

Running Head: COMMENTARY

This self-archived version is provided for scholarly purposes only. The correct reference for this article is as follows:

Rubin, M., & Hewstone, M. (2004). Social identity, system justification, and social dominance: Commentary on Reicher, Jost et al., and Sidanius et al. *Political Psychology*, 25, 823-844. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00400.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00400.x)

Abstract

The articles by Reicher (2004), Jost, Banaji, and Nosek (2004), and Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, and Levin (2004) discuss the strengths and weaknesses of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), and social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993). The latter two theories grew out of a critique of social identity theory, but this critique relates more to deficiencies in social identity research than to deficiencies in the theory itself. More balanced and comprehensive social identity research is required in order to allow a fair assessment of the theory's limitations. In addition, Reicher (2004) and Huddy (2004) are correct that only social identity theory offers the potential for explaining social change and social stability.

KEYWORDS: social identity theory, system justification theory, social dominance theory, ingroup favoritism, outgroup favoritism, intergroup discrimination.

Social Identity, System Justification, and Social Dominance: Commentary on Reicher, Jost et al., and Sidanius et al.

In this article, we comment on articles by Reicher (2004), Jost, Banaji, and Nosek (2004), and Sidanius, Pratto, Van Laar, and Levin (2004). These authors discuss the explanations of intergroup discrimination put forward by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), and social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993).

Social identity theory was developed two decades before system justification theory and social dominance theory (Tajfel, 1972, 1974; Turner, 1975), and the authors of these more recent theories have acknowledged that social identity theory has been a positive influence on their own work (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius, 1993). Indeed, system justification theory and social dominance theory have been developed in order to “supplement” and “integrate” social identity theory, rather than to oppose it (Jost et al., 2004; Sidanius et al., 2004). Nonetheless, both of these more recent theories are prefaced with a detailed critique of social identity theory that is then used as the justification for developing novel theoretical approaches (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius, 1993), and both Sidanius et al. (2004) and Jost et al. (2004) reiterate this critique in their current papers.

Below, we outline social identity theory and comment on the system justification/social dominance critique. We then evaluate system justification theory and social dominance theory. We conclude by considering the strengths and weaknesses of all three theories.

Social Identity Theory

Three Components of Social Identity Theory

There are several different interpretations of social identity theory (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1987). In light of this diversity, we feel that it is necessary to summarize our own interpretation. Following Tajfel (1978c, p. 7; 1979, p. 184), we interpret social identity theory as consisting of three major components. We label these the *social psychological* component, the *system component* (cf. Jost et al., 2004), and the *societal* component.

The social-psychological component. Social identity theory’s social-psychological component explains the cognitive and motivational processes that are responsible for a type of intergroup discrimination known as *social competition* (Turner, 1975). The cognitive process of social categorization is thought to make social identity salient such that self-evaluation becomes synonymous with ingroup evaluation (Tajfel, 1978d). The need for self-esteem is thought to motivate group members to adopt various cognitive and behavioral *identity management strategies* (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; van Knippenberg, 1989). Social competition is a behavioral identity management strategy that may be used to change the status positions of the ingroup and/or outgroup in order to create or protect high ingroup status.

The system component. Social identity theory’s system component qualifies the social psychological component by setting out the conditions under which social competition will and will not occur. The system component specifies three socio-structural variables: (a) the *permeability* of group boundaries, (b) the *stability* of the intergroup status system, and (c) the *legitimacy* of the intergroup status system. The system component predicts that social competition will occur only when group boundaries are impermeable and the intergroup status system is unstable and illegitimate (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45).

The societal component. Social identity theory’s social psychological and system components explain *general* processes that are thought to apply across all group members and all social systems (Billig, 1996, p. 346; Wetherell, 1982, p. 209). However, Tajfel believed that it is impossible for these general processes to manifest themselves outside of

specific societal contexts (Tajfel, 1979, p. 184-185; Tajfel, 1981, p. 21; Turner, 1996, p. 18; see also Billig, 1996, p. 347; Reicher, 2004). Consequently, social identity theory's general hypotheses only translate into predictions about specific cases of intergroup behavior only after the societal component has been taken into account.¹

The societal component relates to the specific historical, cultural, political, and economic context that contains and defines the groups and their status system. The specifics of this societal context may be described as the *social reality* of the intergroup situation (Doosje, Spears, Ellemers, & Koomen, 1999, p. 47; Tajfel, 1979, p. 185). Two aspects of the societal context that are particularly important are (a) *societal norms* and (b) the *societal value* of intergroup behavior.

Societal norms prescribe the background intergroup relations against which social competition may be predicted to operate. For example, societal norms may prescribe outgroup favoritism. In this case, social competition may take the form of reductions in outgroup favoritism (e.g., Brown, 1978, p. 422; Spears & Manstead, 1989).

The *societal value* of intergroup behavior determines the behavior's potential for creating or protecting high ingroup status. In theory, any form of intergroup behavior can be used to create or protect ingroup status as long as group members perceive it to have a positive societal value. Hence, it is possible for social competition to occur through intergroup fairness or outgroup favoritism, although it is more common for it to occur through ingroup favoritism (Reicher, 2004; see also Caddick, 1982, p. 149; Wetherell, 1982, p. 234). Importantly, social identity theory predicts that social competition will lead to intergroup *conflict* only when there is intergroup agreement about the value of intergroup behavior (Tajfel, 1982, p. 495; Turner, 1975, p. 22).

To summarize social identity theory, the social-psychological component explains *why* people show social competition, the system component explains *when* people show social competition, and the societal component explains *how* (in what way) people show social competition. All three components need to be taken into account in order to make predictions about specific instances of intergroup behavior (Tajfel, 1979).

Three Types of Discrimination: Realistic Competition, Social Competition, and Consensual Discrimination

An important and often overlooked feature of social identity theory is that it distinguishes between three different types of discrimination. First of all, the theory distinguishes between two forms of intergroup bias: realistic competition and social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 41; Turner, 1975).

Realistic competition is driven by personal self-interest and occurs when there is an objective conflict of group interests over a limited material resource (e.g., money, territory; Turner, 1975). Social identity theory relegates the explanation of realistic competition to realistic conflict theory (Sherif, 1967; for a review, see Jackson, 1993).

