PANGLOSSIAN IDEOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION: HOW COMPLEMENTARY STEREOTYPES HELP US TO RATIONALIZE INEQUALITY

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According to system justification theory, there is a general social psychological tendency to rationalize the status quo, that is, to see it as good, fair, legitimate, and desirable. This tendency is reminiscent of the dispositional outlook of Voltaire's famous character, Dr. Pangloss, who believed that he was "living in the best of all possible worlds." One of the means by which people idealize existing social arrangements is by relying on complementary (or compensatory) stereotypes, which ascribe compensating virtues to the disadvantaged and corresponding vices to the advantaged, thereby creating an "illusion of equality." In this chapter, we summarize a program of research demonstrating that (1) incidental exposure to complementary gender and status stereotypes leads people to show enhanced ideological support for the status quo and (2) when the legitimacy or stability of the system is threatened, people often respond by using complementary stereotypes to bolster the system. We also show that (noncomplementary) victim-blaming and (complementary) victim-enhancement represent alternate routes to system justification. In addition, we consider a number of situational and dispositional moderating variables that affect the use and effectiveness of

complementary and noncomplementary representations, and we discuss the
broader implications of stereotyping and other forms of rationalization that
are adopted in the service of system justification.

From time to time, Pangloss would say to Candide:

> There is a chain of events in this best of all possible worlds; for if you had not been
> turned out of a beautiful mansion at the point of a jackboot for love of Lady
> Cunégonde, if you had not been clamped into the Inquisition, if you had not
> wandered about America on foot, and had not struck the Baron with your sword,
> and lost all those sheep you brought from Eldorado, you would not be here eating
> candied fruit and pistachio nuts.
> ''That's true enough,'' said Candide; ''but we must go and work in the garden.''
>
> —Voltaire, 1758/1947, *Candide or Optimism*, p. 144

I. Introduction

Whether because of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion,
social class, gender, or sexual orientation, or because of policies and pro-
grams that privilege some at the expense of others, or even because of
historical accidents, genetic disparities, or the fickleness of fate, certain social
systems serve the interests of some stakeholders better than others. Yet
historical and social scientific evidence shows that most of the time the
majority of people—regardless of their own social class or position—accept
and even defend the legitimacy of their social and economic systems and
manage to maintain a ''belief in a just world'' (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost &
Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Jost & Major, 2001; Lane, 1962; Lerner, 1980; Major,
1994; Moore, 1978; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Zinn, 1968). As Kinder and
Sears (1985) put it, ''the deepest puzzle here is not occasional protest but
pervasive tranquility.'' Knowing how easy it is for people to adapt to and
rationalize the way things are makes it easier to understand why the apart-
heid system in South Africa lasted for 46 years, the institution of slavery
survived for more than 400 years in Europe and the Americas, and the
Indian Caste system has been maintained for 3000 years and counting.

This point was made vividly by Elkins (1967), who drew parallels between
the psychological situations faced by African-American slaves and concen-
tration camp survivors during the Nazi regime. He identified a number of
bivalent stereotypes that seemed to help people to rationalize institution-
alized abuse and exploitation under slavery and similar systems. For exam-
ple, the stereotype of '''Sambo' in Southern lore was docile but irresponsible,

loyal but lazy, humble but addicted to lying and stealing …. His relationship to his master was one of utter dependence and childlike attachment; it was this childlike quality that was the very key to his being'' (p. 395). Elkins also noted that for the 700,000 survivors of the Nazi holocaust, "the regime must be considered not as a system of death but as a way of life. These survivors did make an adjustment of some sort to the system; it is they themselves who report it.'' He concluded that with respect to slaves and concentration camp survivors, "It is no wonder that their obedience became unquestioning, that they did not revolt, that they could not 'hate' their masters. Their masters' attitudes had become internalized as a part of their very selves'' (p. 410). Even in extraordinarily oppressive circumstances such as these, people find ways of adapting to circumstances that they cannot change, so that "the unwelcome force is idealized'' (Dollard, 1937, p. 255; see also Jackman, 1994; Jost, 2001, pp. 91–92).

These facts about the remarkable human capacity to rationalize existing social arrangements, however unjust those arrangements may be, were well-known to earlier generations of social psychologists such as Dollard (1937), Bettelheim (1943), Lewin (1941/1948), Allport (1954), and Elkins (1967), but they are frequently forgotten in the context of contemporary theories that stress self-enhancement, self-affirmation, social identification, and in-group favoritism as ubiquitous, almost ineradicable, motives. Until recently, there was very little research on the social and psychological processes by which people maintain relatively favorable views of the *social systems* that affect them. How do people rationalize their own outcomes—whether good or bad—as well as the outcomes of others and, above all, the social systems that dictate those outcomes? What are the cognitive, motivational, and interpersonal mechanisms that enable people to cope with the intrapsychic conflict associated with participating in social systems that are, in many objective ways, arbitrary, capricious, and perhaps even unfair?

System Justification Theory (SJT) tackles these and related questions by addressing the antecedents, contents, and consequences of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that serve to maintain the societal status quo (Blasi & Jost, 2006; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Mandisodza, Jost, & Unzueta, 2006). The theory was formulated more than a decade ago to explain a particularly vexing, but consistent, social psychological finding: the prevalence of out-group favoritism among low-status group members (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Since then, however, research on SJT has expanded greatly to include the empirical search for any and all social psychological processes that serve to maintain or bolster support for the social system (Jost et al., 2004). The research that we summarize in this chapter focuses on one psychological means of resolving the tension caused

by inequality, namely the formation and use of *complementary* stereotypes, that is, stereotypes that appear to compensate for intergroup disparities by assigning offsetting advantages and disadvantages to low- and high-status groups, respectively, thereby preserving a more just (i.e., equal) image of society than may be accurate. Drawing on both published and (to a lesser extent) unpublished research conducted over the past few years, our guiding thesis is that complementary stereotypes serve to rationalize inequality, allowing people to maintain their belief that the societal status quo is, generally speaking, fair, legitimate, and justified.

II. System Justification Theory

A. MOTIVATION TO RATIONALIZE THE STATUS QUO

At the most basic level, SJT posits that there is a general psychological tendency to justify and rationalize the status quo; in other words, there is a motivation to see the system as good, fair, legitimate, and desirable (Jost et al., 2004). System justification has negative consequences for some individuals. For example, members of disadvantaged groups exhibit lower personal and collective self-esteem (Jost & Thompson, 2000; O'Brien & Major, 2005). Despite this, there are a number of psychological reasons why people would actively seek to justify the status quo. These reasons include (but are not limited to) cognitive-motivational needs to believe in order, structure, closure, stability, predictability, consistency, and control (Allport, 1966; Crandall & Beasley, 2001; Festinger, 1957; Janoff-Bulman & Yopyk, 2004; Kruglanski, 2004; Langer, 1975; Plaks, Grant, & Dweck, 2005) and to believe in a just world (Hafer & Begue, 2005; Lerner, 1980). Experimental studies in which people exhibit increased system justification following system threat, as we show in this chapter, provide further evidence that there is a general motive to defend and bolster the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005; Kay et al., 2005).

There are social reasons as well not to "upset the apple cart": people, especially those who engage in system justification, derogate others who are perceived as complaining about discrimination and injustice (Kaiser, Dyrenforth, & Hagiwara, 2006). Thus, it appears that there are social norms that serve to uphold system-justifying responses and punish system-challenging responses. Furthermore, women and others who defy stereotypes and otherwise threaten the status quo face the persistent prospect of backlash (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 1999).

B. OUT-GROUP FAVORITISM AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF ARBITRARY INEQUALITIES AMONG GROUPS

One manifestation of the system justification motive is the pervasive tendency to use social judgments and stereotypes to justify arbitrary status and power differences between groups—that is, to portray both high- and low-status groups as deserving of their position in the hierarchy (Jost, 2001; Jost & Burgess, 2000). For example, group members who are arbitrarily (and even illegitimately) ordained with high levels of relative power in an experimental setting tend to be perceived as more intelligent and responsible than group members who are arbitrarily placed into positions of low power; these perceptions are rendered by the powerful as well as the powerless (Haines & Jost, 2000). Furthermore, people tend to remember the bases of the power differences as more legitimate (and less arbitrary) than they actually were.

There are also a great many studies showing that members of high-status groups are both consciously and unconsciously preferred to members of low-status groups, even by members of low-status groups (for reviews of this extensive literature, see Dasgupta, 2004; Jost et al., 2004). Although much of this work has employed the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Ashburn-Nardo, Knowles, & Monteith, 2003; Rudman, Feinberg, & Fairchild, 2004; Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, & Swanson, 2002), out-group favoritism on the part of the disadvantaged has also been observed on other cognitive, affective, and behavioral measures of implicit preference (Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002). From a system justification perspective, the internalization of inequality is an important instance of ''buying into'' the status quo (Jost et al., 2004).

C. ANTICIPATORY RATIONALIZATION OF LIKELY OUTCOMES

Some further evidence for the existence of a *motivation* to justify the social system has emerged from research examining a different form of system justification, namely the rationalization of the anticipated status quo (Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002). Inspired in part by the writings of William J. McGuire (McGuire, 1960; McGuire & McGuire, 1991; see also Sherman, 1991), we hypothesized that to the extent that people are motivated to justify the status quo (whatever characteristics it might have), then they should begin to see highly probable events in increasingly favorable terms and highly improbable events in increasingly unfavorable terms (see also Elster, 1983; Jolls & Sunstein, 2006). Let us consider the example of the anticipated

outcome of a US presidential election, which, for many American residents, holds fairly obvious implications for the overarching social system. A system justification perspective suggests that as it becomes more (versus less) likely that a given candidate is going to win an election, engaged citizens should adjust their evaluations of that candidate accordingly. Furthermore, these desirability adjustments, according to Kay et al. (2002) and the general tenets of SJT, should take two forms: (1) a ''sour grapes'' rationalization, in which initially preferred outcomes that are deemed to be less and less likely should come to be rationalized as less desirable, and (2) a ''sweet lemon'' rationalization, in which initially nonpreferred outcomes that are deemed to be more and more likely should also come to be rationalized as more desirable.

Two experimental studies provided evidence in support of both forms of anticipatory rationalization of the status quo (Kay et al., 2002; see also Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998). In one study, which was conducted in the context of the 2000 presidential election between Al Gore and George W. Bush, participants were assigned to one of five conditions that manipulated likelihood beliefs concerning the chances of both Gore and Bush presidencies. Afterward, personal desirability ratings for both Gore and Bush presidencies were assessed. As predicted, desirability ratings of each president were influenced by the likelihood manipulations. When participants were led to believe that a Gore presidency was more (rather than less) likely, Democrats viewed him as even more desirable and Republicans viewed him as less undesirable (see Fig. 1A). Similarly, when participants were led to believe that a Bush presidency loomed, Republicans viewed him as more desirable and Democrats saw him as less undesirable (see Fig. 1B). Interestingly, nonpartisans, who were apparently less motivationally involved in the outcome of the election, showed no effect of the experimental manipulations.

These findings were conceptually replicated in a follow-up experiment in which we manipulated the perceived likelihood of a large (i.e., high-motivational involvement) or small (i.e., low-motivational involvement) tuition increase or decrease at Stanford University and then measured the desirability of these anticipated outcomes among Stanford students. Results from this study were very similar to those obtained in the election study. As large tuition increases were seen as more likely to occur, Stanford students adapted to the unwelcome news; they judged the tuition increase to be less undesirable. Conversely, as large tuition decreases were seen as less likely, Stanford students judged them to be less personally desirable. Participants assigned to the low-motivational involvement conditions (i.e., those participants who were told that the tuition change would be small) were unaffected by the likelihood manipulations. These findings (and many others
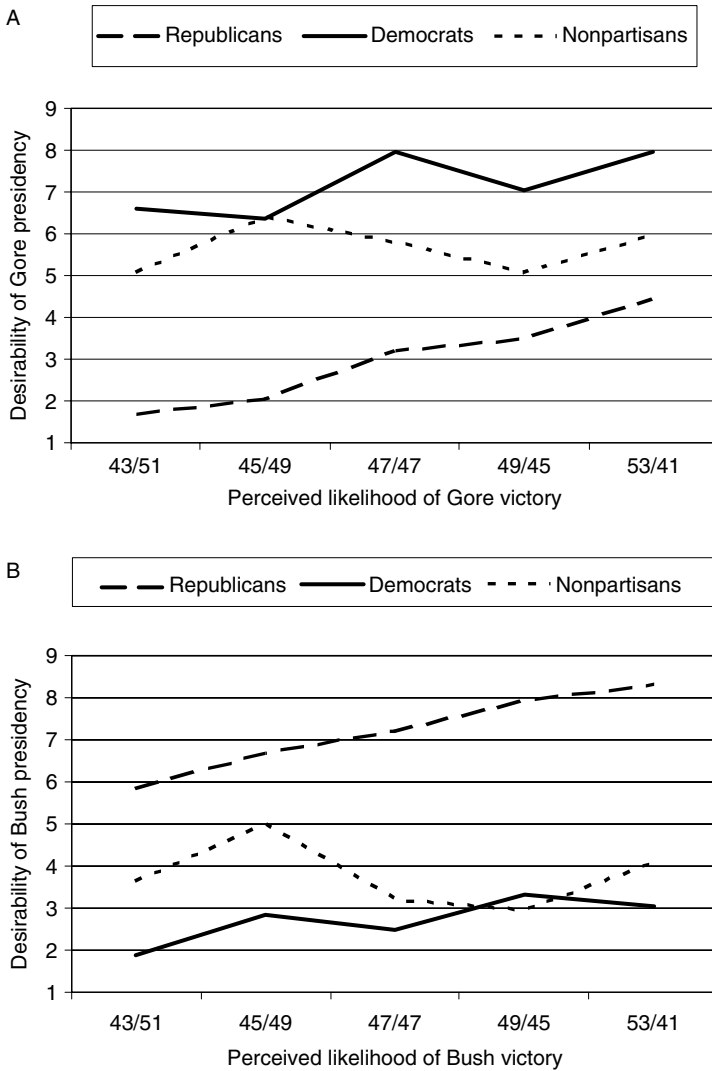
Fig. 1. (A) Desirability ratings of a Gore presidency as a function of manipulated likelihood. (Adapted from Kay et al., 2002.) (B) Desirability ratings of a Bush presidency as a function of manipulated likelihood. (Adapted from Kay et al., 2002.)

like them) are reminiscent of the mindset made famous by Voltaire's (1758/1947) character, Dr. Pangloss, who repeatedly insisted that we are living "in the best of all possible worlds" (see also Blasi & Jost, 2006).

