8 Social Dominance Theory: Explorations in the Psychology of Oppression

Jim Sidanius, Sarah Cotterill, Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington, Nour Kteily, and Héctor Carvacho

Question: What is the difference between capitalism and communism?

Answer: Under capitalism you have the exploitation of man by man. Under Communism it is just the reverse.

Russian saying

Despite impressive gains in the spread of quasi-democratic social practices and respect for human rights witnessed in the past hundred years (e.g., Pinker, 2011), intergroup discrimination, oppression, and violence continue to thrive within every modern social system. Whether one considers the marked discrimination against immigrants in the relatively egalitarian Sweden (Nordenstam & Ringström, 2013; Orange, 2013), the money-dominated elections of post-industrial states (Lessig, 2011), or the unambiguously oppressive dictatorships across the majority of the Arab world, systems of group-based social inequality and domination continue, despite our best efforts, to maintain their grip around the throats of democratic and egalitarian aspirations. While there are certainly vast differences in the degree of group-based social inequality across social systems, or across historical epochs within any given society, group-based social inequality appears to be a human universal present in all kinds of societies (see, e.g., Bowles, Smith, and Borgerhoff Mulder, 2010), even in hunter-gatherer communities (e.g., Ames, 2007; Arnold, 1993; Kennett, Winterhalder, Bartruff, & Erlandson 2008).

Having made this basic observation of the near ubiquity of group-based social inequality, social dominance theory (SDT; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) argues that many familiar types of group-based oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, nationalism, classism, religious intolerance, hostility toward the mentally ill) are essentially particular instantiations of a more general process through which dominant groups establish and maintain social, economic, and military supremacy over subordinate groups. Therefore, it is suggested that specific instantiations of oppression across social contexts cannot be comprehensively understood without serious consideration of the dynamic and multileveled forces producing and sustaining the phenomenon of group-based social hierarchy.

The Trimorphic Nature of Group-Based Social Hierarchy

SDT argues that there are essentially three related, yet qualitatively distinct types of group-based social hierarchy. The first type of hierarchical system is the "age system," in which those considered to be "adults" have more social, economic, and political power than those considered "juveniles." While the specific age separating one category in this system from another may vary between societies and within a given society over time, this dichotomy appears to be universal (James & James, 2008). The second form of group-based social hierarchy can be labeled "patriarchy" and is a system in which males have greater social, economic, and military power than females. While the degree of patriarchy can vary from relatively mild (e.g., Scandinavia) to relatively severe (e.g., Afghanistan), and the degree of patriarchy within a given society may vary over time, the presence of patriarchy itself appears be universal across human societies (Goldberg, 1994). Indeed, patriarchy may be a part of our evolutionary history: With the exception of bonobos (Pan *paniscus*), which can be described as a matriarchal species, patriarchy characterizes the other four great ape species (i.e., gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, and humans). Finally, we refer to the third and most antagonistic system of group-based social hierarchy as the "arbitrary-set" system. By arbitrary-set, we are referring to a hierarchically organized set of group distinctions that emerge as a function of historically and contextually evolved power and status differences between socially constructed groups, which therefore varies from culture to culture.

Mechanisms of Hierarchy Regulation: Hierarchy-Enhancing and Hierarchy-Attenuating Social Forces

Social dominance theorists posit that the exact degree of group-based social hierarchy in a given social system at any given time will be the point of equilibrium between two opposing sets of social forces: hierarchy-enhancing (HE) and hierarchy-attenuating (HA). This pair of forces operates at multiple levels, including individual-level dispositions toward (or against) hierarchy, attitudes and behaviors rooted in group membership, and systemic/institutional factors (Figure 8.1). Thus, HE social forces are composed of individual predispositions favoring hierarchy in society, the hierarchy-maintaining attitudes and behaviors of dominant (relative to subordinate) groups, and the joint operation of (system-level) hierarchy-enhancing social institutions (e.g., the police force), ideologies (e.g., the Protestant work ethic), and stereotypes that produce ever greater levels of group-based inequality. As the label implies, HA forces are those social forces that have exactly the opposite effect on group-based social
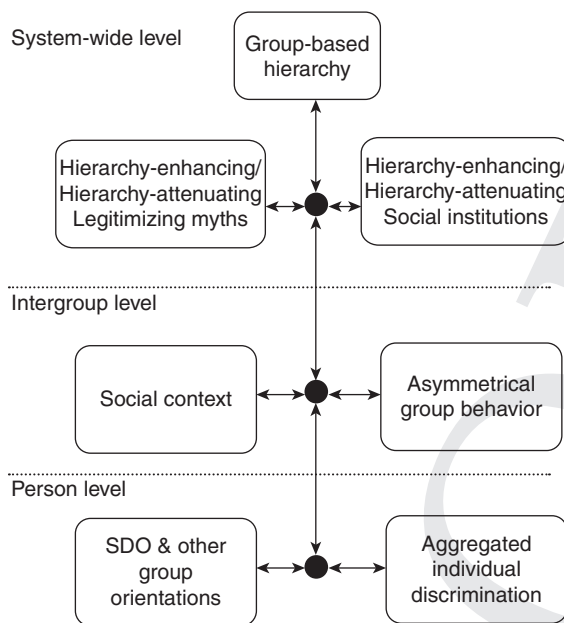
Figure 8.1 *Schematic overview of social dominance theory (from Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006).*

inequality (see, e.g., Boehm, 1999). Examples of these forces are individual drives toward egalitarianism, welfare organizations and institutions such as the public defenders' office, and universalist ideologies such as the doctrine of global human rights.

SDT assumes that, generally speaking, dominant groups tend to support and enforce policies that entrench their advantages (i.e., HE policies), whereas subordinate group members tend to, but do not always, resist these policies. Indeed, the fact that members of dominant groups are more oriented toward preservation of the status quo than subordinates are toward challenging it is thought to be a factor contributing to the stability of hierarchical social systems. In this chapter, we not only review work illustrating the interactions between HE and HA social forces engaged in by dominant group members but also discuss advances in identifying and understanding the suboptimal behavioral and ideological orientations of subordinate group members.