Social competition is driven by the need for social self-esteem and can occur in the absence of objective conflicts of group interests (e.g., Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Notably, social identity theory's explanation of social competition is designed to supplement, rather than to replace, realistic conflict theory's explanation of realistic competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 34).

In addition to these two forms of intergroup *bias*, social identity theory acknowledges that there are often cases in which people have *accurate* perceptions of intergroup relations. Tajfel and Turner (1979) described the accurate perception of an intergroup status hierarchy as a case of "consensual status... where subjective and accorded prestige are identical" (p. 37). Furthermore, they assumed that, under some conditions, group members will behave in accordance with the prevailing status hierarchy. In other words, members of high- and low-status groups will show ingroup favoritism and outgroup favoritism respectively (see also

Turner, 1980, p. 142; Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 142). We call this third form of intergroup discrimination *consensual discrimination* (see Rubin & Hewstone, 1998, p. 44).

The concept of consensual discrimination is central to the contentious issue of outgroup favoritism (Jost et al., 2004; Sidanius et al., 2004). According to social identity theory, most cases of outgroup favoritism represent instances of consensual discrimination shown by members of low-status groups when intergroup status is stable and legitimate.

Consensual discrimination is most likely to occur when intergroup status is stable and legitimate because these conditions indicate a high degree of intergroup consensus about each group's status. Consequently, according to social identity theory's system component, consensual discrimination should be inversely related to social competition: As intergroup status hierarchies become more stable and legitimate, social competition should decrease and consensual discrimination should increase (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, pp. 37, 45).

We should also note that, strictly speaking, it is inappropriate to describe consensual discrimination in terms of "ingroup" and "outgroup" effects because self-categorization and ingroup identification play no part in determining this type of discrimination. It is more accurate to say that members of both high- and low-status groups favor the high-status group over the low-status group (Brauer, 2001; Brauer & Judd, 2000; cf. Jost et al., 2004, Hypothesis 6, Hypothesis 7, Hypothesis 8, Hypothesis 8'). This description is more appropriate because it highlights the fact that there is intergroup *consensus* about the nature of the intergroup status relationship.

The independence of consensual discrimination from self-categorization can be illustrated by considering intergroup judgements made by people who are not affiliated to either of the groups involved. Even these unbiased judges should favor high-status groups over low-status groups, given their knowledge of the intergroup status hierarchy and their acceptance of it as being stable and legitimate (e.g., Bourhis & Hill, 1982, pp. 432-433; see also Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002, p. 585).

In summary, social identity theory distinguishes between three types of intergroup discrimination: realistic competition, social competition, and what we call consensual discrimination. Social identity theory's social-psychological component focuses on the cognitive and motivational processes that produce social competition. However, the theory's system component makes clear predictions about when each of the three types of discrimination is most likely to occur. Realistic competition is most likely to occur when there is an objective conflict of interests between groups. Social competition is most likely to occur when intergroup status is unstable and illegitimate. Finally, consensual discrimination is most likely to occur when intergroup status is stable and legitimate.²

The System Justification/Social Dominance Critique of Social Identity Theory

The proponents of system justification theory and social dominance theory put forward a detailed critique of social identity theory as a justification for developing their own novel theoretical approaches (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius, 1993). To our knowledge, there has never been a detailed response to this critique. In this section, we provide a point-by-point commentary on the 11 major claims of the system justification/social dominance critique.³

Claim 1: Social identity theory over-emphasizes ingroup favoritism. Jost et al. (2004) argue that social identity theory over-generalizes ingroup favoritism and treats it as a ubiquitous default feature of intergroup behavior. We agree with Reicher (2004) that this is an over-simplification. According to social identity theory, social competition and conflict are predicted to occur only when group boundaries are impermeable, intergroup status is unstable and illegitimate, and there is intergroup agreement about the value of intergroup behavior (Tajfel, 1982, p. 495; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45; Turner, 1975, p. 22).

Furthermore, social competition is thought to manifest itself as ingroup favoritism only when

this form of behavior is perceived to have a positive societal value (Caddick, 1982, p. 149; Reicher, 2004; Wetherell, 1982, p. 234). Hence, it is more accurate to say that social identity theory's social psychological component treats social competition, rather than ingroup favoritism, as a default phenomenon, and that the generality and expression of social competition are moderated by system-level and societal-level variables.

Claim 2: Social identity theory under-emphasizes outgroup favoritism. Jost et al. (2004) also argue that social identity theory under-emphasizes outgroup favoritism and that it is ill-equipped to deal with this phenomenon. We accept that, in practice, social identity researchers have tended to investigate social competition in the form of ingroup favoritism. We also accept that social identity theory's social psychological component is unable to explain outgroup favoritism insofar as social competition does not usually take the form of outgroup favoritism (Sidanius, 1993). However, we do not accept that outgroup favoritism is under-emphasized in social identity theory's theoretical analysis.

Social identity theory makes clear references to outgroup favoritism in its explanation of intergroup behavior. As Jost and Banaji (1994, p. 8) noted, Tajfel and Turner (1979) criticized realistic conflict theory for not providing a satisfactory account of outgroup favouritism: "Under some conditions at least, low social status seems to be correlated with an enhancement, rather than a lessening, of positive out-group attitudes" (p. 37). They explained this outgroup favoritism by assuming that "subordinate groups...internalize a wider social evaluation of themselves as 'inferior' or 'second class', and this consensual inferiority is reproduced as relative self-derogation" (p. 37). In other words, social identity theory explains outgroup favoritism as an instance of consensual discrimination shown by members of low-status groups (see also Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 142).⁴

Importantly, social identity theory also specifies *when* members of low-status groups will and will not show outgroup favoritism. Tajfel and Turner (1979) stated that "where social-structural differences in the distribution of resources have been institutionalized, legitimized, and justified through a consensually accepted status system (or at least a status system that is sufficiently firm and pervasive to prevent the creation of cognitive alternatives to it), the result has been less and not more ethnocentrism in the different status groups" (p. 37) and that, conversely, "consensual inferiority will be rejected most rapidly when the situation is perceived as both unstable and illegitimate" (p. 45). In other words, social identity theory's system component predicts that members of low-status groups will show outgroup favoritism (i.e., consensual discrimination) when intergroup status is stable and legitimate (Turner & Reynolds, 2001, pp. 141-142) and that they will show ingroup favoritism (i.e., social competition) when intergroup status is unstable and illegitimate.

