Sex Roles (2010) 62:405–419
DOI 10.1007/s11199-009-9712-7

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Joy of Sexism? A Multinational Investigation of Hostile and Benevolent Justifications for Gender Inequality and Their Relations to Subjective Well-Being

Jaime L. Napier · Hulda Thorisdottir · John T. Jost

Published online: 11 November 2009
© Springer Science + Business Media, LLC 2009

Abstract Previous research on system justification theory suggests that beliefs that rationalize inequalities are related to subjective well-being. We examine how "complementary" (hostile and benevolent) justifications of gender inequality may serve a palliative function for both men and women. Using multilevel modeling and data from 32 countries (*N*'s=362 to 5160), we find that relationships between hostile and benevolent justifications and life satisfaction are moderated by the degree of gender inequality at the national level. In relatively egalitarian nations, individuals who endorse "complementary" justifications are higher on life satisfaction compared to those who endorse an exclusively hostile justification. In nations with high gender inequality, there is no difference in life satisfaction for those who endorse exclusively hostile vs. complementary justifications.

Keywords System justification · Complementary stereotypes · Subjective well-being

J. L. Napier (✉)
Department of Psychology, Yale University,
2 Hillhouse Ave.,
New Haven, CT 06511, USA
e-mail: jaime.napier@yale.edu

H. Thorisdottir
University of Iceland,
Reykjavík, Iceland

J. T. Jost
New York University,
New York, NY, USA

Introduction

In a 1999 interview for the PBS television series *People's Century* (2009), conservative and anti-feminist activist Colleen Parro spoke fondly of her traditional upbringing in the 1950's. When asked to recall her reaction to the feminist movement, she responded:

> To me success was having a good husband and a good family and a happy life... When Betty Friedan and the feminists began their activities, and the feminist movement began to rear its head in our society, I was a young mother raising two children. I guess that was the early 60's. I thought, "How strange! What is wrong with this woman? What are these people so angry about?" I didn't know any feminists. Everybody I knew was not oppressed and was very happy and was not miserable, and we were all enjoying raising our families. Life isn't fair—we'd always been brought up to know that and understand that. But I think most of us, because we had a fundamental belief system ... understood that there's a reason for adversity (*People's Century* 2009)

There was, indeed, quite a bit of "adversity" for many American women during that time. Until 1965, for instance, it was legal for employers to exercise gender-based discrimination in hiring (Martin 1976). The laws also failed to protect women from physical forms of adversity. For example, the state of New York began to grant divorces to victims of domestic violence in 1966, but only if there was evidence that a "sufficiently" large number of beatings had taken place (Martin 1976). Until 1970, in Parro's hometown of Chicago (as well as many other cities) battered women who left their husbands were denied welfare support (Schechter 1982).

Despite these and other obvious detriments to the physical health and economic well-being of women in general, it seems that Parro's relatively disadvantaged status as a woman had little or no impact on her *subjective* well-being. The aim of the present research is to place Parro's account in a broader social-psychological framework. We suggest that she may have been correct to assume that a "fundamental belief system" that provided "a reason"—or, indeed, a rationalization—for gender inequality was, at least in part, responsible for her contentment. In particular, we bring together work on ambivalent sexism theory (Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001a, b) and system justification theory (Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost and Kay 2005) to examine how "hostile" and "complementary" (i.e., hostile and benevolent) justifications of gender disparities relate to the psychological well-being of men and women.

More specifically, we build on work suggesting that system-justifying beliefs serve a *palliative function* for members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Jost and Hunyady 2002, 2005). For instance, research has demonstrated that beliefs that rationalize and justify existing inequalities can often promote positive affect, reduce negative affect, and are frequently associated with increased life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Jost and Hunyady 2002; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Major 1994; Napier and Jost 2008; O'Brien and Major 2005; Rankin et al. 2009; Wakslak et al. 2007).

In this article, our focal thesis is that rationalizations of gender inequality will be associated with greater life satisfaction in general for both men and women. However, we also expect that the degree of gender inequality in a given societal context will affect which *types* of rationalization help individuals to make sense of (and feel satisfied with) the status quo. To this end, we examine the relationship between the endorsement of hostile and benevolent rationalizations of women's relatively disadvantaged status and self-reported life satisfaction in 32 countries with varying degrees of gender inequality. Our prediction is that "complementary" (vs. exclusively hostile) justifications may be especially palliative in societies that have made progress towards gender parity (and thus presumably hold equality as a cultural ideal), insofar as such justifications reframe traditional gender roles as "complementary but equal."

System Justification Theory

In contrast to what is perhaps a "common sense" notion that people will at the very least reject, if not rebel against, attitudes and circumstances that justify the oppression of their own group, research on system justification theory has uncovered myriad ways in which individuals internalize and even perpetuate beliefs that put themselves and their fellow groups members at a disadvantage (e.g., Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost et al. 2004; Jost et al. 2003b). According to the theory, people are motivated to defend the status quo (and by extension, existing inequalities) because doing so serves epistemic, existential, and relational needs to minimize uncertainty and threat and to maintain shared reality with others (Jost et al. 2009; Jost et al. 2008).

Members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups often denounce overtly demeaning or prejudiced categorizations of those who are disadvantaged; this is especially true as a society becomes increasingly aware of the damage caused by past acts of discrimination (Dovidio and Gaertner 1999). Nevertheless, many citizens readily endorse other, more subtle system-serving beliefs that—while less obviously pernicious—still serve to justify or rationalize the relative positions held by members of dominant and subordinated groups. In the United States, for example, most people subscribe to meritocratic beliefs such as "hard work brings success" (Jost et al. 2003a; Kluegel and Smith 1986; Lane 1959/1962). This belief is widespread even among those occupying the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, despite the fact that such a belief implies that *they* are to blame for their own lack of success (Jost et al. 2003b).

Research has shown that (despite potential costs to self-esteem) holding system-justifying beliefs can serve a palliative function. Whether measured as an individual difference variable or induced by a "rags-to-riches" story, system-justifying beliefs can diminish moral outrage and existential guilt over social and economic inequality (Wakslak et al. 2007). In a study involving U.S. college students, Kay and Jost (2003) found that exposure to *non*-complementary stereotypes (e.g., the rich are happier and more honest than the poor) activated justice-related concerns. Thus, the failure to perceive advantaged and disadvantaged social groups as possessing "complementary but equal" strengths and weaknesses seems to pose a threat to the system's legitimacy, at least in societies in which equality is considered an ideal.

Furthermore, Napier and Jost (2008) found that political conservatives generally report greater happiness and personal satisfaction than political liberals and this is due at least in part to conservatives' endorsement of system-justifying attitudes with regard to income inequality. Drawing on research samples taken from ten countries, the authors found that people who hold beliefs justifying and rationalizing income inequality tend to experience greater subjective well-being than those who do not. Furthermore, the relationship between the rationalization of income inequality and subjective well-being was not qualified by socioeconomic status. That is, meritocratic beliefs seem to be palliative for those who are disadvantaged in society as well as those who are advantaged.

Napier and Jost (2008) also found that the level of income inequality over time in the United States significantly moderated the gap between liberals and conservatives with respect to subjective well-being. Increasing income inequality was associated with a steeper decrease in happiness for liberals than for conservatives. This evidence is consistent with the notion that system-justifying ideologies provide a psychological buffer against the otherwise deleterious effects of system-level injustice (i.e., inequality). Just as politically conservative ideology appears to serve a palliative function in the face of income inequality, traditional gender ideologies may similarly buffer men and women from the negative effects of gender-based inequality.

Ambivalent Sexism

Bem and Bem (1970) proposed that men and women counter the threat of gender inequality in ways that largely preserve the status quo and imbue it with fairness, namely by enhancing the roles traditionally occupied by women and thus regarding gender roles as "complementary but equal." Much research has confirmed that inequalities between social groups—especially between men and women—are rationalized by the use of complementary (or "ambivalent") stereotypes (Cuddy and Fiske 2002; Deaux and Lewis 1984; Eagly and Steffen 1984; Fiske 1998; Fiske et al. 2002; Fiske et al. 1999; Jost and Kay 2005; Jost et al. 2005; Kay and Jost 2003; Kay et al. 2005; Kay et al. 2007; Langford and MacKinnon 2000; Williams and Best 1982). That is, higher status groups are ascribed positive status-relevant traits (e.g., competence), and lower status groups are ascribed positive but status-irrelevant traits (e.g., warmth).

