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Antecedents and consequences of system justification among the disadvantaged

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of

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Abstract

System Justification Theory proposes that unequal systems persist over time because even the people who are *most disadvantaged* by those systems are motivated to support them (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). However, large-scale analyses of system justification processes operating among members of low-status groups are extremely rare. Therefore, in the current thesis, I used data from a large, nationally representative survey in New Zealand to conduct five studies investigating the antecedents and consequences of system justification among members of ethnic minority groups. In Study 1, I helped clarify the conditions under which the disadvantaged express at least as much, if not *more*, support for unequal systems relative to members of the dominant group. Study 2 investigated the interpersonal antecedents of system justification, showing that friendships with members of the dominant group foster system-justifying responses among disadvantaged individuals, whereas friendships with fellow ingroup members foster system-challenging responses. Study 3 examined the psychological consequences of system justification, testing the conditions under which system-justifying beliefs would be palliative for members of low-status groups. This study showed that system-justifying beliefs are palliative specifically for those who are most disadvantaged by the system (i.e., members of low-status groups living in highly unequal conditions). Finally, Study 4 examined the political consequences of system justification, showing that system justification reduces political mobilization among the disadvantaged, but only up to a point – at high levels of system justification, political mobilization either levels off, or increases. Together these findings advance our understanding of why members of disadvantaged groups support the unequal systems under which they live, and how they come to resist those systems. Thus, they shed light on how democratic societies might become more equal over time—or why, indeed—they might not.

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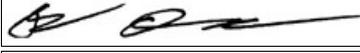
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I. INTRODUCTION

“... [A]ll experience hath shewn that [hu]mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”

— *United States Declaration of Independence*.

“Society’s tendency is to maintain what has been. Rebellion is only an occasional reaction to suffering in human history; we have infinitely more instances of forbearance to exploitation, and submission to authority, than we have examples of revolt.”
(Zinn 1968, p. 16-17)

Some of the greatest advances towards social equality in the 20th Century resulted from the political struggles of disadvantaged groups (e.g. Women’s Suffrage, the American Civil Rights Movement, the dismantling of Apartheid, and the LGBT Rights Movements). However, as expressed in the two epigraphs above, these struggles highlight a paradox of human history: the vast majority of injustices have gone unchallenged for long periods of time. This paradox is especially acute in modern democracies, where social norms and legal frameworks afford people opportunities to press for greater equality in relatively safe and non-violent ways. Whether members of disadvantaged groups make use of these opportunities, or continue to suffer under unequal systems, is the primary question that motivates this thesis. Answering this question will help shed light on how democratic societies might become more equal over time – or why, indeed, they might not.

A vast literature on political mobilization has shown that people will be motivated to challenge the systems under which they live when they perceive those systems to be illegitimate (see van Zomeren, Spears & Leach, 2008 for a review). On the other hand, an equally vast literature has shown that people have a tendency to view existing social systems as legitimate, even when they are unfair (a tendency called *system justification*; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). Taken together, these insights suggest a psychological explanation for why

inequality often goes unchallenged – even those who are most affected by unequal systems might sometimes have a tendency to legitimise them. The present thesis aims to examine this process of system justification operating among members of disadvantaged groups, to explain when they will, and will not, oppose the inequality under which they suffer.

In this chapter, I will (a) describe the existing literature on System Justification Theory, (b) highlight the theoretical and empirical gaps in this literature that my thesis aims to fill, and (c) outline four new studies that investigate the antecedents and consequences of system justification among members of disadvantaged ethnic groups in New Zealand.

System Justification Theory

System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) arose as a critique of one pervasive assumption underlying many theories of intergroup relations – that socio-political attitudes reflect people's pursuit of their own interests (both as individuals and members of social groups). Proponents of SJT claimed that this assumption ran contrary to observed phenomena wherein people displayed attitudes that seemed to conflict with their self- and group-interest (e.g. internalised inequality and ideological dissonance; described in more detail below; Jost et al., 2004). Drawing on Marxist notions of *false consciousness*, early versions of SJT explained these phenomena in terms of social learning – dominant ideologies are transmitted across group lines, such that even members of subordinate groups would eventually subscribe to them. However, later versions of the theory went further, proposing that the disadvantaged do not merely take on the ideologies of dominant groups, but are also *motivated* to provide ideological support to the status quo (see Jost & van der Toorn, 2012 for an outline of the historical development of SJT). This idea became the defining proposition of the theory: People have a general motivation to perceive existing social arrangements as fair and just, whether they benefit from those arrangements, or are disadvantaged by them.

While this proposition has generated much controversy (e.g. Rubin & Hewstone, 2004), it has also spawned a rich empirical literature. One area of research has focussed on showing that system-justifying phenomena do indeed occur, and more recently, that they reflect a *motivated* process. A second stream of research has treated system justification as a higher-order motive and has explored its more proximal motivational antecedents, as well as its ideological and contextual antecedents. A third theme has involved investigating the consequences of system justification for individuals and societies. Below, I review each of these themes in turn, thereby laying out the current state of knowledge on SJT.

Manifestations of System Justification

Early evidence for the existence of a system justification motive was drawn from studies showing that people use stereotypes to rationalise status differences between groups (Jost & Burgess, 2000), accept weak explanations for prevailing inequality (Haines & Jost, 2000), and judge future societal outcomes to be more favourable, if they are seen as being more likely to occur (Kay, Jimenez & Jost, 2002; see Jost & Hunyady, 2002 for a review of this early work). However, two phenomena distinguished SJT most sharply from other theories of intergroup relations (e.g. Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and were therefore studied most extensively as manifestations of the system-justification motive – *internalised inequality* and *ideological dissonance* among members of disadvantaged groups.

Internalised inequality. SJT's critique of other theories in intergroup relations centred around the inability of these theories to account for attitudes among disadvantaged groups that seemed to run counter to their group's interests. For example, research on Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) had emphasised the ubiquity of ingroup favouritism (i.e., a preference for one's own group). However, system justification theorists argued that *outgroup favouritism* among low-status groups was common, and that this phenomenon could not be readily explained by SIT (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Outgroup

favouritism is defined as “the expression of an evaluative preference for members of a group to which one does not belong” (Jost et al., 2004, p. 891). To the extent that the disadvantaged show a greater preference for advantaged groups than their own group, they can be considered to have internalised the status hierarchy that exists in their society (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

Whether people display such a preference on explicit measures of group preference is uncertain and controversial (see Mullen et al., 1992; cf. Jost, 2001). However, the evidence for *implicit* outgroup favouritism among the disadvantaged is much stronger (Jost et al., 2004). Implicit outgroup favouritism can be assessed with the Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT, Greenwald & Banaji, 1998), which uses reaction time as a measure of the ease with which people associate their own group (versus an outgroup) with positive (versus negative) stimuli. Numerous studies using the IAT, involving a wide range of low-status groups, have shown that implicit outgroup favouritism is pervasive.

For example, Blacks and Latinos show implicit favouritism towards Whites (Jost, Pelham & Carvallo, 2002; Ashburn-Nardo, Knowles & Monteith, 2003), dark-skinned Chileans (*morenos*) towards light-skinned Chileans (*blancos*; Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, & Swanson, 2002), gay people towards straight people, older people towards younger people (Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald 2002), and the poor towards the rich (Rudman, Feinberg, & Fairchild, 2002). Outgroup favouritism also manifests behaviourally. Jost et al. (2002) found that, when given the choice to participate in a study that involved interacting with a fellow student, Black and Latino students showed a preference for a White interaction partner over a Black or Latino one.

Recent findings indicate that this implicit preference for high-status groups is found even among children. For example, in several studies, Black and Coloured children in South Africa, aged between 6 and 11 years, have been found to display implicit pro-White bias

(Newheiser, Dunham, Merrill and Hoosain, 2014; Dunham, Newheiser, Hoosain, Merrill & Olson, 2014). Interestingly, these studies indicate that explicit ingroup favouritism is positively associated with the children's age, but that implicit outgroup favouritism seems to be unaffected by age (see also, Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). This suggests that while ingroup favouritism among members of low status groups might reflect a developmental process, outgroup favouritism might reflect a more fundamental psychological tendency. Children seem to learn, over time, to explicitly prefer their own group, but their implicit preference for high-status groups does not appear to diminish as they grow older.

These findings align with research showing that low-status adults display explicit ingroup favouritism, but *implicit* outgroup favouritism (e.g. Banaji, Greenwald & Rosier, 1997). Whereas people might deliberately respond in a manner consistent with their own interests on explicit measures, they are unable to engage in the conscious process of maintaining their self-consistency *on implicit measures*. Therefore, the pervasiveness of implicit outgroup favouritism has been interpreted as evidence that people non-consciously internalise the inequality in the status quo, in a manner that goes against their self- and group-interests (but see Olson, Crawford & Devlin, 2009 for a critique of this interpretation).

Another phenomenon that has been taken as evidence of internalised inequality is *depressed entitlement* among the disadvantaged. Depressed entitlement refers to the finding that people from low-status groups believe their work is worth less than people from high-status groups do. For example, several early studies showed that, relative to men, women have a tendency to report that they deserve less pay for the same work (Callahan-Levy & Messé, 1979; Major, 1994; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984; Jost, 1997). More recently, Pelham and Hetts (2001) found that, regardless of gender, people employed in low-paying jobs reported their work on difficult (but not easy) tasks to be worth less than people in high-

paying jobs. These findings provide additional evidence that the disadvantaged internalise the inequality from which they suffer (see also, Blanton, George & Crocker, 2001).

Ideological dissonance. A corollary of SJT's proposition that system justification is a general human motivation is that both the advantaged and the disadvantaged should display this motivation. For those who benefit from the system, fulfilling this motive simultaneously enables them to enhance their own interests and the interests of their ingroup. However, people who are disadvantaged by the system should experience a conflict between self- and group-interests on the one hand, and the system justification motive on the other. This conflict is termed *ideological dissonance*¹ (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Carvallo, 2003).

The potential for system justification to arouse ideological dissonance means that it should have different psychological consequences for members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups – producing various intrapsychic conflicts for the latter, but not for the former (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). In support of this idea, Jost and Thompson (2000) found that system-justifying beliefs were positively associated with depression and neuroticism among members of disadvantaged groups, but negatively associated with these same outcomes for advantaged groups. Similarly, Jost and Burgess (2000) found that members of low-status groups held more ambivalent attitudes towards their own group, and that this ambivalence increased as a function of system justification (whereas ingroup ambivalence decreased with system justification among advantaged groups).

Perhaps the most controversial prediction drawn from the ideological-dissonance perspective is that low-status groups sometimes justify the system *even more strongly* than

¹ Jost and colleagues have used the term ideological dissonance primarily when discussing why low-status groups might show higher system justification than high-status groups (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Carvallo 2003). However, the dissonance described in the original formulation of SJT is between self/group-interest and the system justification motive. Therefore, I have discussed other findings relevant to this kind of motivational conflict under the same rubric for simplicity.

high-status groups (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003). The reason for this is that instead of confronting the uncomfortable reality that one is justifying the very system which disadvantages one's group, people might find it psychologically easier to cling to the belief that the system is indeed fair, and thus worthy of their support. This prediction was inspired by early cognitive dissonance research, which showed that people who suffer the most have the strongest need to rationalise their own suffering (e.g. Wicklund & Brehm, 1979).

In five studies using large-scale survey data in the United States, Jost, Pelham et al. (2003) found support for this idea by showing that members of various low-status groups (e.g. people on low incomes and African Americans) displayed higher levels of system-justifying beliefs than members of high-status groups. Henry and Saul (2006) also found that low-status school children in Bolivia showed higher levels of system-justifying beliefs than high-status children. In a similar vein, analyses in large samples across 19 different countries have shown that people from low-status groups (e.g. people of low socioeconomic status, Napier & Jost, 2008; ethnic minorities, Henry, 2011) report higher levels of authoritarian beliefs (which are strongly linked to system justification; see Jost Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway, 2003; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009). Finally, van der Toorn, Feinberg, Jost, et al. (2015) found that people who felt more powerless within a given system showed stronger beliefs about the legitimacy of that system.

However, other large-scale analyses have failed to replicate these findings. In a meta-analysis of 206 samples, Lee, Pratto and Johnson (2011) found that, compared to high-status groups, low-status groups showed lower levels of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) – which is generally considered to be a system-justifying ideology (see Jost & Thompson, 2000; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). In one of the most comprehensive analyses to date, Brandt (2013) used data from 31 years-worth of surveys in the United States (i.e., the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies), and from 65

countries worldwide countries (i.e., the World Values Survey), which included many different measures of status (e.g., income, education, gender, race, social class) and system justification (e.g., trust in government, confidence in social institutions). He found no consistent evidence that low-status groups justified the system more than high-status groups. Therefore, the question of whether ideological dissonance will result in enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged, and under what conditions this will occur, is still a controversial and unresolved issue in the system justification literature.

Evidence for the system justification motive. The explanation provided by SJT for phenomena such as internalised inequality and ideological dissonance is that people are *motivated* to justify the system, rather than just passively resigning themselves to it (cf. Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Huddy, 2004). Despite being the defining postulate of the theory, the motivational hypothesis of SJT had not been tested directly, until recently. Kay, Gaucher, Peach, et al. (2009) conducted four studies designed to explicitly test the question of whether system justification reflects a motivated process. They found that priming people to feel more dependent on a given system (which they assumed would heighten the motivation to justify that system) increased the degree to which people viewed systemic inequalities as legitimate and desirable. For example, when the system-justification motive was heightened, university students were more supportive of a system in which political power was concentrated in the hands of the wealthy. They were also more supportive of policies proposed by either governmental or university authorities, depending on whether they were made to feel dependent on the government, or the university. Finally, when their system-justification motive was activated, women found a system in which men had more political and economic power to be more desirable than a system with greater gender equality.

A further three studies by Liviatan & Jost (2014) attempted to provide more rigorous evidence for the motivational nature of system justification. In one study, they showed that

words relevant to satisfying the system-justification goal (i.e., legitimacy-related words such as *fair, just, moral*) became more cognitively accessible when the American socio-political system was criticised. This was not the case when Americans, as a group, were criticised on a system-irrelevant trait (i.e., creativity), suggesting that the system-justification motive was not just another manifestation of the need to protect one's group identity. In a second study, Liviatan and Jost (2014) found that the difference in accessibility between legitimacy-related words and control words disappeared when people were primed to affirm the system, but not when they were primed to affirm their self-concept. This suggested that criticising the system activates a goal that is specific to protecting the system, and does not reflect the need to protect one's *personal identity*. In their third study Liviatan and Jost (2014) showed that system criticism increased the cognitive accessibility of positive adjectives and decreased the accessibility of negative adjectives. These studies indicate that imbuing the system with legitimacy bears the hallmarks of goal-directed (i.e., *motivated*) cognition, and that this motive is independent of ego- and group-justification motives.

Antecedents of System Justification

Ideological antecedents. Early versions of SJT emphasised the ideological transmission of system-justifying beliefs from dominant to subordinate groups (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012). Consequently, the first set of antecedents of system justification explored in the literature included various ideologies considered to be pervasive in society (see Jost & Hunyady, 2005). One of the most widely studied of these ideologies is *political conservatism*. From an SJT perspective, this ideology is, by definition, system-justifying because it indexes a general resistance to socio-political change (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003).

Although conservatism has often been studied as a unidimensional construct, Duckitt (2001) argued that it comprised two distinct elements – an ideological preference for social stability/conformity (indexed by Right Wing Authoritarianism, RWA; Altemeyer, 1998), and

an ideological preference for hierarchy/inequality (indexed by Social Dominance Orientation, SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In line with this perspective, RWA is generally associated with attitudes related to preserving the status quo, and SDO is associated with attitudes related to maintaining inequality (Brandt & Reyna, 2013; Crawford, Jussim & Cohen, 2013; Federico, Ergun & Hunt, 2014; Kugler, Cooper & Nosek, 2010; Sibley & Duckitt, 2010). Thus, the two facets of generalised conservatism are considered system justifying in that they lead people to resist change (driven by RWA), and maintain existing hierarchical arrangements (driven by SDO; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009).

Other ideologies legitimise the status quo by framing existing status differences as the result of fair and just processes (see Ledgerwood, Mandisodza, Jost & Pohl, 2011). These include *Just World Beliefs* (JWBs; i.e., people get what they deserve and deserve what they get; Lerner, 1980), *Protestant Work Ethic* (PWE; i.e., hard work leads to success; Furnham, 1982), and *Meritocracy* (i.e., status differences in society reflect true differences in merit; McCoy & Major, 2007). While these ideologies differ somewhat in content, they all start from the premise that society is organised in a fair way, and therefore imply that victims of systemic inequality must be *deserving* of their disadvantage (see Major, 1994). Accordingly, a vast literature has shown that Just World Beliefs lead people to blame the victims of misfortune for their own plight (Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Olson & Hafer, 2001; see Hafer & Choma, 2009 for a review). Similarly, the Protestant Work Ethic and belief in Meritocracy lead people to attribute the disadvantage faced by particular groups (especially women and ethnic minorities) to negative characteristics possessed by those groups (e.g. incompetence, laziness; see Fraser & Kick, 2000; Furnham, 1982; Haney & Hurtado, 1994; Henry & Sears, 2002; McCoy & Major, 2007; Quinn & Crocker, 1999).

Derogating the victims of systemic disadvantage is not the only way to make society seem fair. Ideologies that ascribe positive traits to low-status groups can make it seem like

there is balance in society – i.e., that people might be disadvantaged, but it is not “all bad” (Jost, Kay & Young, 2005). Similarly, ascribing negative characteristics to high-status groups can also create this same sense of balance – people might be well off, but they still incur certain costs. Thus, society can be perceived as a place in which no one group has all of the advantages, nor bears all of the burdens. For instance, priming people with an example of someone who is “poor, but happy” or “rich, but unhappy” increases their levels of system justification relative to when they are primed with an example of someone who is “poor *and* unhappy”, or “rich *and* happy” (Kay & Jost, 2003).

This type of belief system, which complements negative stereotypes of the disadvantaged with positive ones and positive stereotypes of the advantaged with negative ones, has been termed *Panglossian Ideology* (Kay, Jost, Mandisodza, Sherman, Petrocelli & Johnson, 2007). Studies of complementary stereotypes applied to a wide range of groups (e.g. the poor and the rich, Northern and Southern Italians, Northern and Southern English, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, overweight and non-overweight people) have shown that subscription to the Panglossian Ideology is associated with higher system justification (Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermendi and Mosso, 2005; Kay et al., 2005; cf. DeOliveira & Dambrun, 2007; see also Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Among the most pervasive of these complementary stereotypes are those applied to men and women. Specifically, men are stereotyped as being agentic (i.e. focussed on achievement), but not communal (i.e. focussed on maintaining interpersonal relationships) whereas women are stereotyped as being communal, but not agentic (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Jost and Kay (2005) showed that exposure to complementary agentic and communal stereotypes increased the degree to which women regarded gender relations in society to be fair and just. This dovetails with research on Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), showing that the ideology of Benevolent Sexism, which portrays women as

“weak but wonderful”, increases the degree to which both men and women legitimise gender inequality (e.g. Becker & Wright, 2011; Connelly & Heesacker, 2012; Glick & Whitehead, 2010; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005, Study 2; Mosso, Briante, Aiello & Russo, 2013).

In sum, ideologies that (a) promote social stability/conformity and intergroup hierarchy/inequality as normative goals (e.g., Conservatism, RWA and SDO), (b) derogate the victims of inequality by blaming them for their plight (e.g., JWB, PWE, Meritocracy), or (c) subjectively compensate the victims of inequality by ascribing positive traits to them (e.g., Panglossian Ideology, Benevolent Sexism), can all be used to justify the system.

Motivational antecedents. As evident from the above discussion, early research on SJT proposed that people subscribe to various ideologies to fulfil their system justification motive (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). However, more recently, system justification has been treated as a *higher-order* motive that arises from a set of even more basic human needs – the epistemic need for certainty, the relational need for belongingness, and the existential need for security (see Jost, Federico & Napier, 2009). From this perspective, system-justifying ideologies are considered to be more appealing to people than other types of ideologies because of their particular effectiveness at meeting these three basic needs (Hennes, Nam, Stern & Jost, 2012).

The epistemic need for certainty has been extensively studied in the burgeoning literature on *compensatory control* (Callan, Kay & Dawtry, 2014; Kay, Whitson, Gaucher & Galinsky, 2008; Laurin, Fitzsimmons & Kay, 2011; Shepherd, Kay, Landau & Keefer, 2011; Williams & Chen, 2014). The general premise of this literature is that people seek a sense of control to guard against the uncertainty of living in an unpredictable world. When they feel a loss of personal control over their outcomes, they cling to *external* sources of control to ease their epistemic uncertainty. Much of the research on compensatory control has focussed on

how the belief in a benevolent God functions as an external source of control (e.g. Laurin, Kay & Moscovich, 2008; Kay, Gaucher, McGregor & Nash, 2010). However, several studies also show that the belief in a benevolent *socio-political system* can serve the same function.

For example, Kay Gaucher, Napier, Callan, & Laurin (2008) found that people whose personal control was threatened (i.e., by being reminded of an event over which they did not have control) defended the political system more, if they believed that system to be benevolent. These findings were further corroborated using large-scale survey data comprising 93,122 people from 67 countries (Kay et al., 2008; Study 3). Perceptions of personal control were negatively related to beliefs that the government should be responsible for providing social services, especially in countries with benevolent systems (i.e., with low levels of corruption). In other words, the less personal control people felt, the more they relied on the system as a source of control. Notably, this was the case even in more corrupt countries, although the effect was weaker.

Kay, Shepherd, Blatz, Chua, & Galinsky (2010) integrated the findings on the belief in the socio-political system with the belief in God by showing that these two external sources of compensatory control are substitutable. When the socio-political system was not an effective source of external control (e.g. due to political instability), people believed more strongly in a God who controls human affairs. Conversely, when confronted with evidence against the existence of an intervening deity, people showed higher support for the political system. Moreover, Friesen, Kay, Eibach and Galinsky (2014) found that *hierarchical* systems are more effective sources of external control than egalitarian ones, because they are perceived as being more structured and predictable. Taken together, these findings suggest that people justify and defend unequal systems, in part, because these systems help fulfil their need for epistemic certainty.

Jost, Ledgerwood and Hardin (2008) hypothesized that supporting the system under which one lives can also help fulfil the need for *belongingness*. This hypothesis was derived by applying the insights of Shared Reality Theory (Hardin & Higgins, 1996) to the political domain. Shared Reality Theory proposes that people automatically tune their attitudes to bring them into alignment with the attitudes held by positively evaluated people and groups, for the purpose of maintaining the shared understandings on which valued social relationships depend. Based on this idea, Jost, Ledgerwood and Hardin (2008) proposed that holding system-justifying attitudes would help people maintain a sense of shared reality with significant others, to the extent that others are seen as holding similar attitudes. Accordingly, they found that people who had one conservative and one liberal parent reported higher levels of system justification when their relationship with their conservative parent was made salient, relative to when their relationship with their liberal parent was made salient².

Cheung, Noel & Hardin (2011) hypothesised that members of low-status groups would attempt to tune their attitudes in system-justifying ways to the extent that they perceived some (even trivial) social connection with a high-status person. This is because high-status people represent socially valued individuals, and because system-justifying attitudes are more consistent with the interests of these individuals. In line with this prediction, they found that people showed higher levels of system justification following a computer-mediated ball-toss game with someone described as being of a higher status than themselves. In a similar vein, Hess and Ledgerwood (2014) found that people held stronger system-justifying attitudes in response to unexpected social exclusion. These findings indicate that when the need for social inclusion is threatened, people justify the system as a means of re-establishing a sense of belongingness.

² Pilot testing by Jost, Ledgerwood and Hardin (2008) had confirmed that people accurately judge system-justifying attitudes to be more prevalent among conservatives than liberals.

The existential need for security is the least studied of the three hypothesised motivational antecedents of system justification. However, there is considerable indirect evidence that people respond to existential threats in system-justifying ways. For example, research on Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986) has shown that people subscribe more strongly to a range of conservative (hence, system-justifying³) beliefs when reminded on their own mortality (see Pyszczynski, Greenberg & Solomon, 1999; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003 for reviews). More directly, Ulrich and Cohrs (2007) showed that the existential threat of a possible terror attack increased levels of system justification. In a large sample of low-income Americans, Rankin, Jost and Wakslak (2009) found a positive association between system justification and several existential variables, including feelings of security, mastery and meaning. Finally, Hennes et al. (2012) showed that individual differences in death anxiety were positively correlated with levels of system justification. They also found that individual differences in the *need for shared reality* (e.g. “I don’t like viewing the world the same way everyone around me does”) and the *need for cognition* (e.g. “I only think as hard as I need to”) were correlated with system justification. Thus, Hennes et al.’s (2012) study represents the only comprehensive test of the hypothesis that these three basic human needs – epistemic, relational, and existential – underlie the broader motive to justify the system.

Contextual antecedents. Understanding which of the many motives that guide people’s behaviour will be salient at any given time requires understanding the specific contexts that will activate those motives (see Liviatan & Jost, 2014). To this end, Kay and Friesen (2011) proposed three conditions under which the motive to justify the system should

³ In theory, the Terror Management perspective leads to a prediction that people will cling to their own cultural beliefs, more generally, rather than system-justifying beliefs in particular. However, in practice, most of the research in this area has involved beliefs that can be considered system-justifying (see Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Hennes et al., 2012).

be particularly salient – *system threat*, *system dependence* and *system inescapability*. People should be especially motivated to support the systems under which they live when they perceive those systems to be threatened, when they feel that their outcomes are particularly dependent on the system, and/or when they perceive limited opportunities to exit the system.

The importance of system threat emerged early in system justification research. Studies in which people were presented with fictitious articles expressing pessimistic views of the current state of society found that this manipulation increased system-justifying tendencies. For example, when Israelis (and Americans) read an article that suggesting that Israel (or America) was socially, politically and economically worse off than many other countries in the world, they engaged in greater complementary stereotyping of high- and low-status groups in their respective countries (Jost et al., 2005, Study 3; Kay et al., 2005; Study 1). Likewise, when Canadian women read an article in which a British journalist criticised Canadian society, they were more apt to judge the underrepresentation of women in positions of power in their own country to be legitimate and desirable (Kay et al., 2009; Study 4).

In another study, Ledgerwood et al. (2011) found that people assessed evidence in support of proposition that American society is fair and meritocratic more favourably when the American system was threatened. Further, Wakslak, Jost & Bauer (2011) showed that the effects of system threat were not restricted merely to the system that is threatened, but also generalise to other systems at different scales. For example, people expressed more support for the American system, the high-school popularity system, and the nuclear family system, following system threat, regardless of which of these systems was specifically threatened. Taken together, these findings suggest that the motive for system justification is heightened under conditions of threat (see also Lau, Kay & Spencer, 2008; Matthews, Levin & Sidanius, 2009; Liviatan & Jost, 2014).

Several studies have shown that the system justification motive is also heightened when people feel particularly dependent on a given system. For example, Kay et al (2009; Study 2) primed students to feel more dependent on either the government or their university. They then measured support for equity- versus equality-based funding policies that were ostensibly being implemented either by the government *or* the university. These students showed stronger support for whichever policy was being implemented by the system they had been primed to feel more dependent on, regardless of the policy's content. In another study, Shepherd and Kay (2012; Study 2) found that priming people to feel dependent on the government increased their levels of trust in the government. Further, van der Toorn, Tyler and Jost (2011) found, in three field studies, that the more people perceived that their outcomes were dependent on particular authority figures the more they legitimised the systems represented by those authorities. Most recently, in a large representative sample of Americans, van der Toorn et al. (2015; Study 1) found that the more dependent people felt on their jobs, the more positively they viewed their employers. These findings suggest that system dependence is another important contextual antecedent of system justification.

An extreme form of system dependence is not being able to exit the system (Kay & Friesen, 2011). Accordingly, several studies have shown that the more inescapable a system is perceived to be, the more people legitimise it. For example, Kay et al. (2009; Study 1) showed that when Canadian participants were led to believe that emigration from Canada was difficult, they expressed higher levels of support for a system in which power was concentrated in the hands of the wealthy. Using the same experimental manipulation, Laurin, Shepherd and Kay (2012) showed that system inescapability led people to report that gender inequality in society was better explained by innate differences between men and women, rather than by societal pressures (thus justifying the unequal gender system). This pattern also applied to other systems – students who were led to believe that it was difficult to leave their

university justified that system more (Laurin et al., 2012). In sum, the evidence reviewed here suggests the system-justification motive is heightened when (a) the system is threatened, (b) people feel dependent on the system, and/or (c) they feel unable to escape the system.

Consequences of System Justification

Psychological consequences. A corollary of the proposition that system justification helps fulfil basic human needs for certainty, belongingness and security, is that the more people justify the system, the better off they should be psychologically (see Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008). Hence, research on the so-called *palliative effects* of system justification has attempted to show that system-justifying ideologies are linked to greater wellbeing (Harding & Sibley, 2013; Napier, Thorisdottir & Jost, 2010; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Wakslak, Jost, Tyler & Chen, 2007). One such ideology that has received considerable empirical attention is political conservatism. Indeed, numerous studies have shown that conservatives are happier than liberals (Napier & Jost, 2008; Schlenker, Chambers, & Le, 2012; see Onraet, Van Hiel, & Dhont, 2013 for a meta-analytic review). A system-justification account of this phenomenon is that conservatives are better able to legitimise the inequality they see around them, thereby avoiding the discomfort of living in an unequal society (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; Napier & Jost, 2008). Other researchers have argued that conservatism is merely correlated with other factors that predict positive psychological adjustment – i.e., religiosity, moral clarity and optimism (Schlenker et al., 2012).

However, ideologies with content more specific to the legitimization of inequality have also been shown to have palliative effects. Specifically, the ideological opposition to equality (a facet of the SDO scale), the Panglossian ideology of Benevolent Sexism, and the victim-derogating ideologies of PWE, JBW and Meritocracy are all associated with greater wellbeing (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003; Napier et al., 2010; O'Brien & Major, 2005; McCoy,

Wellman, Cosley, Saslow & Epel, 2013; Quinn & Crocker, 1999; Wakslak, et al., 2007). As previously noted, these ideologies legitimise inequality by framing it as normative and desirable (i.e., SDO), as arising from fair processes (i.e., PWE, JWB, Meritocracy), or by subjectively compensating the victims of inequality (i.e., BS). Given the content of these ideologies, their relationship with wellbeing seems more consistent with the inequality-legitimation account than the positive adjustment account.

Nevertheless, research supporting the SJT-based explanation for the relationship between ideology and wellbeing is not without its own contradictions. For members of advantaged groups legitimising inequality might be palliative because it allows them to continue reaping the benefits of being atop the social hierarchy, while avoiding the discomfort caused by the unfairness inherent in that hierarchy. Indeed, Wakslak et al. (2007) found that the relationship between system justification and wellbeing was explained by reduced moral outrage and guilt among members of advantaged groups. However, for members of disadvantaged groups, whose self- and group-interests conflict with the system justification motive, the psychological consequences of holding system-justifying beliefs are more complicated. As already noted, Jost and Thompson (2000) found that system justification predicted higher self-esteem and lower neuroticism and depression for White Americans, but found the opposite pattern for African Americans. Similarly, Rankin et al. (2009) found that the system justification was positively related with wellbeing among low-income White Americans, but not among low-income African Americans.

On the other hand, there is some research showing that system justifying ideologies might be beneficial even for members of disadvantaged groups, *despite* the conflicts that arise from justifying the very system that disadvantages one's group. For example, Napier et al. (2010) found that Benevolent Sexism (BS) was positively associated with wellbeing among women in 32 countries. Crucially, this relationship between BS and wellbeing among

women has been shown to be mediated by system justification (Connelly & Heesacker, 2012; Hammond & Sibley, 2012). Similar results have also been found for the ideologies of PWE, JWB and Meritocracy. For example, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) found that even those most disadvantaged by the social system (i.e., African Americans and those with low SES) reported higher levels of economic satisfaction as their endorsement of meritocracy increased. Similarly, McCoy et al. (2013) found that women who endorsed meritocracy reported higher global self-esteem and physical health than those who rejected Meritocracy, but only if they were from low-SES backgrounds. Finally, O'Brien and Major (2005) found that subscribing to PWE and JWB predicted higher wellbeing and lower depression in Black and Latino students, but only if they did not identify strongly with their ethnic group. Given this complex set findings, more research is necessary to identify which system justifying ideologies will have positive versus negative psychological consequences for the disadvantaged, and under what conditions.

Political consequences. The enormous impact of SJT on the fields of social and political psychology is evidenced by the proliferation of studies exploring various political and quasi-political consequences of system justification. For example, system justification has been linked to attitudes towards hate crime legislation (Mallet, Huntsinger & Swim, 2011), tolerance for civilian casualties in war (Friedman & Sutton, 2013), opposition to same-sex parenting (Pacilli, Taurino, Jost & van der Toorn, 2011), attitudes towards committed relationships (Day, Kay, Holmes & Napier, 2011) rape-victim blaming (Ståhl, Eek & Kazemi, 2010), attitudes towards feminism (Yeung, Kay & Peach, 2014), prejudice against female leaders (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Nauts, 2012), satisfaction with organisational decisions (Vainio, 2010), attitudes towards organisational diversity initiatives (Dover, Kaiser & Major, 2013), opposition to organisational change (Proudfoot & Kay, 2013), and religious behaviour (Osborne & Sibley, 2014). However, this large constellation

of findings does not speak directly to the idea that is at the heart of SJT – i.e., that unequal social structures remain stable over time because the system justification motive prevents people (especially, the disadvantaged) from mobilising politically. Evidence for this proposition needs to show that system justification reduces political mobilisation among the disadvantaged.

In democratic societies, there are two primary ways in which disadvantaged groups can achieve greater equality through the political process: (a) by supporting affirmative action policies favouring their group (and voting for parties and candidates who promise to advance such policies), and (b) by engaging in collective action (e.g. protest) to demand greater equality. Very few studies have directly tested the degree to which system justification predicts attitudes towards these two types of political mobilisation. This is all the more surprising given the contentiousness of affirmative action policies (e.g. University quota systems; Jaschik, 2015) and protest movements (e.g. Black Lives Matter; Friedersdorf, 2015) in modern democracies.

Indirect evidence for a negative relationship between system justification and support for affirmative action policies comes from the vast literature on Symbolic Racism (Sears & Henry, 2003). Research on Symbolic Racism in the United States has shown that opposition to affirmative action policies benefiting African Americans stems, in part, from perceptions that African Americans are responsible for their own disadvantage (i.e., by being lazy or incompetent; Henry & Sears, 2002). In this regard, symbolic racism is similar in content to system-justifying ideologies that frame the system as fair by blaming the victims of systemic inequality for their own plight (i.e., JWB, PWE, Meritocracy). This indicates that opposition to affirmative action might be the result of system-justification processes.

In the only study to directly test the relationship between system justification and support for affirmative action policies, Phelan and Rudman (2011) found that there was a

negative relationship between the two variables, as would be expected. However, their study did not test whether this relationship applied to both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, the Symbolic Racism literature has focussed primarily on opposition to affirmative action among the racial *majority group* (i.e., White Americans). Therefore, the question of whether system justification reduces support for affirmative action among members of *disadvantaged groups* remains, as yet, unexplored.

Evidence that system justification reduces support for collective action among the disadvantaged is much stronger. However, much of this evidence is not derived from research conducted specifically within the SJT tradition. For example, research on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008) has shown that a key antecedent to whether disadvantaged groups will engage in collective action is the degree to which they judge their disadvantage to be illegitimate (see Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Tausch et al., 2011). Further, Hafer and Olson (1993) found a negative relationship between women's levels of just-world belief and their support for political actions aimed at improving conditions for women in the workplace. Likewise, Cameron and Nickerson (2006) found a negative relationship between SDO and protest intentions among anti-globalization campaigners. To the extent that legitimacy appraisals, JWBs and SDO can be considered system-justifying beliefs (Jost & Hunyady, 2005) the above findings indicate that collective action intentions do indeed decrease as function of system justification.

Only a handful of studies have explored this dampening effect on collective action by directly measuring or manipulating levels of system justification. In one study, Jost et al. (2012) found a negative correlation between system justification and willingness to protest in a small sample of undergraduates. In a second study, they manipulated system justification among May Day protesters in Greece by exposing them to complementary and non-

complementary stereotype exemplars. Even among this highly politicized group, Jost et al. (2012) found that priming system justification reduced support for collective action.

Two studies from New Zealand also provide supportive evidence for this proposition. In the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, a large and nationally representative sample of registered voters, Osborne and Sibley (2013) found that the more deprived Māori (an ethnic-minority group) felt their group was the more they supported collective action. This effect, however, was weaker among Māori who strongly justified the system. In a subsequent study, Osborne, Yogeeswaran and Sibley (2015) found a negative association between system justification and political mobilization among Māori.

However, the literature is neither wholly consistent nor unequivocal. For example, in Jost et al.'s (2012) third study, they failed to find a significant direct or indirect relationship (via group-based anger) between system justification and political mobilization among members of a teacher's union. Similarly, in a recent review of system justification phenomena, Cichocka and Jost (2014) concluded that research in post-communist societies had also failed to establish a link between system justification and political mobilisation. Thus, as with affirmative-action policy preferences, the nature of the relationship between system justification and collective action among the disadvantaged requires more research.

Contributions of this Thesis

System justification in society at large. The vast majority of system justification research has been conducted using experiments. Indeed, the research I reviewed in the preceding section comprises a total of 184 individual studies representing nearly the entire empirical corpus of SJT. Yet, I could find only 58 that used non-experimental methods. Of these, only 34 involved non-student samples, and only 19 studies included some type of large, nationally representative sample (i.e., $N > 1000$; see Table 1.1). Thus, only about 10% of all studies on SJT can be said to have explored system justification in society at large.

