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ADOPTING THE SYSTEM-JUSTIFYING ATTITUDES OF OTHERS: EFFECTS OF TRIVIAL INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

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Although system justification research has focused most on the needs to explain and control the social world, system justification may also be regulated by the need to maintain social connections with others. Three experiments demonstrate that trivial interpersonal ties to system-justifying others can facilitate the endorsement of system-justifying attitudes, sometimes even in the face of social exclusion. In Experiment 1, participants exhibited stronger implicit pro-system, anti-labor attitudes after playing a game of catch with economically advantaged, high-status (vs. equal-status) partners. Experiments 2 and 3 demonstrated that social exclusion (vs. inclusion) by system-justifying partners increased endorsement of implicit anti-system attitudes—*unless participants believed that they shared a birthday or food preference with their partners*. In sum, results suggest that system-justifying attitudes are based in part on motivations to regulate interpersonal relationships, including relationships that are temporary, superficial, and even exclusionary.

Although acquiescence to subjugation and discrimination is no doubt at root purchased with institutionalized terror or the threat of terror (see Jackman, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), it is also true that victims sometimes cope with injustice by adopting the perspective of their subjugators, including endorsing some of the very ideologies that justify their subjugation (for reviews see Bettelheim, 1943; see also Freud, 1946/1966; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Kay & Zanna, 2009). Although system justification among victims of injustice may seem counterintuitive, years

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of research animated by system justification theory has identified several psychological motivations that support it, including the need to understand, predict, navigate, and control the social world (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Yet system justification, like other attitudes, may also be regulated by the need to feel connected with others (e.g.,Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Building upon recent arguments for the role of interpersonal dynamics in ideological thinking (e.g., Hardin, Cheung, Magee, Noel, & Yoshimura, in press; Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008), three experiments demonstrate that even minimal interpersonal ties can cause one to adopt the system-justifying attitudes of others—sometimes even under conditions of social exclusion.

RELATIONAL MOTIVATION IN SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

The idea that interpersonal ties can establish and maintain system-justifying attitudes is hardly new. For example, in their pioneering work on social constructionism, Berger and Luckmann (1966) proposed that interpersonal interactions establish and institutionalize status differences. Through repeated social interaction and dialectical exchange, individual roles are defined and institutional order is formed, including how labor is divided and status is defined (see also Goffman, 1959). Mundane, everyday social interaction among people who differ in status, resources, and power further crystallizes the institutionalized social hierarchy. In describing how intergroup relationships that afford close, regular contact make intergroup hierarchy more subjectively permissible than relationships that do not afford close contact, Jackman (1994) highlighted the role of interpersonal ties, particularly paternalistic ones, in the justification of the status quo. As members of subjugated groups bond with and depend upon members of dominant groups, they are obligated to interact on the basis of shared conceptions of the world defined by inequality, including the specific traits perceived to characterize their respective groups. As such, interpersonal relationships engage both dominants and the subjugated in a common cognitive framework with which to view the world. These common conceptions imbue the institutional arrangement with a shared inclusive appeal, constrain the ways in which the arrangement can be understood, legitimize the hierarchical relationship, and facilitate compliance among the subjugated.

Although it has long been observed that interpersonal ties with members of dominant groups can facilitate acquiescence to the status quo, specific mechanisms by which it takes place have been suggested more recently. In our research, we have explored the mechanisms implied by shared reality theory (Hardin & Conley, 2001; Hardin & Higgins, 1996), which postulates that interpersonal engagement requires people to establish and maintain the perception that relationship-relevant experiences are mutually held—that is, the perception of shared reality. In practical terms, people will tune their attitudes toward the presumed attitudes of others on relationship-relevant dimensions to the extent that they are obligated or otherwise motivated to establish or maintain the relationship. By the same token, people will tune their attitudes away from the presumed attitudes of others on relationship-relevant dimensions to the extent that they are motivated and able to disengage from the relationship. Applied to the case of system justification, research shows that interpersonal dynamics affect system-related attitudes, including attitudes about race (e.g., Conley, Rabinowitz, & Hardin, 2010; Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair,

2001; Sinclair, Hustinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005), political conservatism (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008), religion (Magee & Hardin, 2010), public policy (Cheung, Noel, & Hardin, 2011), and sexual orientation (Cheung, Fingerhut et al., 2011). In short, interpersonal ties with people who espouse system-justifying attitudes can elicit pro-system thoughts.