Social Dominance Orientation

One of the several individual-level factors contributing to the creation and maintenance of group-based hierarchy is a construct known as social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Although SDO was initially conceptualized as the desire to have one's ingroup dominate socially

relevant outgroups, it has been refined to reflect the general desire to establish and maintain hierarchically structured intergroup relations regardless of the position of one's own group(s) within this hierarchy (see Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Pratto, 2001). Thus, for example, a Black American (e.g., member of a subordinate arbitrary-set group) with a high level of SDO would not desire Black Americans to dominate White Americans but rather would desire to maintain the extant hierarchical domination of Blacks by Whites, even at the ingroup's expense (for empirical support of this proposition, see Ho et al., 2012). A great deal of research has documented –using a variety of cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental methodologies –the various ways in which individual differences in SDO contribute to attitudes and behaviors that sustain hierarchy between groups in society (e.g., Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Ho et al., 2012; Kteily, Ho, & Sidanius, 2012; McFarland, 2010; Sibley & Liu, 2010). This research has also distinguished between two subdimensions of SDO, intergroup dominance (SDO-D) and intergroup anti-egalitarianism (SDO-E; Ho et al., 2012; see also Jost & Thompson, 2000; Kugler, Cooper, & Nosek, 2010). While SDO-D indexes one's desire to see some groups actively oppressed and is most strongly related to hostile attitudes such as old-fashioned racism, blatant dehumanization, and support for war, SDO-E taps into a preference for inequality between groups and is most strongly related to subtle forms of racism and hierarchy-enhancing social ideologies and careers (Ho et al., 2012; Kteily, Bruneau, Waytz, & Cotterill, 2015). Despite the prominence that the concept of SDO has had on the intergroup relations literature, social dominance theorists do not attempt to reduce the dynamics of intergroup discrimination or prejudice simply to individual differences in SDO. Rather, SDT is a multileveled theory that argues that group-based social hierarchy and its hydra-headed manifestations are the result of interactions among several processes operating at different levels of analysis (see Figure 8.1).

Contemporary Research Employing Social Dominance Theory

Since the last major review of social dominance theory (SDT) in 2006 (i.e., Pratto et al., 2006), researchers have continued to apply SDT to an understanding of attitudes and behaviors, including the maintenance of status boundaries, political party preference, labor union participation, support of harsh criminal sanctions, excessive use of police force, support for the death penalty and torture, and the dehumanization of low-status outgroups (see Table 8.1). Conceptual clarifications and extensions have also been proposed and tested, five of which we will review here: (a) the context-contingent effects of SDO, (b) the interface between empathy and SDO, (c) deepening our understanding of behavioral asymmetry, (d) introducing new thinking on ideology and the stability of intergroup differences, and (e) the development of the theory of gendered prejudice.

Table 8.1 *Social psychological domains in which social dominance theory has been applied (since 2005)*

Emotions
Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012
Hodson & Costello, 2007
Jeffries, Hornsey, Sutton, Douglas, & Bain, 2012
Kossowska, Bukowski, & Van Hiel, 2008
Laham, Tam, Lalljee, Hewstone, & Voci, 2009
Leone & Chirumbolo, 2008
Martin et al., 2014
Miller, Smith, & Mackie, 2004
Ratcliff, Bernstein, Cundiff, & Vescio, 2012
Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2006

Behavioral Intentions
Reese, Proch, & Cohrs, 2013

Collective Action
Henry, Sidanius, Levin, &Pratto, 2005
Levin, Henry, Pratto, & Sidanius, 2009

Competitiveness
Cozzolino & Snyder, 2008

Criminal Justice Attitudes and Outcomes
Dambrun, 2007
Gerber & Jackson, 2013
Green, Thomsen, Sidanius, Staerklé, & Potanina, 2009
Kemmelmeier, 2005
Kteily, Cotterill, Sidanius, Sheehy-Skeffington, & Bergh, 2014
Sidanius, Mitchell, Haley, & Navarrete, 2006
Perkins & Bourgeois, 2006

Cross-Cultural Comparisons
Fischer, Hanke, & Sibley, 2012
Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011

Dehumanization
Costello & Hodson, 2011
Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008
Kteily et al., in press

Educational Attitudes and Performance
Cross, Cross, & Finch, 2010
Crowson & Brandes, 2010, 2014
Dambrun, Kamiejski, Haddad, & Duart, 2009
Sheehy-Skeffington & Sidanius, 2014a

Environmental Attitudes and Speciesism
Feygina, 2013
Jackson, Bitacola, Janes, & Esses, 2013
Milfont, Richter, Sibley, Wilson, & Fischer, 2013

Table 8.1 (*cont.*)

Health
Gilles et al. 2013
MacInnis, Busseri, Choma, & Hodson, 2013
Rosenthal & Levy, 2010
Sheehy-Skeffington & Sidanius, 2014b

The Invariance Hypothesis
Batalha, Reynolds, & Newbigin, 2011
Caricati, 2007
Dickens & Sergeant, 2008
Foels & Reid, 2010
Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, Crisp, & Redersdorff, 2006
Küpper & Zick, 2011
Lee et al., 2011
Levene & Dickens, 2008
Mata, Ghavami, & Wittig, 2010
McDonald, Navarrete, & Sidanius, 2011
Pula, McPherson, & Parks, 2012
Sidanius, Sinclair, & Pratto, 2006
Schmitt & Wirth, 2009
Snellman, Ekehammar, & Akrami, 2009
Wilson & White, 2010
Zakrisson, 2008

Intragroup Behavior
Islam & Zyohur, 2005
Roccato, 2008

Subdimensions of SDO
Hindriks, Verkuyten, & Coenders, 2014
Ho et al., 2012
Jost & Thompson, 2000
Kugler et al., 2010

Morality
Dhont & Hodson, 2014
Esses et al., 2008
Federico, Weber, Ergun, & Hunt, 2013
Ferreira, Fisher, Porto, Pilati, & Milfont, 2012
Kugler, Jost,, & Noorbaloochi, 2014
Jackson & Gaertner, 2010
McFarland & Mathews, 2005
Milojev et al., 2014
Passini & Villano, 2013
Rios, Finkelstein, & Landa, 2014
Son Hing, Bobocel, Zanna, & McBride, 2007

Table 8.1 (*cont.*)

Nationalism, Patriotism, Support for War
Crowson, 2009
De Zavala, Cichocka, & Iskra-Golec, 2013
Livi, Leone, Falgares, & Lombardo, 2014