As outlined by ambivalent sexism theorists, complementary stereotypes are especially common ways of justifying gender inequality because, unlike other forms of prejudice, the unique interdependent relationship between men and women makes purely antipathetic attitudes toward women untenable (Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001a, b). Rather, men and women alike tend to hold views of women that contain both positive and negative sentiments (Glick et al. 2002; Jackman 1994; Jost and Kay 2005). "Benevolent" sexism refers to a seemingly positive yet paternalistic ideology that holds women to be virtuous and warm, and therefore deserving of protection and being cherished by men. "Hostile" sexism, by contrast, is a more aggressive belief system that holds women to be conniving and manipulative in their attempts to use sex or false claims of discrimination to gain power and control over men. Thus, the ambivalent sexist believes that women ought to be protected and provided for, but also that men ought to be in power and should prevent women from seizing it (Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001a, b; Glick et al. 2000).

These dual perspectives on women can serve to bolster and maintain an unequal gender system by rewarding women who choose traditional roles and derogating those who attempt non-traditional, system-challenging roles. In other words, they serve to justify existing gender inequalities in society and in the family (Jost and Banaji 1994). Benevolent forms of sexism seem to be particularly important in leading women to justify gender inequality (Jackman 1994; Jost and Kay 2005). Cikara et al. (2009) point out that "women's endorsement of [benevolent sexism] (which prominently features the conviction that a male partner will protect and provide for them) seems to be a key ingredient in getting women to accept a traditional role, presumably by sweetening the pot so that many women are more content to value their domestic roles more than work opportunities outside the home" (p. 452).

For example, when North American women are reminded of benevolent or complementary stereotypes (but not other positive, non-stereotypical traits) concerning their group, they increase their support for traditional gender arrangements as well as for the social system in general (Jost and Kay 2005). Sibley et al. (2007) also argued that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism has system-justifying consequences. They provided evidence from a longitudinal study showing that New Zealand women's initial endorsement of benevolent sexism predicted increased hostile sexism later in life, presumably because the "disarming" effect of benevolent attitudes made gender inequality more palatable over time.

Attitudes toward women as a group that are simultaneously hostile and benevolent seem to be relatively pervasive across cultures. A study conducted in 19 countries revealed a high positive correlation (r=.9) between the endorsements of benevolent and hostile forms of sexism (Glick et al. 2000). Such complementary (vs. exclusively hostile) attitudes toward members of disadvantaged groups may be especially effective as system-justifying mechanisms when equality has become an accepted cultural ideal (so that inequality is deemed as threatening), as in North America, Western Europe, and elsewhere (Bem and Bem 1970; Naylor 1998; Rawls 1999; Sen 1990).

By contrast, in societies that have made relatively little progress toward the attainment of gender equality, purely hostile (as opposed to complementary) views of women may satisfy system-justifying needs because the value of gender equality has not come to the cultural forefront in these societies. Much as pre-Civil War racism was markedly more hostile than the more subtle forms of racism currently expressed in U.S. society (Dovidio and Gaertner 1999, 2000; Sears 1988; Schuman et al. 1997), it seems plausible that purely hostile evaluations of women are acceptable forms of system justification in highly

inegalitarian contexts. This notion was captured artfully by Bem and Bem (1970), who wrote that, "The ideological rationalization that men and women hold complementary but equal positions in society appears to be a fairly recent invention. In earlier times—and in more conservative company today—it was not felt necessary to provide the ideology with an *equalitarian veneer*" (p. 96, emphasis added).

Overview: The Palliative Function of Gender Inequality Justification in 32 Nations

In the current research, we further explore the palliative function of system justification by examining the relationship between hostile and benevolent justifications of gender inequality and self-reported life satisfaction in 32 countries. This work expands on previous research showing that the rationalization of inequality is linked to subjective well-being (e.g., Napier and Jost 2008). While prior work addressing the connection between system justification and well-being has largely focused on economic inequality, there is reason to think that the palliative effects of system justification would apply to the justification of other types of inequalities, including gender inequality. Thus, we predict that those who endorse justifications of gender inequality should report greater life satisfaction than those who reject these rationalizations.

However, we expect that the *type* of rationalization that will serve system-justifying ends (and therefore be associated with palliative consequences) will depend upon the societal context. That is, we expect that complementary (as opposed to exclusively hostile) rationalizations of gender inequality will be especially palliative in societal contexts in which blatant gender inequality is seen as undesirable, insofar as complementary justifications put an "equalitarian veneer" on gender inequality.

In this study, we analyze data from 32 countries included in the World Values Survey (2006) to explore the relationship between gender-specific system justification and subjective well-being. The survey included items that we considered to be "hostile" justifications insofar as they derogate women's ability to perform in positions typically held by men (e.g., political leaders) and "benevolent" justifications that enhance the roles typically held by women (e.g., housewives).

As a first step, we aim to compare our measures of hostile and benevolent justification to those used in prior research on ambivalent sexism. Specifically, we expect to replicate several basic findings from a 19-country study by Glick et al. (2000), namely, that: women (more than men) should favor benevolent over hostile justifications (*Hypothesis 1a)*; gender inequality across nations should be related to the endorsement of hostile and benevolent justifications (*Hypothesis 1b*); and hostile and benevolent justifications will be related to each other across countries (*Hypothesis 1c*).

In our second set of analyses, we examine the interplay among nation-level gender equality, hostile and benevolent justifications, and life satisfaction. We hypothesize that system justification will serve a palliative function when it comes to gender inequality, but the societal context will influence what type of justification (hostile vs. complementary) will be associated with increased subjective well-being. That is, we predict that in countries that are low in gender equality, hostile justifications should be sufficient for the purposes of system justification (and thus deliver palliative benefits). However, to the extent that gender equality is considered to be a cultural ideal, the derogation of women in high status positions should, if anything, constitute a threat to the social system unless it is "balanced out" by "benevolent" justifications (i.e., the concurrent, complementary *enhancement* of traditional female roles). Finally, according to system justification theory, members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups should be motivated (at least to some degree) to view the system as fair and legitimate. Thus, to the extent that hostile and benevolent justifications of gender inequality serve as explanations for the unequal gender system, we expect that they should be palliative for both men and women.

In sum, we hypothesize that the relationship between hostile justification and life satisfaction will be moderated by both benevolent justification and nation-level gender inequality. In countries with low gender equality, we predict that hostile justification will be positively associated with life satisfaction for both men and women (*Hypothesis 2*). In countries with relatively high gender equality, however, we predict that hostile justification will be associated with life satisfaction only to the extent that it is coupled with benevolent justifications, so that existing gender roles can be viewed as "complementary but equal" (*Hypothesis 3*).

Method

We analyzed data from the third and fourth waves of the World Values Survey (2006), which were administered from 1994 to 1999 and from 2000 to 2004, respectively. Data were available for nationally-representative samples from 32 different countries. Sample sizes and demographic information for each nation are listed in Table 1.

To gauge national levels of gender (in)equality, we used the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP; 2000) Gender Empowerment Measure, the same measure of gender inequality used by Glick et al. (2000). The Gender Empowerment Measure is a composite indicator that captures gender inequality in political decision-making (e.g., percentage of Parliamentary seats held by women) and economic

Table 1 Sample sizes and means (and standard deviations) of demographic information for women and men in 32 countries from the World Values Survey.