III. The System-Justifying Function of Complementary Stereotypes

SJT addresses a broad range of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. A primary focus of research, however, has been on *stereotyping* and the guiding notion that *stereotypes* can serve to justify and rationalize inequalities within the social system (Jost, 2001; Jost & Hamilton, 2005; Jost et al., 2005). While much early work on stereotyping and prejudice stressed the affective and motivational underpinnings of intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954), contemporary approaches to the study of social stereotypes have tended to emphasize cognitive processes such as categorization (rather than, say, rationalization). Researchers in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, focused on stereotype accessibility, activation, and applicability, as well as issues of automaticity, control, and awareness (Devine, 1989; Fiske, 1998; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994. Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). During this period of heightened attention to relatively low-level cognitive issues, issues of stereotype content, function, and origin were placed on the back burner.

Despite this overall trend, a handful of researchers have addressed motivational processes underlying stereotyping and the social psychological functions that affect the contents of stereotypes. For example, work on the stereotype content model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and on social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), as well as models of ego justification and group justification (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1981), contributed to an appreciation of the functional basis of stereotype content. From a system justification perspective, the content of stereotypes can serve to maintain ideological support for the prevailing social system by justifying and rationalizing inequality (see also Glick & Fiske, 2001; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jackman & Senter, 1983; Jackman, 1994; Jost, 2001; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Major, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The conflict between inequality, on one hand, and the desire to believe in a fair and just social world (Lerner, 1980), on the other hand, is likely to evoke a significant degree of ideological dissonance. Stereotypes, and in particular *complementary* stereotypes, we think, provide a common and effective means of addressing and coping with this conflict.

Although SJT emphasized the rationalization function of stereotyping from the start (Jost & Banaji, 1994), it has only very recently identified the role of complementary stereotyping in the rationalization process (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005; Napier, Mandisodza, Andersen, & Jost, 2006). Status-congruent stereotypes in which low-status and high-status groups are both seen as "deserving" of their relative positions received the bulk of the attention in the first wave of system

justification research (Jost, 2001; Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001). Although derogating society's "losers" and lionizing its "winners" is one powerful means of justifying the system, it is not the only means possible. Theorists have also noted the potentially system-justifying consequences of complementary stereotypes, that is, stereotypes that serve to *elevate* low-status groups and *derogate* high-status groups (Jost et al., 2001; see also Glick & Fiske, 2001; Hunyady, 1998; Jackman, 1994; Lane, 1962). Such stereotypes often depict low- and high-status groups as possessing their own unique strengths and weaknesses (or benefits and burdens). Indeed, several converging lines of research suggest that high- and low-status individuals and groups are frequently assumed to have different but complementary, or "balancing," characteristics.

We have shown that complementary stereotypical representations—those that depict relatively low-status groups as having their own set of compensating rewards and high-status groups as having certain drawbacks—contribute to the perceived legitimacy of the social system (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005). These representations communicate that "no one group has it all" and thus encourage the feeling that things somehow balance out in a way that makes the system seem fair, or at least not unbearably *un*fair. That is, in lay thinking, a just social order is one in which no single group enjoys a monopoly over valued attributes and every group has something going for it. Thus, if equality cannot be achieved in actuality, complementary stereotypes, may help us to create a comforting illusion of equality.[1] In this way, we are closer to living "in the best of all possible worlds."

A. THE CASE OF COMPLEMENTARY GENDER STEREOTYPES

Perhaps the most familiar example of complementary stereotyping pertains to beliefs about gender differences. Researchers have often observed that women are stereotyped as communal but not agentic, whereas men are stereotyped as agentic but not communal. For example, researchers have noted that women in general are perceived as nicer, warmer, more supportive, and more

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[1]The hypothesis that stereotypes that reflect a more "balanced" social world will serve to justify the social system is consistent with interpersonal theories of justice, especially equity theory (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1978). It also bears some relationship to Heider's (1958; see also Crandall & Beasley, 2001) balance theory, although we are conceiving of balance in terms of a social *equilibrium* (in which benefits and burdens across groups "balance out"), whereas Heider largely conceived of balance in terms of *consistency* or *congruency*.

interpersonally sensitive than men (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). This has been characterized as the ''women are wonderful'' effect (Eagly, Mladinic, & Otto, 1991). Additional studies carried out under the rubric of ''benevolent sexism'' have also found that women are often stereotyped as more moral, culturally refined, and deserving of protection than men (Glick & Fiske, 2001). It has been suggested that bivalent stereotypes of women as incompetent *but also* warm, friendly, caring, nurturing, honest, and morally superior to men serve to rationalize the patriarchal system (Jackman, 1994; Jost & Banaji, 1994). In support of this notion, Glick and Fiske (2001) demonstrated that such gender stereotypes are indeed widespread, that they are endorsed by women as well as men, and that they are especially prevalent in societies with extreme gender inequalities (as measured by objective indicators pertaining to the social and economic advancement of women).

There are three main arguments that have been offered for why complementary gender stereotypes might increase support for the system among women. First, stereotypic differentiation along communal/agentic lines can encourage people to treat each gender group as essentially well-suited to occupy the positions and roles that are prescribed for them by society (see also Jost & Hamilton, 2005). Several studies have shown that people will spontaneously stereotype groups in ways that render them especially well-suited to fulfill their social roles. For example, people ascribe communal, nurturant characteristics to people (usually women) who are assumed to occupy stereotypically feminine roles such as the role of childcare-giver (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). Second, according to Jackman (1994), ascribing communal characteristics to women prevents them from withdrawing completely from the system of gender relations by ''sugarcoating'' their low-status position, leading them to more easily tolerate their status and position (see also Rudman, 2005). In other words, praising women for their communal qualities may flatter them into active cooperation with the patriarchal system. The third possibility, which is the one that we have focused on in our research, is that complementary gender stereotypes such as these maintain the sense that the system as a whole is fair, balanced, and legitimate (Jost & Kay, 2005). That is, complementary stereotypes of women may justify the current system of gender relations (including the division of labor in society and in the family), and the status quo in general, by reinforcing the notion that each gender group possesses its own set of strengths and weaknesses that supplement and balance out the strengths and weaknesses of the other group. We hasten to add that these explanations are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, we think that these processes all work together as rationalizations for ongoing gender inequality in society.

1. *Effects of Exposure to Complementary Stereotypes on Gender-Specific System Justification*

Although the system-justifying effects of exposure to complementary stereotypes had never been tested experimentally, this general argument had been made persuasively by Bem and Bem (1970) in an influential chapter entitled "Case Study of a Nonconscious Ideology: Training the Woman to Know Her Place." In this chapter, Bem and Bem observed that:

> In 1954 the United States Supreme Court declared that a fraud and hoax lay behind the slogan "separate but equal." It is unlikely that any court will ever do the same for the more subtle motto that successfully keeps the woman in her place: "complementary but equal" …. The ideological rationalization that men and women hold complementary but equal positions in society appears to be a fairly recent invention. In earlier times—and in more conservative company today—it was not felt necessary to provide the ideology with an equalitarian veneer (p. 96).

Complementary stereotypes of women as more nurturing and caring than men, in other words, create an "illusion of equality" that helps men, and especially women, to justify ongoing gender disparities.

This hypothesis—that common social and cultural representations of men and women lend ideological support to the status quo—may not at first appear to lend itself readily to psychological experimentation, but we concluded that an experimental test should in fact be possible. Social cognitive research on priming and implicit stereotyping suggests that subtle, unconscious reminders of stereotypical features (such as those communicated by character vignettes, certain visual images of members of a given social category, and even "ostensibly unrelated" descriptions of the stereotypical attributes of a given category exemplar) are adequate to increase the cognitive accessibility of stereotypes (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Higgins, 1996). In addition, research on stereotype activation suggests that once the cognitive accessibility of a social stereotype is increased, the perceptions and motivations that are generally associated with that stereotype tend to follow psychologically (Bargh, 1996; Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001). Thus, if certain stereotypes do serve to justify the social system, then exposing people to subtle reminders of those stereotypes should lead them to subsequently endorse the perceived legitimacy of the social system to a greater extent (see also Jost & Major, 2001). This prediction is also consistent with Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, and Trötschel (2001) *automotive* model of automatically triggered motivation, which suggests that when a repeated situation has led an individual to consciously adopt a specific goal often enough (so that the situation-behavior link becomes adequately "tight"), the situation itself will begin to automatically activate the goal. The idea is that a

consciously motivated process will eventually be replaced by an implicitly activated one. Thus, if repeated exposure to complementary stereotypes does serve to justify gender inequality in society, then simply increasing the cognitive accessibility of such stereotypes should automatically trigger an increase in the perceived fairness and legitimacy of the status quo. This prediction is also in line with other work demonstrating the effects of temporarily activated ideologies on levels of prejudice and tolerance (Katz & Hass, 1988; Quinn & Crocker, 1999). Drawing on this line of reasoning, we conducted a series of experimental tests designed to examine the effects of complementary stereotypes on beliefs concerning the fairness and legitimacy of the social system as a whole.

This methodology was used in the specific context of examining the effects of complementary *gender* stereotypes on subsequent system justification. In one study (Jost & Kay, 2005, Study 1), 100 participants were randomly assigned to 1 of 4 different stereotype exposure conditions. In one condition, participants were asked to indicate whether five communal traits (considerate, honest, happy, warm, and moral) applied more to women or to men and to what degree. In another condition, participants were asked to indicate whether each of five agentic traits (assertive, competent, intelligent, ambitious, and responsible) applied more to women or to men. In a third condition, participants were asked to judge both communal and agentic traits. In all 3 experimental conditions, responses were given on a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (e.g., "women are more considerate than men") to 9 (e.g., "men are more considerate than women").[2] A control condition, in which participants were not exposed to gender stereotypes of any kind during the first part of the experiment, was also included in the design.

Then, in an ostensibly unrelated second study, a scale measuring gender-specific system justification was administered. This questionnaire contained eight opinion statements regarding the current state of gender roles and sex role division. These items are listed in Table I. Responses were given on nine-point scales, such that higher numbers indicated stronger agreement. An overall index of gender-specific system justification was calculated by taking the mean of the eight items following reverse-coding of two items. We predicted that participants who had been exposed to the communal stereotypes would evince higher levels of system justification than participants assigned to other conditions.

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[2]Although we used this methodology to activate the specific gender stereotypes rather than as a means of assessing the extent to which our participants themselves endorsed these stereotypes, responses to these questions were indeed recorded. The means did reflect the default stereotypes: Agentic traits were rated as significantly more characteristic of men, and communal traits were rated as significantly more characteristic of women.

TABLE I
ITEMS FOR MEASURING GENDER-SPECIFIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

In general, relations between men and women are fair

The division of labor in families generally operates as it should

Gender roles need to be radically restructured (R)

For women, the United States is the best country in the world to live in

Most policies relating to gender and the sexual division of labor serve the greater good

Everyone (male or female) has a fair shot at wealth and happiness

Sexism in society is getting worse every year (R)

Society is set up so that men and women usually get what they deserve

Note: Participants indicated their agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to nine (*strongly agree*). Items followed by ''(R)'' were reverse-scored prior to data coding and analyses (Jost & Kay, 2005).
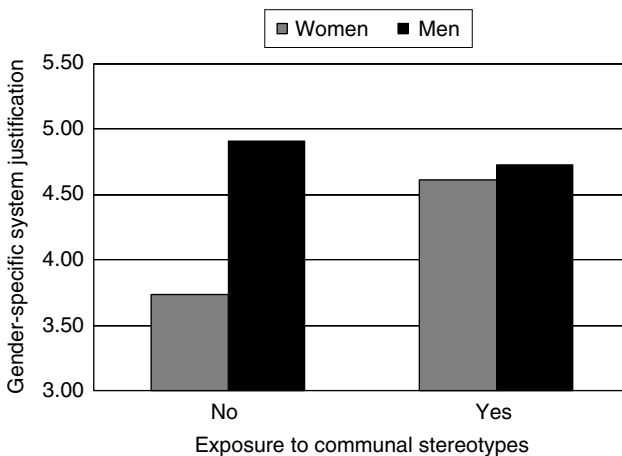

Fig. 2. Mean scores on gender-specific system justification as a function of participant gender and exposure to communal stereotypes. (Adapted from Study 1 in Jost & Kay, 2005.)