Organizational Behavior and the Workplace
Aiello, Pratto, & Pierro, 2013
Green & Auer, 2013
Haley & Sidanius, 2005
Martin et al., 2014
McKay & Avery, 2006
Nicol, 2009
Nicol, Rounding, & MacIntyre, 2011
Parkins, Fishbein, & Rithey, 2006
Pichler, Varma, & Bruce, 2010
Rosenblatt, 2012
Rosette, Carton, Bowes-Sperry, & Hewlin, 2013
Seelman & Walls, 2010
Shao, Resnick, & Hargis, 2011
Umphress, Simmons, Boswell,. & Triana, 2007
Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz, & Walkins, 2007

Personality and SDO
Bergh, Akrami, Sidanius, & Sibley, 2014
Leone, Desimoni, & Chriumbolo, 2014
Parkins, Ritchey, & Fishbein, 2006

Empathy
Bäckström & Björklund, 2007
Cheon et al., 2011
Chiao, Mathur, Harada, & Lipke, 2009
Sidanius et al., 2013

Political Attitudes and Legitimizing Ideologies
Bikman & Sunar, 2013
Bobbio, Canova, & Manganelli, 2010
Choma, Hanoch, Gummerum, & Hodson, 2013
Christopher, Zabel, Jones, & Marek, 2008
Costello & Hodson, 2009
Cotterill, Sidanius, Bhardwaj, & Kumar, 2014
Crawford, 2012
De Cremer, Cornelis, & Van Hiel, 2008
Esses & Hodson, 2006
Federico, Hunt, & Ergun, 2009
Green et al., 2010
Harding & Sibley, 2011
Hodson & Costello, 2007
Hodson & Esses, 2005
Jetten & Iyer, 2010

Table 8.1 (*cont.*)

Kteily, Sidanius, – & Levin 2011Kteily et al., 2012
Krauss, 2006
Levy, West, Ramirez, & Karafantis, 2006
Mosso, Briante, Aiello, & Russo, 2013
Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007
Ramirez, Levy, Velilla, & Hughes, 2010
Sibley & Duckitt, 2010
Sibley & Wilson, 2007
Sibley, Wilson, & Robertson, 2007
Wilson & Sibley, 2013
Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008

Prejudice and Discrimination
Asbrock, Gutenbrunner, & Wagner, 2013
Asbrock, Sibley, & Duckitt, 2010
Bahns & Crandall, 2013
Bassett, 2010
Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010
Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010
Costello & Hodson, 2009, 2014
Crowson & Brandes, 2010, 2014
Crowson & Gries, 2010
Crowson, Brandes, & Hurst, 2013
Danso, Sedlovskaya, & Suanda, 2007
Duckitt & Sibley, 2010
Duriez, 2011
Esses, Wagner, Wolf, Preseiser, & Wilbur, 2006
Feather & McKee, 2008
Gatto & Dambrun, 2012
Guimond et al., 2013
Guimond, De Oliveira, Kamiesjki, & Sidanius, 2010
Gutiérrez & Unzueta, 2013
Hodson, Rush, & MacInnis, 2010
Hodson, MacInnis, & Rush, 2010
Kteily et al., 2014
Kteily et al., 2012
Kteily et al., 2011
Leong, 2008
Levin et al., 2012
Levin, Pratto, Matthews, Sidanius, & Kteily, 2013
Malkin & Ben Ari, 2013
McFarland, 2010
Newman, Hartman, & Taber, 2014
Nickerson & Louis, 2008
O'Brien, Hunter, & Banks, 2007
Onraet & Van Hiel, 2013

Table 8.1 (*cont.*)

Pichler et al., 2010
Poteat & Mareish, 2012
Poteat & Spanierman, 2010
Schmid, Hewstone, Küpper, Zick, & Wagner, 2012
Sidanius, Haley, & Molina, & Pratto, 2007
Sidanius & Pratto, 2012
Tausch & Hewstone, 2010
Thomsen et al., 2010
Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008
Umphress et al., 2008
Unzueta, Knowles, & Ho, 2012
Van Hiel & Kossowska, 2007
Vezzali & Giovannini, 2011
von Collani, Grumm, & Streicher, 2010

Social Perception
Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005
Ho, Sidanius, Levin, & Banaji, 2011
Ho, Sidanius, Cuddy, & Banaji, 2013
Kahn, Ho, Sidanius, & Pratto, 2009
Kteily et al., 2014
Levin et al.,, 2013
Newheiser, Tausch, Dovidio, & Hewstone, 2009
Simmons & Parks-Yancy, 2012
Snellmen Ekehammar, 2005
Yeagley, Morling, & Nelson, 2007
Thomsen et al., 2010

The Context-Contingent Effects of SDO

While it is well established that SDO is associated with generalized prejudice and
hostility toward an array of groups (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; McFarland & Adelson,
1996), more recent research has found that the association between SDO and
outgroup hostility will be modified by the relative social status/power of the out-
group in question. For example, work by Henry et al. (2005) showed that while
SDO was *positively* associated with support for aggression against Arabs (low
status/power) among Americans (high status/power), and SDO was *negatively*
associated with support for aggression against Americans among Arabs. In other
words, those high in SDO are more likely to support violence by dominant groups
against subordinate groups but less likely to support violence of subordinate groups
against dominant groups.

In addition, violence directed at subordinate groups will be particularly severe
when subordinates are perceived as violating group-status boundaries. For exam-
ple, Thomsen et al. (2008) showed that while Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale

(RWA) was somewhat positively associated with willingness to personally participate in government-sanctioned violence against foreign immigrants who did not assimilate to the values and norms of the host country, SDO was strongly associated with the willingness to personally participate in the government-sanctioned violence against immigrants who did assimilate to the values and norms of the host country (thus encroaching the high-status group's distinctiveness and boundaries). Relatedly, Kteily et al. 2014; also see Chapter 10, this volume) showed that the status of ambiguous targets (e.g., biracials) influences whether they are likely to be included in the ingroup, whereas high SDO members of dominant groups were more likely to perceive low-status ambiguous targets in exclusionary terms (deeming them as more outgroup); this was not the case for high-status ambiguous targets (who were comparatively seen to be ingroup members). Research by Ho, Sidanius, Cuddy, and Banaji (2013) also showed that the related process of *hypodescent* (categorizing biracials in terms of their subordinate group membership) is influenced by a combination of high SDO and a sense of threat to the ingroup's standing. Thus, we can see that, as one would expect from a social dominance framework, high SDO individuals will be most hostile toward members of subordinate groups attempting to breach the status/power boundary between subordinate and dominant groups.

