

# Theories of ethnocentrism: social dominance theory and social identity perspectiv...

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Theories of Ethnocentrism: Social Dominance Theory and Social Identity Perspective Compare and Contrast critically evaluate in light of relevant research and theoretical reasoning A major focus of psychology is in understanding why group conflict, inequality and ethnocentrism occur. Many researchers have developed theories and presented evidence to try and explain these issues and two predominant approaches have emerged. The first approach focuses on the relatively stable personality differences that people show in their general orientation towards ethnocentrism and inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Social Dominance Theory (SDT) proposes that people exhibit different levels of social dominance orientation, a desire to dominate members of other groups and a desire for continued hierarchical relations between groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The alternative approach focuses on social and situational factors as causes of ethnocentrism. The dominant theory here is Social Identity Perspective (SIP), which is comprised of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994).

Social Identity Perspective proposes that ethnocentrism occurs when people are depersonalized: they see themselves as members of a salient group rather than unique individuals. This process leads them to adopt a social identity where their ideas, attitudes, values and behaviours tend to reflect norms of their group and their main goal is to see their group as positive and distinct (Turner, 1987). This essay will consider how these approaches define ethnocentrism and will provide an outline of how they explain ethnocentrism.

It will then compare and contrast the theories, and consider the strengths and limitations of each with reference to the large body of research in this field. In light of the limitations of viewing ethnocentrism as due to a relatively stable, individual disposition to inequality, the essay concludes that SIP provides a more complete explanation. However, researchers need to consider whether ethnocentrism is due to an interaction of situationally dependent personality factors and social identity factors for a more comprehensive explanation of ethnocentrism.

Ethnocentrism Sumner (1911) originally defined ethnocentrism as "...the sediment of cohesion, internal comradeship and devotion to the in-group, which carries with it a sense of superiority to any out-group and readiness to defend the interests of the in-group against the out-group" (p. 11). Recent research has defined ethnocentrism as ethnic group self-centeredness and identified six specific aspects that are divided between inter and intragroup expressions (Bizumic, Duckitt, Popadic, Dru & Krauss, 2008).

Intergroup expressions of ethnocentrism include a preference for and favoritism given to the ingroup, a tendency to see the ingroup as superior and to only associate with the ingroup (purity) and the belief that exploitation of outgroups is acceptable to promote ingroup interests (Bizumic et al, 2008). Intragroup aspects include that ingroups are cohesive: integrated and cooperative, and that there is strong devotion and commitment to the ingroup (Bizumic et al, 2008). The two theories define and measure ethnocentrism in different ways.

SDT emphasizes ingroup favoritism and bias in high status groups, and the allocation of negative social value to outgroups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Ethnocentrism is measured through levels of prejudice, racism, conservatism and other associated concepts, which, although distinct from ethnocentrism, are closely correlated (Bizumic et al, 2008). SIP measures ethnocentrism primarily through ingroup favoritism: the tendency to favor the ingroup in evaluations and allocation of resources (Oaks et al, 1994). Social Dominance Theory

SDT was developed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) and focuses on personality and structural factors as causes of ethnocentrism. The theory argues that individuals differ in their level of social dominance orientation (SDO), which is the desire to oppress outgroups, have the ingroup be seen as superior and dominant, or the extent that an individual endorses group inequalities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Specifically, SDO is “ a desire for and value given to ingroup dominance over outgroups and the desire for non-egalitarian, hierarchical relationships between groups within the social system” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1994 p. 9). Differences in SDO are argued to make some people more likely to show ethnocentrism and prejudice, and people who have SDO show more negative behaviours towards the outgroup. This is known as differential ingroup social allocations. Illustrating this point, Sidanius (1994) states that people’s ethnocentric orientations and attitudes are due to personality and consistent behavioral predispositions (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT also proposes that legitimizing myths maintain ethnocentrism and inequality.