Table 1.1
*Chronological list of studies examining system justification in society at large**

Study	<i>N</i>	Index of System Justification	Theme
Nosek et al. (2002)	120,823	Implicit outgroup favouritism	Internalised inequality
Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003; Study 1)	1,345	Support for authoritarian governance	Ideological dissonance
Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003; Study 2)	2,485	Trust in government	Ideological dissonance
Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003; Study 3)	2,567	Economic System Justification	Ideological dissonance
Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003; Study 4)	2,003	Meritocracy	Ideological dissonance
Napier & Jost (2008)	14,653	Authoritarianism	Psychological Consequences
Kay et al. (2008; Study 3)	93,122	Governmental responsibility	Motivational Antecedents
Kugler et al. (2010)	66,074	SDO, RWA, BJW, PWE, Conservatism	Ideological Antecedents
Napier et al. (2010)	48,370	Benevolent Sexism	Psychological Consequences
Laurin et al. (2011; Study 5)	53,394	Meritocracy	Motivational Antecedents
Brandt (2011)	82,905	Hostile Sexism	Consequences
Henry (2011)	1,212	Authoritarianism	Ideological dissonance
Hammond & Sibley (2011)	6,100	Gender-specific System Justification	Psychological Consequences
Brandt (2013)	27,543	Trust and confidence in government	Ideological dissonance
Osborne & Sibley (2013)	6,886	General System Justification	Psychological Consequences
Harding & Sibley (2013; Study 1)	6,518	General System Justification	Psychological Consequences
Federico et al. (2014; Study 2)	1,201	Conservatism	Motivational Antecedents
Osborne & Sibley (2014)	1,600	General System Justification	Political Consequences
van der Toorn et al. (2015; Study 1)	1,530	Perceptions of organisational fairness and legitimacy	Motivational Antecedents

*Defined as involving a non-student sample of $N > 1000$ (not including the studies in this thesis).

Much has been said about the relative strengths and weaknesses of experimental versus survey designs. While experiments have higher internal validity (i.e., the ability to rule out confounding variables) and allow for causal inferences, large-scale surveys have high ecological validity (Cooper, 2012). Experimentation has been essential for demonstrating the motivational nature of system justification, and for ruling out alternative theoretical accounts for the same phenomena. Moreover, SJT is not the only theory in social science that suffers from a paucity of large-scale survey data (e.g. see Weakliem, 2015). Nonetheless, low ecological validity is an especially problematic epistemological issue for SJT, because of the central claim made by the theory – that societies remain stable over time because individual citizens are motivated to justify the status quo.

It is one thing to show that certain experimental manipulations increase or decrease system-justifying attitudes and behaviours. It is quite another to establish that these processes lead people to think and act in such a way as to collectively perpetuate the status quo. In order to do the latter, it is critical to study *mass opinion*. We need to know (a) how much people, in general, actually perceive their societies to be fair and just, (b) how these perceptions, at the societal level, are affected by the types psychological and contextual antecedents identified in experimental SJT research, and (c) to what extent levels of system justification engender political attitudes and behaviours that maintain (versus challenge) existing social arrangements. The first major contribution of this thesis is that it uses large-scale survey data to answer these questions.

These data are drawn from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). The NZAVS is a panel study conducted using a postal (or optionally, an online) questionnaire, which tracks various social psychological variables in a large, nationally representative probability sample of New Zealanders. Most of the research in this thesis (except for Study 4) uses data from the first wave of the NZAVS collected in 2009 (NZAVS-

2009). The NZAVS-2009 questionnaire was posted to 40,500 participants from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll (i.e., 1.36% of all registered voters), yielding responses from 6,518 participants. The questionnaire includes numerous variables relevant to the research questions in this thesis, including several measures of system justification, political ideology, political mobilization, wellbeing, and a range of demographics. Using data of this kind allows us to conduct high-powered statistical tests, which helps address recent concerns about the proliferation of underpowered studies that have cast doubt on the credibility of research findings in psychology and related disciplines (Button et al., 2013; Pashier & Wagenmakers, 2012; Vankov, Bowers & Munafò, 2014; see also Ionnidis, 2005; Nosek et al., 2015).

System justification among the disadvantaged. Using data from the NZAVS is particularly useful for testing the predictions of SJT because it contains large, representative samples of *disadvantaged groups*. While many theories provide accounts for why advantaged groups support the systems that benefit them (e.g. Social Dominance Theory; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the distinguishing feature of SJT is its claim that the disadvantaged also support the very same systems. It is for this reason that early SJT studies on internalised inequality and ideological dissonance explored system-justifying processes occurring among low-status groups.

However, recent system justification research has moved away from this focus on the political attitudes of the disadvantaged. Of the various strands of the SJT literature reviewed in the preceding section, research on the motivational, situational and ideological antecedents, as well as much of the research on the psychological and political consequences of system justification has focussed on system justification processes *in general*. Therefore, this research has relied on samples that consist largely of members of high-status groups (for exceptions to this general trend see Brandt, 2013; Cheung et al., 2011; Kay et al., 2009;

Laurin et al., 2011; McCoy et al., 2013; Napier et al., 2010; Osborne, Yogeeswaran & Sibley, 2015; Rankin et al, 2009).

My research aims to shift the focus back to system justification among the disadvantaged. This is especially important given SJT's claim that system-justifying processes contribute to the stability of unequal systems over time (Jost et al., 2004). Social change towards equality is most often achieved through the political struggles of the victims of inequality, rather than being bestowed benevolently by its beneficiaries (Reicher, 2004). If the very people who have the most to gain from social change have a motivation to resist such change, unequal systems can become highly entrenched. Thus, if system-justifying processes at the individual level do indeed explain stability at the societal level, a major cause must lie in the prevalence of these processes among individuals belonging to disadvantaged social categories. These are processes that this thesis aims to examine.

Conceptual clarity. In SJT, neither the definition of “the system”, nor the definition of “justification” is adequately specified. Critics have argued that this lack specificity has allowed system justification theorists to subsume a wide range of phenomena under the rubric of the theory (see Mitchell & Tetlock, 2009; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). These critics have called for more stringent criteria, defined *a priori*, for determining what counts as evidence for system justification. For example, while *the system* has most often been conceptualised as the nation, the analytic units considered to be systems in SJT research have been as varied as universities, workplaces, and families. They have also included more abstract entities such as the economy, as well as status hierarchies based on gender, ethnic-group membership, income and social class (e.g. see Table 1.1). This very broad conception of the system has led to huge variation in the level of analysis in system justification research.

It is not the variation in definitions of the system that is in itself problematic, but the fact that SJT has not made this variation an explicit aspect of the theory. Indeed, the theory

does not make specific predictions about how similarities or differences between the types of systems being studied might affect people's psychological responses to those systems (but see van der Toorn et al., 2011; Wakslak et al., 2011 for exceptions). Instead, the same processes are implicitly assumed to operate regardless of how the system is operationalised in any given study. One problem that can arise from this lack of specificity is that while researchers might consider a particular analytic unit to represent a "system", participants might not share the same perspective. For example, when asked attitudes about towards the nation's political system, one might indeed think of the nation as a system under which one lives, *or* one might compare it to other nations and thus think of it more as a *group* to which one belongs (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Mitchell & Tetlock, 2009; cf. Liviatan & Jost, 2014).

Apart from differences in what counts as a system, there is considerable variability in what counts as "justification" in SJT research (see Table 1.1). Notice that of the studies reviewed in this chapter, some have inferred system justification from particular patterns of intergroup preference (i.e., ingroup versus outgroup favouritism), support for certain policy positions, or relative feelings of entitlement between groups. Others have measured support for the political system, trust in the government and social institutions, acquiescence to the control of authority figures, and beliefs about gender- or ethnic-group inequality. Still others have operationalized system justification in terms of various ideologies including political conservatism, RWA, SDO, and Meritocracy. As noted previously, these ideologies differ in the explanations they provide for the legitimacy of the system. Specifically, RWA promotes support for the system's authorities, SDO promotes inequality as normative and desirable, and Meritocracy and related ideologies derogate the victims of inequality.

Here again, the problem is not so much that the various measures of justification differ in content, but that the theory has not explicitly laid out the implications of these differences. For example, do ideologies that frame inequality as being normative and

desirable have the same antecedents and consequences as ideologies that frame inequality as arising from fair processes? Further, do all forms of system support necessarily imply a motivation to legitimise inequality, or could there be other (perhaps, “rational”) reasons why people might express support for their nation’s governments, institutions and authorities (see Mitchell & Tetlock, 2009)?

I argue that much of the empirical ambiguity that surrounds SJT’s more controversial hypotheses (e.g. Brandt, 2013) can be resolved by being more specific about the *types* of systems and the *types* of justifications being studied. This thesis takes the first steps towards that goal of conceptual clarity. I draw a distinction between the political system as a whole, and particular dimensions of inequality within that system. I also distinguish between two types of justification – i.e., generalised support for the status quo and the legitimisation of inequality (see also, Duckitt & Sibley, 2009; Brandt & Reyna, 2013). More specifically, I will explore how generalised support for the political status quo differs from beliefs that frame a particularly relevant and unfair status hierarchy in New Zealand as being fair (i.e., the ethnic-group hierarchy; see Study 1 described below).

Interpersonal processes. People do not develop their political attitudes in a vacuum, but are influenced by their family, friends, and other members of their society with whom they interact (Sears & Levy, 2003). SJT recognises this interpersonal dimension of political attitudes by proposing that system justification helps fulfil the relational need for belongingness (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008). However, this component of the theory has received very little empirical attention, with only a handful of studies investigating the relational function of system justifying attitudes (Hennes et al., 2012; Hess & Ledgerwood, 2014; Cheung et al., 2011). Even these studies have investigated the effects of *incidental* social connection (or exclusion) on system justification (but see Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin,

2008 for an exception). As far as I am aware, no studies to date have explored the impact people's *friendships* have on their tendency to justify the system.

This paucity of research is especially glaring given that large empirical traditions in other areas of social psychology have provided strong evidence for the role of friendships in determining political attitudes relevant to system justification. For example, the vast literature on Intergroup Contact Theory has shown that friendships across group boundaries can profoundly affect people's political attitudes (and sometimes, in system-justifying ways; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Dixon, Levine, Reicher & Durrham, 2012). Similarly, research on small-group interactions has shown that contact *within* groups can also shape people's attitudes towards the systems under which they live (e.g. Stott & Drury, 2004; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). Together, these research traditions suggest that contact with both ingroup and outgroup friends can affect levels of system justification. By directly testing this idea for the first time, the present thesis will integrate these two literatures with SJT, and provide a more comprehensive exploration of the relational nature of system justification (Study 2, Analyses 1 and 2, described below).

Objective inequality. SJT attempts to provide an explanation for why people justify inequality in their social context. Implicit in the theory is the notion that system-justifying phenomena will be more prevalent under conditions of high inequality, because unequal systems are assumed to be the ones in greatest need of justification (see Brandt, 2013). Despite this, very little research has investigated how system-justification processes might vary based on the objective levels of inequality in a given context. The few multilevel analyses that have addressed this question have measured cross-national variation in inequality (Napier et al., 2010; Brandt, 2013).

The NZAVS includes information on the objective levels of inequality in 1492 area-units across the country (akin to neighbourhood-level units). Drawing from Census data on

the distribution of household income in each area, a neighbourhood-level Gini coefficient has been computed (using a procedure described in more detail in Chapter 5; Chaudhary, 2009). Using this kind of measure offers several advantages over analyses that rely on national-level indices of inequality. First, countries differ on many characteristics other than their levels of inequality (e.g. history and culture), and much of this variation is not easily quantifiable. Therefore, analyses focussing on cross-national variation in inequality cannot rule out many third-variable accounts of the phenomena they are investigating (Oishi, Kesebir & Diener, 2011). Second, the large number of Level 2 units available in the New Zealand data (N = 1437) provides higher statistical power to test cross-level interactions than previous analyses which have had to rely on between 30 and 65 Level 2 units (i.e., nations). Third, I argue that people's responses to inequality should not only depend on the level of inequality in their country as a whole, but also on the information they get from their immediate context about the nature of resource distribution in their society. Therefore, it becomes important to test how variation in exposure to inequality in people's immediate environment affects system-justifying processes (see Study 3, described below).

Consequences. The review of SJT research presented in the preceding section makes it clear that while the antecedents of system justification have been studied extensively, the political and psychological consequences most relevant to SJT's core hypotheses have received considerably less empirical attention. Moreover, the studies that do exist raise several contradictions and inconsistencies. For example, some studies suggest that system justification has negative psychological consequences for the disadvantaged (e.g. Jost & Thompson, 2000), while others suggest it has palliative effects (e.g. McCoy et al., 2013). Further, while some studies have found that system justification decreases political mobilisation among disadvantaged groups (e.g., Jost et al., 2012), others have concluded that there is insufficient evidence for this effect (e.g., Cichocka & Jost, 2014).

This thesis aims to address the relative lack of research on the consequences of system justification, and resolve some of the inconsistencies in past work. To these ends, it will investigate the effects of system justification on wellbeing and both types of political mobilization (i.e., support for affirmative action, and intentions to engage in collective action) among the disadvantaged (Studies 3 and 4, described below). This is crucial to determining whether SJT's central proposition can be supported – i.e., that social systems remain stable because even the people who have the most to gain from social change are motivated to resist changes to the system.

The New Zealand context. There are several aspects of the New Zealand context that make it a particularly compelling testing ground for the predictions of SJT. First, New Zealand is a highly peaceful, democratic nation, with high levels of personal freedom. For example, the country was ranked fourth in the world on both the global peace and democracy indices (IEP, 2014; EIU, 2012), and first on a global index of personal freedom (McMahon, 2012). These features are important because of SJT's proposition that system-justifying processes are more likely to occur in contexts with higher levels of political repression, where people have fewer opportunities to escape from or reform their society (Kay & Friesen, 2011). Therefore, the New Zealand context should be ideal for testing the boundary conditions of system-justification phenomena.

New Zealand's *intergroup context* is also unique in ways that have implications for SJT. One of most politically relevant dimensions along which intergroup inequality exists in New Zealand is ethnicity. Members of the ethnic majority group (i.e., New Zealand Europeans), enjoy a host of socio-economic advantages relative to members of the other ethnic groups in the country. They earn more, have lower mortality, morbidity, unemployment and incarceration rates, and report higher wellbeing than ethnic minorities (The Social Report, 2010; Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias & Bonne, 2003).

The largest of these minorities is Māori. Māori are the indigenous peoples of New Zealand and make up around 14% of the population. European colonisation through the 19th century had devastating consequences for Māori, as was the case for other indigenous groups in the New World (King, 2007). The many injustices perpetrated against them by European settler-colonists included forced appropriation of their land, and the suppression of their language and culture (Belich 1986; Walker, 1990). This systematic marginalisation, along with the warfare and disease that also accompanied colonisation, led to a rapid decline in the Māori population through the late 19th Century (Pool, 1991).

However, a *Māori Renaissance* blossomed in the latter half of the 20th Century, coinciding with rapid urbanisation of the Māori population (Derby, 2014). The defining aspect of this movement was an increased political consciousness, reflected in numerous protest marches and demonstrations (called *hiko*) that demanded greater recognition of Māori culture, and remediation of historical injustices (Keane, 2015). Partly as a result of this movement, contemporary Māori identity is highly politicised (Vaughan, 1978). For example, Houkamau and Sibley's (2010) Multi-Dimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement showed that, along with dimensions such as Spirituality and Cultural Efficacy, the dimension of *Sociopolitical Consciousness* was a core aspect of Māori identity. Sociopolitical Consciousness indexes the perceived relevance of historical injustice to contemporary Māori, and the willingness to engage in political action to advance Māori interests. Houkamau and Sibley (2010) demonstrated that this dimension was the most strongly linked to ethnic identity centrality (more so than any of the other five dimensions).

Moreover, system-justifying patterns that have been found among other disadvantaged groups are not as prevalent among Māori. For example, research in the United States has shown that both ethnic majority and minority groups associate the majority group's culture more strongly with American identity than minority-group culture (Devos & Banaji,

2005). This pattern of results can be interpreted as a manifestation of outgroup favouritism among the disadvantaged. Māori, on the other hand, do not display outgroup favouritism in this manner. Instead, they regard their own culture as more representative of New Zealand's identity than European culture (Harding, Houkamau & Sibley, 2011).

These findings suggest that Māori are not particularly predisposed to justifying the inequality under which they suffer. Their politicised identity and history of engaging in protest on behalf of their group indicate that they have well-established norms for mobilizing politically in New Zealand's free and democratic social context (see Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2009). Therefore, studying system justification among Māori in New Zealand allows for a stringent way to test SJT's proposition that the disadvantaged perpetuate the very systems that disadvantage them. System-justifying processes that operate in this context can be expected to be even more prevalent among disadvantaged groups whose identity is less politicised, and who live in countries with fewer opportunities to remediate systemic inequality via the political process. Moreover, the extent to which these processes are *not* observed among Māori will shed light on the historical and political conditions that attenuate system-justifying responses among the disadvantaged.

Summary

The literature on SJT is vast – spanning nearly three decades and comprising hundreds of studies. This literature suggests that people have a motivated tendency to perceive the systems under which they live as fair and just, even when those systems are unfair. It also suggests that this tendency is the result of ideological, motivational and contextual antecedents, and can have both psychological consequences for individuals and political consequences for social structures. However, there are several issues that remain unresolved. For example, it is unclear how much the disadvantaged justify unequal systems relative to the advantaged; it is unclear how much people's personal relationships enhance or

attenuate the system justification motive; it is unclear how features of people's immediate context interact with the system justification motive; and finally, it is unclear to what extent system justification among the disadvantaged contributes to the psychological and political outcomes proposed by SJT. I have argued that these problems arise from specific weaknesses of the SJT literature: (a) inadequate large-scale survey research, especially involving disadvantaged groups (b) lack of conceptual clarity about which specific systems are being justified and how (c) scarce research on the interpersonal processes affecting system justification (d) few multilevel analyses that account for people's immediate context, especially, the levels of objective inequality they are exposed to, and (e) contradictions and inconsistencies in the research on the psychological and political consequences of system justification. These problems mean that more work is necessary to empirically validate SJT's explanation for why societies remain stable or change over time.

Overview of the Studies

To address these gaps in the SJT literature, I conducted five studies that examined system-justification processes operating among members of disadvantaged ethnic groups in New Zealand. Study 1 sets the scene for the studies that follow, by testing how much the disadvantaged actually justify the system, and how their levels of system justification compare to those of the dominant group. Study 2 examines the interpersonal antecedents of system justification, building on SJT's relational component (i.e., the proposition that people justify the system to fulfil their need for belongingness). Studies 3 and 4 investigate the psychological and political consequences of system justification respectively. These studies are described in more detail below:

Study 1 examines differences in the levels of two forms of system justification between the four major ethnic groups in New Zealand. In doing so, it tests one of the most controversial hypotheses derived from the ideological dissonance component of SJT – the

status-legitimacy hypothesis. The status-legitimacy hypothesis predicts that the dissonance between self/group-interest and the system justification motive should lead low-status groups to justify the system *more* than high-status groups, under certain conditions. As already noted, the evidence for this hypothesis has been mixed (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003 cf. Brandt, 2013). In Study 1, I argue that this inconsistency stems from a lack of specificity in the conceptualisation of system justification, as well as a lack of clarity about what the concept of dissonance means in the domain of political attitudes. I propose that dissonance is most likely to be elicited when one is judging the fairness of the particular dimension of inequality under which one suffers (what I call dimension-specific legitimation). Accordingly, Study 1 tests whether ethnic minorities show higher system justification than the ethnic majority group when evaluating the fairness of ethnic-group relations, but not the political system in general.

Study 2 (Analysis 1) integrates the vast literature on intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) with the relational component of SJT. Based on research showing that system justification might help people achieve a sense of shared reality with socially valued individuals and groups (Cheung et al., 2011), I test the hypothesis that contact with the dominant group (i.e., New Zealand Europeans) increases support for system-justifying beliefs among the disadvantaged (i.e., Māori). This study also explores one important consequence of system justification – support for affirmative action. Accordingly, it tests whether the increase in system justification that results from contact with the dominant group subsequently predicts opposition to a topical affirmative action policy benefiting Māori.

Study 2 (Analysis 2) tests the hypothesis that the effects of *ingroup contact* on system justification for Māori are in the opposite direction to those of *outgroup contact* – i.e. that *ingroup contact* is *negatively* associated with system justification for the members of disadvantaged groups. In doing so, this analysis helps integrate the insights of the literatures

on small-group interactions (Thomas & McGarty, 2009) and political socialisation (Sears & Levy, 2003) with the relational component of SJT. The analyses also builds on the initial exploration of the consequences of system justification in Study 2 (Analysis 1) by including a more comprehensive set of indices of political mobilization. It tests whether the hypothesised decrease in system justification as a function of ingroup contact subsequently predicts decreased opposition to resource-specific affirmative action policies, symbolic affirmative action policies, and the Māori Party (a political party that positions itself as representing the interests of Māori as a group). Finally, Study 2 (Analysis 2) tests the predictions of SJT against one important “rival” theory – Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). To do so, it investigates whether system justification and ethnic identification concurrently mediate the relationship between ingroup contact and political mobilization.

Study 3 aims to test another controversial hypotheses derived from SJT, that system-justifying beliefs have palliative benefits even for members of low-status groups. Thus, it attempts to reconcile an apparent contradiction – ideologies that legitimise inequality by attributing it to individual-level causes (e.g. Meritocracy; McCoy & Major, 2007) lead low-status individuals to internalise their own disadvantage, yet are hypothesised to be psychologically beneficial for these same individuals (McCoy et al., 2013). In Study 3, I attempt to resolve this contradiction by arguing that legitimising ideologies will not be palliative for *all* members of low-status groups. Instead, the psychological pay-offs for subscribing to these ideologies should differ as a function of the magnitude of inequality a given person is exposed to.

This argument is based on the idea that inequality threatens the ability of members of low-status groups (but not high-status groups) to feel in control of their own outcomes (see Laurin et al., 2011). Therefore, low-status individuals living in highly unequal conditions should report the lowest levels of wellbeing *unless* they are able gain a sense of control by

internalising the causes of their disadvantage. Those living in more equal conditions should not experience the same level of threat to their personal control, and therefore have less to gain from legitimising ideologies. Instead, the costs of internalising inequality (e.g. Jost & Thompson, 2000) should start to outweigh the benefits. These differential effects should produce a pattern in which ideology is palliative *only* for low-status individuals living in highly unequal conditions – i.e., those most in need of palliation. In Study 3, I attempt to provide evidence for this pattern by testing the cross-level interaction between objective inequality and ideology predicting wellbeing among both high- and low-status groups.

Study 4 aims to reconcile inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between system justification and political mobilization among the disadvantaged (Jost et al., 2012; Cichocka & Jost, 2014). It tests the hypothesis that the relationship between these two variables is quadratic rather than linear, and that this curvilinear relationship explains why past research has been inconclusive. Further, I argue for, and test the idea that nature of the quadratic relationship is best described by a U-shaped function, as opposed to the inverted-U shaped function that has been hypothesised by other theorists (Cichocka & Jost, 2014). In other words, I expect that system justification will be negatively associated with political mobilization at low to moderate levels of system justification, but positively associated with political mobilization as system justification increases from moderate to high levels.

II. THE STATUS-LEGITIMACY HYPOTHESIS

The primary goal of this thesis is to explore system-justifying processes operating among the disadvantaged. Towards this goal, I first sought to explore how much disadvantaged groups in New Zealand actually supported the system, and how these levels of system support differed from those of the advantaged group. Answering these questions will speak to one of the most controversial and distinctive hypotheses derived from SJT – the status-legitimacy hypothesis. The status-legitimacy hypothesis proposes that low-status groups will justify the system *more* than high-status groups (under specific circumstances). As I have already reviewed, the evidence for this proposition has been mixed (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003, cf. Brandt 2013). The first study of this thesis will contribute crucial large-scale data from a new context to the empirical corpus on this highly debated topic.

In this study I also propose an explanation that attempts to resolve the inconsistencies in past research. I argue that status-legitimacy effects will only be found when people are legitimising the specific status hierarchy under which they suffer – what I call dimension-specific legitimation. I advance this argument by (a) clarifying the concept of ideological dissonance that is hypothesised to produce status-legitimacy effects, (b) showing that prior research on system justification is consistent with the dimension-specific legitimation hypothesis, and (c) providing an additional test of this idea by analysing differences in diffuse and dimension-specific legitimacy perceptions between advantaged and disadvantaged groups.

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Abstract

The status-legitimacy hypothesis, which predicts that low-status groups will legitimize inequality more than high-status groups, has received inconsistent empirical support. To resolve this inconsistency, we hypothesized that low-status groups would display enhanced legitimation only when evaluating the fairness of the specific hierarchy responsible for their disadvantage. In a New Zealand-based probability sample ($N = 6,162$), we found that low status ethnic groups (Asians and Pacific Islanders) perceived ethnic-group relations to be fairer than the high-status group (Europeans). However, these groups did not justify the overall political system more than the high-status group. In fact, Māori showed the least support for the political system. These findings clarify when the controversial status legitimacy effects predicted by System Justification Theory will – and will not – emerge.

The status-legitimacy hypothesis revisited: Ethnic group differences in general and dimension-specific legitimacy

Coercion is the least efficient means of obtaining order.

—Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* (1974)

The dominance of one group in society over others is most effectively maintained when subordinate groups buy into unequal social arrangements and see them as legitimate. This prevents the dominant group from having to use hostile means of control to maintain their dominance, which would risk engendering resistance and conflict (Jackman, 1994). While there is general consensus that high-status groups justify their advantage in a variety of ways (often cajoling the groups they exploit using various ideologies; Jost, Wakslak, & Tyler, 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the question of whether low-status groups actively legitimize systems that disadvantage them is much more controversial (see Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; cf. Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004).

One perspective that has advanced the idea of active legitimation among the disadvantaged is System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994). It proposes that members of both high- and low-status groups share a general motivation to perceive existing social arrangements as fair and just. For low-status groups, this motivation arouses dissonance with the competing motives to advance their own personal and group interests (Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001). Accordingly, SJT makes the provocative prediction that in order to resolve this dissonance; the disadvantaged will sometimes be motivated to legitimize inequality *even more strongly* than members of advantaged groups (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003). Brandt (2013) dubbed this “the status-legitimacy hypothesis” (p. 765) – lower status will be associated with higher legitimation. While two early studies found evidence for this effect (Henry & Saul, 2006; Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003), other analyses have

either failed to replicate the finding (e.g., Brandt, 2013), or have implied the opposite pattern (i.e., lower status, lower legitimacy; e.g., Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011).

Given these inconsistent findings, the present study aims to provide additional data from a large, representative, national sample in New Zealand, to inform the ongoing debate over the robustness of status-legitimacy effects. Specifically, we investigate ethnic-group differences in perceptions of legitimacy. Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003), who provided the first direct test of these effects, acknowledged that they are unlikely to be universal. Instead, they are most likely to emerge in democratic societies with extensive civil liberties, a meritocratic culture, and high levels of inequality. New Zealand meets all of these criteria (as discussed in detail later). Therefore, a failure to replicate the status-legitimacy effect in the New Zealand context would cast further doubt on its robustness, and the dissonance-related mechanism thought to underlie it. On the other hand, a replication of the effect would help shed light on the circumstances under which low-status groups might legitimize the very systems that disadvantage them.

In addition to providing valuable data from a different cultural context, our study makes a key contribution to the conceptualisation and measurement of system justification. As we will argue, part of the empirical uncertainty surrounding the status-legitimacy effect might stem from (1) a lack of alignment between the status dimension being measured and the hierarchy being legitimized and (2) an imprecise definition of what “legitimacy” entails in the context of dissonance-reduction. The logic of the dissonance argument suggests that the conflict being resolved is between the need to perceive systems as *fair* and the experience of unfairness within those systems. As such, status-legitimacy effects should be most likely to emerge when legitimacy is measured in terms of fairness, and when these fairness perceptions apply to the hierarchy responsible for creating the status differences being assessed (what we will call “dimension-specific legitimation”).

To test this thesis, we investigate the effects of ethnic-group status on the perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations. We also test an alternative model which operationalizes legitimacy in a manner that does not allude to the fairness of specific hierarchies: general support for the political system (see Brandt, 2013). Thus, our study examines whether differences in how legitimacy is conceptualized account for the mixed empirical support for the status-legitimacy hypothesis.

System Justification Theory

System Justification Theory proposes that sociopolitical behaviour is not only driven by self- and group-interest, but also by a motive to justify the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2001). Engaging in system justification allows people to fulfil their epistemic need for order and structure (Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009) and accrues various affective benefits – including increased satisfaction with one’s situation, and reduced moral outrage, guilt, and frustration in the face of inequality (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). Indeed, nearly two decades of research on system justification has provided support for the argument that there exists a general ideological motive to legitimize the status quo (see Jost et al., 2004 for a review). For example, people use various ideologies and stereotypes to legitimize group-based differences in social status (Jost & Burgess, 2000), defend the status quo in response to threats to it (Ledgerwood, Mandisodza, Jost, & Pohl, 2011) and accept weak, pseudo-explanations for prevailing social inequality (Haines & Jost, 2000).

A defining feature of the system-justification perspective is the proposition that this bias in favour of the system exists both among those who benefit from it, and among those who are disadvantaged by it (Jost et al., 2001). For members of high-status groups, supporting the status quo is consistent with their personal and group interests. For low-status groups, however, supporting a system which disadvantages them is in direct conflict with

their self- and group interests. This is the central idea behind the “status-legitimacy hypothesis” (Brandt, 2013): under some circumstances, the dissonance between the system justification motive and people’s self- and group-interest will lead the disadvantaged to justify the system *more* than the advantaged. In the following sections, we clarify the rationale behind this hypothesis and analyse the existing evidence for and against it.

Clarifying the Concept of Dissonance

The status-legitimacy hypothesis derives from an extension of Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) to the political domain (Jost Pelham, et al., 2003). Research on cognitive dissonance has shown that people respond to inconsistencies in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours by bringing one of the inconsistent components into alignment with their remaining attitudes (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999). Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) speculated that, in the political domain, “dissonance might arise from the contradictory cognitions that (1) the system is putting me (and my group) at a disadvantage and (2) through our acquiescence, my group and I are contributing to the stability of the system” (p. 16). Under some circumstances, people might resolve this dissonance by justifying the system.

We argue that it is unnecessary to assume that the implicit realisation that one is contributing to one’s own disadvantage elicits dissonance. Instead, we argue that research on cognitive dissonance strongly implies that the conflict being resolved, rationalized, or justified arises from inconsistencies between features of people’s *psychology* (e.g., their beliefs, motives) and features of their *experience* (e.g., their own or others’ behaviour, their social reality). For example, Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter’s (1956) seminal work showed that, in response to failed predictions of an impending apocalypse, members of a UFO cult expressed even more fervent beliefs in their mythology. This resolved the dissonance between their apocalyptic beliefs and their experience of reality (which disconfirmed those beliefs). Similarly, people express greater commitment to a group after

being subjected to harsh initiation rituals (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Gerard & Mathewson, 1966). The dissonance here is between their psychological motive for inclusion and their experience of abuse.

Thus, from our perspective, the most appropriate interpretation of dissonance-induction as it applies to political attitudes is the conflict elicited between the psychological motive identified by SJT (i.e., to perceive existing social arrangements as fair) and the experience of unfairness in the particular social system(s). It is this conflict that should, at least sometimes, yield the status-legitimacy effects hypothesized by the theory. In other words, the unfairness of being lower in status along a specific intergroup hierarchy should induce dissonance with the motive for fairness, leading people to shift their perceptions of fairness in favour of those hierarchies. By measuring legitimacy as support for broader systems (rather than beliefs about the fairness of specific hierarchies), previous analyses may have been ill placed to detect manifestations of this dimension-specific dissonance (e.g., Brandt, 2013).

Measuring Legitimacy

Part of the reason why research on the status-legitimacy effect has operationalized legitimacy in this broader sense is that SJT has often conflated two theoretically distinct, albeit related, processes: support for the status quo and legitimation of inequality. The Theory's central proposition is that there is a motivation to legitimize *the status quo* (Jost et al., 2004). Accordingly, SJT proposes that fulfilling this motivation necessitates the legitimation of inequality in the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). This works well under the assumption that the political, economic and social systems in most societies are hierarchical and unequal. However, to the extent that particular systems are more *equal* than unequal, the legitimation of inequality will not be equivalent to the legitimation of the status quo. Indeed, Brandt and Reyna (2012) showed that a preference for inequality was related to

support for the status quo in unequal countries, but not in countries with high levels of equality.

Further, legitimation itself can involve processes that differ in the ways in which they achieve their purpose. Early work on legitimation acknowledged that subordinates could trust the decisions of authorities “independently of judgments of the correctness or acceptability” of the rationale behind those decisions (Simon, 1957, p. 125; see also Tyler, 2006). In a recent review, Costa-Lopes, Dovidio, Pereira, and Jost (2013) defined legitimation as “psychological processes by which attitudes, behaviors, and social arrangements are justified as conforming to normative standards – *including, but not limited to – standards of justice*” (emphasis added, p. 230). These definitions imply that any attitude or ideology that increases perceptions of normativity can be used to bolster the status quo, regardless of whether or not it involves arguments about the fairness of the system.

If one accepts that legitimizing inequality is theoretically distinct from legitimation of the status quo, and that legitimation can involve more than justice perceptions, then it becomes possible to conceive of ways that systems can be bolstered without making inequality seem fair. In systems already marked by inequality, mere attitudinal preferences for (1) unequal social relations or (2) deference to authority and tradition will suffice (Brandt & Reyna, 2012). Individual differences in these preferences are indexed by the constructs of social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) and right wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1996) respectively.

While it has been argued that SDO and RWA are legitimizing ideologies, they differ significantly from other ideologies that fall into this category (e.g., Belief in a Just World, Protestant Work Ethic and Meritocracy; see Jost & Hunyady, 2005). For example, the Belief in a Just World explains away inequality by asserting that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner, 1980). The Protestant Work Ethic frames those with low

status as lazy and those with high status as hard working (Furnham, 1982). Meritocracy involves subscribing to the view that inequality arises from fair processes in which merit determines people's outcomes (McCoy & Major, 2007). In contrast, the items used to assess SDO and RWA offer no *explanation* for unequal outcomes being fair or deserved, but merely assess the degree to which people see such inequality as normative, desirable, or inevitable.

These two ways of bolstering the status quo are differentially appealing to subordinate and dominant group members. For dominant groups, opposition to equality serves their interests by maintaining the hierarchies from which they benefit (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For subordinate group members, however, categorically opposing the principle of equality is less viable, as it conflicts with their group interests (e.g., Jost & Thompson, 2000). Not surprisingly then, a meta-analysis of status differences in the preference for inequality, found that high-status groups were consistently higher on SDO than low-status groups (Lee et al., 2011).

The pattern of status differences in authoritarianism is exactly the opposite. Low-status group members consistently show a greater preference for obedience to authority than high-status groups (e.g., Napier & Jost, 2008), possibly because it buffers them from the effects of stigma and social devaluation (Brandt & Henry, 2012; Henry, 2011). An ironic consequence of this coping mechanism is that the very authoritarian attitudes that buffer them against stigma can also engender support for the authority structures on society, thus bolstering the status quo (Stenner, 2009). Together, these findings suggest that when legitimacy is measured in terms of support for the political and economic status quo, the processes of authoritarianism and social dominance operating differently among high-and low-status groups might occlude the dissonance-induced effects of low status.

A Closer Look at the Evidence

Consistent with this reasoning, a closer look at the three studies reporting direct tests

of the status-legitimacy hypothesis reveals that the effects predicted by SJT are only found under two conditions: (1) when measuring ideological legitimization of the specific hierarchies relevant to the status dimension being analysed (i.e., dimension-specific legitimization) and (2) when legitimacy is measured as support for authoritarian governance (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003; Study 1; Henry & Saul, 2006; analysis 2). We argue that the former is a true manifestation of dissonance-reduction, and will, therefore, be the focus of the present analysis. The latter is likely a reflection of the stigma-driven subscription to authoritarianism that has already been identified in the literature (e.g., Henry, 2011).

We start by considering the most recent study to assess the status-legitimacy hypothesis – a large-scale analysis by Brandt (2013). In a wide array of tests that used different status dimensions in large samples from across Europe and the United States, he found no support for a negative main effect of status on legitimacy (measured as trust in government and societal institutions). In line with our preceding analysis, we see these measures as indexing general support for the status quo rather than dimension-specific legitimization of inequality, which might partly explain the average null effects across samples.

Nonetheless, trust in government *could* be seen as an index of the legitimization of specific hierarchies to the extent that the government is perceived as disproportionately serving the interests of one group over others. Given that most measures of governmental trust assess perceptions of corruption (see Brandt, 2013, p. 6), *income* might be one dimension along which negative effects of status on legitimacy can be expected to emerge. Indeed, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003; Study 2) found evidence for the status-legitimacy effect when operationalizing status as income. Low-income Latinos expressed greater trust in the government (by believing it was run for the benefit of all rather than serving special interests) compared to high-income Latinos.

Brandt (2013) also acknowledged that while there was no main effect for status on

legitimacy on average, there was considerable variability in the size and direction of the effects. In many of the analyses reported, effects consistent with the dissonance argument were observed. Nevertheless, this variation was not explained by any of the moderators in his analysis (e.g., inequality). We believe that a crucial moderator missing from this study was the extent to which the status dimension being measured aligned with the hierarchy being legitimized. For example, in countries where battles over government were explicitly fought along ethnic lines, the effects of low ethnic-group status on government trust might emerge. Consistent with this notion, Henry and Saul (2006) found that in Bolivia where politics and ethnicity are strongly entwined (Molina, 2007), low-status ethnic groups trusted the system more than high-status ethnic groups.