SDO and Empathy

While SD theorists have long argued that SDO will tend to be negatively related to empathy (e.g., Bäckström & Björklund, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), relatively new research has uncovered those brain regions that are implicated in this SDO/low-empathy connection. For example, Chiao and colleagues (Chiao et al., 2009) found that individuals' levels of SDO were strongly and negatively correlated with activity within those regions of the brain associated with the perception of pain in others. These brain regions included circuits in the mirror neuron system, the right inferior parietal lobe, and the left inferior frontal gyrus (see also Cheon et al., 2011).

In addition, in a set of cross-lagged analyses of panel (i.e., longitudinal) data using large samples in Belgium and New Zealand, recent work by Sidanius and colleagues (Sidanius et al., 2013) suggests a reciprocal relationship between SDO and empathy. That is, not only does the data suggest that one's level of empathy affects one's level of SDO, but individuals' levels of SDO also seem to influence empathy over time. Indeed, the effect of SDO on empathy appeared to be at least as strong as, if not stronger than, the reverse relationship.[1] This finding is in contrast to an important premise of the dual process model (see Chapter 10, this title, as well as Duckitt, 2001; Sibley & Duckitt, 2010), which argues that SDO – as an ideological variable – is driven by (rather than driving) personality factors such as empathy. If replicable, Sidanius et al.'s (2013) finding has important theoretical bearing on

1 However, for some limitations of cross-lag analysis, see Kenny, 1975.

our understanding of the status of SDO as either a personality variable or a sociopolitical ideology, or perhaps a mixture of both. Because we typically think of one's personality as driving one's sociopolitical ideologies (and not the reverse), it may be time to revisit the assumption among some theorists that SDO is exclusively a sociopolitical ideology.

Behavioral Asymmetry

One claim of SDT is that although group-based hierarchy is predominantly enforced and policed by high-power group members, low-power group members also play an important role in contributing to their own subordination. Sidanius and Pratto (1999, ch. 9) summarize how, on average, dominant social groups are much more successful than other groups in behaving in ways that enhance and maintain their dominant status, such as placing greater emphasis on educational achievement, saving money to acquire desirable commodities, and building social networks that help their friends and family have successful careers. On the other hand, members of subordinate social groups in a number of societies have a greater tendency to behave in group-debilitating ways, such as engaging in violence within and outside the home, school truancy, and unhealthy habits, including smoking and heavy alcohol consumption (e.g., Cauley, Donfield, LaPorte, & Warheftig, 1991; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, ch. 9, for a review). The argument is that these differences in the behaviors of dominant *vs.* subordinate groups might contribute to the entrenchment of hierarchy between groups in society.

This early observation has been buttressed by recent studies from across the social sciences. Public health researchers have highlighted the role of poor health-related decisions among members of subordinate groups in exacerbating inequalities in health outcomes along the socioeconomic spectrum (Lock, Pomerleau, Causer, & Altman, 2005), while political scientists observe that the poorest groups in society, though the ones with the greatest stake in debates concerning public spending, are the most quiescent and least politically engaged (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; see also Cohen, Vigoda, & Samorly, 2001). Economists, meanwhile, highlight decisions made by those low in socioeconomic status that end up hampering their chances at social mobility, such as not opening a bank account (Bertrand, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2006), not applying for available welfare support (Currie, 2004), engagement in rent-to-own contracts for expensive commodities (Zikmund-Fisher & Parker, 1999), and purchasing state lottery tickets at higher rates (despite these tickets offering the lowest rate of return of any legal gambling initiative; Clotfelter, Cook, Edell, & Moore, 1999; for a review, see Hall, 2012).

Rather than attribute such behavioral patterns to supposedly inherent inadequacies of members of subordinate groups, SDT points to ways in which these self-debilitating behaviors can be a product of the dynamics of oppression itself. The high incidence of violence among subordinate group members, for example,

might be understood through extant theories regarding the tendency of people (a) to behave in ways that reinforce stereotypes imposed on them (Chen & Bargh, 1997; Snyder & Swann, 1978), (b) to take an oppositional stance to systems that oppress them (e.g., Ogbu, 2008), or (c) to channel anxiety about being at the bottom of increasingly unequal status hierarchies into aggressive interactions aimed at bolstering personal honor (Henry, 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, ch. 9). Research on stereotype threat allies with this approach, showing how mere reminders that one is in a group that has a bad reputation with respect to a trait being assessed, such as intelligence in the case of Black Americans, can trigger poorer performance on measures of that trait than when such reminders are absent (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Also supportive of the role of hierarchical dynamics in triggering hierarchy-supporting behaviors is evidence that perceived discrimination among low-status group members is strongly related to negative health behaviors (Pascoe & Smart, 2009).

Even more persuasive is evidence that experimentally induced experiences of low status or deprivation can elicit the same group-debilitating behaviors that were predicted by SDT (i.e., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In one line of studies concerning the psychological effects of poverty, behavioral economists induced a sense of resource scarcity in middle-income participants by asking them to play computerized games in which they had few versus plentiful resources (Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012). Those who experienced scarcity ended up making decisions that hampered their game performance, such as borrowing resources from future rounds, and thus engaging in cycles of debt that mimic the damaging and self-reinforcing nature of financial debt among the poor (Shah et al., 2012). A follow-up set of studies shows how the cognitive constraints imposed by poverty can lead to the impression that the poor are less intelligent than the rich. Running experiments with shoppers in a New Jersey mall and sugar cane farmers in India, Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir, and Zhao (2013) demonstrated how the same person can appear to have less cognitive control and intelligence when he or she is preoccupied with financial strain, compared to when free of such financial worries. Experiments by Sheehy-Skeffington and Sidanius (2014a) demonstrate how such deficits in cognitive performance, and even downstream financial decisions, can be a product not only of absolute resource scarcity but also of relative scarcity, linking it back to the dynamics of oppression. In three studies, participants drawn from an American college, online, and low-income samples, who were randomly assigned to believe that they were near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, performed worse on three measures of executive functioning than did those led to believe they were near the top of the ladder. An additional study demonstrated that such impairments in executive functioning carried over into poor performance on a realistic financial task relying on such processes: identifying the best of three credit card loan offers (Sheehy-Skeffington & Sidanius, 2014a).