Claim 3: Outgroup favoritism is inconsistent with social identity theory's predictions concerning low-status groups. Sidanius et al. (2004) raise Hinkle and Brown's (1990) criticism that "the common occurrence of out-group favouritism among low-status groups is actually contrary to the hypothesis, derivable from social identity theory, that low-status groups have the greatest motivation to enhance their social identities and thus should be particularly likely to manifest pronounced in-group favouritism" (p. 52). Contrary to Hinkle and Brown, however, social identity theory does not predict that members of low-status groups are more motivated than members of high-status groups to engage in social competition. Instead, the theory predicts that members of low-status groups are just as motivated to *create* a positive social identity as members of high-status groups are to *protect* their positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45). Social identity theory proposes that the key moderators of social competition are system stability and legitimacy, not ingroup status (Turner, 1999, p. 24; Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 140).

Claim 4: Outgroup favoritism is inconsistent with social identity theory's assumption that group members seek positive social identities. Jost and Banaji (1994, p. 8) highlighted

another criticism made by Hinkle and Brown (1990): “Out-group favoritism *per se* does not fit with [social identity theory’s] view that group members create and maintain positive social identities by engaging in in-group favouring processes of intergroup comparison” (p. 49). Before dealing with this criticism, it is important to clarify two points. First, social identity theory does not assume that group members are *always* able to create and maintain positive social identities (Turner & Reynolds, 2001, pp. 141-142). Instead, Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that “social identity may be positive *or negative* according to the evaluations (which tend to be consensual, either within or across groups) of those groups that contribute to an individual’s social identity” (p. 40, emphasis added). Second, social identity theory assumes that social identity may be *secure* or *insecure*, depending on whether the associated intergroup status system is stable or unstable respectively (Tajfel, 1978a, p. 87; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45). Members of low-status groups in stable status systems are assumed to have secure negative social identities and are therefore expected to exhibit outgroup favoritism (i.e., consensual discrimination).

Social identity theory does not assume that the need for a positive social identity affects intergroup behavior when social identity is secure and intergroup status is stable. Instead, the theory predicts that this motive affects intergroup *cognition*. Specifically, members of low-status groups in stable status hierarchies are predicted to adopt cognitive identity management strategies that avoid or reduce the impact of their secure negative social identity and the outgroup favoritism that it entails (“social creativity” strategies; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 43). Tajfel and Turner originally described three such strategies in their 1979 paper. However, social identity theorists have proposed an array of additional cognitive identity management strategies since then (e.g., Blanz et al., 1998; Rubin, Hewstone, & Voci, 2001; Van Knippenberg, 1989).

Claim 5: Social identity theory cannot explain institutional discrimination. Sidanius et al. (2004) propose that social identity theory is unable to explain institutional discrimination. We agree that institutional discrimination has not been the focus of social identity research. However, this research lacuna does not necessarily mean that social identity theory is unable to explain institutional discrimination.

In our opinion, institutional discrimination can be accounted for in terms of consensual discrimination. Specific societal norms embodied in the institution prescribe the nature and extent of this discrimination. For example, a police force may contain norms that prescribe discrimination against black people. According to the social identity account, black police officers should engage in racial ingroup derogation and outgroup favoritism to the extent that they identify with their police force and internalize its institutional norms.

Claim 6: Social identity theory under-emphasizes social consensus. Jost and Banaji (1994, p. 6) characterized social identity theory as a “conflict theory” that under-emphasizes social consensus. Although we agree that social identity theory focuses on the conflict between groups over definitions of reality (Reicher, 2004), we do not think that this implies that the theory under-emphasizes social consensus. Indeed, the concept of social consensus plays two key roles in social identity theory.

First, social consensus is regarded as a necessary condition for conflict based on social competition. Specifically, the theory’s societal component predicts that the process of social competition will only lead to intergroup conflict when there is intergroup *agreement* about the value of the intergroup behavior that the groups are engaging in (Tajfel, 1982, p. 495; Turner, 1975, p. 22). For example, if Group A equates status with wealth and Group B equates status with generosity, then Group A could increase its subjective status by awarding itself more money than Group B, and Group B could increase its subjective status by awarding itself less money than Group A. In this scenario, Group A attributes a positive value to ingroup favoritism and Group B attributes a positive value to outgroup favoritism. This

lack of intergroup agreement about the value of intergroup behavior means that both groups achieve a subjective positive status without engaging in intergroup conflict (for a real life example, see Wetherell, 1982, p. 234).

Second, social consensus is thought to be necessary in order to achieve a *secure* social identity (Tajfel, 1978a, pp. 95-96). Indeed, the aim of social competition is to achieve intergroup agreement that the ingroup is better than the outgroup. In other words, the aim of social competition is to produce consensual discrimination in favor of the ingroup (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 41).

Claim 7: The concept of “social reality” does not explain the occurrence of outgroup favoritism. Jost et al. (2004) question the role of social reality in social identity theory’s explanation of outgroup favoritism. According to social identity theory, social reality is based on “*socially shared* systems of beliefs” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 36, emphasis in original; Tajfel, 1982, p. 495). The theory proposes that it is functional and adaptive for people to hold accurate and unbiased representations of this socially shared reality (Tajfel, 1981, p. 68; Van Knippenberg & Dijksterhuis, 2000). It is this need to hold accurate representations of social reality that is thought to constrain the influence that the need for a positive social identity has on intergroup behavior (Doosje et al., 1999, p. 49).

As an illustration of how accurate perceptions of social reality constrain intergroup behavior, consider two football teams that have just finished a game in which one team won and the other team lost. According to social identity theory, the need for a positive social identity would motivate members of the losing team to adopt one or more cognitive identity management strategies in order to mitigate the impact of their relatively secure negative social identity. However, if members of the losing team are asked who won the game, the need to maintain an accurate representation of social reality constrains the response that they could give: Although they would like to say “we won the game” in order to satisfy their need for a positive social identity, this response would be inaccurate, dysfunctional, and maladaptive. Instead, members of the losing team must admit that they lost the game and that the other team won. System justification theorists would argue that this admission of defeat (i.e., outgroup favoritism) represents an active attempt to support the status inequality between the two football teams. In contrast, social identity theorists offer the more parsimonious explanation that this response is simply a passive reflection of the current status quo as specified in a socially shared reality.