These are beliefs, attitudes, values or ideologies that are circulated and justify inequality, as well as continuing the dominance of some groups over others (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For example, the myth that men have better jobs and higher incomes because they are more assertive and have better leadership skills than women. The second part of SDT is based on the assumption that intergroup conflict and ethnocentrism is due to the way society is made up of group-based hierarchies, which have a hegemonic group at the top which controls money, resources and power, and a negative reference group at the bottom (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

These hierarchies are based on three stratification systems: an age system, gender system, and an arbitrary-set system, where people from high status groups have more power than people in lower status groups. Hierarchies are formed and maintained by institutional discrimination, individual discrimination and behavioural asymmetry (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Institutional discrimination is the rules and regulations of social institutions, such as schools, religions, corporations, businesses or governments, which result in lower status groups having less power, money or other resources.

Institutions maintain unequal hierarchies through the use of systematic terror, which is threat or violence directed towards low status groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Individual discrimination is the small, daily discriminations which occur in every setting, and the way desired goods, such as health care, money or power, are allocated to members of dominant groups. These small acts add up and lead to the continued dominance of one group over another (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Behavioural asymmetry is the way people in low status groups behave differently compared to those in high status groups. Examples of this include that ethnocentrism is higher in high status groups compared to low status groups, and there is more ingroup favoritism in high status groups ??? what SDT calls the asymmetrical ingroup bias. Also, low status groups can show self-handicapping, which is where they perform below their abilities due to self-fulfilling stereotypes or expectations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social Identity Perspective

SIP is a broad theory of ethnocentrism which includes social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell, 1987). Social Identity Theory SIT proposes that in different situations, people either define themselves as individuals, or as group members: they move along the interpersonal ??? intergroup continuum (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). SIT argues that people have a collection of category memberships and each membership is represented in the persons mind as a social identity that describes how the person should think, feel and act as a member of that group (Turner, 1987).

If a group is important people will internalize the group membership so that it becomes an important part of their self-concept, and they are then driven to achieve positive self-esteem and establish a social identity (they are motivated to establish positive distinctiveness) (Turner, 1987). This self-enhancement is achieved by comparing their group with salient outgroups along dimensions which lead to the most positive representation of their group.

SIT proposes that a cognitive processing bias occurs during this process, which results in people minimizing the differences within their group, and exaggerating the differences between their group and a salient outgroup (Turner, 1987). This produces intragroup homogeneity, where behaviour becomes more group focused, attitudes in the group are consensual and people define themselves and outgroup members as “undifferentiated” members of their social category (Turner and Reynolds, 2001).

SIT explains these cognitive processes of categorization and self-enhancement as due to subjective belief structures, which are people’s beliefs about the nature of relations between groups (Turner, 1987). These include the stability and legitimacy of group relations, and the possibility of social mobility psychologically passing from one group to another, or social change, changing how they feel about their group membership (Turner, 1987). Self-Categorization Theory

SCT follows on from and elaborates on SIT. SCT focuses on the shift from personal to social identity which occurs when people change from defining themselves as individuals compared to other individuals (when their personal identity is salient), and start to see themselves as group members who are different from members of other groups (when their social identity is salient) (Turner et al, 1987). This social identity is thought to emerge when group categorizations are made prominent.

The emergence of this social identity leads to a process called depersonalization, which is where people see increased similarity between themselves and ingroup members and differences from outgroup members,

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interchangeability with other ingroup members, and see themselves as representative of the group (Turner et al, 1987). The theory argues that whether depersonalization occurs depends on the accessibility and fit of social categories. Accessibility is how accessible the category is, in terms of past experiences, expectations, goals, motives and if the categorization is important for a person's self-concept (Turner et al, 1987).

Fit refers to the way people activate a category which best explains or fits the individual information and stored category information (Turner et al, 1987). Fit is determined based on whether the information fits in a normal or stereotypical direction (normative fit), and whether there is a high meta-contrast ratio: which is when the differences within a group are less than the differences between that group and others (comparative fit) (Turner et al, 1987).