While the cognitive strain of poverty and low status may be one mechanism through which subordination elicits group-debilitating behavior, another important mechanism is the psychology of low social power. Recent research on this topic

converges on the observation that being experimentally assigned to feel low in power triggers a prevention-focused, inhibition-oriented system of self-regulation (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). This in turn impairs psychological responses supportive of one's own advancement, such as confidence (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), awareness of rewards (Anderson & Berdahl, 2003), and engagement in goal-relevant actions (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003). Supportive of the claim that the psychology of powerlessness is a feature of intergroup disadvantage, Sheehy-Skeffington and Sidanius (2014b) showed that the experimentally induced perception that one is at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy leads to a decrease in self-reported efficacy and control, which in turn increases the likelihood of making decisions that harm one's well-being.

In sum, the early claim that behavioral asymmetry of those at the top and bottom of the hierarchy is both a robust feature of, and contributor to, group-based social hierarchy has been bolstered by subsequent evidence originating across disciplines and national contexts. Even more intriguing is emerging evidence that the temporary experience of subordination itself can elicit behaviors that enhance such subordination through processes that would affect any of us were we to find ourselves in such situations.

Asymmetric Mobilization

SD theorists have also revisited ideas put forth in earlier work regarding ideological mechanisms that help sustain intergroup inequality. SDT proposes that in the same way that there are consequential differences in the behavioral repertoires of dominant and subordinate groups (Cauley et al., 1991; Skeffington & Sidanius, 2014a; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1992), there are also differences in the patterns of ideological endorsement across the social status continuum (Levin et al., 1998; Mitchell & Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius, Pratto, & Rabinowitz, 1994). This is to say, in addition to adopting suboptimal behavioral patterns, subordinate groups are also less ideologically oriented in their groups' interest than are dominant groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Cotterill et al. (2015) demonstrate that these patterns are more pervasive than work to date suggests, while also providing evidence for why they occur. The authors draw on ideas from the literature on the psychology of legitimacy (e.g., Jost & Major, 2001), which shows that high- and low-status groups alike are motivated to see the status quo as relatively fair and just (Jost & Banaji, 1994). An important observation from this literature is that for high-status groups, seeing the system as legitimate also means seeing the advantages enjoyed by one's group as legitimate (Jost, 2001; Jost & Burgess, 2002). On the other hand, for members of low-status groups, perceiving the system as legitimate is at odds with wanting the best for one's group (Jost, 2001; Jost & Burgess, 2002).

Furthering this reasoning, Cotterill et al. (in prep) predicted that the relatively pervasive tendency to perceive the status quo as legitimate might blunt group-serving behavior even among those low-status group members who care deeply about and identify strongly with the group. Empirically this should manifest in a relatively weak correlation between low-status ingroup identity (i.e., the degree to which a person thinks about himself as a member of a group to which he belongs) and group-serving beliefs (i.e., support for HA and rejection of HE beliefs). On the other hand, because seeing the system as legitimate is consistent with seeing high-status groups' advantage as legitimate, Cotterill et al. (in prep) did not expect legitimacy to hinder high-status groups from connecting their sense of identity with their interests. They predicted that there would be a relatively strong correlation between high-status identity and beliefs that serve the interests of high-status groups (i.e., support for HE and rejection of HA beliefs).[2]

In fact, Cotterill et al. (in prep) argued that the difference in the degree to which high- versus low-status groups mobilize identity in group-serving ways (termed asymmetric identity mobilization, or AIM) has implications for hierarchy maintenance. AIM suggests that highly identified members of subordinate groups, those individuals who extant literature suggests should be among the most likely to engage in collective action to improve the status of the group (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) are not necessarily endorsing ideological beliefs conducive to such action. Moreover, to the extent that high-status groups do connect their identity with their interests, we might expect hierarchy to become further entrenched.

The authors document evidence of AIM across five studies, using data from two countries, and in the context of real and artificial groups. First, using large-scale survey data from both higher- and lower-class students, the authors found that whereas there was a relatively strong connection between higher-class ingroup identity and support for HE, as well as rejection of HA ideologies, there was a significantly weaker connection between lower-class identity and support for HA and rejection of HE beliefs. Speaking to the generalizability of AIM, the same pattern was found using data from both Blacks and Whites in the United States and high versus low castes in India.

Furthermore, Cotterill et al. (in prep) found evidence of AIM in the context of an artificial groups paradigm. When group-based status differences were made to seem legitimate, there was a strong connection between high-status identity and

2 It is important to note that social dominance theorists have considered the relationship between identity and ideology before. Levin et al. (1998) found that a strong positive relationship between White ingroup identity and HE ideological beliefs, and a strong negative relationship between Black ingroup identity and HE beliefs (a phenomenon they termed ideological asymmetry, or IA, drawing on the classic SDT use of the term). This would suggest that Blacks mobilize identity in service of their respective group interests to the same extent as Whites. Cotterill et al. (in prep) point out, however, that these data were collected in the aftermath of the Rodney King beating, at a time when inequality was salient, and perceived system legitimacy was low for Black participants.

beliefs that serve the interests of the high-status group, and a significantly weaker connection between low-status identity and beliefs that serve the interests of the low-status group. This suggests that AIM is not simply a product of ongoing intergroup relations over the decades (e.g., the general history of violence and oppression seen in both the United States and India), but it seems to be a relatively basic aspect of group psychology.

Speaking to the question of why AIM occurs, the authors also found that decreasing perceived legitimacy in the context of artificial groups experimentally "turned off" AIM, significantly increasing the connection between subordinate ingroup identification and group-serving ideologies. In a final study, Cotterill et al. found the same moderation by legitimacy in the context of real groups. When lower-income participants believed that members of their class group were mistreated by a higher-class group, there was a significantly stronger connection between identification with these fellow group members, and support for policies that would help them (relative to when perceived treatment of their fellow group members was good).