Claim 8: Social identity theory’s self-esteem hypothesis has received little empirical support. Sidanius et al. (2004) note that the evidence for social identity theory’s self-esteem hypothesis is equivocal. We have also reviewed this evidence and found it wanting in several respects (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). As Hewstone et al. (2002) pointed out however, social identity theory qualifies the self-esteem hypothesis in a number of ways and, given that researchers have tended to ignore these qualifications, it could be argued that the hypothesis has not yet been tested in an appropriate manner.

First, the self-esteem hypothesis only refers to social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975). Failure to control for realistic competition and consensual discrimination in some tests of the self-esteem hypothesis may account for inconsistent results, given that both of these latter forms of discrimination may also be related to self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 2001, p. 443; Hertel & Kerr, 2001; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998, p. 44).

Second, the self-esteem hypothesis only refers to *specific social state* self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Turner, 1999, pp. 24-25). The common use of global, personal, and/or trait self-esteem scales has provided imprecise tests of the self-esteem hypothesis (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 140).

Third, the self-esteem hypothesis is qualified in terms of ingroup identification (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 41). Failure to take account of ingroup identification has led to insensitive tests of this hypothesis.

Fourth, social identity theory assumes that the *need* for self-esteem is independent of current levels of self-esteem. Specifically, people with high self-esteem are thought to be just as motivated to *protect* their self-esteem as people with low self-esteem are to *enhance* their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45; Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 140; see also Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988). Tests that have equated low self-esteem with a high need for self-esteem are inconsistent with social identity theory's assumptions.

Finally, only *successful* social competition is thought to increase self-esteem (Farsides, 1995; Turner, 1999, p. 24; Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 140). In other words, only social competition that is subjectively perceived to bring about consensually-agreed increases in relative ingroup status should lead to increases in self-esteem. Failure to consider the perceived success of social competition has led to insensitive tests of the self-esteem hypothesis.

Claim 9: Social identity theory provides a better explanation of ingroup favoritism than of outgroup derogation. Sidanius et al. (2004) propose that social identity theory is better at explaining ingroup favoritism than outgroup derogation (see also Turner, 1978, pp. 249-250; Turner, 1975, p. 23). Historically, intergroup bias in social psychological research has usually been analysed in terms of ingroup favoritism, rather than outgroup derogation (Brewer, 1979). Furthermore, given that much of this research has investigated social identity theory, it could be argued that social identity researchers have focused on ingroup favoritism more than outgroup derogation. However, this asymmetry in research practice does not necessarily imply that social identity theory is better at explaining ingroup favoritism than outgroup derogation.

Social identity theory emphasizes the *relative* and *comparative* nature of group status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Theoretically, outgroup derogation provides exactly the same social psychological function as ingroup favoritism vis-à-vis social competition (see also Crocker, Blaine, & Luhtanen, 1993, p. 52). Admittedly, the societal value of ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation is likely to vary from one intergroup context to another, and in some situations it may be more effective or desirable to engage in social competition by favoring the ingroup than by derogating the outgroup. However, social identity theory does not posit any general principle whereby ingroup favoritism is more appropriate or successful than outgroup derogation for creating and protecting ingroup status.

Claim 10: Social identity theory ignores group power. Sidanius et al. (2004) argue that social identity theory fails to address the issue of group power. Contrary to this assessment, it could be argued that social identity theory incorporates group power in its system component. For example, Tajfel (1982, pp. 488-489) proposed that system stability increases as a function of intergroup power differentials (see Reicher, 2004). Similarly, Ng (1982, 1986) proposed that intergroup status is most unstable when groups have equal power (control) over the intergroup situation (see also Bourhis, 1994; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985, 1991). Nevertheless, we agree with Sidanius et al. (2004) that the original version of social identity theory lacks a sophisticated theoretical analysis of group power (see also Spears, Jetten, & Doosje, 2001).

Claim 11: Social identity theory provides a reductionist explanation of discrimination. Sidanius et al. (2004) argue that social identity theory is "primarily psychological" and therefore reductionist. In our opinion, two aspects of social identity theory make it nonreductionist.

First, the theory's "psychological" component is primarily social and therefore nonreductionist: Specifically, self-esteem is conceptualised as a social phenomenon because

(a) it is shared by members of the same group and (b) it is dependent on intergroup relations with other groups.

Second, the theory's social psychological component is designed to *interact* with the wider social context: The need for social self-esteem is thought to interact with general social system variables and specific societal variables, and these are thought to determine when and how the need for self-esteem influences intergroup behavior (Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel, 1981, p. 21; Turner & Bourhis, 1996, p. 30). We agree with Reicher (2004) that social identity theory only appears to be reductionist when self-esteem is conceived as a personality trait and the theory's social psychological component is divorced from its system and societal components (see also Tajfel, 1979, p. 184; Turner, 1996, p. 18).

To conclude our commentary on the system justification/social dominance critique, we believe that it is more appropriate to describe many of the criticisms of social identity theory as criticisms of social identity *research* rather than of the theory itself. It is true that social identity researchers have spent more time investigating social competition, ingroup favoritism, and social conflict than they have spent investigating institutional discrimination, outgroup favoritism, outgroup derogation, and social consensus. However, this research bias does not mean that these latter phenomena cannot be explained by social identity theory. The social identity account of these phenomena needs to be tested before critics can argue that the theory needs to be supplemented by additional theories.

System Justification Theory

System justification theory's central hypothesis is that people are motivated to justify the status quo of the status systems that their social groups inhabit (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Under some conditions, this motivation is thought to clash with the need to create and maintain a positive social identity (Jost & Banaji, 1994). In particular, system justification theory uses the concept of system justification to explain outgroup favoritism shown by members of low-status groups: Whereas social identity theory assumes that outgroup favoritism represents consensual discrimination, system justification theory assumes that outgroup favoritism represents system justification.

Critical Tests of System Justification Theory

We believe that critical tests of system justification theory need to address a series of methodological issues and competing theoretical explanations. We outline these issues and explanations below.