Overall, all group processes, including ethnocentrism, are argued to be the outcome of psychological group formation and depersonalization of self.

#### Similarities between Social Identity Perspective and Social Dominance

**Theory** Both theories agree that that group identification is needed for ethnocentrism and influences levels of ethnocentrism (Sidanius, Pratto, van Larr & Levin, 2004). SDT argues that although people with particular personalities are more likely to engage in ethnocentrism, social identification is also needed (Sidanius et al, 1994).

The theories also agree that ingroup bias and favouritism can be modified under specific conditions (Sidanius, Pratto, Mitchell, 1994). Similarly, both theories recognize the importance of the salience of ingroups and outgroups

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(Sidanius et al, 2004). Significantly, minimal group experiments show that if intergroup distinctions are made salient, peoples SDO levels are more likely to influence whether they discriminate against outgroups, and many SIP experiments have show the importance of salience in changing group relations Sidanius et al, 2004). Both theories emphasize the “ dynamic” ways people construct their social identities (Sidanius et al, 2004), based on a salient ingroup, or group distinctions based on race, nationality, class, ethnicity, or arbitrarily-set categories. Sidanius et al. , (2000) also argue that SIP finding of ingroup favoritism in minimal groups is similar to SDT assertion that people have a predisposition to form ingroup ??? outgroup distinctions and to discriminate against outgroups based on these categorizations.

Also, although the theories differ on the importance assigned to social and contextual factors, both agree that they can influence ethnocentrism. SIP clearly emphasizes social factors such as self-categorizations and contextual factors including the salience of groups, and the stability and legitimizing of group relations (Turner, 1987). SDT also considers social identification, contextual factors such as status differences, connections with social institutions and social roles, cultural factors and structural relations (Sidanius, 2000).

Although SDT argues that SDO is a relatively stale personality variable, they do agree that levels of SDO can correspond with shifts in the intergroup context (Sidanius et al, 2004). SIP also argues that ethnocentrism can vary based on the context and structural position of groups (Turner et al, 1994). Levin (1996) found that when differences between groups of Jewish Israelis

were made salient, high-status Jewish Israelis were more positively orientated toward inequality than lower status Jewish Israelis.

However, when thinking about Israeli-Palestine relations, the groups did not differ in attitudes towards inequality. Further, Schmitt, Branscomb and Kappen (2003, study 3) found that the participants who believed inequality favored their university (ingroup) were much more positive towards the inequality than the other participants, showing that the social-structural position of groups influences attitudes. Differences between Social Identity Perspective and Social Dominance Theory Although there are some general similarities between these theories, they contrast on many specific points.

**Focus on Personality or Social Factors as Causing Ethnocentrism** The major difference between these two theories is their focus on either personality or social factors as causing ethnocentrism. SDT argues that the personality variable SDO is the main factor predicting ethnocentric behaviour (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In contrast, SIP argues that identification with the ingroup and self-categorization as a group member through a process of depersonalization leads to ethnocentrism (Reynolds, Turner, Haslam, and Ryan, 2001). There is evidence for each argument.

Evidence that ethnocentrism is caused by levels of SDO. There is evidence that SDO scores are correlated with attitudes and beliefs related to ethnocentrism. SDO was positively correlated with racism, sexism, conservatism, ethnic prejudice, nationalism, patriotism and cultural elitism in a diverse sample of 19, 000 participants from 13 samples (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle, 1994). People with higher levels of SDO also reported

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that they intended to work in more hierarchy-enhancing professions as opposed to hierarchy-attenuating professions (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

There is also evidence that support for discriminatory policies, strict laws, military programs, war; the death penalty and belief in legal retribution are positively correlated with SDO (Sidaius, Lui, Pratto and Shaw, 1994). High SDO scores and dominance-oriented prejudice have also been found to be related to personality characteristics such as being disagreeable, vindictive, hostile or seeing social inequality as “ they way it should be” (Lippa & Arad, 1999).