Country	*N*	Education	Income	Church attendance	Age	% Married
Australia						
Women	860	2.05(.76)	1.85(.80)	3.54(2.54)	3.24(1.70)	54.5
Men	826	2.10(.78)	1.98(.80)	2.88(2.39)	3.14(1.69)	60.3
Bangladesh						
Women	1170	1.55(.65)	1.95(.80)	6.27(2.54)	2.18(.98)	78.3
Men	1522	1.79(.72)	2.05(.77)	6.79(1.84)	2.81(1.27)	74.8
Canada						
Women	800	2.00(.71)	1.97(.83)	4.36(2.52)	3.52(1.63)	62.9
Men	829	2.07(.73)	2.15(.81)	3.76(2.48)	3.76(2.48)	68.7
Chile						
Women	1033	1.78(.72)	1.83(.79)	4.80(2.51)	3.15(1.55)	62.1
Men	901	1.91(.74)	1.94(.81)	3.76(2.53)	3.01(1.51)	64.6
Colombia						
Women	1388	2.06(.75)	2.07(.72)	5.63(2.16)	2.68(1.20)	59.6
Men	1513	2.17(.76)	2.21(.71)	5.12(2.33)	2.71(1.27)	60.5
Czech Republic						
Women	465	1.71(.67)	1.83(.84)	2.86(2.23)	3.87(1.62)	59.4
Men	362	1.75(.72)	2.14(.78)	2.34(2.02)	3.67(1.59)	72.7
Dominican Republic						
Women	154	2.62(.62)	1.75(.79)	5.56(2.42)	1.89(.93)	37.5
Men	110	2.62(.59)	2.02(.78)	4.67(2.67)	1.93(.95)	40.1
El Salvador						
Women	479	1.69(.78)	1.87(.70)	5.90(2.40)	2.63(1.45)	61.0
Men	482	1.73(.80)	1.99(.70)	5.53(2.54)	2.87(1.63)	59.9
Estonia						
Women	522	2.03(.64)	2.02(.80)	3.12(1.79)	3.50(1.55)	59.4
Men	406	2.01(.67)	2.23(.77)	2.39(1.74)	3.25(1.49)	73.8
Finland						
Women	432	1.66(.65)	1.98(.81)	3.60(1.76)	3.22(1.64)	58.5
Men	403	1.73(.63)	2.04(.86)	2.78(1.45)	3.19(1.58)	63.0
Germany						
Women	836	1.93(.73)	1.85(.76)	3.33(2.34)	3.21(1.56)	57.0
Men	693	2.01(.79)	1.86(.74)	2.68(2.11)	3.27(1.51)	65.2
Japan						
Women	415	2.07(.50)	1.93(.82)	3.99(1.72)	3.45(1.52)	71.6
Men	360	2.27(.66)	2.08(.82)	3.92(1.70)	3.71(1.55)	79.1
Jordan						
Women	560	1.81(.84)	1.90(.84)	2.29(2.19)	2.51(1.26)	71.2
Men	547	1.73(.80)	1.94(.75)	6.66(2.30)	2.83(1.62)	63.5
Korea, Republic of						
Women	1153	2.22(.62)	2.07(.84)	4.18(2.58)	2.79(1.25)	68.2
Men	1128	2.35(.59)	1.98(.85)	3.48(2.46)	3.05(1.32)	69.9
Latvia						
Women	596	2.23(.61)	1.92(.81)	3.72(1.97)	3.30(1.54)	52.1
Men	451	2.15(.63)	2.12(.83)	2.90(1.87)	3.27(1.60)	67.3
Lithuania						
Women	395	2.09(.65)	1.95(.82)	4.91(1.89)	3.30(1.62)	63.6
Men	370	1.99(.66)	2.06(.82)	4.05(2.07)	3.38(1.68)	74.6
Mexico						
Women	1447	1.69(.70)	1.95(.81)	5.93(2.02)	2.64(1.38)	62.7
Men	1487	1.86(.75)	2.05(.81)	5.34(2.30)	2.70(1.44)	61.2

Table 1 (continued)

Country	*N*	Education	Income	Church attendance	Age	% Married
New Zealand						
Women	491	1.98(.87)	2.00(.82)	3.18(2.49)	3.73(1.53)	67.5
Men	372	1.99(.88)	2.15(.80)	2.74(2.22)	3.73(1.57)	74.3
Norway						
Women	517	2.00(.80)	1.73(.73)	3.08(2.04)	3.39(1.61)	70.7
Men	512	2.04(.77)	1.87(.76)	2.60(2.01)	3.29(1.54)	69.4
Peru						
Women	1185	1.97(.72)	1.75(.78)	5.98(1.90)	2.53(1.29)	60.5
Men	1137	2.14(.72)	1.88(.79)	5.34(2.15)	2.60(1.37)	56.9
Philippines						
Women	589	2.01(.79)	1.98(.77)	6.57(1.41)	2.76(1.43)	75.1
Men	589	2.03(.79)	2.06(.75)	6.12(1.67)	2.81(1.46)	69.8
Poland						
Women	451	1.64(.75)	1.83(.75)	6.27(1.62)	3.62(1.69)	60.0
Men	384	1.43(.66)	1.89(.76)	5.69(1.89)	3.60(1.57)	71.5
Romania						
Women	499	1.96(.60)	1.70(.72)	5.11(1.90)	3.19(1.56)	68.6
Men	486	2.02(.62)	1.77(.74)	4.39(2.10)	3.30(1.63)	74.8
Russian Federation						
Women	971	2.05(.63)	1.92(.79)	2.78(1.90)	2.67(1.61)	56.0
Men	690	2.05(.62)	2.13(.78)	1.93(1.56)	3.48(1.52)	78.1
Slovakia						
Women	425	1.76(.64)	1.79(.79)	5.15(2.51)	3.51(1.47)	67.6
Men	405	1.88(.69)	1.90(.82)	4.29(2.40)	3.29(1.59)	74.2
Spain						
Women	795	1.51(.74)	2.04(.71)	4.40(2.62)	3.50(1.71)	62.9
Men	765	1.64(.79)	2.11(.72)	3.27(2.47)	3.31(1.71)	60.6
Sweden						
Women	898	2.13(.74)	1.93(.80)	2.73(1.93)	3.47(1.58)	62.1
Men	886	2.00(.73)	2.06(.77)	2.37(1.78)	3.52(1.58)	67.6
Turkey						
Women	2099	1.33(.60)	1.77(.75)	3.24(2.58)	2.66(1.30)	77.1
Men	2218	1.52(.69)	1.75(.76)	5.92(2.49)	2.78(1.43)	72.0
Ukraine						
Women	1035	2.07(.65)	1.91(.83)	3.72(2.13)	3.53(1.55)	69.2
Men	711	2.06(.61)	2.07(.82)	2.90(2.09)	3.52(1.52)	80.5
United States						
Women	1178	2.28(.75)	1.84(.79)	5.45(2.40)	3.43(1.60)	60.5
Men	1141	2.30(.76)	1.97(.79)	4.76(2.52)	3.27(1.64)	60.2
Uruguay						
Women	489	1.55(.66)	1.97(.83)	3.21(2.55)	3.58(1.61)	55.6
Men	366	1.48(.64)	1.98(.81)	2.14(2.01)	3.79(1.68)	63.6
Venezuela						
Women	946	1.84(.74)	1.92(.82)	5.25(2.23)	2.67(1.44)	57.9
Men	993	1.86(.73)	2.11(.84)	4.36(2.34)	2.62(1.45)	54.7

Education and income are measured on a 3-point scale; church attendance ranges from 1 ("never attend church") to 8 ("attend more than once a week"); age is measured on a 6 interval scale (e.g., 1=18–25; 2=26–35; 3=36–45; 4=46–55; 5=56–65; 6=66 or older)

participation (e.g., women's share of earned income; UNDP, 2000, p. 168). The overall index ranges from 0 to 1, such that 0 denotes complete gender inequality and 1 denotes complete gender equality.

Hostility of attitudes toward women in high status roles was measured by taking the mean of responses to two items, "Men make better political leaders than women do," and "University education is more important for a boy than a girl" (r=.59, p<.001). Benevolence of attitudes toward women in traditional, low status roles was measured with a single item that read, "Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay." Responses to all three items were provided on a 1-to-4 scale, such that 1="Strongly disagree" and 4="Strongly agree." The means and standard deviations for men and women on hostile and benevolent forms of justification are listed in Table 2 for each of the 32 countries.

