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Ingroup friendship and political mobilization among the disadvantaged

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of ingroup contact in a large, national sample of Māori (a disadvantaged ethnic group; $N = 940$) on political attitudes relevant to decreasing ethnic inequality in New Zealand. We tested the role of two mediating mechanisms – ethnic identification and system justification – in explaining the effects of ingroup contact on the dependent variables. Time spent with ingroup friends predicted increased support for the Māori Party and support for symbolic and resource-specific reparative policies benefiting Māori. These effects were partially mediated by increased ethnic identification. Although ingroup contact also reduced levels of system justification among Māori, its effects on policy attitudes and party preference were not mediated by system justification. This suggests that a key antecedent to system-challenging political attitudes is an increased sense of identification with a disadvantaged group arising, in part, from interactions with ingroup friends.

Keywords: ingroup contact, system justification, social identity, minority groups.

Abstract word count: 141

Ingroup friendship and political mobilization among the disadvantaged

In democratic societies, members of disadvantaged ethnic groups are, at least in theory, able to challenge existing inequalities through the political process – by supporting policies aimed at remediating group-based disadvantage and voting for parties that would enact such policies. In these societies, identifying the antecedents of support for reparative policies, and for the parties that promote them, becomes key to understanding how the victims of inequality can push for social change. Research on political mobilization (van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008) and on the relational nature of political preferences (Hardin, Cheung, Magee, Noel & Yoshimura, 2012) has implicated the role of strong ingroup bonds in determining social-change-related attitudes among the disadvantaged. However, the immediate contextual antecedents of these bonds are less clearly understood. For example, the vast literature on the role of identity processes in motivating collective action usually treats group identification as the conceptual and empirical starting point in the causal chain leading to social change intentions, without much consideration of what might produce a stronger or weaker sense of identification (see Barlow, Sibley & Hornsey 2012, Simon & Klandermans, 2001, and van Zomeren, Leach & Spears, 2010 for important exceptions to this general theoretical orientation).

In the present paper we address this point and extend recent analyses (Sengupta, Barlow & Sibley, 2012; Sengupta & Sibley, in press), by proposing that everyday interactions with ingroup friends are a key predictor of political mobilization among the disadvantaged (assessed in terms of reparative policy preferences and political party support). Drawing from research on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) we also

investigate the role of two potential mediating mechanisms explaining the hypothesized effects of ingroup contact on political preferences – increased ingroup identification and reduced system justification. Three decades of research leading up to the development of SIMCA has shown that a strong sense of identification with a disadvantaged group is an essential precursor to social change intentions (van Zomeren et al., 2008). We argue that everyday interactions and contact between members of groups will bond them together, increasing the extent to which they identify as a group member. For minority-group members (the focus of the current study), this should result in an increase in system-challenging political attitudes.

In contrast to the social identity account of collective action, *System Justification Theory* (SJT) posits that system-challenging political attitudes among the disadvantaged are determined by the relative salience of two competing motives – a motive to advance one's group interests and a motive to justify the status quo (Jost, Burgess & Mosso, 2001). Victims of systemic disadvantage are most likely to challenge inequality when the salience of group-interest is high and the salience of the system-justification motive is low (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). SJT would predict that ingroup contact will increase system-challenging political attitudes to the extent that it *simultaneously* increases ingroup identification and reduces system justification among the disadvantaged (see also Jost, Chaikalis-Petritsis, Arams, Sidanius, Van der Toorn & Bratt, 2012). Again, we argue that from this perspective, ingroup contact should motivate collective action. The more time minority-group members spend with one another, reflecting on shared experiences and realities, the *less* likely they might be to justify a social system that disadvantages them (something that relative isolation from other minority group members might encourage). As such, we suggest that it is possible that ingroup contact will decrease system justification and subsequently motivate support for political policies promoting intergroup equality.

