
CURRENT RESEARCH IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~grpproc/crisp/crisp.html>

Volume 13, No. 9

Submitted: August 27, 2007

First Revision: December 4, 2007

Accepted: December 5, 2007

Published: December 16, 2007

MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES: IS STEREOTYPE ENDORSEMENT RELATED TO SUPPORT FOR SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION?

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ABSTRACT

According to the system justification theory (SJT), stereotypes can be conceptualized as tools of system justification. Because relatively few studies have directly examined this assumption, we conducted two studies in which the relationships between stereotype endorsement of various disadvantaged groups (i.e. women, Arabs, the poor and Gypsies) and system justification ideologies were explored (N = 540). Interestingly, results revealed that stereotype endorsement and system justification ideologies were not significantly related. Only negative stereotypes and prejudices were related to support for the system, not positive stereotypes. Finally, results were not consistent with the complementary hypothesis. Using various measures, whatever their level of positive stereotype endorsement, those who hold negative attitudes were also those who justified the system.

INTRODUCTION

Intergroup relations are profoundly influenced by the existence of a hierarchical system in which the distribution of social, economic and political resources are made in a disproportionate manner in favor of dominant individuals or groups (Sidanius, Liu, Shaw, & Pratto, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991). Numerous philosophers and researchers in the political and social sciences are interested in the processes which enable the “powerful” to maintain the privileges which are associated with it and the status quo (Aron, 1965/1998; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Foucault, 1976/2001; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Marx & Engels, 1846/1970; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). All suggest that the stability and preservation of social systems are facilitated by a certain ideological consensus regarding the social positions held by each individual on the hierarchical continuum. Therefore, each society develops a set of myths or ideas which permits it to explain and legitimize unequal and arbitrary relations between the dominant and subordinate groups (see Zelditch, 2001 for a review of the legitimation theories). From this point of view, the principal aim of this paper is to examine the degree to which stereotypes are tools of system justification and their role in maintaining social inequalities.

Legitimizing Ideologies and System Justification

According to the theory of social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, Van Laar, & Levin, 2004) and the system justification theory (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2002), maintenance of the hierarchical equilibrium would result from justifying ideologies which are shared by both the dominant and the dominated groups. Sidanius & Pratto (1999) define these ideologies as “values, attitudes, beliefs, causal attributions and ideas, which provide an intellectual and moral justification for social practices” (p. 104). The social, economic and political arrangements would thus be reinforced and perceived as being normal and legitimate. Over the years, numerous ideologies have been identified as being related to the individual’s need to preserve the status quo in works on both social dominance (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, Malle, & 1994; Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Pratto, 2001) and system justification (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003; Jost & Thompson, 2000). Pratto et al. (1994), for example, have shown that the more individuals were favorable to hierarchical relations and dominant relationships between groups, the more they adhered to a set of ideologies which legitimizes the social hierarchy. Racism, sexism and nationalism are among these ideologies, as well as notions of individual responsibility such as meritocracy and internal attributions of poverty. Similar data has been observed by Jost and his colleagues (i.e., Jost & Hunyady, 2002); the individuals who tend to rationalize the status quo endorse ideas which permit them to offer explanations for the unequal arrangements of society at the same time. Among these justification ideologies are notions of a belief in a just world, conservative politics, meritocracy and Protestant ethics. All these ideologies or doctrines are generally positively related to each other, which suggests that they have a common ideological function of maintaining the status quo by providing individuals with the means for justifying the social positions held by each one (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003; Jost & Thompson, 2000). Several research studies have consistently suggested that prejudices towards subordinated groups favor system justification (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998; Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov & Duarte, 2003; Richeson & Ambady, 2003; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Crandall

(1994), for example, has demonstrated that prejudice towards fat people is strongly related to various justifying ideologies such as conservative ideologies, belief in a just world and right-wing authoritarianism.

Are Stereotypes Tools of System Justification?

If the prejudices towards the disadvantaged or dominated groups can be conceptualized to a certain extent as ideologies to maintain the status quo, does this hold true for stereotypes? Stereotypes are defined as widespread beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviors of members of a particular social group (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). While prejudices have an affective component, stereotypes appear to be more cognitively driven (i.e., Guimond, 2004). According to Jost & Banaji (1994), stereotypes may serve three distinct justifying functions: ego-justification, group-justification and system-justification. Ego-justification function refers to the notion that stereotype emerges in order to rationalize the individual's own interests, actions and psychological needs (i.e., Katz & Braly, 1935; Fein & Spencer, 1997). The group-justification view proposes that stereotyping serves to develop and maintain favorable images of one's own group and to defend and justify the actions of fellow ingroup members (i.e., Hogg & Abrams, 1988, Tajfel, 1981). Moreover, Jost and Banaji (1994) argued that in addition to serving ego-justifying and group-justifying functions, both explicit and implicit forms of social stereotypes also serve an ideological function of system justification.