Subjective well-being was measured in terms of self-reported personal life satisfaction as indicated on a 1-to-10 scale ranging from 1 ("Not at all satisfied") to 10 ("Very satisfied"). The gender of the respondent was effect-coded so that -1=male and 1=female.

Adjustment variables

In our analyses, we adjusted for both nation-level and individual-level variables that, on the basis of prior research, were expected to be associated with our primary variables of interest. Previous research has shown that inhabitants of wealthier (vs. poorer) countries tend to report higher life satisfaction (Diener and Oishi 2000; Myers and Diener 1995). Wealthy countries also tend to have higher rates of gender equality in comparison with poorer countries (United Nations Development Programme 2000). Thus, to examine

Table 2 The United Nation's Gender Equality Measure (*GEM*) and means (and standard deviations) of men's and women's hostile and benevolent justifications for gender inequality in 32 countries from the World Values Survey.

Country	GEM	Hostile justification		Benevolent justification	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Jordan	0.22	3.14(.76)	2.63(.80)	3.22(.97)	3.17(.91)
Bangladesh	0.31	2.79(.78)	2.60(.79)	2.12(.79)	2.03(.81)
Korea, Republic of	0.32	2.54(.70)	2.25(.78)	3.14(.70)	3.33(.63)
Turkey	0.32	2.54(.80)	2.35(.78)	3.12(.77)	3.01(.85)
Romania	0.41	2.89(.78)	2.67(.82)	2.81(1.06)	2.69(1.11)
Ukraine	0.42	2.72(.70)	2.47(.69)	2.95(.79)	2.80(.83)
Russian Federation	0.43	2.64(.65)	2.51(.66)	3.04(.76)	2.84(.83)
Chile	0.44	2.36(.82)	2.04(.81)	2.92(.91)	2.83(.93)
Peru	0.45	2.27(.64)	2.03(.62)	2.81(.75)	2.84(.73)
Uruguay	0.47	2.24(.59)	2.13(.58)	2.91(.70)	2.81(.77)
Philippines	0.48	2.59(.74)	2.45(.76)	2.67(.83)	3.15(.65)
Japan	0.49	2.43(.65)	2.26(.65)	3.04(.54)	3.05(.60)
Colombia	0.51	2.18(.58)	1.98(.57)	2.82(.74)	2.80(.80)
Dominican Republic	0.51	2.15(.80)	1.79(.76)	2.47(1.00)	2.44(1.08)
Mexico	0.51	2.33(.80)	2.20(.84)	2.84(.89)	2.85(.92)
Poland	0.51	2.61(.73)	2.47(.74)	3.04(.68)	2.54(.89)
El Salvador	0.53	2.08(.70)	2.08(.74)	2.89(.87)	2.98(.92)
Lithuania	0.53	2.49(.58)	2.31(.63)	3.10(.61)	3.05(.73)
Slovakia	0.53	2.69(.75)	2.48(.77)	2.47(.83)	2.36(.89)
Czech Republic	0.54	2.55(.68)	2.31(.75)	2.42(.72)	2.41(.85)
Estonia	0.54	2.70(.70)	2.43(.75)	2.83(.82)	2.82(.83)
Latvia	0.54	2.62(.57)	2.48(.64)	2.81(.69)	2.66(.75)
Venezuela	0.60	2.11(.86)	1.87(.84)	2.84(1.08)	2.83(1.08)
Spain	0.62	1.99(.67)	1.82(.66)	2.80(.83)	2.68(.90)
United States	0.71	2.09(.61)	1.86(.63)	3.03(.69)	3.08(.75)
Australia	0.72	2.13(.54)	1.85(.55)	2.81(.63)	2.79(.74)
New Zealand	0.73	2.07(.56)	1.79(.58)	2.76(.73)	2.84(.76)
Canada	0.74	1.89(.57)	1.69(.61)	3.10(.70)	3.10(.77)
Finland	0.76	1.78(.77)	1.57(.73)	3.29(.79)	3.26(.86)
Germany	0.76	1.85(.61)	1.68(.61)	2.46(.74)	2.32(.83)
Sweden	0.79	1.54(.65)	1.45(.62)	2.76(.91)	2.64(.99)
Norway	0.83	1.52(68)	1.48(.65)	2.84(.98)	2.74(1.09)

The Gender Equality Measure (GEM) ranges from 0 to 1, where 0=absolute inequality and 1=absolute equality. The measures of hostile and benevolent justification were assessed on a 1-to-4 scale, where higher numbers indicated agreement.

the effects of nation-level gender equality above and beyond any effects of national wealth, we adjusted for the natural log of each nation's gross domestic product per capita (GDP).

We also adjusted for a host of demographic variables that are known to be related to life satisfaction (e.g., Blanchflower and Oswald 2004; Myers and Diener 1995). These included frequency of church attendance (self-placement on an 8-point scale, where 1="Never" and 8= "More than once a week"); income (3 intervals); education (3 intervals); marital status (dummy coded so that 0=divorced, widowed, or single and 1=married); age (6 intervals); and the quadratic effect of age (age squared), because prior research suggests that younger and older people are happier than are those in middle age (Blanchflower and Oswald 2004). With the exception of gender (which was effect-coded), all variables in the model were centered on their grand mean.

Results

Hostile and benevolent justifications

The means and standard deviations of hostile and benevolent justification endorsement for men and women in the 32 nations are listed in Table 2. We conducted a gender-by-country MANCOVA with all of the individual-level adjustment variables entered as covariates. The results of this analysis indicated that men were more likely than women to endorse both hostile, $F(1, 48{,}369=877.41$, $p<.001$, $M=2.34$, $SE=.01$ for men; $M=2.12$, $SE=.01$ for women, and benevolent forms of justification, $F(1, 48{,}369)=38.58$, $p<.001$, $M=2.89$, $SE=.01$ for men; $M=2.80$, $SE=.01$ for women. To gauge whether women were more likely than men to reject a hostile justification than a benevolent one, we conducted a univariate gender-by-country ANCOVA (including all covariates) to predict the difference between hostile and benevolent justifications (i.e., hostile justification score minus benevolent justification score). Results revealed that, in line with Hypothesis 1a, women were indeed more likely than men to differentiate between hostile and benevolent justifications, $F(1, 48{,}369)=219.70$, $p<.001$.

The MANCOVA analysis also yielded significant effects of country on both hostile (F [31, 48,369]=340.69, $p<.001$) and benevolent justifications (F [31, 48,369]=177.05), as well as small but significant gender by country interactions for both dependent variables, $F(31, 48{,}369)=5.57$, $p<.001$, and $F(31, 48{,}369)=4.39$, $p<.001$, respectively. In other words, men and women's endorsement of hostile and benevolent forms of gender inequality justification did vary across nations.

We next sought to test whether this variability in gender inequality justification was systematically related to nation-level gender inequality, as hypothesized (*Hypotheses 1b* and *1c*). Thus, we conducted two hierarchical fixed and random effects regression models predicting hostile justifications (Model 1) and benevolent justifications (Model 2). We used robust standard errors because our dependent measures were based on 4-point scales, and thus were not normally distributed.

The results for hostile justification are shown in the first column of Table 3. We found that gender equality on a national level was associated with decreased endorsement of hostile justification, $b=-1.23$, $SE=.17$, $p<.001$, as expected. In addition, there was an independent effect of GDP, $b=-.22$, $SE=.03$, $p<.001$, such that increased national wealth was associated with decreased hostility toward women. Our results also revealed that benevolent justification (the "complement" of hostile justification) was positively associated with hostile justification, $b=.04$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$. This effect was qualified by a small (but significant) benevolent justification by gender interaction, $b=.01$, $SE=.00$, $p<.05$. These findings parallel the results of Glick et al. (2000), namely that hostile and benevolent justifications tend to be endorsed together, and the relationship between the two is slightly stronger for women than men. Also in line with the findings of Glick et al. (2000), the women in our sample were less likely than men to endorse hostile justifications for gender inequality, $b=-.11$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$. This was true regardless of the degree of gender equality at the national level, as shown by the non-significant interaction between gender and gender equality, $b=.03$, $SE=.06$, *ns*.