We test these predictions in a large, nationally representative sample of Māori, a disadvantaged ethnic minority in New Zealand. In doing so, we seek to contribute to an increased understanding of how one's immediate interpersonal context can influence the socio-political attitudes that shape the distribution of power and resources in democratic societies. Specifically, we aim to shed light on how ingroup friendships might engender increased support for social-change-related political preferences among the disadvantaged. This work extends recent findings indicating that ingroup contact can shift the ideological positions of minority groups towards the recognition of, and opposition to social inequality (Sengupta et al., 2012; Sengupta & Sibley, 2013). Going beyond the narrow set of ideologies included in these prior studies, the present analysis aims to explore the effects of ingroup contact on a wide range of political attitudes, and test two potential mechanisms underlying them: increased identification with the group and reduced support for the social system.

The relational nature of political attitudes

Evidence for the role of ingroup bonds in shaping political attitudes comes from recent work on the relational nature of political ideologies and policy preferences (Hardin et al., 2012). Shared Reality Theory (Hardin & Higgins 1996) proposes that people are motivated to achieve shared understandings of the social world with important others in order to (a) meet their relational need for affiliation and (b) obtain the kind of social validation that allows them to view their environments as stable and predictable. To fulfill this motivation, people automatically “‘tune’ relationship-relevant attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward others in desired or obligatory relationships so as to create and protect those common understandings on which the relationships depend” (Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin, 2008, p. 173). At the interpersonal level, evidence for this tuning process comes from studies showing that people display characteristics and behaviors consistent with individuals and groups that are psychologically salient (e.g. Cesario, Plaks, & Higgins, 2006), and adjust their self-

evaluations to align themselves with the views of significant others (e.g. Sinclair, Dunn & Lowery, 2005).

Applying this perspective to the political domain, Jost et al., (2008) argued that political ideologies and attitudes are subject to shared reality processes because they too serve a relational function, by providing people a sense of affiliation, and an epistemic function, by helping structure the social world (see also Jost, Federico & Napier, 2009). Thus, to the extent that these attitudes reflect mutual understandings of the political landscape, people should automatically shift their political opinions and orientations towards those of valued individuals and groups.

Consistent with this argument, the vast literature on political socialization has shown that political attitudes and behavior, especially among adolescents and young adults, are strongly influenced by those of their family and friends (see Sears & Levy, 2003 for a review). Further, Jost et al., (2008) demonstrated that this social influence is exerted via a process of “automatic tuning”, as proposed by Shared Reality Theory. They found that people unconsciously adjusted their ideological orientations to be more liberal or more conservative depending on whether the relationship with a liberal or conservative parent was primed. This shows that the salience of a significant social relationship can shape political attitudes in a direction that helps maintain the shared understanding required for that relationship.

Beyond family and the immediate peer group, affiliation with broader social categories and groups can also influence political attitudes. For example, Conover and Feldman (1981) found that positive evaluations of conservatives or liberals as social groups partially predicted ideological self-placement along the conservative-liberal ideological dimension. Ledgerwood & Chaiken (2007) showed that people express stronger support for the positions of the political party they are affiliated with, when their party identification is primed. They also found that this attitude alignment was contingent on the degree of

perceived closeness felt towards the social group with whom the relative alignment (or lack thereof) was being made, highlighting the importance of identity strength in the alignment process. This is also evident in Sinclair et al.'s (2005) findings that children's racial attitudes correlated with their parents' to the extent that they identified strongly with them.

The power of social identity is further evidenced in Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, Reynolds and Eggin's (1996) finding that the attitudes of Australians towards Americans and Australians were strongly influenced by the perceived attitudes of other Australians but not those of non-Australians. Cohen (2003) showed that self-identified liberals and conservatives selectively processed policy information to align themselves with their party's perceived position. Presented with either a stringent or liberal welfare policy, they supported whichever one they were told their party endorsed, regardless of the content. Together, these findings suggest that information about the attitudes shared by members of a salient ingroup influences people's political attitudes at the individual level. Further, this influence exerts itself through a mechanism of motivated, biased information processing, contingent on the strength of identification with the relevant ingroup.