Because of their contents, stereotypes allow one to explain and rationalize social arrangements by making them legitimate and natural. The traits or characteristics which are associated with each group, will then permit them to justify the distribution of social roles as well as inequalities in social and economic power which result from them. Their reasoning is based on a series of research which suggests that each individual will develop his self-image and that of others based on the existing social arrangements (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Skrypnek & Snyder, 1982). Eagly and Steffen (1984), for example, suggest that individuals directly infer stereotyped attributes based on information about the status that they have in society. In their study, these authors propose qualifying the stereotypical attributes associated with women as "communal" (i.e. warm, helpful, nurturing, etc.) and those associated with men as "agentic" (i.e. competent, ambitious, self-assertive, etc.). If these traits are attributed differentially to men and women, it is due to the social roles that the two sexes most often have in our societies. The "communal" trait of the feminine stereotype would be largely conditioned by the fact that one has more occasions to observe women as homemakers, while men are seen more often in roles of workers or managers. For Jost and Banaji (1994), the stereotyping in the experiment by Eagly and Steffen (1984) is the result of efforts to explain and justify differences concerning the manner in which social roles are distributed.

The works of Hoffman and Hurst (1990) also propose that the function of stereotypes is to furnish explanations regarding the distribution of roles according to gender. In this study, the participants had to imagine two fictional groups of extraterrestrials. They were informed that the two groups were distinguished by their activities: the Ackemians worked while the Orinthians were in charge of the education of children. The subjects were then asked to think about the reasons for which each group had a particular role. The results indicated that the group which looked after children was described as patient, understanding and kind, while the group

“workers” was described as more logical and determined. This data is consistent with the assumption of system justification; stereotypes would emerge in order to explain social arrangements and would thereby participate in maintaining the status quo. It must be pointed out that both positive and negative stereotypes may serve an ideological system-justifying function. Contrary to both ego-justification and group-justification, SJT suggests that stereotypes are not necessarily negative for disadvantaged groups and positive for dominant ones, the opposite can be observed when the stereotype of the dominated group justifies its disadvantages (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994; Jost & Banaji, 1994).

Even if these works are compatible with the system justification theory, they do not permit one to conclude in a definitive manner that stereotypes in general are related to the desire to maintain the status quo. Moreover, while recent works by Kay and Jost provide support for the justifying function of implicit and subtle forms of stereotyping (Kay & Jost, 2003; Jost & Kay, 2005), the justifying function of conscious stereotype endorsement still remains largely unclear.

Unexpectedly, in a recent paper Jost and Kay (2005) found no significant correlations between stereotype endorsement and system justification. They concluded: “it is possible that such effects would emerge with larger sample sizes and larger pools of items” (p. 507). Similarly, Dambrun, Guimond and Duarte (2002) found a non-significant relationship between the endorsement of ethnic stereotype and social dominance orientation, hence an indirect measure of system justification (Jost & Thompson, 2000). However, because prior research was relatively limited, it still remains very difficult to draw definitive conclusions concerning the relationship between stereotype endorsement and system justifying ideologies; these studies were based on relatively small samples and they used a single target outgroup.

In keeping with this point of view, we carried out a series of correlation studies in which the level of stereotype endorsement across four disadvantaged social groups was measured (i.e. the stereotype of women, Gypsies, North Africans and the poor). The subjects here were asked to answer a measure of economic system justification (Jost & Thompson, 2000), a measure of social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and a measure of prejudice towards the target group (i.e. women, North Africans, the poor and Gypsies). Our first aim is then to examine the extent to which positive and negative stereotypes (study 1) and agentic and communal stereotypes (study 2) are related in order to perceive social and economic differences as being legitimate and just.

Kay and Jost (2003; see also Jost & Kay, 2005) have recently formulated the stereotype complementary hypothesis according to which the need to maintain the status quo and to justify the system increases when individuals are exposed to complementary stereotypes (i.e. benevolent and hostile sexism, positive and negative stereotypes). Kay and Jost (2003) show, for example, that the participants who were exposed to complementary stereotype (i.e. “poor but happy”, “poor but honest”, “rich but miserable” and “rich but dishonest”) were more inclined to perceive the system as legitimate and stable. Similar results were also obtained by Jost and Kay (2005); it was demonstrated that exposure to complementary gender stereotypes (i.e. communal and agentic or benevolent and hostile sexism) leads women to score higher on both gender-specific and more general forms of system justification. The results of these works are based on the fact that individuals can be unconsciously affected by stereotypes (Devine, 1989) and produce a set of ideas or behaviors which matches the stereotypes to which they are exposed (Bargh, Chen &

Burrows, 1996; Wheeler & Petty, 2001). Consequently, if it appears that the activation of complementary stereotypes is a favorable factor in maintaining the status quo, there is nothing which permits one to conclude that endorsement of complementary stereotypes (i.e. “nice but incompetent”), and not only activation, is a factor in maintaining the status quo. However, as we have previously seen, the system justification theory originally seemed to propose that positive and negative stereotypes combine fittingly to justify and legitimize anti-egalitarian social arrangements. From this point of view, our second aim is to examine the extent to which endorsement of complementary stereotypes is related to the need to justify the system and the existing social inequalities. According to the complementary hypothesis, we should observe that the subjects who endorse both negative and positive stereotypes towards women, Gypsies, North Africans or the poor are those who justify the system the most.