Further support for a dimension-specific legitimization process can be found by analysing the situations in which status-legitimacy effects did and did not emerge in the seminal studies by Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003). In line with our distinction between bolstering the status quo and legitimizing inequality, they found most support for the status-legitimacy hypothesis when measuring status differences in ideologies and beliefs that legitimized specific kinds of inequality. For example, in Study 3, they found that poor people were more likely to believe that large differences in income were necessary to motivate effort than rich people. Thus, it was a belief that legitimized income inequality that revealed yielded status differences in legitimacy along the dimension of income.

In Study 4, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) operationalized status in terms of race, income, and geographical location. Legitimacy was measured as support for statements that equated hard work with success and thus explained away status differences in terms of differences in effort (see Jost & Hunyady, 2002). The pattern of interactions in their findings reveals the highly specific nature of dissonance-based legitimation. There was no main effect for race, probably because legitimacy (i.e., the belief that hard work leads to success) in this context

was not specifically about justifying racial inequality. However, in the South, where status differences in race and income align more strongly, status-legitimacy effects emerged. For example, poor African Americans in the South (but not in the North) endorsed legitimacy beliefs more than wealthy African Americans. This supports our argument that it is particularly when *specific* status differences are in need of legitimation that the dissonance-based mechanism should yield status-legitimacy effects.

The psychological benefits of subscribing to legitimizing ideologies also seem to manifest in a dimension-specific manner. If dissonance arises from suffering inequality while also being motivated to see society as fair, then processes of legitimation that help resolve this dissonance should buffer people's psychological well-being (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Indeed, several studies have found evidence for the palliative effects of legitimizing ideologies for members of low-status groups (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2008; McCoy, Wellman, Cosley, Saslow, & Epel, 2013; Osborne & Sibley, 2013). Relevant to our argument about dimensional specificity, Sengupta, Osborne and Sibley (2015a) found that subscribing to an ideology that delegitimizes ethnic-group-based claims for reparation predicted increased wellbeing, but only among Māori (the low-status ethnic group) living in conditions of high inequality. Thus, it is precisely those who had the most to lose from ideologically legitimizing inequality that accrued psychological benefits from doing so.

The Present Study

Here, we present a test of the status-legitimacy hypothesis by analysing ethnic-group differences in two kinds of legitimacy beliefs (namely, support for the political system, and the perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations) in a large, national, probability sample in New Zealand ($N = 6,162$). The measures in our survey, and the cultural context in which it was conducted, offer a unique opportunity to investigate some of the questions that lie at the heart of the debate over whether the victims of inequality bolster the very systems that

disadvantage them. Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) outlined three important boundary conditions for the dissonance-reduction mechanism hypothesized to drive status-legitimacy effects.

First, if the motive to justify the system competes with the self- and group interests of the disadvantaged, then the effects of dissonance would be more likely to emerge when the salience of these interests is relatively low. Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) argued that large-scale surveys are one condition under which the motives for advancement of the self and the ingroup are low, since people are responding to myriad questions, most of which have nothing to do with their group memberships or system-related beliefs. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (NZAVS), from which our data are drawn, consists of over 200 items assessing a wide range of variables, including personality, health, environmental attitudes, voting behaviour etc. Thus, our methodology satisfies the first boundary condition by not strongly triggering individual- and group-level motives at the expense of system-level motives.

Second, dissonance research suggests that when people freely choose their behaviour, the need to rationalize the given act is enhanced (e.g., Cooper & Fazio, 1984). Accordingly, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) proposed that dissonance about the system would most likely be elicited when people feel that they have a say in how the system is constituted. Thus, democratic societies with extensive civil liberties represent a favourable testing ground for status-legitimacy effects. New Zealand was ranked fifth on an index assessing the robustness of a country's democratic institutions (Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU], 2012) and first on an index of human freedom (McMahon, 2012).

Third, like other post-colonial Western societies, New Zealand has a meritocratic culture in that people subscribe to various ideologies that frame issues of distributive justice in terms of individual deservingness (e.g., Sibley, 2010; Sibley & Wilson, 2007). Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) suggest that this type of cultural context will produce “strong

motivational pressures for disadvantaged group members to provide attitudinal support for the system” (p. 17). Thus, the disadvantaged in New Zealand are more likely to engage in processes of legitimation than low-status groups in more authoritarian societies, or in cultures with weaker meritocratic norms.

Finally, because it is the experience of inequality that is hypothesized to elicit dissonance, status-legitimacy effects should be more likely to emerge in societies with a higher level of inequality (Brandt, 2013). While New Zealand is less unequal than the United States, it has experienced the sharpest rise in inequality in the OECD over the past 20 years (OECD, 2011). Much of this inequality exists along ethnic lines. The Social Report (2010) by The Ministry of Social Development revealed that compared to European New Zealanders (the ethnic majority group), Māori, Pacific, and Asian people fair worse on a host of socioeconomic indicators including income, employment, literacy rate, and political representation. Members of these groups also experience worse health outcomes (e.g., higher mortality; The Social Report, 2010) and report lower well-being (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, & Bonne, 2003) compared to Europeans. These inequalities create an ethnic status-hierarchy that, when combined with the other features of the New Zealand context noted above, represent a favourable context in which to test if the dissonance-based effects of low-status on perceptions of legitimacy occur in a manner consistent with the predictions of SJT.

In particular, we will test whether ethnic minorities show higher levels of legitimation than New Zealand Europeans. In line with our argument that dissonance should manifest in terms of a *specific* kind of legitimation (i.e., fairness perceptions) and in relation to *specific* hierarchies, we test ethnic-group differences in the belief that ethnic-group relations in New Zealand are fair. To provide support for our argument that past explorations have operationalized legitimacy in a manner that occludes the effects of dissonance, we also test

status differences in the belief that the New Zealand political system operates as it should (analogous to measures such as trust or confidence in government that have been used in prior analyses). Consistent with Brandt's (2013) analysis, we expect that this general form of system justification will be less likely to bear out the status-legitimacy hypothesis than the specific legitimization of ethnic-group differences.

Finally, while we expect status-legitimacy effects for Asian and Pacific people on the dimension-specific measure, we predict that Māori, the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, will show *lower* levels of both support for the political system and perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations. This is because the nature of Māori identity has important implications for the way in which any potential dissonance might be resolved.

The Political Nature of Māori Identity

Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) noted that resolving dissonance in favour of the system is only one potential option. Alternatively, when faced with the conflict between the motivation to perceive the system as fair and the experience of inequality, a person could acknowledge the systemic origins of their disadvantage. Justifying the status quo is often the psychologically easier route, as people are apt to feel helpless in the face of systemic inequality (Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008). However, when anti-systemic norms exist, it should be easier to resolve the dissonance between felt inequality and one's motivation to view society as fair by challenging rather than rationalizing inequality in the system.

Among disadvantaged groups, such norms are reflected in the content of their ingroup identity (Thomas & Louis, 2013). Research on the content on Māori identity has shown that "sociopolitical consciousness" forms a core aspect of what it means to be Māori. For example, Houkamau and Sibley (2010) showed that a dimension indexing the perceived relevance of historical injustice to contemporary Māori, and the willingness to engage in political action to advance Māori interests, was more strongly linked to ethnic-identity

centrality than other dimensions such as cultural efficacy or spirituality. In a similar vein, Sibley (2010) showed that Māori are strongly opposed to ideologies that deny the relevance of historical injustice to contemporary issues of resource distribution in society.

Such a highly politicized ethnic identity leads us to expect that Māori would be more able than other disadvantaged groups in New Zealand (cf. Manuela & Sibley, 2013) to resolve their dissonance by favouring their group. This dovetails with research from the Social Identity tradition showing that identifying strongly with a disadvantaged group increases the motivation to collectively resist unequal systems, especially when the content of the group identity is highly political in nature (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Thus, consistent with their group interests, Māori should show *reduced* legitimation of both the general political system and the ethnic-group status hierarchy.

Method

Sampling Procedure

The Time 1 (2009) NZAVS contained responses from 6518 participants sampled from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll. The electoral roll is publicly available for scientific research and, in 2009, contained 2,986,546 registered voters. This represented all citizens over 18 years of age who were eligible to vote (regardless of whether they chose to vote), barring people who had their contact details removed due to specific case-by-case concerns about privacy. The sample frame was split into three parts.

Sample Frame 1 constituted a random sample of 25,000 people from the electoral roll (4,060 respondents). Sample Frame 2 constituted a second random sample of a further 10,000 people from the electoral roll (1,609 respondents). Sample Frame 3 constituted a booster sample of 5,500 people randomly selected from meshblock area units of the country that contained a high proportion of Māori, Pacific Nations and Asian peoples (671 respondents). Meshblocks were selected using ethnic group proportions based on data from the 2006 national census. An additional 178 people responded to the survey but did not provide their contact details. As such, these respondents could not be matched to a specific sample frame. In sum, postal questionnaires were sent to 40,500 registered voters (i.e., roughly 1.36% of all registered voters in New Zealand). The overall response rate (adjusting for the address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%.

Participant Details

Complete responses to the items analysed here were provided by 6,162 participants (95% of the sample; 3,669 women, 2,493 men). Of those providing complete data, 73% were New Zealand European ($n = 4,501$), 17.6% were Māori ($n = 1,083$), 4.4% were of Pacific Nations ancestry ($n = 274$), and 4.9% were of Asian ancestry ($n = 304$). Participants who were coded as belonging to 'other' ethnicities were not included in the analysis. Participants'

mean age was 47.93 (SD = 15.78). 80% of the European respondents, 98% of the Māori respondents, 51% of the Pacific respondents, and 17% of the Asian respondents were born in New Zealand.

Measures

General support for the political system (conceptually analogous to measures of “trust in government” used in previous analysis) was measured using the following item from Kay and Jost’s (2003) general system-justification scale: “In general, the New Zealand political system operates as it should”. For dimension-specific legitimation, the following item from the gender-specific system justification scale developed by Jost and Kay (2005) was revised to assess the fairness of ethnic-group relations: “In general, relations between different ethnic groups in New Zealand are fair”. Both items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). We also assessed whether people were born in New Zealand to adjust for the effects of immigrant-status.

Results

Primary Model

A 2 (System Legitimacy: General vs. Specific) x 4 (Ethnicity: European, Māori, Pacific Island, Asian) mixed-model ANOVA was conducted, with type of system-legitimacy (either general support for the political system or perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations) as the within-subjects factor and ethnicity as the between-subjects factor. Owing to our large sample, the p -value for all effects was set at .001. As predicted, there was a significant main effect for ethnicity ($F(3, 6158) = 31.33, p < .001, \mu_p^2 = .02$) indicating that people of different ethnic groups differed in the extent to which they believed the New Zealand political system operates as it should, and that ethnic-group relations are fair.

We also found a significant main effect for type of system-legitimacy ($F(1, 6158) = 69.46, p < .001, \mu_p^2 = .01$) indicating that levels of support for the overall political system differed from levels of perceived fairness of the ethnic-group system. This effect occurred because people were higher on perceptions of fairness of ethnic-group relations ($M = 4.44, SE = .03$) than on general support for the political system ($M = 4.17, SE = .03$).

Finally, the interaction between type of system-legitimacy and ethnicity was significant ($F(3, 6158) = 34.00, p < .001, \mu_p^2 = .02$) indicating that the difference in levels of support for the political system and levels of perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations was contingent on participants' ethnicity (see Figure 2.1). Analysis of the simple effects revealed that Māori ($MD = .43, SE = .05, p < .001$), Pacific ($MD = .56, SE = .11, p < .001$) and Asian people ($MD = .37, SE = .10, p < .001$) were significantly higher on levels of perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations, relative to levels of support for the political system. However, there was no difference in the two types of legitimacy perceptions among Europeans.

For political-system support, Bonferonni *post-hoc* comparisons revealed that the effect of ethnicity occurred because Māori ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.54$) were significantly lower than Europeans ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.39$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.37$), Asian ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.39$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.38$) and Pacific people ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.59$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.29$). In contrast, there were no significant differences in levels of support for the political system between the European, Asian and Pacific groups. This is consistent with our hypothesis that status-legitimacy effects would not emerge when measuring levels of general support for the political status quo. It is also consistent with the hypothesis that the group whose identity was most politicised (i.e., Māori) would show lower levels of support for the political system than all other ethnic groups.

For the perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations, post-hoc analyses revealed that the effect of ethnicity occurred because Europeans ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.37$) displayed lower average levels than Asians ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.36$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.32$) and Pacific Islanders ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.51$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.36$). Further, Māori ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.48$) also displayed lower levels of perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations than Asians (Cohen's $d = -.34$) and Pacific Islanders (Cohen's $d = -.38$). There were no significant differences in the levels of perceived fairness between Māori and Europeans (Cohen's $d = -.04$), or between Asian and Pacific people (Cohen's $d = -.06$). This is consistent with our prediction that status-legitimacy effects would only emerge when measuring dimension-specific legitimation, and when legitimation is operationalised in terms of fairness perceptions. However, the hypothesis that Māori would show lower levels of perceived fairness was not supported. Thus, even the group with the most highly politicised identity legitimised the ethnic-group relations at least as much as the dominant ethnic group.

Covariate Adjusted Model

To examine the robustness of our findings, we reanalysed our data using a 2 (System Legitimacy) x 4 (Ethnicity) mixed-model ANCOVA, *adjusting for the effects of immigrant-status* (i.e., whether were people were born in New Zealand). This is because a large proportion of the Asian and Pacific groups in New Zealand are first-generation immigrants. Therefore, our findings might reflect the effects of immigration-status on ethnic-group legitimization. That is, indigenous New Zealanders and recent arrivals might be engaging in different types of comparisons (i.e., to an imagined ideal versus to their home country) when evaluating the fairness of New Zealand society.

Contrary to this alternative hypothesis, we found that Māori ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.54$) remained significantly lower on support for political system than Europeans ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.39$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.34$), Asians ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.38$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.25$) and Pacific people ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.59$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.21$). There were no significant differences in levels of support for the political system between the European, Asian and Pacific groups. Similarly for dimension-specific legitimization, we again found that Europeans ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.37$) displayed lower average levels of perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations than Asians ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.34$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.28$) and Pacific Islanders ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.50$, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = -.34$), even after taking into account immigration status. Further Māori ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.48$) also displayed lower levels of perceived fairness of ethnic-group relations than Asians (Cohen's $d = -.30$) and Pacific Islanders (Cohen's $d = -.36$), after accounting for immigration status. There were no significant differences in the levels of perceived fairness between Māori and Europeans (Cohen's $d = -.03$), or between Asian and Pacific people (Cohen's $d = -.08$). Thus, the pattern of group differences in these two forms of legitimacy obtained in the preceding analysis remained unaffected after adjusting for immigrant-status.

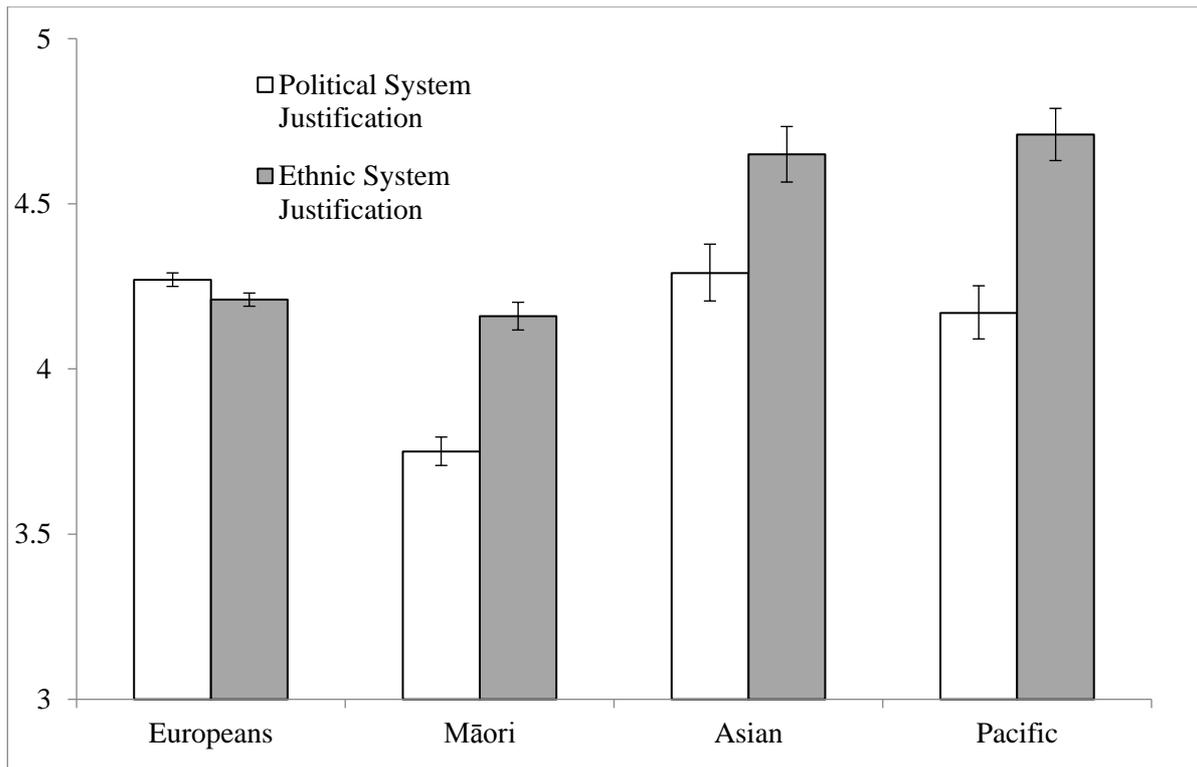


Figure 2.1. Clustered bar-graph showing levels of political and ethnic system justification in the four major ethnic groups of New Zealand. Note. For visual clarity, the Y-axis displays system justification scores between 3 and 5. The actual range for the two system justification scales used was 1-7. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

Discussion

We aimed to test the conditions under which the controversial status-legitimacy effects hypothesized by SJT would and would not emerge. Using a large national sample in a highly democratic country (namely, New Zealand), we showed that some low-status groups do indeed show enhanced legitimacy beliefs compared to the high-status group. Members of the Asian and Pacific minority groups in New Zealand believed that ethnic-group relations were fairer than did their European New Zealand counterparts. Overall, this lends support to the notion that a dissonance-based explanation might help account for why the disadvantaged sometimes legitimize the very inequalities from which they suffer. It also suggests that Brandt's (2013) conclusion that "the status-legitimacy effect is not robust" (p. 11) might be premature.

We believe that this conclusion follows from analyses that do not adequately consider the type of legitimation that would reflect dissonance-reduction processes. Specifically, we argued that dissonance is most likely to result from experiencing low relative status (i.e., unfair disadvantage) within a particular intergroup hierarchy. Justification processes aimed at resolving this dissonance should, therefore, manifest as increased perceptions of the fairness of that particular hierarchy. Consistent with this argument, we found that Asian and Pacific people showed higher levels of legitimation than Europeans *only* when evaluating the fairness of the ethnic-group hierarchy under which they suffer. They did not trust the functioning of the general political system anymore or less than the dominant group. Presumably, the legitimation of the broader system can be accomplished in ways that do not involve framing it as fair, and thus do not trigger mechanisms for the reduction in psychological conflict between unfair experiences and the fairness motive.

Following Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003), we do not contend that this tendency to resolve dissonance in a direction that bolsters intergroup hierarchies is universal. Indeed, it is

unlikely that the disadvantaged will always be the ones who most strongly support unequal systems. Clearly unfair social arrangements do get challenged, overthrown or reformed, often by those adversely affected by these arrangements (Reicher, 2011). However, our findings demonstrate that, under some circumstances, low-status groups can rationalize status hierarchies more than the groups who benefit from them. Specifically, in democratic nations with high inequality and extensive civil liberties, disadvantaged groups whose identities do not include anti-systemic norms might be driven to believe that the hierarchies responsible for their lower status are fairer than high-status groups believe them to be.

Our findings also help highlight another important boundary condition of the status-legitimacy hypothesis. Consistent with the Social Identity perspective on collective action (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008), we found that Māori (a group whose identity is highly politicized) show lower support for the political system than all other groups. Further, unlike Asian and Pacific people, they show no more legitimization of the ethnic-group system than the dominant group. However, it should also be noted that, somewhat inconsistent with the collective action perspective, their politicized identity did not cause them to display *lower* levels of dimension-specific legitimization. Māori still legitimized ethnic-group relations at least as much as the group that benefits from the ethnic-group hierarchy.

Limitations

Since these data were drawn from a much larger survey, we were necessarily constrained in the comprehensiveness of the measures used. The use of one-item measures for all constructs in the analysis adversely affected the reliability with which we could assess these beliefs. Further, we only compared status effects along one dimension – ethnicity. We chose this dimension because much of the inequality in New Zealand exists along ethnic lines. Future research should extend the analyses reported here by examining legitimization

along other status dimensions and with more comprehensive measures of legitimacy. Despite these issues, our survey had the advantage of including items that tapped both general/political and dimension-specific legitimization, thereby enabling us to test our argument about why past explorations of the status-legitimacy hypothesis have been inconclusive. Further, testing status-legitimacy effects on a large, nationally representative sample from an as-yet unexplored intergroup context adds valuable information to the international literature on this highly contentious topic.

There are also some competing explanations for our findings that our analyses cannot conclusively rule out. One such explanation is that belonging to collectivist cultures makes Asian and Pacific people more prone to justifying the system than Māori who, it could be argued, might be more acculturated to individualistic New Zealand society. It has been found, for example, that people from collectivist cultures are more tolerant of hierarchy and inequality in the social structure (Ledgerwood et al., 2011). So, it might be this cultural difference, rather than increased dissonance, that explains why Pacific and Asian people justify the status quo more strongly than Europeans. However, the fact that Māori and Pacific people share a common (Polynesian) cultural heritage, yet show very different levels of system justification, undercuts this argument.

Further, it could be argued that because Asian and Pacific people are recent immigrant groups in New Zealand, they engage in a different type of comparison when assessing the fairness of the New Zealand system. While indigenous New Zealanders might compare the current system to an imagined ideal, immigrants may compare it to the system in their country of origin. However, this explanation assumes that the comparison being made by immigrants is an advantageous one – that is, that they are judging ethnic-group relations in New Zealand to be fairer than their home country.

While plausible, there is at least one reason to suspect that this explanation does not

account for our findings. Asian and Pacific people often belong to the ethnic *majority* (and thus the advantaged group) in their country of origin. When they move to New Zealand they experience a drop in status relative to their status in their home country. Therefore, it is equally possible that when compared to their home country, immigrants would experience ethnic-group relations as being less fair because they find themselves near the bottom of the ethnic-group hierarchy. This sharper experience of relative unfairness would then spark even more dissonance, resulting in higher levels of legitimation. However, we obtained the same pattern of group differences when rerunning our analyses while adjusting for whether people were born in New Zealand. This indicates that comparisons with a home country (either advantageous or disadvantageous) are not likely to be driving the effects observed in our study.

Finally, we have argued that in order to tap manifestations of ideological dissonance, measures of legitimacy must be (1) dimension-specific and (2) assess fairness perceptions. Our particular measures, however, cannot establish conclusively that both these features are essential; the ethnic-specific measure contains both elements while the general measure contains neither. Therefore, it is possible that measures that assess general fairness perceptions might also yield status-legitimacy effects. If so, this would suggest that the effects of dissonance for low-status groups generalize to systems beyond the group-based hierarchy directly responsible for their relative status-disadvantage. It is also possible that measures of domain-specific legitimacy unrelated to perceptions of fairness might yield status-legitimacy effects (although see Lee et al., 2011 for evidence against this possibility). This would mean that being low-status along a particular hierarchy leads people to support the system in ways that extend beyond framing it as fair. Both possibilities imply that the legitimation of one's own disadvantage occurs even more widely than our observations allow us to conclude.

Conclusion

In this study, we have shown that low-status groups can sometimes display higher perceptions of legitimacy than the high-status group. We also showed that these effects occur specifically when evaluating the fairness of the hierarchy along which status differences exist. Further, we provided evidence for an additional boundary condition for these effects – the content of the low-status group’s identity. When norms that acknowledge the illegitimacy of group-based disadvantage and promote collective action define a group’s identity, the need to legitimize unfairness is probably less stark. Overall, our findings suggest that there may be some dissonance between experiences of unfairness and the motive for fairness that sometimes leads people to legitimize their own disadvantage. This finding implies that those who have the most to gain from social change may be prevented from recognizing that such change is necessary.

III. OUTGROUP CONTACT AND SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Study 1 established what prior analyses had hinted at – that Māori show weaker system-justifying tendencies than other disadvantaged groups (e.g. Harding et al., 2011; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010). Studying system justification in this type of group allows for novel and more stringent tests of SJT's predictions as they apply to disadvantaged groups. Māori are the largest ethnic minority group in New Zealand and are considered the indigenous peoples of the country. As such, intergroup politics in New Zealand is dominated by debates over the historical and contemporary relationship between Māori and the descendants of European settler-colonists (and especially debates about resource distribution between the two groups; e.g. see Brash, 2004). Moreover, our sample includes more than three times as many Māori as any other ethnic minority group ($N = 1168$), a number that, as a proportion of the overall sample, closely matches the proportion of Māori in the general population (i.e. 14%; Statistics New Zealand 2013). Thus, Māori are the disadvantaged ethnic group for whom our data afford us the highest statistical power. For these reasons, the remainder of the studies in this thesis focus on the antecedents and consequences of system justification among Māori in particular.

Among the antecedents of system justification reviewed in Chapter 1, its interpersonal antecedents are among the least studied. SJT proposes that people justify the system, in part, to maintain a sense of shared reality with valued individuals and groups (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008). Members of high-status groups in society represent such socially valued individuals (Cheung et al., 2011). Thus, the disadvantaged might be expected to justify the system partly because it enables them to develop social bonds with members of dominant groups (see also Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994). Indeed, in the only study to directly

test this idea, Cheung et al. (2011) found that casual contact with a high-status individual increased system justification among low status individuals.

Several studies from the vast literature on Intergroup Contact Theory also provide suggestive evidence, showing that contact with the dominant group can have so-called *sedative effects* for members of disadvantaged groups, reducing their motivation to challenge systemic inequalities (see Dixon et al., 2012 for a review). These consequences of outgroup contact closely mirror the hypothesised political consequences of system justification for members of disadvantaged groups (i.e. reduced support for political mobilization in favour of their group's interests). Studies on the sedative effects of outgroup contact therefore raise the possibility that contact with the dominant group can be an important antecedent of system justification among the disadvantaged.

However, an SJT perspective has not previously been applied to understanding these sedative effects. In the following study, I integrate the two large literatures on Intergroup Contact and System Justification, by testing the proposition that contact with the dominant group can have system-justifying consequences for members of subordinate groups. More specifically, I will test whether the contact that Māori have with European New Zealanders reduces support for policy preferences that would benefit Māori *because* it increases subscription to a system justifying ideology (i.e. ethnic-specific Meritocracy).

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Abstract

Contact with the dominant group can increase opposition, among the disadvantaged, to social policies that would benefit their group. This effect can be explained in terms of contact promoting support for an ideology of meritocracy, which privileges the distribution of societal resources based on individual merit, rather than group-level disadvantage. We tested this ideological mechanism in a large, nationally representative sample of Māori (a disadvantaged group in New Zealand; $N = 1,008$). Positive intergroup contact with the dominant group (New Zealand Europeans) predicted increased opposition to a topical reparative policy (Māori ownership of the foreshore), and this was fully mediated by increased support for the ideology of meritocracy. Intergroup contact may enable the ideological legitimization of inequality among members of disadvantaged groups, engendering political attitudes that are detrimental to their group's interests. Contact with ingroup members had the opposite effect, increasing support for reparative policy by reducing subscription to meritocratic ideology.

Perpetuating one's own disadvantage: Intergroup contact enables the ideological legitimization of inequality

System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) posits that political behaviour is driven, not just by self- and group-interest, but by a need to rationalize and legitimize existing sociopolitical systems, even in the face of inequality. The theory predicts that ironically, under certain circumstances, this motivation to justify the system is strongest among people who suffer the greatest systemic disadvantage (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003). While this enhanced system-justification effect among the disadvantaged has been replicated many times and in several countries⁴ (e.g., Henry & Saul, 2006; Sengupta & Sibley, 2013⁵), exploration of the contextual factors that might increase or attenuate this tendency has been limited (see Saguy & Chernyak-Hai, 2012).

Recent research suggests that one such contextual variable that might lead the disadvantaged to adopt system-justifying political attitudes is the amount of positive contact they have with advantaged-group members. For example, several studies have found that increased contact with the dominant group reduces support for reparative social policies

⁴ The current article was published before Brandt's (2013) study which questioned the robustness of status-legitimacy effects, and before my attempt to reconcile his findings with prior research (see preceding chapter). Therefore, my arguments about status-legitimacy effects here, reflect the state of knowledge about these effects at the time that this article was published. Although the arguments in this article refer to the enhanced system justification motive among the disadvantaged, they do not *require* that members of these groups be more motivated to justify the system than the advantaged. All that is required is that the system justification motive should operate not only among advantaged groups, but also among disadvantaged groups.

⁵ In the current article, which is an unaltered reproduction of the published manuscript, "Sengupta and Sibley (2013)" refers to an earlier version of the manuscript presented in the preceding chapter (i.e. Sengupta et al., 2015b). Again, this version was too early to take into account Brandt's (2013) findings. Therefore the way in which the findings of Sengupta and Sibley (2013) is discussed in the current article, reflects my understanding of status-legitimacy effects at that time. Again however, this does not significantly alter the general argument presented here.

among the disadvantaged and decreases their motivation to engage in collective action to advance their interests (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009). Although this effect is well documented, the study of the mechanisms driving it has focused on socio-cognitive processes such as reduced ingroup identification, improved outgroup evaluations, and perceptions of discrimination (see Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010, for a review).

In addition to these processes, viewing the system-bolstering effects of contact through the lens of SJT highlights the need to consider the mediating role of *ideology* in explaining them. Research on SJT has shown that one of the most effective ways for people to fulfill their system-justification motivation is to subscribe to ideologies that make social inequality seem legitimate (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). One such ideology is that of “equality-as-meritocracy,” which positions inequality as arising from differences in individual merit, rather than from historical, group-based disparities (McCoy & Major, 2007; Sibley & Wilson, 2007). People who subscribe to this ideology tend to prefer outcome allocations based on the deservingness of individuals, rather than those based on the disadvantage associated with one’s group-membership (Son Hing et al., 2011). Indeed, endorsement of a meritocratic ideology has been found to predict a variety of system-justifying beliefs and attitudes, especially among members of disadvantaged groups (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003; McCoy & Major, 2007).

Here, drawing from the rich, but largely independent research traditions of SJT and intergroup contact, we argue that the socio-cognitive consequences of contact increase the system-justification motivation among the disadvantaged, leading them to ideologically bolster the status quo. Thus, ideology forms the “missing link” in the mechanism through which interactions between individuals shape the political attitudes that help perpetuate societal-level inequalities (see also Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). Specifically, we

predict that positive contact with the dominant group will increase support for an ideology that privileges the merit-based distribution of societal resources, which should in turn engender opposition to specific policies aimed at remediating group-based inequality. We test this in a large sample of Māori (the indigenous group), who suffer considerable socioeconomic disadvantage relative to the now dominant group—New Zealand Europeans. Māori in New Zealand have been victims of historical injustice perpetrated by European settler-colonists, and in contemporary society, fair worse than Europeans on various socioeconomic indicators, including income, employment, political representation, and incarceration rates (see Sibley & Ward, 2013, for review).

System Justification Theory

Nearly two decades of research on SJT has provided support for the central premise that there exists a general ideological motive to perceive the status quo – the socio-political systems under which one lives – as fair and just (see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004, for a review). For example, it has been found that people use various ideologies and stereotypes to legitimize group-based differences in social status (Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost & Hunyady, 2005), defend the status quo in response to threats to it (Ledgerwood, Mandisodza, Jost, & Pohl, 2011), and accept weak, pseudo-explanations for prevailing social inequality (Haines & Jost, 2000). This desire to justify the system is driven by people's inherent, epistemic need for order and structure (Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009), and buffers them against the negative emotional consequences of living in an unfair world (Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007).

A somewhat counterintuitive prediction derived from SJT is that sometimes the victims of systemic inequality have the strongest motivation to bolster the very status quo that disadvantages them. This prediction is drawn from research on cognitive dissonance theory, which has shown that those who are most deprived have the strongest need to

rationalize their own suffering, to reduce dissonance (Wicklund & Brehm, 1976). In the context of intergroup relations, such dissonance arises from the competing motivations of subordinate- group members to advance their self- and group-interests, and to justify the unequal system in which their group is at a disadvantage (Jost et al., 2004). Psychologically, it is much easier for them to resolve this dissonance by making internal attributions for their disadvantage, rather than acknowledging that society is inherently unfair (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kluegel & Smith, 1986).

Consistent with this argument, several studies have shown that members of lower-status groups can show more pronounced system-justifying attitudes relative to higher-status group members. For example, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) found that African Americans and people on low incomes were more likely than others to legitimize economic inequality as being necessary, and support restrictions on the rights of citizens to criticize the government. Similarly, Henry and Saul (2006) found that low-status children in Bolivia held stronger beliefs about the government's ability to meet the needs of its citizens than higher-status children. In New Zealand, results from a large, nationally representative sample showed that members of Asian and Pacific minority groups, who experience the highest levels of interpersonal discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantage, believed New Zealand society was fairer than European New Zealanders did (Sengupta & Sibley, 2013).

However, the phenomenon of enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged remains contentious and is not always observed. Several influential theories of intergroup relations including social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and realistic group conflict theory (Campbell, 1965) propose that while members of dominant groups might be motivated to bolster systems that advantage them, subordinate-group members typically reject and resist such systems in a manner consistent with self- and group-interest. Indeed, a large body of research in support of these

perspectives has suggested that subordinate-group members are more inclined to challenge status hierarchies than dominants (Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005; see Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011, for a meta-analytic review).

Furthermore, research on collective action has demonstrated that the experience of systemic injustice against one's ingroup motivates resistance to the status quo among the disadvantaged (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). In fact, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) who provided some of the most compelling evidence for enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged acknowledged that the disadvantaged are not "always (even ordinarily) the most likely ones to provide ideological support for the system" (p. 17). Instead, SJT predicts that the disadvantaged are most likely to display enhanced system justification, specifically when the salience of self- and group-interest is low (Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001). Here, we argue that the psychological consequences of positive intergroup contact serve to reduce the salience of self- and group-interest, thus enhancing the system-justification motive.

Intergroup Contact and System Justification

The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) starts from the premise that intergroup problems stem primarily from ignorant, negative attitudes displayed by dominant groups towards subordinate groups. The solution it proposes is for prejudiced individuals to come into contact with the targets of their prejudice under conditions of equal status, cooperative interdependence, common goals, and institutional support. This serves to dispel their ignorance and improve outgroup attitudes. Indeed, as reported in Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of 696 samples, five decades of empirical work has provided strong evidence that increased outgroup contact, under optimal conditions, is associated with more favorable evaluations of outgroups.

Pettigrew (1998) postulated that the considerable benefits of positive contact are

accrued through a process of changing category salience over time, culminating in recategorization into to a superordinate category (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989). This involves the interactants viewing themselves as belonging to an overarching group that consists of the ingroup and outgroup. Achieving this superordinate categorization allows processes of favoritism usually reserved for ingroup members to be extended to members of the now-included outgroup (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). This mechanism has received considerable empirical support from studies showing that greater positive contact does indeed promote superordinate categorization, and thereby, more positive outgroup evaluations (e.g., Lipponen & Leskinen, 2006; see also Dovidio, Gaertner, Saguy, & Halabi, 2008, for a review). Specifically relevant to our analysis of minority-group processes, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Mönen, and Liebkind (2012) found that Russian immigrants to Finland identified more strongly with the superordinate Finnish national category as a function of the quality of contact they had with the native Finnish outgroup.

However, by reducing the salience of their stigmatized social identity, while increasing the salience of a common superordinate identity shared with the dominant group, this recategorization process can have insidious political consequences for the disadvantaged (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrhiem, 2012; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009). For example, Greenaway, Quinn, and Louis (2011) showed that priming a sense of common identification with the dominant group led Aboriginal Australians to identify less strongly with their own group, and consequently reduced their intentions to engage in collective action to redress the historical injustice perpetrated by European settler-colonists. This highlights that a strong sense of identification with a stigmatized group is an essential precursor to recognizing intergroup inequality, which motivates political action for social change (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Indeed, it has been found that positive contact prevents subordinate groups from

recognizing the inequality inherent in their socio-political relationship with the dominant group, reducing their motivation to act in their group's interests (Saguy et al., 2009; see Dixon et al., 2012, for a review). For example, Dixon, Durrheim et al. (2010) found that Black South Africans reported reduced levels of perceived discrimination as a function of their contact with Whites. Extending this model, a longitudinal analysis by Tropp, Hawi, van Laar, and Levin (2012) revealed that positive contact with White Americans decreased ethnic activism among Latinos and Blacks over time, mediated by lowered perceptions of racial discrimination. In the most comprehensive test of the process outlined here, Cakal, Hewstone, Schwär, and Heath (2011) found that contact with White South Africans reduced ingroup identification among Black South Africans, thereby reducing perceptions of ingroup deprivation, leading to reduced support for political behaviors that would benefit their group. Thus, contact lowers the salience of self- and group-interest directly, through its effects on the social categorization process, and indirectly through its effects on perceptions of inequality. According to SJT, the consequence of this reduced identity salience is the enhancement of the system-justification motive (Jost et al., 2004).