So how do people gain and share such information about consensually held attitudes? Part of this process involves the top-down influence of political elites, who construct the content and meaning of a group's identity through rhetoric, in the service of various political goals (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). These constructions prescribe norms for attitudes and behaviors that are considered consistent with the group's identity (e.g. Reicher, Haslam & Rath, 2008; Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, & Levine, 2006). A contrasting route to arriving at a shared understanding of normative attitudes is through a bottom-up process of social interaction with other group members (Postmes, Haslam, and Swaab 2005). It is this process that is of central relevance to the present analysis of the impact of ingroup friendships on the political attitudes of the disadvantaged.

Research on interactions in small groups has shown that communication between group members in the context of a shared social identity can result in consensually shared attitudes about the ingroup and outgroups, and generate norms for intergroup behavior (e.g. Haslam et al., 1998; Stott & Drury, 2004; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). For example, Haslam and colleagues showed that intragroup discussion increased consensus regarding stereotypes applied both to one's own group and various outgroups (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999). Moreover, these discussions led not only to alignment of attitudes, but to greater polarization in a direction consistent with perceived group norms. This polarization was all the more pronounced when ingroup identity was made salient. Indeed, in their review of the literature on intragroup discussions, Postmes et al. (2005) concluded that "the capacity for cognition to be shared is only realized to the extent that a shared social identity is salient" (p. 14) and that "identity-related forms of social influence are strongly implicated in the formation of shared perceptions of reality" (p. 19).

Crucial to the present analysis, it has been found that intragroup communication predicts not just attitude alignment, but increased consensus about engaging in collective action to further one's group interests in the face of inequality. For example, Stott & Drury (2004) found that after within-group discussion, low-status group members who were placed in a context of injustice (impermeable group boundaries), consensualized around positive views of the ingroup and showed a preference for collective behavioral strategies over individual-level strategies to remediate the inequality. This suggests that communication helps build a shared notion of ingroup identity and also galvanizes action in service of that identity. This is consistent with our prediction that ingroup contact among the disadvantaged will increase the strength of ingroup identification and consequently increase political mobilization.

The New Zealand context

As alluded to in the analysis above, contact with ingroup members should shift individuals' attitudes in a direction that enables alignment with the perceived norms for the group. In line with social categorization theory, this suggests that the nature of social influence will be determined by the *content* of the relevant ingroup identity (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). We must therefore consider the context in which the ethnic identity under investigation in this study developed. Here, we analyse contact and attitudes among Māori the largest ethnic minority group in New Zealand. Māori were the first humans to settle in New Zealand, and like other indigenous peoples, their culture was put under tremendous pressure with the arrival of large numbers of European settler-colonists in the 19th century (primarily from Great Britain; King, 2007).

A landmark event that makes New Zealand unique in the imperial context was the signing of a treaty between the British Crown and the Māori chiefs in 1840. In what is widely considered the most important moment in New Zealand history, the Treaty of Waitangi established British sovereignty over the country and granted Māori the rights of citizenship and ownership of tribal lands (King, 2007). However, disagreements over translation and interpretation of the Treaty led to ongoing conflict between Māori and Europeans. Moreover, the Crown disregarded and violated the principles of the Treaty for decades, forcefully appropriating Māori land and resources, usurping Māori rights and promoting cultural assimilation (Belich, 1986).

This historical injustice has had a lasting impact on the socioeconomic and political landscape of New Zealand. Māori still suffer considerable disadvantage relative to European New Zealanders in several domains including income, employment, incarceration rates, morbidity/mortality and wellbeing (The Social Report, 2010). For example, the youth unemployment among Māori in 2010 was 26%, while among Europeans it was 14%. Further, Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias and Bonne (2003) showed that while the overall mortality

rate in New Zealand had fallen in the two decades between 1980 and 1999, the gap between Māori and Europeans had increased. Given this context, compensation for historic violations of The Treaty and remediation of contemporary socioeconomic inequality are the defining issues of intergroup politics in New Zealand.