The second column of Table 3 shows the results of the model predicting benevolent justification of gender inequality. Interestingly, gender equality at the national level was unrelated to the endorsement of benevolent justification, $b=-.31$, $SE=.25$, *ns.* There was, however, a *positive* relationship between GDP and benevolent justification, $b=.16$, $SE=.05$, $p<.01$, indicating that benevolent sexism was more common in wealthier nations. Men and women were equally likely to endorse the benevolent justification for gender inequality, $b=-.01$, $SE=.01$, *ns*. This was true regardless of the societal context, as shown by the non-significant interaction, $b=.05$, $SE=.04$, *ns.* Mirroring our findings from Model 1, the "complementary" justification (in this case, hostile justification) was positively related to benevolent justification, $b=.06$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$, after adjusting for other factors. As before, the two types of justification were more highly correlated for women than for men, as evidenced by the significant complementary justification by gender interaction, $b=.02$, $SE=.01$, $p<.05$.

In Models 1 and 2, there was no reliable interaction between complementary justification and gender equality at the national level, nor was there a reliable 3-way interaction involving gender equality, gender, and complementary rationalization. Thus, hostile and benevolent justifications tend to go hand-and-hand in societies that are both high and low in terms of gender equality.

Table 3 Estimated fixed effects (and robust standard errors) from two random and fixed effects multilevel models predicting (1) hostile justification and (2) benevolent justification of gender inequality in 32 countries.

	Hostile justification	Benevolent justification
Intercept (nation-level)	−.26(.04)***	.33(.04)***
Gender Equality (nation-level)	−1.23(.17)***	−.31(.25), *ns*
GDP per capita (log; nation-level)	−.22(.03)***	.16(.05)**
Church attendance	.02(.00)***	.02(.00)***
Marital status	.01(.01), *ns*	.03(.01)*
Education	−.10(.01)***	−.08(.01)***
Income	−.04(.01)***	−.01(.01), *ns*
Age	.04(.01)***	.03(.01)***
Gender	−.11(.01)***	−.01(.01), *ns*
Gender * Gender Equality	.03(.06), *ns*	.05(.04), *ns*
Complementary Justification[a]	.04(.01)***	.06(.01)***
Complementary Justification * Gender	.01(.00)*	.02(.01)*
Complementary Justification * Gender Equality	−.06(.06), *ns*	−.09(.09), *ns*
Complementary Justification * Gender Equality * Gender	−.03(.03), *ns*	−.05(.04), *ns*

[a] Complementary justification when predicting hostile justification (*Model 1*) refers to the endorsement of benevolent justification; when predicting benevolent justification (*Model 2*) it refers to the endorsement of hostile justification.

*** $p<.001$ ** $p<.01$ * $p<.05$ +$p<.10$ *ns*, $p>.10$

Complementary justifications and life satisfaction

To test our focal hypotheses that complementary justifications for gender inequality would be associated with higher life satisfaction (especially in egalitarian nations), we conducted a two-level fixed and random effects model. On the first level, life satisfaction was predicted by gender, hostile attitudes towards women in non-traditional roles, benevolent attitudes towards women in traditional roles, the interaction of hostile and benevolent attitudes, and all two- and three-way interactions of these variables, adjusting for demographic variables. In addition, we included cross-level interactions of nation-level gender equality with gender, hostile justification, benevolent justification, and all two- and three-way interactions involving these three variables (see Table 4).

We found that with the exception of the linear effect for age, all adjustment variables were significantly associated with life satisfaction in the expected directions. There was a positive relationship between GDP per capita and life satisfaction, $b=.41$, $SE=.14$, $p<.01$, replicating previous results (e.g., Diener and Oishi 2000). Church attendance was positively associated with life satisfaction, $b=.08$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$. Married people were more satisfied with their lives in comparison with their unmarried counterparts, $b=-.44$, $SE=.05$, $p<.001$. Older and younger people were more satisfied with life than were middle-aged people, as shown by a quadratic effect for age, $b=.10$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$. Finally, both income and education were positively associated with life satisfaction, b's=.48 and .16, SE's=.04 and .03, respectively, both p's<.001. These demographic findings are all consistent with previous research (e.g., Myers and Diener 1995).

As shown in Table 4, nation-level gender equality was marginally and positively related to average life satisfaction, $b=1.55$, $SE=.79$, $p<.06$. This effect emerged after adjusting for the positive effect of GDP, suggesting that above and beyond material circumstances, egalitarian gender policies are associated with greater subjective well-being at the aggregate (national) level. We also found that women reported higher levels of life satisfaction than men, $b=.05$, $SE=.02$, $p<.05$. Interestingly, this main effect was not qualified by nation-level gender equality, $b=-.16$, $SE=.15$, *ns*. Thus, increased gender equality was associated with increased life satisfaction for both men and women.

As can be seen in Table 4, hostile justification was negatively related to life satisfaction, $b=-.08$, $SE=.02$, $p<.01$; benevolent justification, by contrast, was positively related, $b=.12$, $SE=.02$, $p<.001$. These two main effects were further qualified by three significant (or marginally significant) interactions involving hostile justification and gender, $b=.04$, $SE=.02$, $p<.06$, hostile justification and national gender equality, $b=-.36$, $SE=.13$, $p<.05$, and a three-way interaction between hostile justification, benevolent justification, and gender equality, $b=.35$, $SE=.12$, $p<.01$.

There were two noteworthy patterns that emerged. First, the relationship between hostile justification and life satisfaction was moderated by gender (albeit marginally), whereas the relationship between benevolent justification and life satisfaction was not (see Fig. 1). These patterns held regardless of the state of gender inequality in a nation.

Table 4 Estimated fixed effects (and standard errors) from a random and fixed effects multilevel model predicting life satisfaction in 32 countries.

Intercept (nation-level)	6.60(.15)***
Gender Equality (nation-level)	1.55(.79)+
Gross Domestic Product (log; nation-level)	.37(.15)*
Gender (effect coded)	.05(.02)*
Gender * Gender Equality	−.16(.15), *ns*
Hostile Justification	−.08(.02)**
Hostile Justification * Gender	.04(.02)+
Hostile Justification * Gender Equality	−.36(.13)*
Hostile Justification * Gender * Gender Equality	.10(.14), *ns*
Benevolent Justification	.12(.02)***
Benevolent Justification * Gender	.01(.02), *ns*
Benevolent Justification * Gender Equality	.14(.12), *ns*
Benevolent Justification * Gender * Gender Equality	.13(.12), *ns*
Hostile * Benevolent Justification	.00(.02), *ns*
Hostile * Benevolent Justification * Gender	−.01(.02), *ns*
Hostile * Benevolent Justification * Gender Equality	.35(.12)**
Hostile * Benevolent Justification * Gender * Gender Equality	−.00(.10), *ns*

Models included adjustments for income, education, marital status, age, age squared, and church attendance.

*** $p<.001$ ** $p<.01$ * $p<.05$ +$p<.10$ *ns*, $p>.10$

Simple slopes analyses revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between hostile justification and life satisfaction for men, $b=-.11$, $SE=.03$, $p<.001$, but *not* for women, $b=-.03$, $SE=.03$, *ns*.

The second notable finding from this analysis is the three-way interaction involving hostile justification, benevolent justification, and nation-level gender equality. As shown in Fig. 2, when the endorsement of benevolent justification was low hostile justification exerted opposite effects on life satisfaction in countries with high vs. low gender equality (illustrated by the solid lines in each panel of the Figure). We probed the two- and three-way interactions at high and low levels of national gender equality (one standard deviation above and below our sample mean) and at high and low levels of hostile and benevolent justification endorsement (the scale endpoints) using the online tools provided by Preacher et al. (2006).