The Role of Ideology

How do disadvantaged-group members go about fulfilling this enhanced motive, even in the face of the inequality they suffer? SJT suggests they do this by subscribing to ideologies that allow them to rationalize social inequality as being legitimate and necessary (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). One powerful ideology that enables them to do this is that of "equality as meritocracy," which positions equality as being primarily a question of procedural fairness between individuals, as opposed to distributive fairness between groups (Sibley & Wilson, 2007). We argue that by reducing the issue of equality down to the level of the individual, the ideology of meritocracy allows members of subordinate groups to resolve the cognitive dissonance resulting from being a victim of systemic disadvantage and

simultaneously needing to justify that unequal system. As mentioned earlier, this dissonance is most easily resolved by attributing the origins of one's disadvantage to personal factors (e.g., lack of effort) while clinging more strongly to a belief in systemic fairness—a sentiment akin to, “If only I try hard enough, this fair and meritocratic system will reward me.”

This propensity of subordinate-group members to internalize their disadvantage is evident in the phenomenon of “depressed entitlement.” For example, it has been found that women internalize gender inequality by judging their own work as worth less than their male counterparts do (Jost, 1997). Similarly, people employed in lower-paying jobs internalize economic inequality by reporting that they deserve less for their work on difficult tasks than do people employed in higher-paying jobs (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). The core premise of the meritocratic ideology is that differences in status reflect differences in individual merit or deservingness (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Thus, subscribing to this ideology further enables the tendency of the disadvantaged to make internal attributions for the inequality they face.

Two studies by McCoy and Major (2007) provide direct evidence for this ability of the meritocratic ideology to promote internalization of inequality. In their first study, members of a lower-status group (women) primed with the idea of a meritocratic system were more likely to blame rejection by a higher-status group member (men) on themselves, rather than seeing it as gender-based discrimination. In their second study, women who were provided information on gender inequality and then primed with meritocracy were more likely to explain this inequality by self-stereotyping their own group as incompetent and minimizing the role of systemic sexism. This dovetails with recent research showing that subscription to other kinds of system-justifying ideologies and attitudes (e.g., benevolent sexism, social dominance orientation, political conservatism) can also lead members of disadvantaged groups to internalize inequality by applying the negative stereotypes

associated with their group to themselves and behaving in stereotype-consistent ways (Calogero & Jost, 2011; Cheung & Hardin, 2010).

Contact and Ideology

Here, we argue that contact enhances the tendency of disadvantaged-group members to internalize inequality and subscribe to a meritocratic ideology, thus fulfilling their need to reduce ideological dissonance. It does so by drawing their attention away from group-based disparities; occluding their perception of the systemic origins of their disadvantage (Saguy et al., 2009). For example, Saguy and Chernyak-Hai (2012) found that contact reduced the propensity of subordinate-group members in laboratory and real-world settings to attribute negative treatment of ingroup members to systemic discrimination. Instead, they were more likely to attribute this treatment to internal factors (such as a lack of effort on the part of the individual being mistreated).

To the extent that the meritocratic ideology indexes a preference for internal attributions of disadvantage, intergroup contact should increase support for this ideology. By framing success within a social system as reflecting individual merit rather than group-based privilege, the meritocratic ideology also implies greater individual mobility and permeable group boundaries (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Recent research suggests that the system-justifying effects of positive contact with the dominant group are mediated by an increased perception of individual mobility among subordinate-group members (Tausch & Becker, 2012). This lends further support to our prediction that contact should increase support for meritocracy among the disadvantaged.

The Effects of Ingroup Contact

In contrast to the well-documented effects of outgroup contact on socio-political attitudes, contact with members of one's own group is rarely measured quantitatively in the intergroup literature (see Wilder & Thompson, 1980, for a notable early exception). This

reflects a general theoretical orientation that treats intragroup and intergroup processes as independent and distinct (Dovidio, Saguy, & Shnabel, 2009). However, the interactions people have with outgroup friends occur in a broader social context that includes friendships with ingroup members. Therefore, following other theorists (e.g., Dixon et al., 2012), we consider it important to examine the role of ingroup contact in shaping intergroup relations. In the absence of direct empirical evidence, we draw on the vast intergroup contact literature and recent work on the relational nature of ideology (see Hardin, Cheung, Magee, Noel, & Yoshimura, 2012) to speculatively propose that ingroup contact might have the opposite effect on system-justifying political attitudes to outgroup contact.

Since people have a limited amount of time for social interaction, it seems reasonable to assume that to some extent, ingroup contact comes at the expense of outgroup contact. As noted by Pettigrew (1998), the effects of outgroup contact can, in part, be explained in terms of reduced contact with the ingroup, as a result of increased contact with the outgroup. This reciprocal relationship between ingroup and outgroup contact is useful in understanding the potential effects of the former. To the extent that contact with the dominant group reduces the salience of self- and group-interest among the disadvantaged, by attenuating ingroup identification (Cakal et al., 2011) and reducing perceptions of ingroup disadvantage (Dixon, Durrheim, et al., 2010), thereby increasing their system-justification tendencies, ingroup contact could be expected to *increase* the salience of these interests, increasing ingroup identification and perceptions of disadvantage, thus reducing system justification. This is consistent with evidence that identifying strongly with a group influences one's ideological affinities in ways that are consistent with the collective self-interest of the group (Bobo, 1999; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004) and increases the motivation for systemic change (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

This analysis also resonates with recent theoretical and empirical developments

suggesting that people subscribe to political ideologies, in part, to meet their relational need to maintain a shared reality with positively evaluated individuals and groups (Hardin et al., 2012; Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin 2008). To do this, they automatically shift their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward desired others, to maintain and regulate the mutual understandings essential for these relationships (e.g., Davis & Rusbult, 2001), and away from undesired, disliked, or socially unimportant others (Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005).

Consistent with this notion, the literature on political socialization shows that people's "ideological opinions are tied to stable interpersonal relationships such as those involving friends and family members" (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008, p. 176). There is also evidence that identification with social groups, beyond one's friends and family, influences one's sociopolitical attitudes. For example, Haslam et al. (1996) found that the intergroup attitudes of Australians were most strongly influenced by the perceived attitudes of their fellow Australians. Similarly, Cohen (2003) found that people engage in selective information processing to attain ideological alignment with their ingroup. They presented liberals and conservatives with either a stringent or generous welfare policy and found that both groups supported whichever policy they were told was endorsed by their political ingroup, regardless of the policy's content. Together these findings indicate that ingroup bonds have a considerable impact on ideology and political attitudes.

In the case of ideologies and political attitudes that are relevant to systemic inequality, the influence of these ingroup bonds should be stronger for members of disadvantaged groups than advantaged groups. This is because the disadvantaged are often the ones who perceive inequality most acutely, and generally tend to resist existing hierarchies (Lee et al., 2011). Further, the ingroup identity of the disadvantaged is often constructed in direct contrast to the superordinate category shared by those in power and those who benefit from the hierarchy

(Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008). Therefore, disadvantaged-group members are more likely to view themselves as belonging to a group that challenges the status quo than are advantaged-group members. Bonds with others who share this identity, then, should influence the disadvantaged to adjust their ideologies and attitudes in a way that resists rather than maintains inequality.

This is especially pertinent to the focus of the present study: the ideological legitimization of the status quo by the disadvantaged in New Zealand. Māori, the disadvantaged group in this context, have been found to display the lowest levels of system-justification beliefs of all ethnic groups (Sengupta & Sibley, 2013). It has also been shown that socio-political awareness regarding the historical injustice faced by Māori at the hands of European settler-colonists forms a core part of Māori identity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010). Furthermore, Māori show strong opposition to the ideology of “Historical Negation,” which disregards the relevance of historical injustice to contemporary issues of resource distribution between groups (Sibley, 2010). Therefore, ingroup contact among Māori should bias their ideological orientations in a direction consistent with these preferences for the recognition and remediation of systemic inequality. Māori can thus be expected to oppose the ideology of meritocracy, which de-emphasizes group-based disadvantage, and support redistributive social policies as a function of the time they spend with Māori friends.

Present Study and Hypotheses

Based on the arguments presented, we hypothesize that outgroup contact among the disadvantaged will increase subscription to the ideology of “equality as meritocracy.” We also predict that this relationship will fully mediate the effect of outgroup contact on reparative policies benefiting the disadvantaged group. Further, we expect that ingroup contact will have the opposite effect, reducing support for meritocracy, and thus reducing opposition to reparative policy. We test these predictions using a large sample of indigenous

Māori in New Zealand. When the British Crown colonized New Zealand in the mid-nineteenth century, they signed the Treaty of Waitangi with Māori, which established British sovereignty over the country and granted Māori the rights of citizenship and ownership of tribal lands. However, the Crown disregarded and violated the principles of the Treaty for decades, forcefully appropriating Māori land and resources, and usurping Māori rights (Belich, 1996). The ongoing legacy of this injustice is a defining feature of intergroup relations in New Zealand. Compared with European New Zealanders, Māori fair worse on a host of socioeconomic indicators including income, employment, literacy rate, and political representation (see Sibley & Ward, 2013).

In the context of this historical disadvantage, reparations for violations of the resource provisions granted to Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi are the main redistributive social policy issues in New Zealand today. We will examine how contact and ideology correlate with one specific reparative policy, that of Māori ownership of the foreshore and seabed. More specifically, we predict that the more time Māori spend with European friends, the more strongly they will subscribe to a meritocratic ideology, which will in turn be associated with greater opposition to Māori ownership of the foreshore and seabed. This study is novel in a number of ways, chiefly that we (a) examine the association between intergroup friendship and highly contested and topical support for a specific social policy central to the group's interests, in a large nationally representative sample of disadvantaged-group members, (b) model an ideological mechanism through which ingroup and outgroup contact predict change in the policy attitudes held by disadvantaged-group members, and (c) explore contextual variation in system-justifying political attitudes.

Method

Participants and Sampling Procedure

This study analyzed data from the 2009 New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS-2009). The Time 1 (2009) NZAVS contained responses from 6518 participants sampled from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll. The electoral roll is publicly available for scientific research and, in 2009, contained 2,986,546 registered voters. This represented all citizens over 18 years of age who were eligible to vote (regardless of whether they chose to vote), barring people who had their contact details removed due to specific case-by-case concerns about privacy. The sample frame was split into three parts.

Sample Frame 1 constituted a random sample of 25,000 people from the electoral roll (4,060 respondents). Sample Frame 2 constituted a second random sample of a further 10,000 people from the electoral roll (1,609 respondents). Sample Frame 3 constituted a booster sample of 5,500 people randomly selected from meshblock area units of the country that contained a high proportion of Māori, Pacific Nations and Asian peoples (671 respondents). Meshblocks were selected using ethnic group proportions based on data from the 2006 national census. An additional 178 people responded to the survey but did not provide their contact details. As such, these respondents could not be matched to a specific sample frame. In sum, postal questionnaires were sent to 40,500 registered voters (i.e., roughly 1.36% of all registered voters in New Zealand). The overall response rate (adjusting for the address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%.

We limited our analyses to the 1,008 participants who identified as Māori and who provided complete responses to the items analyzed here (630 women, 378 men). Participants had a mean age of 43.88 years ($SD = 13.66$). Average household income was \$NZ 70,667 ($SD = 54,431$). Roughly half (52.5%) of participants were religious, 78.0% were parents, 63.5% were in a relationship or married, and 73.5% were employed. With regard to

education, 33.6% had no formal qualification, 30.7% had a secondary school qualification, 15.4% had a tertiary diploma or trade certificate, 16.4% had an undergraduate university degree, and 4.0% had a postgraduate qualification.

Questionnaire Measures

Contact was measured using the following item: “Roughly how many hours (if any) have you spent with friends from each of the following groups in the last week?” Participants entered an open-ended number in response to the question for each of five ethnic groups: Americans, NZ Europeans, Māori, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. For this analysis, outgroup contact for Māori was operationalized as hours spent with NZ European friends and ingroup contact as hours spent with Māori friends. On average, Māori spent 24.13 hours ($SD = 37.85$) with Māori friends and 25.38 hours ($SD = 33.58$) with NZ European friends.

Support for equality as meritocracy was measured using three items from a scale developed and validated by Sibley and Wilson (2007). Items were administered with the following instructions: “The statements below reflect different opinions and points of view. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement. Remember, the best answer is your own opinion” and were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The items were, “We are all New Zealanders and the law should not make provision for minority groups because of their ethnicity,” “True equality can be achieved only once we recognize that some ethnic groups are currently more disadvantaged than others and require additional assistance from the government,” and “We are all one nation and we should all be treated the same. No one should be entitled to anything more than the rest of us simply because they belong to one particular ethnic group.” For Māori, the mean scale score for support for equality as meritocracy was 4.44 ($SD = 1.57$). The Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .69$) for this scale indicated that it had reasonable internal reliability.

Participants rated their level of support versus opposition for “Māori ownership of the

foreshore and seabed” on a scale of 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support). Scores for this item were reverse-coded so that a higher score indexed greater opposition toward the policy. The mean score was 3.75 (SD = 2.19). Age, gender, and objective economic deprivation were added to the model to adjust for their effects. Deprivation was assessed by matching each participant’s neighborhood (obtained via their address) with a measure of deprivation calculated by the Ministry of Health (see White, Gunston, Salmond, Atkinson, & Crampton, 2008). This measure provides a ranked decile score (1 = most affluent; 10 = least affluent) to each local neighborhood in New Zealand (each neighborhood consists of roughly 100 people). Each decile score is derived via a principal components analysis of household income and the proportion of people living within the given neighborhood who (a) receive financial assistance, (b) rent their home, (c) are single parents, (d) are unemployed, (e) lack qualifications, (f) live in crowded housing, (g) lack telephone access, and (h) lack access to a car. The mean deprivation index for Māori was 6.33 (SD = 2.88).

Results

We tested a structural equation model in which hours with European friends predicted meritocracy beliefs. Further, a latent estimate of meritocracy beliefs was modeled as predicting opposition to reparative policy. All models were estimated using 5,000 bootstrapped resamples. Owing to our large sample size, we set the alpha level at $p = .01$ for all analyses. Because we were interested in determining full versus partial mediation, we also included the links between hours with European friends and reparative policy. The model also included links from hours with Māori friends, gender, age, and material deprivation with meritocracy and reparative policy attitudes, and therefore adjusted for the effect of ingroup contact and these demographic factors. This model is depicted in Figure 2.1 Descriptive statistics and correlations between all observed variables are presented in Table 3.1.

The model provided a reasonable fit to the observed data according to a range of indices of relative model fit: $\chi^2(12) = 39.01$, $p < .01$; standardized Root Mean Square Residual (sRMR) = .021, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .047. The sRMR and RMSEA values indicate that the model provided a reasonably parsimonious summary of the observed covariance matrix according to the rules-of thumb proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) of an RMSEA $< .06$ and a sRMR $< .08$.

As predicted, hours spent with European friends positively predicted meritocracy beliefs ($b = .009$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = .188$, $z = 4.16$, $p < .01$). Conversely, hours spent with Māori negatively predicted meritocracy beliefs ($b = -.010$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = -.239$, $z = -5.18$, $p < .01$). Meritocracy beliefs in turn were positively linked with increased opposition toward reparative policy ($b = .737$, $SE = .047$, $\beta = .556$, $z = 15.65$, $p < .01$). Tests of (bootstrapped) indirect effects indicated that, as predicted, hours with European friends predicted a significant increase in opposition to reparative policy via its positive effect on meritocratic ideology (indirect effect = .007, $\beta = .104$, $SE = .002$, $z = 4.00$, $p < .01$, 99% CI = [.038,

.171]) and hours with Māori friends predicted a significant increase in support for reparative policy via its negative effect on reparative policy (indirect effect = $-.008$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = -.133$, $z = -4.48$, $p < .01$, 99% CI = $[-.208, -.057]$). The direct effect of hours with European friends on opposition to reparative policy was non-significant when controlling for meritocratic ideology ($b = .005$, $SE = .002$, $\beta = .07$, $t = 2.22$, $p = .026$) indicating that this ideology fully mediated the effects of contact on reparative policy.

We also tested an alternative model in which the demographics, hours with European friends, and hours with Māori friends were modeled as predicting meritocracy and opposition to resource policy as independent outcomes. A chisquare difference test indicated that the hypothesized model provided a significantly better fit than the alternative model, $\chi^2(1) = 289.98$, $p < .001$. This indicated that meritocracy is more appropriately modeled as an intermediary ideology influenced by intergroup contact, which in turn predicts policy attitudes, rather than it being a distinct outcome from policy preferences.

Table 3.1
Descriptive statistics and correlations between all observed variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Gender									
2. Age	.07								
3. Deprivation	.02	.03							
4. Ingroup Contact	.02	-.05	.18*						
5. Outgroup Contact	.08*	-.04	.04	.62*					
6. Meritocracy Item 1	.02	.04	-.08*	-.11*	.02				
7. Meritocracy Item 2	.03	-.04	-.07*	-.11*	-.01	.30*			
8. Meritocracy Item 3	.00	.04	-.04	-.10*	.04	.64*	.30*		
9. Opposition to Resource Policy	.02	.03	-.17*	-.24*	-.03	.44*	.35*	.48*	
<i>M</i>	.38	43.88	6.33	24.13	25.38	4.83	3.51	4.96	3.76
<i>SD</i>	.48	13.66	2.88	37.85	33.58	2.13	1.81	2.05	2.19

* $p < .01$

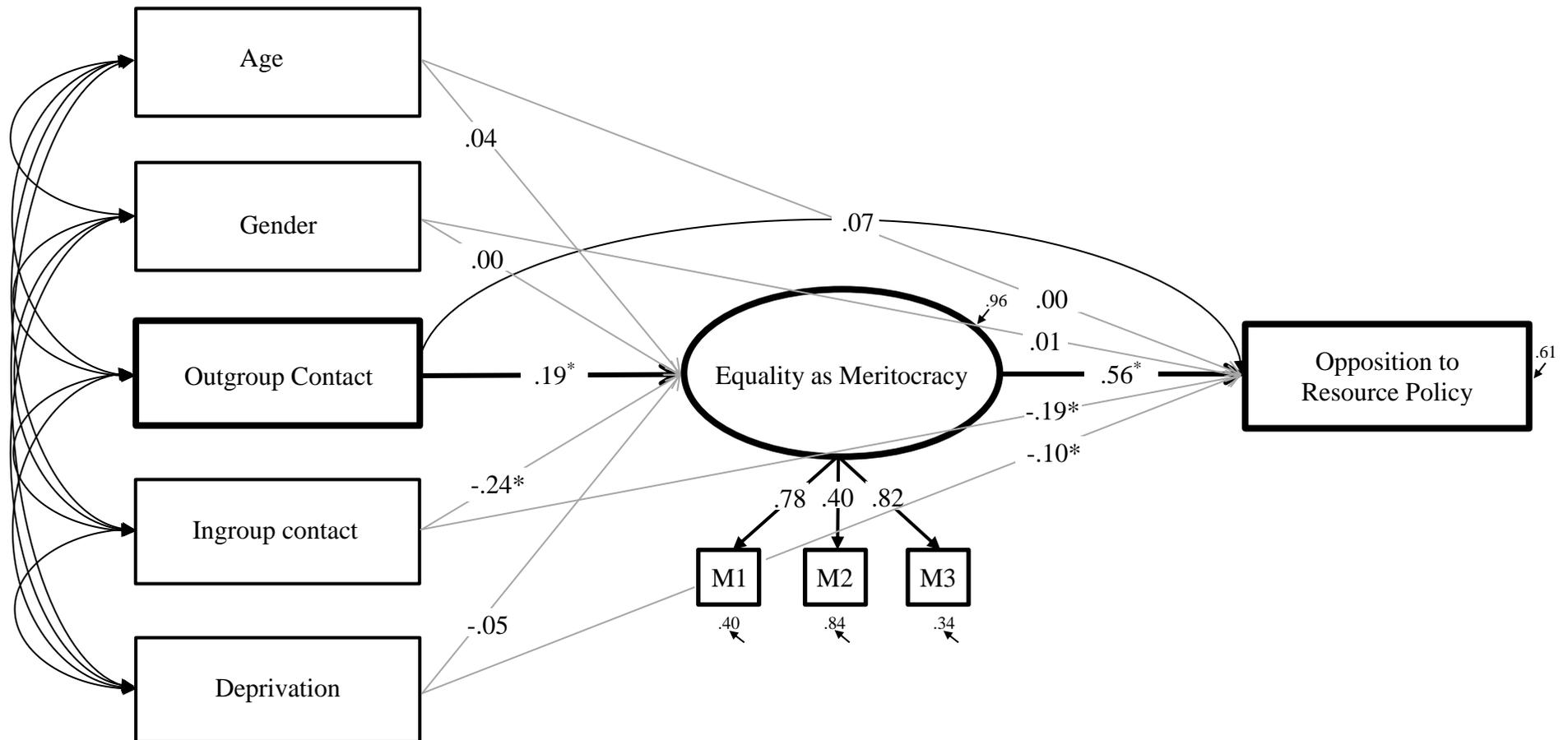


Figure 3.1. Structural equation model with standardized path coefficients predicting opposition to resource policy as a function of outgroup contact, mediated by support for the ideology of Meritocracy (*p <.01. Fit indices for the model were as follows: $\chi^2(12) = 39.01$; sRMR = .021; RMSEA = .047).

Discussion

This is the first study of its kind, modeling an ideological mechanism through which contact influences the social policy preferences of disadvantaged-group members, using a large, representative national sample. Consistent with our predictions, we found that the more time Māori spend with European friends, the more strongly they oppose redistribution of resources (in this case, land) in favor of their own group. This effect was fully mediated by their increased subscription to the ideology of meritocracy which negates group-based claims to societal resources by prescribing that such allocations should reflect individual deservingness. Overall, these findings support our argument that intergroup contact enhances subordinate-group members' already strong motivation to justify the system, a motivation which can be fulfilled by subscribing more strongly to the meritocratic ideology, which then helps justify opposition to reparative policy. Conversely, we found that the more time Māori spend with ingroup friends, the less likely they are to ideologically justify the status quo and oppose group-based reparations.

These findings add new insight into the broader context in which contact and ideology operate, by acknowledging the role of intergroup and intragroup processes in shaping intergroup relations. In integrating the perspectives of SJT and the contact hypothesis, our findings represent an important contribution to both these vast literatures. First, they serve to replicate, in the New Zealand context, the effect observed thus far in South African, Israeli, and American samples (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010; Saguy et al., 2009; Wright & Lubensky, 2009), that intergroup contact can have insidious consequences for the political attitudes of disadvantaged-group members. Positive interactions with the dominant group can cause subordinates to oppose the very measures designed to remediate the systemic injustice from which their group suffers. In explaining the psychological process underlying this tendency, our study goes beyond the socio-cognitive explanations (e.g., reduced ingroup identification,

improved outgroup evaluations) explored in past work, to consider the mediating role of ideology. It thus answers the call of several theorists for a more political conception of the consequences of intergroup contact, one which takes into account not just how contact affects intergroup attitudes, but how it might shape the ideologies that drive political behavior (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005; Jackman & Crane, 1986; Pettigrew, 2010; Reicher, 2007).

This ideological extension of the contact hypothesis has important implications for a theory described as “one of psychology’s most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations” (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003, p. 5). This assertion is based on the premise that the central problem in intergroup relations is ignorant antipathy between groups, and specifically antipathy expressed by dominants towards subordinates. The fact that contact consistently increases outgroup warmth (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) speaks to the effectiveness of this strategy. However, more harmonious intergroup relations do not necessarily translate into more equal relations (Dixon et al., 2012; Dixon, Tropp, et al., 2010). As our findings suggest, the very processes that help improve intergroup attitudes can inculcate ideological orientations and policy preferences that perpetuate intergroup inequality. Indeed, inequalities that exist in the context of relatively positive and intimate social relations between groups can be far more resistant to change than those born out of openly conflictual relations (Jackman, 1994). One reason for this, is that having positive experiences with the dominant group can prevent subordinates from perceiving them as functionaries of an unequal status quo (Reicher, 2007). For example, it has been empirically demonstrated that the warm feelings engendered by contact can increase perceptions of outgroup fairness among members of subordinate groups, perceptions that prove optimistic in light of the actual fairness demonstrated by the dominant group when allocating resources (Saguy et al., 2009).

This is especially pertinent in a country like New Zealand, where intergroup antipathy is low and interethnic friendships are relatively common (Sibley & Ward, 2013). Under such circumstances, dominant-group ideologies can be easily transmitted across intergroup boundaries, since people tune their ideological orientations towards people they share positive interpersonal relationships with (see Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008). As Jackman (1994) noted, “bonds of mutual affection” (p. 82) between groups can lead subordinate-group members to buy in to ideologies that offer them conditional inclusion into an inherently unequal relationship with the dominant group. This is particularly true when subordinates engage in contact with dominants in which the latter actively legitimize social inequality. Becker, Wright, Lubensky, and Zhou (2013) found that contact only undermined subordinates’ collective action tendencies “when the advantaged-group partner described their group’s advantaged position as legitimate or when they did not communicate their feelings about intergroup inequality (leaving them ambiguous)” (p. 442).

In New Zealand, Europeans have been found to show much stronger support than Māori for the ideology of Historical Negation, which denies the relevance of historical injustice in explaining contemporary issues of group-based inequality (Sibley, 2010). So when Māori come in contact with Europeans, they are probably, on average, exposing themselves to interaction partners who are prone to legitimize social inequality. Thus, the negative political consequences of contact for disadvantaged-group members might be especially pronounced in contexts where entrenched inequality exists in conjunction with highly prevalent hierarchy- legitimizing ideologies and relatively harmonious intergroup relations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Further, the superordinate recategorisation prompted by positive contact can lead subordinate-group members to pay less attention to the inequality inherent in their socio-political relationship with the dominant group (Saguy & Chernyak-Hai, 2012; Saguy et al., 2009). Consider, for example, that optimal contact requires equal

status between group members in the contact situation and authority support (Pettigrew, 1998). Taken together, these prescriptions imply that the individuals engaging in the contact and the institutions supporting it should ignore the power and status differences that mark the real-world relationship between the groups to which these individuals belong. The logic behind this is that attending to these differences will elicit anxiety, provoke defensive reactions, and produce the same patterns of interpersonal behavior that the contact is designed to change (Dovidio et al., 2003). However, it also means that the collective and institutional bases of inequality can go unchallenged, allowing for the denial of group rights and group-based grievances (Jackman, 1994). This is reflected in our finding that positive contact encourages the disadvantaged to ignore group-based disparities when making judgments about resource allocations in society and focus instead on individual merit.

The failure of the contact hypothesis to fully account for such ironic effects, calls into question the theoretical model of social change that underlies it; one predicated on prejudice-reduction (see also, Dixon et al., 2005). It also highlights two major asymmetries of focus in the contact literature: a focus on attitude change at the individual level and on the attitudes of dominant groups in particular. By investigating the effects of outgroup contact on subordinate-group members' ideologies and policy orientations, our study addresses these asymmetries and shows how positive interactions between individuals can have negative societal consequences, enabling the ideological legitimization of inequality. This suggests that for all its affective benefits contact can potentially hinder disadvantaged-group members' pursuit of the real structural changes (e.g., land redistribution) required to improve their lot.

The inequality-bolstering effects of contact also have important implications for system-justification theory. This theory often frames the tendency to rationalize and legitimize unequal systems as an intrinsic motivation (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Positioning system justification as a fundamental human trait forecloses any consideration of situational

factors that might serve to enhance or reduce this tendency (see Reicher, 2011). This has the effect of naturalizing inequality and making resistance seem futile—if we are all predisposed to justifying the system, how could we ever hope to change it? However, recent research has begun to suggest that several factors might explain contextual variation in the tendency to bolster the status quo, including the degree to which the system is perceived to be threatened, how inescapable it seems and how much people feel dependent on it (Kay & Friesen, 2011). Further, Sengupta and Sibley's (2013) recent findings imply that feeling part of the nation and having a strong sense of injustice suffered by one's ingroup might diminish subordinate-group members' need to rationalize their own disadvantage. The present study adds to this literature on contextual variation in system justification, showing that disadvantaged-group members' contact with the dominant group might enhance their support for system-justifying ideologies and policy preferences.

On a more positive note, one aspect of our model provides an indication of how the enhanced system-justification motive among the disadvantaged might be attenuated. We found that contact with ingroup friends was negatively related to opposition to reparative policy and that this effect was fully explained by a reduced subscription to the meritocratic ideology. This is consistent with research suggesting that ingroup contact reduces support, among Māori, for another system-justifying ideology (Symbolic Exclusion; Sibley, 2010), which functions to exclude representations of Māori identity from the national category (Sengupta, Barlow, & Sibley, 2012). It seems that the more time the disadvantaged spend with members of their own group, the less inclined they are to legitimize an unequal status quo.

These ameliorative effects of ingroup contact (*vis-à-vis* system justification), together with the potentially pernicious effects of outgroup contact highlight the need to consider an alternate model of social change; one not predicated solely on improving intergroup

attitudes. In countries like New Zealand where frequent and positive intergroup contact takes place in a context of entrenched structural inequality, engendering discontent among the victims of inequality may be a more effective strategy for achieving social change than promoting greater harmony. In an independent research tradition, psychologists studying collective action have approached the problem of intergroup inequality in terms of how the disadvantaged come to organize politically to improve their plight rather than how prejudice among the dominant group can be reduced (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2005; Klandermans, 1984; Walker & Smith, 2002). This perspective is based on the premise that equality is not achieved through endowment by the advantaged, but through the political mobilization of the disadvantaged (see Dixon et al., 2012, for a detailed analysis of these competing models of social change).

Accordingly, research in this area has shown that to engage in collective action, disadvantaged-group members must first recognize that they are victims of injustice (Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikmen, 2006), be outraged by this (van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004), and feel capable of changing their circumstances (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002). A key antecedent in this process is a strong sense of identification with the disadvantaged group (van Zomeren et al., 2008), something that might be promoted by ingroup contact and hindered by outgroup contact. Thus, our findings suggest that ingroup contact might help increase the motivation for collective action among the disadvantaged, while outgroup contact might diminish it.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study is cross-sectional, which precludes the inference of a causal direction from contact to ideological change. It is therefore possible, that people's preexisting political orientations towards redistributive social policy and beliefs about meritocracy influence their choice of friends and how the amount of time spent with them. However,

findings from elsewhere in the contact literature indicate that the direction of causality is indeed from contact to attitude change rather than vice-versa. For example, in their metaanalysis Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) addressed this issue by coding samples based on the extent to which participants could choose to engage in intergroup contact. They hypothesized that if positive attitudes predicted contact, the effect sizes should be larger for studies that allowed choice than for those that did not. However, they found that studies in which selection bias was allowed did not produce larger effect sizes. Longitudinal analyses of the effects of contact on intergroup attitudes (Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007) and ethnic activism (Tropp et al., 2012), over time, also provide support for the causal direction proposed here.

Since these data were drawn from a much larger survey, which measured a vast array of social-psychological variables, we were necessarily constrained in the length and comprehensiveness of the scales used for the specific analyses reported here. For example, we measured meritocracy using a shortened three-item version of a larger, eight-item scale developed and validated by Sibley and Wilson (2007). While this measure had good internal reliability, future research using more comprehensive measurement of ideology would serve to provide further support to the mechanism tested here. Similarly, our use of a single-item to gauge policy preferences is limited in scope and could be extended in future work to include a broader range of policy attitudes. It must be noted that our choice of redistributive policy (i.e., Māori ownership of the foreshore and seabed) reflected the highly topical and contested nature of this particular issue in contemporary New Zealand.

An important strength of our study is that it is conducted on a large, nationally representative sample of minority-group members, which is rare in the literature. Further, the particular group studied here, Māori, has been found to be unique among disadvantaged groups. For example, while other ethnic minorities in New Zealand show enhanced system

justification relative to European New Zealanders, Māori show lower levels (Sengupta & Sibley, 2013). Observing the system-justifying effects of contact among a group not as predisposed as others to bolstering the status quo represents a stringent test of our hypotheses and suggests that similar processes might be operating in other disadvantaged groups.

Conclusion

Here we have presented evidence that contact with the dominant group increases the subscription to the meritocratic ideology among disadvantaged-group members and that this leads them to express opposition to reparative policies which favor their group. In doing so, we have extended research on the potentially negative political consequences of intergroup contact and on the contextual variation of system-justification tendencies among the disadvantaged. We have also shown that ingroup and outgroup contact work in opposition to each other. These findings highlight the tension between harmony and equality in intergroup relations by showing that the same processes that promote harmony might bolster inequality. Finding ways to resolve this tension and promote social relations that are simultaneously amicable and equal is a fertile site for future research on social change.

IV. INGROUP CONTACT AND SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Study 2 (Analysis 1) suggests that contact with the dominant group could increase system-justifying tendencies among the disadvantaged. Thus, it adds to the large literature on the antecedents of system justification (reviewed in Chapter 1), by identifying another important antecedent – interpersonal bonds with members of groups that benefit from the system. An additional contribution of this analysis is that it provides an initial indication of an interpersonal factor that might counteract the system-justifying effects of outgroup contact among the disadvantaged – i.e., ingroup contact. In Study 2 (Analysis 2), I undertake more comprehensive analysis of the system-challenging consequences of ingroup contact. To do so, I use a more general measure of ethnic system justification than in Analysis 1, and a wider set of political-mobilization-related outcome variables – i.e., support for a range of affirmative action policies and for the *Māori Party*. Thus, Analysis 2 helps to further extend the literature on the relational nature of system justification. It also presents a competitive test of the predictions of SJT and a key “rival” theory in social psychology – Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1978).

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of ingroup contact in a large, national sample of Māori (a disadvantaged ethnic group; $N = 940$) on political attitudes relevant to decreasing ethnic inequality in New Zealand. We tested the role of 2 mediating mechanisms—ethnic identification and system justification—to explain the effects of ingroup contact on the dependent variables. Time spent with ingroup friends predicted increased support for the Māori Party and support for symbolic and resource-specific reparative policies benefiting Māori. These effects were partially mediated by increased ethnic identification. Although ingroup contact also reduced levels of system justification among Māori, its effects on policy attitudes and party preference were not mediated by system justification. This suggests that a key antecedent to system challenging political attitudes is an increased sense of identification with a disadvantaged group resulting, in part, from interactions with ingroup friends.

Ingroup friendship and political mobilization among the disadvantaged

In democratic societies, members of disadvantaged ethnic groups are, at least in theory, able to challenge existing inequalities through the political process—by supporting policies aimed at remediating group-based disadvantage and voting for parties that would enact such policies. In these societies, identifying the antecedents of support for reparative policies, and for the parties that promote them, becomes the key to understanding how the victims of inequality can push for social change. Research on political mobilization (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) and on the relational nature of political preferences (Hardin, Cheung, Magee, Noel, & Yoshimura, 2012) has implicated the role of strong ingroup bonds in determining social-change-related attitudes among the disadvantaged. However, the immediate contextual antecedents of these bonds are less clearly understood. For example, the vast literature on the role of identity processes in motivating collective action usually treats group identification as the conceptual and empirical starting point in the causal chain leading to social change intentions, without much consideration of what might produce a stronger or weaker sense of identification (see Barlow, Sibley, & Hornsey, 2012; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2010, for important exceptions to this general theoretical orientation).

In this article we address this point and extend recent analyses (Sengupta, Barlow, & Sibley, 2012; Sengupta & Sibley, 2013) by proposing that everyday interactions with ingroup friends are a key predictor of political mobilization among the disadvantaged (assessed in terms of reparative policy preferences and political party support). Drawing from research on the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) we also investigated the role of two potential mediating mechanisms to explain the hypothesized effects of ingroup contact on political

preferences—increased ingroup identification and reduced system justification. Three decades of research leading up to the development of SIMCA has shown that a strong sense of identification with a disadvantaged group is an essential precursor to social change intentions (van Zomeren et al., 2008). We argue that contact between members of groups will bond them together, increasing the extent to which they identify as a group member. For minority group members (the focus of the current study), this should result in an increase in system-challenging political attitudes.

In contrast to the social identity account of collective action, SJT posits that system challenging political attitudes among the disadvantaged are determined by the relative salience of two competing motives—a motive to advance one’s group interests and a motive to justify the status quo (Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001). Victims of systemic disadvantage are most likely to challenge inequality when the salience of group interest is high and the salience of the system justification motive is low (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). SJT would predict that ingroup contact will increase system challenging political attitudes to the extent that it simultaneously increases ingroup identification and reduces system justification among the disadvantaged (see also Jost et al., 2012). Again, we argue that from this perspective, ingroup contact should motivate collective action. The more time minority group members spend with one another, reflecting on shared experiences and realities, the less likely they might be to justify a social system that puts them at a disadvantage (something that relative isolation from other minority group members might encourage). As such, we suggest that it is possible that ingroup contact will decrease system justification and subsequently motivate support for political policies promoting intergroup equality.

We test these predictions in a large, nationally representative sample of Māori, a disadvantaged ethnic minority in New Zealand (NZ). In doing so, we seek to contribute to an increased understanding of how one’s immediate interpersonal context can influence the

sociopolitical attitudes that shape the distribution of power and resources in democratic societies. In particular, we aim to shed light on how ingroup friendships may engender increased support for social-change-related political preferences among the disadvantaged. This work extends recent findings indicating that ingroup contact can shift the ideological positions of minority groups toward the recognition of, and opposition to social inequality (Sengupta et al., 2012; Sengupta & Sibley, 2013). Going beyond the narrow set of ideologies included in these prior studies, in the present analysis we aim to explore the effects of ingroup contact on a wide range of political attitudes, and test two potential mechanisms underlying them: increased identification with the group and reduced support for the social system.