It is important to emphasize that although people can and do tune their own attitudes toward the attitudes of others, shared reality theory also implies that people will tune their attitudes away from the attitudes of others when they are motivated to socially disengage. For example, in one experiment, women anticipated an interaction with a person who ostensibly held either sexist or nonsexist attitudes (Sinclair, Hustinger et al., 2005, Experiment 1). Under conditions in which women were unmotivated to establish a relationship with their partners, they tuned away from the partner's attitudes, rating themselves as more masculine and less feminine when anticipating an interaction with a sexist (vs. nonsexist) partner. However, under conditions in which these female participants were tethered to their partners by the mere thread of a shared birthday, women rated themselves as more feminine and less masculine when they anticipated interacting with a sexist (vs. nonsexist) partner. Similar findings involving other manipulations of interpersonal ties have been replicated with respect to African American ratings of their own academic abilities (Sinclair, Hustinger, et al., 2005, Experiment 4) and white evaluations of African Americans (Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005).

In sum, research suggests that even minimal interpersonal connections, including ties as superficial as sharing the same birthday, can cause people to take the perspectives of others, even when the perspectives are incompatible with attitudes espoused outside the context of the relationship, and even when the perspectives reflect poorly on the self (see also Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006). Such findings are not merely of academic interest; for many ongoing interpersonal relationships, both within and across group boundaries, are not always benign. Indeed, a primary motivation for research on intergroup attitudes and system justification is to understand and explain institutional and psychological harm, including stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and injustice (e.g., Jost & Kay, 2010). Indeed, a large part of the everyday experience of subjugation involves interpersonal exclusion and social rejection (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Williams & Gerber, 2005). Given that a common response to social rejection is retaliatory rejection (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; Williams, 2001), and given that intergroup subjugation is nevertheless often met with political acquiescence rather than retaliation (e.g., Jost & Kay, 2005; see also Major, Gramzor, McCoy, Levin, Schmader, & Sidanius, 2002), the research we report here was designed to investigate system justification in the context of interpersonal exclusion as well as interpersonal inclusion.

Given past research on social tuning, the case of social exclusion would appear to be simple—at least at first blush. Exclusion, like other forms of social disengagement, should elicit tuning away from the relationship-relevant attitudes of others. In contrast, routine social inclusion, like other forms of social engagement, should elicit tuning toward the relationship-relevant attitudes of the others. Indeed, under conditions in which there is no other basis for the relationship, this is exactly the effect implied by shared reality theory and demonstrated many times using a variety of research paradigms involving people whose relationship is limited to the laboratory interaction (e.g., Williams, 2001; Williams & Gerber, 2005). Yet many of

the most telling relationships people have are not limited to one isolated setting or situation. What are the effects of exclusion on social tuning under conditions in which the relationship may continue or when there are other interpersonal connections that do not afford effortless disengagement? To investigate this question, we explored the possibility that even minimal interpersonal connections may mitigate or even reverse the anti-tuning that would be expected from social exclusion.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Three experiments were designed to investigate how even minimal interpersonal connections with people who appear to hold system-justifying attitudes provides proximal social support for system justification. As implied by shared reality theory, we hypothesized that temporary relationships with system-justifying others would elicit social tuning of automatic, relationship-relevant attitudes under conditions of simple interpersonal inclusion (Experiments 1–3) and anti-tuning under conditions of interpersonal exclusion (Experiments 2 & 3), replicating previous research on social tuning. In addition, however, we hypothesized that effects of interpersonal exclusion would be eliminated or possibly reversed under conditions in which participants were minimally tied to the relationship and thereby less able to immediately disengage from the relationship (Experiments 2 & 3).