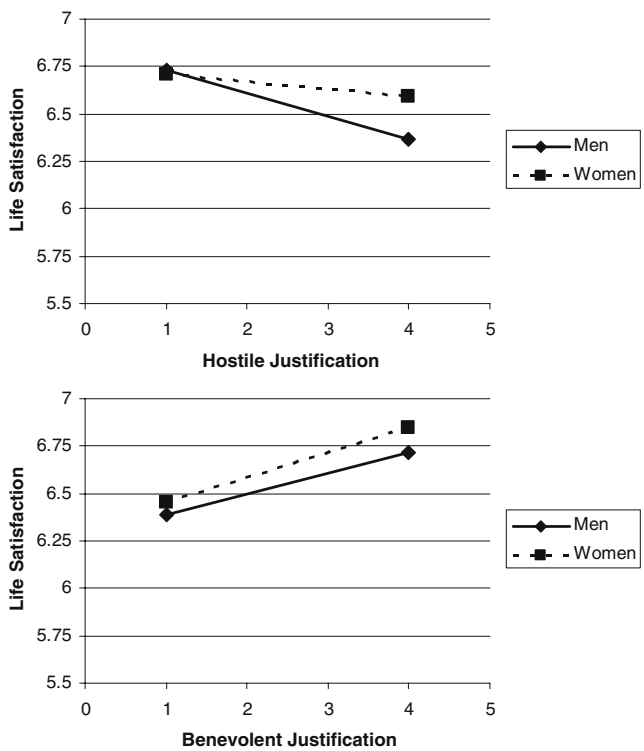

Fig. 1 The effects of hostile justification (*top panel*) and benevolent justification (*bottom panel*) on life satisfaction for men and women (for a nation with an average level of gender equality).

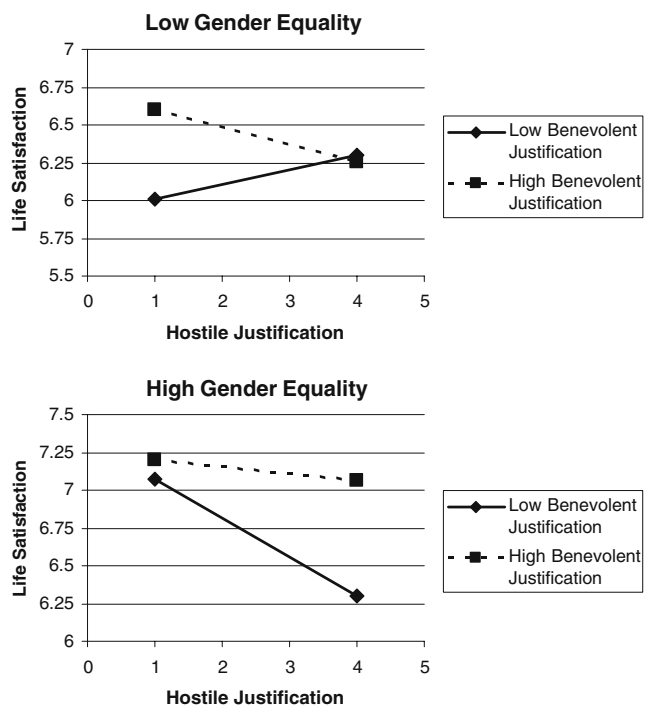

Fig. 2 The effects of hostile and benevolent justifications on life satisfaction (for men and women combined) in countries with low (*top panel*) and high (*bottom panel*) levels of gender equality.

We used the scale endpoints (as opposed to values +/− one standard deviation) as the conditional values in our simple slopes analysis because of the ordinal nature of the hostile and benevolent justification scales (1-to-4 where 1="Strongly agree" and 4="Strongly disagree") and the fact that the distribution of these response sets is non-normal (e.g., for benevolent justification, 32.4% of the responses were at the scale endpoints; 34.4% of responses were at the endpoints of the hostile justification scale).

Simple slopes analyses revealed that in countries with low gender equality, when benevolent justification was high, hostile justification was negatively related to life satisfaction, $b=-.11$, $SE=.04$, $p<.01$. When benevolent justification was low, however, the effect of hostile justification on life satisfaction trended positively, $b=.10$, $SE=.07$, $p<.16$. This positive relationship between hostile justification and life satisfaction attained statistical significance in countries with extreme gender inequality (e.g., 2 standard deviations below the mean), $b=.18$, $SE=.09$, $p=.04$. In countries with high gender equality, by contrast, the endorsement of hostile justification was *negatively* associated with life satisfaction, but only when benevolent justification was low, $b=-.25$, $SE=.08$, $p<.001$. When benevolent justification was high, hostile justification and life satisfaction were unrelated, $b=-.04$, $SE=.05$, $p=.36$.

The analysis also revealed that an "exclusively benevolent" justification of gender inequality is more palliative than no justification at all in low (but not high) gender equality. Specifically, for those living in relatively non-egalitarian nations, the endorsement of benevolent justification was associated with increased life satisfaction for those who reject hostile sexism, $b=.20$, $SE=.05$, $p<.001$. For those living in countries with high gender equality, there was no relationship between benevolent justification and life satisfaction among those who rejected a hostile justification, $b=.04$, $SE=.04$, *ns*.

In addition, simple slopes analyses revealed that those who held a "complementary" justification reported higher life satisfaction than those who held an exclusively hostile justification in nations with high (but not low) gender equality. That is, when hostile justification was strongly endorsed, benevolent justification was significantly and positively related to life satisfaction in countries with high gender equality, $b=.25$, $SE=.07$, $p<.001$, but it was not associated with increased life satisfaction in countries with low gender equality, $b=-.01$, $SE=.06$, *ns*.

In summary, then, the palliative effects of different types of justifications for gender inequality depend upon the societal context. In societies with low gender equality, there is no difference in terms of well-being when it comes to endorsing a purely hostile justification versus a complementary form of system justification. For people living in relatively egalitarian nations, however, the endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with *decreased* life satisfaction unless it was softened by the concomitant endorsement of a more benevolent form of justification.

Discussion

The results from this study, which was based on nationally representative data from 32 countries, support the notion that gender-specific system justification may serve a palliative function. Moreover, our analyses reveal that the societal context systematically determines when justifications that are "hostile" (e.g., the derogation of women's abilities to perform in positions typically held by men) or "benevolent" (the idealization of the traditional role of a housewife) will be associated with palliative benefits.

We should note that our findings with regard to the endorsement of "hostile" and "benevolent" justifications were remarkably consistent with previous work on ambivalent sexism. Replicating the results of Glick et al. (2000), we found that women were less likely than men to endorse justifications for gender inequality, and especially ones that are hostile in nature. In addition, we found that the endorsements of hostile and benevolent justifications were positively correlated; this relationship was especially strong for women, in line with the findings of Glick et al. (2000). The fact that hostile and benevolent justification are more strongly intercorrelated for women than men is consistent with the notion that benevolent justifications for gender inequality may help to reduce the conflict among ego-, group-, and system-justifying needs for women (Cikara et al. 2009).

Glick et al. (2000) also reported that both hostile and benevolent justifications were more enthusiastically endorsed in countries with low (vs. high) gender equality. In our analysis, we found that hostile justification was related to nation-level gender inequality, but benevolent justification was not. It is conceivable that, in highly egalitarian countries, the operationalization of benevolent justification—praise for the role of housewife—more adequately approximated the paternalistic ideology tapped by Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (e.g., "Men are incomplete without women," and "Women should be cherished and protected by men").

Our study sheds considerable light on how the justification of gender inequality is associated with psychological well-being, but the effects are clearly contingent upon the specific societal context. In relatively egalitarian societies, such as the United States and Western Europe, the endorsement of hostile justifications of gender inequality is inversely related to life satisfaction when a more benevolent (i.e., complementary) justification is rejected.

That is, those who endorsed *exclusively* hostile justifications for gender inequality were significantly less satisfied with their lives than were those who endorsed both hostile and benevolent ("complementary") justifications. These patterns were the same for both men and women.