The Relational Nature of Political Attitudes

Evidence for the role of ingroup bonds in shaping political attitudes comes from recent work on the relational nature of political ideologies and policy preferences (Hardin et al., 2012). Shared reality theory (Hardin & Higgins, 1996) proposes that people are motivated to achieve shared understandings of the social world with important others to (a) meet their relational need for affiliation and (b) obtain the type of social validation that allows them to view their environments as stable and predictable. To fulfil this motivation, people automatically “‘tune’ relationship relevant attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours toward others in desired or obligatory relationships so as to create and protect those common understandings on which the relationships depend” (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008, p. 173). At the interpersonal level, evidence for this tuning process comes from studies showing that people display characteristics and behaviors consistent with individuals and groups that are psychologically salient (e.g., Cesario, Plaks, & Higgins, 2006), and adjust their self-evaluations to align themselves with the views of significant others (e.g., Sinclair, Dunn, & Lowery, 2005).

Applying this perspective to the political domain, Jost, Ledgerwood and Hardin (2008) argued that political ideologies and attitudes were subject to shared reality processes because they too served a relational function, by providing people a sense of affiliation, and an epistemic function, by helping structure the social world (see also Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). Thus, to the extent that these attitudes reflect mutual understandings of the political landscape, people should automatically shift their political opinions and orientations toward those of valued individuals and groups. Consistent with this argument, the vast literature on political socialization has shown that political attitudes and behaviour, especially among adolescents and young adults, are strongly influenced by those of their family and friends (see Sears & Levy, 2003 for a review). Further, Jost, Ledgerwood and Hardin (2008) demonstrated that this social influence is exerted via a process of “automatic tuning,” as proposed by shared reality theory. They found that people unconsciously adjusted their ideological orientations to be more liberal or more conservative depending on whether the relationship with a liberal or conservative parent was primed. This shows that the salience of a significant social relationship can shape political attitudes in a direction that helps maintain the shared understanding required for that relationship.

Beyond family and the immediate peer group, affiliation with broader social categories and groups also can influence political attitudes. For example, Conover and Feldman (1981) found that positive evaluations of conservatives or liberals as social groups partially predicted ideological self-placement along the conservative-liberal ideological dimension. Ledgerwood and Chaiken (2007) demonstrated that people expressed stronger support for the positions of the political party they are affiliated with, when their party identification is primed. They also found that this attitude alignment was contingent on the degree of perceived closeness felt toward the social group with whom the relative alignment (or lack thereof) was being made, highlighting the importance of identity strength in the

alignment process. This is also evident in Sinclair et al.'s (2005) findings that children's racial attitudes correlated with their parents' to the extent that they identified strongly with them.

The power of social identity is further evidenced in Haslam and colleagues' (1996) finding that the attitudes of Australians toward Americans and Australians were strongly influenced by the perceived attitudes of other Australians but not those of non-Australians. Cohen (2003) demonstrated that self-identified liberals and conservatives selectively processed policy information to align themselves with their party's perceived position. Presented with either a stringent or liberal welfare policy, they supported whichever one they were told their party endorsed, regardless of the content. Together, these findings suggest that information about the attitudes shared by members of a salient ingroup influences people's political attitudes at the individual level. Further, this influence exerts itself through a mechanism of motivated, biased information processing, contingent on the strength of identification with the relevant ingroup.

How do people gain and share such information about consensually held attitudes? Part of this process involves the top-down influence of political elites, who construct the content and meaning of a group's identity through rhetoric, in the service of various political goals (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). These constructions prescribe norms for attitudes and behaviours that are considered consistent with the group's identity (e.g., Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, & Levine, 2006; Reicher, Haslam, & Rath, 2008). A contrasting route to arriving at a shared understanding of normative attitudes is through a bottom-up process of social interaction with other group members (Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005). It is this process that is of central relevance to the present analysis of the impact of ingroup friendships on the political attitudes of the disadvantaged.

Research on interactions in small groups has shown that communication between

group members in the context of a shared social identity can result in consensually shared attitudes about the ingroup and out-groups, and generate norms for intergroup behavior (e.g., Haslam et al., 1998; Stott & Drury, 2004; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). For example, Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, and Turner (1999) showed that intragroup discussion increased consensus regarding stereotypes applied both to one's own group and various out-groups. Moreover, these discussions led not only to alignment of attitudes, but to greater polarization in a direction consistent with perceived group norms. This polarization was all the more pronounced when ingroup identity was made salient. Indeed, in their review of the literature on intragroup discussions, Postmes et al. (2005) concluded that "the capacity for cognition to be shared is only realized to the extent that a shared social identity is salient" (p. 14) and that "identity-related forms of social influence are strongly implicated in the formation of shared perceptions of reality" (p. 19).

Crucial to the present analysis, it has been found that intragroup communication predicts not just attitude alignment, but increased consensus about engaging in collective action to further one's group interests in the face of inequality. For example, Stott and Drury (2004) found that after within-group discussion, low-status group members who were placed in a context of injustice (i.e. impermeable group boundaries), formed consensual positive views of the ingroup and showed a preference for collective behavioural strategies over individual-level strategies to remediate the inequality. This suggests that communication helps build a shared notion of ingroup identity and also galvanizes action in service of that identity. This is consistent with our prediction that ingroup contact among the disadvantaged will increase the strength of ingroup identification and consequently increase political mobilization.

The New Zealand Context

As alluded to in the preceding section, contact with ingroup members should shift

individuals' attitudes in a direction that enables alignment with the perceived norms for the group. In line with social categorization theory, this suggests that the nature of social influence will be determined by the content of the relevant ingroup identity (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). We must therefore consider the context in which the ethnic identity under investigation in this study developed.

Here, we analyse contact and attitudes among Māori, the largest ethnic minority group in New Zealand. Māori were the first humans to settle in New Zealand, and like other indigenous peoples, their culture was put under tremendous pressure with the arrival of large numbers of European settler/colonists in the 19th century (primarily from Great Britain; King, 2007). A landmark event that makes New Zealand unique in the imperial context was the signing of a treaty between the British Crown and the Māori chiefs in 1840. In what is widely considered the most important moment in New Zealand history, the Treaty of Waitangi established British sovereignty over the country and granted Māori the rights of citizenship and ownership of tribal lands (King, 2007). However, disagreements over translation and interpretation of the Treaty led to ongoing conflict between Māori and Europeans. Moreover, the Crown disregarded and violated the principles of the Treaty for decades, forcefully appropriating Māori land and resources, usurping Māori rights and promoting cultural assimilation (Belich, 1996).

This historical injustice has had a lasting impact on the socioeconomic and political landscape of New Zealand. Māori still suffer considerable disadvantage relative to European New Zealanders in several domains including income, employment, incarceration rates, morbidity/mortality, and wellbeing (The Social Report, 2010). For example, the youth unemployment among Māori in 2010 was 26%, while among Europeans it was 14%. Further, Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, and Bonne (2003) showed that although the overall mortality rate in New Zealand had fallen in the two decades between 1980 and 1999, the gap

between Māori and Europeans had increased. Given this context, compensation for historic violations of the Treaty and remediation of contemporary socioeconomic inequality are the defining issues of intergroup politics in New Zealand.

Research on the content of Māori identity has suggested that these political issues lie at the heart of what it means to be Māori (Vaughan, 1978). Houkamau and Sibley's (2010) Multi-Dimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement revealed that, along with dimensions such as spirituality and cultural efficacy, a Sociopolitical Consciousness factor also emerged. This dimension indexed the perceived relevance of historical injustice to contemporary Māori, and the willingness to engage in political action to advance Māori interests. Houkamau and Sibley (2010) emphasized the importance of this dimension of Māori identity, and demonstrated that it was the most strongly linked to ethnic identity centrality (more so than the links between ethnic identity centrality and either spirituality or cultural efficacy). In a similar vein, Sibley (2010) demonstrated that Māori were strongly opposed to the ideology of Historical Negation, which functions to deny the relevance of historical injustice to contemporary issues of resource distribution in society.

Together, these findings suggest that the content of Māori identity is particularly politicized. Based on the analyses in the preceding section, we expect that interactions between Māori friends will further strengthen consensus around this highly political conception of Māori identity. This normative alignment should then predict increased political mobilization. In other words, the shared reality processes engaged during contact should shift Māori political attitudes in a direction consistent with their general preference for the recognition and remediation of entrenched inequality. This prediction is further supported by research showing that it is specifically when an identity gets politicized in this manner, that collective action intentions are the strongest (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Thomas & McGarty, 2009).

System Justification Theory

The arguments presented thus far, are consistent with the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008). This model proposes that the most important antecedent to political mobilization is a strong sense of identification with a disadvantaged social group. Social identification increases people's awareness of the inequality faced by their group and enables relatively powerless individuals to feel as if they have the collective ability to resist this inequality (see also Drury & Reicher, 2005).

Consistent with this formulation, van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis found that social identity predicted collective action directly and indirectly through its effects on perceived inequality and perceived efficacy. Applied to the present analysis, SIMCA would predict that political mobilization among Māori would arise from contact among Māori, to the extent that contact increases their ethnic identification.

However, an assumption underlying SIMCA and the theoretical traditions from which it is drawn is that advantaged and disadvantaged group members generally have different orientations toward the status quo. Advantaged group members, who benefit from the status quo, are generally assumed to be motivated to preserve it, whereas the disadvantaged are seen as generally driven to oppose the status quo to advance their group's position. On the other hand, SJT proposes that in addition to their divergent group based motives, the advantaged and the disadvantaged share a common motivation to legitimize and bolster the systems under which they live (Jost & Banaji, 1994). More than a decade of research on SJT has provided considerable evidence for the existence of this general system justification motive in both advantaged and disadvantaged groups (see Jost et al., 2004, for a review).

The group interests of the advantaged align with their motive to preserve the status quo that, by definition, benefits their group. However, for the disadvantaged their motive to

enhance group interest conflicts with their motive to justify the very system that disadvantages them (Jost, Burgess & Mosso, 2001). SJT thus proposes that the key to determining when the disadvantaged will and will not challenge the status quo lies in understanding how the conflict between the group and system motives is resolved (Jost et al., 2004). When the salience of group interest is low, the disadvantaged might justify the system strongly, sometimes even more so than the advantaged (e.g., Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003). On the other hand, it can be expected that system challenge is most likely to occur when the salience of the group interest is high and the system justification motive is low. This is supported by recent evidence that being asked to think about ways the system could be challenged (i.e., a system rejection prime), increases intentions to engage in collective protest, mediated by a concurrent increase in ingroup identification and a decrease in system justification (Jost et al., 2012). From the perspective of SJT then, ingroup contact among Māori can be expected to increase political mobilization to the extent that it *simultaneously* increases ethnic identification and reduces system justification.

Preliminary evidence that ingroup contact might, in fact, serve to diminish the system justification motive comes from recent studies showing that contact between Māori decreases their subscription to various system justifying ideologies. For example, Sengupta, Barlow, and Sibley (2012) found that ingroup contact decreased support among Māori for an ideology that excludes their own culture from representations of New Zealand identity (symbolic exclusion; Sibley, 2010). Sengupta and Sibley (2013) found that the more time Māori spend with ingroup friends, the less likely they are to subscribe to the ideology of Meritocracy, which downplays the relevance of group-based inequality.

Present Study and Hypotheses

Here we test a model in which contact with ingroup friends predicts political mobilization, in a large nationally representative sample of disadvantaged group members

(Māori, $N = 940$). We operationalize political mobilization in terms of three variables: (a) support for symbolic reparative policies (e.g., increasing the profile of Māori culture in New Zealand), (b) support for resource-specific policies (e.g., Māori ownership of tribal lands), and (c) support for the Māori party. Based on research on the relational nature of political attitudes, we predict that ingroup contact will increase political mobilization among Māori. Drawing from the evidence in support of SIMCA, we predict that this effect will be mediated by increased ethnic identification. Finally, drawing from the SJT perspective, we predict that the effect of ingroup contact on political mobilization will also be mediated by a decrease in system justification beliefs among Māori. We tested these predictions by estimating a structural equation model that statistically adjusted for hours of contact with out-group friends, along with a range of demographic covariates including age, gender, objective neighbourhood-level deprivation, education, and political orientation.

Method

Sampling Procedure

This study analyzed data from the 2009 New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS–2009). The Time 1 (2009) NZAVS contained responses from 6518 participants sampled from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll. The electoral roll is publicly available for scientific research and, in 2009, contained 2,986,546 registered voters. This represented all citizens over 18 years of age who were eligible to vote (regardless of whether they chose to vote), barring people who had their contact details removed due to specific case-by-case concerns about privacy. The sample frame was split into three parts.

Sample Frame 1 constituted a random sample of 25,000 people from the electoral roll (4,060 respondents). Sample Frame 2 constituted a second random sample of a further 10,000 people from the electoral roll (1,609 respondents). Sample Frame 3 constituted a booster sample of 5,500 people randomly selected from meshblock area units of the country that contained a high proportion of Māori, Pacific Nations and Asian peoples (671 respondents). Meshblocks were selected using ethnic group proportions based on data from the 2006 national census. An additional 178 people responded to the survey but did not provide their contact details. As such, these respondents could not be matched to a specific sample frame. In sum, postal questionnaires were sent to 40,500 registered voters (i.e., roughly 1.36% of all registered voters in New Zealand). The overall response rate (adjusting for the address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%.

Participant Details

The NZAVS–2009 contained responses from 6,518 participants. We limited our analysis to 940 participants (575 women, 365 men) who identified as Māori and completed the relevant items. The mean age of the participants in this sample was 44.12 years ($SD = 13.43$). In terms of other demographic factors, 98.5% of the sample was born in New

Zealand, and 45.2% identified as religious. Most participants had at least one child, 78.6%, and 67% were in a romantic relationship. The majority of participants were in some form of paid employment, 76%. In terms of education, 33.2% did not report their highest level of education or said they had no education, 31.5% reported at least some high school, 14.3% reported having studied toward a diploma or certificate, 16.5% reported having studied at undergraduate level, and 4.6% reported having pursued postgraduate study. Participants provided their postal address, and we used this information to identify the level of economic deprivation of the immediate area in which each participant resided. The New Zealand deprivation index allocates a deprivation score to each mesh block based on a principal components analysis of nine variables using census data. These are (in weighted order): proportion of adults receiving a means-tested government supplied benefit, household income, proportion not owning own home, proportion of single-parent families, proportion unemployed, proportion lacking qualifications, proportion living with household crowding, proportion with no telephone access, and proportion with no car access. The index thus reflects the average level of deprivation of different small neighbourhoods or community areas across the country (Salmond, Crampton, & Atkinson, 2007). We used the percentile deprivation index, which gives an ordinal score from 1 (most affluent) to 10 (most deprived) for each mesh block area unit based on 2006 census data (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). The mean score on this measure of deprivation in our sample was 6.23 (SD = 2.92).

Questionnaire Measures

Contact was measured using the following item: “Roughly how many hours (if any) have you spent with friends from each of the following groups in the last week?” Participants entered an open-ended response to the question for each of five ethnic groups: Americans, NZ Europeans, Māori, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. For this analysis, ingroup contact was operationalized as hours spent with Māori friends, and out-group contact, as hours spent with

friends from all other ethnic groups. Ethnic identification was assessed using the following three items. They were scored using Leach et al. (2008) scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): “I often think about the fact that I am a member of my ethnic group.” “The fact that I am a member of my ethnic group is an important part of my identity.” “Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of how I see myself.”

Two items from the scale developed by Kay and Jost (2003) were used to assess system justification: “In general, the New Zealand political system operates as it should” and “In general, I find New Zealand society to be fair.” Items were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Support for resource specific policies was measured using four items, rated on a scale from 1 (strongly opposed) to 7 (strongly support): “Māori ownership of the seabed and foreshore”; “Reserving places for Māori students to study medicine”; “Rates exemptions on Māori land”; and “Crown (government) ownership of the seabed and foreshore.” Support for symbolic policies also was measured using four items, rated on a scale from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support): “Performance of the Haka at international sports events.” “Waitangi Day as a national celebration of biculturalism”; “Teaching Māori language in New Zealand primary schools.” “Singing the national anthem in Māori and English.” Support for the Māori Party was measured as a single item using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support).

Finally, a range of demographic variables was included in the model. These were: political orientation (measured as self-ratings on a scale from 1 [very liberal], to 7 [very conservative]), gender (coded as 0 female, 1 male), age, the NZDep2006 index measure of neighbourhood deprivation (proxy for socioeconomic status; see Salmond et al., 2007), immigration status (0 born overseas, 1 born in NZ), religious status (0 not religious, 1 identifies with a religious denomination), parental status (0 no children, 1 at least one child), relationship status (0 single, 1 in a romantic relationship), employment status (0 unemployed,

1 employed), and education (highest level of education reported ranging from -2 to 2; 2 None/Unreported, -1 Some High School, 0 Diploma/Certificate, 1 Undergraduate, 2 Post-Graduate).

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between all of the variables used in the analyses including mean calculated composite variables are presented in Table 4.1. Within the main structural equation model tested ethnic identification, system justification, and resource and symbolic policy attitudes were estimated as latent variables. This factorial solution provided a reasonable fit to the data: $\chi^2(59) = 253.982$, standardized root mean square residual (sRMR) = .037, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .055.

Model Estimation

Our model tested the extent to which ethnic identity centrality and system justification beliefs jointly mediated the effect of hours of contact with ingroup friends on outcomes relating to Māori political mobilization.

Contact was indexed using self-reported hours spent with friends from the ingroup and all out-groups in the previous week, scored in 10-hr units. This contact measure was designed to indicate average (latent) hours of contact overall. As such, a value of 0 represented a threshold below which scores were unreported (as sampled from the last week), rather than an absolute minimum. This is an important technical point because a value of zero may simply reflect zero hours in the last week, rather an absolute value of zero over a longer time frame in our latent variable (consider if hours per week were multiplied by 4 to estimate average hours per month). A score of 0 would still be 0 if modelled in absolute terms, which is potentially incorrect. A score of 0 thus represents a censor point or threshold that the manifest indicator does not go below, but which the latent variable it represents may extend beyond). To address this, we estimated both ingroup and out-group contact as censored variables (also known as Tobit estimation), with censoring below zero. This is a common approach in econometrics, in which an observed indicator may reflect only part of the distribution of the underlying latent variable, as is the case with our measure of contact in

terms of hours (see Wooldridge, 2006, pp. 595–622, for a review).

To provide a conservative test the hypothesized mediation, the structural equation model (SEM) is tested as fully saturated, that is, without constraining estimated parameters. As such the model tested the proposed mediational structure while adjusting for all possible paths between the variables of interest. We modelled multi-item scales as latent variables, as per a standard SEM. Self-reported hours of ingroup and out-group contact were modelled as censored variables. Our tests of mediation therefore assessed the indirect effect of a censored variable on both latent and manifest outcomes, mediated by other latent variables. This required Monte-Carlo integration using maximum likelihood with robust estimation of standard errors (MLR). Note that standard estimates of model fit are not available using this estimation procedure. However, a confirmatory factor analysis assessing the multi-item latent variable components of the model (ethnic identity, system justification, resource, and symbolic policy support) indicated that the measurement model provided a good fit.

We allowed the residual variance of the two latent mediators to correlate, thus adjusting for their joint effect on the outcomes. We also allowed the residual variance of the three outcome variables to correlate. Finally, the model also statistically adjusted for a range of demographic covariates, by regressing both the mediator and outcome variables on them. A schematic overview of our structural model is presented in Figure 4.1. Model parameters are necessarily unstandardized given our estimation method.

Parameter Estimates

Parameter estimates for component of our model predicting the two mediators are presented in Table 4.2. As shown, the focal predictor, ingroup contact, predicted increased ethnic identity centrality ($b = .05$), and decreased system justification beliefs ($b = -.03$). As reported, these effects held when statistically adjusting for a wide range of demographic covariates, including net outgroup contact.

Table 4.3 presents parameter estimates for contact, the two mediators, and all covariates predicting each of the three outcomes. As reported, ethnic identity centrality predicted increased support for resource-specific policy ($b = .84$), symbolic policy ($b = .30$), and support for The Māori Party ($b = .70$). In contrast, system justification beliefs did not significantly predict any of these three outcome measures ($z < 1.2$).

Tests of indirect effects (estimated within our model using Monte-Carlo integration with multiple starts) indicated that ethnic identity significantly partially mediated the effect of (censored) ingroup contact on all three outcome variables (indirect effect on resource-specific policy: $b = .044$, $se = .013$, $z = 3.413$, $p < .01$; indirect effect on symbolic policy: $b = .016$, $se = .005$, $z = 3.244$, $p < .01$; indirect effect on support for The Māori party: $b = .037$, $se = .010$, $z = 3.486$, $p < .01$). Ingroup contact also retained a significant direct effect on support for resource-specific policy ($b = .12$), symbolic policy ($b = .03$), and support for The Māori Party ($b = .09$) independent of both mediators.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the variables used in the analyses including averaged composite variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Hours ingroup																	
2. Hours out-group	.634*																
3. System justification	-.148*	-.102*															
4. Ethnic identification	.192*	.114*	.048														
5. Māori Party support	.183*	.029	.053	.444*													
6. Resource policy support	.276*	.086*	-.086*	.485*	.633*												
7. Symbolic policy support	.141*	.070*	.050	.382*	.395*	.466*											
8. Political orientation	.023	.013	-.017	-.105*	-.085*	-.115*	-.168*										
9. Gender ^a	-.002	.044	.063	-.021	.015	-.038	-.105*	.015									
10. Age	-.061	-.045	.152*	.044	-.011	-.039	-.119*	.021	.089*								
11. NZDep ^b	.200*	.075*	-.094*	.163*	.123*	.232*	.038	-.037	.003	.006							
12. Born in NZ ^c	-.041	.051	-.002	-.008	-.061	.013	.012	-.025	.062	.034	.034						
13. Religious ^c	.102*	.071*	.023	.138*	.099*	.103*	.066*	.095*	-.013	.225*	.076*	-.065*					
14. Parent ^c	.009	-.015	.019	.104*	.020	.054	.017	.073*	-.053	.360*	.036	.043	.109*				
15. Partnered ^c	-.082*	-.049	.035	-.003	-.077*	-.120*	-.066*	.092*	.076*	.090*	-.193*	.007	-.013	.269*			
16. Employed ^c	-.018	.064	-.016	-.037	-.063	-.073*	.021	-.006	.055	-.194*	-.185*	-.008	-.044	-.087*	.145*		
17. Education ^d	-.149*	-.102*	.023	-.025	.003	-.031	.042	-.028	-.101*	-.102*	-.194*	-.052	-.030	-.095*	.064	.256*	
<i>M</i>	2.40	3.67	4.13	4.94	4.10	4.18	5.72	3.62	0.39	44.12	6.23	0.99	0.45	0.79	0.67	0.76	-0.72
<i>SD</i>	3.76	4.82	1.18	1.59	1.87	1.73	1.15	1.20	0.49	13.43	2.92	0.12	0.50	0.41	0.47	0.43	1.21

Note. NZDep = NZDep2006 index measure of neighborhood deprivation.

^aCoded as 0 (female) and 1 (male). ^bBased on a scale ranging from 1 (affluent) to 10 (deprived). ^cCategories coded as 0 (no) and 1 (yes). ^dBased on category codes ranging from -2 to 2.

Table 4.2
Parameter estimates for models predicting the dual mediators, ethnic identification and system justification.

	Ethnic Identification			System Justification		
	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>
Ingroup Contact	.05**	.02	3.42	-.03*	.02	-1.98
Outgroup Contact	.00	.01	.17	.00	.02	-.21
Political Orientation	-.11**	.04	-2.91	-.02	.05	-.42
Gender	-.04	.08	-.52	.13	.08	1.56
Age	.00	.00	-.55	.01*	.01	2.84
NZ Deprivation	.06**	.02	4.03	-.03	.02	-1.34
Born in NZ	-.13	.33	-.40	-.07	.29	-.24
Religious Status	.32**	.08	3.85	.02	.09	.21
Parental Status	.31**	.11	2.72	-.08	.15	-.55
Relationship Status	.06	.09	.69	.02	.11	.16
Employment Status	-.02	.10	-.17	-.02	.14	-.14
Education	.04	.03	1.02	.01	.07	.94

Note. Hours of ingroup and outgroup contact were scored in 10-hour units with censoring below 0. Model was estimated using Maximum Likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and Monte-Carlo integration. *b* coefficients represent unstandardized parameters. *Z*-values reflect the ratio of the effect to the standard error of the effect. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Focal variables printed in bold.

Table 4.3

Parameter estimates for models predicting the three outcomes, support for resource specific policies, symbolic policies, and The Māori Party.

	Resource Policy			Symbolic Policy			Māori Party Support		
	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>
Ethnic Identification	.84**	.07	-12.20	.30**	.40	7.74	.70**	.06	10.89
System Justification	-.30	.31	-.93	.08	.07	1.11	.16	.15	1.10
Ingroup Contact	.12**	.02	5.41	.03**	.01	3.10	.09**	.08	4.59
Outgroup Contact	-.06**	.02	-3.56	-.01	.01	-1.49	-.06**	.02	-2.97
Political Orientation	-.13*	.05	-2.32	-.09**	.03	-3.73	-.04	.05	-.90
Gender	.02	.12	.19	-.12*	.06	-2.17	.19	.12	1.63
Age	-.01	.01	-.96	-.01**	.00	-4.53	-.01	.01	-1.30
NZ Deprivation	.05*	.02	2.17	-.01	.01	-1.46	.01	.02	.28
Born in NZ	.62	.52	1.18	.14	.24	.58	-.52	.53	-.98
Religious Status	.07	.12	.61	.06	.05	1.25	.13	.12	1.14
Parental Status	.19	.15	1.24	.09	.07	1.36	.03	.15	.20
Relationship Status	-.36**	.13	-2.80	-.11*	.06	-2.01	-.27*	.12	-2.18
Employment Status	-.20	.15	-1.34	.01	.06	.21	-.15	.15	-1.03
Education	.05	.05	1.07	.04	.02	1.75	.06	.05	1.35

Note. Hours of ingroup and outgroup contact were scored in 10-hour units with censoring below 0. Model was estimated using Maximum Likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and Monte-Carlo integration. *b* coefficients represent unstandardized parameters. *Z*-values reflect the ratio of the effect to the standard error of the effect. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Focal variables printed in bold.

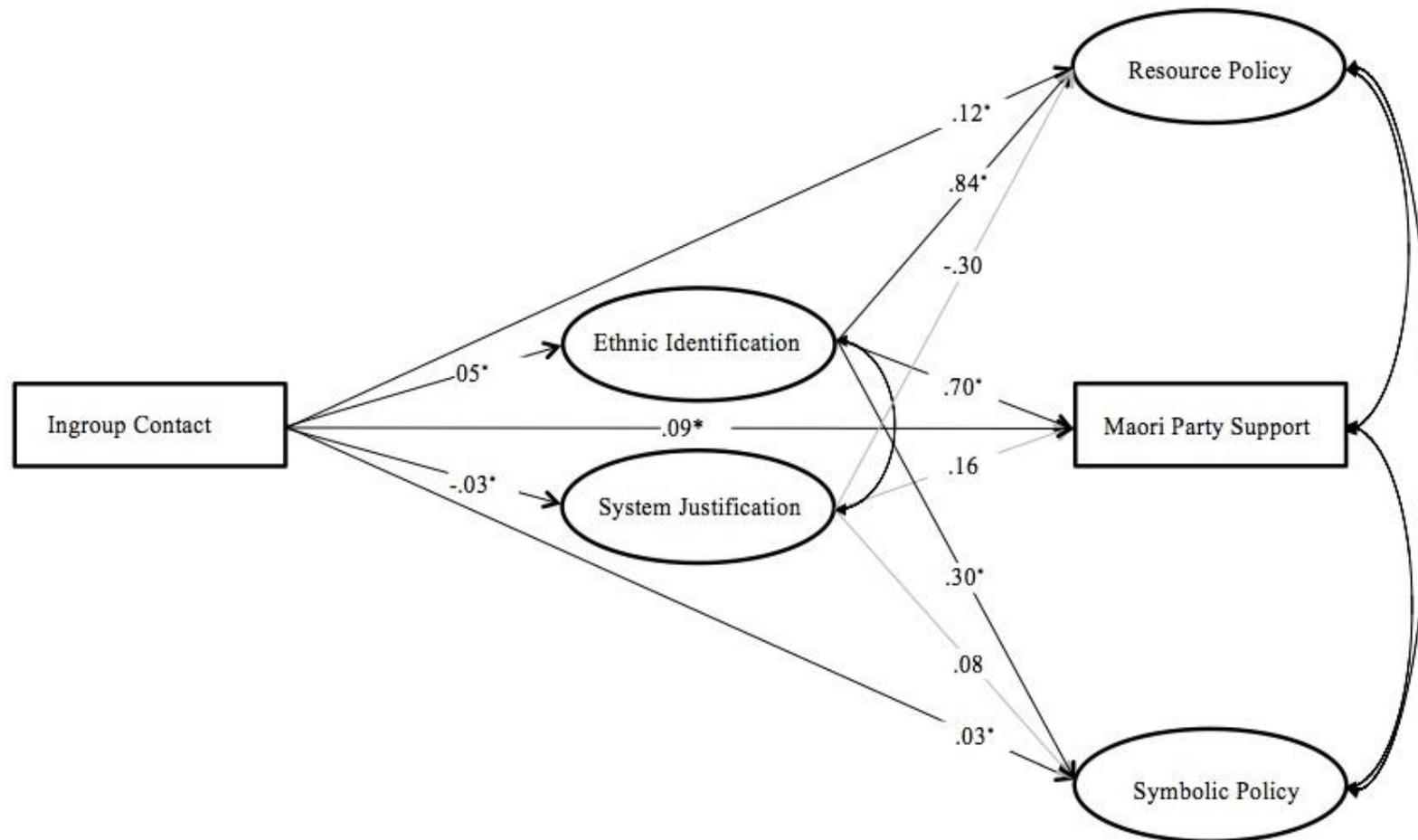


Figure 4.1. Schematic overview of key paths, with unstandardized parameter estimates. (Note. for simplicity, links from latent variables to manifest indicators are not shown. The model also adjusted for the full set of demographic covariates, as reported in Tables 1 and 2.

Discussion

In this study we considered how everyday interactions with fellow disadvantaged group members might increase identification, decrease system justification, and consequently, increase political mobilization in minority groups. We argued that political change is not simply the product of large scale, environmental change, but also finds its roots in the backyards and lounge rooms of minority group members, where close friendships are developed and nurtured. Consistent with our hypothesis, we found that ingroup contact was associated with increased political mobilization among Māori. This manifested as increased support for both symbolic and resource specific reparative policies benefiting Māori, and increased support for the Māori party. These effects held after adjusting for out-group contact and a range of demographic covariates.

Although the effects of out-group contact on political attitudes are interesting in their own right, they are among the most widely studied in the intergroup literature (see Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012). Thus, the most significant contribution of the current study lies in its analysis of how contact with fellow group members might change the way people operate at the intergroup level. Previous studies using the NZAVS dataset (focusing primarily on out-group contact but including ingroup contact as another variable of interest) had already hinted at the mobilizing potential of ingroup contact. For example, Sengupta et al. (2012) demonstrated that Māori subscribed less strongly to an ideology that excludes their own culture from representations of the national category as a function of their contact with ingroup friends. Further, Sengupta and Sibley (2013) found that ingroup contact among Māori increased support for one topical redistributive policy issue (Māori ownership of the foreshore and seabed), mediated by decreased meritocracy beliefs.

Although these studies are suggestive, they focused on a small number of ideological outcomes. The present analysis represents a more comprehensive test of the effects of

ingroup contact, showing that these effects generalize across a wide range of interrelated attitudes and policy preferences which are relevant to the political empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Moreover, the present study goes further in testing two specific mechanisms underlying the contact mobilization relationship, derived from SIMCA and SJT.

Analyzing simultaneous mediation by ethnic identification and system justification, we found that the effects of ingroup contact on political attitudes could partially be explained by increased strength of identification with the Māori ethnic group. Although contact with Māori friends was associated with system justification as predicted, this decrease had no effect on mobilization attitudes. Our results are more consistent with the social identity perspective on collective action, than with system justification theory. They suggest that, at least in the New Zealand context, identity-related processes may be more important than system-level motives, for understanding what drives political mobilization.

These findings have important implications for SJT. Reicher (2004, 2011) argued that the underlying theoretical assumption that system justification is a fundamental human motivation is pernicious; reifying inequality in the status quo and making attempts at change seem futile. If we are all biased in favor of the system, what hope do we have of changing it? This assumption is reflected in the fact that the possibility of variation in the system justification motive has received relatively little attention in the literature.

Recently however, research has begun to emerge investigating various contextual factors that might impact the degree to which people justify the system, including perceptions of system threat, system inescapability, and system dependence (Kay & Friesen, 2011). Our study adds to this literature by showing that for those disadvantaged by a social system, spending more time with ingroup friends can reduce extent to which they believe that system is fair. The extent to which participants did not justify the system, however, was unrelated to

the extent to which they politically mobilized (over and above effects of identification).

Future research should explore other outcomes stemming from the association between ingroup contact and system justification demonstrated in this paper.

That said, it is possible that the lack of mediation by system justification is a result of the specific intergroup context in which the present study was conducted. Māori have been shown to be unique among disadvantaged groups in the extent of their system justifying tendencies. Unlike other ethnic minorities, they do not tend to internalize inequality by displaying an implicit preference for the dominant group (Harding, Sibley, & Robertson, 2011; cf. Devos & Banaji, 2005). They also show the lowest levels of system justification relative to all other ethnic groups in New Zealand (Sengupta, Osborne & Sibley, 2015b). It is possible that this low level of system justification, and an established preference for reparative policies (e.g., Sibley, 2010), meant that the further reduction in system justification precipitated by ingroup contact was not large enough to push support for political mobilization any higher than it already was.

As we have noted, sociopolitical consciousness is a central dimension of Māori identity. Māori are acutely aware of the historical injustice faced by their group at the hands of Europeans, and recognize the continuing relevance of this injustice to contemporary intergroup relations. It is possible that the mobilizing effects of ingroup contact will only be observed in groups whose identities are similarly politicized (see Simon & Klandermans, 2001). We suspect, however, that hours spent with ingroup friends will have a generally positive effect on political mobilization in most minority groups. Groups that face prejudice and discrimination may not have the luxury of decoupling their political interests from identity. In addition, van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) metaanalysis showed that although politicized identity did have a stronger impact on collective action intentions ($r = .43$), general, nonpoliticized social identification also retained a considerable influence ($r = .34$).

Our study represents an important addition to the vast literature on collective action, which has moved away from examining mobilization based on membership in broad social categories such as ethnicity (see Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). Instead, it has shifted more toward a focus on specific types of activist identities drawn from membership in social movements (e.g., Simon et al., 1998) or opinion-based groups (e.g., Thomas & McGarty, 2009). However, our findings suggest that even membership in broad social categories can galvanize collective action around shared political agendas. This is consistent with earlier research showing that identification with categories such as those defined by gender (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995) and nationality (e.g., Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999) can increase political mobilization.

Such identities are highly salient aspects of the socio-political context in many nations. For example, much inequality in postcolonial societies such as New Zealand exists along ethnic lines, and stems from histories of domination by members of one ethnic group over another. Under these circumstances, ethnicity becomes a salient dimension for the formation of identity, to the extent that it enables those from disadvantaged ethnic groups to establish a direct contrast to the identity shared by those in power and those who benefit from the hierarchy (see Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008). Thus, taking advantage of how people are already defined in their social contexts (e.g., in terms of their ethnic heritage) can be useful for the inculcation of political preferences that challenge entrenched, group-based inequality. Our findings suggest that one way to do this is to encourage greater friendly contact among members of historically disadvantaged groups.

A further contribution this study makes to the collective action literature is that it identifies a proximal, situational antecedent to the sense of identification shown to be so vital for fomenting political change. As noted earlier, theory and research in this area often treats ingroup identification as the conceptual starting point from which collective action stems.

Although the notion that this identification arises at least partly from interactions within the group is implicit in the social identity account of collective action (see, e.g., Haslam & Reicher, 2012), the effects of time spent with the ingroup have rarely been made explicit or studied quantitatively.

By going back further in the causal sequence, our study raises concrete, practical implications for how the all-important sense of identification can be developed. Political and social leaders looking to engender discontent among the victims of inequality might need to consider how friendships and positive social interactions between members of disadvantaged groups can be fostered (see also, Reicher, 2007). For example, Sengupta, Luyten, et al. (2015) demonstrated that features of neighbourhoods, such as the access to communal areas and participation in local sports teams, increased the sense of community among the neighbourhood's inhabitants. Using such insights, specific practical strategies can be developed to promote social change through the political process, by facilitating the development of ingroup identification through within-group contact among the disadvantaged. This will increase the likelihood that their policy preferences will reflect their group's interests.

Strengths, Limitations, and a Note on Effect Size

The usefulness of our findings may be called into question on account of the magnitude of the effects observed (specifically the effects of ingroup contact on the ethnic identification and system justification). For example, we found that 10 hr of ingroup contact predicted an increase in ethnic identification by .05 of a unit on a 1 to 7 scale, and decrease in system justification by .03 of a unit. These effects are small. However, as noted by Prentice and Miller (1992), the logic of judging the importance of findings based on effect size breaks down when the variables used could have been operationalized in different ways. In such situations, effect size estimates merely reflect how good the particular operationalization of

the independent variable is at predicting variance in the dependent variable as it measured. Although small effects may indicate a need to reconsider the strength of the measures, they do not undermine the importance of the independent variable or the validity of the psychological process being investigated.