The data were generally supportive of this hypothesis. As can be seen in Fig. 2, activating communal gender stereotypes served to increase women's degree of support for the existing system of gender relations. For men, gender-specific system justification was uniformly high, and it was unaffected by stereotype activation. This experiment, we believe, was the first to provide direct evidence of a causal connection between exposure to specific gender stereotype contents and ideological support for the system of gender relations. Interestingly, the extent to which participants personally endorsed

communal stereotypes did not significantly correlate with levels of system justification; nearly everyone subscribed to the same stereotypical beliefs. Thus, this study suggested that exposure to complementary gender stereotypes, regardless of the degree of conscious personal endorsement of those stereotypes, was sufficient to lead women to show increased support for the current system of gender relations in society.

2. Effects of Exposure to Complementary Stereotypes on Diffuse System Justification

A follow-up experiment sought to improve on and expand on these results in several important ways (Jost & Kay, 2005, Study 2). First, we examined the extent to which exposure to hostile and benevolent sexist ideals would mirror the effects of exposure to agentic and communal stereotypes, respectively (see also Glick & Fiske, 2001). Second, we assessed the extent to which exposure to complementary gender stereotypes would affect beliefs regarding the legitimacy of the overall social system, in general, and not just the specific system of gender relations. Third, we made use of an incidental exposure manipulation that did not require the participants to actually endorse or refute these stereotypes. Fourth and finally, we addressed the issue of whether *any* favorable statement regarding women would be sufficient to increase system justification levels or whether these effects are dependent on the activation of preexisting, culturally available stereotypes associated with communal and agentic dimensions.

To this end, participants in this study were randomly assigned to one of four different conditions. Specifically, they were exposed to: (1) four benevolent sexism statements, (2) four hostile sexism statements, (3) two hostile and two benevolent sexism statements, or (4) four favorable, but nonstereotypical, statements about women (i.e., describing them as more creative, realistic, tactful, and resourceful than men). These four conditions were crossed with a manipulation of exposure versus endorsement. In the endorsement conditions, participants were again asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. In the exposure condition, participants were instead asked to proofread each item and to rate the ambiguity versus clarity of item wording. A control condition was also included in which participants were not exposed to any of these statements at all.

Next, all participants completed a measure of general or diffuse system justification. The items are listed in Table II. An overall index was calculated by taking the mean of responses to all eight items following recoding. In terms of convergent validity, Kay and Jost (2003) found that these diffuse system justification scores correlated significantly with (1) scores on Lipkus' (1991) Global Belief in a Just World scale, $r(117) = .67$, $p < .001$; (2) Quinn

TABLE II
ITEMS FOR MEASURING DIFFUSE (GENERAL) SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

In general, you find society to be fair

In general, the political system operates as it should

American society needs to be radically restructured (R)

The United States is the best country in the world to live in

Most policies serve the greater good

Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness

Our society is getting worse every year (R)

Society is set up so that people usually get what they deserve

Note: Participants indicated their agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to nine (*strongly agree*). Items followed by "(R)" were reverse-scored prior to data coding and analyses (Kay & Jost, 2003).

TABLE III
ITEMS FOR MEASURING PERCEPTIONS OF "BALANCE" AND "COMPLEMENTARITY"
IN THE SOCIAL WORLD

All in all, the world is a balanced place

Some people have everything, while others have nothing (R)

A person who has recently experienced a string of bad breaks probably has something good coming to him or her

Masculine traits perfectly complement feminine traits (and vice versa)

I agree with people who say that "everything comes out in the end"

The dice are basically "loaded"; positive outcomes are distributed disproportionately to the "winners" in society (R)

Most people have both good and bad characteristics

Everything has its advantages and disadvantages

The social world is almost never in a state of "harmony" or "equilibrium" (R)

Note: Participants indicated their agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to seven (*strongly agree*). Items followed by "(R)" were reverse-scored prior to data coding and analyses (Kay & Jost, 2003).

and Crocker's (1999) Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) scale, $r(49) = .45$, $p < .001$; and (3) a new measure of general beliefs concerning needs for "balance" and "complementarity" in the social world, $r(117) = .37, p < .001$ (see items in Table III).

The results from this study yielded several findings of note. First, exposure to the *benevolent* sexism items increased system justification among women, much as exposure to the *communal* items had in the previous study. That is,

for female participants, system justification was significantly higher following exposure to the benevolent sexism statements, compared to both the positively valenced, nonstereotypical control and ''nothing'' control conditions (see Fig. 3). Second, this experiment demonstrated that the system-justifying effects of complementary gender stereotypes are not limited to beliefs regarding the legitimacy of gender relations, but they apply more generally to the societal status quo. Third, because the results for the incidental exposure (proofreading) conditions did not differ substantially from those obtained in the endorsement conditions, we obtained further evidence that mere exposure to complementary stereotypes, even in the absence of opportunities for personal endorsement, affects women's degree of support for the societal status quo.

Across these two studies, then, we found that the activation of communal and benevolent stereotypes was sufficient to increase system justification among women. Complementary gender stereotypes may be especially
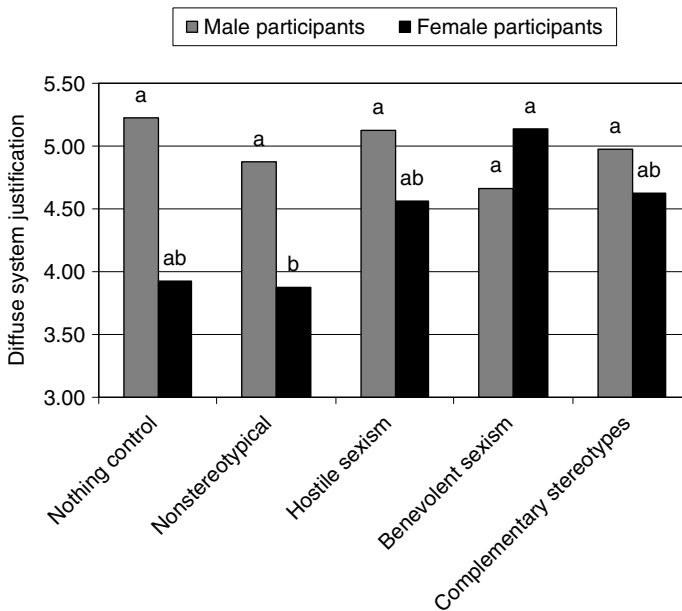

Fig. 3.   Mean scores on diffuse system justification as a function of participant gender and content of stereotype exposure, collapsed across proofreading and endorsement instructions. (Adapted from Study 2 in Jost & Kay, 2005.) Note: Different superscripts within each gender group differ from one another according to Tukey tests of multiple comparison ($p < .05$).

effective at rationalizing the status quo because they, almost by definition, appear to compensate for women's deprivation in terms of status and power (Bem & Bem, 1970; Jackman, 1994). This interpretation is broadly consistent with the fact that only the communal and benevolent stereotypes about women (and not the agentic stereotypes about men) affected women's system justification scores in the first two studies. That is, the communal and benevolent stereotypes may have acted as a counterweight to the presumptive advantages enjoyed by men.

3. Altering the Presumptive Context of Gender Inequality

If the above interpretation is correct, then a manipulation that temporarily reverses the status differences between men and women by portraying men as disadvantaged relative to women should reverse the effects of complementary (or compensating) stereotypes on system justification. That is, when the presumptive social context is altered so that women are seen as having a status advantage over men, then agentic stereotypes about men (rather than communal or benevolent stereotypes of women) should lead to increased levels of system justification for men as well as women. In such a context, ascribing unique advantages to women should do little to ''balance out'' the system; only stereotypes that ascribe compensating advantages to men should be system justifying. The third study reported by Jost and Kay (2005) tested this reasoning.

A group of Canadian and American participants was first exposed to a manipulation that either reinforced the presumed status advantage of men relative to women (i.e., the cultural default) or reversed that advantage. Afterward, participants were exposed to either communal stereotypes of women or agentic stereotypes of men using the same proofreading task that was used in the second study. Participants were asked to proofread four statements regarding either the communal nature of women or the agentic nature of men.

To manipulate the relative advantage of men and women, participants read a description of alleged research findings that described either women or men as more naturally suited to being better managers; these materials were derived from actual scientific and journalistic accounts of female leadership qualities in business (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Sharpe, 2000). In the ''women are better managers'' condition, participants read that:

> Research has demonstrated convincingly that the best *managers* in business settings tend to have excellent *interpersonal* skills and are able to *communicate* well and work closely with *others*. Consequently, the most effective managers in recent years have tended to be *women* rather than men.

In the ''men are better managers'' condition, participants instead read that:

> Research has demonstrated convincingly that the best *managers* in business settings tend to have excellent *individual leadership* skills and are able to *solve problems independently.* Consequently, the most effective managers in recent years have tended to be *men* rather than women.

After reading one of these two passages, participants were exposed to prescriptive stereotypical statements taken from research by Prentice and Carranza (2002). Finally, participants completed the diffuse system justification scale (see Table II). The experimental design for this study, therefore, was a 2 (presumptive context: women versus men are better managers) × 2 (stereotype exposure: women are communal versus men are agentic) factorial, and the dependent variable was the perceived legitimacy of the societal status quo.

As hypothesized, the interaction between the two independent variables was statistically significant. The pattern of means is illustrated in Fig. 4. When the presumptive context of male advantage was maintained, exposure to communal stereotypes about women was slightly more effective at increasing system justification levels (although this pairwise comparison did not
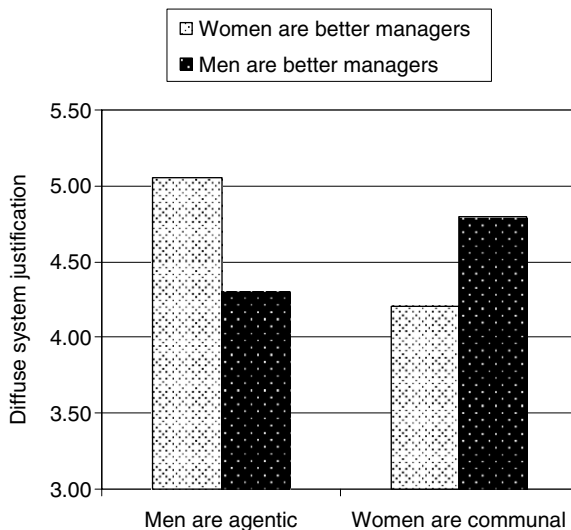
Fig. 4.   Mean scores on diffuse system justification as a function of managerial context and content of stereotype exposure. (Adapted from Study 3 in Jost & Kay, 2005.)

attain statistical significance). When the presumptive gender difference was reversed, however, so that women (because of their communal nature) were described as enjoying a superior managerial status, exposure to the male agentic stereotype led to significantly higher levels of system justification, as compared with exposure to the female communal stereotype. Thus, this experiment further strengthens our theoretical argument that complementary gender stereotypes can serve to maintain support for the status quo, and it offers more precise evidence for the effectiveness of the compensating (or balancing) mechanism in particular.

4. Summary: System-Justifying Functions of Complementary Gender Stereotypes

In three experiments first reported by Jost and Kay (2005), we have shown that exposure to communal and benevolent stereotypes is sufficient to bolster ideological support for the status quo (at least among women). Furthermore, exposure to complementary gender stereotypes increased both gender-specific and diffuse forms of system justification. These results are quite consistent with several prominent accounts of the assumed connection between gender stereotyping and system maintenance (Bem & Bem, 1970; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jackman, 1994; Jost & Banaji, 1994). In particular, we have highlighted the potential for complementary stereotypes to counteract the status disadvantage of women, thereby helping people to feel better about gender inequalities in society. Taken as a whole, this evidence provides strong support for novel hypotheses derived from SJT (see also Kay & Jost, 2003).

One other aspect of these studies is worth mentioning. In earlier work, system justification was largely inferred from studies that documented either (1) the existence or ramifications of in-group versus out-group favoritism as a function of group status (Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost et al., 2002; see also Jost & Hunyady, 2002 for a review) or (2) the degree to which (presumably) system-justifying stereotypes were consensually endorsed by members of high- and low-status groups (Jost et al., 2001, 2005). In these earlier studies, system justification had not yet been measured directly as an outcome variable. Nor had it been measured in previous studies of gender stereotyping as rationalization (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). Thus, there was no direct evidence in the published literature that *exposure* to specific kinds of stereotypes serves to *increase* ideological support for the existing social system. The studies we have just described, in conjunction with a set of studies that we will describe next, represent the first experimental tests of the *causal* relationship between specific stereotypes and perceptions of system legitimacy.