However, there is no evidence that SDO causes ethnocentrism, only that some aspects of ethnocentrism are closely related to a dominance orientated personality measure. There is also evidence that SDO predicts outgroup discrimination and negativity in minimal group studies. Sidanius and Pratto (2004) found that people who scored higher on SDO had a greater desire for social distance from the outgroup, were less willing to cooperate, showed a tendency to accept group boundaries and a desire to dominate other groups.

They concluded that although ingroup favoritism is important, SDO is needed to fully explain ethnocentrism. Evidence against the assertion that SDO causes ethnocentrism. Recent evidence suggests a different explanation for these results. Schmitt et al (2003) argue that the results of experiments showing SDO is related to ethnocentrism are actually due to the way specific forms of inequality are salient for participants as they fill in SDO measures. Schmitt et al (2003) tested this in study 1, and found that SDO was only correlated with racism if race was a salient social categorization at the time.

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Study 2 provided further support, showing that sexism scores only predicted SDO when gender was salient, and racism scores only predicted SDO when race was salient. Therefore, when people are completing a measure of SDO, they are actually expressing their attitudes towards inequality specific to salient social groups rather than pre-existing, stable individual dispositions towards inequality (Schmitt et al, 2003). Evidence that ethnocentrism is caused by self-categorization. Tajfe, Billing, Bundy and Flament (1971) conducted the first minimal group studies which led to SIP.

In these experiments participants were divided into one of two groups of the basis of some meaningless dimension, and then allocated resources to members of the two groups. Despite the minimal conditions, participants still acted in an ethnocentric way, showing ingroup favouritism. Additionally, when given the choice of maximising joint benefits (for the ingroup and outgroup) or maximising comparative benefits, participants tended to chose the option that gave the ingroup comparatively more than the outgroup.

This discrimination in minimal groups has been found over a range of cultures and dimensions, and shows that categorization of people into groups can produce discrimination (Turner, 1986). General evidence for SIP over personality theories of ethnocentrism comes from Haslam and Wilson (2000), who found that personal beliefs were more predictive of prejudice when they reflected stereotypic beliefs shared within an in-group. Perreault and Bourhis (1999) found that ingroup identification was the only factor which predicted discrimination in minimal groups, and that a range of personality variables had no impact Role of SDO.

Another key difference between the theories is that while SDT describes SDO as a relatively stable personality variable, SIP argues that it varies in different situations, in different groups, and based on identification.

Reynolds, Turner, Ryan, Mavor and McKone (2006) looked at the degree that personality variables (SDO and authoritarianism) can be modified using identification with either a pro or anti-feminist source. They found significant changes in levels of feminism and SDO in the different conditions, which shows that SDO can be influenced.

SDO scores of individuals did not correlate well between the two phases of the experiment if participants had seen the pro-feminist message, and measures also showed that implicit prejudice and stereotyping varied in the same way as SDO. SIP provides a clear explanation for these and other results which find SDO to be stable, by arguing that attitudes can be stable in contexts where similar self-categorizations are made salient, but can change when shifts in categorization occur (Reynolds et al, 2006).

Verkuyten and Hagendoorn (1998) made either a personal or national identity salient and looked at ingroup stereotypes of the Dutch's treatment of minorities. They found that personality variables were correlated with prejudice in the personal identity condition, and ingroup stereotypes were correlated in the national identity condition. Also, when ingroup norms were of tolerance and equality, participants showed far lower levels of prejudice.

This supports the SIP discontinuity hypothesis, showing that people's attitudes change depending on what identity is salient, and ethnocentrism is determined by people's salient self-categorizations. Reynolds, Turner,

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Haslam and Ryan (2001) conducted similar studies, testing prejudice when participants personal, gender, age, or national identity was salient. They found correlations between personality and prejudice in the age and gender conditions, but not in the personal or national conditions.