This is especially true when measures are selected to minimize common method variance, and when dependent variables are difficult to influence (Prentice & Miller, 1992)—both of which apply to the present study. In the intergroup literature, contact and political attitudes are both usually measured using Likert-scale ratings. Here, we asked for a numerical estimate of hours spent with ingroup members and Likert-scale ratings for the mediators and outcome variables, thus reducing common-method variance. Further, global attitudes toward the ingroup and the system should be fairly stable over time, and generally resistant to change and short-term fluctuations. Thus, the fact that we observe these effects at all is potentially important. Moreover, Abelson (1985) provided a mathematical demonstration of how very small effects of variables measured over narrow timeframes (as is the case for our contact measure) can cumulate within individuals, and across people in a group, amounting to meaningful effects in the long run.

This suggests that engaging in ongoing contact can shift ideologies, over time, to a greater extent than can be interpreted from the magnitude of our observed cross-sectional effects. Our reliance on cross-sectional data does, however, prevent a conclusive inference of causality from ingroup contact to political attitudes. It is possible that people who hold system challenging attitudes are more likely to identify strongly with the group to which those attitudes are relevant and consequently spend more time with friends from that group. However, two of the experimental traditions of research on which this study draws, provide some evidence for the causal process hypothesized here. First, research on the impact of intragroup communication has typically manipulated the degree of communication and

measured the resulting shared cognitions (see Postmes et al., 2005). Most studies on collective action in the social identity tradition also have used similar experimental designs (see Haslam & Reicher, 2012). Although this does not rule out reciprocal relationships between these variables, the experimental nature of this past work does provide an empirical basis for the directionality of our model, and the theory that underlies it. Thus, there is reason to believe communication increases shared identification, which in turn, motivates collective action.

A major strength of our study is the use of a large, nationally representative sample of disadvantaged group members, which is novel in the literature. Indeed, past work on collective action has been criticized for relying too heavily on “experimental studies in which there is limited interaction between participants and little opportunity for the development of a sense of group history” (Haslam & Reicher, 2012, p. 158). By studying a real group, embedded in a sociohistorical context marked by real intergroup inequality, our study provides a degree of ecological validity lacking in past explorations of these processes. It also answers calls to integrate insights from the vast literatures on intragroup processes and intergroup relations (Dovidio, 2013). We demonstrated that the mechanisms of social influence within groups, uncovered in small-group research, have implications for the intergroup context in which those groups operate.

Conclusion

Overall, our study suggests that ingroup friendships among the disadvantaged can help galvanize political support for changes to remediate intergroup inequality. Consistent with the social identity model of collective action, we showed that this effect is partly explained by increased identification with the disadvantaged social category. Contrary to system justification theory, we found that the reduced support for the status quo precipitated by contact did not predict increased political mobilization. Moreover, all effects held when adjusting for a range of demographic covariates, including out-group contact. Thus, our study sheds light on the processes through which interactions between individuals can influence the policy preferences that shape the distribution of resources in democratic societies. In doing so, it offers practical insights into how the disadvantaged can inculcate political attitudes that promote social change toward equality.

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Research on the psychological consequences of system justification for members of disadvantaged groups raises an important contradiction. On the one hand, the ideologies used to make an unfair system *seem* fair encourage people to internalise the disadvantage they face (McCoy & Major, 2007), which can be deleterious to their wellbeing (Jost & Thompson, 2000). On the other hand, these same types of ideologies can help people cope with the inequality they suffer under, thereby improving their wellbeing (Napier et al., 2010; McCoy et al., 2013). In the study that follows, I attempt to resolve this contradiction by specifying when system-justifying ideologies are most likely to have palliative effects for the disadvantaged. I argue that in order to understand the psychological consequences of ideologies that legitimise inequality, it is important to understand the psychological consequences of *inequality itself*, for both its beneficiaries and its victims. Specifically, I propose that inequality is particularly detrimental to the ability of low-status group members (but not high-status group members) to feel in control of their own outcomes. Therefore, the psychological pay-offs for internalising the causes of inequality should be the greatest for low-status individuals who experience highest levels of objective inequality. On the other hand, for low-status individuals who do not experience high inequality (and are therefore not as prone to being reminded of their powerlessness), the costs of internalising inequality (e.g. Jost & Thompson, 2000) probably outweigh the benefits. Thus, system-justifying ideologies should not be palliative for *all* members of low-status groups, but only for those who are most in need of palliation. I test this hypothesis by constructing a multilevel model in which objective regional-level inequality interacts with system-justifying beliefs to predict wellbeing among high- and low-status groups.

The research article that follows is a manuscript currently under review. Please do not cite without permission from the authors.

Abstract

Ideologies that legitimize status hierarchies have been shown to predict increased wellbeing. The extent to which these ideologies have palliative effects for members of low-status groups, however, is an unresolved and controversial issue. The present study investigated the effects of subscribing to a Meritocratic ideology on wellbeing among majority and minority group members (4,519 Europeans and 1,091 Māori) in a representative sample of 1,437 regions of New Zealand that varied in objective levels of income inequality (as determined by regional-level Census data). Results showed that Meritocracy was positively associated with wellbeing among Māori (the indigenous peoples of New Zealand), but only if they lived in neighbourhoods with high levels of income inequality. On the other hand Meritocracy was (more weakly) positively associated with wellbeing among high-status groups, regardless of the level of inequality in their neighbourhood. This suggests that it is precisely those who have the strongest need to justify unfair social conditions that accrue the most psychological benefit from subscribing to legitimizing ideologies.

Feeling better about a bad situation: The palliative effect of Meritocratic beliefs for low-status groups living in neighbourhoods with high inequality

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions.”

— Karl Marx.

Marx’s (1844) aphorism about Religion being “the opium of the people” is probably the most famous articulation of the idea that belief can be palliative. There is now evidence that not just religious belief, but any kind of belief that explains people’s social reality, can serve a palliative function (Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Napier & Jost, 2008). In particular, several studies suggest that there are psychological benefits associated with the kinds of beliefs that legitimize inequality (e.g., McCoy, Wellman, Cosley, Saslow, & Epel, 2013; Jost, Wakslak, & Tyler, 2008; Napier, Thorisdottir & Jost, 2010; Osborne & Sibley, 2013).

However, the degree to which these benefits accrue to members of low-status groups is an unresolved and controversial issue (Rankin et al., 2009). On the one hand, legitimizing ideologies encourage people from low-status groups to internalize the inequality they face (e.g. McCoy & Major, 2007), which can be detrimental to their wellbeing (e.g. Jost & Thompson 2000). On the other hand, there is a substantial body of work suggesting that a positive relationship exists between ideology and wellbeing, *even among low-status individuals* (e.g. Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Napier et al., 2010; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; O’Brien & Major, 2005; McCoy et al., 2013).

Here, we attempt to resolve this apparent contradiction by considering how the magnitude of inequality in a person’s immediate context interacts with their beliefs about inequality, and their group’s status. Specifically, using data from a stratified national sample of high-and low-status groups in New Zealand (4,519 Europeans and 1,091 Māori, nested within 1437 neighbourhoods), we outline and test a somewhat counterintuitive hypothesis:

ideology will *only* be positively associated with wellbeing for those low-status individuals who live in highly unequal contexts. In other words, belief should be palliative specifically for the oppressed living in the most “spiritless conditions.”

The Effects of Inequality

Inequality between individuals and groups is both a historical feature of human societies and a contemporary reality (Piketty, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). It is, however, an *uncomfortable* reality. Wilkinson and Pickett’s (2009) ground-breaking analysis showed that people who live in societies characterized by large disparities in wealth and income fare worse on a wide range of social and psychological indicators compared to people in more equal societies. For example, in Western countries with high levels of inequality, people report lower levels of happiness and social trust (e.g. Delhey and Dragolov 2014; Fahey and Smyth 2004; Layte 2011). Even within nations, people who live in more unequal areas (e.g. regions or neighbourhoods) report lower wellbeing and self-esteem than those in less unequal areas, adjusting for personal income (e.g. Alesina, Di Tella, & MacCullough, 2004; Osborne, Sibley & Sengupta, 2015).

Research exploring *why* inequality is associated with these negative outcomes is still in its infancy. However, the most empirically validated explanation in the extant literature is that inequality conflicts with fundamental human concerns for fairness and justice (see Schneider, 2015). As early as 12 months, infants show a clear preference for the fair distribution of resources (Geraci & Surian, 2011; Sloane, Baillargeon, & Premack, 2012), and this preference continues into adulthood (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; Norton & Ariely, 2011; Smith & Tyler, 1996). Large empirical literatures on System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) and the Just World Hypothesis (JWH; Lerner, 1980) have shown that people are generally motivated to perceive their social worlds as fair (Liviatan & Jost, 2014; Jost et al., 2004; van de Bos & Lind, 2002).

When this motive is left unfulfilled by people's social reality, they react negatively. Experiments by game theorists suggest that negative reactions to violations of fairness are a human universal (Fehr & Rockenbach, 2003; Henrich, 2000; Kahneman et al., 1986). At the societal level, Oishi, Kesebir and Diener (2011) found that Americans reported lower average happiness during years when inequality was higher, and that this effect was mediated by perceptions of unfairness. These findings indicate that one reason that inequality is uncomfortable is because it leads people to question the fairness of the systems under which they live.

The Palliative Function of Ideology

System Justification Theory suggests that one way for people to cope with the discomfort induced by inequality is by subscribing to ideologies –shared sets of beliefs, norms and prescriptions for making sense of one's sociopolitical context – that make unequal social structures *seem* fair (Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). The notion that ideologies serve psychological functions for those who subscribe to them is not new (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Jackman, 1994; Jost et al., 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, earlier theorists focused primarily the function of ideologies in helping dominant groups justify their position at the top of the social hierarchy (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008). For example, the dual ideologies of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism help men maintain dominance over women by simultaneously “punishing” women who violate traditional gender roles (with open hostility) and “rewarding” women who conform to traditional gender roles (with paternalistic protection; Glick & Fiske, 2001).

The contribution of SJT was in supplementing the idea that ideology serves this kind of *hegemonic function*, with the idea that it also serves a *palliative function* – dampening the negative psychological effects of living in an unequal society (Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008).

In line with this perspective, several studies have revealed a positive association between ideologies that legitimise inequality, and wellbeing (Napier & Jost, 2008; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Wakslak, Jost, Tyler & Chen, 2007).

The fact that dominant-group members accrue the palliative benefits of legitimizing ideologies is understandable because their motive to maintain their group's position aligns with their motive to perceive the social world is fair (Jost, Burgess & Mosso, 2001). Thus, endorsing ideologies that frame inequality as fair allow dominant group members to continue reaping the benefits of being atop the social hierarchy, while simultaneously avoiding the discomfort caused by the unfairness inherent in that hierarchy (Wakslak et al., 2007).

However, the notion that members of *subordinate* groups may derive psychological benefits from beliefs that legitimize their own disadvantage is far more contentious, because the interests of these groups are not served by providing ideological support to unequal systems.

Nevertheless, there is accumulating evidence that certain legitimizing ideologies can be palliative *even* for members of low-status groups. For example, the ideology of Benevolent Sexism — which justifies male dominance by portraying women as weak but deserving of men's protection — was shown to correlate positively with women's life satisfaction in 32 countries (Napier et al., 2010; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Connelly & Heesacker, 2011). O'Brien & Major (2005) found that subscribing to a variety of legitimizing ideologies, including the Protestant Work Ethic and Belief in a Just World, predicted higher wellbeing and lower depression in Black and Latino students (if they did not identify strongly with their ethnic group). Although these findings are suggestive, the most consistent evidence that ideology is palliative for low-status groups comes from research on Meritocracy.

The Ideology of Meritocracy

Like most constructs in psychology, belief in Meritocracy has been operationalized in different ways, many of which overlap with other ideological constructs (Jost, Pelham,

Sheldon & Sullivan, 2003; McCoy & Major, 2007; O'Brien & Major, 2005; Sibley & Wilson, 2007). Common to these conceptualizations, however, is the idea that Meritocracy frames status differences in terms of differences in merit. In other words, inequality is justified as a product of fair (i.e., merit-based) processes by which people receive the outcomes they deserve (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). People from low-status groups, who believe that merit determines status, can only blame themselves for not being meritorious enough to deserve higher status. Indeed, several studies have found that members of low-status groups who hold Meritocratic beliefs frame the social arrangements responsible for their disadvantage as being fair (Hafer & Olson 1989; 1993) and make internal attributions for their outcomes (Quinn & Crocker, 1999).

For example, Major et al. (2002) found that ethnic minorities perceived less ethnic discrimination the more they subscribed to Meritocratic beliefs. In a follow-up study, they found that ethnic minority participants were less likely to attribute rejection by a member of a high-status ethnic group to discrimination if they were high on Meritocracy. Likewise, McCoy and Major (2007) found that women who were primed with Meritocratic cues and subsequently rejected by a male confederate blamed the rejection on themselves rather than on discrimination. They also found that women who were primed with Meritocracy, and then provided evidence of pervasive gender inequality, perceived *less* societal sexism than women who were not confronted with such evidence. Moreover, these women endorsed stereotypes of their group that legitimized gender inequality (i.e. that women are warm but less competent than men) more than their counterparts who were not primed with Meritocracy. Thus, both in the context of ethnic-group relations and gender relations Meritocracy seems to lead low-status groups to deemphasize group-based discrimination, and make internal attributions for their disadvantage.

Internalizing inequality by blaming oneself can be detrimental to the self-esteem of members of low-status groups (Jost & Thompson, 2000). Even so, several studies have also found that subscribing to Meritocratic beliefs can have psychological *benefits* for the disadvantaged. Early evidence was provided by Kluegel & Smith's (1986) survey, which found that poorer people were more satisfied with their circumstances when they saw themselves as being responsible for their poverty. Similarly, Jost, Pelham, et al. (2003) found that even those most disadvantaged by the social system (i.e., African Americans and those with low socioeconomic status; SES) reported higher levels of economic satisfaction as their endorsement of meritocracy increased. Van der Toorn, Berkics & Jost (2010) found that meritocracy was more predictive of satisfaction when it explained *others'* high status than when it explained one's own high status. Finally, McCoy et al. (2013) found that women who endorsed meritocracy reported higher global self-esteem and physical health than those who rejected Meritocracy, but only if they were from low-SES backgrounds.

Taken together, the studies described above raise an apparent contradiction. Meritocracy, an ideology that induces self-blame among members of disadvantaged groups, also correlates with increased wellbeing for these very groups. Resolving this contradiction requires considering how inequality might affect people differently based on the status of the group they belong to, and how these differences in the effects of inequality change the way that ideology functions for high- and low-status groups.

The Function of Ideology for High- and Low-Status Groups

Ideologies such as Meritocracy, that frame inequality as being fair, are palliative for different reasons depending on whether one is a member of a high- or low-status group. The primary discomfort-inducing implication of inequality for high-status individuals is that they have potentially gained an *unfair advantage* over others (Laurin, Fitzsimmons & Kay, 2011; Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008). Therefore, the palliative function of legitimising ideologies for

members of these groups lies primarily in their ability to reduce the aversive affective consequences of having accrued this kind of unfair advantage. In line with this idea, Wakslak et al. (2007) showed that the relationship between ideology and wellbeing among the advantaged was mediated by reduced moral outrage and guilt.

However, for members of low-status groups, the problem of inequality is more personal. These are the people who are disproportionately more likely to have had their own outcomes affected negatively by unfair social stratification. For them, inequality implies an *unfair disadvantage* faced by themselves and their group. Acknowledging this implication can reduce the degree to which members of low-status groups feel like they have control over their own outcomes (Laurin et al., 2011). If people do not feel in control of their outcomes, they cannot plan for the future with confidence (Feather, 1982; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992), and thus, cannot enact strategies to improve their condition. Therefore, the primary palliative benefit of a legitimising ideology, like Meritocracy, for low-status groups should lie in its ability to provide the sense of control necessary to engage in long-term goal pursuit.

Consistent with this reasoning, Laurin et al. (2011) found, across five studies, that Meritocratic beliefs predicted an increased commitment to long-term goals among members of low-status groups, but not among members of high-status groups. They also found that the reason these beliefs increased goal-commitment among the disadvantaged was that they reduced expectations of being treated unfairly. In another study, McCoy et al. (2013) showed that the palliative benefits of Meritocracy for low-status groups were fully explained by increased perceptions of personal control.

The preceding analysis implies that exposure to inequality in one's immediate social context should affect the advantaged and the disadvantaged differently; thereby changing the function that legitimising ideologies serve for members of each group. Since inequality represents a potential threat to the general motive for fairness (e.g. Oishi et al., 2011), it

should predict lower wellbeing for members of both groups. However, we argue that mere exposure to inequality should not trigger any *more* concern about unfairness among high-status groups than is already entailed by their advantaged position. This is because inequality does not have a particularly strong implication for the ability of members of advantaged groups to have personal control over the pursuit their long-term goals – i.e., they have less *skin in the game*. Thus, the palliative effects of legitimising ideologies should be similar in size for advantaged groups living in relatively more equal versus unequal conditions.

However, we argue that for members of disadvantaged groups, inequality should reduce wellbeing specifically because it *sends a signal* that one's outcomes are beyond one's own control. Therefore, low-status individuals living in highly unequal conditions should report particularly low levels of wellbeing, *unless* they are able to frame the inequality their group suffers from as being fair. This process, if correct, would produce a positive relationship between ideology and wellbeing among low-status groups, but *only* for those living in conditions of high inequality. For low-status groups living in more equal conditions, the benefits of subscribing to Meritocracy would be offset by the costs of internalising the causes of their disadvantage. In the absence of any additional pressure to gain a sense of personal control over their outcomes – pressure induced by receiving signals from their immediate context that their society is unfair – they should not gain the same palliative benefits from subscribing to legitimising ideologies as their counterparts in more living in more unequal contexts.

The Present Study

In the present study, we test the pattern implied by the analysis above, using a large, stratified, national sample of high- and low-status groups in New Zealand. The groups in this analysis are European New Zealanders (i.e., the ethnic-majority group) and Māori (i.e., the indigenous peoples of New Zealand). The colonial history of New Zealand has left

contemporary Māori at a severe socioeconomic disadvantage relative to their European counterparts (King, 2007; Walker, 1990). For example, Māori suffer higher mortality, incarceration and unemployment rates, have lower median incomes and report lower wellbeing compared to Europeans (The Social Report, 2010; Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, & Bonne, 2003). Thus, Māori are unquestionably a low-status group in New Zealand.

In addition to having large samples of both Europeans and Māori (N = 4,519 and 1,091, respectively), our dataset includes information about the objective levels of income inequality across 1,437 regions across the country. The richness of these data provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to model how the level of inequality in a person's immediate context interacts with their group membership and their Meritocracy beliefs to predict wellbeing. Specifically, based on the analysis in the preceding section we predict that:

Hypothesis 1. Meritocracy beliefs will be positively associated with wellbeing among Europeans, regardless of whether they live in relatively equal or unequal neighbourhoods.

Hypothesis 2. Meritocracy beliefs will be positively associated with wellbeing among Māori, but *only* if they live in highly unequal neighbourhoods.

Method

Sampling Procedure

The Time 1 (2009) NZAVS contained responses from 6518 participants sampled from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll. The electoral roll is publicly available for scientific research and, in 2009, contained 2,986,546 registered voters. This represented all citizens over 18 years of age who were eligible to vote (regardless of whether they chose to vote), barring people who had their contact details removed due to specific case-by-case concerns about privacy. The sample frame was split into three parts.

Sample Frame 1 constituted a random sample of 25,000 people from the electoral roll (4,060 respondents). Sample Frame 2 constituted a second random sample of a further 10,000 people from the electoral roll (1,609 respondents). Sample Frame 3 constituted a booster sample of 5,500 people randomly selected from meshblock area units of the country that contained a high proportion of Māori, Pacific Nations and Asian peoples (671 respondents). Statistics New Zealand (2013) define the meshblock as

“...the smallest geographic unit for which statistical data is collected and processed by Statistics New Zealand. A meshblock is a defined geographic area, varying in size from part of a city block to large areas of rural land. Each meshblock abuts against another to form a network covering all of New Zealand including coasts and inlets, and extending out to the two hundred mile economic zone. Meshblocks are added together to ‘build up’ larger geographic areas such as area units and urban areas. They are also the principal unit used to draw-up and define electoral district and local authority boundaries.”

Meshblocks were selected using ethnic group proportions based on data from the 2006 national census. An additional 178 people responded to the survey but did not provide their

contact details. As such, these respondents could not be matched to a specific sample frame. In sum, postal questionnaires were sent to 40,500 registered voters (i.e., roughly 1.36% of all registered voters in New Zealand). The overall response rate (adjusting for the address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%.

Census Area Units

New Zealand is unusual in that the census provides rich information about each area unit/neighbourhood of the country and makes these data available for research purposes. The smallest of these area units are meshblocks. As noted above, meshblocks make up larger census area units (which were our focus in this paper). The geographical size of these census area units differs depending on population density, but each unit tends to cover a region containing a median of 2097 residents ($M = 2,253$, $SD = 1,587$, range = 3-9,027). These area units are thus roughly the size of small neighbourhoods (in terms of population). Although they do not represent formal geographic neighbourhoods, they provide a novel source of information about the population characteristics of the immediate 2,000-odd people living in the region of residence for each participant.

Participants

Of the entire sample, only participants who identified as New Zealand European or Māori—and who provided complete data for our variables of interest—were included in our analysis. This subsample contained responses from 5,610 participants (i.e., 86.1% of the overall sample). Our analysis of Europeans was based on 4,519 participants nested within 1,337 census area units (3.38 per unit), whereas our analysis of Māori was based on 1,091 participants nested within 692 area units (1.58 per unit). Collapsing across Māori and non-Māori respondents, our sample resided in 1,437 distinct census area units.

Procedure for Calculating Neighbourhood Inequality

We calculated regional Gini coefficients for the net 1,437 census area units in New Zealand in which our participants resided. Thus, this analysis spanned the vast majority of all area units in New Zealand. The rare cases where there were missing area units ($n = 372$) from our sample occurred because some units in rural areas have a very small number of (or, in some cases, no) residents.

We used data from the 2006 New Zealand census to determine the number of people in each census area unit whose household income fell within each of the following household income bands provided by Statistics New Zealand: (a) less than \$5,000, (b) \$5,001-\$10,000, (c) \$10,001-\$20,000, (d) \$20,001-\$30,000, (e) \$30,001-\$50,000, and (f) \$50,001 and above. Because the census only provides information on broad income bands, we took the lower value within each band and treated these points as known values when interpolating a Lorenz curve, as outlined in Equation 1.0 (see Chaudhary, 2009, p. 126):

$$G_1 = 1 - \sum_{k=1}^n (X_k - X_{k-1})(Y_k + Y_{k-1}) \quad (1.0)$$

Where, X_k is the cumulated proportion of the population variable, for $k = 0, \dots, n$, with $X_0 = 0$, $X_n = 1$; and Y_k is the cumulated proportion of the income variable, for $k = 0, \dots, n$, with $Y_0 = 0$, $Y_n = 1$.

This formula provides an *approximate* estimate of income inequality, as we do not employ advanced techniques such as approximating a quadratic function or other smoothing procedures. Also, because income values above \$50,001 were rounded down to \$50,001, our estimate systematically *underestimates* the actual level of inequality in each region. Despite these limitations, our Gini estimate offers a reasonable Lorenz curve approximation of inequality given the available data from the census on household income for each area unit of the country. As with a standard Gini coefficient calculated at the level of the nation, scores on

our Gini estimate could range from 0 (complete equality) to 1 (complete inequality). Thus, higher scores reflect greater levels of regional-level inequality. Within our study, Gini values ranged from .33 to .73 ($M = .47$, $SD = .05$).

Questionnaire Measures

Ethnicity was measured using the standard wording and coding system employed by the New Zealand census: “Which ethnic group do you belong to? (mark the space or spaces which apply to you)”. Endorsement of Meritocracy was measured using three items from Sibley and Wilson’s (2007) *Equality as Meritocracy* scale. These items included the following: (a) “we are all New Zealanders and the law should not make provision for minority groups because of their ethnicity”, (b) “true equality can be achieved only once we recognize that some ethnic groups are currently more disadvantaged than others and require additional assistance from the government”, and (c) “we are all one nation and we should all be treated the same. No one should be entitled to anything more than the rest of us simply because they belong to one particular ethnic group.” Each item was rated on a 7-point scale with anchors at 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) and averaged to form a measure of meritocratic beliefs ($\alpha = .69$). Personal wellbeing was measured using ratings of satisfaction on a 1-10 scale (1 – completely dissatisfied; 10 – completely satisfied) for the following four items: “Your health”; “Your personal relationships”; “Your standard of living”; “Your future security” ($\alpha = .73$).

Results

We constructed two separate multilevel models (one for Europeans and one for Māori) examining the relationship between Meritocracy beliefs and personal wellbeing. We modelled the intercept and slope for Meritocracy as random effects, thus allowing them to vary across census area units. Meritocracy was centred at the grand mean. We included regional inequality (Gini coefficients) as a between-level variable moderating this association. Gini coefficients were centred at the group mean.

Model for Europeans

For Europeans, endorsement of Meritocratic beliefs was positively associated with personal wellbeing ($b = .057$, $se = .020$, $z = 2.840$, $p = .005$, 99% CI [.005, .108]). In contrast, between-level analyses indicated that regional inequality was negatively associated with personal wellbeing ($b = -1.278$, $se = .629$, $z = -2.031$, $p = .042$, 99% CI [-2.899, -.343]). Critically, the cross-level interaction between Meritocracy beliefs and regional inequality was non-significant ($b = .098$, $se = .427$, $z = .230$, $p = .818$, 99% CI [-1.002, 1.199]). Thus, consistent with Hypothesis 1, for Europeans the relationship between Meritocracy beliefs and wellbeing was unaffected by the level of inequality in their neighbourhoods (see Figure 5.1).

Model for Māori

Analyses focusing on Māori indicated that endorsement of Meritocratic beliefs was positively associated with personal wellbeing ($b = .145$, $se = .038$, $z = 3.814$, $p < .001$, 99% CI [.047, .241]). Between-level analyses, however, showed that regional inequality was not associated with personal wellbeing when collapsing across respondents with varying degrees of Meritocracy beliefs ($b = -1.851$, $se = 1.240$, $z = -1.493$, $p = .135$, 99% CI [-3.718, 3.527]). Nevertheless, consistent with Hypotheses 2, results indicated that there was a reliable cross-level interaction between Meritocracy beliefs and regional inequality predicting wellbeing ($b = 2.139$, $se = .776$, $z = 2.758$, $p = .006$, 99% CI [.104, 4.084]).

To probe the interaction between Meritocracy and regional inequality, we estimated simple slopes for the effect of Meritocracy at conditional Gini values of .42 (.05 below the mean) and .57 (.10 above the mean). We opted for these values because the distribution of Gini coefficients was skewed, and these values represented the lower and upper *decile* values (i.e., the 10th and 90th percentile points) of our measure of inequality.

As indicated in Figure 5.2, Meritocracy was only significantly associated with personal wellbeing at high conditional values of inequality ($b = .348$, $se = .080$, $z = 4.362$, $p < .001$, 99% CI [.138, .547]). In contrast, the simple slope for the effect of Meritocracy on personal wellbeing at low conditional values of inequality was non-significant ($b = .027$, $se = .060$, $z = .445$, $p = .649$, 99% CI [-.124, .181]). Thus, in line with Hypothesis 2, Meritocracy was positively associated with wellbeing among Māori, but *only* for those who lived in areas with high levels of inequality.

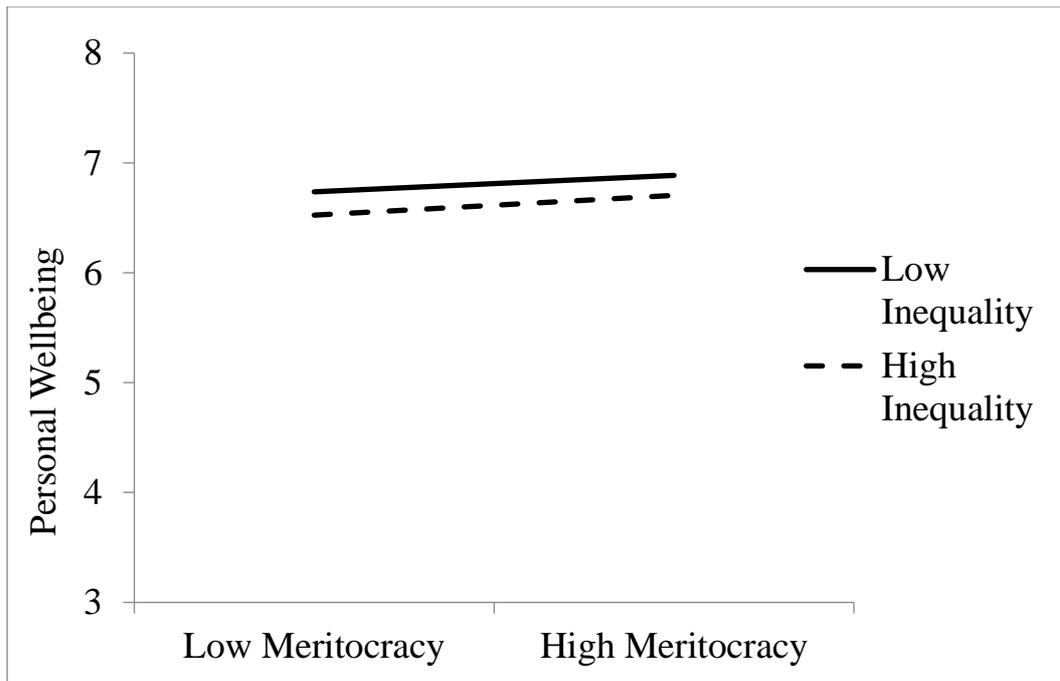


Figure 5.1. Line graph showing the relationship between Meritocracy beliefs and Personal Wellbeing among Europeans (the high-status ethnic group) in area units of New Zealand with low and high inequality.

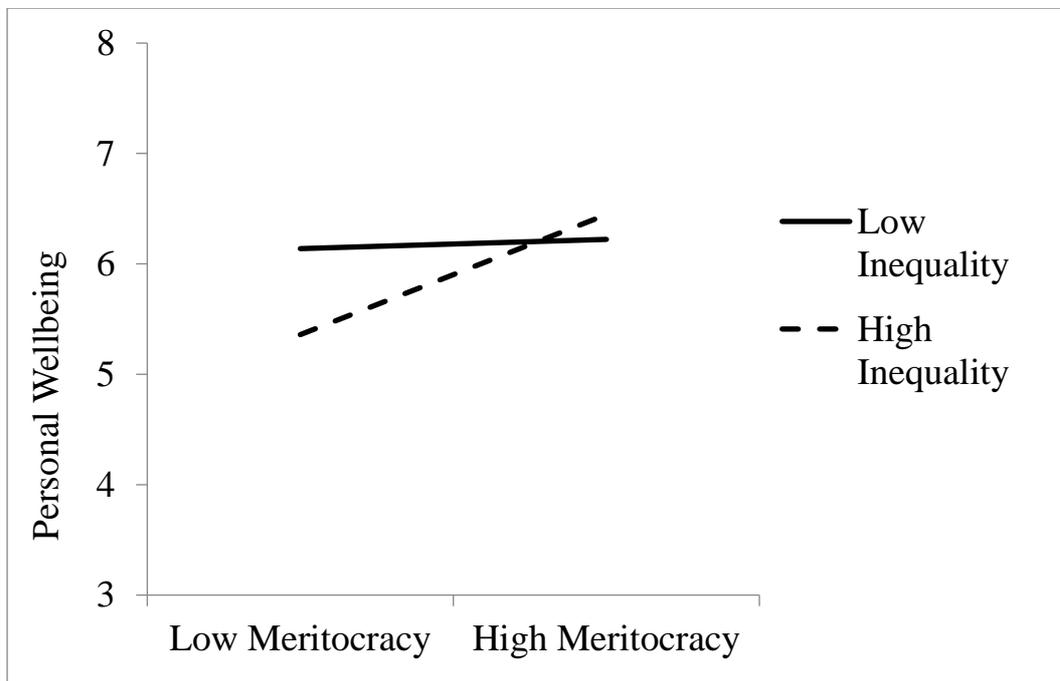


Figure 5.2. Line graph showing the relationship between Meritocracy beliefs and Personal Wellbeing among Māori (a low-status ethnic group in New Zealand) in area units with low and high inequality.

Discussion

This is the first study of its kind modelling a cross-level interaction between objective regional inequality and Meritocracy, predicting differences in wellbeing between members of advantaged (i.e., European) and disadvantaged (i.e., Māori) groups. First, we found that both Europeans and Māori who lived in more unequal neighbourhoods reported lower wellbeing, on average, than those who lived in more equal neighbourhoods. This is consistent with prior work showing that inequality is negatively associated with wellbeing, particularly in Western nations (Alesina et al., 2004; Oishi et al., 2011; Osborne, Sibley & Sengupta 2015).

Second, we found a positive association between Meritocracy and wellbeing for Europeans, consistent with the notion that high-status individuals gain palliative benefits from subscribing to ideologies that legitimise their advantaged position (e.g. Wakslak et al., 2007). Third, we found that this association was not moderated by the objective inequality of the neighbourhoods in which Europeans lived. This finding is consistent with our argument that inequality does not have particularly strong implications for the perceived ability of high-status individuals to control their personal outcomes. Thus, inequality does not affect the nature of the relationship between ideology and wellbeing for these individuals.

Fourth, we found that inequality *did* moderate the relationship between Meritocracy and wellbeing among Māori. More specifically, Meritocracy was positively associated with wellbeing *only* among Māori who lived in unequal conditions. Māori who lived in unequal neighbourhoods and *did not* subscribe to the ideology of Meritocracy reported the lowest wellbeing of all the groups in our analysis. This is consistent with our argument that inequality has particularly adverse implications for the ability of low-status group members to feel that their outcomes are within their control. When exposed to high inequality, low-status individuals are likely reminded of the unfair disadvantage they face because of their group membership, which consequently reduces their wellbeing.

By enabling them to make internal, rather than systemic attributions for this disadvantage, Meritocracy allows these individuals to feel like they have a chance to improve their position in society. This is reflected in our finding as subscription to Meritocracy increased, the wellbeing of Māori in unequal neighbourhoods began to approach the level of Māori in more equal neighbourhoods. Thus, our findings help clarify one of the most vexing questions in social psychology – that of whether ideology is palliative for the disadvantaged. They suggest that ideologies that legitimise inequality are not equally beneficial to *all* members of low-status groups, but are most beneficial to those who are subjected to the greatest inequality. Ideology may indeed be the opium of the (most oppressed) people.

However, as Marx (1944) intended, the opium metaphor highlights a major social problem that arises out of these palliative effects of ideology – those who are most oppressed, and therefore have the most to gain from resisting inequality, are instead politically *sedated* by their internalised attributions for the causes of inequality. By allowing low-status individuals to feel *personally* able to advance their interests, Meritocratic beliefs also reduce their motivation to advance the interests of their *group* as a whole. Indeed, research in the Social Identity tradition has shown that individuals who feel able to improve their own individual status, eschew collective strategies for improving their group's status – i.e., righting the group-based wrongs that created the status differences that disadvantage them (Ellemers et al., 1992; Mummendey et al., 1999). Consistent with this idea, Sengupta and Sibley (2013) found that the more Māori subscribed to Meritocracy, the less they supported reparative policies aimed at reducing group-based inequality.

The only people in our analysis for whom Meritocracy did not have palliative effects, were Māori who lived in more equal neighbourhoods. This is probably because, in the absence of the effect that visible inequality has in making unfair disadvantage salient, the psychological costs of self- and ingroup-blaming ideologies start to outweigh the benefits.

Another way of looking at this finding is that, when social stratification is less extreme, low-status groups lose the psychological incentive to internalise their own disadvantage. These are the individuals who are most likely to be amenable to engaging in political action to remediate the inequality they suffer under.

Strengths and Limitations

Here, we have operationalized regional inequality in terms of income, whereas group status and ideology were operationalized in terms of ethnicity. Ideally, we would have attempted to show that the ethnic-minority group living in areas with the greatest *ethnic* inequality gained the most palliative benefits from legitimising the inequality that exists along that dimension. However, we were unable to construct a measure of ethnic inequality, for want of regional-level data on the income distribution across ethnic-groups.

Nonetheless, there are at least two reasons why we think our ability to draw conclusions about the effects of inequality might not be substantively mitigated by this lack of alignment. First, our argument about inequality is essentially an argument about how exposure to social stratification makes unfair disadvantage salient to low-status groups. Therefore, the actual dimension along which that stratification exists is not particularly important for the case we are trying to make. As long as inequality triggers concerns about the fairness of status differences between groups (see Johnson, Leedom & Muhtadie, 2012), it should affect low-status groups in the way we hypothesise. Consistent with this idea, research in New Zealand has shown that income inequality does in fact increase perceptions of *ethnic-group-based* relative deprivation (Osborne, Sibley & Sengupta, 2015).

Second, as in other postcolonial nations, income and ethnic inequality are strongly linked in New Zealand. For example, according to (admittedly older) available census data, Māori make up 14.9% of the New Zealand population but account for 38.5% of the lowest household-income quartile and only 12.5% of the highest quartile (Statistics New Zealand,

1996). More recent data show that the proportion of Māori living below the poverty line (60% of the median household income) is twice that of Europeans (34% and 17% respectively; The Social Report, 2014). Further, while incomes among Europeans have increased slightly since 2008, incomes among Māori have dropped sharply (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). This suggests that the income inequality in New Zealand (which is among the highest, and fastest-rising in the OECD; OECD, 2012) is more strongly felt among the Māori population. Thus, we believe that when Māori are exposed to income inequality, they are apt to interpret it within the context of their lower social status relative to Europeans. The heightened salience of their ethnic disadvantage should then increase the psychological payoff of framing the ethnic hierarchy in Meritocratic terms.

