual variables like self-esteem

level. This is not surprising and adds to the understanding of how important it is to do psychological research in real life setting, with real groups in their everyday environment.

CONCLUSION

In the socio-political context of a community divided along ethnic line, it is possible that being a member of the majority or the minority group is crucial for feeling more or less free to show in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Group status (minority vs. majority group) proved to have large impact on intergroup processes. We found differences between members of the minority and the majority ethnic group on all variables. In line with research done in this area, members of the majority group expressed higher social self-esteem, scored higher on the ethnic identity scale, and consequently showed more in-group bias and out-group discrimination than members of the minority group. However, their personal self-esteem was lower, probably due to the fact that we were dealing with a group of war refugees, who are known to be a highly traumatised group and therefore usually have lower personal self-esteem (Živčić, 1992; UNHCR, 1994; McCallin, 1991; Woodside, Santa Barbara, & Benner, 1999; Mesić, 1992, 1996).

The findings presented here highlight the importance of social identity and social self-esteem for explaining in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Ethnic identity and social self-esteem (derived from a membership in a highly salient ethnic group) proved to be more important for intergroup processes than personal self-esteem. All participants expressed high levels of attachment to their ethnic group, as well as high social self-esteem connected to that group. Results also show high positive correlations of social identity and social self-esteem with in-group bias and out-group discrimination. Nevertheless, personal self-esteem shouldn't be disregarded when investigating intergroup processes since it has a relatively small, yet opposite effect on out-group discrimination and can therefore add to better understanding of intergroup processes, especially discrimination of the members of an out-group.

Taken together, effects of self-esteem on intergroup attitudes in this research are not large. However, this could be due to the fact that participants in this study have relatively high personal and social self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem are needed in order to truly test our hypothesis. Our results highlight the importance of social identity and social self-esteem in intergroup processes, and also indicate smaller, yet significant role of personal self-esteem in out-group discrimination. The role of belonging to a majority or minority ethnic group as well as ethnic identity level have proved to be the most important predictors of both in-group bias and out-group discrimination.

We believe that the research contributes to the theoretical and empirical understanding of intergroup attitudes and

behaviours, primarily due to the fact that it was conducted in realistic everyday setting. This research is also one of the first attempts after the war in Croatia to investigate these psychological processes in realistic setting, and in a community where these processes belong to the most painful and most important topics.

REFERENCES

- Ajdković, D., & Čorkalo Biruški, D. (2008). Caught between the ethnic sides: Children growing up in a divided post-war community. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 32 (4), 337-347.
- Andreopoulou, A., & Houston, D.M. (2002). The impact of collective self-esteem on intergroup evaluation: self-protection and self-enhancement. *Current Research In Social Psychology*, 7, 1-4.
- Bettencort, B.A., & Bartholow, B.D. (1998). The importance of status legitimacy for intergroup attitudes among numerical minorities. *Journal of Social Issues*, 54, 759-775.
- Branscombe, N. R., & Wann, D. L. (1994). Collective self-esteem consequences of out-group derogation when a valued social identity is on trial. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 24, 641-657.
- Bray, B. M. (2001). The influence of academic achievement on a college student's self-esteem. *National Undergraduate Research Clearinghouse*, 4. Available online at <http://www.webclearinghouse.net/volume/>. Retrieved November 27, 2009.
- Brewer, M. B. (1999). The psychology of prejudice: In-group love or outgroup hate? *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, 429-444.
- Brewer, M. B. (2001). The many faces of social identity: Implications for political psychology. *Political Psychology*, 22, 115-125.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Čorkalo, D., & Kamenov, Ž. (1999). Nacionalni identitet i međunacionalna tolerancija. Izvještaj s VIII. ljetne psihologijske škole [National identity and interethnic tolerance: Report from 8th Psychological Summer School]. Zagreb: Odsjek za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta, STUP.
- Forgas, J.P., & Williams, K. (Ed.) (2001). *Social influence: Direct and indirect processes*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.
- Gaertner, L., & Insko, C. A. (2000). Intergroup discrimination in the minimal group paradigm: Categorization, reciprocation, or fear? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 77-94.