First, we agree with Jost et al.'s (2004, footnote 3) assessment of the distinction between consensual discrimination and system justification: Social identity theory proposes that group members *passively* reflect stable and legitimate status systems, whereas system justification theory proposes that group members *actively* legitimize and bolster status systems. Given this distinction, critical tests of system justification theory need to do more than show that group members accurately perceive, understand, re-iterate, and explain the processes and outcomes of inequalitarian social systems (whether on implicit or explicit measures). The most convincing evidence for system justification theory needs to show that members of low-status groups behave in ways that actively legitimize and stabilize, protect and defend, and support and favor the relevant social system. In other words, system justification researchers need to show that people are *biased* in favor of their social systems, rather than simply cognizant of, and responsive towards, those systems. As an example of what we mean, a convincing test of system justification theory would show that members of low-status groups rate a relevant high-status outgroup significantly more positively than do respondents who are unaffiliated with either of the groups. This comparison between the responses of affiliated and unaffiliated perceivers would allow researchers to distinguish between biased evaluations in support of the status system (i.e., system justification) and

accurate descriptions that reflect the social reality of the status system (i.e., consensual discrimination).

Second, system justification researchers need to show that the “palliative functions” of system justification (Jost & Hunyady, 2002) are distinct from the cognitive identity management strategies proposed by social identity theorists (Blanz et al., 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Van Knippenberg, 1989).

Third, system justification researchers need to demonstrate that there is a consistency between what they define as ingroups, outgroups, and social systems and what their research participants define as ingroups, outgroups, and social systems. What appears to be a case of system justification from the researchers’ perspective may actually be a case of ingroup favoritism if participants perceive the system to be their ingroup. So, for example, support for George W. Bush and the U.S. government after the 9/11 terrorist attacks may be reinterpreted as an instance of ingroup favoritism following ingroup threat, rather than system justification following system threat (cf. Jost et al., 2004).

Finally, in order for outgroup favoritism to be interpreted as system justification, it needs to be demonstrated on dimensions that respondents perceive to be directly related to intergroup status. It is difficult to believe that group members exhibit outgroup favoritism on status-*irrelevant* dimensions in order to support inequalities on status-*relevant* dimensions (see Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002; Overbeck, Jost, Mosso, & Flizik, 2004).

Explaining Stability and Change

In contrast to social identity theory, system justification theory treats system stability and legitimacy as outcomes, rather than as a priori moderators, of intergroup perception and behavior (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 9). Crucially, however, system justification theory does not replace social identity theory’s moderating variables with any clear system-level alternatives (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 16). Consequently, the theory is unable to predict when social groups will adopt strategies that are designed to bring about social change (i.e., social competition) and when they will adopt strategies that are designed to bring about social stability (i.e., system justification; see also Sidanius et al., 2004). Moreover, the absence of moderating variables means that there is nothing to prevent the general motive for system justification from causing social systems to come to rest in permanent states of social stability, rather than to fluctuate between stability and change as social identity theory assumes (see also Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004). It is for this reason that system justification theorists view the prospects for social change as “not good” based on system justification theory’s analysis (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003, p. 32) and “overly optimistic” based on social identity theory’s analysis (Jost et al., 2004).

Social Dominance Theory

Social dominance theory (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) proposes that society contains ideologies that either promote or attenuate intergroup hierarchies. Individual differences in the extent to which these competing ideologies are accepted are represented by social dominance orientation (SDO). Individuals with a high SDO have a strong desire to promote intergroup hierarchies and for their ingroups to dominate their outgroups.

Three Versions of Social Dominance Theory

Like most theories, social dominance theory has undergone several revisions over the years. However, unlike most theories, these revisions have involved fundamental changes to its central hypothesis. These changes are most apparent in the changing definition of SDO.

Sidanius (1993) originally defined SDO as “the degree to which individuals desire social dominance and superiority for themselves and their primordial groups over other groups” (p. 209). Hence, this first version of social dominance theory aimed to explain ingroup favoritism (e.g., Sidanius, Pratto, & Mitchell, 1994).

The second version of social dominance theory was broadened so that SDO not only included “(a) a...desire for and value given to in-group dominance over out-groups, [but also] (b) the desire for nonegalitarian, hierarchical relationships between groups within the social system” (Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994, p. 1007). Hence, SDO was thought to represent two needs: the need for ingroup domination -- *specific* SDO -- and the need for intergroup hierarchies in general -- *general* SDO (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Jost et al., 2004).

The dual conceptualization of SDO led to difficulties concerning the relationship between SDO and group status. Specifically, members of low-status groups with a high SDO encounter a conflict between the desire to consider their ingroup as dominant (specific SDO) and the desire to promote the current intergroup hierarchy (general SDO). Social dominance theorists have attempted to deal with this problem in several different ways (Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Rabinowitz, 1999; for critiques, see Schmitt & Branscombe, 2003; Turner & Reynolds, 2003).

The third and most recent version of social dominance theory excludes a consideration of specific SDO and focuses on general SDO per se. Hence, Sidanius, Levin, Federico, and Pratto (2001) defined SDO as a “general desire for unequal relations among social groups, regardless of whether this means ingroup domination or ingroup subordination” (p. 312, italics omitted; see also Sidanius et al., 2004, Footnote 4; Jost et al., 2004).

The changes in the definition of SDO may explain the differing views about social dominance theory among the participants in this forum (Huddy, 2004). The original version of theory may be criticized for predicting ubiquitous ingroup favoritism (Reicher, 2004). In contrast, the most recent version of the theory is better at providing an explanation of the *absence* of ingroup favoritism amongst low-status groups (Jost et al., 2004).

The distinction between the three different versions of social dominance theory is important from a practical perspective as well as a theoretical perspective. Although there is a relatively large body of evidence supporting social dominance theory (for reviews, see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), it is more appropriate to characterize this evidence as supporting three separate SDO hypotheses, rather than one single theory.

Problems with Personality Theories of Discrimination

Sidanius et al. (2004) characterize social dominance theory as a personality theory of discrimination insofar as “people’s ethnocentric orientations and socio-political attitudes are reflections of and rooted in personality and cross-situationally consistent behavioral predispositions”. Consequently, social dominance theory is vulnerable to general criticisms of personality theories of discrimination (e.g., Brown & Turner, 1981, p. 44; Reynolds, Turner, Haslam, & Ryan, 2001, p. 428; Tajfel, 1978b, p. 50).