To investigate effects of interpersonal inclusion and exclusion, we adapted a paradigm common in the ostracism literature in which small groups of participants toss a ball around in a game of on-line catch (for a review see Williams, 2001). According to shared reality theory, social tuning occurs on attitudes that are perceived to be relationship-relevant. Hence, across the three experiments, participants learned about the ostensible attitudes of their partners designed to reflect face-valid acceptance of social hierarchies related to social class (Experiment 1), race (Experiment 2), and gender (Experiment 3). In Experiment 1, we tested the hypothesis that a simple game of catch with members of an economically high-status group (vs. equal-status group) can cause people to assume system-justifying, anti-labor attitudes.

Research shows that compared to conditions in which the ball is tossed around from participant to participant, conditions in which participants are excluded by never receiving the ball typically exhibit alienation, anger, and a motivation to disengage from their game partners (e.g., Williams, 2001; Williams & Gerber, 2005). Hence, in Experiments 2 and 3, we examined whether (a) interpersonal exclusion would elicit anti-tuning away from the ostensible attitudes of partners, and (b) whether such anti-tuning effects of interpersonal exclusion would be eliminated or reversed when participants were minimally connected to their partners by virtue of a shared birthday or food preference.

Across all three experiments, we focused on implicit attitudes to assess the interpersonal regulation of system-justifying attitudes. Although shared reality theory does not emphasize the distinction between implicit and explicit processes, evidence suggests that socially sensitive attitudes of the type investigated here—i.e., social class, race, and gender—are often more easily assessed by nonreactive, implicit instruments. Similarly, it has been suggested that people are more likely to express system-justifying attitudes at an implicit rather than explicit level (Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002; Jost et al., 2004; Rudman, Feinberg, & Fairchild, 2002).

EXPERIMENT 1

We have argued that system justification among the subjugated persists in part because interpersonal interaction across the boundaries of social hierarchy requires participants in the interaction to share attitudes about the status quo. To test this hypothesis, in Experiment 1 we examined whether perceptions of the economic system become more system-justifying by merely playing a game of catch with partners perceived to be economically well-off. Because interpersonal interaction is known to motivate people to share the actual and implied attitudes of others (e.g., Lowery et al., 2001; Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005), we expected people to exhibit more pro-system, anti-labor attitudes after interacting with higher-status partners than equal-status partners.

METHOD

Participants and Design

In a "cross-campus study of group compatibility" 92 (17 male, 75 female) students at Brooklyn College in New York City interacted with economically higher-status or equal-status partners. After a computer-mediated game of catch, implicit attitudes toward the economic hierarchy were assessed using an IAT adapted for measuring attitudes toward management versus labor.

Procedure and Materials

Economic Status. Participants played a computer-mediated game of catch with two other participants, who purportedly joined the game through the laboratory computer network (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000). In the game of catch, participants and the two other fictional players toss a ball around, and in the current experiment, each player was thrown the ball one third of the time.

Partner status was manipulated by providing information about university affiliation and likely family income. Partners were said to attend either the most exclusive private universities in New York City or public universities of comparable status to Brooklyn College. In addition to the name of partner schools, participants also received general information about their schools, including student family income distributions. Higher-status partners were said to be students from New York University and Columbia University whose families were economically well off (i.e., annual family income for 63% of its students over $100,000). Equal-status partners were said to be students from Queens College and Kingsborough College (part of the CUNY system along with Brooklyn College) whose families were economically worse off (i.e., annual family income for 4% of its students over $100,000). An independent sample from the same population indicated that they perceived New York University and Columbia University students to be 4.14 times more likely to be pro-management than Queens College and Kingsborough College students, $\chi^2(1) = 13.44$, $p < .001$.

Measurement of Pro-Management / Anti-Labor Attitudes. After playing catch with two people whose attitudes were ostensibly more (vs. less) pro-system, participants completed an implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) designed to assess how strong the concepts of management versus

labor were cognitively associated with positive and negative words. Participants categorized as quickly and accurately as possible positive and negative words as well as words related to management (supervisors, boss, salary, administration, employer, and managers) and labor (union, workers, employees, staff, subordinates, and hourly). Using the standard algorithm (Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003), pro-management/anti-labor attitudes were indicated by faster responses on blocks of trials in which positive words were paired with management and negative words were paired with labor than vice versa. Data from one participant were discarded because more than 10% of his IAT latency was below 300 ms (Greenwald et al., 2003).