A very different picture emerged for individuals living in nations with low gender equality. In these contexts, those who held an exclusively hostile ideology were no different in terms of life satisfaction than were those who subscribed to complementary forms of system justification. In fact, there was a trend suggesting that the endorsement of hostile justification was *positively* associated with life satisfaction for individuals in these societies who rejected a benevolent justification; the positive relationship attained significance in nations with extreme gender inequality. These findings suggest that in highly unequal contexts just about *any* justification of the gender hierarchy is associated with palliative consequences (as compared to no justification at all).

Across all nations, we found that benevolent justification was positively related to life satisfaction for both men and women. Hostile justification, however, was negatively related to life satisfaction for men and unrelated for women. Thus, although men are more likely than women to endorse hostile sexism, they may take a "hit" in terms of their subjective well-being in doing so, whereas women do not. Because women are more likely to have experienced gender-based discrimination than men, it is possible that a hostile justification may serve as a psychological "buffer" against the deleterious effects of inequality. Importantly, the interactive effect of hostile and benevolent justifications on life satisfaction was not qualified by gender. That is, "complementary" rationalizations seem to fulfill a palliative function equally for men and women.

Our study establishes that an objective indicator of gender equality at the national level (the United Nation's Gender Empowerment Measure; GEM) has important consequences for subjective well-being. First of all, increased gender equality in society is associated with a decrease in hostile (but not benevolent) justifications. In other words, as society progresses (when it comes to gender relations), so do people's attitudes. Second, nation-level gender equality is associated with increased life satisfaction, even after adjusting for national wealth. This adds to a growing body of evidence suggesting that indicators of liberal development, including peace, social capital, and democratic governance, are associated with higher mean levels of happiness among citizens (Diener and Seligman 2004; Diener and Tov 2007) and, conversely, that increasing economic inequality is associated with decreased subjective well-being in general (Napier and Jost 2008).

Thus, as Napier and Jost (2008) suggested, objective inequality seems to exert a negative effect on subjective well-being, whereas the cognitive reappraisal of inequality as fair or desirable has a positive effect. As we mentioned above, the positive relationship between gender equality at the national level and life satisfaction was no stronger for women than for men. Rather, increased gender equality is associated positively with subjective well-being for men and women alike. This implies that the improved social status of women in society does not seem to come at the cost of men's subjective well-being. This finding is broadly consistent with the results of a study conducted by Rudman and Phelan (2007) in which men who were dating feminists reported increased relationship stability and sexual satisfaction as compared to men who were dating more traditional women.

More research is needed to determine whether the palliative effects of system justification motivate people to adopt system-supporting beliefs (e.g., Lerner 1980) or whether the palliative consequences of system justification are simply byproducts of other motivations—such as the motivation to reduce cognitive or ideological dissonance (cf. Elster 1982). One obvious limitation of the current research is that we cannot say whether the direction of causality is such that system-justifying beliefs promote subjective well-being (either directly or indirectly) or that people who are motivated to maintain or improve subjective well-being adopt beliefs that are in line with the societal status quo. Experimental work by Wakslak et al. (2007) provides support for the former notion, insofar as exposure to high (vs. low) system-justifying scenarios led to a significant reduction in negative affect. But the opposite causal relationship is plausible as well. That is, people who are especially motivated to maintain positive affect may well be more likely to adopt system-justifying beliefs and ideologies.

It seems more likely that rationalizing gender inequality provides a "system-justifying buffer" against the potentially negative effects of perceiving system-level injustice. In countries where gender-based discrimination is subtly executed, complementary justifications of traditional gender roles can help to mask the inequality that exists. Although legally sanctioned barriers to women's career advancement have been eradicated in most of the Western world, women continue to face obstacles in terms of asymmetric domestic labor and childcare responsibilities as well as gender biases in the workplace (Evertsson and Nermo 2004; Heilman 2001). The resulting imbalance between the genders—with men holding more high-ranking and high-salary positions than women—is well known to any critical observer of government or the corporate world. In these contexts—where blatant inequality is undesirable and/or indefensible—gender disparities in high power positions should be psychologically troublesome. As our study showed, those who deny that women are well-suited for non-traditional

roles and believe that the work of a housewife is unfulfilling have the lowest life satisfaction. Rather than regarding the respective positions of men and women in society as "high vs. low status," enhancing (or exaggerating) the relative status of housewives serves to reframe gender roles as "complementary but equal" (see also Bem and Bem 1970; Jost and Kay 2005).

In many parts of the world, however, the extent of gender inequality is too extreme and blatant to be covered over with an "equalitarian veneer." This point was powerfully made by American musician Robert Mueller (2006), who described the state of gender affairs in Burma as follows: "I asked a Burmese why women, after centuries of following their men, now walk ahead. He said there were many unexploded land mines since the war" (p. 541). Thus, in cases of extreme gender inequality, where even the lives of women are considered to have less value than the lives of men, a "complementary but equal" notion of gender roles is entirely unnecessary.

This is not to say that people fail to endorse complementary stereotypes in countries with low gender equality. As can be seen in Table 2—and more comprehensively shown in prior work by Glick et al. (2000)—they clearly do. We speculate, however, that in less egalitarian contexts, attitudes toward women that are simultaneously benevolent and hostile do not necessarily reframe gender roles as "equal" when there are legal and other overt restrictions on women's professional and educational success. A very subtle system-justifying buffer against gender inequality is presumably not needed for people to navigate overtly sexist systems. Along these lines, we found that hostile justifications for the gender system were more prevalent in nations with high (vs. low) levels of gender inequality. Given the contexts, it may not be so surprising that hostile justifications were associated with greater subjective well-being in such societies. What is perhaps shocking (and yet consistent with system justification theory) is that women's self-reported life satisfaction was no lower than men's in these inegalitarian contexts.

In general, our findings imply that the ideological justification of relatively extreme forms of inequality, which have not yet been covered with an "equalitarian veneer," would be more uniformly hostile than the justifications for gender differences in contemporary Western societies. For instance, the crux of Jim Crow (or pre-Civil rights era) racism, which is often referred to as "old-fashioned racism," was the belief that Blacks were inherently inferior to Whites. Extrapolating from the results of the current study, we would predict that both African American and European American individuals who subscribed to such racial beliefs when the oppression of Blacks was blatant and legally sanctioned would have had higher life satisfaction than those who rejected such beliefs. Today, however, complementary (or compensatory) rationalizations—including the leveling stereotypical assumptions that "Blacks are better athletes" and "White men can't jump"—presumably serve a palliative function (e.g., see Jost et al. 2005; Jost and Kay 2005).

People's Century (2009) did not spell out the details of her "fundamental belief system" concerning gender roles in the PBS interview we mentioned at the outset of this article. Based on the results of our study, one might speculate that her "reasons for adversity" were comprised of a mix of benevolent and hostile rationalizations. Although the gender gap is much less pronounced than it was when she was a young mother, the reframing of traditional gender roles as "complementary but equal" continues to serve a palliative function even today. Quite possibly, it is borne of an attempt to reduce the cognitive or ideological dissonance that is aroused when citizens profess the value of equality while living in a clearly hierarchical society. One can only speculate (and perhaps hope) that such ideological comforts will be less necessary 50 years from now.

References

Bem, S. L. & Bem, D. J. (1970). Case study of a nonconscious ideology: Training the woman to know her place. In D. J. Bem (Ed.), *Beliefs, attitudes, and human affairs* (pp. 89–99). Belmont: Brooks/Cole.

Blanchflower, D. G. & Oswald, A. J. (2004). Well-being over time in Britain and the USA. *Journal of Public Economics, 88*, 1359–1386.

Cikara, M., Lee, T. T., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2009). Ambivalent sexism at home and at work: How attitudes toward women in relationships foster exclusion in the public sphere. In J. T. Jost, A. C. Kay & H. Thorisdottir (Eds.), *Social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cuddy, A. J. C. & Fiske, S. T. (2002). Doddering, but dear: Process, content, and function in stereotyping of older persons. In T. Nelson (Ed.), *Ageism: Stereotyping and prejudice against older persons* (pp. 3–26). Cambridge: MIT.