Personality theories provide relatively inflexible explanations of intergroup discrimination because they explain differences in discrimination in terms of differences in personality that are assumed to be stable across different situations. Consequently, personality theories have difficulty explaining how the same person can show markedly different degrees of discrimination in different situations. Furthermore, personality theories have difficulty explaining how the same *social group* of people can show markedly different degrees of discrimination in different situations. For example, where social identity theory might explain the Feminist Movement in terms of changes in the stability and legitimacy of the intergender status system (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988, pp. 210-211), social dominance theory would need to posit widespread changes in female and/or male SDO (see also Huddy, 2004).

It is important to note that the aetiology of personality differences (e.g., genetic, cultural, or both genetic and cultural) is irrelevant with respect to the above criticisms. Whatever their origin, the defining feature of personality differences is that they are assumed

to be cross-situationally consistent. Consequently, they cannot be used to explain cross-situational *variations* in social behavior.

In defence of social dominance theory, Sidanius et al. (2004) argue that SDO interacts with the social context in a number of ways. First, the influence of SDO is thought to be moderated by group identification and group threat (Pratto & Shih, 2000; Sidanius, Pratto, & Mitchell, 1994). However, arguing that personality and situation interact to influence behavior does not invalidate criticisms that are directed at the personality-based assumptions of the theory. Second, social context is thought to influence current levels of SDO (e.g., Levin, 1996, as cited in Sidanius et al., 2004; Guimond, Damburn, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003). Conceptualizing SDO as a state rather than a trait makes it a much more flexible construct. Again, however, if the primary explanatory power of SDO depends on its conception as a *stable* individual disposition towards intergroup hierarchies, then social dominance theory will always have difficulty explaining how the same individual or social group can desire to enhance intergroup hierarchies in some situations but attenuate them in others (Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004).

Conclusions

The System Justification/Social Dominance Critique of Social Identity Theory

We considered the system justification/social dominance critique of social identity theory in detail and concluded that, in most cases, this critique highlights research biases amongst social identity researchers rather than conceptual deficiencies in the theory itself. Consequently, we do not believe that the critique per se provides a strong justification for supplementing social identity theory with additional novel theories. If criticisms are aimed at the research practices of social identity theorists, then solutions should involve changing these research practices, rather than developing new theories. The system justification/social dominance critique should act as an impetus for social identity researchers to devote more attention to the phenomena of outgroup favoritism, institutional discrimination, social consensus, and outgroup derogation. The necessity of supplementary theories can only be established after the results of this additional research have been appraised. In this respect, we agree with Reicher (2004) that, even after more than 30 years of research, the social identity tradition should be judged more as a “propitious beginning” than as a “finished article”.

Limitations of Social Identity Theory

Aside from calling for a more balanced and comprehensive research effort, we believe that there is room for theoretical elaboration and development within the social identity approach. The system justification/social dominance critique highlights two potential areas for theoretical development.

First, as we mentioned previously, social identity theory lacks a sophisticated analysis of group power (Sidanius et al., 2004; Spears et al., 2001). Theorists need to explicate the relationships between power, status, stability, and legitimacy if they are to successfully incorporate this variable in social identity theory’s system component (see Bourhis, 1994; Ng, 1982, 1986; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991; Tajfel, 1982, pp. 488-489).

Second, the theory treats system stability and legitimacy as a priori moderating variables per se (Reicher, 1996). However, following the system justification approach, we believe that social identity theorists also need to investigate the influence of intergroup behavior on perceptions of system stability and legitimacy (see also Reicher, 1996, pp. 325-326; Stangor & Jost, 1997, pp. 347-348). In particular, it seems important to understand how social identity motives bias perceptions of system stability and legitimacy.

Limitations of System Justification Theory and Social Dominance Theory

We agree with Reicher (2004) and Huddy (2004) that one of the main limitations of both system justification theory and social dominance theory is that they fail to account for instances of social change. System justification theory does not provide any clear

system-level moderators that might halt or reverse the general tendency towards social stability. Social dominance theory's personality-based approach fails to account for cases of relatively rapid widespread social change.

Like Reicher (2004; Reicher, 1996, p. 319), we believe that a successful theory of intergroup discrimination needs to explain social stability *and* social change, including the processes that tip the balance in favor of one or the other (see also Huddy, 2004). Social identity theory fulfills this role by distinguishing between consensual discrimination and social competition and by incorporating status stability and legitimacy as system-level moderating variables in its analysis. System justification theory and social dominance theory need to undergo theoretical development in order to achieve similar explanatory power.

A Pluralist Approach to Intergroup Relations

Whatever the advantages and disadvantages of the three theories that we have been discussing, one common point emerges from their comparison: Each theory alludes to more than one type of intergroup discrimination. Social identity theory assumes that there are three types of discrimination: realistic competition, social competition, and consensual discrimination. Similarly, system justification theory characterizes discrimination in terms of ego justification, group justification, and system justification. Finally, social dominance theory implies two types of discrimination, as characterized by its implicit distinction between specific SDO and general SDO. Hence, it seems as if the debate within the area of intergroup relations is no longer concerned with which theory can best explain intergroup discrimination. Instead, the debate has shifted to a consideration of which theory can best explain specific *types* of intergroup discrimination. Researchers now need to determine which theory is most appropriate under which conditions, rather than which theory is right or wrong per se (see also Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2002; Stangor & Jost, 1997). Given this pluralist approach to intergroup relations, we believe that the debate about the three theories that we have been discussing is far from over.

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mark Rubin at the School of Behavioural Sciences, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Australia. Tel: +61 (0)2 4921 6706. Fax: +61 (0)2 4921 6980. E-mail: mark.rubin@newcastle.edu.au