Among other demographic items, participants reported political orientation, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), liking of game partners, and the degree to which they felt being accepted by the partner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although partner status did not affect how much participants reported liking their partners or feeling accepted by them (ts < 1.5), participants exhibited stronger implicit pro-management/anti-labor attitudes following interaction with students from higher-status institutions (M = .05) than students from equal-status institutions (M = –.13), $t(89) = 2.18$, $p = .03$. The effect was moderated by neither political orientation nor SDO. In the context of the interpersonal foundations of ideology, these findings are important for two primary reasons. First, this experiment demonstrates that implicit pro-management/anti-labor attitudes can be increased reliably through mere interpersonal interaction with others who are stereotypically assumed to hold system-justifying attitudes by virtue of their social class. Social norms regarding civil interpersonal interaction commonly put people in the position of interacting politely with others who may well hold such attitudes. Yet this experiment demonstrates that simple interaction with ostensibly wealthy people can easily and instantly increase implicit classism.

Second, the effect of interpersonal interaction on system-justifying attitudes was readily elicited by a temporary relationship. Replicating previous results concerning the role of everyday interpersonal activity in the regulation of intergroup prejudice (for reviews see Hardin & Banaji, in press; Hardin et al., in press), this finding suggests that merely throwing a ball back and forth with high-status people can elicit attitudes that function to perpetuate the status quo. In this light, the current findings complement recent findings showing that minimal contact across the group boundaries can cause improved perceptions about high-status groups, as well as expectations about equality among members of low-status groups (Saguy, Tausch, Dovido, & Pratto, 2009).

EXPERIMENT 2

Given that one important goal of system justification theory is to explain how the disadvantaged cope with subjugation (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), and given a large part of the experience of subjugation involves interpersonal exclusion and social rejection (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999;

Williams & Gerber, 2005), in Experiments 2 and 3 we explored the possibility that even minimal interpersonal ties—like a shared birthday or food preference—might mute the anti-tuning effect of interpersonal rejection expected in the absence of interpersonal ties. To test the hypothesis, we used the same ball-tossing paradigm as in Experiment 1 but added conditions in which participants were excluded from the game by the other players. Given that racial prejudice has been identified as an important expression of system justification (e.g., Hardin et al., in press; Jost & Kay, 2005), implicit and explicit prejudice was assessed after interactions with partners likely to hold relatively anti-black attitudes.

METHOD

Participants and Design

Participants were 85 white Brooklyn College undergraduates (25 male, 60 female) who participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Automatic attitudes toward African Americans were assessed after participants were being either excluded from or included in an on-line game of catch with ostensibly racist partners with whom participants either shared or did not share trivial connections in a 2 (Exclusion: yes vs. no) × 2 (Interpersonal Connection: yes vs. no) between-subjects factorial design.

Procedure and Materials

Interpersonal Connection. In a procedure adapted from Sinclair and colleagues (Sinclair, Hustinger, et al., 2005), participants were told that (a) they shared idiosyncratic commonalities with their partners (or not) and (b) they should expect further interaction with the partners in addition to the game (or not). Commonalities were created idiosyncratically for each participant based on an initial questionnaire that included items about their personal interests, favorite foods, and birthdays. The experimenter collected this questionnaire and left the room to "check briefly on the other participants." After one minute or so the experimenter returned with two questionnaires ostensibly completed by two other participants with whom they would interact. Participants were asked to read over their partners' questionnaires insofar as they "might want to know the interests of the other two people you will play a ball-tossing game with." Partner responses indicated that the participant either shared (or did not share) a favorite food with one player and a birthday with the other player. Furthermore, to increase the power of the interpersonal connection manipulation, participants were told (or not) that they would play one more game with the same partners at the end of the study.

Partner Attitudes. All participants were led to expect interactions with people who held system-justifying, possibly racist attitudes. To do so, the partner questionnaires also contained information indicating that both partners disliked hip-hop music and grew up in the American South. In response to the item, "How many friends do you have who are White/European Americans?" both partners indicated "most." In response to the item, "How many friends do you have who are Black/African Americans?" both partners indicated "none."