B. BEYOND GENDER: COMPLEMENTARY STEREOTYPES RATIONALIZE STATUS DIFFERENCES IN GENERAL

The fact that the system-justifying potential of gender stereotypes can change depending on whether women are seen as occupying a high-status or a low-status position suggests that these effects are more general than gender theorists may have assumed. That is, the system-justifying consequences of complementary (or compensatory) stereotypes are probably not unique to gender per se, but may be part of a more general social psychological process of rationalizing inequality in general (see also Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005; Napier et al., 2006; Yzerbyt, Provost, & Corneille, 2005). In fact, if we divide the communal dimension into two subdimensions, one that captures warmth, friendliness, happiness, and likeability, and another that centers on honesty, morality, tradition, and virtue, the resulting subdimensions suggest important similarities to stereotypes of a number of groups other than gender groups. If ascribing these positive characteristics to low-status groups is in fact system justifying, then we should observe a very general pattern of complementary stereotyping across a wide range of different low-status groups.

1. Regional and Ethnic Status Stereotypes

We have addressed this issue in several studies with respect to stereotypes based on regional and ethnic status in the United States, Italy, England, and Israel (see Jost et al., 2001, 2005). In all of these very different contexts, we have observed a strikingly similar pattern of results. In the United States, for instance, we find that both Northerners and Southerners tend to hold similar regional stereotypes that seem to be related to social and economic status differences (Jost et al., 2001). Specifically, a sample of students at the University of Cincinnati (which is located on the border between the North and the South) reported believing that Northerners in the United States are more intelligent and productive than Southerners but that Southerners are more happy and honest than Northerners (see Fig. 5). The fact that these complementary stereotypes are consensually shared by Northerners and Southerners is important because it suggests that these stereotypes serve system-justifying (rather than ego- or group-justifying) functions.

Status differences between Northerners and Southerners in Italy are even weightier than in the United States (see Capozza, Bonaldo, & DiMaggio, 1982). They are summarized well by the racist slight, ''Africa begins in Rome.'' In a study conducted by Jost et al. (2005, Study 1), students from Northern, Central, and Southern universities in Italy ($N = 160$) completed a series of stereotyping measures. As in the United States, Northerners were
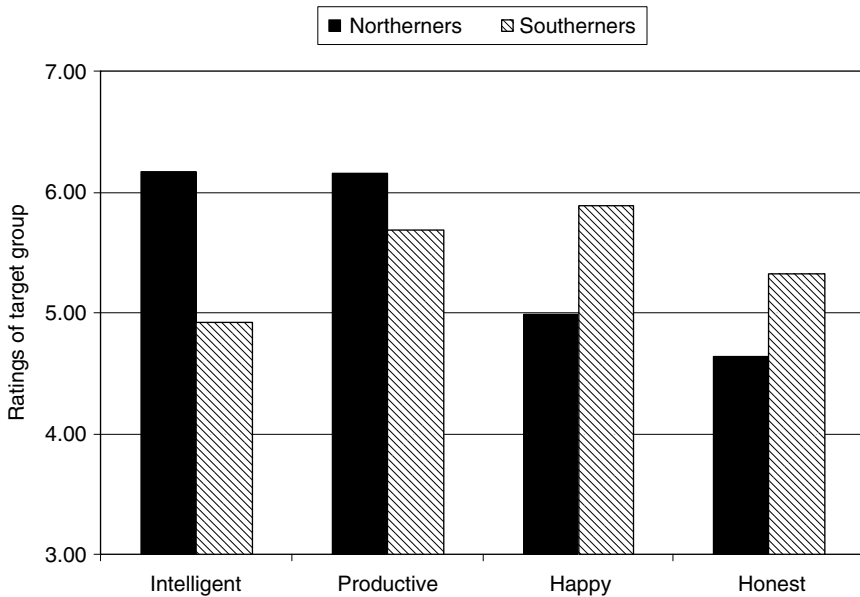
Fig. 5.   Trait ratings of Northerners and Southerners in the United States.

consensually perceived to be more intelligent and productive than South-
erners. At the same time, Southerners were consensually perceived to be
more happy (see Fig. 6), although they were not perceived as more honest,
probably because of stereotypes linking Sicilians and other Southern Italians
to the mafia.

In England, where it is the Southerners rather than the Northerners who
are seen as higher in social and economic status, the same general pattern of
stereotypes emerges (see Jost et al., 2005, Study 2). Students from the
North and the South ($N = 94$) again stereotyped the higher status group
(Southerners) as more intelligent and productive, but they stereotyped the
lower status group (Northerners) as more happy and honest (see Fig. 7).
Furthermore, we found that the perceived magnitude of status differences
was associated with increased endorsement of complementary stereotypes,
which, in turn, was associated with enhanced perceptions of the legitimacy
and stability of the status hierarchy (Jost et al., 2005, pp. 320–321).

In Israel, we replicated these results using ethnic rather than regional
status differences (Jost et al., 2005, Study 3; $N = 135$). In this context, the
high-status group of Ashkenazi Jews was stereotyped as more intelligent and
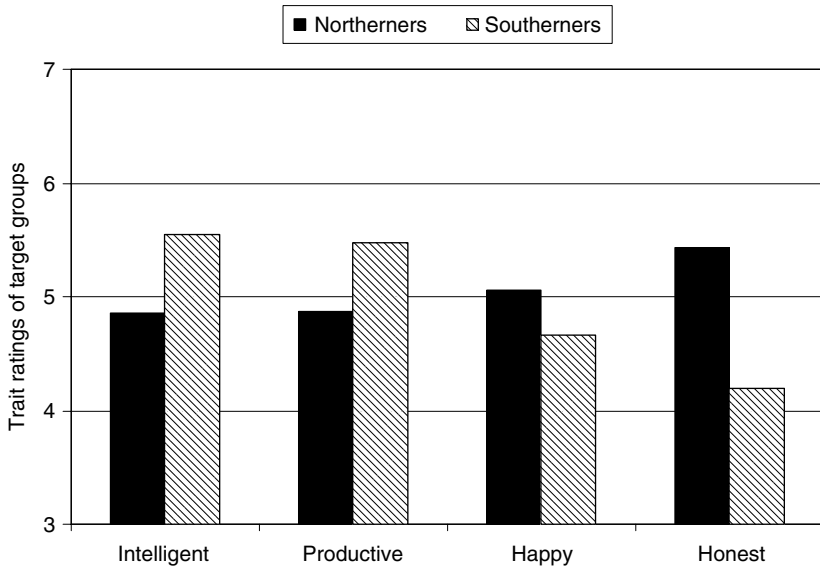responsible, whereas the low-status group of Sephardic Jews was stereotyped

Northerners ■   Southerners ◨

Fig. 6.   Trait ratings of Northerners and Southerners in England.
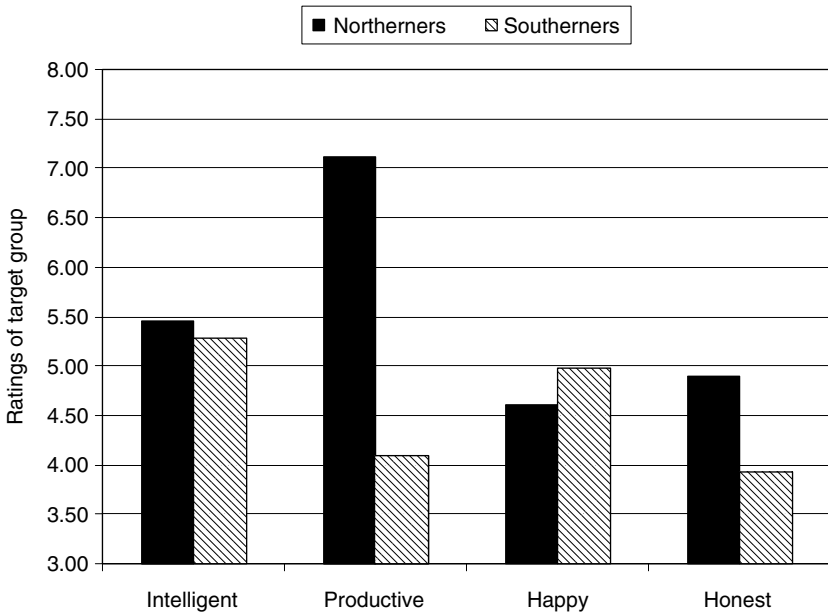
Northerners ■   Southerners ◨

Fig. 7.   Trait ratings of Northerners and Southerners in Italy.
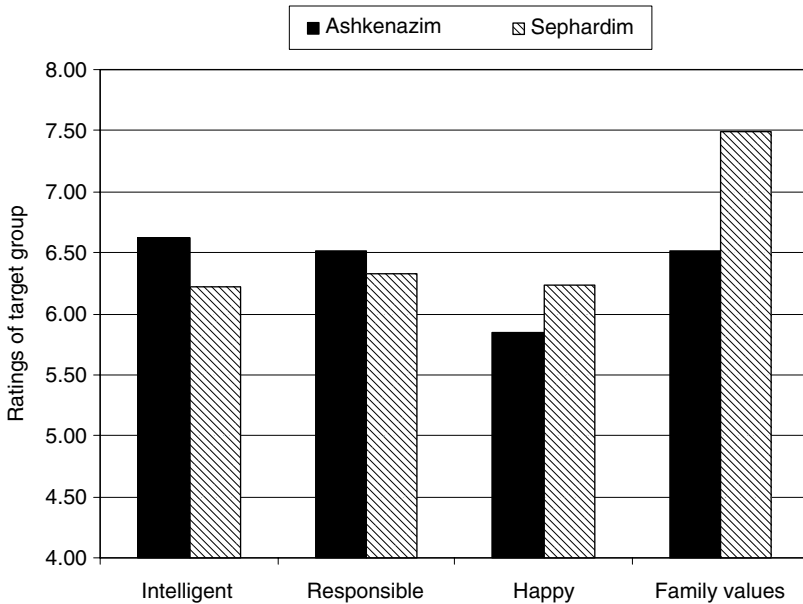
Fig. 8.   Trait ratings of Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Israel.

as happier and as more supportive of family values (these respondents were not asked about their perceptions concerning honesty). As before, these complementary stereotypes were shared by members of both high- and low-status groups. They were also endorsed more strongly following an experimental manipulation of system threat (see Fig. 8), providing further evidence that complementary stereotypes serve the function of bolstering the societal status quo (see also Kay et al., 2005; Napier et al., 2006). In any case, it appears that intergroup differentiation with respect to agentic and communal stereotypes is not at all unique to gender groups (see also Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005; Ridgeway, 2001; Yzerbyt et al., 2005). On the contrary, the tendency to ascribe agentic characteristics to members of high-status groups and communal characteristics to members of low-status groups is pervasive indeed.

2. The Virtues of the Oppressed

Kay and Jost (2003) observed that representations of the poor as happier and more honest than the rich abound in works of literature, film, and popular culture more generally. Characterizations found in such diverse

works as Dickens' *Great Expectations* and *A Christmas Carol*, Moliere's *The Miser*, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*, and even Steve Martin's *The Jerk* reflect a propensity to ''balance out'' accounts of differences in wealth with accounts of offsetting or compensating traits and characteristics. This tendency to ascribe redeeming qualities to the poor and downtrodden was noted by Bertrand Russell (1950) in an essay entitled ''The Superior Virtue of the Oppressed.'' Russell wrote that:

> A rather curious form of this admiration for groups to which the admirer does not belong is the belief in the superior virtue of the oppressed: subject nations, the poor, women, and children. The eighteenth century, while conquering America from the Indians, reducing the peasantry to the condition of pauper laborers, and introducing the cruelties of early industrialism, loved to sentimentalize about the ''noble savage'' and the ''simple annals of the poor'' (p. 58).

Such representations are indeed quite common. Blasi and Jost (2006) noted that there are over 800 Google ''hits'' that contain English phrases such as the ''happy vagrant'' and the ''carefree vagabond.''

It seems likely that complementary stereotypes play a role in racial attitudes as well as in attitudes toward the rich and the poor. A short story by Langston Hughes (1933/1971) entitled ''Slave on the Block'' begins by excoriating a White couple for their romantic views about the virtues of Blacks:

> They were people who went in for Negroes—Michael and Anne—the Carraways. But not in the social-service, philanthropic sort of way, no. They saw no use in helping a race that was already too lovely for words. Leave them unspoiled and just enjoy them, Michael and Anne felt. So they went in for the Art of Negroes—the dancing that had such jungle life about it, the songs that were so direct, so real (p. 19).

One is reminded also of the bigoted character in the (1957) film *Twelve Angry Men*, who insists that, ''Oh, sure, there are some good things about them, too. Look, I'm the first to say that.''

Kay and Jost (2003) proposed that by reinforcing the notion that the material advantages of the wealthy are accompanied by specific deficits in areas such as moral virtue and happiness and by stressing that the material deprivation of the poor is counterbalanced by other virtues, people are able to maintain an illusion of equality. Such representations, we hypothesized, help to preserve the legitimacy of the system, insofar as people are able to believe that there is, overall, an equal distribution of benefits and burdens throughout society. This system maintenance hypothesis had been suggested (but never directly tested) in previous work by, among others, Lane (1962) and Lerner (1980).