Deaux, K. & Lewis, L. L. (1984). Structure of gender stereotypes: interrelationships among components and gender label. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 991–1004.

Diener, E. & Oishi, S. (2000). Money and happiness: Income and subjective well-being across nations. In E. Diener & E. M. Suh (Eds.), *Cross-cultural psychology of subjective well-being* (pp. 185–218). Boston: MIT.

Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). Beyond money: toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *5*(1).

Diener, E. & Tov, W. (2007). Subjective well-being and peace. *Journal of Social Issues, 63*, 421–440.

Dovidio, J. F. & Gaertner, S. L. (1999). Reducing prejudice: combating intergroup biases. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 8*, 101–105.

Dovidio, J. F. & Gaertner, S. L. (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and 1999. *Psychological Science, 11*, 319–323.

Eagly, A. H. & Steffen, V. (1984). Gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men into social roles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 735–754.

Elster, J. (1982). Belief, bias, and ideology. In M. Hollis & S. Lukes (Eds.), *Rationality and relativism* (pp. 123–148). Cambridge: MIT.

Evertsson, M. & Nermo, M. (2004). Dependence within families and the division of labor: comparing Sweden and the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66*, 1272–1286.

Fiske, S. T. (1998). Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., Vol. 2, pp. 357–411). New York: McGraw- Hill.

Fiske, S. T., Xu, J., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. (1999). (Dis) respecting versus (Dis)liking: status and interdependence predict ambivalent stereotypes of competence and warmth. *Journal of Social Issues, 55*, 473–490.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: competence and warmth respectively follow from status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 878–902.

Glick, P. & Fiske, S. T. (1996). The ambivalent sexism inventory: differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 491–512.

Glick, P. & Fiske, S. T. (2001a). An ambivalent alliance: hostile and benevolent sexism as complementary justifications for gender inequality. *American Psychologist, 56*, 109–118.

Glick, P. & Fiske, S. T. (2001b). Ambivalent sexism. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 33, pp. 115–188). Thousand Oaks: Academic.

Glick, P., Fiske, S. T., Mladinic, A., Saiz, J., Abrams, D., Masser, B., et al. (2000). Beyond prejudice as simple antipathy: hostile and benevolent sexism across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 763–775.

Glick, P., Sakalli-Ugurlu, N., Ferreira, M. C., & Aguiar de Souza, M. (2002). Ambivalent sexism and attitudes toward wife abuse in Turkey and Brazil. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26*, 291–296.

Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: how gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*, 657–674.

Jackman, M. R. (1994). *The velvet glove: Paternalism and conflict in gender, class, and race relations*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jost, J. T. & Banaji, M. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 22*, 1–27.

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. & Hunyady, O. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of system-justifying ideologies. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14*, 260–265.

Jost, J. T. & Kay, A. C. (2005). Exposure to benevolent sexism and complementary gender stereotypes: consequences for specific and diffuse forms of system justification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*, 498–509.

Jost, J. T., Blount, S., Pfeffer, J., & Hunyady, G. (2003a). Fair market ideology: its cognitive-motivational underpinnings. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 25*, 53–91.

Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Sheldon, O., & Sullivan, B. N. (2003b). 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., 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*, 881–919.

Jost, J. T., Kivetz, Y., Rubini, M., Guermandi, G., & Mosso, C. (2005). System-justifying functions of complementary regional and ethnic stereotypes: cross-national evidence. *Social Justice Research, 18*, 305–333.

Jost, J. T., Ledgerwood, A., & Hardin, C. D. (2008). Shared reality, system justification, and the relational basis of ideological beliefs. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 2*, 171–186.

Jost, J. T., Federico, C. M., & Napier, J. L. (2009). Political ideology: its structure, functions, and elective affinities. *Annual Review of Psychology, 60*, 307–337.

Kay, A. C. & Jost, J. T. (2003). Complementary justice: effects of "poor but happy" and "poor but honest" stereotype exemplars on system justification and implicit activation of the justice motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 823–837.

Kay, A. C., Jost, J. T., & Young, S. (2005). Victim-derogation and victim-enhancement as alternate routes to system justification. *Psychological Science, 16*, 204–246.

Kay, A. C., Jost, J. T., Mandisodza, A. N., Sherman, S. J., Petrocelli, J. V., & Johnson, A. L. (2007). Panglossian ideology in the service of system justification: How complementary stereotypes help us to rationalize inequality. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 39, pp. 305–358). San Diego: Elsevier.

Kluegel, J. R. & Smith, E. R. (1986). *Beliefs about inequality: Americans' view of what is and what ought to be*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Lane, R. E. (2004). The fear of equality. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 217–229). New York: Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis. (Original work published 1959).

Langford, T. & MacKinnon, N. J. (2000). The affective bases for the gendering of traits: comparing the United States and Canada. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 63*, 34–48.

Lerner, M. (1980). *The belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion*. New York: Plenum.

Major, B. (1994). From social inequality to personal entitlement: The role of social comparisons, legitimacy appraisals, and group membership. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 26, pp. 293–355). San Diego: Academic.

Martin, D. (1976). Battered wives. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, Inc.

Myers, D. G. & Diener, E. (1995). Who is happy? *Psychological Science, 6*, 10–19.

Mueller, R. (2006). Quoted in *Look*, 5 March 1957. In F. R. Shapiro (Ed.), *The Yale Book of Quotations* (p. 541).

Napier, J. L. & Jost, J. T. (2008). Why are conservatives happier than liberals? *Psychological Science, 19*, 565–572.

Naylor, L. L. (1998). *American culture: Myth and reality of a culture of diversity*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group.

O'Brien, L. T. & Major, B. N. (2005). System justifying beliefs and psychological well-being: the roles of group status and identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 1718–1729.

People's Century (2009). *Public Broadcasting System (PBS)*. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/episodes/halfthepeople/parrotranscript.html

Preacher, K. J., Curran, P. J., & Bauer, D. J. (2006). Computational tools for probing interaction effects in multiple linear regression, multilevel modeling, and latent curve analysis. *Journal of Education and Behavioral Statistics, 31*, 437–448.

Rankin, L., Jost, J. T., & Wakslak, C. J. (2009). System justification and the meaning of life: are the existential benefits of ideology distributed unevenly across racial groups? *Social Justice Research, 22*, 312–333.

Rawls, J. (1999). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Original work published 1971.

Rudman, L. A. & Phelan, J. E. (2007). The interpersonal power of feminism: is feminism good for romantic relationships? *Sex Roles, 57*, 787–799.

Schechter, S. (1982). Women and male violence: The visions and struggles of the battered women's movement. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Schuman, H., Steele, C., Bobo, L., & Krysan, M. (1997). *Racial attitudes in America: trends and interpretations* (Revisedth ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sears, D. O. (1988). Symbolic racism. In P. A. Katz & D. A. Taylor (Eds.), *Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy* (pp. 53–84). New York: Plenum.

Sen, A. (1990). More than 100 million women are missing. *New York Review of Books*, *37*(20).

Sibley, C. G., Overall, N. C., & Duckitt, J. (2007). When women become more hostilely sexist toward their gender: the system-justifying effect of benevolent sexism. *Sex Roles, 57*, 743–754.

United Nations Development Programme. (2000). *Human Development Report 2000*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wakslak, C., Jost, J. T., Tyler, T. R., & Chen, E. (2007). Moral outrage mediates the dampening effect of system justification on support for redistributive social policies. *Psychological Science, 18*, 267–274.

Williams, J. E. & Best, D. L. (1982). *Measuring sex stereotypes: A thirty-nation study*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

World Values Survey (2006). European and World Values Surveys Four-Wave Integrated Data File, 1981–2004, v.20060423. Retrieved from http://www.jdsurvey.net/bdasepjds/wvsevs/WVSData.jsp