Conflicts of Legitimation among Self, Group, and System

The Integrative Potential of System Justification Theory

John T. Jost, Diana Burgess, and Cristina O. Mosso

Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system.

Dorothy Day

Social systems adapt inner nature to society with the help of normative structures in which needs are interpreted and actions licensed or made obligatory. The concept of motivation that appears here should not conceal the specific fact that social systems accomplish the integration of inner nature through the medium of norms that have need of justification.

Jürges Habermas (1975) (emphasis added)

Several decades of research on the psychology of justice leads one to the almost overwhelming conclusion that people generally prefer to believe that the social system to which they belong is fair, legitimate, and justifiable rather than capricious, unfair, or illegitimate (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Jost, 1999; Lerner, 1980; Major, 1994; Martin, 1986; Tyler & McGrath, 1990). This general proposition seems to be upheld even in social systems that produce egregious levels of inequality (e.g., Dumont, 1970; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Lane, 1962), such as the industrial capitalist system criticized so harshly by Dorothy Day and other socialist activists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In a historical study of community responses to economic inequality in Europe during this same period of time, Barrington Moore, Jr. (1978) observed poignantly that "The human capacity to withstand suffering and abuse is impressive, tragically so" (p. 13). As the above quotation by Habermas suggests, social systems impose themselves on groups and individuals with a normative force that is difficult to resist.

According to Marxist theory, which must be regarded as one of the major and primary sources of any contemporary analysis of the legitima-
A man's success and his masculinity reinforce each other. If a woman is profession-
ally successful, she must either see herself as having masculine traits — and, thereby
run the risk of seeming unfeminine to herself and others — or as having
compensated in some way — through lack or extraordinary effort — for a lack of
masculine characteristics. Unlike a successful man, a woman has something to
lose from success: her gender identity or belief in her ability. Conversely, failure and
femininity reinforce each other. For men, then, there is complete congruence
between professional goals and the need to feel like a good example of their gender. For
women there is a potential conflict. (Valian, 1998, p. 20; emphasis added)
This is one of the major empirical implications of the theory of system justification, which was first developed by Jost and Banaji (1994) as a social cognitive account of false consciousness and the ideological legitimation of social systems. Before proposing a theoretical integration of existing research in ideology, justice, and intergroup relations, a brief overview of the system justification perspective is in order.

An Overview of Theory and Research on System Justification

According to social identification and self-categorization perspectives, which are well represented in this volume (e.g., Ellemers, Spears et al., and Wight), there has been growing interest in the role of group membership in shaping individual behavior. In other words, it is theorized that people may act either as unique, differentiated individuals or as interdependent, conforming members of a social group. Thus, social identity theory identifies two major levels of analysis: the individual and the group. Others have argued for the relevance of three (Leyens, Zeb Bryant, and Schadron, 1992; Stangor and Jost, 1997) or four (Deese, 1977; McCreight, 1990) levels of analysis, incorporating "macro" and "micro" issues such as societal position and ideological justifications. Indeed, thinking about group membership involves recognizing the functions that attitudes and behaviors serve for organizations and social systems, and these may not be reducible to individual and group factors alone (e.g., Ellesheim, Ridgeway, Sidanis, Levin, Federico, and Pratto, and Tyler, this volume).

While social identity theory grew out of research on the "minimal group paradigm," in which laboratory groups with no history of interaction exhibit ethnocentrism (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the theory tends to emphasize the generalizability of these findings to the operation of many different types of social groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Mullen, Brown, and Smith, 1992). This is not to say that social identity theorists have ignored entirely the occurrence of outgroup favoritism, as the chapter by Spears et al. (this volume) demonstrates. Nevertheless, the theory seems to emphasize "group justification," which is defined as the tendency to favor members of the ingroup and to disfavor members of other groups with regard to attribution, stereotyping, evaluation, and resource allocation. It has been argued, for example, that outgroup favoritism is confined to experimental "ad hoc" groups, with the implication that it may be some kind of a demand characteristic of the experimental situation (Mullen et al., 1992).