METHOD - STUDY 1

Participants

258 first year psychology students at the University of Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand participated in this study. The average age of the participants is 18.9 years.

Procedure

The participants were recruited at the beginning of a class. A questionnaire presented as a completely anonymous opinion survey was distributed to the students. The professor requested the students to remain silent and to fill out the questionnaire individually. Actually, three different questionnaires were distributed in the lecture hall. Their format was identical but the statements related to the social groups varied. Three questionnaires aiming at three distinct target groups were constructed: target “women” ($N = 88$), target “Arab” ($N = 84$) and target “Gypsies” ($N = 86$).

Questionnaire

Each questionnaire contained four principal measures: a measure of stereotyping, a system justification scale, a social dominance orientation scale and a measure of prejudices.

Economic System Justification

Our 3 questionnaires included a measure of economic system justification as developed by Jost and Thompson (2000). The subjects had to indicate their degree of agreement to a selection of 12 items from the original scale (i.e. “The differences in wealth between the social classes are justified”) on a 7-point scale going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A high score on the scale indicates that the subjects perceive economic inequalities between dominant and dominated groups as being justified. The analyses of reliability for this scale are identical for each questionnaire and indicate when an item is deviant (i.e. “There are no inherent differences between the rich and the poor, it is simply a question of the circumstances in which one is born”). Indeed, once this item is withdrawn from the analyses, the Cronbach alpha goes from .59 to .65. Consequently, this item was dropped from the analyses.

Social Dominance Orientation

A version of 10 items from the SDO scale (Pratto & al, 1994, $\alpha = .79$ for the 3 questionnaires) was used for each questionnaire. This scale was made up of 6 items which measured opposition to equality and 4 items which measured dominance based on the groups. A high score on a 7-point scale going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) indicates a favorable attitude towards existing hierarchical relations between the dominant and dominated groups.

Stereotype Endorsement

The subjects were asked to indicate if the proposed adjective is representative of the target category on a 7-point scale going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for each of the target groups (i.e. women, Arabs and Gypsies). A series of 10 stereotypical adjectives (five positive and five negative) was presented (the presentation order of the adjectives was done randomly). All of the adjectives used in this study were chosen beforehand on the basis of several pre-tests. The adjectives used for the target group “women” were: sensitive, sincere, considerate, creative, cheerful (positive traits; $\alpha = .71$) and capricious, timid, talkative, dependent, emotional (negative traits; $\alpha = .56$). The traits used for the target group “North Africans” were: family centered, frank, helpful, inventive, warm (positive traits; $\alpha = .71$) and aggressive, restless, threatening, insolent, violent (negative traits; $\alpha = .86$). Finally, the 10 attributes for “Gypsies” were: free, musical, helpful, inventive, revelers (positive traits; $\alpha = .63$) and thievish, dirty, threatening, dishonest, violent (negative traits; $\alpha = .90$).

Prejudice

We used 3 different scales of prejudice in order to obtain the measure of prejudice specific to the target groups studied. A measure of hostile sexism with 8 items (Glick & Fiske, 1996, $\alpha = .84$) was used for the group “women” (i.e. “Women exaggerate the problems that they encounter at work”). The questionnaire for the North Africans included a measure of subtle prejudice towards Arabs (8 items; Dambrun, 2007; $\alpha = .73$; i.e. “The religious practices of North Africans are not in keeping with French values”). Finally, for the group “Gypsies”, we created a specific scale for the needs of the study. This measure contained 8 items (4 positive and 4 negative, see Appendix A). The Cronbach alpha for these 8 items is satisfactory ($\alpha = .86$). The subjects noted their answers on a 7-point scale going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for each of these measures. A high score for these scales indicates a high level of prejudice.

RESULTS - STUDY 1

Correlations between System Justification Ideologies, Stereotypes and Prejudices

To examine the relationship between system justification ideologies (i.e. system justification and social dominance orientation), stereotypes and prejudices, we calculated the correlations between these variables (see Table 1). Using the three distinct target groups (i.e. Arabs, women and Gypsies), we found low support for the assumption that stereotypes are positively and significantly related to support for system justification. With the exception of the target group “Arabs”, the correlations between system justification ideologies and stereotypes were not significant.

Interestingly, the decomposition of stereotypes on the basis of their valence (i.e. positive vs. negative) revealed that the two components were related differently to system justification ideologies. While positive stereotypes were unrelated or *negatively* related to system justification ideologies (r ranged from -.28 to -.01), negative stereotypes were modestly but significantly and positively related to system justification ideologies in two cases (i.e. Arabs and women). The more the participants displayed negative stereotypes towards Arabs or women, the more they supported the system (r ranged from .06 to .27). We consistently found significant relations between prejudices and system justification ideologies (r ranged from .21 to .35). Again, the more the participants were prejudiced towards the target groups, the more they justified the system.