Social Exclusion Manipulation. Participants played a computer-mediated game of catch with two other participants. For participants assigned to the exclusion conditions, the two partners threw the ball back and forth, excluding participants. For participants assigned to the inclusion condition, the ball was thrown to them one third of the time. Participants always played with same-sex partners.

Measurement of Anti-Black Attitudes. To assess social tuning of racial attitudes, we used a variant of the IAT to measure how efficiently participants associated African-American names with positive versus negative words. To eliminate the confound between attitudes toward whites and blacks common in race IATs (e.g., Blanton & Jaccard, 2006), we used furniture as a race-neutral contrast category rather than white names. Thus, the IAT score reflected implicit attitudes toward African Americans independent of attitudes toward whites. Participants categorized positive and negative words as well as African-American names (e.g., Latisha, Tawanda, Jamal) and the race-neutral contrast category—furniture (e.g., chair, table, sofa). Lastly participants completed the Katz and Hass (1988) 20-item racial ambivalence measure to assess explicit positive and negative attitudes toward African Americans.

Procedure. Small groups of participants arrived for a study of group compatibility. Participants were assigned to separate individual cubicles and informed that the study involved a brief questionnaire about their interests, playing an online ball-tossing game with two other participants, and completing a computer-based sorting task. After the game participants were thanked and debriefed, and were offered an opportunity to play an additional game of catch to assuage lingering negative effects of the exclusion manipulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although social exclusion elicited anti-tuning in the absence of interpersonal ties, merely sharing a birthday or food preference was sufficient to eliminate this effect. Implicit attitudes toward African Americans were submitted to a 2 (Exclusion) × 2 (Interpersonal Connection) between-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). As shown in Figure 1, participants tuned their implicit racial attitudes away from possibly racist partners who excluded them from the game under conditions of no interpersonal connection, but if anything tuned their implicit attitudes toward the partners who excluded them under conditions of minimal interpersonal connection, as indicated by a significant Exclusion × Interpersonal Connection interaction, $F(1, 81) = 5.13$, $p = .03$, $r^2 = .06$. Replicating previous demonstrations of social tuning as a function of social engagement (e.g., Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005), participants exhibited less implicit anti-black prejudice when they were excluded (M = .07) than included (M = .40) in the game with ostensibly racist partners in the absence of interpersonal connections, $F(1, 81) = 7.20$, $p = .01$, $r^2 = .29$. However, when participants were interpersonally connected to the other players, participants exhibited, if anything, greater implicit anti-black prejudice when they were excluded ($M = .30$) than included ($M = .23$), although the trend was not significant, $F(1, 81) = .31$, $p = .58$, $r^2 = .06$. Neither the main effect of exclusion nor interpersonal connection was significant, Fs < 2, ps > .15.

In the context of the interpersonal foundations of ideology, and in particular system-justifying attitudes that support the racial hierarchy like implicit anti-black

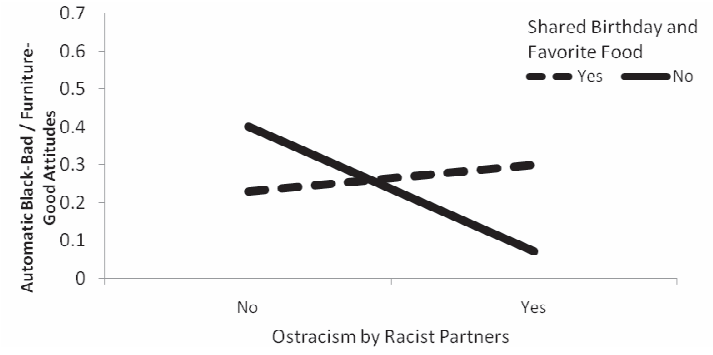

FIGURE 1. Automatic black-bad/furniture-good associations as a function of interpersonal connection and ostracism from racist partners (Experiment 2).