Spears et al. (this volume) acknowledge, too, that social identity theory focuses more on the accommodation of outgroup favoritism (and the expression of ingroup favoritism) among members of low status groups in pursuit of positive group distinctiveness than on the extent to which unequal social systems lead people to internalize a sense of personal or collective inferiority, which is the focus of the system justification perspective. System justification theory was developed by Jost and Banaji (1994) in order to understand outgroup favoritism and related phenomena such as the "tolerance of injustice" (e.g., Jost, 1995; Major, 1993; Martin, 1986; Tyler & McGown, 1980) and the "depressed entitlement effect" among women (Jost, 1995; Major, 1993) and to link them to ideological processes of justification and legitimation. The first phase of work, therefore, was to demonstrate that ingroup derogation and outgroup favoritism are "real" phenomena that take place both inside and outside of the psychologist's laboratory. For members of low status groups, these phenomena are in direct contradiction to ego justification and group justification, two self-interested motives that have been duly documented by social psychologists. It is interesting to note that in economics and in political science, as well as in social psychology, the notion that people generally act in self-interested ways, as groups or as individuals, has lost its aura of unsaliability in recent years (e.g., Davis & Thaler, 1988; Green & Shapiro, 1990). One among many examples of outgroup favoritism (see also Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Jost, 2001; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanis, 1993) involves the internalization of inferiority among Southern Italians, who for at least a century have occupied a position that is less socially and economically successful than Northern Italians (e.g., Caporazz, Bonaldo, & D'Amaggio, 1982; Sirono, 1990). The status differences between the North and the South are captured best by the chauvinistic refrain that "Afric begins in Rome!" That Southern Italians have more or less accepted their inferior status can be seen by examining the results of survey data that were collected on a sample of 2,000 people throughout Italy via telephone in 1994 by Schizzerotto, Peri, Siederman, and Piazza and that were made available on a web site operated by the University of California at Berkeley (http://csa.berkeley.edu/702archive.html). Jost, Mosso, Rubin, and Guarnieri (2000) used this data set to investigate system justification hypotheses about ingroup and outgroup favoritism among groups that differ in social status, namely Northern versus Southern Italians.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with both positive (honest, law abiding) and negative (selfish, violent, complainer, lazy, intrusive) stereotypes about Northern Italians and Southern Italians. Using these 14 items (separate ratings of the ingroup and the outgroup on each of these 7 stereotypes), we computed an index of ingroup favoritism (positive ingroup ratings minus negative ingroup ratings) and negative outgroup ratings (negative outgroup ratings minus positive outgroup ratings) divided by 7.
number of stereotype items. We determined group membership (Northerners vs. Southerners) objectively on the basis of respondents' locations. The dependent variable, then, was the average difference in favorability of ingroup ratings compared to outgroup ratings, so that positive numbers indicate ingroup favoritism and negative numbers indicate outgroup favoritism. As can be seen in Figure 15.1, Northerners exhibited healthy levels of ingroup favoritism, whereas Southern Italians seemed to acknowledge the legitimacy of the other group's superiority by demonstrating outgroup favoritism, as indicated by negative difference scores. Thus, Northerners believed that they were better than Southerners (more honest, more law abiding, less violent, less lazy, etc.), and the Southerners, for their part, agreed with that assessment (Jost et al., 2000).

The second phase of research on system justification theory has sought to identify variables (such as perceived legitimacy and political ideology) that moderate the expression of ingroup and outgroup favoritism among members of groups that differ in social status. This can also be seen in Figure 15.1. Because the Italian survey contained information about respondents' political orientations, it is possible to see that the gap between Northern and Southern Italians with regard to ingroup favoritism increases as one moves across the ideological spectrum from left to right. This interaction effect is driven largely by the responses of Northerners, for whom there is a positive linear trend such that ingroup favoritism increases steadily from left-wing to right-wing ideological orientation (Jost et al., 2000). We propose that these results are stronger for Northern Italians than for Southern Italians because right-wing ideology, which combines elements of linguistic group justification and conservative system justification, provides a strong, unambiguous legitimation for dominant group members to feel superior and preserve their advantage (e.g., Sidanius et al., this volume), whereas right-wing ideologies held by members of subordinate groups might simultaneously spawn ethnocentric hostility (a form of group justification) and outgroup favoring deference (a form of system justification), as Allmeyer's (1990) work also suggests.