3. Effects of Exposure to "Poor but Happy" and "Poor but Honest" Stereotype Exemplars on Diffuse System Justification

We designed four experiments to investigate the potential of complementary stereotypes concerning the rich and poor to serve as system-justifying devices, that is, to aid individuals in shoring up support for the existing social system even in the face of visible inequality (see also Jost & Banaji, 1994; Napier et al., 2006). Our interest in these studies was not to gauge the prevalence of these representations per se—although they do seem to be quite common in popular culture, but rather to test for the effects of exposure to "poor but happy," "rich but miserable," "poor but honest," and "rich but dishonest" stereotype exemplars on the perceived legitimacy of the social system.

In the first experiment (Kay & Jost, 2003, Study 1), under the guise of an impression formation task, we exposed participants to four character vignettes depicting a fictional character, Mark, as either rich and unhappy (complementary), rich and happy (noncomplementary), poor and happy (complementary), or poor and unhappy (noncomplementary). Thus, the design was a 2 × 2 factorial in which the protagonist was described as either rich or poor and as either happy or unhappy. Afterward, in what was purported to be a separate study, participants in all four conditions completed the diffuse system justification scale (see items in Table II). Our hypothesis was that participants would deem the system to be the most legitimate following exposure to the complementary (rich but unhappy, poor but happy) compared to the noncomplementary (rich and happy, poor and unhappy) stereotype exemplars. In other words, we predicted a two-way interaction between level of wealth (rich versus poor) and level of happiness (happy versus unhappiness) of the protagonist, so that when Mark was described as *poor*, describing him also as *happy* (versus unhappy) would lead people to score higher on system justification, whereas when he was described as *rich*, describing him as *unhappy* (versus happy) would lead people to score higher on system justification. The vignettes were worded as follows (with alternate versions designated with the use of brackets and italics):

> Mark is from a large Northeast city. He is married and has two children, has brown hair and is 5 feet 11 inches. Mark was an athletic child and still closely follows all his local sports teams. Mark *enjoys almost all aspects of his life* [is not particularly happy with most aspects of his life], *and* [but] because of his *high* [low] salary, he *has* [has no] trouble getting the bills paid and keeping food on the table. In June, Mark will be turning 41.

Thus, the passages contained the relevant information pertaining to levels of wealth and happiness as well as some individuating information about the protagonist. The passages about Mark, it can be seen, had no clear or

explicit connection of any kind to the very general system-related attitudes that are measured by the diffuse system justification scale.

Nevertheless, and in line with predictions, a significant two-way interaction between wealth and happiness levels of the protagonist was observed on participants' system justification scores. As can be seen in Fig. 9, people who were exposed to the ''poor but happy'' protagonist judged the overarching social system to be more fair and legitimate, in comparison with people who were exposed to the ''poor and unhappy'' protagonist. Conversely, people who were exposed to the ''rich and happy'' protagonist judged the overarching social system to be *less* fair and legitimate, in comparison with people who were exposed to the ''rich and unhappy'' protagonist. Thus, the two complementary representations in which the poor were portrayed as happy and the rich as unhappy served to increase ideological support for the societal status quo. It is worth emphasizing a counterintuitive aspect of this pattern of results, namely, that when the level of wealth was held constant (as rich), increasing the happiness of the target actually *decreased* the perceiver's satisfaction with the status quo.

As Russell (1950), Lane (1962), Lerner (1980), and others have suggested, believing that the poor are more honest and virtuous than the rich (and perhaps also more likely to be rewarded in the afterlife) may be a powerful means of rationalizing status inequalities in society. Thus, we conducted a second experiment to investigate the system-justifying potential of ''poor but honest'' and ''rich but dishonest'' complementary stereotypes (Kay & Jost,
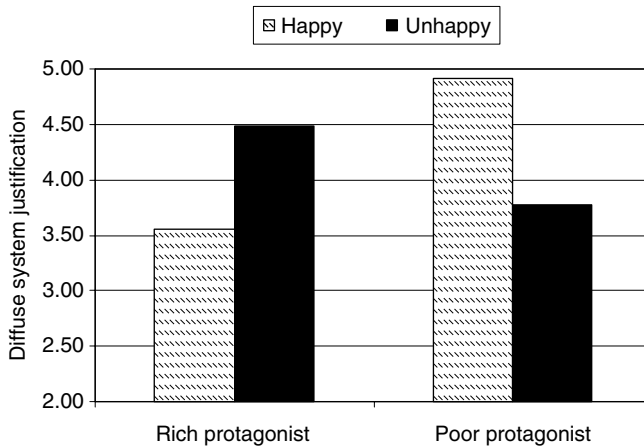

Fig. 9. Effects of exposure to rich versus poor protagonists who are described as happy versus unhappy on system justification. (Adapted from Study 1 in Kay & Jost, 2003.)

2003, Study 2). The vignettes for this study were as follows (with alternate versions italicized and set off by brackets):

> George is from a large Northeast city. He is married and has two children, has brown hair and is 5 feet 11 inches. George was an athletic child and still closely follows all his local sports teams. George *sometimes* [never] cuts corners, and other people consider him to be *somewhat dishonest* [very honest]. Because of his *high* [low] salary, he *has* [has no] trouble getting the bills paid and keeping food on the table. In June, George will be turning 38.

Once again, we predicted that exposure to the complementary representations (i.e., "poor but honest," "rich but dishonest") would produce an increase in participants' levels of system justification, relative to their scores in the noncomplementary (i.e., "poor and dishonest," "rich and honest") conditions.

This is precisely what we observed. The protagonist's wealth significantly interacted with his perceived level of honesty, so that when the protagonist was described as *poor*, the system was viewed more favorably when he was also described as *honest* rather than dishonest, but when he was described as *rich*, the system was viewed more favorably when he was also described as *dishonest* rather than honest (see Fig. 10). Thus, participants rated the system as more fair and legitimate following exposure to the complementary
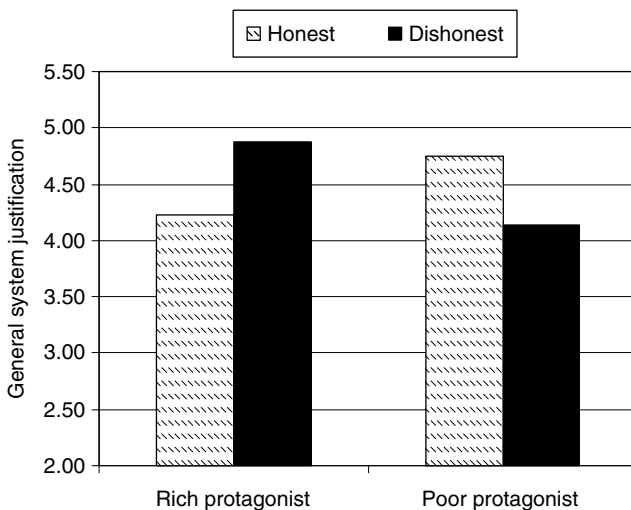

Fig. 10. Effects of exposure to rich versus poor protagonists who are described as honest versus dishonest on system justification (Adapted from Study 2 in Kay & Jost, 2003.)

pairings of "poor but honest" and "rich but dishonest." It is worth noting that these findings are quite different from what one would expect on the basis of theoretical perspectives that stress balance, congruity, or "halo" effects (see Kay & Jost, 2003). Nevertheless, the pattern of results obtained in these experiments nicely parallel the effects on system justification that Jost and Kay (2005) observed after exposing participants to benevolent stereotypes of women (which portray them as, among other things, more virtuous than men). In both cases, stereotypes that depict the lower status group as more virtuous than the higher status group produced elevated perceptions of the legitimacy of the status quo (see also Mandisodza et al., 2006). This may help to explain why people are so eager to appreciate, as Russell (1950) put it, the "virtues of the oppressed."

4. Effects of Exposure to "Poor but Happy" and "Poor but Honest" Stereotype Exemplars on Implicit Activation of the Justice Motive

Inspired by the work of Carolyn Hafer (2000), who demonstrated that situations of injustice activate the justice motive at an implicit level of awareness, we sought to replicate our effects using an implicit dependent measure. Hafer found that exposure to situations that are clearly unjust (such as a perpetrator of a crime not being brought to justice) led to increases in the activation of the justice motive, as measured by enhanced accessibility of justice-related words (operationalized in terms of interference on a Stroop task). In other words, she demonstrated that unjust situations spontaneously activate justice concerns at a nonconscious level of awareness. Applying this logic, we endeavored to first expose participants to complementary (versus noncomplementary) stereotypical exemplars, and then to measure the implicit activation of the justice motive using a reaction time paradigm. To the extent that noncomplementary representations are perceived as less just than complementary representations, we expected to see increases in the accessibility of justice-related words following exposure to them.

We examined this hypothesis first in the context of "poor but happy"/ "rich but miserable" complementary stereotypes (Kay & Jost, 2003, Study 3). Participants were exposed to one of two sets of stimuli that described two friends, one rich and one poor, in either complementary or noncomplementary terms. In the complementary condition, the rich friend was described as less happy than the poor friend. In the noncomplementary condition, the rich friend was described as happier than the poor friend. The first part of the vignette was identical in both conditions. It read:

> Joseph and Mitchell both grew up in the midwestern United States and now both live in Seattle. Joseph is 39 and Mitchell is 41. Joseph and Mitchell met in their twenties,

were good friends for almost ten years afterwards, but now because of their work schedules, they have lost touch over the last few years. Joseph has an excellent job now, lives in a beautiful, spacious house in a lavish neighborhood, and makes a very large salary. Mitchell spends a lot of his time watching and playing sports, but unlike Joseph, his job doesn't pay him much, so his home, which is in a rather inexpensive part of town, is a bit cramped and not very nice-looking.

In the complementary, ''poor happier than rich'' condition, the story concluded this way:

Despite Mitchell's smaller house and lower salary, he tends to be much happier with his life than Joseph is. Mitchell enjoys most aspects of his life and is known amongst his friends as that guy who's always ''broke but happy.'' Joseph, on the other hand, lacks the feeling of general contentment that Mitchell has and is often thought of as that ''rich but miserable guy.''

In the noncomplementary, ''rich happier than poor'' condition, the story concluded as follows:

Not only does Mitchell have a smaller house and lower salary than Joseph, he also tends to be much less happy with his life than Joseph is. Joseph enjoys most aspects of his life and is known amongst his friends as that guy who ''has it all.'' Mitchell, on the other hand, lacks the feeling of general contentment that Joseph has and is often thought of as that ''broke, miserable guy.''

Participants were instructed that this description would be used as part of a memory task, and they were asked to read the vignette as many times as necessary in order to be able to answer questions about it later. Before the memory task took place, however, participants were asked to complete a task pertaining to a separate study on the computer. This task, which was a lexical-decision task, was used to gauge the relative accessibility of justice-related and non-justice-related words. Specifically, participants were required to judge, as quickly as possible, whether strings of letters presented to them were words or nonwords by pressing designated computer keys. Participants were exposed to justice-related words (i.e., fair, legitimate, just, valid, justified), neutral words (e.g., volume, finger, calendar, candle), and nonwords; the justice-related and neutral words were matched for familiarity. The extent to which participants were faster to categorize justice-related (versus neutral) words as words was used as a measure of implicit activation of the justice motive. Given the results reported by Hafer (2000), we expected that the ''rich happier than poor'' vignette would lead people to exhibit increased justice concerns, relative to the ''poor happier than rich'' vignette.

As illustrated in Fig. 11, we found that the accessibility of justice-related words was indeed higher in the noncomplementary condition (as indicated
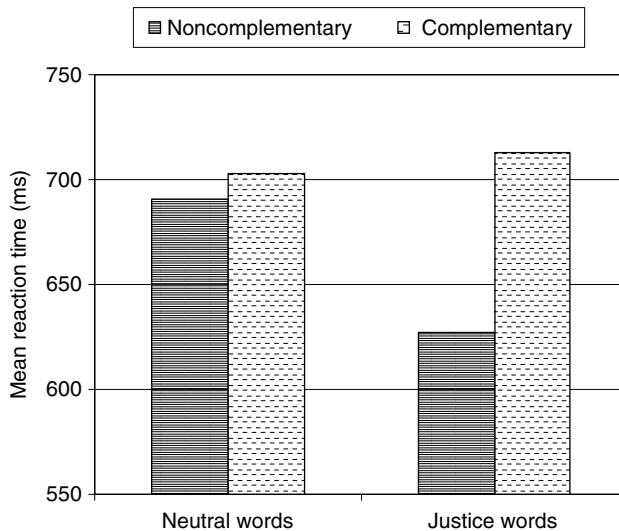
Fig. 11.   Effects of exposure to complementary versus noncomplementary stereotype exem-
plars on accessibility of justice-related and neutral words. (Adapted from Study 3 in Kay & Jost,
2003.)

by faster lexical decision reaction times), that is, when the rich friend
was described as happier than the poor friend. The manipulation of perceived
complementarity exerted no comparable effects on response times to neutral
control words. Thus, even when measured at an implicit level of awareness, it
appears that the complementary "poor but happy" stereotype exemplar is more
satisfying (in terms of system justification needs) than is its noncomplementary
counterpart (rich and happy).

   In a follow-up experiment, we substituted honesty and dishonesty for
happiness and unhappiness, and obtained a nearly identical pattern of
results (Kay & Jost, 2003, Study 4). The noncomplementary condition again
appeared to threaten the justice (or justification) motive, as indicated by
faster reaction times to justice-related words. As before, the two conditions
exerted no effect on reaction times to the neutral words.