They also found that the relationship was strongest when the gender identity was salient and weakest when a national identity was salient. So, the power of personality to predict ethnocentrism changed in the different conditions.

Reynolds et al (2001) argue that SDO cannot be the psychological mechanism underlying ethnocentrism and inequality if it varies with group identity. In contrast to these results, Sidanius et al (1994) measured ethnocentrism with indexes of differential ingroup social allocation (DISA) in minimal groups, and found a direct relationship between SDO and three of the DISA indexes.

Even after the effects of gender, self-esteem and ingroup identification were controlled for, subjects with higher levels of SDO displayed a greater desire for social distance from, and were less willing to cooperate with the outgroup. This demonstrates that, independent of the effects of group identification, people who have higher levels of SDO are more likely to show ethnocentric behaviour and attitudes. Explanations for varying levels of SDO across situations and in groups. A related difference between the two theories is their different explanations for the variability found in SDO scores.

SDT has suggested that changes in SDO may be due to the fact that people with high SDO are more likely to identify with their group and be affected by group factors (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In contrast, SIP has argued that SDO

is a group attitude which varies in different situations (Reynolds & Turner, 2006). SIP argues that personality differences may be correlated with ethnocentrism when personal identity is salient, but group attitudes and beliefs will predict ethnocentrism when a social identity becomes salient (Reynolds and Turner, 2006).

A number of studies have tested whether shifts in self categorization from personal to social identities affect the relationship between ethnocentrism and personality variables, and a few key experiments are outlined below. Sidanius, Pratto and Mitchell (1994) looked at minimal group members who evaluated each other on positive and negative domains and found that, in line with both theories, ingroup identification significantly predicted discrimination. However, people who identified highly with their group and had high levels of SDO showed more ingroup favouritism, suggesting that SDO is a key predictor of ethnocentrism.

Buzimic et al (2007) tested whether personality factors affect discrimination directly or indirectly through influencing people who have higher levels of these personality variables to identify more strongly with their ingroup. They found that ingroup identification was a significant predictor of discrimination, and that it got stronger when the ingroup-outgroup categorization was more salient. Individual differences in levels of SDO did not predict discriminatory behaviour, and there was little evidence that some people have a preference for hierarchal relations between groups.

In one condition, where discrimination would lead to an unequal hierarchy, participants actually showed fairness and cooperation. Although people with

high SDO did not move as far towards equality as the other participants here, if there was a basic drive for inequality and dominance participants should have discriminated strongly in that condition. This study provides clear evidence that SDO does not influence ethnocentric behaviours.

Explanations for gender differences in ethnocentrism Another important difference between SIP and SDT is their explanations for the gender differences in ethnocentrism.

SDT takes an evolutionary stance, arguing that these differences are due to biological differences in the reproductive strategies of men and women (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). That is, men need to have lots of economic resources to attract young, attractive women, while women are focused on attracting men with resources to support their offspring (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT sees this difference as stable, and not affected by structural or contextual factors, and predicts that men will almost always be more favorable towards inequality.

A limitation of this explanation is that it does not explain the major changes in women's roles that have occurred in developed countries over time (Reynolds et al, 2000). SIP argues that the lower levels of ethnocentrism in women are not due to gender differences in SDO, they are due to the same processes which result in all lower-status groups having lower levels of SDO ??? the different implications that the inequality has for each group (Schmitt et al, 2003).

That is, women have lower levels of ethnocentrism because gender inequality results in disadvantage for them, and men have higher levels

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because this inequality is beneficial for them (Schmitt et al, 2003). As such, these differences should vary depending on the specific inequality which exists between the groups. Schmitt et al (2003) investigated these competing explanations. They found that men and women did not differ in levels of SDO after they considered gender inequality in both directions, and did not differ in their overall comfort with specific forms of inequality ??? which contradicts SDT.