Table 1: Correlations between System Justification Ideologies, Stereotype & Prejudice (Study 1)

	Arabs (Sample 1, n = 84)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1- System justification	-				
2- SDO	.64***	-			
3- Stereotype	.26*	.17	-		
4- Positive stereotype	-.01	-.10	.30**	-	
5- Negative stereotype	.24*	.23*	.70***	-.47***	-
6- Prejudice	.27*	.26*	.29**	-.47***	.62***

	Women (Sample 2; n = 88)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1- System justification	-				
2- SDO	.42***	-			
3- Stereotype	.11	-.09	-		
4- Positive stereotype	-.10	-.28**	.82***	-	
5- Negative stereotype	.27*	.10	.87***	.45***	-
6- Prejudice	.32**	.21*	.51***	.24*	.59***

	Gypsies (Sample 3; n = 86)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1- System justification	-				
2- SDO	.44***	-			
3- Stereotype	-.01	.01	-		
4- Positive stereotype	-.12	-.16	.36***	-	
5- Negative stereotype	.06	.11	.81***	-.25*	-
6- Prejudice	.22*	.35***	.45***	-.36***	.69***

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Prejudice = Prejudice towards the target group (i.e. Arabs, Women or Gypsies)

Are Positive and Negative Stereotypes Complementary?

To examine the complementary hypothesis, a series of regression analyses was done. Positive and negative stereotype scores were centered at the grand mean and multiplied to obtain the interaction term. The three variables were included in a regression analysis with, firstly, the

system justification scale as a dependent variable and, secondly, with the social dominance orientation scale. The results of this series of analyses are presented in Appendix B. Only a significant interaction showing that those who displayed higher levels of both positive and negative stereotypes were also those who strongly justified the system would support the complementary hypothesis. However, contrary to this assumption, the interaction term was never significant. Thus, we found no support for the complementary hypothesis. In most cases, we found a main effect of negative stereotypes revealing that the more the participants obtained higher scores on this variable, the more they justified the system.

DISCUSSION - STUDY 1

The first study aimed mainly at examining the relation between endorsement of stereotype towards different disadvantaged groups and system justification, and the social arrangements, as they exist. Only one of 6 correlations is significant; the SDO and stereotype endorsement of Arabs show a low but significant correlation ($r = .26$). The five other correlations are very low and not significant. On the other hand, we observe that the relation between stereotypes and legitimization ideologies for each target group differs according to the valence of the stereotype. There is no significant relation between endorsement of positive stereotypes and the need for system justification, only the negative stereotypes are positively and significantly related to the SDO and the system justification scale. In other words, the relation between the adherence to the general stereotype of Arabs and the SDO is misleading insofar as this relation is entirely due to the negative component of the stereotype. Consequently, only this last component of the stereotype appears to have a role in system justification. Our measures of prejudices are positively and significantly correlated each time with the SDO and the system justification scale, corroborating these first results. In short, the more the participants endorse negative stereotypes and/or prejudices, the more they perceive social relations between the groups as legitimate and just. But the negative stereotypes and prejudices have a common valence, both of them being negative. Consequently, the first results suggest that endorsement of negative attitudes towards disadvantaged groups is a factor which has an active role in maintaining the status quo and social inequalities (Pratto & al., 1994; Guimond & al., 2003).

Our second aim was to examine the validity of the complementary hypothesis (Kay & Jost, 2003) which states that subjects who endorse both negative and positive stereotypes, are the ones who justify the system the most. Contrary to this hypothesis, the results of this study show that whatever their level of positive stereotype endorsement, those who adhere the most to a negative stereotype are those who justify the system the most. In other words, the results do not lead to confirming the idea that complementary stereotype endorsement would be a factor in system justification. In order to examine the complementary hypothesis more directly, we propose examining the relationship between endorsement of hostile and benevolent sexism and system justification in a second study. If benevolent and hostile sexism emerge and combine to function as a contribution to a justification and a legitimization of inequalities between men and women, we should observe that the subjects who adhere the most to the benevolent and hostile sexism combination are also those who justify the system the most.

These first results do not confirm the assumption that stereotypes would be tools of system justification in a general way. However, it is possible that the absence of a relation, which is

generally observed between our measures of stereotypes and system justification, is due to their lack of contextual factors. Indeed, we can note a certain discrepancy between our measures of stereotypes and legitimation. While our measures of stereotypes and prejudices are specific for the targets used, the SDO uses the term “group” in general and the justification system scale is contextualized on an economic level and also uses general terms such as “system” or “social class”. It is thus possible that the discrepancy between our measures at least partly explains the lack of relation between the stereotypes and system justification. Consequently, it is important to replicate these results by contextualizing and specifying more our measures of justification. In order to verify this methodological limit, we carried out a new study by incorporating a specific measure of system justification in our questionnaire (see for example, Jost & Kay, 2005). Secondly, we measured agentic and communal stereotypes in addition to positive and negative stereotypes. As we have previously seen, several works suggest that these stereotypes emerge in order to explain and to justify the distribution of social roles, and thereby maintain the status quo (Eagly & Stephen, 1984; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jackman, 1994; Jost & Banaji, 1994). It is possible that the absence of a relation between system justification and stereotypes is due to their content. Theoretically, by incorporating agentic and communal traits in our questionnaire, we maximize our chances of establishing a relation between the two constructs. Indeed, if the agentic and communal stereotypes emerge in order to furnish system justification, adherence to them should be strongly related to a desire for the justification of inequalities.