   Thus, using multiple independent and dependent measures, we have
obtained consistent evidence in support of the notion that complementary
stereotypes of the rich and poor can serve system-justifying functions. As
with complementary gender stereotypes of men as agentic but not communal
and women as communal but not agentic, complementary representations of
the rich and poor lead people to believe more strongly in the fairness,
legitimacy, and overall desirability of the societal status quo. Maintaining

the notion that we live "in the best of all possible worlds" is no simple task in the context of social systems (such as patriarchy and capitalism) that are associated with dramatic and visible disparities between groups. Fortunately (or unfortunately), people show remarkable skill and flexibility in their capacity to invent or simply to latch onto ready-made rationalizations for the status quo (see also Blasi & Jost, 2006; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). The studies first reported by Kay and Jost (2003) demonstrate the system-enhancing potential of several culturally familiar complementary (or compensatory) representations of the rich and poor. It appears that simply being reminded of one or more "virtues of the oppressed" leads people to profess greater satisfaction with the overarching social system at an explicit level of awareness and to exhibit decreased concerns for justice at an implicit level of awareness.

IV. Moderators of the Effect of Complementary Stereotypes on System Justification

For several decades, much of the research in the social justice tradition has emphasized the ways in which people maintain their "belief in a just world" by engaging in processes of *victim-blaming* or *victim-derogation.* That is, we know that people frequently ascribe *negative* characteristics to members of disadvantaged groups, such as the poor and dispossessed, apparently in order to deflect blame away from the system itself and onto individual victims (Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Hafer & Begue, 2005; Lerner, 1980; Montada & Schneider, 1989). This approach stresses attributional consistency as an outcome, so that those who "succeed" are seen as good in various ways, and those who "fail" are seen as inherently flawed (see also Crandall & Beasley, 2001).

Our research on the system-justifying potential of complementary stereotypes, however, suggests that a process that is akin to *victim-enhancement*—such that *favorable* characteristics are ascribed to members of disadvantaged groups—can also serve to increase allegiance to the overarching social system. Indeed, the seven experiments by Jost and Kay (2005; Kay & Jost, 2003, described above) show clearly that stereotypical representations that endow members of low-status groups with compensating virtues and members of high-status groups with leveling vices can serve to increase people's faith in the fairness and legitimacy of the societal status quo.

How do we reconcile our findings with the long tradition of research on victim-blaming as a defensive response to injustice and inequality (Lerner, 1980; Ryan, 1976)? Our assumption is that in some contexts and for some

groups of people, victim-derogating, noncomplementary justifications are especially effective as system-justifying devices, whereas in other contexts and for some people, victim-enhancing, complementary stereotypes are more effective. In other words, the system-justifying potential of complementary stereotypes, such as ''poor but happy'' and ''poor but honest'' representations, may be *moderated* by both contextual constraints and individual differences. Thus, we have maintained an active interest in uncovering the moderating variables and boundary conditions that characterize our effects (Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005; Kay, Czaplinski, & Jost, 2007a).

To date, we have identified several situational and dispositional factors that affect the means by which people attempt to maintain their belief in the legitimacy of the system as well as the effectiveness of those means. Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that there may be several alternative, possibly functionally equivalent routes to attaining system justification. In the language of goal systems theory, it appears that there are multiple, substitutable means of satisfying the goal of justifying the status quo (see Jost, Pietrzak, Liviatan, Mandisodza, & Napier, in press; Kruglanski, 1996; see also Tesser, Martin, & Cornell, 1996); some of these means presumably rely on direct, noncomplementary, victim-derogating ''strategies,'' whereas others may be more subtle and indirect, like the complementary, victim-enhancing approaches we have stressed in this chapter. Which route is ''chosen'' depends on a number of factors, including situational constraints, dispositional tendencies, and the contents of readily available (prepackaged) stereotypes. Our use of goal-related terminology such as ''strategy'' and ''choice'' should not be taken to mean that these processes are necessarily consciously accessible to social actors and perceivers. Rather, we assume that system justification goals can operate implicitly or nonconsciously (see also Bargh et al., 2001).

A. PERCEPTIONS OF A CAUSAL LINK BETWEEN TRAIT AND OUTCOME

Several social psychological theories assume that human beings are motivated to believe in a predictable and controllable social world (Allport, 1966; Janoff-Bulman & Yopyk, 2004; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Langer, 1975; Lerner, 1980; Major, 1994; Plaks et al., 2005). This motivation is thought to be so strong that when people encounter evidence that some events are uncontrollable, chaotic, or randomly determined, they generally respond by reconstruing things so as to minimize the threat to feelings of controllability (Hafer & Begue, 2005). One highly effective means of coping with this situation is to explain seemingly arbitrary or random acts of injustice or misfortune as due to, or *caused by*, traits, dispositions, or other

characteristics that are internal to the victim in question. Accordingly, poor people are often assumed to be lazy and unintelligent (Jost & Banaji, 1994), obese people are assumed to lack self-control (Crandall, 1994; Quinn & Crocker, 1999), and so on. This implies that the effectiveness of victim-blaming attributions should depend on the perception of a specific *causal link* between the trait (e.g., intelligence) and the outcome (e.g., wealth). In contrast, when the trait is perceived as causally *irrelevant* to the outcome, victim-derogation is unlikely to justify the social system.

Victim-enhancement, by contrast, is assumed to justify the system by implying a fair dispersion of benefits and burdens across social groups rather than a sense of prediction or control. Complementary stereotypes (which are victim-enhancing) reinforce the desire to believe that no one ''has it all'' and that, as Dr. Pangloss had it, bad luck in one domain is offset by good luck in others. It seems important that the compensating benefits commonly ascribed to members of disadvantaged groups (their ''virtues'') are causally *un*related to the dimension on which they are disadvantaged. In this manner, the system as a whole can be seen as fair, because in the long run everyone encounters both rewards and setbacks. There is, in other words, an *illusion of equality*.

Thus, we propose that there are two distinct, alternative ways of justifying the status quo (and maintaining the belief in a just world) when confronted with unequal outcomes. First, one can blame victims for their own state of disadvantage, thereby reinforcing the extent to which events and outcomes are seen as predictable and controllable (Lerner, 1980). Second, one can conceive of ways of restoring the illusion of equality by stressing the virtues of the disadvantaged and the vices of the advantaged (Kay & Jost, 2003). If our theoretical logic is correct, then people will tend to pursue the first route to system justification (i.e., relying on victim-derogating stereotypes and judgments) when a given trait is seen as *causally related* to the specific outcome in question, as when a person's purported laziness is used to explain (or justify) his or her poverty. By contrast, people will tend to pursue the second route to system justification when there is no perceived causal link between the trait and the outcome, as when the poor are roman-ticized as happier or as more honest than the rest of us. We investigated these hypotheses in a series of experiments reported by Kay et al. (2005) on the moderating role of perceptions of trait–outcome causality.

1. Effects of Exposure to Victim-Derogating Versus Victim-Enhancing Representations on Diffuse System Justification

In one experiment, we exposed people to victim-derogating and victim-enhancing representations under different circumstances and measured their subsequent degree of support for the societal status quo (Kay et al., 2005,

Study 2). Pretesting revealed that most people regard intelligence as causally related to economic outcomes such as wealth and poverty but as causally unrelated to physical attractiveness. Thus, study participants were exposed to one of four vignettes according to a 2 (victim-enhancing, complementary versus victim-derogating, noncomplementary representations) × 2 (trait causally relevant versus irrelevant to outcome) factorial design. For conditions in which a perceived causal link existed between trait (intelligence) and outcome (wealth/poverty), the complementary (and, in italics, the noncomplementary) passage read:

> Mary and Sarah both grew up in the Midwestern United States and now both live in Seattle. Mary is 34 and Sarah is 33. Mary and Sarah met in their teens, were good friends for almost ten years afterwards, but now because of their work schedules they have lost touch over the last few years. Mary is very bright but not very wealthy [*is both very bright and now very wealthy*]. Sarah, on the other hand, is not very smart at all, but is now very wealthy [*is not very wealthy at all, and is also much less intelligent than Mary*]. Because of these differences, Mary is always thought of as that women "who had an easy time getting good grades, but now has a hard time paying the bills" ["*who is both smart and rich*"] and Sarah is always thought of as the girl "who is not very smart but is very rich" ["*a hard time getting decent grades and now has a hard time paying the bills*"].

For conditions in which no perceived causal connection existed between the trait (intelligence) and outcome (attractive/unattractive), the complementary (and, in italics, the noncomplementary) passage began the same way and continued as follows:

> Mary, although not particularly bright, is very pretty [*is both very bright and very pretty*]. Sarah, on the other hand, is not generally considered to be very good-looking, but is without a question much more intelligent than Mary [*is not generally considered to be very good looking, and is also much less intelligent than Mary*]. Because of these differences, in college Mary was always thought of as that girl "who got lots of looks from the boys but no good grades from the professors" ["*who got lots of looks from the boys and lots of A's from the teachers*"] and Sarah was always thought of as the girl who had "an easy time getting an A but a hard time getting a date" ["*a hard time getting decent grades and dates*"].

Afterward, participants completed the diffuse system justification scale (see Table II). We hypothesized that when a perceived causal connection between trait and outcome existed, exposure to noncomplementary representations (derogating the "loser," lionizing the "winner") would lead to an increase in system justification. However, when no such causal connection was perceived, exposure to complementary, offsetting representations (elevating the "loser," downgrading the "winner") would lead to increased system justification.

These predictions were indeed supported by the results of our experiment (see Fig. 12). When intelligence was paired with economic outcomes, participants who were exposed to noncomplementary representations with victim-derogating consequences scored higher in terms of system justification than did participants who were exposed to complementary representations with victim-enhancing consequences. When intelligence was paired with physical attractiveness (that is, when no trait–outcome connection was assumed), however, participants who were exposed to complementary representations with victim-enhancing consequences scored higher in terms of system justification than did participants who were exposed to noncomplementary representations with victim-derogating consequences.

These data suggest that the system-justifying potential of complementary and noncomplementary representations depends on whether people perceive a causal connection between trait and outcome. Victim-blaming increases system justification only when there is an assumed link between trait and outcome (e.g., between a lack of intelligence and low income). Conversely, victim-enhancement increases system justification only when there is no
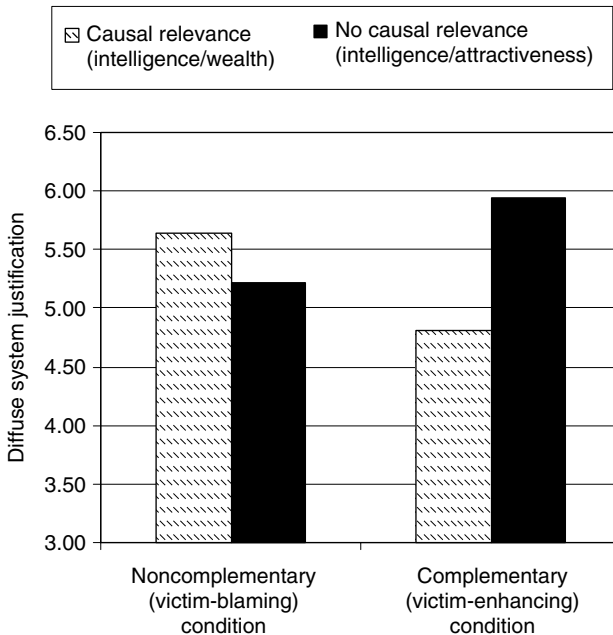

Fig. 12.   Effects of exposure to complementary and noncomplementary representations on system justification as a function of causal relevance. (Adapted from Study 2 in Kay et al., 2005.)

perceived link between trait and outcome (e.g., between degrees of intelligence and physical attractiveness). The notion that victim-blaming and victim-enhancement are alternate routes to system justification was further explored by Kay et al. (2005) using a system threat experimental paradigm.

2. Effects of System Threat on Victim-Derogation and Victim-Enhancement

We know from years of research that threatening the self-concept stimulates the need to engage in ego-defensive processing and affirming the integrity of the self-concept reduces ego-defensiveness (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Steele, 1988). Similarly, it seems that threatening the social system stimulates the need to engage in system-defensive processing and that affirming the integrity of the system reduces such defensiveness (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost et al., 2005). Both patterns are consistent with recent goal systems research demonstrating that attaining a desired end-state (e.g., high self-esteem, high system legitimacy) greatly diminishes the degree of motivated processing generally used to achieve that end-state (Forster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005; see also Jost, Pietrzak, et al., in press). Thus, to the extent that derogating victims on traits that are seen as causally related to status outcomes and enhancing victims on traits that are causally unrelated to outcomes both serve to justify the overarching social system, Kay et al. (2005) hypothesized that threatening the legitimacy of the system should increase both of these tendencies.

In two experiments, we employed a system-threat manipulation that was designed to increase the system justification motive (Kay et al., 2005, Studies 1a and b). Specifically, participants assigned to the high system threat condition read a newspaper article, attributed to a local journalist, which included the following passage:

> These days, many people in the United States feel disappointed with the nation's condition. Many citizens feel that the country has reached a low point in terms of social, economic, and political factors. People do not feel as safe and secure as they used to, and there is a sense of uncertainty regarding the country's future. It seems that many countries in the world are enjoying better social, economic, and political conditions than the U.S.