In many different cases, in fact, we find that system justifying ideologies work in concert with group justifying ideologies for members of high status groups, but they are in a state of conflict or contradiction for members of low status groups. This incompatibility among group and system justification tendencies could explain why "social dominance orientations" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) — which apparently measures some degree of adherence to both group justifying ("group-based dominance") and system justifying ("opposition to equality") ideologies (see Jost & Thompson, 2000) — is less internally reliable and consistent for members of lower status groups, such as African-Americans, than for members of higher status groups, such as European-Americans. As suggested above, it may also explain why the outgroup favoring trend by Southern Italians is not as strong in relation to political ideology as the ingroup favoring trend exhibited by Northern Italians (Jost et al., 2000).

In addition to survey research, we have conducted experimental studies of the effects of alleged socioeconomic success on stereotypical ingroup versus outgroup favoritism (e.g., Jost, 2001; Jost & Burgess, 2000). According to this paradigm, research participants are led to believe that members of their own group (students at the University of Maryland, for example) are either more or less socially and economically successful than members of a rival group (such as students at the University of Virginia). Consistent with system justification theory, people assigned to membership in low status groups tend to exhibit outgroup favoritism (particularly on stereotypic dimensions that serve to justify socioeconomic success), whereas people assigned to high status groups tend to exhibit strong ingroup favoritism in general (see Jost, 2001).
Furthermore, status interacts with perceptions of the legitimacy of the socioeconomic differences, such that perceived legitimacy increases ingroup favoritism among high status group members, but it decreases ingroup favoritism (or increases outgroup favoritism) among low status group members. For instance, University of Maryland students who believed that their own group was more economically successful than University of Virginia students also believed that their group was more intelligent, hard-working, friendly, honest, interesting, and skilled at verbal reasoning, especially when they perceived the status differences to be legitimate (see Figure 15.2). When they believed that their own group was less successful than the other group, they exhibited ingroup favoritism on these same traits when perceived legitimacy was low and outgroup favoritism when perceived legitimacy was high (see Jost, 2003).

The tendency for low status group members to show greater outgroup favoritism under conditions of system legitimacy was replicated with an experimental manipulation of perceived legitimacy (see also Jost, 2001). In this study, students at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) were all led to believe that they were lower in social and economic status than students from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), according to the same procedure used in the Maryland study. Research participants were then exposed to essays in which the economic differences were either justified in terms of greater efforts and abilities on the part of UCLA students (high legitimacy condition) or unjustified and attributed to discrimination and bias on the part of employers (low legitimacy condition). Results, which are graphed in Figure 15.3, indicated that, relative to the low legitimacy condition, people assigned to the high legitimacy condition showed greater outgroup favoritism on achievement-related dimensions (such as hard-working, intelligent, and skilled at verbal reasoning) and lesser ingroup favoritism on socioeconomic dimensions (such as friendly, honest, and interesting). Thus, perceived legitimacy moderates the expression of ingroup and outgroup favoritism among members of groups that differ in social status, on dimensions that have been considered “status relevant” as well as “status irrelevant” (e.g., Mullen et al., 1992; Spears & Manstead, 1999).

The third phase of research on system justification theory has sought to demonstrate that stereotypes and social judgments serve system justifying functions for their adherents. This was the goal of a study that was conducted in Cincinnati, Ohio about stereotypes of Northerners and Southerners in the United States, two groups that differ in social status in much the same way as Northerners and Southerners in Italy. Bobbie Ann Mason, the
"The country grandpa comes from was a striking byproduct of unbreakable poverty where everyone was always happy."

Figure 13.4. New Yorker cartoon. Source: © The New Yorker Collection 2001 David Sipress from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.

Kentucky-born author of In Country, observed that 'Southerners react to that sense of inferiority in two ways. One is to stand up fiercely for the South and sing Dixie all the time. The other is to reject it and say that the North is the authority and try to learn their ways and get rid of our accents' (Lyons & Oliver, 1968, p. 27). This illustrates well the competing temptations of group justification and system justification, respectively.

In our study, Cincinnatians stereotyped the higher status group of Northerners as more competitive, productive, active, efficient, dominant, responsible, productive, ambitious, and selfish than the lower status group of Southerners (Jost et al., 2000). By contrast, Southerners were perceived as more religious, friendly, traditional, happy, emotional, and honest than Northerners. The contents of these stereotypes fit with other research that indicates a differentiation between achievement-related dimensions and socioemotional attributes (e.g., Glick & Fiske, this volume; Jost, 2001; Spears & Manstead, 1994). Somewhat paradoxically, people seem to perceive an inverse relationship between economic success and happiness or well-being (e.g., Hunsley, 1998; Lane, 1962), as the New Yorker cartoon (Figure 13.4) suggests. From a system justification perspective, it is quite conceivable that the "poor but honest" and "poor but happy" stereotypes themselves serve as important rationalizations or legitimations of inequality. As Lane (1962) puts it, "Lower income and status are more tolerable when one can believe that the rich are not receiving a happiness income commensurate with their money income" (p. 96).