The Theory of Gendered Prejudice (TGP)

One of the latest and most controversial extensions of SDT has been the further development of the theory of gendered prejudice (see McDonald et al., 2011). Built on the foundations of the Trivers's parental investment sexual selection theory (Trivers, 1972), and gender-related hypotheses derived from SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994; discussed later; see also Sidanius, Sinclair, & Pratto, 2006), the theory of gendered prejudice argues that there are important intergroup implications of the fact that over the course of evolutionary time, males and females have been faced with somewhat different reproductive challenges. Because of the considerably higher reproductive costs borne by females (i.e., in terms of placentation, gestation, birthing, lactation), and the fact that females are reproductively capable for a considerably shorter portion of their life cycles than are males, the two sexes will tend to pursue slightly different reproductive strategies. Specifically, females tend to be significantly choosier in their selection of a reproductive partner and will gravitate toward males in command of relatively high material and social resources and a willingness to devote these resources to the care and protection of the females' offspring. One of the primary ways in which males could accumulate these qualities attractive to females was to engage in extractive coalitional behavior together with other ingroup males to expropriate resources (e.g., hunting grounds, foraging territory, foodstuffs) from the males of out-groups. In addition, male access to reproductive assets could also be facilitated by constraining the reproductive choices of females (such as through mate guarding). This chronic predatory orientation toward outgroup males and the tendency to control the sexual choices of females are thought to have formed the basis of relatively high chronic levels of socially dominating attitudes and

behaviors found among males (for evidence of the link between non-egalitarian attitudes and sexual behaviors, see Kelly, Dubbs, & Barlow, 2015).

According to the theory of gendered prejudice, this interplay between male and female reproductive strategies resulted in the following set of expectations: (a) On average, males will display higher levels of aggression and discrimination against arbitrary-set outgroups, and higher average SDO levels than females, everything else being equal (a thesis known as the invariance hypothesis); (b) males will not only tend to be the primary protagonists of arbitrary-set aggression but will also be the primary targets of this aggression (a thesis originally labeled the subordinate male target hypothesis) and later developed into the outgroup male target hypothesis; see Navarrete, McDonald, Molina, & Sidanius, 2010); (c) the motives for outgroup discrimination will be somewhat different for ingroup males and females. Whereas outgroup discrimination will be proximally driven by some combination of outgroup aggression and social dominance orientation among males, among females outgroup discrimination will be proximally driven by fear, especially fear of sexual coercion at the hands of outgroup males (what is known as the differential motives hypothesis). In sum, the TGP essentially argues that outgroup discrimination and aggression are gendered phenomena and that the dueling reproductive strategies of males and females have sociopolitical implications for humans.

A good deal of research has found results consistent with TGP. In a large meta-analysis, Lee et al. (2011) employed 52,826 respondents (27,745 women), gleaned from 206 samples and 118 independent reports. The results showed robust male/female differences in SDO in line with the invariance hypothesis. Furthermore, the effect size of this gender difference in SDO was more than twice that of arbitrary-set differences in SDO.

Even more provocative is recent evidence consistent with the differential motives hypothesis. For example, Navarrete and colleagues (Navarrete, Fessler, Fleischman, & Geyer, 2009) found that racial bias against Black Americans tracked pregnancy risk across the menstrual cycle among young White women. The higher a woman's risk of conception, the higher the level of discrimination against Black Americans. Furthermore, additional interrogation of the data revealed that this correlation was conditioned by the degree to which the participants felt chronically vulnerable to sexual coercion. While there was a general tendency for anti-Black bias to increase as a function of conception risk, this relation was particularly pronounced among those women who felt chronically vulnerable to sexual coercion (Navarrete et al., 2009).

To assure themselves that these initial conception risk/prejudice results generalized across outgroups and were not simply restricted to Black targets, McDonald and colleagues (2011) performed an extension of the initial conception risk study by using male targets from minimal groups. Their results showed that for males perceived to be physically formidable, the greater a woman's conception risk, the greater the evaluative bias against males from minimal groups.

While the empirical evidence supporting TGP is encouraging thus far, much more work needs to be done to explore its limiting conditions and cultural generalizability.

Criticisms of Social Dominance Theory

Three major lines of criticism have been leveled against SDT. One concerns the causal status of SDO in driving sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors. A second line of criticism questions the validity of the invariance hypothesis concerning gender (see earlier). The third faults SDT for its alleged inability to account for social change. We discuss each of these criticisms in turn.

The Causal Status of SDO

In spite of the large set of phenomena with which SDO has been shown to correlate (see e.g., Table 8.1), the interpretation of these relationships has been the subject of some controversy. Critics have centered on two interrelated yet distinct issues – namely, SDO's role as a causal agent influencing downstream social attitudes and behaviors and its generality (Kreindler, 2005; Lehmiller & Schmitt, 2007; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; see also Reynolds & Turner, 2006).

With regards to this first issue, social dominance theorists have long treated SDO as both influenced by the social structure and context and influencing structure and context via its effects on intergroup attitudes and behaviors (i.e., as both a cause and an effect). However, some critics have argued that SDO is simply epiphenomenal, a "mere reflection" of existing attitudes toward particular social groups within a particular salient intergroup context (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). On this account, the relationship between SDO and a given variable – for example, racism – is explained by positing that participants complete the SDO scale holding a particular social group in mind. Thus, rather than SDO assessing support for hierarchy between groups in general (as the scale intends), participants might mentally substitute "groups" with "racial groups." If true, SDO would reflect nothing more than levels of participants' prior racism, and the SDO-racism relationship would be entirely epiphenomenal. Along similar lines, this perspective holds that the robust gender difference in SDO (Lee et al., 2011) can be accounted for by assuming that men and women complete the scale thinking about the implications of SDO for their respective gendered identities (Huang and Liu, 2005; Schmitt et al., 2003; see also Kreindler, 2005). This self-categorization perspective has received some empirical support. For example, Huang and Liu (2005) found that the gender difference in SDO was present when gender was salient in Taiwanese participants' minds, but not when membership in regional groups was primed. Similarly, in one study, Schmitt et al. (2003, Study 2) found that the SDO scores of participants

specifically told to think about race were associated with their racism but not with their sexism.

Although we see this contextualist critique of SDO as informative, we do not agree that it undermines the generality of SDO or its status as a contributor to (rather than a mere reflection of) downstream social attitudes and behaviors. As suggested by Sibley and Liu (2010), we argue that although it is possible to prime specific contexts and thus influence the SDO scale to appear as a mere proxy for prior attitudes toward particular groups, it nevertheless typically serves as (a) a robust measure of support for intergroup hierarchy across social contexts and (b) it predicts specific intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Several strands of research provide support for our assertions.