Participants assigned to the low system threat condition read a newspaper article that included the following passage instead:

> These days, despite the difficulties the nation is facing, many people in United States feel safer and more secure relative to the past. Many citizens feel that the country is relatively stable in terms of social, economic, and security factors. There is a sense of optimism regarding America's future and an understanding that this is the only place

where American people can feel secure. It seems that compared with many countries in the world the social, economic and political conditions in the U.S. are relatively good.

Participants were asked to read the passage as many times as necessary to become familiar with it, and they expected to answer questions about it later in the session. Afterward, they completed ratings of the powerless and the obese, so that we could measure their tendencies to derogate versus enhance these groups on traits that had been pretested as either causally relevant or irrelevant to power and obesity.

As hypothesized, system threat led people to exhibit increased: (1) victim-blaming on traits that were seen as causally related to status outcomes and (2) victim-enhancement on traits that were seen as causally unrelated to these outcomes (see Fig. 13A and B). That is, people who had read the system-threatening (versus system-affirming) newspaper article were more likely to derogate ''losers'' on traits viewed as casually relevant to their plight, so that the powerless were judged to be less intelligent and the obese were judged to be lazier. They also more likely to elevate these same ''losers'' on traits that were viewed as causally irrelevant to their plight, so that the powerless were judged as happier and the obese as more sociable. A noteworthy feature of these experiments is that all participants made ratings on causally relevant and causally irrelevant traits, which means that high (versus low) system threat led people to engage *simultaneously* in both complementary and noncomplementary means of restoring legitimacy to the system (see also Napier et al., 2006).

B. POLITICAL ORIENTATION

There is good reason to believe that the system-justifying potential of complementary and noncomplementary representations will vary as a function of other variables in addition to perceptions of causality. A likely candidate is political orientation. Studies show that conservatives tend to explain social problems, in areas such as crime, poverty, and obesity, using models of personal responsibility and control (Carroll, Perkowitz, Lurigio, & Weaver, 1987; Crandall, 1994; Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002; Sniderman, Hagen, Tetlock, & Brady, 1986). With respect to poverty, for instance, conservatives are more likely than liberals to make internal attributions, seeing it as caused by a lack of intelligence or competence (Pellegrini, Queirolo, Monarrez, & Valenzuela, 1997; Skitka et al., 2002; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that they will rely more heavily on the noncomplementary, victim-blaming route to system justification.
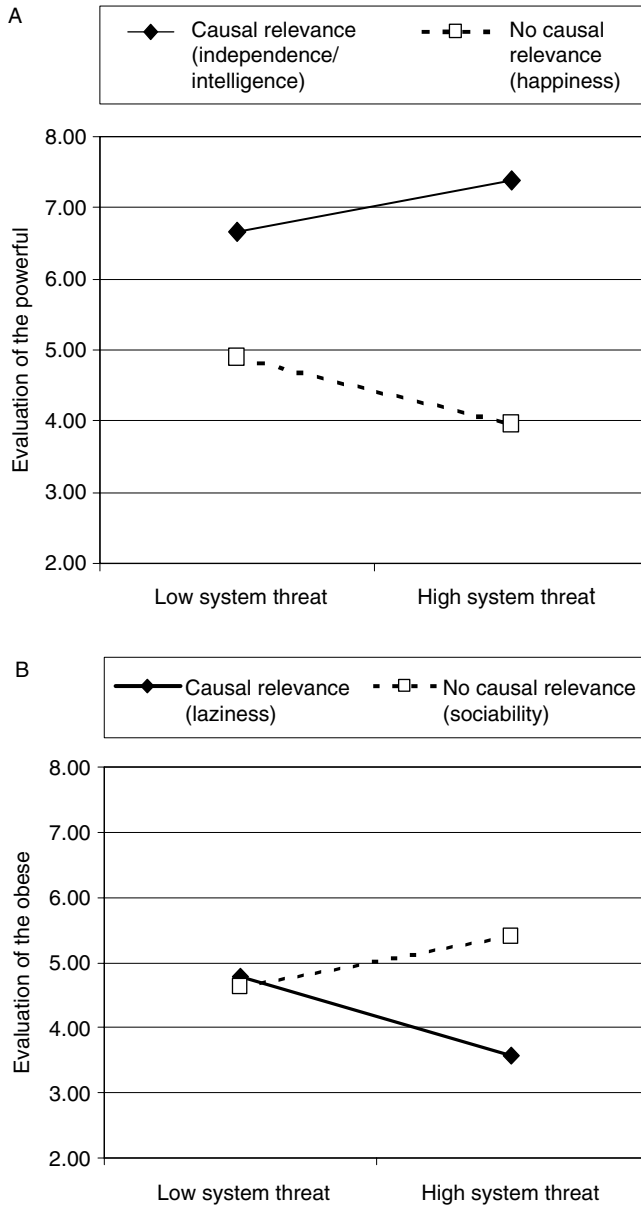
A

B

Fig. 13.   (A) Effects of system threat manipulation on ratings of the powerful for causally relevant and irrelevant traits. (Adapted from Study 1a in Kay et al., 2005.) Note: Ratings were made on nine-point scales, with higher numbers indicating that powerful people were judged to be more independent, intelligent, and happy (and powerless people judged to be less independent,

Liberals, on the other hand, may be more likely to pursue the complementary, victim-enhancing route. For example, liberals are more likely than conservatives to acknowledge the role of contextual factors in creating and sustaining poverty (Bryan, Dweck, Ross, Kay, & Mislavksy, 2006; Skitka et al., 2002), they are less likely to believe that people have control over their circumstances (Zucker & Weiner, 1993), and they are more likely to endorse structural remedies (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Glaser, 2005). For all of these reasons, liberals may eschew victim-blaming responses and instead rely on other ''strategies'' to maintain their faith in the legitimacy of the social system. To the extent that they are less likely to accept deservingness-based justifications for economic inequality, they may be more accepting of complementary, victim-enhancing justifications (see also Feather, 1999).

We investigated the possibility that political orientation would moderate the effects of exposure to complementary (i.e., victim-enhancing) and noncomplementary (i.e., victim-derogating) stereotypes on perceptions of system legitimacy in two studies conducted in Poland. In the first of these (Kay et al., 2007a, Study 1), participants were exposed to either a complementary representation in which a poor friend was described as happier than his rich friend or a noncomplementary representation in which a rich friend was described as happier than his poor friend. [These materials were modified slightly from those used in studies by Kay and Jost (2003); they were translated into Polish by Szymon Czaplinski.] This manipulation was crossed with self-identified political orientation (leftists and centrists versus rightists), creating a 2 × 2 factorial design in which the two ideological groups were exposed to either complementary or noncomplementary representations of the rich and poor. Afterward, all participants completed a Polish version of the same diffuse system justification scale used in prior studies.

As can be seen in Fig. 14, the complementary (victim-enhancing) and noncomplementary (victim-derogating) exemplars had opposite effects on explicit system justification for leftists/centrists and rightists. For leftists and centrists, system justification was significantly higher following exposure to the complementary, ''poor but happy/rich but miserable'' vignette compared to the noncomplementary condition. For rightists, by contrast, system

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intelligent, and happy). (B) Effects of system threat manipulation on ratings of the obese for causally relevant and irrelevant traits. (Adapted from Study 1b in Kay et al., 2005.) Note: Ratings were made on nine-point scales, with higher numbers indicating that overweight people were judged to be more sociable and less lazy (and normal weight people judged to be less sociable and more lazy).
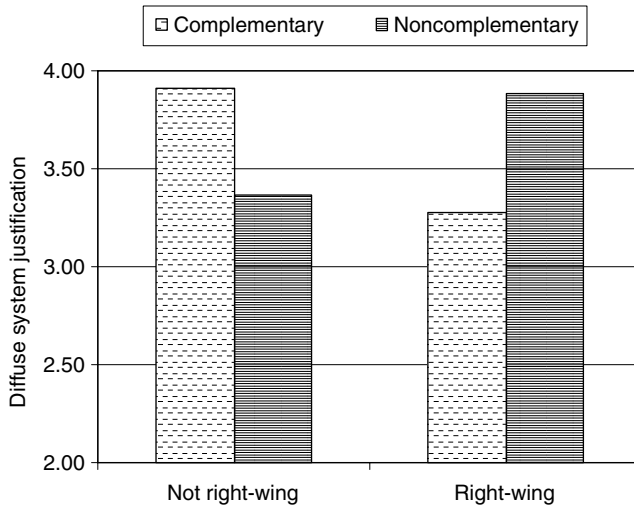
Fig. 14.   Effects of exposure to complementary and noncomplementary representations on system justification as a function of political ideology. (Adapted from Kay et al., 2007a.)

justification was higher following exposure to the noncomplementary, ''poor and unhappy/rich and happy'' vignettes.

In a follow-up experiment, we substituted honesty for happiness and examined the effects of the ''poor but honest/rich but dishonest'' (complementary) and ''poor and dishonest/rich and honest'' (noncomplementary) stereotypes on system justification (Kay et al., 2007a, Study 2). As before, results generally supported our hypothesis. For right-wingers, the noncomplementary (victim-derogating) representation proved more effective at justifying the system than did the complementary (victim-enhancing) representation. For leftists/centrists, although the means were in the predicted direction (i.e., system justification was higher following exposure to the complementary representation), the difference did not reach statistical significance.

Thus, self-reported political orientation does appear to moderate the system-justifying potential of complementary, victim-enhancing and noncomplementary, victim-derogating representations of the rich and poor. Whereas complementary, victim-enhancing stereotypes proved most effective at justifying the system for liberal and moderate participants, these same stereotypes proved least effective for conservative participants. As hypothesized, conservatives scored consistently higher on system justification following exposure to noncomplementary, victim-blaming stereotypical representations.

C. PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC

The PWE is one of several system-justifying belief systems, insofar as it fosters personal commitment to the capitalist system (see also Jost & Hunyady, 2005). It refers to the assumption that hard work is a moral prerequisite and that it will be rewarded in the long run, in heaven if not on earth (Jones, 1997; Mirels & Garrett, 1971). Studies show that people who score high on individual difference measures of the PWE are more likely to exhibit victim-blaming tendencies and to believe that the lack of success is due to laziness and poor self-control (Biernat, Vescio, & Theno, 1996; Crandall, 1994; Katz & Hass, 1988; Quinn & Crocker, 1999). Thus, people who embrace the PWE, like political conservatives, may be more prone to rationalizing economic inequality through the noncomplementary, victim-derogating route than the complementary, victim-enhancing route.

In the context of "poor but happy" complementary stereotypes, this is indeed what we observed (Kay & Jost, 2003, Study 3). Whereas participants who scored low on Quinn and Crocker's (1999) version of the PWE scale viewed the system as more legitimate following exposure to complementary (versus noncomplementary) representations, participants who scored high on the PWE scale were unmoved by the complementary stereotypes (see Fig. 15). (There was also a tendency for people who scored high on the PWE scale to endorse the system justification items more strongly.) Thus, at least
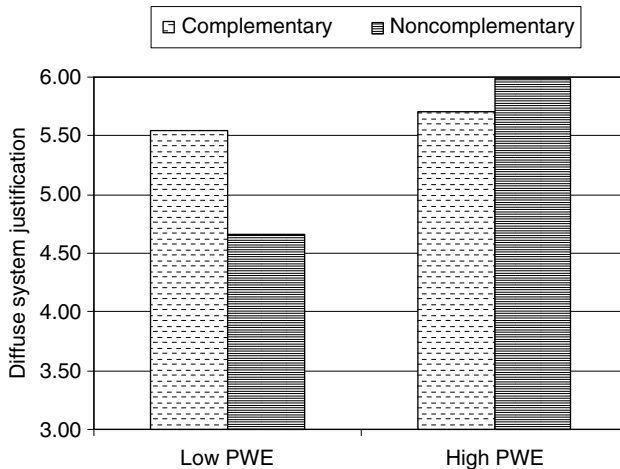

Fig. 15. Effects of PWE of exposure to complementary versus noncomplementary representations on system justification as a function of PWE. (Adapted from Study 3 in Kay & Jost, 2003.)

in the context of the poor but happy complementary stereotype, the effects of PWE are similar to those of political conservatism.

We also examined the moderating role of PWE in the context of the ''poor but honest'' complementary stereotype, but in this case the pattern did not replicate (Kay & Jost, 2003, Study 4). Rather, low PWE scorers showed no appreciable difference between complementary and noncomplementary conditions, whereas high PWE scorers were more supportive of the societal status quo following exposure to ''poor but honest'' and ''rich but dishonest'' complementary representations. Thus, it appears that low PWE scorers are more affected by ''poor but happy'' stereotype exemplars, whereas high PWE scorers are more affected by ''poor but honest'' stereotype exemplars. This is broadly consistent with some accounts of the ideological function of the PWE, which is said to provide ''a moral justification for the accumulation of wealth'' but also to encourage people to ''eschew immoderate consumption and participation in worldly pleasures'' (Mirels & Garrett, 1971, p. 40).