Gender differences in SDO were mediated by sexism, suggesting that the difference is due to women and men's different positions in the social structure. They also found that men felt more positively about inequality that favored men, while women felt more positively about inequality which favored women. There was no correlation between gender and other types of inequality, showing that gender differences are specific to the inequality that exists between the men and women.

Causes of high SDO and ethnocentrism. In contrast to SIP, SDT argues that SDO and ethnocentrism develop from three major influences: socialization factors, situational contingencies and temperament (Sidanius & Pratto, 1994). The main socialization factor is group status. SDT argues that because group superiority seems compatible with hierarchy-legitimizing myths, it seems appropriate for people in high-status groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). There is substantial evidence that group status is related to SDO.

Pratto and Choudhury (Pratto, 1999) found that people in higher status groups had higher levels of SDO, whether group status was based on gender,

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ethnicity or sexual orientation. SDO has also been found to increase with the status of the major racial groups in America (Sidanius et al, 1999). Other factors which lead to SDO and ethnocentrism include gender, and temperament or personality factors. Evidence for this shows SDO declines with empathy and increases with aggression. Education is also thought to be involved, with higher levels of education correlating with lower SDO and prejudice generally.

However, this seems to contradict other SDT predictions, as you would expect that people with higher levels of education would be in higher status groups. Finally, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religiosity and employment status are also thought to be involved. Sidanius and Pratto (1994) found that these demographic variables accounted for 21% of the variance in SDO scores. However, across samples and nations, only gender and group status were reliably related to SDO. Explanations for differences in ethnocentrism in different status groups

Although both SDT and SIP agree that group status effects ethnocentrism, they differ in their explanations of why this is so. SDT argues that group status directly effects people's SDO, and group differences in acceptance of legitimizing myths account for group differences in SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In contrast, SIP argues that SDO scores reflect attitudes towards the specific types of inequality that are salient (Schmitt et al, 2003). Schmitt et al (2003, study 4) investigated these competing explanations.

They found that men and Whites were more pro-inequality than women and ethnic minorities. However, they found that gender differences in SDO were

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totally mediated by sexism, but not by racism, and racial differences in SDO were mediated by racism, but not by sexism. So, group differences in SDO are not indicative of group differences in a general orientation towards inequality, but are reflective of group differences in attitudes relevant to the specific inequality existing between groups. Explanations for outgroup favoritism

Another important difference between the two theories is their explanations for outgroup favoritism, and their predictions of when outgroup favoritism will occur. Many studies illustrate that low-status group's show outgroup favoritism (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT developed the asymmetrical ingroup bias hypothesis, which states that high-status groups will show more ingroup favoritism because it is easier and more valuable for them, and that low-status groups should show outgroup favoritism to support the social hierarchy (especially people with high SDO) (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

In contrast, SIP argues that the legitimacy and stability of intergroup relations determines when people will show outgroup favoritism (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). If group boundaries are permeable and inequalities secure (stable or legitimate), people will identify with, favor and seek to move into the high status group (Turner, 1986). If group boundaries are impermeable and secure, low status group members will accept their status and try to seek positive distinctiveness along other dimensions (Turner, 1986).

If group boundaries are impermeable and insecure (that is, unstable or illegitimate), the low status group will seek to change the inequality and will show ingroup bias (Turner, 1986). There is a lot of evidence supporting these

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three predictions, including a meta-analysis of ingroup bias conducted by Mullen, Brown and Smith (1992) which found that while high status groups evaluated their group on dimensions relevant to the inequality, low-status groups tended to show greater ingroup favoritism on less relevant attitudes ??? finding alternative means of achieving positive distinctiveness.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) tested group asymmetry in ingroup favoritism and found that Blacks had higher levels of ingroup bias than Whites, consistent with SIP. Also, the SDT prediction that low-status group members will act against their own interests and show outgroup favoritism to support the unequal social system has been disconfirmed by much SIP research which shows that low-status groups will only favor high-status groups if they either identify with the group or see the inequality as stable and legitimate (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994).