In the Cincinnati study, respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the magnitude of socioeconomic status (SES) differences between Northerners and Southerners, the perceived legitimacy of those differences, and the likelihood that those differences would change in the future. Question order was varied experimentally so that some respondents answered those questions before the stereotyping task, whereas others answered them only after the stereotyping task. Supporting the notion that stereotypes serve to legitimate status differences between groups (e.g., Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jackman & Senter, 1985; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997), people who responded to questions about the magnitude, legitimacy, and stability of SES differences between the North and the South after having completed the stereotyping task were significantly more likely to perceive the SES differences to be large in magnitude and high in legitimacy, and they were less likely to believe that the differences would change in the future (see Figure 13.5). While previous studies have assumed that stereotypes are related to ideological assessments of the social system, this finding demonstrates an important stereotyping-ideology link. Specifically, it shows that the act of thinking about
stereotypes leads people to enhance their perceptions of the legitimacy and stability of social inequality. This is the most direct evidence to date that stereotyping serves a justification or legitimation function on behalf of the social system (Jost et al., 2000).

The fourth phase of system justification research, which is the one that is closest to the major theme of this chapter, has been to document trade-offs and conflicts among group and system justification motives. This is the focus, for example, of research on attitudinal ambivalence among members of low status groups (Jost & Burgess, 2000). It was hypothesized that insofar as group and system justification motives are consistent and complementary for members of high status groups, but they are in conflict and contradiction for members of low status groups, there should be greater attitudinal ambivalence associated with ingroup ratings on the part of low status group members compared to members of high status groups. Furthermore, we hypothesized that for members of psychologically meaningful groups (for whom at least moderate levels of group justification motives would be present), ambivalence toward the ingroup would be (a) increased for members of low status groups as system justification motives are increased and (b) decreased for members of high status groups as system justification motives are increased. Empirical support for these hypotheses is provided by two studies described here (see also Jost & Burgess, 2003).

In the experimental study conducted with University of Maryland students (mentioned above), people who believed that their group occupied either a position of high socioeconomic status or low socioeconomic success relative to the outgroup (University of Virginia students) rated their own group on a series of unipolar scales that contained both positively worded and negatively worded judgments (e.g., intelligent vs. unintelligent, lazy vs. hard-working, friendly vs. unfriendly, and so on). This procedure allows for several different ways of measuring attitudinal ambivalence: unidimensionally, by performing different calculations on "dominant" and "confl icting" attitudinal statements (see Priester & Petty, 1996). Conceptually, a maximally ambivalent person is one who reports on one item that the group is extremely intelligent and, on another item, that the group is extremely unintelligent. As hypothesized, ambivalence toward the ingroup was found to be higher for people who were assigned to the low status condition than for people who were assigned to the high status condition, especially on status relevant dimensions (see Jost & Burgess, 2003).

In addition, we found that perceptions of the legitimacy of the socioeconomic success differences (as measured by three items tapping perceived fairness, legitimacy, and justifiability) were associated with in-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Low Status</th>
<th>High Status</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence toward ingroup (SIM)</td>
<td>-0.49**</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence toward ingroup (CRIM)</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence toward ingroup (GTIM)</td>
<td>-0.32**</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
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**p < .05; ***p < .001. Z-score difference tests were one-tailed.

Source: Adapted from Jost and Burgess, 2003. Study 1.

increased ambivalence on the part of low status groups and with decreased ambivalence on the part of high status groups. As can be seen in Table 15.1, for three different measures of attitudinal ambivalence (see Priester & Petty, 1996), there were positive correlations between perceived legitimacy and ingroup ambivalence for members of low status groups, and there were negative correlations between these variables for members of high status groups. Once again, this pattern of results was stronger for status relevant (achievement-related) than status irrelevant (socioemotional) attributes.