Research on the content of Māori identity has suggested that these political issues lie at the heart of what it means to be Māori (Vaughan 1978). Houkamau and Sibley's (2010) Multidimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement (MMM-ICE) revealed that, along with dimensions such as spirituality and cultural efficacy, a "socio-political consciousness" factor also emerged. This dimension indexed the perceived relevance of historical injustice to contemporary Māori, and the willingness to engage in political action to advance Māori interests. Houkamau and Sibley (2010) emphasized the importance of this dimension of Maori identity, and showed that it was the most strongly linked to ethnic identity centrality (more so than the links between ethnic identity centrality and either spirituality or cultural efficacy). In a similar vein, Sibley (2010) showed that Māori are strongly opposed to the ideology of Historical Negation, which functions to deny the relevance of historical injustice to contemporary issues of resource distribution in society. Together, these findings suggest that the content of Māori identity is particularly politicized.

Based on the analyses in the preceding section, we expect that interactions between Māori friends will further strengthen consensus around this highly political conception of Māori identity. This normative alignment should then predict increased political mobilization. In other words, the shared reality processes engaged during contact should shift Māori political attitudes in a direction consistent with their general preference for the recognition and remediation of entrenched inequality. This prediction is further supported by research showing that it is specifically when an identity gets politicized in this manner, that collective

action intentions are the strongest (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Thomas & McGarty, 2009).

System Justification Theory

The arguments presented thus far, are consistent with the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008). This model proposes that the most important antecedent to political mobilization is a strong sense of identification with a disadvantaged social group. Social identification increases people's awareness of the inequality faced by their group and enables relatively powerless individuals to feel like they have the collective ability to resist this inequality (see also Drury & Reicher, 2005).

Accordingly, van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis found that social identity predicted collective action directly and indirectly through its effects on perceived inequality and perceived efficacy. Applied to the present analysis, SIMCA would predict that political mobilization among Māori would arise from contact among Māori, to the extent that contact increases their ethnic identification.

However, an assumption underlying SIMCA and the theoretical traditions from which it is drawn, is that advantaged and disadvantaged group members generally have different orientations towards the status quo. Advantaged group members, who benefit from the status quo, are generally assumed to be motivated to preserve it, while the disadvantaged, are seen as generally driven to oppose the status quo in order to advance their group's position. On the other hand, System Justification Theory proposes that in addition to their divergent group-based motives, the advantaged and the disadvantaged share a common motivation to legitimize and bolster the systems under which they live (Jost & Banaji, 1994). More than a decade of research on SJT has provided considerable evidence for the existence of this general system-justification motive in both advantaged and disadvantaged groups (see Jost, et al., 2004 for a review).

The group interests of the advantaged align with their motive to preserve the status quo that, by definition, benefits their group. However, for the disadvantaged their motive to enhance group interest conflicts with their motive to justify the very system that disadvantages them (Jost, Burgess & Mosso, 2001). SJT thus proposes that the key to determining when the disadvantaged will and will not challenge the status quo lies in understanding how the conflict between the group and system motives is resolved (Jost et al., 2004). When the salience of group-interest is low, the disadvantaged might justify the system strongly, sometimes even more so than the advantaged (e.g. Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Sullivan, 2003). Conversely, it can be expected that system-challenge is most likely to occur when the salience of the group-interest is high and the system-justification motive is low. This is supported by recent evidence that being asked to think about ways the system could be challenged (i.e. a system-rejection prime), increases intentions to engage in collective protest, mediated by a concurrent increase in ingroup identification and a decrease in system justification (Jost et al., 2012)

From the perspective of SJT then, ingroup contact among Māori can be expected to increase political mobilization to the extent that it simultaneously increases ethnic identification and reduces system justification. Preliminary evidence that ingroup contact might, in fact, serve to diminish the system-justification motive comes from recent studies showing that contact between Māori decreases their subscription to various system-justifying ideologies. For example, Sengupta, Barlow and Sibley (2012) found that ingroup contact decreased support among Māori for an ideology that excludes Māori culture from representations of New Zealand identity (Symbolic Exclusion; Sibley, 2010). Sengupta and Sibley (2013) found that the more time Māori spend with ingroup friends, the less likely they are to subscribe to the ideology of Meritocracy, which downplays the relevance of group-based inequality.