Finally, the SDT prediction that all high-status group members will show ethnocentrism and support for inequality is problematic: ethnocentrism has been found in many different groups, of both high and low status (Reynolds & Turner, 2000). Comfort with inequality in the direction it exists in society. SDT argues that people are more comfortable with inequality as it exists in society than in the opposite direction because it is justified by hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths; and that people high in SDO are even more likely to accept inequality in its general direction (Sidanius and Pratto, 1994).

In contrast, SIP argues that people's social identities affect comfort with inequality – people are more likely to be comfortable with inequality which favors their ingroup rather than the outgroup (Schmitt, Branscomb &

Kaplan, 2003). Schmitt et al (2003, study 3) tested these contrasting predictions by asking participants to report on how comfortable they would be with four different types of inequality in both possible directions.

They found that SDO did not influence participants' comfort with inequality, and could not account for comfort with inequality as it exists compared to the opposite direction. These findings support SIP, showing that attitudes toward inequality depend on the type and direction of inequality being considered. The importance of ingroup favoritism or outgroup degradation in ethnocentrism. The theories also differ in the importance they assign to different aspects of ethnocentrism; SIP focuses on ingroup favoritism in producing cohesion, devotion and discrimination (Turner, 1986).

In contrast, SDT focuses on personality variables which lead to outgroup negativity (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT argues that SIP is limited in the scope of behaviours it can explain: ingroup favoritism and a desire for positive distinctiveness cannot explain the way some people or groups strive to dominate and oppress outgroups, and cannot explain the occurrence of oppression, ethnic wars, slavery and other such events (Sidanius, Pratto & Mitchell, 1994). A number of studies support SDT in their criticism of SIP.

Brewer (1979) found that most intergroup discrimination in minimal groups was bias in favor of the ingroup rather than denigration of the outgroup.

Hewstone, Fincham and Jaspars (1981) investigated when people will take money away from ingroup and outgroup members in minimal groups, and found less ingroup favoritism and that the predominant strategy used was fairness. Mummendey et al (1992) investigated allocation of negative

outcomes to the ingroup and outgroup and did not find any evidence of ingroup favoritism and that fairness was the main strategy used.

However, when group size and status were manipulated in this experiment more negative allocations were made to the outgroup when the ingroup was a minority or of low status, and ingroup favoritism was the most used strategy in low status groups (Mummendey et al, 1992). These results support SIP, showing that ingroup favoritism occurs in negative domains when the ingroup is particularly motivated to achieve a positive social identity.

Reynolds, Turner and Haslam (2000) also found that ingroup favoritism is not restricted to the positive domain; that participants allocated negative resources to outgroups when traits fit the ingroup-outgroup categorizations. Conclusion After considering similarities and differences in two major theories of ethnocentrism, and highlighting strengths and weakness of each, a clear conclusion emerges. SDT proposes an explanation of ethnocentrism at the individual, group and societal level, and is very good at highlighting individual differences in the desire to dominance others (Huddy, 2004).

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) also provide clear evidence for how minority members are discriminated against and the way individual, institutional and other structural factors maintain inequality in numerous studies. Although it cannot explain ethnocentrism, SDT predicts and demonstrates that people high in SDO show more prejudice and endorse measures which maintain inequality. In contrast, SIP argues that ethnocentrism emerges from social attitudes which are group specific, as shifts in self-categorization from an

individual to a group member which produce shifts in attitudes and behaviour (Reynolds & Turner).

In light of the limitations of viewing ethnocentrism as due to a relatively stable, individual disposition to inequality, SIP provides a more complete explanation. However, researchers do need to consider the value of a situationally dependent personality factor as well as social identity processes as producing ethnocentrism. References Reynolds, K. , Turner, J. , Haslam, R. , Bizumic, B. , and Subasic, E. (2007). Does personality explain ingroup identification and discrimination? Evidence from the minimal group paradigm. *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46, 517-539 Perreault, S and Bourhis, R.

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