In a second study, men and women read about a female plaintiff who was suing her university for gender discrimination and therefore posing a challenge to the overarching social system. In this study, social status was operationalized in terms of gender, with the assumption that women would be lower in status than men (e.g., Ellermers, this volume; Ridgeway, this volume), and system justification was operationalized not in terms of perceptions of legitimacy but in terms of more general ideological differences such as the "belief in a just world" (see Olson & Hafer, this volume) and "social dominance orientation" (Sidanius et al., this volume). Items on Rubin and Pfeuffer's (1993) "just world scale" tap the conviction that social

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Table 15.1. Correlations Between Perceived Legitimacy and Ambivalence toward the Ingroup among Low and High Status Groups
outcomes are just and deserved (e.g., "in almost any business or profession, people who do their job well rise to the top"); "People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves"). Items on Pratt et al.'s (1994) "social dominance orientation" scale measure a desire to maintain group-based social hierarchies (e.g., "Some groups of people are just more worthy than others"); "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups"). Both of these instruments measure individual differences that should be associated with tendencies to engage in system justification.

In this study, we measured ambivalence by asking for independent ratings of positive ("pride," "respect") and negative ("angry," "ashamed") feelings directed at the female plaintiff, and we calculated ambivalence according to the same three formulae. Results were that all three measures of ambivalence were correlated positively with just world beliefs and social dominance orientation among women respondents, but they were negatively correlated with social dominance orientation among men and uncorrelated with just world beliefs (see Table 13.4). These results suggest the when faced with an ingroup member who threatens the legitimacy of the larger system, members of low status groups may experience a significant degree of conflict or ambivalence, which might be directed both at the ingroup member who challenges (in)equality and at the system itself (Just & Burgess, 2000).

Thus far, we have focused on primary research conducted by system

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Justification researchers. Our view, however, is that the theoretical language of system justification theory, especially the conceptual partitioning of legitimization motives into categories of ego justification, group justification, and system justification (Just & Postmes, 1994), helps to understand and integrate the complementary insights offered by other theorists and researchers of intergroup relations. In particular, the system justification framework is compatible with much of the work that has been done by social identity theorists and social dominance theorists, although there may be important divergences among these three theories as well (see also Jost, 2001; Sidanius et al., this volume; Spears et al., this volume). Because these three theoretical perspectives (social identification, social dominance, and system justification) address many of the same core issues having to do with the ideological legitimation of status differences between groups, it is worth discussing how their distinctive insights might be integrated to provide a more complete picture of the social and psychological challenges and alternatives facing members of disadvantaged groups.

Potential for the Integration of Social Identification and System Justification Theories

By incorporating the concepts of perceived legitimacy and status differences between groups into the social psychological study of intergroup relations, social identity theorists took the lead in identifying ideological and system-level variables that affect intergroup judgments and behaviors (e.g., Spears et al., this volume; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Brown, 1978). For instance, Tajfel and Turner (1986) wrote that:

Where social-structural differences in the distribution of resources have been institutionalized, legitimized, and justified through a conscious acceptance of status system (or at least a status system that is sufficiently firm and pervasive to prevent the creation of cognitive alternatives to it), the result has been less and not more ethnocentrism in the different status groups. (p. 12; emphasis added)

An influential study conducted by Turner and Brown (1978) found that members of low status groups displayed outgroup favoritism except under conditions of perceived illegitimacy and perceived instability. In a further elaboration of social identity theory, Wright, Taylor, and Moghadam (1990) demonstrated that members of disadvantaged groups failed to engage in collective action aimed at social change as long as there was any chance of upward mobility, presumably because the possibility of upward mobility granted legitimacy to the social system (see also Wright, this volume).
Potential for the Integration of Social Domination and System Justification Theories

An ever-increasing number of findings compiled by social dominance theorists (e.g., Sidanius et al., this volume) are also consistent with the integrative framework proposed here, which suggests, among other things, that group and system justification motives are more interrelated for members of high status groups than for members of low status groups. For instance, the "ideological asymmetry effect" (Levin et al., 1998; Sidanius et al., this volume), which refers to the fact that "social dominance orientation" scores (Pratto et al., 1994) tend to be more internally consistent and more strongly related to ingroup favoritism among members of high status groups than low status groups, is explicable in terms of the conflict between group and system justification motives for the latter groups but not the former (see also Jost & Thompson, 2000).