METHOD - STUDY 2

Participants

282 first year psychology students at the University of Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand participated in this study. The average age of this sample was 19.2 years.

Procedure

The protocol here was similar to the one used in study 1. A questionnaire presented as being anonymous was distributed at random to each student in a lecture hall. The target groups studied were women ($N = 85$), Arabs ($N = 94$) and the poor ($N = 103$).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of three principal measures: a measure of stereotype, a specific system justification scale and a measure of prejudices towards stigmatized groups.

Specific System Justification

In order to examine more accurately the need to justify the system and inequalities between the social groups, we used measures of justification specific to the proposed target groups. For the group “women”, the questionnaire included a translated version of the justification system scale of the specific type proposed by Jost and Kay (2005). The subjects indicated their degree of agreement to statements (i.e. “As a rule, the relations between men and women are just”) on a 7 point scale. The analysis of reliability indicates a Cronbach alpha of .60, which is similar to that

obtained by the American version ($\alpha = .62$, Jost & Kay, 2005). For the group “Arabs”, we used Jost and Kay’s scale as a basis by adapting it to the relations between the French and foreigners (i.e. “As a rule, you find that society is unjust to foreigners”, see Appendix D for the complete scale). The analysis of reliability reveals a satisfactory Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = .71$). Finally, for the group “the poor”, we conserved our economic system justification measure from study 1 (Jost & Thompson, 2000; $\alpha = .60$). A high score on the set of these specific system justification scales indicates that the subject perceives inequalities between the groups as normal and justified.

Stereotype Endorsement

When complementing the positive and negative stereotypical adjectives related to certain social groups, it appeared necessary to add a series of 5 agentic traits (confident, competent, combative, responsible, ambitious) and 5 communal traits (sociable, considerate, understanding, warm, helpful), (Jost & Kay, 2005). The results of the analyses of reliability indicate a satisfactory Cronbach alpha for the series of agentic and communal traits for each of the questionnaires ($.70 \leq \alpha \leq .80$). We used the same adjectives as in study 1 ($.57 \leq \alpha \leq .91$) for the positive and negative traits regarding women and Arabs, while the adjectives used for our new target group “the poor” were: happy, honest, helpful, sociable, warm (positive traits, $\alpha = .71$) and dishonest, lazy, opportunist, dependent, unhappy (negative traits, $\alpha = .57$). The subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they considered the 20 adjectives proposed (5 positive traits, 5 negative traits, 5 agentic traits and 5 communal traits) as being representative of the target category.

Prejudice

Concerning our measure of prejudices, we conserved our scale of subtle prejudices towards Arabs ($\alpha = .73$; Dambrun, 2007). For this new study, our measure of prejudices towards women contained a series of 4 items of hostile sexism ($\alpha = .65$; i.e. “Women are easily offended”) and 4 items of benevolent sexism ($\alpha = .72$; i.e. “A lot of women are chaste unlike few men”) that were developed by Glick and Fiske (1996). Finally, the questionnaire for the group “the poor” contained a scale of 8 items of prejudice towards the poor (4 positive and 4 negative; i.e. “The poor have only themselves to blame, they are responsible for their situation”) developed by Gatto, Dambrun, Kerbrat, and De Oliveira (2007). The internal reliability of this scale is satisfactory ($\alpha = .72$).

RESULTS - STUDY 2

Correlations between Specific System Justification and Various Dependent Measures

Stereotype and Prejudice

We found low correlations between the measure of specific system justification and the various measures of stereotypes (see Table 2). With the exception of the poor as a target group, the correlations between these variables were not significant. Again, we found support for dissociation between the positive and negative components of stereotypes. While positive stereotypes were not related or *negatively* related (see Arabs) to specific system justification (r ranged from $-.33$ to $-.04$), the more the participants endorsed negative stereotypes, the more they

justified the system (r ranged from .26 to .33). Finally, prejudices were always positively and significantly related to specific system justification (r ranged from .29 to .37).