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (1988). Comments on the motivational status of self-esteem in social identity and intergroup discrimination. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 18*, 317-334.
- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2001). Collective identity: Group membership and self-conception. In M. A. Hogg & S. Tindale (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Group processes* (pp. 423-460). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Billig, M. (1996). Remembering the particular background of social identity theory. In W. P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social groups and identities: Developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel* (pp. 337-357). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Blanz, M., Mummendey, A., Mielke, R., & Klink, A. (1998). Responding to negative social identity: A taxonomy of identity management strategies. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 28*, 697-729.
- Bourhis, R. Y. (1994). Power, gender and intergroup discrimination: Some minimal group studies. In M. Zanna & J. Olson (Eds.), *The psychology of prejudice: The 7th Ontario symposium on personality and social psychology* (pp. 171-208). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bourhis, R. Y., & Hill, P. (1982). Intergroup perception in British higher education: A field study. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 423-468). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Branscombe, N. R., & Wann, D. L. (1994). Collective self-esteem consequences of outgroup derogation when a valued social identity is on trial. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 24*, 641-657.
- Brauer, M. (2001). Intergroup perception in the social context: The effects of social status and group membership on perceived out-group homogeneity and ethnocentrism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*, 15-31.
- Brauer, M., & Judd, C. M. (2000). Defining variables in relationship to other variables: When interactions suddenly turn out to be main effects. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 36*, 410-423.
- Brewer, M. B. (1979). Ingroup bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive motivational analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 86*, 307-324.
- Brown, J. D., Collins, R. L., & Schmidt, G. W. (1988). Self-esteem and direct versus indirect forms of self-enhancement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*, 445-453.
- Brown, R. (1978). Divided we fall: An analysis of relations between sections of a factory workforce. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 395-429). London: Academic Press.
- Brown, R. J., & Turner, J. C. (1981). Interpersonal and intergroup behaviour. In J. C. Turner & H. Giles (Eds.), *Intergroup behaviour* (pp. 33-65). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Caddick, B. (1982). Perceived illegitimacy and intergroup relations. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 137-154). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crocker, J., Blaine, B., & Luhtanen, R. (1993). Prejudice, intergroup behaviour and self-esteem: Enhancement and protection motives. In M. A. Hogg & D. Abrams

- (Eds.), *Group motivation: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 52-67). New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Doosje, B., Spears, R., Ellemers, N., & Koomen, W. (1999). Perceived group variability in intergroup relations: The distinctive role of social identity. *European Review of Social Psychology, 10*, 41-74.
- Farsides, T. (1995, September). *Why social identity theory's self-esteem hypothesis has never been tested - and how to test it*. Paper presented at the Social Section Conference of the British Psychology Society, York.
- Gagnon, A., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1996). Discrimination in the minimal group paradigm: Social identity or self-interest? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*, 1289-1301.
- Guimond, S., Dambrun, M., Michinov, N., & Duarte, S. (2003). Does social dominance generate prejudice? Integrating individual and contextual determinants of intergroup cognitions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 697-721.
- Hertel, G., & Kerr, N. L. (2001). Priming ingroup favoritism: The impact of normative scripts in the minimal group paradigm. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*, 316-324.
- Hewstone, M., & Jaspars, J. (1984). Social dimensions of attribution. In H. Tajfel (Ed.) *The social dimension: European developments in social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 379-404). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hewstone, M., Rubin, M., & Willis, H. (2002). Intergroup bias. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53*, 575-604.
- Hewstone, M., & Ward, C. (1985). Ethnocentrism and causal attribution in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48*, 614-623.
- Hinkle, S., & Brown, R. (1990). Intergroup comparisons and social identity: Some links and lacunae. In D. Abrams & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Social identity theory: Constructive and critical advances* (pp. 48-70). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1988). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. London: Routledge.
- Huddy, L. (2001). From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory. *Political Psychology, 22*, 127-156.
- Huddy, L. (2002). Context and meaning in social identity theory: A response to Oakes. *Political Psychology, 23*, 825-838.
- Huddy, L. (2004). Contrasting theoretical approaches to intergroup relations. *Political Psychology, 25*, XXX-XXX.
- Jackson, J. W. (1993). Realistic group conflict theory: A review and evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literature. *The Psychological Record, 43*, 395-414.
- Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 1-27.
- Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology, 25*, XXX-XXX.
- Jost, J. T., & Hunyady, O. (2002). The psychology of system justification and the palliative function of ideology. *European Review of Social Psychology, 13*, 111-153.
- Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., & Carvallo, M. (2002). Non-conscious forms of system justification: Cognitive, affective, and behavioral preferences for higher status groups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 586-602.
- Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Sheldon, O., & Sullivan, B. N. (2003). Social inequality and the reduction of ideological dissonance on behalf of the system: Evidence of enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 13-36.

- Jost, J. T., & Thompson, E. P. (2000). Group-based dominance and opposition to equality as independent predictors of self-esteem, ethnocentrism, and social policy attitudes among African Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 36*, 209-232.
- Levin, S. (1996). *A social psychological approach to understanding intergroup attitudes in the United States and Israel*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Levin, S., Sidanius, J., Rabinowitz, J. L., & Federico, C. (1998). Ethnic identity, legitimizing ideologies and social status: A matter of ideological asymmetry. *Political Psychology, 19*, 373-404.
- Ng, S. H. (1982). Power and intergroup discrimination. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 179-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ng, S. H. (1986). Equity, intergroup bias and interpersonal bias in reward allocation. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 16*, 239-255.
- Oakes, P. (2002). Psychological groups and political psychology: A response to Huddy's "Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory". *Political Psychology, 23*, 809-824.
- Overbeck, J., Jost, J. T., Mosso, C., & Flizik, A. (2004). Resistant vs. acquiescent responses to ingroup inferiority as a function of social dominance orientation in the USA and Italy. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 7*, 35-54.
- Pratto, F., & Shih, M. (2000). Social dominance orientation and group context in implicit group prejudice. *Psychological Science, 11*, 515-518.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*, 741-763.
- Rabinowitz, J. L. (1999). Go with the flow or fight the power? The interactive effects of social dominance orientation and perceived injustice on support for the status quo. *Political Psychology, 20*, 1-24.
- Reicher, S. (1996). Social identity and social change: Rethinking the context of social psychology. In W. P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social groups and identities: Developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel* (pp. 317-336). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Reicher, S. (2004). The context of social identity: Domination, resistance and change. *Political Psychology, 25*, XXX-XXX.
- Reynolds, K. J., Turner, J. C., Haslam, S. A., & Ryan, M. K. (2001). The role of personality and group factors in explaining prejudice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*, 427-434.
- Rubin, M., & Hewstone, M. (1998). Social identity theory's self-esteem hypothesis: A review and some suggestions for clarification. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 2*, 40-62.
- Rubin, M., Hewstone, M., & Voci, A. (2001). Stretching the boundaries: Strategic perceptions of intragroup variability. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 31*, 413-429.
- Sachdev, I., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1985). Social categorization and power differentials in group relations. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 15*, 415-434.
- Sachdev, I., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1991). Power and status differentials in minority and majority group relations. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 21*, 1-24.
- Scheepers, D., Spears, R., Doosje, B., & Manstead, A. S. R. (2002). Integrating identity and instrumental approaches to intergroup differentiation: Different contexts, different motives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*, 1455-1467.
- Schmitt, M. T., & Branscombe, N. R. (2003). Will the real social dominance theory please stand up? *British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*, 215-219.