The most fundamental difference between social dominance theory and system justification theory concerns the evolutionary origins of social attitudes and intergroup behavior. Whereas social dominance theory is a sociobiological theory that holds ethnocentrism and tendencies to preserve the status quo to be "adaptive," "inevitable," and part of "human nature" (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993), system justification theory stresses processes of social learning and ideological persuasion as determinants of stereotypes and other intergroup attitudes (Jost, 1992; Jost & Banaji, 1994). From a system justification framework, in fact, sociobiological accounts are themselves in danger of becoming "legitimizing myths" in that they provide essentialistic justification for status differences between groups (e.g., Eberhardt & Raadell, 1997; Estebey & Rogger, this volume). We are not suggesting that social dominance theorists have themselves sought to justify existing status and power differences between groups, only that the history of using evolutionary meta-theory to understand human social behavior is a troubled one, ideologically speaking, and as it has been closely allied with social Darwinism and other political attempts to justify the dominance of some groups over others.

In recent years, social dominance theorists have focused on the measurement of individual differences (e.g., Pratto et al., 1994). Completely consistent with a system justification framework, this research demonstrates that people who possess high levels of "social dominance orientation" will be more likely to subscribe to "hierarchy-enhancing legitimating myths" that provide "moral and intellectual justification for continued and increased levels of hierarchy and inequality among socially constructed groups" (Levin et al., 1994, p. 370). Although it is sometimes unclear about whether social dominance orientation should be regarded as more of a group justification variable or a system justification variable (e.g., Jost & Thompson, 2000; Robinowitz, 1999), in general researchers seem to be moving more toward the latter conception (e.g., Jost & Burgess, 2000; Sidanius et al., this volume).

On the specific point that group and system justification are compatible for high status groups but incompatible for low status groups, Levin et al. (1996) demonstrated that endorsement of system justifying beliefs (such as political conservatism and perceived system legitimacy) were positively

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On the specific point that group and system justification are compatible for high status groups but incompatible for low status groups, Levin et al. (1996) demonstrated that endorsement of system justifying beliefs (such as political conservatism and perceived system legitimacy) were positively
related to ethnic ingroup identification among European-Americans, but they were negatively related to ingroup identification among Hispanic-Americans and African-Americans. These effects were replicated in a follow-up study involving the high-status group of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel relative to the low-status group of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel (see Sidanius et al., this volume). Similarly, Sinclair, Sidanius, and Levin (1998) found that attachment to American society was positively related to ethnic identification and attachment for European-Americans, but it was negatively related to these variables for Hispanic-Americans and African-Americans. All of this evidence provides further and independent corroboration of the hypothesis that group and system justification tendencies are complementary for high status groups, but they are contradictory for members of low status groups.

The Integrative Potential of a System Justification Framework

In the remainder of this chapter, we expand on the theme that members of low status groups are faced with conflicts or crises of legitimation among self, group, and system. Thus far, we have focused primarily on conflicts between group justification and system justification. The theoretical perspective also implies that, at least some of the time, there will be psychological conflicts between ego justification and system justification and between ego justification and group justification. Thus, we propose that the conceptual framework offered by system justification theory helps to understand and integrate other lines of research involving self-esteem, personal sense of entitlement, group exit, and perceived discrimination.

Conflicts between Ego Justification and System Justification

Just as members of low status groups must choose between supporting the legitimacy of their own group interests and the legitimacy of the social system, they must also at times choose between the legitimacy of the self and that of the system (see also Major & Schmader, this volume). The "depressed entitlement effect" among women, whereby women pay themselves less than men pay themselves for equivalent amounts and quality of work (e.g., Jost, 1997; Major, 1994; Major, McPartlin, & Gagnon, 1984), seems to be one example in which adapting (consciously or unconsciously) to the status quo has negative consequences for self-evaluation and self-worth. Thus, for members of low status groups, there is a negative relation between self-esteem and other ego justifying variables and denial of discrimination and other system justifying variables.