attitudes, these findings are important for at least two reasons. First, replicating previous results concerning the role of everyday interpersonal activity in the regulation of intergroup prejudice (for reviews see Hardin & Banaji, in press; Hardin et al., in press), this experiment demonstrates that anti-black attitudes can be increased substantially through simple cooperation in a game played with people who just might be racist. Second, and perhaps more striking, even trivial interpersonal connections were sufficient to subdue the well-documented social-distancing response to social exclusion (e.g., Major et al., 2002; Williams, 2001). For example, people adopt attitudes opposite to the apparent perspective of a rude experimenter (e.g., Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005). Yet in this experiment, merely sharing a birthday or food preference was sufficient to eliminate if not reverse this effect. This finding suggests that interpersonal ties with system-justifying others discourage people from turning their back on system-justifying ideologies, even when they are mistreated by them.

Broadly consistent with findings that socially-contested attitudes like racial prejudice may be better captured implicitly than explicitly (for a meta-analysis see Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009), social tuning of anti-black prejudice was not observed on the explicit measure of prejudice. The exclusion × interpersonal connection ANOVA yielded no significant effect on explicit attitudes toward African Americans, whether on the pro-black or anti-black subscales, Fs < 1, ps > .30. We do not interpret this finding as indicating that social tuning effects are limited to implicit cognition given substantial evidence of social tuning on explicit attitudes that are unrelated to anti-black prejudice (e.g., Sinclair, et al., 2006), but instead believe that participants in our sample were unlikely to be fully candid about their attitudes toward African Americans.

In sum, results of Experiment 2 demonstrate that even trivial interpersonal connections with evident racists are sufficient to discourage dissent from them even when one is excluded by them. Participants tuned their implicit attitudes away from the attitudes of apparent racists when they had been excluded by them, but did so only when they were not bound by interpersonal connections. Superficial but personally relevant connections eliminated anti-tuning at least at the implicit level. This raises the intriguing possibility that social exclusion is functional to

group unity not only by punishing dissent (e.g., Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Spoor & Williams, 2007), but also by binding people to the extant shared reality.

EXPERIMENT 3

Given the finding in Experiment 2 that even trivial interpersonal connections can bind one to the intergroup attitudes of others—even in the face of social rejection—Experiment 3 was designed to test whether the effect extends to self-stereotyping. To capture gender self-stereotyping on dimensions of particular relevance to system justification, we assessed attitudes about the self regarding the contemporary dilemma that women of reproductive age must face between economic independence and familial childrearing (cf. Jost & Kay, 2005). To do so, we assessed the efficiency with which female participants associated the self with career versus family concerns in an IAT. We hypothesized that social exclusion by ostensibly sexist partners would motivate women to dissent by taking on an alternative view of the self, unless they were interpersonally connected to their partners.

METHOD

Participants and Design

Participants were 63 female Brooklyn College undergraduates who participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Implicit self-concepts were measured after participants interacted with two ostensibly sexist partners with whom participants either did or did not share interpersonal connections in a 2 (Exclusion: yes vs. no) × 2 (Interpersonal Connection: yes vs. no) between-subjects factorial design.

Procedure and Materials

The procedure and materials were identical to Experiment 2, except for measures of self-concept and indicators of partner attitudes. Participants initially completed an interest questionnaire and read those ostensibly completed by their partners. To convey that the partners held sexist attitudes, participants were also shown an additional scale titled Attitudes Toward Women, also allegedly completed by the two future partners (adapted from Sinclair, Hustinger, et al., 2005). Taken from Benevolent Sexism Inventory (BSI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), responses on all 11 items were consistent with traditional, system-justifying views of women. For example, on the items "A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man" and "Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers," one future partner purportedly circled "agree slightly" and the other one circled "agree strongly." In this experiment, gender of the two other participants was not specified.