- Insko, C. A., Schopler, J., Hoyle, R., Dardis, G., & Graetz, K. (1990). Individual-group discontinuity as a function of fear and greed. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 68-79.
- Insko, C. A., Schopler, J., Pemberton, M.B., Wieselquist, J., McIlraith, S.A., Currey, D.P., et al. (1998). Long-term outcome maximization and the reduction of interindividual-intergroup discontinuity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 695-710.
- Jelić, M. (2003). Provjera postavki teorije socijalnog identiteta na etničkim grupama [Verification of basic assumptions of Social Identity Theory on two ethnic groups]. Unpublished master's dissertation. Zagreb: Odsjek za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta.
- Jelić, M. (in press). Validacija hrvatske verzije Skale socijalnog samopoštovanja [Validation of the Croatian version of the Collective Self-esteem Scale]. *Migracijske i etničke teme*.
- Jost, J.T., & Thompson, E.P. (2000). Group-based dominance and opposition to equality as independent predictors of self-esteem, ethnocentrism, and social policy attitudes among African Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36, 209-232.
- Long, K., & Spears, R. (1997). The Self-esteem Hypothesis Revisited: Differentiation and the Disaffected. In R. Spears, P.J. Oakes, N. Ellemers & S.A. Haslam (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of stereotyping and group life*, 296-317. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1991). Self-esteem and intergroup comparisons: Toward a theory of collective self-esteem. In J. Suls & T. A. Wills (Eds.), *Social comparison: Contemporary theory and research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 302-318.
- McCallin, M. (Ur.) (1991). *The Psychological Well-Being of Refugee Children: Research, Practice and Policy Issues*. International Catholic Child Bureau
- Mesi, M. (1992). *Osjetljivi i ljuti ljudi, hrvatske izbjeglice i prognanici* [Sensitive and angry people, Croatian displaced persons and refugees]. Zagreb: Ured za prognanike i izbjeglice, Institut za migracije.
- Mesi, M. (1996). *Ljudi na čekanju – pogledi na povratak* [The waiting people – a perspectives of the return]. Sociološko Društvo Hrvatske: Zagreb.
- Moeller, T.G. (1994). What research says about self-esteem and academic performance. *Education Digest*, 34, 25-32.
- Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S.A., & Turner, J. S. (1994). *Stereotyping and social reality*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pettigrew, T. (1998). Reactions towards the new minorities of Western Europe. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 77-103.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L.M., & Malle, B.F. (1993). Social Dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 741-763.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Seyranian, V., Atuel, H., & Crano, W.D. (2008). Dimensions of Majority and Minority Groups. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 11, 21-37.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidanius, J., Levin, S., Liu, J., & Pratto, F. (2000) Social dominance orientation, anti-egalitarianism and the political psychology of gender: an extension and cross-cultural replication, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30, 41-67.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Martin, M., & Stallworth, L. (1991). Consensual racism and career track: Some implications of social dominance theory. *Political Psychology*, 12, 691-721.
- Smith, E. R., & Henry, S. (1996). An in-group becomes part of the self: Response time evidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 635-642.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Taylor, D.M., & Moghaddam, F.M. (1994). *Theories of intergroup relations: International social psychological perspectives*. Westport: Praeger.
- UNHCR (1994). *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3470.html>. Retrieved 27 November 2009.
- Wiest, D.J., Wong, E.H., & Kreil, D.A. (1998). Predictors of global self-worth and academic performance among regular education, learning disabled, and continuation high school students. *Adolescence*, 22, 601-618.
- Wiggins, J., & Schatz, E.L. (1994). The relationship of self-esteem to grades, achievement scores, and other factors critical to school success. *School Counselor*, 41, 239-244.
- Woodside, D., Santa Barbara, J., & Benner, D.G. (1999). Psychological trauma and social healing in Croatia. *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 15, 355-367.
- Živčić, I. (1992). *Djeca i omladina izloženi ratnim stresovima* [Children and youth exposed to war stress]. Godišnjak Zavoda za psihologiju, str. 181-184. Rijeka: Pedagoški fakultet.