In an extremely influential article, Crocker and Major (1989) argued that...
language of Tajfel and Turner does capture extremely well the conflict faced by members of low status groups between ego and group justification motives. Research has demonstrated that upward mobility strategies are inversely related to levels of group identification. When group identity is low, people are more likely to view themselves as individuals rather than ingroup members and to opt for group-nurturing and individual mobility, particularly when the group is diverse, e.g., Ellermers & van Knippenberg, 1977; Wright et al., 1990). This suggests that there is some degree of incompatibility between defending and justifying the interests of the self and the ingroup. Thus, for members of low status groups, low levels of group justification may allow for an increase in ego justifying attitudes and behaviors and, conversely, high levels of ego justification may lead to decreased levels of group justification. This formulation, which is derived from a kind of hydraulic model (concerning hypothesized relations among self, group, and system needs for legitimacy, appears to be consistent with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) continuum model of individual behavior versus group behavior as well as models in cultural psychology which pit individualistic or independent orientations against collectivistic or interdependent orientations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1980). The major difference is that system justification theory regards these antinomies as arising from the predilection of members of disadvantaged groups, who sometimes must make a trade-off between serving and legitimating their own personal interests and the interests of their group. It follows that members of advantaged groups need not oscillate so dramatically between behaving as an independent individual and an interdependent group member; as the sociologists would say, members of high status groups face less "role conflict" between individual and group roles.

In addition to exiting the group (e.g., Ellermers, this volume; Wright, this volume) members of low status groups may also distance themselves from their group by (a) classifying themselves as unique individuals rather than prototypic group members and (b) enhancing the heterogeneity or variability of the group, thereby acknowledging the group's inferiority at some level, while simultaneously stressing that exceptions exist and that one is such an exception himself or herself. In support of the first point, people who are initially low in ingroup identification respond to negative feedback about the status of their group by describing themselves less as prototypic group members, whereas people who are initially high in ingroup identification exhibit no such response following the status threat (Spears, Doosje, & Ellermers, 1997). In support of the second point, the tendency to perceive one's low status group as highly variable (and therefore less of individual exceptions) is more prevalent in people who identify weakly rather than strongly with their own group (Ellermers & Van Rijswijk, 1997). Putting both of these points together, people who are made to identify only weakly with a low status ingroup are more likely to perceive their group as heterogeneous, are less committed to the group, and express stronger desires to enter a higher status outgroup, as compared with people who are made to identify strongly with the ingroup (Ellermers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). These important studies provide further evidence that ego justification and group justification are negatively related for members of low status groups and that the strategic accentuation of ingroup variability serves an ego justification function at the expense of ingroup solidarity.

Returning to the context of Southern Italy, work by Serino (1999) also demonstrates that low status group members may opt to dis-identify with at least certain attitudes that they agree are characteristic of their own group and to perceive themselves as more similar to the outgroup. According to this research, Southern Italians see themselves as having the positive but not the negative characteristics of Southerners. For example, they believe that in general Southerners are less serious, modern, and open-minded than Northerners, but they rate themselves as more similar to Northerners on all of these dimensions.

Work by Steele (1997) similarly suggests that African-Americans who aspire to academic success are forced to dis-identify, to some degree at least, with members of their own group and to identify with members of a more successful outgroup; thus, the biggest predictors of success in college for African-Americans is the number of white friends in their social network. As if things we're not bad enough already for members of disadvantaged groups, it appears that, under some circumstances at least, they must choose between achieving legitimacy for themselves as individuals on the one hand or legitimating the status and characteristics of their own group on the other. This is a conflict that has been well-recognized by social identity theorists (e.g., Ellermers, this volume), and it is also highly consistent with the integrative framework proposed by system justification theorists.

Conclusion
Under a theoretical umbrella that seeks to integrate theories of social identity, social dominance, and system justification, we have argued that people have strong motives to (a) legitimize the self, (b) legitimize the group, and (c) legitimize the social system. For members of low status groups,
these motives are often in conflict or contradiction, resulting in ambiva-
ence (Glick & Fiske, this volume; Jost & Burgess, 2000), decreased ideological
coherence (Sidanius et al., this volume), disengagement from the sys-
tem (Major & Schmader, this volume; Steele, 1997), partial or total dis-
identification with the ingroup (Sciano, 1996; Steele, 1996), and individ-
ual mobility and group exit (Ellemers, this volume; Wright et al., 1990). By
analyzing the set of “legitimation cases” afflicting members of low status
groups, it is possible to integrate a wide variety of empirical findings in a
common theoretical language. One of the kinds of theoretical and
empirical convergences outlined in this chapter testifies to the fact that a
common perspective that amelits the study of ideology, justice, and
Intergroup relations is indeed emerging.

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