Social exclusion was experimentally manipulated in the game used in Experiment 2. After the game, participant self-stereotyping was assessed by an IAT in which the cognitive associations between self and other on the one hand and family and career on the other hand were assessed. Self was represented by the first-person pronouns I, me, mine, and myself, whereas other was represented by the

words they, them, their, and themselves. As adapted from the gender-career IAT (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002), family was represented by the words home, parents, children, and marriage, whereas career was represented by the words executive, professional, management, and corporation. Explicit self-concept was measured by having participants rate how much 19 masculine (e.g., athletic) and feminine (e.g., nurturing) traits described their own personalities (Sinclair, Hustinger, et al., 2005, Experiment 1). Finally, participants indicated their political orientation and the extent to which they identified with their gender.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine whether interpersonal connections moderated how female participants responded to social exclusion by ostensibly sexist partners, implicit self-stereotyping scores were submitted to a 2 (Exclusion) × 2 (Interpersonal Connections) between-subjects analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with gender identification entered as a covariate.[1] As shown in Figure 2, the effect of social exclusion on the self-concept depended on whether there were interpersonal connections, as indicated by a significant Exclusion × Interpersonal Connections interaction, $F(1, 58) = 5.23$, $p = .03$, $r^2 = .08$. Replicating and extending the results of Experiment 2, women who were unconnected to their sexist partners self-stereotyped marginally less when they were excluded ($M = .28$) than included ($M = .48$) in the game, $F(1, 58) = 2.90$, $p = .09$, $r^2 = .22$. That is, women implicitly tuned their self-concepts away from the sexist attitudes of those who had excluded them, as reflected by marginally stronger cognitive associations between self and career. In contrast, the effect of exclusion on self-stereotyping was if anything reversed among women connected to their sexist partners. Self-stereotyping was marginally greater when they were excluded ($M = .47$) than included ($M = .28$) in the game, $F(1, 58) = 2.47$, $p = .12$, $r^2 = .20$. Neither including nor statistically controlling participant political orientation qualified the observed pattern. A parallel ANCOVA model yielded no significant effects on explicit self-concepts, $Fs < 1.60$, ps $> .20$.

In sum, interpersonal connections again moderated responses to social exclusion, as implied by shared reality theory and suggested by previous research on social tuning. Findings from Experiments 2 and 3 indicate that interpersonal connections can manifest themselves on both measures of other-stereotyping and self-stereotyping alike. In addition, as in Experiment 2, the moderating effect of interpersonal connections was observed on implicit but not on explicit measures. This finding adds to a large and growing literature suggesting that socially sensitive, system-justifying attitudes related to racism and sexism are sometimes better assessed implicitly than explicitly (for reviews see Greenwald et al., 2009; Hardin & Banaji, in press), and resonates with the claim that psychological defenses, including identification with aggressors, may operate unconsciously (Freud, 1946/1966; see also Cramer, 2000; Erdelyi, 2001).

1. We included gender identification as a covariate because past research shows that for members of negatively stereotyped groups, group identification tends to conflict with system justification (cf. Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 1994; e.g., O'Brien & Major, 2005). Without the covariate, the Exclusion X Interpersonal Connection interaction was marginally significant, $F(1, 58) = 5.23$, $p = .06$.

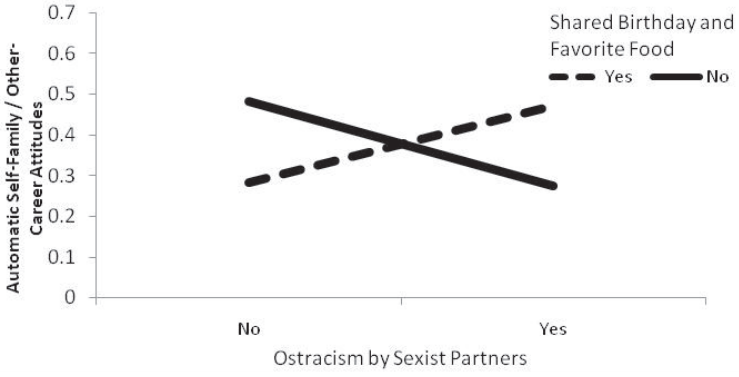

FIGURE 2. Women's automatic self-family/other-career associations as a function of interpersonal connection and ostracism from sexist partners (Experiment 3).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across three experiments, participants entered into temporary relationships with people whose ostensible attitudes were consistent with extant class, race, and gender hierarchies. Extending previous research on social tuning, all three experiments demonstrated that system-justifying attitudes were increased through mere inclusion in a simple game of catch with people who espoused or otherwise represented system-justifying attitudes—whether implicit anti-labor bias (Experiment 1), implicit anti-black prejudice (Experiment 2), or implicit sex-typed self-concepts among women (Experiment 3).