Another limitation of our study is that the scale used to measure ethnic-specific Meritocracy does not include items commonly used in other scales assessing Meritocracy, which specifically allude to the concept of *merit* (e.g. Ledgerwood et al., 2011). Therefore, it could be argued that the scale does not truly capture the construct. However, it should be noted that the three items included in the NZAVS come from a longer, validated scale which *does* in fact include items explicitly relating to merit (e.g. “Everyone should be judged solely on their merits...”; Sibley & Wilson, 2007). Sibley and Wilson’s (2007) analysis indicates that the items included in the NZAVS correlate highly with the more explicitly merit-relevant items, and load onto the same latent construct.

Moreover, my argument about Meritocracy rests upon the function that this type of belief plays in minimising the systemic nature of group-based disadvantage by framing inequality in terms of individual-level causes. Indeed, previous research has shown that Meritocracy reduces the degree to which people attribute group-based disadvantage to systemic causes, and increases the degree to which they attribute it to individual factors (McCoy & Major, 2007; Ledgerwood et al., 2011). Consistent with this general function of

Meritocracy, the items in this study assess beliefs that deny the relevance of group-based claims for greater equality. Therefore, there is reason to suspect that this scale is assessing the same functional belief as more commonly used measures of Meritocracy.

A major strength of our study is its use of large representative samples of both high- and low-status groups, as well as the high number of area units representing abutting regions of New Zealand. The use of a regional-level index of inequality has several advantages over previous analyses in the SJT literature, which have investigated the moderating effects of inequality by using indices of cross-national variation in inequality (e.g. Brandt, 2013; Napier et al., 2010). First, countries differ on many characteristics other than their levels of inequality, and therefore, tests of the effects of cross-national inequality cannot easily rule out third-variable accounts for the same phenomena (see Oishi et al., 2011). Second, the large number of Level 2 units (i.e., neighbourhoods) in our analysis ($N = 1437$) meant that we had much higher statistical power to test cross-level interactions than previous analyses which have had to rely on between 30 and 65 Level 2 units (i.e., nations). Third, if we are correct, people's responses to inequality should not only depend on the overall level of inequality in their nation, but also on the information they get about the inequality in their society from their immediate context. Indeed, people are generally incapable of accurately judging the overall level of inequality in their nation (Norton & Ariely, 2011), but their subjective perceptions of disadvantage are closely calibrated to the level of inequality in their neighbourhood context (Osborne, Sibley & Sengupta, 2015). Therefore, it becomes important to measure variation in exposure to inequality in people's immediate environment.

Conclusion

Our results indicate that members of disadvantaged groups living in conditions of inequality feel better about their situation if they frame the group-based hierarchy under which they suffer as Meritocratic. This implies that ideology is not just a mechanism to perpetuate inequality, but also a coping mechanism to deal with entrenched inequality. This dual function of ideology can make unequal systems very resistant to change, since those who have the greatest interest in overturning the status quo – those who suffer the most inequality – also gain the most psychological comfort from legitimizing the system.

VI. POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Study 2 (Analyses 1 and 2) primarily focussed on two important interpersonal antecedents of system justification among the disadvantaged – ingroup and outgroup contact. However, these analyses also examined some important political consequences of system justification, namely, support for affirmative action policies benefiting one's group, and support for a political party that represents the interests of one's group. These analyses yielded inconsistent findings. On the one hand, ethnic-specific Meritocracy perceptions were associated with increased opposition to one particular affirmative action policy in Analysis 1, but a broader measure of ethnic-specific system justification was unrelated to a range of similar attitudes in Analysis 2.

This inconsistency reflects the current state of the literature on the political consequences of system justification – with some studies finding a negative relationship between system justification and political mobilization, and others finding no relationship (Jost et al., 2012, Study 1 cf. Study 3; see also Cichocka & Jost, 2014). Recently, Cichocka and Jost (2014) suggested that these inconsistencies might reflect the fact that the relationship between system justification and political mobilization is not linear, but curvilinear. In Study 4, I develop their argument further and present the first large-scale test of this hypothesis.

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Abstract

Evidence that system justification reduces political mobilization among members of disadvantaged groups has been inconsistent (Jost et al., 2012; cf. Cichocka & Jost, 2014). One explanation for the inconsistency is that the relationship between system justification and political mobilization might be best described by a quadratic, rather than a linear function. The present study is the first to test this explanation in a large, nationally representative sample of ethnic minority-group members in New Zealand (i.e. Māori, $N = 1674$). The overall pattern of results provided evidence for a U-shaped quadratic relationship; political mobilization initially decreased with increasing levels of system justification, but then increased as system justification increased beyond the midpoint of the scale. These findings identify a previously unknown nuance in the relationship between system justification and political mobilization.

**The curvilinear relationship between system justification and political mobilization
among the disadvantaged**

From the fall of apartheid, to the steady advance of gay rights, recent history has shown that groups, long persecuted and marginalized can improve their social position when they find their political voice. Psychological theories that attempt to explain how this kind of social change occurs have identified various factors that increase or decrease the likelihood that disadvantaged groups will become politically mobilized (e.g. Drury & Reicher, 2005; Klandermans, 1984; Walker & Smith, 2002; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). One prominent perspective – System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) – holds that a major hindrance to political mobilization is a general human motivation to justify and support existing sociopolitical systems *even when* they disadvantage oneself or one’s group (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Sullivan, 2003; see also Sengupta, Osborne & Sibley, 2015b). Thus, in order to bring about social change, SJT suggests that members of disadvantaged groups must overcome this basic motivation to justify the system.

Despite hundreds of studies confirming various predictions of SJT across different contexts (see Cichocka & Jost, 2014, for a recent review), surprisingly few have directly examined the relationship between system justification (SJ) and political mobilization (PM) among the disadvantaged. Those that have (e.g., Jost, et al., 2012; Osborne, Yogeewaran & Sibley, 2015; Sengupta, Milojev, Barlow & Sibley, 2015) generally assume that the relationship between SJ and PM is linear. However, these studies have yielded mixed results.

Recently, Cichocka and Jost (2014) have suggested an explanation for these inconsistent findings – that the SJ-PM relationship might be curvilinear and potentially follow a second-order polynomial (quadratic) function. In the present article, we (a) outline the logic for this prediction, (b) discuss the different forms the effect might take, and (c)

present the first formal test of the quadratic effects of system justification on four indices of political mobilization in a large, nationally representative sample of ethnic-minority group members ($N = 1674$).

System Justification Theory

System Justification Theory differs from other perspectives seeking to explain social change in that it focuses more on what prevents change than on what promotes it. Its central proposition is that unequal systems perpetuate over time because people are motivated to perceive the existing social order as fair and just, even when it is not (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). Over two decades of evidence has now accumulated in support of this proposition. For example, people subscribe to various ideologies and stereotypes that make systemic inequalities seem legitimate (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Kay, Jost, Mandisodza, Sherman, Petrocelli & Johnson, 2007), cling more strongly to these ideologies and stereotypes when primed to believe the system is under threat (Kay, Jost & Young, 2005; Ulrich & Cohrs, 2007), and engage in biased information processing in defence of the system (Ledgerwood, Jost, Mandisodza & Pohl, 2011).

Crucially, SJT proposes that it is not just people who have a vested interest in the status quo (i.e., advantaged groups) who justify and defend it. A corollary of the theory's proposition that system justification is a general human tendency is that it operates *even* among members of disadvantaged groups. Evidence for system justifying tendencies among the disadvantaged comes from studies highlighting ways in which people with low-status group memberships internalize systemic status differences. For example, members of various low-status groups including ethnic minorities (Jost, Pelham & Carvallo, 2002), the poor (Rudman, Feinberg, & Fairchild, 2002), gay men and lesbians (Jost et al., 2004) show implicit favoritism towards members of high-status groups. Further, women and low-status groups evaluate themselves as deserving lower pay for the same work, compared to men and

high-status groups, thus legitimizing group-based income inequality (Jost, 1997; Pelham & Hetts 2001; O'Brien, Major & Gilbert, 2012).

Kay et al. (2009; Studies 3 and 4) provided what is perhaps the most convincing demonstration of the system-justification motivation operating among the disadvantaged. They found that when the system-justification motive was heightened, women were more likely to support social arrangements in which their group was described as being underrepresented in politics and business, and to report that this underrepresentation was normative and desirable. Several studies have also shown that under some circumstances, low-status groups can justify the system even more than high-status groups (Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003; Henry & Saul, 2006; Sengupta et al., 2015b; although see Brandt, 2013 for a critique of this idea)

System Justification and Political Mobilization

The fact that those who have the most to gain from challenging an unequal system also show a motivated tendency to perceive those systems as legitimate has important implications for social change. Research on political mobilization strongly suggests that for unequal systems to be challenged, people first need to recognize that they are victims of inequality, and feel outraged enough to take action (see van Zomeren et al., 2008). System justification undermines such recognition and outrage (Osborne & Sibley, 2013; see also Wakslack, Jost, Tyler & Chen, 2007). Thus, the primary contribution of SJT to social change research lies in highlighting a previously unidentified limiting factor to political mobilization among the disadvantaged – a cognitive-motivational preference for the status quo. However, the degree to which this preference limits social change is unclear, partly because very few studies have directly tested the relationship between system justification and people's willingness to mobilize politically.

Two studies that examined analogues of system justification (e.g. Just World beliefs, Social Dominance Orientation) provide initial evidence to support the notion that system justification reduces political mobilization. Hafer and Olson (1993) found a negative relationship between women's degree of Belief in a Just World (i.e., a world in which people got what they deserved and deserved what they got) and their support for political actions aimed at improving conditions for women in the workplace. Further, Cameron and Nickerson (2006) found a negative relationship between Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; i.e., an ideological preference for intergroup inequality) and protest intentions among anti-globalization campaigners. Although SDO and Just World beliefs are not measures of SJ, *per se*, they can be considered system-justifying ideologies because they legitimize the inequality of outcomes that characterizes most societies (see Jost & Hunyady, 2005). However, they represent only two of a wide variety of ways in which the sociopolitical system can be bolstered (e.g. Kay et al., 2007; see also, Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Sengupta et al., 2015b).

Only a handful of studies have directly measured (or manipulated) system justification to test its effects on political mobilization. In one study, Jost et al. (2012) found a negative correlation between system justification and willingness to protest in a small sample of undergraduates. In a second, Jost et al. (2012) manipulated system justification among May Day protesters in Greece by exposing them to complementary and non-complementary stereotype exemplars (see Kay & Jost, 2003). Even among this highly politicized group, they found that increasing the system justification motive reduced political mobilization.

Two studies from New Zealand—the country in which the current study is being conducted—have also provided supportive evidence. In the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study, a large and nationally representative sample of registered voters, Osborne and Sibley (2013) found that system justification dampened the effects of group-based

deprivation on political mobilization. In a subsequent study, Osborne, Yogeeswaran & Sibley (2015), when testing a broader theoretical model, found a negative relationship between SJ and PM among Māori (a disadvantaged ethnic group).

However, several analyses have failed to replicate this pattern. For example, using data from a different wave of the same large-scale survey used in Osborne and colleagues' analyses mentioned above, Sengupta, Milojev, et al. (2015) did not find a significant relationship between ethnic-specific system justification (i.e. the degree to which ethnic-group relations are perceived to be legitimate) and political mobilization among Māori. Similarly, examining political action among members of a teachers union, Jost et al. (2012, Study 3) failed to find either a significant direct or indirect SJ-PM relationship (via group-based anger). In a recent review of system justification phenomena, Cichocka and Jost (2014) concluded that research in post-communist societies had also failed to establish a link between system justification and political participation. They speculated that one reason for this inconsistent evidence might be that the relationship is, in fact, curvilinear.

The Curvilinear Hypothesis

Cichocka and Jost (2014) suggested that system justification might have opposing effects on political mobilization. On the one hand, system justification makes people more satisfied with the status quo, and therefore less motivated to change it. On the other hand, a certain level of system justification might be necessary for people to feel that changing the system is worthwhile. Indeed, it has been found that system justification is positively associated with political efficacy among members of disadvantaged groups (Osborne, Yogeeswaran & Sibley, 2015), and political efficacy has been shown to predict higher levels of support for collective action (e.g. Hornsey et al., 2006; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink & Mielke, 1999). Therefore, system justification might be negatively associated with political mobilization via satisfaction with the system, but positively associated with political

mobilization via an increased sense of political efficacy. According to Cichocka and Jost (2014), these opposing effects should mean that political mobilization is highest at moderate levels of system justification. This is because political disillusionment at low levels of system justification, and political satisfaction at high levels of system justification would keep mobilization low. Thus, the SJ-PM relationship might be best described by an inverted U-shaped quadratic function (see Figure 6.1).

We agree that the SJ-PM relationship might be curvilinear, but raise the possibility that the curve might take a different shape. Research in the Social Identity tradition has shown that people are most likely to use collective strategies to enhance their group interests when they perceive intergroup status relations to be illegitimate (Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993; Mummendey et al., 1999). In line with this work, we suggest that political mobilization might be highest at low levels of system justification. As system justification increases, political mobilization should decrease (since being more satisfied with the system should make people increasingly less willing to change it). However, as people start feeling more positively than negatively towards the system (i.e. beyond the midpoint of the scale), they might also feel a greater sense of political efficacy about achieving change within the system (see Osborne, Yogeewaran & Sibley, 2015). This heightened level of efficacy at high levels of system justification should increase political mobilization. This type of process would produce a U-shaped curve (see Figure 6.2).

Thus, in contrast to Cichocka and Jost (2014), our version of the curvilinear hypothesis predicts that mobilization will be *lowest* at moderate levels of system justification. This is because a strong sense of dissatisfaction at low levels of system justification, and a strong sense of political efficacy at high levels, might make people who hold these more strongly valenced attitudes towards the system more likely to mobilize in support of their group's interests. The two hypotheses are similar in that they both suggest that the opposing

effects of system justification on (a) satisfaction with the status quo and (b) political efficacy produce differential effects on political mobilization at high and low levels of SJ. However, the hypotheses differ in whether the effects of SJ on political efficacy are expected to manifest at low or high levels of system justification.

Cichocka and Jost's (2014) hypothesis implies that the effects of efficacy are important primarily at low levels of SJ, producing a positive effect on political mobilization up to approximately the midpoint of the scale. Beyond that point, satisfaction with the system would override feelings of political efficacy to drive down levels of political mobilization. Our hypothesis suggests that the increased political efficacy associated with system justification will start to manifest in the form of greater mobilization *only* once people start to feel at least moderately satisfied with the system. In the absence of published empirical data in support of either pattern, we leave this an open question and present the first large-scale test of the quadratic effects of system justification on political mobilization among the disadvantaged.

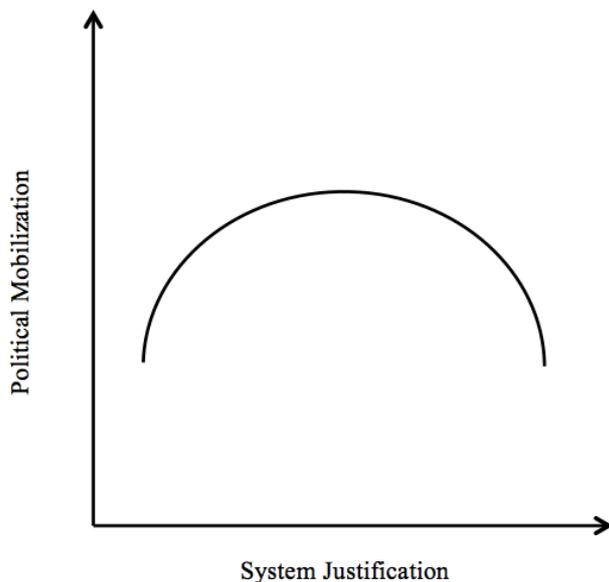


Figure 6.1. The inverted U-shaped relationship between system justification and political mobilization predicted by Cichocka and Jost (2014).

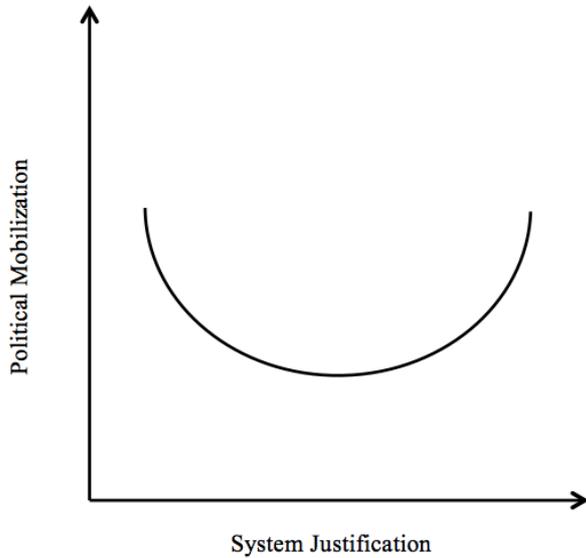


Figure 6.2. The alternative U-shaped relationship between system justification and political mobilization predicted in the current analysis.

The Present Study

We examined political mobilization among Māori – a disadvantaged ethnic minority group in New Zealand. Māori arrived in New Zealand in the 13th Century and were the first people to settle the islands. European migration and eventual colonization over the course of the 19th Century took a huge toll on the Māori population (King, 2007), as was the case for indigenous groups across the Americas, Africa and Australia. Systematic injustices – which included the forced appropriation of Māori land, and the suppression of their language and culture – left Māori at a severe socioeconomic disadvantage relative to European New Zealanders (Belich, 1986; Walker, 1990).

The legacy of this disadvantage is still evident in contemporary New Zealand society. Māori make up 14.9% of the population, but account for 38.6% of the lowest income quartile, and 51% of the prison population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006; 2012). Relative to New Zealand Europeans, Māori have a lower employment rate, experience higher mortality and morbidity rates (The Social Report, 2010), report lower wellbeing (Sibley, Harré, Hoverd,

and Houkamau, 2011), and face various forms of interpersonal and institutional discrimination (Harris et al., 2006; Houkamau & Sibley, 2015). Thus, Māori are a very appropriate group for the purposes of our analysis – they have faced historical injustices resulting in contemporary disadvantage, which they can try to remediate by mobilizing collectively in New Zealand’s free and democratic political environment (see EIU, 2012; McMahon, 2012).

In democratic societies, disadvantaged groups can seek redress for historical grievances by supporting affirmative action policies that would benefit their group, and voting for candidates and political parties who are likely to implement such policies. They can also put more direct pressure on political leaders by engaging in collective action (e.g. protest marches and demonstrations). The present study will be the first to explore the relationship between system justification and all of these distinct forms of political mobilization. More specifically, we will measure political mobilization in terms of support for two types of affirmative action policy (i.e. symbolic and resource-specific), support for the Māori party, and support for collective action.

Method

Participants and Sampling procedure

The data for this study were drawn from Time 4 of the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). The NZAVS is a national longitudinal study that began in 2009 and is based on a random sample of the electoral roll—a nationwide list of registered voters. The Time 4 (2012) NZAVS contained responses from 12,182 participants (6,807 retained from one or more previous wave, 5,108 new additions from booster sampling, and 267 unmatched participants or unsolicited opt-ins). The sample retained 4,053 participants from the initial Time 1 (2009) NZAVS of 6,518 participants (a retention rate of 62.2% over three years). The sample retained 5,762 participants from the full Time 3 (2011) sample (a retention rate of 83.7% from the previous year). Participants were posted a copy of the questionnaire, with a second postal follow-up two months later. Participants who provided an email address were also emailed and invited to complete an online version of the study if they preferred.

We chose to analyse data from Time 4 of the NZAVS for two reasons. First, a booster sampling procedure had been implemented at this time point, in order to increase the proportion of participants from under-represented social categories. Therefore Time 4 has the largest sample of Māori of all the waves of the NZAVS, giving our analysis the highest possible statistical power. Second, the questionnaire at Time 4 included, for the first time, a measure of collective action intentions among Māori. Thus we could analyse the effects of system justification on a more comprehensive range of political mobilisation indices than was possible using earlier waves of NZAVS (e.g., see Sengupta, Milojev, et al., 2015).

We analyzed data from the 1674 Māori participants (1075 women, 599 men) who provided complete responses to relevant items at Time 4 of the NZAVS. Participants had a mean age of 45.73 years ($SD = 13.66$) and a mean household income of \$82,941 ($SD = \$78,284$). 68% of the sample was employed. In terms of educational attainment, 28%

reported having no qualifications, 31% reported some high school education, 16% reported having a diploma or certificate, 20% reported having an undergraduate qualification and 9% reported having a postgraduate qualification.

Questionnaire Measures

System Justification. Since several studies have suggested that system-justification processes among the disadvantaged are more likely to emerge when people are evaluating the domain most relevant to their own disadvantage (Sengupta et al., 2015b; Kay & Friesen, 2011; van der Toorn, Tyler & Jost, 2011), we operationalized system justification in terms of perceptions of fairness of ethnic-group relations. Participants were asked to rate the following two items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): “In general, relations between different ethnic groups in New Zealand are fair” and “Everyone in New Zealand has a fair shot at wealth and happiness, regardless of their ethnicity or race”.

Political Mobilization. We operationalized political mobilization in four different ways: two types of affirmative-action policy preferences (i.e., symbolic and resource-specific), support for the Māori Party, and collective action intentions. Symbolic policies are designed to increase the degree to which Māori culture is represented as part of New Zealand’s national identity. To measure support for this type of affirmative action, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they supported or opposed the following four policies (1 – strongly oppose, 7 – strongly support): “Performance of the Haka at international sports events”, “Waitangi Day as a national celebration of biculturalism”, “Teaching Māori language in New Zealand primary schools” and “Singing the national anthem in Māori and English”.

Resource-specific affirmative action policies are aimed at increasing Māori communities’ share of the power and resources in New Zealand society. To measure support for this type of affirmative action, participants rated their degree of support for or opposition

to the following four items (1 – strongly oppose, 7 – strongly support): “Māori ownership of the seabed and foreshore”, “Reserving places for Māori students to study medicine”, “Rates exemptions on Māori land”, Crown (government) ownership of the seabed and foreshore” (reverse-coded).

Participants were also asked for a rating of how strongly they supported or opposed each of New Zealand’s major political parties (1 – strongly oppose, 7 – strongly support), including the Māori Party. The Māori Party’s political platform is to represent the interests of Māori, as a group, in the New Zealand parliament. Finally, collective action intentions were measured by asking participants the degree to which they would support or oppose “Protest marches and public demonstrations supporting the rights of Māori” (1, strongly oppose – 7, strongly support).

Covariates. The following covariates were also assessed: (a) gender, (b) age, (c) economic deprivation, (d) employment status (e) education and (f) political orientation. Economic deprivation was calculated using the Ministry of Health’s Deprivation NZDep2013—a measure that assigns a ranked decile score ranging from 1 (most affluent) to 10 (most impoverished) to each local area (mesh-block) in the country (White, Gunston, Salmond, Atkinson, & Crampton, 2008). Political Orientation was measured using the following item: “Please rate how politically liberal versus conservative you see yourself as being” (1 – extremely liberal, 7 – extremely conservative).

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between all variables included in this study are shown in Table 6.1. We first tested the linear effect of system justification on the four political mobilization indices in four multiple regressions using Maximum Likelihood with robust estimation of standard errors in *Mplus Version 7.2* (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). As shown in Table 6.2, when adjusting for age, gender, deprivation, education, employment status, and political orientation, only the effect of system justification on one index of political mobilization was negative and significant, as SJT would predict (Resource Policy Support: $b = -.12$, $se = .03$, $p < .001$). The effect of system justification on Protest Intentions was also negative, but given our large sample size, the effect can only be considered marginally significant ($b = -.07$, $se = .03$, $p = .04$). On the other hand, the effect of system justification on Symbolic Policy Support was *positive* and marginally significant ($b = .04$, $se = .02$, $p = .04$), while its effect on support for the Māori Party was positive, but non-significant ($b = .01$, $se = .04$, $p = .83$). This pattern of findings is consistent with the fact that prior analyses have failed to establish that a robust linear relationship exists between system justification and political mobilization (e.g. Jost et al., 2012, Study 3; Sengupta, Milojevic, et al., 2015).

To test our curvilinear hypothesis, we entered the mean-centered system justification term, a quadratic system justification term (calculated by multiplying the mean-centered system justification with itself), and all covariates simultaneously into a four multiple regressions predicting the four indices of political mobilization (which also adjusted for the shared variance between these four outcomes). As shown in Table 7, the coefficients for the quadratic system justification term (or system justification squared) were positive and significant in three of the four analyses (Symbolic Policy Support: $b = .05$, $se = .01$, $p < .001$; Resource Policy Support: $b = .05$, $se = .02$, $p = .001$; Protest Intentions: $b = .06$, $se = .02$, $p <$

.001), adjusting for the effects of gender, age, deprivation, education-level and employment status. However, the quadratic effect of system justification on support for the Māori Party was non-significant ($b = .02, se = .02, p = .24$).

To examine the shape of the quadratic functions that reached significance, we plotted the estimated conditional values of Symbolic Policy Support, Resource Policy Support and Protest Intentions (after adjusting for our covariates) at 13 values along the System Justification scale (i.e. 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0). As shown in Figure 3, the trajectory of Symbolic Policy Support along the SJ scale initially decreased with increasing levels of SJ (from values of 1 to 3.5 on the scale), but subsequently began to increase once passing the midpoint (from values of 4 to 7 on the scale). Analyses of the differences in estimated conditional values indicated that the lowest value for Symbolic Policy Support (i.e. the value at 3.5 on the SJ scale) was significantly lower than the values at both the extreme high ($b_{\text{difference}} = .58, se = .11, t = 5.16, p < .001$) and low end ($b_{\text{difference}} = .29, se = .10, t = 2.94, p = .003$) of the SJ scale.

Similarly, the trajectory of Protest Intentions along the SJ scale initially decreased with increasing levels of SJ (from values of 1 to 4.5 on the scale), but subsequently began to increase once passing the midpoint (from values of 5 to 7 on the scale). Here again, the lowest value for Protest Intentions (i.e. the value at 4.5 on the SJ scale) was significantly lower than the values at both the extreme high ($b_{\text{difference}} = .40, se = .17, t = 2.40, p = .017$) and low end ($b_{\text{difference}} = .73, se = .18, t = 4.15, p < .001$) of the SJ scale.

Finally, the trajectory of Resource Policy Support along the SJ scale also decreased with increasing levels of SJ (from values of 1 to 5 on the scale), and subsequently began to increase (from values of 5.5 to 7 on the scale). Analyses of the differences in estimated conditional values indicated that the lowest value for Resource Policy Support (i.e. the value at 5 on the system justification scale) was significantly lower than the value at the extreme

low end of the SJ scale ($b_{\text{difference}} = .82, se = .16, t = 5.03, p < .001$), but not the value at the extreme high end of the SJ scale ($b_{\text{difference}} = .19, se = .14, t = 1.38, p = .17$) of the SJ scale.

This indicates that the curve for Resource Policy Support is asymptotic at higher levels of SJ, rather than following the same type of upward trajectory as the curves for Symbolic Policy Support and Protest Intentions. Taken together, these findings are consistent with our hypothesis that the relationship between system justification and protest intentions among the disadvantaged is best described by a U-shaped quadratic function (rather than the inverted U-shaped function predicted by Cichocka & Jost, 2014; see Figure 6.1).

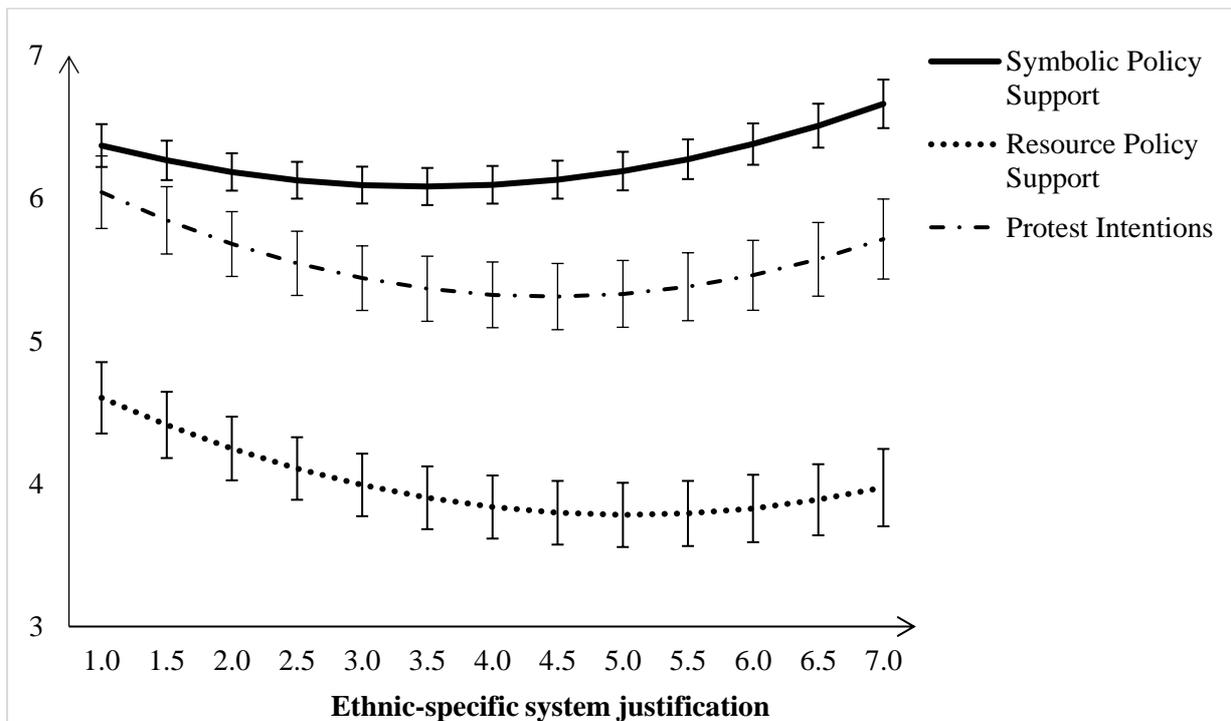


Figure 6.3. Curves showing the relationship between ethnic-specific system justification and the three forms of political mobilization for which significant quadratic effects were found. *Note.* Error bars represent the standard errors of each point estimate.

Table 6.1
Descriptive statistics and correlations between all variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. System Justification												
2. System Justification ²	.98*											
3. Symbolic Policy Support	-.01	-.02										
4. Resource Policy Support	.10*	.09*	.52*									
5. Māori Party Support	-.03	-.03*	-.48*	-.57*								
6. Protest Intentions	-.07*	-.07*	-.61*	-.68*	.54*							
7. Gender	.13*	.13*	.23*	.12*	-.09*	-.10*						
8. Age	.11*	.11*	.26*	.17*	-.10*	-.19*	.14*					
9. Deprivation	-.02	.00	-.07*	-.21*	.07*	.11*	-.03*	-.08*				
10. Education	-.07*	-.07*	-.17*	-.07*	.14*	.17*	-.08*	-.13*	-.20*			
11. Employment	-.04*	-.05*	-.10*	.01	.02	.04*	.04*	-.26*	-.09*	.19*		
12. Political Orientation	.10*	.10*	.23*	.26*	-.23*	-.32*	.06*	.14*	.02	-.21*	.04*	
M	3.89	17.47	5.78	4.45	4.18	4.97	.36	45.70	6.32	-.33	.70	3.64
SD	1.46	11.81	1.12	1.72	1.80	1.77	.48	13.62	2.88	1.28	.47	1.20

Note. *p < .01

Table 6.2

Multiple regression models of the linear and quadratic effects of system justification on the four types of political mobilization among Māori.

	Symbolic Policy Support			Resource Policy Support			Māori Party Support			Protest Intentions		
	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>
Linear Effects Model												
System Justification	.04*	.02	2.06	-.12**	.03	-3.90	.01	.04	.22	-.07*	.03	-2.11
Gender	-.27**	.06	-4.67	-.20*	.09	-2.29	-.11	.11	-.99	-.10	.09	-1.17
Age	-.01**	.00	-3.56	.00	.00	1.18	.00	.00	-.13	.00	.00	-.66
Deprivation	.03**	.01	3.34	.15**	.01	10.60	.08**	.02	4.25	.10**	.02	6.67
Education	.08**	.02	3.69	.08*	.04	2.37	.12**	.04	2.79	.09*	.04	2.51
Employment	.03	.06	.42	-.12	.09	-1.25	-.05	.12	-.40	-.18	.10	-1.86
Political Orientation	-.04	.02	-1.77	-.12**	.04	-3.35	-.04	.05	-.88	-.22**	.04	-5.73
Quadratic Effects Model												
System Justification	.04*	.02	2.02	-.12**	.03	-3.98	.01	.04	.19	-.07*	.03	-2.20
System Justification ²	.05**	.01	4.65	.05**	.02	3.27	.02	.02	1.16	.06**	.02	3.74
Gender	-.27**	.06	-4.67	-.20*	.09	-2.28	-.11	.11	-1.01	-.10	.09	-1.14
Age	-.01**	.00	-3.89	.00	.00	.10	.00	.00	-.22	.00	.00	-.89
Deprivation	.03**	.01	3.03	.15**	.01	10.36	.08**	.02	4.16	.10**	.02	6.51
Education	.08**	.02	3.67	.08*	.03	2.35	.12**	.04	2.79	.09*	.04	2.48
Employment	.04	.06	0.66	-.10	.09	-1.08	-.04	.12	-.31	-.16	.10	-1.68
Political Orientation	-.04	.02	-1.61	-.12**	.04	-3.24	-.04	.05	-.85	-.22**	.04	-5.60

Note. *b* coefficients represent unstandardized parameters. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

Here, we presented a test of the quadratic effects of system justification on political mobilization in a large, nationally representative sample of members of a historically disadvantaged ethnic group. Our overall pattern of results was consistent with the proposition, first articulated by Cichocka and Jost (2014), that the SJ-PM relationship is curvilinear – with three of the four analyses yielding significant quadratic effects. The findings also suggested that the linear relationship between system justification and political mobilization was not robust. Together, these findings help account for the inconsistent prior evidence on the nature of the SJ-PM relationship. It appears that the direction of this relationship changes as system justification increases from low to high levels.

However, in contrast to Cichocka and Jost's (2014) hypothesis, we found that the shape of the SJ-PM curve was best described by a U-shaped function, rather than an inverted U-shaped function. Political mobilization was highest at low levels of system justification (not at moderate levels), and decreased as system-justification increased up to around the mid-point of the scale. After that, support for resource-specific affirmative action policies levelled off, whereas protest intentions and symbolic policy support began to rise at increasingly higher levels of system justification. Māori who were very high on system justification were, on average, about as willing to protest and support symbolic affirmative action policies as Māori who were very low on system justification.

Our analyses are limited by the fact that the Time 4 NZAVS data did not include a measure of political efficacy. Thus, we could not test whether the increase in protest intentions at higher levels of system justification was indeed a consequence of an increased sense of political efficacy, as hypothesised. While previous analyses do suggest that system justification and political efficacy are positively correlated (e.g. Osborne, Yogeeswaran & Sibley, 2015), and that political efficacy increases collective action intentions (Hornsey et al.,

2006; Mummendey et al., 1999), future research will need to explicitly test the possibility that political efficacy mediates the quadratic effects of SJ on collective action intentions.

However, the differences in the shape of the curves for the three types of mobilization do provide a clue about the hypothesized role of the political efficacy. Certain forms of political mobilization are considered more aligned with the values and norms of the overarching system than others. For example, in stable democracies, voting in an election would be considered a more normative political act than participating in a protest. Similarly, protesting would be considered more normative than rioting (see Tausch et al., 2011). Political efficacy should be more strongly related to forms of mobilization considered more normative within a particular system. Indeed, Tausch et al. (2011) found that political efficacy was more strongly related to voting intentions, than to protest intentions. Following this reasoning, if the upward trajectory of the SJ-PM curve is indeed explained by the positive relationship between system justification and political efficacy, this trajectory should be steeper for forms of mobilization that are more normative, and gentler for those that are less normative.

This is exactly what our analyses suggest. Among the four forms of political mobilization in our study, symbolic affirmative action policies can be considered the most normative in the New Zealand context. For example, both qualitative and survey research has shown that even the dominant ethnic group (i.e. New Zealand Europeans) express relatively high levels of support for the inclusion of Māori culture in New Zealand's national identity, which is something that symbolic policies are designed to increase (Liu & Sibley 2006; Sibley, Liu & Khan, 2008; Sibley & Liu, 2007; Sibley, Robertson & Kirkwood; 2005). Moreover, while dominant groups in other countries implicitly associate their own culture more strongly with the national category than minority-group culture (e.g. Devos & Banaji, 2005), European New Zealanders do not show this implicit bias. Instead, both Europeans and

Māori associate Māori culture just as strongly with New Zealand's national identity, as they do European culture (Sibley & Barlow, 2009). This openness to the inclusion of Māori culture means that symbolic policies are much more widely supported, and this high degree of normativity is reflected in the fact that the upward trajectory of the SJ-PM curve is the steepest when political mobilization is measured in terms of symbolic policy support.

Resource-specific affirmative action policies on the other hand are much more controversial. There is a clear disjunction between levels of support for these policies between the ethnic majority group and Māori – with Europeans showing much lower support for them (Sibley, 2010). Moreover, politicians often use majority-group opposition to such policies to score political points (e.g. Brash, 2004). Even among Māori, support for such policies is much lower than support for symbolic policies and generalized collective action (as indicated by the means for these variables in our study). For this, less normative form of affirmative action, the upward trajectory of the SJ-PM curve is the least pronounced.