- Sherif, M. (1967). *Group conflict and co-operation*. London: Routledge.
- Sidanius, J. (1993). The psychology of group conflict and the dynamics of oppression: A social dominance perspective. In S. Iyengar & W. J. McGuire (Eds.), *Explorations in political psychology* (pp. 183-219). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sidanius, J., Levin, S., Federico, C., & Pratto, F. (2001). Legitimizing ideologies: The social dominance approach. In J. T. Jost & B. Major (Eds.), *The psychology of legitimacy: Emerging perspective on ideology, justice, and intergroup relations* (pp. 307-331). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., & Bobo, L. (1994). Social dominance orientation and the political psychology of gender: A case of invariance? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*, 998-1011.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., & Mitchell, M. (1994). In-group identification, social dominance orientation, and differential intergroup social allocation. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *134*, 151-167.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Van Laar, C., & Levin, S. (2004). Social dominance theory: Its agenda and method. *Political Psychology*, *25*, XXX-XXX.
- Spears, R., Jetten, J., & Doosje, B. (2001). The (il)legitimacy of ingroup bias: From social reality to social resistance. In J. T. Jost & B. Major (Eds.), *The psychology of legitimacy: Emerging perspectives on ideology, justice, and intergroup relations* (pp. 332-362). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Spears, R., & Manstead, A. S. R. (1989). The social context of stereotyping and differentiation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *19*, 101-121.
- Stangor, C., & Jost, J. T. (1997). Individual, group and system levels of analysis and their relevance for stereotyping and intergroup relations. In R. Spears, P. J. Oakes, N. Ellemers, & S. A. Haslam (Eds.), *The social psychology of stereotyping and group life* (pp. 336-358). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tajfel, H. (1972). La catégorisation socialé. In S. Moscovici (Ed.), *Introduction à la Psychologie Sociale* (Vol. 1, pp. 272-302). Paris: Larousse.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, *13*, 65-93.
- Tajfel, H. (1978a). The achievement of group differentiation. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 77-98). London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1978b). Interindividual behaviour and intergroup behaviour. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 27-60). London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1978c). Introduction. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 1-23). London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1978d). Social categorization, social identity and social comparison. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 61-76). London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1979). Individuals and groups in social psychology. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *18*, 183-190.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Tajfel, H. (1982). Instrumentality, identity and social comparisons. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 483-507). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P., & Flament, C. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 1*, 149-178.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.
- Turner, J. C. (1975). Social comparison and social identity: Some prospects for intergroup behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 5*, 5-34.
- Turner, J. (1978). Social comparison, similarity and ingroup favouritism. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. (pp. 235-250). London: Academic Press.
- Turner, J. C. (1980). Fairness or discrimination in intergroup behaviour? A reply to Branthwaite, Doyle and Lightbown. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 10*, 131-147.
- Turner, J. C. (1987). A self-categorization theory. In J. C. Turner, M. A. Hogg, P. J. Oakes, S. D. Reicher, & M. Wetherell (Eds.), *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory* (pp. 117-141). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Turner, J. C. (1996). Henri Tajfel: An introduction. In W. P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social groups and identities: Developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel* (pp. 1-23). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Turner, J. C. (1999). Some current issues in research on social identity and self-categorization theories. In N. Ellemers, R. Spears, & B. Doosje (Eds.), *Social identity: Context, commitment, content* (pp. 6-34). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Turner, J. C., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1996). Social identity, interdependence and the social group: A reply to Rabbie et al. In W. P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social groups and identities: Developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel* (pp. 25-63). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Turner, J. C., & Reynolds, K. J. (2001). The social identity perspective in intergroup relations: Theories, themes, and controversies. In R. Brown & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Intergroup processes* (pp. 133-152). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Turner, J. C., & Reynolds, K. J. (2003). Why social dominance theory has been falsified. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*, 199-206.
- van Knippenberg, A. (1989). Strategies of identity management. In J. P. Van Oudenhoven & T. Willemsen (Eds.), *Ethnic minorities: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 59-76). Lisse, Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- van Knippenberg, A., & Dijksterhuis, A. (2000). Social categorization and stereotyping: A functional perspective. *European Review of Social Psychology, 11*, 105-144. Chichester: Wiley.
- Wetherell, M. (1982). Cross-cultural studies of minimal groups: Implications for the social identity theory of intergroup relations. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 207-240). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Footnotes

1. Our interpretation of social identity theory differs from some others (e.g., Reicher, 2004) in that we make an explicit distinction between general socio-structural variables (the “system component”) and specific societal variables (the “societal component”).

2. To simplify matters, we have discussed the three different types of discrimination as if they occur in isolation from one another. In reality, however, most cases of intergroup discrimination are likely to reflect a complex mixture of all three types of discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, pp. 46-47). Social competition and consensual discrimination are likely to co-occur to some extent because status systems are unlikely to be either completely stable or completely unstable (Tajfel, 1978a, pp. 87-88). Furthermore, realistic competition is likely to accompany social competition and consensual discrimination in situations that involve objective conflicts of group interests. Researchers are faced with the difficult, but not impossible, task of separating out these different forms of discrimination.

3. Huddy (2001, 2002) has also provided a critique of social identity theory. However, given that Oakes (2002) has already responded to this critique, we will not address it here.

4. Jost and Banaji (2004) suggest that Hewstone and Jaspars (1984) and Hewstone and Ward (1985) criticised social identity theory for failing to account for the phenomenon of outgroup favoritism. Contrary to this interpretation, Hewstone and Jaspars’ (1984) theory of social attribution incorporates social identity theory’s explanation of outgroup favoritism: “Under certain conditions social attributions will not function to provide a positive ingroup identity....In this case, members of the ‘objectively’ inferior group will make attributions which tend to devalue the ingroup and favour the outgroup” (p. 398). In addition, Hewstone and Ward (1985) explained the outgroup favoritism that they found in their research in terms of social identity processes interacting with the cultural context (pp. 618, 620).