V. Implicit Complementary Versus Noncomplementary Stereotypical Associations

There are questions concerning the overall prevalence of complementary versus noncomplementary stereotypical representations that we have not yet addressed. In the case of gender stereotypes, it certainly does seem that complementary stereotypes of women as communal but not agentic and men as agentic but not communal reflect cultural ''default'' stereotypes (Eagly et al., 1991; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jost & Kay, 2005). However, the most prevalent economic and racial stereotypes may well be noncomplementary (and victim-derogating) rather than complementary (and victim-enhancing). A pilot study by Kay and Jost (2003) found, for instance, that at an explicit, conscious level participants believed that poor people are more honest than rich people (a complementary stereotype) but also less happy than rich people (a noncomplementary stereotype). Stereotypes of African-Americans and other racial minority groups do seem to possess some favorable characteristics (e.g., athletic, religious, musical), but also a preponderance of unfavorable characteristics (e.g., aggressive, uneducated, loud, hostile, and so on; see Devine, 1989; Judd, Park, Ryan, Braver, & Kraus, 1995; Katz & Hass, 1988; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001). The fact that people possess implicit, automatic stereotypes raises another interesting question concerning the extent to which complementary stereotypes have permeated our unconscious (as well as conscious) minds. Do implicit associations primarily reflect noncomplementary (victim-derogating) or complementary (victim-enhancing) stereotypes?

A. IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNING RICH/POOR AND HAPPINESS/HONESTY

Issues of implicit complementary versus noncomplementary stereotyping were addressed by Sherman, Petrocelli, Johnson, and Jost (2005). Specifically, they conducted IAT experiments in order to gauge the extent to which "poor but happy" and "poor but honest" stereotypical associations are held unconsciously. They also examined ideological and other correlates of complementary versus noncomplementary associations, which allows us to better understand explicit moderators of the associations held at an implicit level of awareness (see also Jost et al., 2004).

   In one set of experiments, Sherman et al. (2005) constructed IATs to measure both rich/poor + happy/unhappy and rich/poor + honest/dishonest associations ($N = 56$ Indiana University students). There were eight stimuli terms related to the concept "rich" (rich, wealthy, affluent, well-off, prosperous, fortune, millionaire, and well-to-do) and eight terms related to "poor" (poor, underprivileged, deprived, needy, broke, poverty, bankrupt, and penniless). There were also eight stimuli terms related to the concept "happy" (happy, content, cheerful, pleased, joyful, delighted, elated, and blissful) and eight terms related to "unhappy" (unhappy, discontented, gloomy, sad, depressed, miserable, despondent, and cheerless). Finally, there were eight stimuli terms related to the concept "honest" (honest, truthful, sincere, candid, genuine, trustworthy, frank, and honorable) and eight terms related to "dishonest" (dishonest, deceitful, liar, untruthful, fraudulent, ingenuine, cheater, and corrupt).

   Results indicated that participants did indeed respond more quickly to complementary pairings of rich/dishonest and poor/honest ($M = 951.78$ ms) than to their noncomplementary counterparts ($M = 1542.07$ ms; $t[25] = 9.34$, $p < .001$). With regard to happiness, however, the opposite pattern was the dominant one: participants were significantly faster at pairing the noncomplementary rich/happy and poor/unhappy concepts together ($M = 865.36$ ms) than the complementary rich/unhappy and poor/happy concepts ($M = 1478.66$ ms; $t[29] = -11.16$, $p < .001$). These findings mirror the results of Kay and Jost's (2003) pilot test concerning explicit attitudes. At both implicit and explicit levels of awareness, people appear to endorse the "poor are more honest than rich" complementary stereotype, but they also endorse the (noncomplementary) notion that the "rich are happier than the poor." It is worth pointing out that the latter association, at least, is consistent with the available evidence concerning the actual relationship between income and subjective well-being (Diener & Diener, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

   In a follow-up set of experiments ($N = 251$ Indiana University students), Sherman et al. (2005) employed IATs in which the first names of individuals

were used as stimuli for the categories of rich and poor (e.g., Winthrop, Carlton, Trevor, Gavin, and Parker versus Billy Bob, Spike, Freddy, Bubba, and Darryl). Under these conditions, the tendency for people to see the poor as more honest disappeared. In fact, participants were faster to associate "poor" names with dishonesty and "rich" names with honesty ($M = 698.55$ ms) than the reverse ($M = 831.67$ ms; $t[125] = -9.21$, $p < .001$). They were also faster to associate these same "poor" names with unhappiness and "rich" names with happiness ($M = 680.13$ ms) than vice versa ($M = 844.79$ ms; $t[124] = -10.11$, $p < .001$).

These results, taken as a whole, are consistent with the notion that people have different reactions toward general (group) and specific (individual) cases. That is, different cognitive processes seem to operate when people encounter and store general versus specific case information (Sherman, Beike, & Ryalls, 1999). This suggests that, although the poor in general might be stereotyped at both implicit and explicit levels of awareness as more honest than the rich, any individual poor person may not be seen as more honest than others. Once personalization enters, it appears that individual targets may be evaluated quite differently than the group as a whole (Jenni & Loewenstein, 1997; Small & Loewenstein, 2003).

B. IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNING WHITE/BLACK AND HAPPINESS/HONESTY

Sherman et al. (2005) also conducted a series of race-based IATs ($N = 94$ Indiana University students) in which first names that had been pretested as either stereotypical of Black males (Jamal, Theo, Darnell, Leroy, Tyrone, Lavon, Marcellus, and Wardell) or White males (Adam, Chip, Josh, Matthew, Brad, Greg, Paul, and Todd) were paired with the same honest/dishonest and happy/unhappy stimuli used in the earlier study. Under these circumstances, it appears that the noncomplementary, victim-derogating associations dominated any trace of complementary, victim-enhancing associations. That is, participants were faster at pairing Black names with dishonesty and White names with honesty ($M = 822$ ms) than the reverse pairing ($M = 1231$ ms; $t[30] = -7.31$, $p < .001$), and they were faster at pairing Black names with unhappiness and White names with happiness ($M = 920.64$ ms) than the reverse ($M = 1122.42$ ms; $t[30] = 6.57$, $p < .001$). An additional IAT revealed that participants were also more likely to associate Black names with "poor" words and White names with "rich" words ($M = 852.89$ ms) than vice versa ($M = 988.67$ ms, $t[31] = 5.04$, $p < .001$).

Two more race-based IAT experiments conducted by Mandisodza, Jost, and Kenyon (2006)—in which photographs of Blacks and Whites were

paired with words related to honesty/dishonesty and happiness/unhappiness—revealed the same overall pattern of results as in the Sherman et al. (2005) study using Black and White names. In one study, participants ($N = 64$ NYU undergraduates) were faster at pairing photographs of Black individuals with negative characteristics (i.e., dishonesty and unhappiness) and photographs of White individuals with positive characteristics ($M = 844.87$ ms) than the reverse ($M = 986.92$ ms; $F[1, 63] = 54.62$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, participants who scored higher on the diffuse system justification scale (see items in Table II) were more likely to implicitly associate Blacks with dishonesty and Whites with honesty ($r = .34$, $p < .001$) and to associate Blacks with unhappiness and Whites with happiness ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the dominant (noncomplementary) associations were themselves system-justifying in the racial context.

In a second study involving 88 NYU undergraduates, we manipulated whether the photographs of Black and White targets were of individuals or groups. Consistent with the notion that people treat general (group) and specific (individual) cases differently (Sherman et al., 1999), reaction times to the two types of stimuli differed. Specifically, participants were faster to ascribe stereotypical associations (whether complementary or noncomplementary) to individuals than groups, $F(1, 87) = 6.29$, $p < .05$. Nevertheless, collapsing across individual and group targets, participants were again faster at pairing Black targets with negative traits (dishonesty and unhappiness) and White targets with positive traits ($M = 828.71$ ms) than the reverse ($M = 990.07$ ms; $F[1, 87] = 113.02$, $p < .001$). The tendency to associate Black targets with dishonesty and White targets with honesty was again correlated with participants' scores on the diffuse system justification scale ($r[63] = .35$, $p < .01$) and also with their scores on Jost and Thompson's (2000) economic system justification scale ($r[63] = .33$, $p < .01$). However, implicit racial associations pertaining to happiness were not consistently correlated with system justification scores in this study.

Thus, in the case of implicit racial stereotypes, noncomplementary (or victim-derogating) associations clearly trump complementary (or victim-enhancing) associations, regardless of whether target race is conveyed through the use of names or photographs and whether members are depicted as individuals or as a group. The preponderance of correlational evidence also suggests that these more common victim-derogating associations in the racial context are positively (rather than negatively) related to system-justifying tendencies. It may be that in the case of stereotypes about Blacks, characteristics other than honesty and happiness, such as athleticism, are more likely to be used in a victim-enhancing manner to create the "illusion of equality," thereby contributing to the perceived legitimacy of the societal status quo.

VI. Concluding Remarks: SJT and Stereotyping as Rationalization

The program of research that we have summarized in this chapter leads to the conclusion that, as previous theorists have suggested (Bem & Bem, 1970; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lane, 1962; Lerner, 1980), complementary stereotypes do indeed help people to rationalize substantial social and economic inequalities in society. Presumably, this is because such stereotypes serve to create an ''egalitarian veneer,'' allowing people to tolerate disparities that might otherwise provide strong grounds for complaint or dissatisfaction with the status quo. In several studies, we have provided strong and consistent experimental evidence that exposing people to complementary (or compensatory) gender and status stereotypes increases their faith in the fairness and legitimacy of the overarching social system (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2005). Furthermore, we have shown that when the legitimacy or stability of the system is threatened, people often respond by using complementary stereotypes to bolster the system (Jost et al., 2005; Kay et al., 2005).

Although we have focused on stereotyping in this chapter, we know that people engage in rationalization and ''cognitive restructuring'' much more generally (Festinger, 1957; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1978). The kinds of system-justifying biases we have identified with respect to complementary stereotypes are probably also at work in many other instances of cognition, perception, and memory (see also Haines & Jost, 2000). For instance, we have begun to find that people seem to rationalize everyday, self-relevant threats to the justice motive, such as the lucky and unlucky breaks people experience in their everyday lives (e.g., winning or losing a coin flip). In one such study, participants who experienced a good break were subsequently more likely to call to mind previous bad breaks, and participants who were faced with a bad break were more likely to recall good breaks in the past, suggesting that they were motivated to compensate for the fickleness of fate by ''balancing out'' good and bad breaks over time (Kay et al., 2007a).

The system-justifying potential of complementary (or compensatory) beliefs about the social world may also affect the dynamics of interpersonal interaction and attraction. For example, Lau, Kay, and Spencer (2007) found that an experimental manipulation of high system threat, which presumably increases the strength of system justification motives, led men to express increased attraction to women who embraced romantic ideals associated with benevolent sexism (e.g., women who described themselves as delicate, fragile, old-fashioned, and in need of male protection). This suggests that psychological needs to satisfy system justification goals could influence a much wider range of social outcomes, including interpersonal

attraction, impression management strategies, and the choice of specific types of interaction partners.

It is tempting to conclude that Panglossian forms of rationalization, which help us to maintain a favorable, even idealized image of the status quo, are innocuous and even propitious. Perhaps we should be thankful for the gift of system justification. As Gilbert (2005) wrote in an Op-Ed piece that appeared in the *New York Times*:

> Research suggests that human beings have a remarkable ability to manufacture happiness . . .. Our ability to spin gold from the dross of our experience means that we often find ourselves flourishing in circumstances we once dreaded. We fear divorces, natural disasters and financial hardships until they happen, at which point we recognize them as opportunities to reinvent ourselves, to bond with our neighbors and to transcend the spiritual poverty of material excess. When the going gets tough, the mind gets going on a hunt for silver linings, and most linings are sufficiently variegated to reward the mind's quest.

Viewed from this perspective, the human capacity to rationalize suffering, exploitation, injustice, and inequality seems like a godsend. But, as Gilbert goes on to note, there is a price, namely complacency about change:

> Many of the heroes and redeemers we most admire were unhappy people who found it impossible to change how they felt about the world—which left them no choice but to change the world itself. Outrage, anger, fear and frustration are unpleasant emotions that most of us vanquish through artful reasoning; but unpleasant emotions can also be spurs to action—clamorous urges that we may silence at our peril.

In our research, we have found that many system-justifying beliefs and ideologies do indeed serve the palliative function of reducing distress and fostering positive affect and general satisfaction (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003). As Gilbert (2005) suggests, however, satisfaction with the status quo breeds inaction. Kay, Gaucher, Peach, Spencer, and Zanna (2007b) have found that the system justification motive leads people to reinterpret what "is" (i.e., descriptive norms) as what "should be" (i.e., injunctive norms). For example, learning that the Canadian House of Commons is composed of people in the top 90th percentile of income, or that university professors are typically male, causes participants in experimental settings to actively argue that politicians *should* be wealthier than the rest, and university professors *should* be male (an effect that becomes more pronounced under conditions of high system threat). This system-justifying bias has obvious consequences for motivations to redress social inequality. Furthermore, we find that system justification undermines moral outrage, which is an important motivator of egalitarian reform and efforts to help the disadvantaged (see Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007).

Thus, to the extent that people embrace complementary stereotypes and other appealing notions that allow them to continue believing that they live ''in the best of all possible worlds,'' they will undoubtedly feel better about the inequalities and even injustices all around them, but they will also be much less likely to do anything to change them.

Acknowledgments

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