Table 2: Correlations between Specific System Justification, Stereotype and Prejudice (Study 2)

	Arabs (Sample 1, $n = 94$)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1- Specific system justification	-					
2- Stereotype	.06	-				
3- Positive stereotype	-.33***	.18	-			
4- Negative stereotype	.29**	.69***	-.58***	-		
5- Agentic	-.23*	-.02	.55***	-.41***	-	
6- Communal	-.28**	.01	.85***	-.61***	.63***	-
7- Prejudice	.34***	.33***	-.49***	.63***	-.26*	-.46***

	The Poor (Sample 3, $n = 103$)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1- Specific system justification	-					
2- Stereotype	.22*	-				
3- Positive stereotype	-.14	.38***	-			
4- Negative stereotype	.33***	.65***	-.45***	-		
5- Agentic	-.25*	.16	.51***	-.26**	-	
6- Communal	-.27**	.27**	.89***	-.47***	.57***	-
7- Prejudice	.29**	.35***	-.16	.47***	-.21*	-.23*

	Women (Sample 2; $n = 85$)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1- Specific system justification	-							
2- Stereotype	.15	-						
3- Positive stereotype	-.04	.77***	-					
4- Negative stereotype	.26*	.82***	.28*	-				
5- Agentic	-.11	.37***	.58***	.03	-			
6- Communal	-.05	.73***	.96***	.24*	.63***	-		
7- Prejudice (sexism)	.37***	.27*	.08	.34**	-.04	.08	-	
8- Benevolent sexism	.20+	.31**	.30**	.21+	.20	.31**	.84***	-
9- Hostile sexism	.44***	.13	-.09	.27*	-.13	-.10	.72***	.27*

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; + $p < .10$; Prejudice = Prejudice towards the target group (i.e. Arabs, Women or the Poor)

Agentic and Communal Traits

With the exception of the target group “women”, both agentic and communal traits were *negatively* and significantly correlated to specific system justification (r ranged from -.05 to -.28, see Table 2). The more the participants attributed agentic or communal traits to Arabs or the poor, the less they supported the system. Both categories of attributes were strongly and

positively related to the positive component of stereotypes, and strongly and negatively correlated to negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Benevolent and Hostile Sexism

While the benevolent component of sexism was only marginally related to the measure of specific system justification, the latter was significantly correlated to the hostile component (see Table 2). When both the benevolent and hostile components of sexism were simultaneously entered in a regression analysis with the measure of specific system justification as the dependent variable, only the effect of hostile sexism still remained significant ($\beta = .415, p < .001$).

Confirming the relatively spurious relation between the benevolent component and system justification, the effect of benevolent sexism disappeared ($\beta = .086, t < 1$).

Testing the Complementary Hypothesis with Various Measures

As shown in Appendix D, we tested the complementary hypothesis by using various measures. The first method was identical to the one used in study 1. We calculated the interaction term between positive and negative stereotypes and entered the three variables in a regression analysis with specific system justification as the dependent variable. Secondly, and only for the second sample (i.e. the target group “women”), we tested the effect of the interaction term between benevolent and hostile sexism on specific system justification. Contrary to the complementary hypothesis, we found no support for the assumption that the endorsement of positive and negative stereotypes is complementary, nor is endorsement of benevolent and hostile sexism.

DISCUSSION - STUDY 2

The results of the second study show that only the participants who have negative stereotypes and prejudices towards certain disadvantaged social groups believe that society is just and equitable towards these groups. Indeed, endorsement of positive stereotypes, and also of agentic and communal stereotypes, is either unrelated (target: women), or it is related in a negative manner with our measures of specific system justification (targets: the poor, Arabs). In this last case, the more the participants attributed agentic or communal characteristics, the *less* they tended to desire maintaining the status quo. Previous research has argued that agentic and communal stereotypes are complementary and often inversely related (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jost & Kay, 2005). Contrary to this assumption, these stereotypes were positively related to each other, and they correlated in the same direction with system justification beliefs in the present study. In our view, because both agentic and communal traits are positive in their contents, they share a common part of variance. Consistently, both were positively and significantly related to the measure of positive stereotyping. Thus, it seems that endorsement of positive stereotypes, including communal and agentic ones, does not provide support for system justification. On the contrary, they are associated with the defense of minority groups against an unequal and unfair system.

Regarding the relation between benevolent sexism, hostile sexism and system justification, here again only the negative component (i.e. hostile sexism) is positively and significantly related to system justification.

Finally, the complementary hypothesis of social stereotypes is once again unsupported by these results. For each of our target groups, the participants who simultaneously endorsed positive and negative stereotypes were not those who justified inequalities the most. Likewise, those who endorsed benevolent sexism and hostile sexism in a complementary manner were not necessarily defenders of the anti-egalitarian system. The interaction effect between the two forms of sexism on the measure of social justification is quasi null. Indeed, only the subjects who endorsed hostile sexism supported and justified the system.