One line of research emphasizes SDO's generality (Kteily et al., 2012; Sibley & Liu, 2010). Thus, for example, Sibley and Liu (2010) modified items of the SDO scale to generate SDO scores that were specific to ethnic, gender, and age stratification. These items were measured in addition to the standard SDO scale, which was assessed with modified instructions to "think about groups in general." These authors found that support for hierarchy between groups in each of these specific contexts *uniquely* contributed to overall SDO scores, suggesting that SDO could not be accounted for by attitudes in any one of these contexts. Moreover, using hierarchical linear modeling, they determined that a large portion of the overall variance across the context-specific SDO measures was *between-person*, reflecting individual differences in support of inequalities across these contexts that were predicted by the general measure of SDO. Kteily et al. (2012) replicated and extended these ideas among an American community sample. Specifically, similar to Sibley and Liu (2010), these authors assessed the standard SDO scale, as well as a series of SDO items modified to focus on each of the race, age, and gender contexts. Using structural equation modeling, they showed that overall SDO scores (i.e., scores on the standard scale) were significantly and uniquely predicted by each of the scales assessing SDO levels with respect to race, age, and gender specifically. Consistent with Sibley and Liu (2010), this suggests that SDO cannot be thought to merely reflect attitudes in any one of these contexts alone. Kteily et al. (2012) further examined whether SDO's generality was dependent on providing, as Sibley and Liu (2010) had, instructions to "think about groups in general" prior to participants completing the SDO scale, by randomly assigning one group of participants (but not the other) to receive these instructions. In fact, this experimental manipulation had no effect: Across both conditions, SDO could not be reduced to any one of race-SDO, gender-SDO, or age-SDO. Beyond assessing these context-specific forms of SDO, these authors further observed that across experimental condition, SDO –measured on a single measurement occasion –was associated with a wide range of variables (from war support, to welfare opposition, to liking HE jobs and disliking HA jobs). Kteily and colleagues argued that it is highly unlikely that participants were thinking about all these groups simultaneously as they completed the SDO scale, making it difficult to conclude that these correlations could be explained by a contextualist account.

A related stream of research addressing the causal status of SDO has moved beyond cross-sectional studies and employed cross-lagged longitudinal designs. This research has provided strong support consistent with a causal role for SDO. For example, Thomsen et al. (2010) observed that whereas SDO significantly predicted White Americans' sense of ethnic victimization in 2000, controlling for levels of that variable in 1997, the reverse was not true. Consistent with the view of SDO as both a cause and effect, Sibley and Liu (2010) found some evidence of reciprocal cross-lagged paths between overall SDO and measures of context-specific inequality support over a 5-month period. Similarly, but over a 4-year period, Kteily et al. (2011) found that SDO and outgroup affect exerted significant cross-lagged effects on each other (see also Dhont, Van Hiel, & Hewstone, 2014; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). However, when they assessed self-reported levels of friendship with racial outgroup members, they observed that SDO contributed to decreased outgroup friendships over time but not the reverse. Building on this recent research, evidence for SDO as a cause (as well as an effect) would benefit from experimental manipulations of SDO that documented increases in HE attitudes and behaviors across a range of social contexts.

In sum, SDO correlates with intergroup attitudes across a wide spectrum of social contexts, is uniquely associated with multiple context-specific inequality measures, and longitudinally predicts outgroup attitudes, (self-reported) behavior and even personality. Notwithstanding certain contextual influences on SDO, this pattern of results is highly inconsistent with a view of SDO as a mere epipheno-menon, shifting dramatically from one context to another. Rather, although SDO can be influenced to reflect context-specific attitudes, it seems to represent indivi-duals' generalized orientation toward inequality between groups across social contexts, an orientation that has important social consequences.

The Invariance Hypothesis

As mentioned earlier, the invariance hypothesis states that males are expected to have higher SDO scores than females, all else being equal (see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al., 1994). More than 20 years of empirical research has shown this to be the most well-documented finding in the entire SDT literature[3] (see Lee et al., 2011). Thus, the controversy no longer concerns the facts of the case, but rather how this highly documented gender difference is to be interpreted. While cultural determinists and social role theorists (e.g., Eagly, 1987) prefer to interpret this gender difference as a result of socialization into social roles and context-specific power differences between men and women, SD theorists interpret this difference through the lens of evolutionary processes (see "Theory of Gendered Prejudice"). It is also possible, of course, that both perspectives are valid. SDO can

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3 For competing evidence using much smaller samples, see Batalha et al., 2011. See also Küpper and Zick, 2011.

be partly socialized and evolutionary processes might predispose males toward higher SDO levels. The definitive adjudication between these two interpretations awaits future research.

Social Dominance Theory and Social Change

A final criticism of social dominance theory is the claim that it does not adequately account for social change (e.g., Huddy, 2004; Jost, 2011; Pratto, Stewart, & Bou Zeineddine, 2013; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). It is argued that by assuming the ubiquity of group-based hierarchy and the mechanisms that sustain it, SDT is not well equipped to account for changes to hierarchy. Indeed, the success of a growing field of research into collective action, much of which is based on social identity theory (see, e.g., Van Zomeren et al., 2008), might be seen as evidence that the latter theory is better equipped to account for incidents of group-based social protest and challenges to social hierarchy consistently observable in the global news media (Turner & Reynolds, 2003; see also Reicher, 2004). We break down this critique into two components, only one of which, we argue, is a valid criticism of SDT as originally formulated.

The first version of the social change–based critique of SDT is that it does not have coherent conceptual resources to deal with antiestablishment protest and other omnipresent social forces dedicated to challenging social hierarchy (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). We argue that this claim neglects SDT's explicit early theorizing of the presence, in every society, of forces that are not only hierarchy enhancing but also hierarchy attenuating. The latter includes egalitarian ideologies such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, a broad range of counter-dominance discourses such as around the inegalitarian implications of capitalism, and social institutions that exert steady and continuous pressure toward more equal distribution of social value (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; see also Boehm, 1999). It is precisely the dynamic nature of the clash between HE and HA forces, across levels of analysis, that uniquely equips SDT to account for complex societal processes and changes. Indeed, the original formulation of the theory acknowledged various types of social change that do occur, ranging from progressive legislative reforms (such as the American Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, 1871, 1875, 1957, 1964, and 1965) that attenuated intergroup inequality, to separatist or anti-imperialist conflicts that destabilize, divide, or destroy societies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, pp. 35–36). Despite this, SD theorists point out that though the severity and specific nature of social hierarchy varies across time and social contexts, the fact of group-based social hierarchy itself seems to be a constant (see also Pratto et al., 2006). Thus, although the degree of domination and the specific groups dominating and being dominated might change, the phenomenon of group-based dominance seems remarkably stable. The 2012–2013 events in Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood supplanted an oppressive regime and then itself proceeded to quell opposition to its rule, provide a case in point. Thus, adequate theories of social change will need to explain not only the process by which oppressed groups

supplant other oppressive groups but also the process by which hierarchy becomes re-entrenched. SDT provides the conceptual tools to explain both phenomena in turn. In other words, while the specific actors may change, the basic play remains the same.