Perhaps more striking, Experiments 2 and 3 demonstrated that implicit social tuning away from the system-justifying attitudes of others as a function of social exclusion was eliminated if not reversed when participants were even trivially connected to their system-justifying partners. Although participants exhibited greater implicit anti-black prejudice (Experiment 2) and women exhibited more implicit labor-related self-stereotyping (Experiment 3) when they were included than excluded by ostensible racists and sexists, respectively, the experimental instantiation of a shared birthday and food preference was sufficient to eliminate the effect of social exclusion. These findings suggest that under conditions in which interpersonal relationships are not easily eschewed, people may respond to impoliteness, insensitivity, or perhaps even flagrant rejection with renewed efforts to share reality—even if it involves adopting racist and sexist attitudes.

In sum, this research demonstrates across three types of system-justifying attitudes that interpersonal dynamics animate attitudes that justify the status quo, even when they could well be incompatible with attitudes espoused outside the context of the relationship, and even when the perspectives reflect poorly on the self (see also Sinclair, Hustinger, et al., 2005). Hence, inequitable systems may persist in part because system-justifying attitudes are shared and maintained in ongoing interpersonal relationships.

EVERYDAY INTERACTION AND SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION

Years of system justification research has shown that people are motivated to explain and justify the status quo, sometimes even at considerable cost to the self (for

reviews see Jost et al., 2004; Kay & Zanna, 2009). Although research animated by system justification theory to date has focused most on epistemic and existential motivations (but see Jost et al., 2008), the current research presents evidence that the motivation to manage interpersonal relationships can also contribute to the endorsement of system-justifying attitudes.

From the viewpoint of the individual, the status quo is composed of groups that include them, groups that exclude them, everyday interactions with individuals who belong to these groups, and the perceived hierarchical relationships among these groups. Indeed, in an increasingly multicultural world, the dynamics involved in living, breathing interpersonal relationships are arguably as important as more abstract political and ideological factors (cf. Marx & Engels, 1848/1972). We argue that the stability of economic, racial, and gender systems is sustained in large part by everyday interpersonal interaction. The experiments reported here suggest that interpersonal ties with others who espouse or otherwise represent system-justifying attitudes can function to encourage pro-system thoughts and discourage anti-system thoughts, thereby allowing people to maintain their support for the status quo even when it may be incompatible with their personal interests and ideological convictions.

Our argument emphasizes the idea that system justification occurs in a context of interpersonal relationships, especially ongoing, everyday connections people make within and across group boundaries. Everyday interpersonal connections and affiliations may appear mundane and superficial, yet their very ubiquity likely plays a major role in how the status quo is perceived and experienced. People gossip, argue, confront, conform, and make peace in the neighborhood, workplaces, schools, and shopping malls—situations in which people interact with others who include them and others who exclude them (e.g., Jackman, 1994). People probably rarely connect and interact with others for the explicit sake of preserving the status quo, yet interpersonal interactions do shape how people see and experience the status quo. From this perspective, social interactions among people who differ in status or power will not always reduce ideological allegiance to social hierarchy, but sometimes reinforce and maintain it. Moreover, the research we report here demonstrates that the maintenance of system-justifying ideology does not necessarily require positive interactions with system-justifying others. Under conditions of even minimal interpersonal consequence, people may respond to social rejection with relationship-relevant forms of system justification.

Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* begins with a conflict between the workers (hand) and the thinkers (head), and the protagonist Maria attempts to persuade the restless workers not to revolt but to wait for the arrival of the Mediator (heart). Can the heart pacify workers? Complementing Jackman's (1994) argument in the Velvet Glove that challenges to the status quo are mitigated by ideologies that glorify the subjugated, the current research suggests that challenges to the status quo may also be mitigated by simple cooperation with those who espouse hostile attitudes toward the subjugated. Although the status quo is harmful to many, interpersonal ties with people who espouse attitudes that justify the status quo may elicit system justification among those whose compliance is essential to sustain it.

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