In conclusion, the methodological limits attributed to study 1 do not appear to be responsible for the absence of a link between stereotype endorsement on one hand, and system justification on the other hand.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Several works suggest that our hierarchical societies are perpetuated by the influence of ideologies and myths. These myths serve an ideological function of maintaining relations of domination between groups, by making it possible to render legitimate, even natural, the differences in social values in our societies. In their paper, Jost and Banaji (1994) attribute this function of legitimation to social stereotypes. These would result from the need to explain the existing arrangements such as social and economic systems or the differences in status, power or material means. The stereotypes thus make it possible to justify the system. The aim of our research was to examine the validity of this assumption and to examine the extent to which endorsement of stereotypes towards different stigmatized groups was related to the need to justify the system. All the stereotypes did not seem to have the function of maintaining and justifying social arrangements (see Jost and Banaji, 1994). Indeed, we observe that stereotype endorsement in general is not correlated to measures of system justification (study 1: measure of economic system justification and measure of social dominance orientation; study 2: measure of specific system justification). More exactly, the relation between stereotypes and our measures of justification differ according to the type and the valence of the adjectives proposed. The endorsement of positive social stereotypes or of communal stereotypes regarding disadvantaged groups does not inevitably lead individuals to desire maintaining the status quo, it is sometimes even the opposite. The more individuals will attribute communal characteristics (warm, sociable...) to dominated groups, the more they will consider society as being unjust towards these groups. This is contrary to the preceding research which presupposes that, by their content, social stereotypes facilitate the rationalization of inequalities in society on one hand by explaining the social positions and roles associated with the dominated groups (Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Jost & Banaji, 1994) and, on the other hand, by gratifying certain social groups on socially important aspects as was proposed by Jackman (1994). These works, however, are not directly based on measures of justification, our data offers a new empirical support for determining the extent to which stereotypes are tools of system legitimation.

We also attempted to test the complementary effect of stereotypes on the rationalization of unequal social relationships across these two studies. This hypothesis, which was recently proposed by Kay and Jost (2003), makes the assumption that social groups are often described as

having both certain qualities and certain faults, which makes it possible to justify the distribution of social roles. We then examined if the participants who strongly described the disadvantaged groups with positive and negative adjectives or expressed hostile or benevolent sexism towards women, justified the system more than the participants who adhered to none or to only one of these stereotypes, or to only one of the two types of sexism. The results obtained do not provide support for this assumption. The data is not in contradiction with the works of Jost and Kay (2005), but it indicates that the conscious endorsement of stereotypes regarding women or foreigners is not necessarily a factor in maintaining the status quo. We suggest that it is important to distinguish stereotypes according to their positive or negative valence in order to better understand their effect on system justification. Indeed, in our two studies, it appears that it is the endorsement of negative stereotypes and prejudices towards the target groups in particular which permits one to legitimize social or economic inequalities. The individuals who hold rather negative ideas or attitudes regarding women, Gypsies, the poor or North Africans, are also those who believe that society is equitable towards these disadvantaged groups. These results agree with several works which propose that racism, sexism, ethnic prejudices and negative stereotypes are a means of legitimizing social discrimination and thereby maintaining inequalities (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998; Dambrun, Taylor, McDonald, Crush, & Méot, 2006; Pratto, et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Contrary to positive stereotypes (communal and agentic), endorsement of both negative stereotypes and prejudices directly affects the perception of the legitimacy of the system and operates in a conscious manner. As for the other ideologies which favor maintaining inequalities (i.e. meritocracy, capitalism, belief in a just world, nationalism), the stigmatization of disadvantaged groups is directly related to the propensity of individuals to justify and legitimize relationships of domination as well as social inequalities.

These results are not fully inconsistent with the cognitive approach proposed by Jost and Kay to study the effect of stereotypes on system justification. As opposed to their works, we studied if personal endorsement of social stereotypes was a factor in maintaining the status quo by using data based on a conscious level. The absence of correlation between stereotype endorsement and system justification in general could then be due to the fact that stereotypes operate in a relatively unconscious manner. Thus, it would be relevant to replicate the present study with implicit measures of stereotypes instead of explicit ones. In their studies, Kay and Jost (2003) propose that “The lack of correlations between personal endorsement and system justification suggests that merely reminding people of culturally prevalent stereotypes may be sufficient to trigger an increase in system justification” (p. 21). While we agree with this approach, our data indicates on one hand that personal and, hence conscious, endorsement of negative stereotypes towards the target groups operates in a direct manner on maintaining the status quo and, on the other hand, that endorsement of both communal and agentic stereotypes (towards Arabs or the poor) produces effects which are contrary to those observed by simple exposure to stereotypes. Indeed, the more the individuals describe these target groups as being honest or warm, the *less* they consider the system as just and equitable towards these groups. Thus, positive and negative stereotypes are related in an opposite direction to system justification, resulting in a null effect of stereotype endorsement on system justification ideologies. Consequently, future research is necessary to examine more precisely what are the mechanisms that permit stereotypes to uphold the system. Is it because of their contents and their more or less unconscious character that the effect of stereotypes on maintaining the status quo differs?