A second version of this critique argues that whereas processes that radically alter societies are acknowledged in the theory, these processes are under-theorized and understudied within SDT (Pratto et al., 2013). Indeed, engaging in a dedicated examination of social change and of the assumptions of the theory regarding it may warrant more detailed development of some of the theory's nascent components. It is worth noting that the claim of SDT being logically incoherent, by assuming that which is to be proven – that is, the universality of group-based social hierarchy (Pratto et al., 2013) – misconstrues the basic assumptions and goals of SDT. The SDT project is not, in fact, trying to prove the universality or naturalness of group-based social hierarchy. Rather it starts with the observation that starting from the Holocene, human societies tend to be organized as group-based social hierarchies (see Bowles et al., 2010). Having made this observation, SDT then attempts to (a) engage in reverse engineering in trying to uncover the multileveled and interactive processes that are responsible for the production and maintenance of group-based hierarchy and (b) most importantly, explore how this form of social organization expresses itself in various forms of social oppression (e.g., racism, nationalism, and classism).

However, we agree that another area in need of more conceptual and empirical work is that of the balanced nature of HE and HA forces within societies and institutions, especially where such claims are grounded on assumed societal stability in a world in which many societies have in fact failed (Pratto et al., 2013). With this in mind, we are excited by ongoing conceptual innovations, such as on the multidimensional and fungible nature of power (Pratto, Lee, Tan, & Pitpitan, 2011), and the examination of meta-level, inter- and trans-societal dynamics (Pratto, Sidanius, Bou Zeineddine, Kteily, & Levin, 2014)which are extending and improving SDT's ability to speak to social instability and change.

Where Do We Go from Here? Some Remaining Questions

SD theorists have long argued that the production and maintenance of group-based hierarchy and its resultant systems of oppression are a function of processes operating at multiple levels of analysis. While some modest work has examined the processes responsible for the fit between individuals' sociopolitical attitudes (e.g., SDO levels, racism) and the hierarchical nature of social institutions in which individuals are embedded, the multilevel assumptions of SDT have yet to be comprehensively tested. There are a number of areas in which we need further evidence to clarify the specific multileveled interactive nature of the processes involved. In particular, we identify three aspects of a multilevel theory in which additional research is needed.

First, most of the research employing SDT as an organizing framework has used outcome variables at the individual level of analysis (for an exception see Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995). However, recent work has also begun to examine higher levels, looking at how between-nation differences in SDO are a function of such factors as nations' level of democratization and gender empowerment (e.g., Fischer et al., 2012).

Second, we are in need of more research devoted to an examination of *cross-level* processes. We must begin to focus on the manner in which processes at one level of analysis both affect and are affected by processes at other levels of analysis (see, e.g., Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010). One rudimentary example of such cross-level processes is the person-institution work discussed by Haley and Sidanius (2005). These researchers began by reviewing evidence indicating that there is a matching or congruence between the hierarchy-relevant nature of social institutions and the hierarchy-relevant social attitudes and behavioral predispositions of personnel embedded within these institutions. For example, early work on SDT showed that Los Angeles police officers (i.e., hierarchy enhancers) had relatively high SDO scores, while attorneys in the public defender's office (i.e., hierarchy attenuators) had relatively low SDO scores (see Sidanius et al., 1994). Haley and Sidanius (2005) outlined five cross-level mechanisms that were argued to be responsible for this person-institution matching: (a) s*elf-selection*, or the tendency for individuals to select those social institutions that are congruent with their hierarchy-relevant social attitudes. For example, people with relatively high SDO scores will be positively attracted to careers in the internal security organizations (e.g., secret police), and negatively attracted to careers designed to help the stigmatized and the oppressed (e.g., civil rights organizations), (b) *institutional selection*, or the process by which social institutions will tend to select personnel with congruent hierarchy-relevant social attitudes and behavioral predispositions, (c) *institutional socialization*, or the tendency for the hierarchy-relevant social attitudes and behaviors of personnel to become increasingly congruent with continued exposure to hierarchy-relevant institutional culture. For example, evidence has shown that police trainees become increasingly hostile to Blacks as exposure to training within the police academy increases (see, e.g., Teahan, 1975; for a related example see Guimond, 2000). The fourth matching process is known as (d) *differential institutional reward*. This describes the tendency for personnel whose hierarchy-relevant social attitudes are congruent with the hierarchy-relevant institutional culture to be positively rewarded and personnel whose hierarchy-relevant social attitudes and behaviors are incongruent with the hierarchy-relevant culture of the institutions within which they are placed to be negatively rewarded. The fifth and last process thought to be responsible for the matching of individuals and social institutions, and to yet be empirically tested, is (e) *differential attrition*, or the tendency for incongruents to leave social roles or social institutions that do not fit with their ideological orientation.

Although Haley and Sidanius (2005) presented relatively strong evidence for the first four of these processes feeding into person-institutional matching, they had no data concerning the precise mediating mechanisms between person-institutional mismatch and personnel attrition. Perhaps even more important for SD theorizing, research has yet to explore the question as to whether or not the degree of group-based social hierarchy, at the system-wide level, is caused by or even associated with the degree of person-institutional congruence. These are exciting questions that can be answered with research techniques dedicated to exploring multiple levels of analysis.

Finally, a large lacuna in SDT research, linked to the social change critique, is a coherent and well-thought-out explanation accounting for the vast differences in the degree of group-based social hierarchy across cultures, nations, and time. One suspects that explanations for the substantial differences in the severity of group-based social hierarchy across societies are to be primarily found in the net effects of higher-level, exogenous factors such as chronic economic scarcity, vulnerability to invasion by outgroups, population density, disease load, and climactic conditions. While no efforts have yet been made to incorporate such contextual, macro-level factors into SDT, we suggest that such incorporation could prove to be extremely illuminating in understanding the dynamics and prospects for our socially hierarchical world.

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