We believe that Māori protests and demonstrations can be considered less normative than symbolic affirmative action, but more normative than resource-specific affirmative action policies. At first glance, this can be observed in the fact that the mean level of support for protest is lower than that for symbolic policy, and higher than that for resource-specific policies. Māori have a long history of engaging in protest against the injustices suffered by their group – there are records of protest movements going back to 1844 (Harris, 2004). Since the 1970s these movements have become an increasingly visible part of New Zealand's political landscape (Walker, 1990). More recently, Māori have also expanded their protest activities beyond the interests of their own group, to take political action on behalf of issues that affect New Zealand society more broadly (e.g., the privatization of state assets, deep sea oil drilling off New Zealand's coastline; Fensom, 2012; Nathan, 2015). For this form of political mobilization, with an intermediate level of normativity, the upward trajectory of the

SJ-PM curve is steeper than the SJ-resource-policy curve, and shallower than the SJ-symbolic-policy curve.

Finally, it should be noted that one of our analyses did not yield either significant linear or curvilinear effects – i.e., system justification was unrelated to support for the Māori Party. This is probably because, since its inception, there has been ambiguity about how the Party is positioned vis-à-vis the overarching system. On the one hand, its platform to represent the interests of Māori, positions it in opposition to the existing system of ethnic inequality in New Zealand. On the other hand, in the last two election cycles, the Māori party has allied with the ruling, and right-leaning, National Party – the very party which has, in recent times, sought to deny Māori claims for redistributive justice (e.g. Brash, 2004). The fact that the mean level of support for the Māori Party, was close to the midpoint of the scale and the lowest of all the measures of political mobilization in the study, probably reflects an uncertainty, among Māori, about where the Party stands with regard to reforming the unequal ethnic-group hierarchy. This uncertainty would explain why there is no relationship between ethnic system-justification and support for the Māori Party.

An important caveat for the generalizability of the findings is that these data come from a nation with very strong democratic institutions. New Zealand ranks 5th in the world in terms of democratic robustness (EIU, 2012) and 1st in terms of individual liberty (McMahon, 2012). Thus, minority groups in New Zealand have clear norms and structures for mobilizing politically, and achieving change *within the system*. Groups who live in societies where such norms and structures are less available might show a decreased willingness to protest as their levels of system justification rise from moderate to high. They might also not be particularly motivated to protest at very low levels of system justification because the prospect of systemic change might seem unrealistic.

If so, the relationship between SJ and protest intentions among these groups would begin to more closely approximate the inverted U-shaped function predicted by Cichocka & Jost (2014). Indeed, their hypothesis was derived while trying to make sense of political mobilization in the post-communist context, where democratic institutions are more recent, and democratic norms are, consequently, much weaker. Testing quadratic effects of system justification on collective action in more diverse contexts will help shed light on whether the pattern observed in our study generalizes across societies that vary in the degree to which social change is allowed for within the political system. Nonetheless, our findings should at least apply to other democratic societies (e.g. in Europe, North America, Oceania and India) where peaceful protest and legislative changes are made possible by the nature of political system, and by the existence of norms and historical precedents for political mobilization.

These findings have important implications for System Justification Theory. They suggest that very high levels of SJ might not be as much of a hindrance to system-challenging attitudes as assumed in much of the SJT literature (see Jost et al., 2012). Rather, ambivalent (or perhaps, indifferent) feelings towards the system (expressed in terms of moderate levels of system justification) might be the most detrimental for political mobilization among the disadvantaged. People who feel very negatively about the system will mobilize out of a sense of dissatisfaction, and people who feel very positively will likely mobilize because they feel they can make a difference within the system – there is something worth fighting for.

The results of the current study also have implications for the literature on collective action. A major branch of research in this tradition has focused on the importance of perceiving intergroup status relations as illegitimate (e.g. Ellemers et al., 1993) and perceiving unjust ingroup disadvantage (e.g. Smith & Ortiz, 2002) in motivating political action (see also, van Zomeren et al., 2008, p. 505). However, the quadratic function reported here suggests that it is not always necessary to get people to de-legitimize the system as much

as possible in order for them to become willing to change it. Indeed, our analyses suggest that people who are high on system justification may also be open to challenging the system in certain ways (e.g. by engaging in protest, or supporting more normative forms of affirmative action).

In this regard, our findings fit well with recent work on “system-sanctioned change.” For example, Feygina, et al. (2010) found that although system justification was negatively related to support for political action to tackle climate change, this effect was reversed when people were primed to see environmental protection as *pro-systemic*. In other words, there was a positive relationship between system justification and support for environmental protection policies when people viewed these policies as important to preserving the system. In the same way, our findings highlight the possibility that to the extent that people see achieving intergroup equality as helping to improve and safeguard the fairness of the system, they might become more (rather than less) motivated to mobilize as a function of their levels of system justification.

Conclusion

Using a large, nationally representative sample of disadvantaged-group members in New Zealand, we showed that the relationship between system justification and political mobilization is best described by a U-shaped quadratic function. For Māori, willingness to support systemic changes that benefit their ethnic group initially decreased with increasing levels of system justification, and then either levelled off or increased as system justification increased beyond the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that high levels of system justification may not always deter the disadvantaged from mobilizing politically.

VII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

This thesis was motivated by a desire to understand how inequality between groups persists over time, and how it comes to be challenged. History suggests that inequality can be reduced when its victims engage in a political struggle against it (Guigni, 2004). System Justification Theory, however, proposes that people are generally motivated to support the *status quo*, even if it disadvantages them (Jost et al., 2004). This implies that a major hindrance to intergroup equality is the tendency for members of disadvantaged groups to support the unequal systems under which they live. Put another way, the greatest promise for social change towards equality lies in the degree to which the victims of inequality can overcome their system justification motive. I therefore conducted a programme of research aimed at exploring the antecedents and consequences of system justification among members of disadvantaged ethnic groups. In doing so, I have not only drawn from—and added to—the literature on SJT, but also theories of inter- and intra-group processes, ideology, inequality, subjective wellbeing, political mobilization and social change.

System Justification among the Disadvantaged

By using data from a large, nationally representative sample, this thesis helps address two major weaknesses in the SJT literature. First, it has measured *mass opinion* about the system, providing valuable information about how much people generally support the status quo. This has also allowed an analysis of how much societal levels of system justification affect, and are affected by, psychological processes identified in the small-scale, experimental research that typifies the SJT literature. Second, this thesis has brought the focus of SJT back to its most distinctive component; its hypothesis that the system justification motive operates even among members of disadvantaged groups.

Together, these two contributions are crucial for assessing the veracity of SJT's proposition that unequal systems remain stable over time because of the support they receive from both their beneficiaries and their victims. The first step towards evaluating this proposition was to measure how much support unequal systems do, in fact, receive from their beneficiaries and victims. To this end, Study 1 compared levels of system support between the members of disadvantaged and advantaged groups. It showed that New Zealand's political system receives similar levels of endorsement from some disadvantaged groups (i.e., members of the Asian and Pacific minority groups), as it does from the advantaged group (i.e., the European majority).

By using two different indices of system justification, Study 1 made an additional contribution of conceptual clarity to system justification research. It showed that the relative support systems receive from advantaged and disadvantaged groups depends upon which "system" is being supported, the type of support being provided, and the political context in which the groups are embedded. Members of the Asian and Pacific Island ethnic groups showed even higher levels of system justification than New Zealand Europeans. However, this was only the case when the *system* they were justifying was the hierarchy directly responsible for their group's low status, and when the mode of *justification* involved framing that particular hierarchy as being fair (i.e. dimension-specific legitimation). These findings help clarify the phenomenon of ideological dissonance that SJT predicts should sometimes drive the disadvantaged to show higher levels system justification than the advantaged. They suggest that the type of dissonance induced in this context is between (a) people's motive for fairness and (b) their experience of unfairness within a particular status hierarchy.

Study 1 also showed that, unlike Asians and Pacific Islanders, Māori reported *lower* levels of support for New Zealand's political system than Europeans, and similar levels of belief in the fairness of ethnic-group relations. This corroborated and extended previous

research indicating that Māori are unique among ethnic minority groups in their weaker system-justifying tendencies (e.g. Harding et al., 2011). The remaining studies in this thesis therefore focussed on the antecedents and consequences of system justification among Māori in particular.

As noted in Chapter 1, focussing on a group that does not justify the system as much as other groups represents a relatively stringent test of the system-justifying mechanisms that operate among the disadvantaged. Further, having found that system justification is heightened when people are assessing the fairness of the hierarchy under which they suffer, the remaining studies focussed on indices of system justification that reflect beliefs about the fairness of *ethnic-group relations* in New Zealand. This helped to maintain a degree of conceptual specificity through the current research programme that is generally lacking in the SJT literature.

Antecedents of System Justification

Study 2 (Analyses 1 and 2) extended the relational component of SJT by examining the interpersonal antecedents of system justification. These analyses modelled the degree to which time spent with ingroup and outgroup friends is associated with system-justifying beliefs among the disadvantaged. Recently, there has been mounting evidence that contact with the dominant group reduces subordinate-group members' support for political measures designed to reduce intergroup inequality (see Dixon et al., 2012 for a review). In Analysis 1, I corroborated these findings by showing that time spent with European friends was positively associated with Māori individuals' opposition to a land redistribution policy. In addition, I found that these effects were explained by increased support for an ideology that framed ethnic-group relations in New Zealand as being fair and meritocratic.

Thus, Analysis 1 integrated the vast literature on intergroup contact with SJT. It suggested that one of the reasons *why* contact reduces support for redistributive policies is

because it leads the disadvantaged to adopt the system-justifying attitudes of the advantaged. Time spent with European friends appears to encourage Māori to subscribe to beliefs that are more aligned with the political interests of the dominant group than with those of their own group (i.e. beliefs that legitimised existing interethnic inequality). To the extent that dominant-group friends represent socially valued individuals for subordinate-group members (Cheung et al., 2011), these findings are consistent with SJT's prediction that people justify unequal systems in order to achieve a sense of shared reality with significant others (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008).

Analysis 2 built upon the initial indications from Analysis 1 that ingroup contact might have the *opposite* effect on system justification as outgroup contact. Accordingly, Analysis 2 showed that the more time Māori spent with their Māori friends, the more they identified with their own group, and the less they legitimised ethnic-group relations in New Zealand. While system justification research provides much information on how people imbue the system with legitimacy, it does not provide a comprehensive analysis of how systems come to be *delegitimised*. For this reason, Cichocka and Jost (2014) emphasised the need for future research on SJT to more fully consider the process of *system-dejustification*. This echoes critiques by other theorists that SJT, with its focus on how social stability is maintained, does not provide a full account of how social *change* occurs (e.g., Reicher, 2011). Study 2 (Analyses 1 and 2) helps address these concerns by demonstrating not only how the relational nature of political attitudes can foster system-justifying responses, but also how it can attenuate such responses.

Consequences of System Justification

The final two studies in this thesis explored the consequences of system justification for individuals and societies. Specifically, Study 3 explored the *psychological* consequences of system justification for disadvantaged individuals. SJT proposes that ideologies that

legitimise inequality in the status quo help people cope with that inequality. However, empirical support for this proposition is sparse and raises an important contradiction. Legitimising ideologies such as Meritocracy explain away inequality by attributing it to individual-level rather than structural causes. This means that victims of inequality who subscribe to such ideologies must make internal attributions for their disadvantage (McCoy & Major, 2007), which can be deleterious to their wellbeing. How then, can these very same ideologies also serve a palliative function for the disadvantaged?

I aimed to resolve this contradiction in Study 3 by proposing that legitimising ideologies only have palliative effects for the disadvantaged under certain conditions. Specifically, when exposed to high levels of inequality, disadvantaged individuals should be the most likely to feel that their personal control is threatened. Since, the primary function of Meritocracy for the disadvantaged is to buffer them against threats to personal control (Laurin et al., 2011; McCoy et al., 2013), I expected low-status group members living in highly unequal conditions would reap the greatest benefit from subscribing to this ideology. Consistent with this idea, I found that the belief that the ethnic-group hierarchy in New Zealand is fair and meritocratic was positively associated with wellbeing among Māori living in highly unequal neighbourhoods. This association was not found among Māori living in more equal neighbourhoods. In the absence of the threat to personal control made salient by high inequality, the benefits for Māori of explaining away inequality were presumably offset by the costs of internalising the causes of their disadvantage (e.g. Jost & Thompson, 2000).

In the final study of this thesis (Study 4), I explored the political consequences of system justification among the disadvantaged (i.e. support for affirmative action and protest intentions). Study 2 included an initial exploration of some of these consequences, but yielded mixed results. SJT proposes that to the extent that people justify the inequality in the status quo, they should be less willing to challenge it (Jost et al., 2012). Accordingly, Study 2

(Analysis 1) showed that ethnic-specific Meritocracy was associated with decreased support for an affirmative action policy designed to reduce interethnic inequality (i.e. Māori ownership of the foreshore and seabed). However, Study 2 (Analysis 2) failed to find an association between ethnic-specific system justification and opposition to a broader range of affirmative action policies.

These inconsistent findings mirror the inconsistencies in previous explorations of the political consequences of system justification. Indeed, some analyses have yielded the predicted negative relationship between system justification and political mobilization, whereas others have not (Jost et al., 2012, Study 1 cf. Study 3; Cichocka & Jost, 2014). In line with this, Study 4 also failed to find a *robust linear relationship* between system justification and political mobilization – system justification was negatively related to only one of the four indices of political mobilization in this study (i.e. resource-specific policy support). The relationships between system justification and the other indices of political mobilization were only marginally significant, or non-significant.

To examine these inconsistent findings further, Study 4 additionally tested Cichocka and Jost's (2014) explanation for why the evidence for a linear relationship between system justification and political mobilization has been inconclusive. They proposed that the direction of this relationship changes as system justification increases from low to high levels – i.e., it is a curvilinear relationship. I found support for this proposition, with three of the four analyses yielding significant quadratic effects. However, in contrast to Cichocka and Jost's (2014) hypothesis, I found that the relationship was best described by a U-shaped, rather than an inverted U-shaped quadratic function. Moreover, the increase in political mobilization at higher levels of system justification was more pronounced for political opinions and behaviours that can be considered to be more consistent with the values and norms of New Zealand society. This suggested that people feel increasingly efficacious about

engaging in *pro-systemic* forms of political mobilization, as their belief in the system increases (see also Feygina et al., 2009).

Implications for Theory and Society

Theoretical implications. The research presented here has several important implications for System Justification Theory. It highlights the need for SJT to consider how particular aspects of people's social reality interact with their general motive for system justification. Indeed, the way in which this motive expresses will be different depending on (a) the dimension of inequality that a person suffers under, (b) the types of explanations for inequality that are available in the political discourse of the society in which the person lives, (c) the socio-historical context in which the inequality arose and is embedded, and (d) the magnitude of that inequality.

For example, it matters whether an individual is a victim of inequality due to their group membership/identity (e.g. ethnicity), or their personal circumstances (e.g. income). This will determine which aspect of the system (e.g. ethnic-group relations or the economic system) that individual is most in need of rationalising or justifying. By failing to appropriately define the concept of "the system", current SJT research (with the exception of the few studies on *system dependence*; e.g. van der Toorn et al., 2011) effectively treats the diverse patchwork of systems and sub-systems under which people live as psychologically interchangeable (see Wakslak et al., 2011). However, the research presented here suggests that this amounts to an oversimplification, which obscures important differences between people for whom different systems will be more or less psychologically relevant.

It also matters *how* one justifies the system. One can (a) merely provide generalised support to the status quo, (b) subscribe to ideologies that frame the inequality in the status quo as being fair (e.g. Meritocracy, JBW, Panglossian Ideology), (c) believe that inequality itself is normative or desirable (e.g. SDO), or (d) assert that the authorities and traditions

represented by the status quo should be respected (e.g. Conservatism, RWA). While SJT has long acknowledged this diversity in modes of justification (e.g. see Jost & Hunyady, 2005), it has not developed the implications of these differences (see also Brandt & Reyna, 2013). One implication highlighted by my research is that beliefs that frame inequality as fair may function better to reduce dissonance than beliefs that merely express a generalised sentiment of support towards the system (Study 1).

Studying system justification in the New Zealand's unique socio-historical context also raises important implications for SJT. While SJT acknowledges the role of group-identity *salience* in reducing system justification among the disadvantaged (e.g. Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003), it does not account for the possibility that a group's identity *content*, or its degree of *representation* in the superordinate, system-level category (e.g. national identity) might affect levels of system justification. As noted previously, compared to other ethnic minorities, the content of Māori identity is highly politicised (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010) and their group's culture is strongly associated with New Zealand's national identity (Sibley & Barlow, 2009). Thus, my findings that Māori are more sceptical about the system than other minority groups, and that this scepticism is enhanced when they spend more time with other Māori people, imply that groups whose culture is represented in the national category, and whose identity-content involves recognising group-based disadvantage, might be buffered against the psychological pressures to justify the very system that disadvantages them.

Moreover, even high levels of system justification among such groups might not inevitably lead to the maintenance of inequality as is implicitly assumed in SJT. For example, Māori high on system justification showed similar levels of support for *symbolic reparative policies* as Māori low on system justification, perhaps due to New Zealand's high degree of symbolic biculturalism (Liu & Sibley 2006; Sibley & Barlow, 2009; Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Liu, 2007). Further, Māori high on system justification showed similar levels of

support for *collective action* as Māori low on system justification, perhaps due to the Māori community's long history of engaging in protest movements (Walker, 1990). In both cases political mobilization was lowest at moderate levels of system justification. This suggests that ambivalent attitudes towards the system might be more of a hindrance to reducing certain types of systemic inequalities than highly positive attitudes towards the system.

The research in this thesis also highlights the need for SJT to consider how the *magnitude* of the inequality in people's immediate context interacts with their psychology. As noted in Chapter 2, SJT research often conflates support for the system with the legitimization of inequality within that system. Generally, this conflation is inconsequential, or even logical, given that most contemporary social systems are, in some sense, hierarchical and unequal. However, acknowledging that most systems are inherently unequal does not preclude the existence of *variation* in inequality between different systems (e.g. some countries, regions, and communities are marked by more extreme gaps between the rich and poor, or between men and women, or between ethnic groups, than others). This means that people are exposed to different levels of inequality depending on where they live, and which domains of the overarching system have the greatest relevance to their lives and their identities.

These differences in contextual inequality should have implications for people's psychological motive for fairness. Indeed, SJT assumes that more unfair and unequal systems arouse a greater need for rationalisation among the people living under those systems (e.g., see Cichocka & Jost, 2014). However, this assumption has rarely been directly tested, and the few studies that have considered the moderating role of inequality have focussed on national-level differences (e.g. Brandt, 2013; Napier et al., 2010). But people's exposure to, and perceptions of inequality are surely determined by the signals they receive about the distribution of resources from their immediate social environment (e.g., see Osborne, Sibley & Sengupta, 2015) – something that national indices of inequality cannot capture.

For the first time, the research presented in this thesis has been able to speak to this question by measuring variation in inequality across smaller area-units. The findings imply that as a member of a low-status group, the greater the inequality one is exposed to the greater the psychological benefits of subscribing to ideologies that make inequality *seem* fair. Moreover, these benefits accrue to low-status groups who generally show a reduced propensity to justify the system (i.e., Māori). This suggests that even though Māori might experience less psychological pressure to justify the system than other groups do, they certainly are not *immune* to system-justifying processes.

Indeed, the more time Māori spend with members of a group that has an interest in justifying the system (i.e. Europeans), the more prone they are to assimilate the system-justifying attitudes of that group (i.e., by subscribing to the dominant ideology that denies the group-based nature of ethnic inequality; Study 2; Analysis 1). This finding helps develop further a crucial, yet under-researched component of SJT – the function that system justification plays in satisfying people’s *need to belong*. According to SJT, one reason people justify the system is to achieve a sense of shared reality with valued individuals and groups (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin 2008; Jost et al., 2009). Study 2 (Analysis 1) supports this idea, and is consistent with SJT’s early emphasis on the ideological transmission of system-justifying attitudes from dominants to subordinates (see Jost & van der Toorn, 2012) – even subordinates who might not ordinarily be prone to expressing such attitudes.

Societal implications. By exploring system justification among the disadvantaged in New Zealand, the studies in this thesis have contributed to the scientific literature on the question of how intergroup inequality in diverse democratic societies is maintained, and how it comes to be challenged. These studies suggest that even those most disadvantaged by particular social systems can perceive them to be fair and legitimate. In fact, the people who suffer the most under specific hierarchies can sometimes view them as being even fairer than

those who benefit from those hierarchies (Study 1). For these individuals, who are already marginalised and lacking in political power, acknowledging that the hierarchy that disadvantages them is inherently unfair can make them feel even more powerless (see van der Toorn et al., 2015). Instead, it may be psychologically easier for them to cling to the belief that the system is in fact fair, and that their own efforts therefore afford them the prospect of personal advancement (Kluegel & Smith, 1986).

This interpretation is also corroborated by my finding that members of low status groups can gain some palliative benefits from Meritocratic beliefs that help them maintain their view of societal fairness, when they live in highly unequal contexts (Study 3). When faced with an unfair situation, the disadvantaged can gain a sense of personal control by subscribing to beliefs that enable them to make individual-level rather group-based/systemic attributions for their low status (see also McCoy & Major, 2007). In this way, the very types of victim-blaming ideologies that are used to justify the systematic oppression of certain peoples can also, conveniently, function to soothe and sedate them (see Jost, Wakslak & Tyler, 2008).

This perspective is consistent with Marxist notions of ideology as *false consciousness*, which are used to explain why low status groups do not rebel against systems of oppression (Eagleton, 1991). It is also consistent with more recent work in social psychology showing that a certain level anger, frustration and discontent is needed to motivate people to pursue collective action on behalf of their group's interests (Osborne, Smith & Huo, 2012; van Zomeren, et al., 2004; Walker & Smith, 2002). To the extent that certain ideologies (e.g. Meritocracy) buffer people's wellbeing in the face of inequality, they can reduce the impetus for social change among those who have the most to gain from it (Stronge, Sengupta, Barlow, Osborne, Houkamau & Sibley, in press). This would explain why unequal social structures go unchallenged for long periods of time.

However, as noted earlier, complacency in the face of inequality is not an *inevitable* consequence of system justification among the disadvantaged. The findings of Study 4 suggest that even low-status group members who are high on system justification may be willing to mobilise politically, as long as the form that mobilisation takes is seen as being consistent with systemic values and sanctioned by systemic norms (see also Feygina et al., 2010). These findings highlight the possibility that people pursue social change not only to overthrow systems they oppose, but also to improve upon systems they generally support – a possibility that theories of collective action do not usually make explicit (but see Halperin, Russell, Dweck & Gross, 2011). This suggests that social reformers might be able to recruit the system justification motive in the service of positive social change. To do so, they would need to frame their message of change as being consistent with the values of the system they are trying to reform. Dr Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, August 1963, represents one of the most famous examples of this type of message:

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

I must emphasise, however, that to acknowledge that system justification does not inevitably lead to political complacency is not to imply that it plays no role in perpetuating inequality. After all, while Māori who were very high on system justification showed similar levels of support for symbolic affirmative action policies and collective protest as Māori who were very low on system justification, they still showed *lower* support for policies aimed at resource redistribution. In other words, system justification still predicted greater opposition to the real structural changes that would be required to reduce intergroup inequality

(although, given the asymptotic nature of the quadratic function at high levels of system justification, these effects did not occur to the extent that SJT would predict).

Finally, my finding that opposition to redistributive policies increases as a function of the contact low status groups have with high status groups (Study 2; Analysis 1) has important implications for *intergroup relations* in multicultural societies. Generally, the challenge in these societies has been seen as one of enabling individuals with different cultural identities and group memberships to get along with one another (Dixon et al., 2012). This is unsurprising given the enormous threat that intergroup conflict has posed to diverse political entities throughout history (Pinker, 2011). Accordingly, social scientists and political leaders aiming to improve their societies have invested heavily in the goals of reducing prejudice among dominant groups and facilitating the positive social integration of marginalised groups (e.g., Chirof & Seligman, 2001). Within social psychology alone, vast literatures have proliferated on the topics of prejudice reduction (see Paluck & Green, 2009) and multicultural integration (see Rudmin, 2003).

While these goals are unquestionably laudable, the research in this thesis speaks to a social problem faced by diverse societies that is not solved by simply reducing prejudice or promoting integration – the problem of intergroup inequality (see Dixon et al., 2012). Indeed, as my research shows, positive intergroup contact – the very strategy most effective at promoting harmonious intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) – can also occlude and perpetuate power and status differences between groups. When subordinate groups have a high degree of intimacy with the dominant group, it makes it harder for them to recognise and challenge the inequality inherent in their relationship with that group (Jackman, 1994; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Reicher, 2004; Sibley, 2010). Conversely, when they have the opportunity to come together as a group, they are able to galvanise around the shared goal of improving their lot (e.g., Study 2; Analysis 2).

This implies that multicultural societies in which the disadvantaged are able to develop strong ingroup bonds are more likely to be amenable to social change towards equality. On the other hand, societies in which the disadvantaged are highly integrated and come into regular positive contact with the dominant group are vulnerable to remaining unequal. To be clear, this does not mean I am not advocating a segregated society. Rather, the tension between harmony and inequality highlights a need to consider what the priorities of social reformers should be in any given context. For example, in contexts where intergroup conflict is rife, promoting harmony through contact might indeed be the most pressing goal. However, in relatively peaceful societies like New Zealand, where overt intergroup conflict is uncommon and inequality between groups is highly entrenched, facilitating political mobilization among the disadvantaged might be the best way to improve the social landscape (see also Reicher, 2004).

Directions for Future Research

As with any ambitious research programme, this thesis raises many questions— both unanswered questions that reflect its epistemological limitations, and new questions that arise from its findings. The most obvious limitation is my reliance on correlational data. Each of the studies in this thesis makes use of a single time-point of the NZAVS (i.e., Time I for Studies 1-3, and Time IV for Study 4). There is much to be learned from even these types of data, inasmuch as they represent something incredibly rare in the social-psychological literature in general, and the system-justification literature in particular: a stratified, representative, national sample, with significant numbers of disadvantaged-group members. However, we are still left with the problem of ascertaining causality.

For example, does contact (either with the ingroup or outgroup) cause people to change their political beliefs, or do people's political beliefs change the amount of contact they engage in (Study 2)? Does ideology improve wellbeing, or does experiencing greater

wellbeing nudge people towards certain ideologies (Study 3; see also, Schlenker et al., 2012)? Finally, does system justification really change people's political action intentions, or does being politically mobilised change one's view of the system (Study 4)? Alternatively, are these relationships bidirectional? In each case, I have offered reasons why it is likely that the causal direction is as hypothesised, but it is important to reemphasise that only future research using non-correlational data will be able to speak conclusively to these questions.

The traditional empirical response to the limitations of cross-sectional data has been experimentation. While there this method does allow stronger causal inferences to be made, there has been increasing concern over the validity and reproducibility of the findings from small-scale scale laboratory experiments in Psychology and related disciplines (Button et al., 2013; Ionnidis, 2005; Nosek et al., 2015; Pashier & Wagenmakers, 2012; Vankov, et al., 2014). The problems with this method – which often stem from research practices that inflate effect sizes and capitalise on false positives – have been discussed in detail by other authors (e.g. Fiedler, 2011; Murayama, Pekrun & Fiedler, 2011). Therefore, I will not repeat these points here, except to note that there are good practical reasons to be cautious when looking to experimentation as the primary way to make progress on the key questions of causality in social science.

Even if research practices were improved in a way that increased confidence in the results of laboratory experiments, a harder, epistemological problem is that the types of questions being asked in this thesis cannot easily be answered in the laboratory. First, many of the key variables relevant to the psychology of social change do not lend themselves well to experimental manipulation (e.g. historical group-based disadvantage, contextual inequality, individual differences in ideological affinity). Second, as I have argued in Chapter 1, the question of how individual psychology produces societal-level stability and change would be incomplete without the study of mass opinion. If one accepts this argument, then an

alternate strategy for getting closer to ascertaining causality in an ecologically valid way would be to model change in large-scale, nationally representative data over time.

For example, we would need to know whether changes in contact over time predict subsequent changes in political attitudes, whether ideological shifts predict subsequent changes in wellbeing, and whether changes in system justification over time predict changes in mobilization-related attitudes. Moreover, we would need to know whether changes in these system-relevant attitudes actually predict subsequent changes in the *structure of societies* (e.g. Brandt, 2011). It is this type of research that, in my opinion, offers the greatest promise for uncovering the causal mechanisms that link individual psychology to processes of socio-structural change.

A second limitation of this thesis is the scope and comprehensiveness of the measures used. As I have acknowledged in the preceding chapters, the use of scales with only one or a few items detracted from the reliability with which the various constructs could be measured. Since the NZAVS is designed to speak to a wide range of psychological and social questions, the space dedicated to each individual construct was necessarily limited. While the use of these data enabled me to study mass opinion about the system among large samples of minority-group members, my analyses could only capitalise on the measures already included in the survey. Certainly future research that uses longer-form measures of the constructs in this thesis would be useful. However, the broader issue lies not in the brevity (and thus, low reliability) of the scales, but in the questions that could not be fully answered because the requisite measures were unavailable in the NZAVS.

For example, I was limited to conceptualising disadvantage in terms of ethnicity, even though the broader question this thesis aimed to address was system justification among the disadvantaged *in general*. This is not only because ethnicity is an important and politically salient dimension along which group-based inequality exists in New Zealand, but

also because the NZAVS included several measures relevant to this dimension (e.g. ethnic-specific system justification, ethnic-specific political mobilization, ethnic-specific Meritocracy beliefs, ethnic identification, as well as contact between and within ethnic groups). However, if the processes I have tested reflect fundamental ways in which people think about the systems under which they live, then they should apply to systems of group-based inequality that exist along other dimensions as well (e.g. income, class, religious identification).

For example, in Study 1, I was able to test my hypothesis regarding dimension-specific legitimation by comparing broad attitudes about New Zealand's political system, to specific attitudes about the fairness of ethnic-group relations. However, the dimension-specific ideological dissonance that is hypothesised to produce these affects should affect other low-status groups as well. To more fully test this hypothesis, future analyses should examine whether groups who are disadvantaged along other status dimensions (e.g. income/class) evaluate those specific hierarchies (e.g. the economic hierarchy) to be fairer than the groups who sit atop those hierarchies.

In Study 2, the measures in the NZAVS allowed me to test the effects of contact between and within *ethnic* groups on political attitudes relevant *ethnic* inequality. However, if I am correct about the psychological mechanisms at work, contact between and within class groups should operate in the same way. For example, the more time *low income* individuals spend with friends from higher-income groups, the more they should see the system of *income distribution* as being meritocratic, and the less they should support measures to reduce income inequality; contact with other members of their own socio-economic class should produce the opposite pattern.

Finally, the ethnic-specific Meritocracy measure included in the NZAVS allowed me to test the palliative function of this ideology for low-status ethnic groups living in conditions

of high inequality. Future research that tests whether general (i.e. economic) Meritocracy beliefs serve the same function for low income individuals in highly unequal contexts as ethnic-specific Meritocracy beliefs serve for Māori would extend and validate the theoretical model presented in Study 3.

A third limitation of the current research programme is that it has examined the antecedents and consequences of system justification among the disadvantaged in only one country – i.e., New Zealand. Thus, there are unique aspects of the New Zealand context that need to be accounted for when evaluating the applicability of these findings to understanding system-justification processes in other countries. However, there is considerable information about the specific ways in which New Zealand differs from other countries, which allows for informed speculation about the implications of those differences.

For example, we know that one unique aspect of New Zealand's intergroup context is that the largest disadvantaged ethnic group in the country (and the group that has been my primary focus here; i.e. Māori) has a highly politicised identity, and a group culture that is well represented in the national category (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Sibley & Barlow, 2009). In some cases, this uniqueness of Māori diminishes the external validity of my findings, but in other cases it strengthens their broader applicability. More specifically, to the extent that Māori show system-challenging responses, these might be a unique consequence of their politicised identity. For example, ingroup contact might only decrease system justification and increase political mobilisation among groups for whom the recognition of historical injustice is central to the content their identity (Study 2; Analysis 2). Moreover, the high degree of political mobilisation at high levels of system justification, observed in Study 4, might only apply to groups who have a strong sense of belonging within the system and a long history of engaging in protest movements. Thus, future research involving groups that

are less politicised, and more culturally marginalised, will be important for establishing the generalizability of these particular findings.

On the other hand, in cases where Māori show a vulnerability to the psychological pressures of system justification, other, less politicised groups should be even more vulnerable. First, the fact that Māori display at least as much dimension-specific legitimation as Europeans strengthens the case for dimension-specific legitimacy effects among other disadvantaged groups (Study 1). Second, the fact that outgroup contact fosters system-justifying responses among Māori implies that it will do so, to an even greater extent, for less politicised disadvantaged groups (Study 2; Analysis 1). Third, the fact that Māori living in unequal conditions gain the palliative benefits of Meritocracy (despite identity serving as a buffer against group-based disadvantage; see Branscombe, Schmidt & Harvey, 1999) strengthens the argument that these beliefs should also be palliative for other disadvantaged groups living in similar conditions (Study 3). Thus, studying system justification among Māori can increase our understanding of these phenomena among other groups in other countries as well.

There are also features of the New Zealand context, besides the uniqueness of Māori, which set it apart from other countries. New Zealand is an extremely peaceful and democratic society with low levels of political corruption, and high levels of individual freedom (IEP, 2014; EIU, 2012). SJT predicts that countries with higher levels of corruption and greater restrictions on individual freedoms should be in greater need of being justified and rationalised (Kay et al., 2008). So the propensity for people to justify the system, even in a well-functioning society such as New Zealand, might be taken as evidence for the ubiquity of this motivation. Or, it might mean something else entirely – it might indicate that the New Zealand system is actually more *worthy* of being supported and imbued with legitimacy.

One consequence of living in a society that ranks highly on various measures of human development is that one can quite easily make downward comparisons (i.e., comparing New Zealand to the many, many nations that are politically and economically worse off). Certainly, the media relentlessly exposes people to the terrible things happening all over the world (e.g. extreme poverty, violence and warfare). Confronted with this information, and considering the significantly less extreme problems that New Zealand faces, people could justifiably come to the conclusion that they live in a relatively fair and just society. Their expressed support for the New Zealand system then, might just as easily reflect this type of reasoned comparative judgement, as it might an unconscious motive to legitimise an unequal and unfair status quo. Indeed, a major criticism of the SJT perspective has been that, with its focus on *motivated* reasoning (e.g., see Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003), it has left no room for rational judgement (Mitchell & Tetlock, 2009).

Recently, system justification theorists have sought to respond to this critique by studying system justification in post-communist societies (Cichocka & Jost, 2014). If the same system-justifying processes that operate in stable, Western democracies also operate in countries where people have fewer good reasons to view the status quo favourably, this would undermine the argument that system justification is a rational response to one's material circumstances. Research of this kind is still in its infancy, so there is much scope for future work that helps distinguish when people support the status quo for reasons that are rational, rather than merely *rationalising* it. This endeavour would also help answer the more general call for psychological research to go beyond the WEIRD – Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic – world (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010).

A final limitation of this thesis, as a whole, is that it attempts to answer the question of why the disadvantaged support unequal systems, yet has focussed on a relatively small set of antecedents and consequences of system justification. Of course, any research programme

can only achieve as much as the time, resources and data allow. But in limiting my focus to System Justification Theory – which provides an essentially *motivational* account for status-quo maintenance – I have neglected other explanations for these phenomena. For example, apart from the comparative judgements alluded to above, there may be reasons why people fail to challenge inequality in the status quo that are *independent* of motivational pressures.

One possibility, suggested by recent research, is that support for the status quo might partly be the result of basic cognitive biases. In this work, researchers have shown that the reliance on mental short-cuts (i.e. heuristics) can lead people to show patterns of responding that could be considered system-justifying. For example, reliance on “existence and longevity heuristics” leads people to judge any target of evaluation that exists, as better than one that is purely hypothetical, and any target that has existed for longer, as better than one that is newer (Eidelman & Crandall, 2014). Similarly, the “inherence heuristic” leads people to attribute the causes of observed patterns in the world to the inherent properties of the entities displaying those patterns (i.e., girls wear pink because pink is a girly colour; Cimpian & Salomon, 2014). These heuristics have been found to predict support for the status quo independently of any motivational pressure to justify the system under which one lives (Hussak & Cimpian, 2015). Thus, a broader perspective and research agenda are needed to fully answer the question of why societies remain stable or change over time.

Conclusion

The world can become a fairer and more equal place when groups of people who have been the victims of inequality rise up against the systems that disadvantage them. However, given the rarity of such uprisings, this thesis sought to explore the psychological reasons why the disadvantaged support or challenge inequality. To do so, it examined the antecedents and consequences of system justification among members of ethnic minority groups in New Zealand. First, it showed that the disadvantaged sometimes support unequal systems at least as much, if not more, than the advantaged. Second it showed that contact with the friends from an advantaged group can foster system-justifying attitudes, whereas contact with friends from one's own disadvantaged ingroup can undermine such attitudes. Third, it showed that the very people whom the system victimises the most – low-status group members living in highly unequal conditions – also gain the greatest palliative benefits from holding system-justifying beliefs. Finally, it showed that system justification reduces political mobilization among the disadvantaged, but only up to a point. At extremely high levels of system justification, political mobilization either levels off, or increases. Together, these findings shed light on why the people who have the greatest interest in social change engage politically to pursue it, and why they do not. For example, they might pursue social change out of solidarity with fellow ingroup members, or because they find the system to be extremely unfair, or alternatively, because they find the system fair enough that certain types of improvements to it are seen as possible and worthwhile. Conversely, they might eschew social change and support unequal systems to reduce the dissonance between their fairness motive and the unfair social reality, to achieve a shared understanding with dominant-group members, or to buffer their wellbeing against the loss of control that accompanies living in unequal conditions. By uncovering these processes operating among the disadvantaged this thesis has produced a more complete picture of the psychology of social stability and change.

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