Concerning the limitations of the current research, firstly, the present samples of college students limit the generalizability of the results. Future investigators may want to examine the validity of our findings using a more representative sample. Secondly, according to Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004), people should have a general need to justify the existing social order. However, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer, it would be interesting to examine how perceived inequality between social groups moderates the relationship between stereotype endorsement and system justification; only those who perceive inequality would be motivated to justify the system through the use of stereotypes. Thirdly, as argued by Kay, Jost and Young (2005), “threats directed at the existing social system stimulate increased efforts at justifying the status quo” (p. 241). Consistently, they demonstrated that following a threat to the social system, participants tended to justify the status quo. Thus, in the absence of a threat to the system or one's group, stereotype endorsement might correlate most strongly with prejudice. However, when the system or one's group is threatened, it is possible that conscious stereotypes -either positive or negative- would then be used to explain social inequalities and to justify the system. These possibilities should be examined in future research.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the implications of the present findings for the understanding of ideologies. The fact that the affective component (i.e. prejudice) rather than the cognitive component of attitudes (i.e. stereotype) is related to system justifying ideologies suggests that ideology may be more influenced by affective factors than by cognitive ones. While many psychologists and sociologists often conceive ideology primarily in terms of both cognitive construct and processes (Shils, 1968), our results also suggest the necessity to consider the affective nature of ideology. Likewise, Fine & Sandstrom (1993) proposed that ideologies are not purely cognitive, but also depend on emotional responses. They wrote: “Ideology expresses the transformations of feelings, known through images and metaphors, into beliefs about social system. People understand ideology through emotional experiences that help them make sense of the world. Through ideology, emotional reactions are generalized beyond their situated contexts. This statement does not deny the analytical component of ideology, but only emphasizes that emotions are central.” (p. 29). In this perspective, the data of the present study provides an empirical support for the view that affective processes underlie ideology.

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APPENDIX A: Prejudice towards Gypsies (8 items)

1. The Bohemians are not reliable, they only think about drinking and having parties.
2. The Bohemians work hard to make a living.
3. The problem with Bohemians is that they are all thieves.
4. One would be more secure if there were not so many Bohemians.
5. Laws should be made to make the Gypsies settle so that they would stop wandering about.
6. I believe that the Gypsy culture is very rich and should be preserved at all costs.
7. Gypsies take advantage of the system at the expense of real workers.
8. Bohemians are quite intelligent and it is easy to talk to them.

APPENDIX B: Tests of the Complementary Hypothesis (study 1)

	Arabs (Sample 1; n = 82)		
	β	t	p
DV: System Justification			
Positive stereotype	.106	<1	ns
Negative stereotype	.265	2.075	.041
Positive x Negative stereotype	.138	1.225	ns
DV: SDO			
Positive stereotype	.016	<1	ns
Negative stereotype	.236	1.812	.074
Positive x Negative stereotype	.018	<1	ns

	Women (Sample 2; n = 88)		
	β	t	p
DV: System Justification			
Positive stereotype	-.286	-2.525	.013
Negative stereotype	.378	3.243	.002
Positive x Negative stereotype	.070	<1	ns
DV: SDO			
Positive stereotype	-.412	-3.650	.001
Negative stereotype	.295	2.545	.013
Positive x Negative stereotype	-.027	<1	ns

	Gypsies (Sample 3; $n = 86$)		
	β	t	p
<i>DV</i> : System Justification			
Positive stereotype	-.109	<1	ns
Negative stereotype	.033	<1	ns
Positive x Negative stereotype	.021	<1	ns
<i>DV</i> : SDO			
Positive stereotype	-.142	-1.255	ns
Negative stereotype	.084	<1	ns
Positive x Negative stereotype	.03	<1	ns

APPENDIX C: Specific System Justification between French and Foreigners (8 items)

1. As a rule, you find society is unjust to foreigners.
2. As a rule, the distribution of jobs between the French and foreigners is done as it should be.
3. There are more and more problems related to racism in society every year.
4. Everyone (the French and foreigners) has the same opportunities to try to become rich and happy.
5. Most of the immigration policies serve to maintain good cohesiveness.
6. For a foreigner, France is one of the best countries in the world to live in.
7. French society usually allows each individual to get what he merits.
8. The political attitude towards foreigners needs to be radically rethought.

APPENDIX D: Tests of the Complementary Hypothesis (Study 2)

	Arabs (Sample 1; $n = 94$)		
	β	t	p
<i>DV</i> : Specific System Justification			
Positive stereotype	-.085	<1	ns
Negative stereotype	.176	1.469	ns
Positive x Negative stereotype	.175	1.587	ns

	Women (Sample 2; $n = 85$)		
	β	t	p
<i>DV</i> : Specific System Justification			
Positive stereotype	-.126	-1.139	ns
Negative stereotype	.312	2.807	.006
Positive x Negative stereotype	-.138	-1.294	ns
<i>DV</i> : Specific System Justification			
Benevolent sexism	.079	<1	ns
Hostile sexism	.419	4.056	.001
Benevolent x hostile sexism	-.053	<1	ns

	The Poor (Sample 3; $n = 103$)		
	β	t	p
<i>DV</i> : Specific System Justification			
Positive stereotype	.054	<1	ns
Negative stereotype	.328	3.039	.003
Positive x Negative stereotype	-.002	<1	ns

AUTHOR'S NOTES

We sincerely thank Serge Guimond, Jacques-Philippe Leyens and Donald M. Taylor for their useful comments on an earlier version of this article.

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