Present study and hypotheses

Here we test a model in which contact with ingroup friends predicts political mobilization, in a large nationally representative sample of disadvantaged-group members (Māori, $N = 940$). We operationalize political mobilization in terms of three variables: (a) support for symbolic reparative policies (e.g. increasing the profile of Māori culture in New Zealand), (b) support for resource-specific policies (e.g. Māori ownership of tribal lands) and (c) support for the Māori party.

Based on research on the relational nature of political attitudes, we predict that ingroup contact will increase political mobilization among Māori. Drawing from the evidence in support of SIMCA, we predict that this effect will be mediated by increased ethnic identification. Finally, drawing from the SJT perspective, we predict that the effect of ingroup contact on political mobilization will also be mediated by a decrease in system-justification beliefs among Māori. We tested these predictions by estimating a Structural Equation Model that statistically adjusted for hours of contact with outgroup friends, along with a range of demographic covariates including age, gender, objective neighbourhood-level deprivation, education and political orientation.

Method

Sampling Procedure

This study analyzed data from the 2009 New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS-2009). The NZAVS-2009 questionnaire was posted to 40,500 participants from the 2009 New Zealand electoral roll. Roughly 1.36% of all people registered to vote in New Zealand were contacted and invited to participate. The overall estimated response rate (adjusting for address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%.

Participant Details

The NZAVS-2009 contained responses from 6,518 participants. We limited our analysis to 940 participants (575 women, 365 men) who identified as Māori and completed the relevant items. The mean age of the participants in this sample was 44.12 (SD = 13.43). In terms of other demographic factors, 98.5% (n = 926) of the sample was born in New Zealand, and 45.2% (n = 425) identified as religious. Most participants had at least one child, 78.6% (n = 739), and 67% (n = 630) were in a romantic relationship. The majority of participants were in some form of paid employment, 76% (n = 714). In terms of education, 33.2% did not report their highest level of education or said they had no education (n = 312), 31.5% reported at least some high school (n = 296), 14.3% reported having studied towards a diploma or certificate (n = 134), 16.5% reported having studied at undergraduate level (n = 155) and 4.6% reported having pursued post-graduate study (n = 43).

Participants provided their postal address, and we used this information to identify the level of economic deprivation of the immediate area in which each participant resided. The New Zealand deprivation index allocates a deprivation score to each meshblock based on a principal components analysis of nine variables using census data. These are (in weighted order): proportion of adults receiving a means-tested Government supplied benefit, household income, proportion not owning own home, proportion of single-parent families, proportion unemployed, proportion lacking qualifications, proportion living with household crowding, proportion with no telephone access, and proportion with no car access. The index thus reflects the average level of deprivation of different small neighbourhoods or community areas across the country (Salmond, Crampton & Atkinson, 2007). We used the percentile deprivation index, which gives an ordinal score from 1 (most affluent) to 10 (most deprived) for each mesh block area unit based on 2006 census data. The mean score on this measure of deprivation in our sample was 6.23 (SD = 2.92).

Questionnaire Measures

Contact was measured using the following item: “Roughly how many hours (if any) have you spent with friends from each of the following groups in the last week?” Participants entered an open-ended response to the question for each of five ethnic groups: Americans, NZ Europeans, Māori, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. For this analysis, ingroup contact was operationalized as hours spent with Māori friends, and outgroup contact, as hours spent with friends from all other ethnic groups.

Ethnic Identification was assessed using a three items scale Leach et al. (2008) rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): “I often think about the fact that I am a member of my ethnic group.”; “The fact that I am a member of my ethnic group is an important part of my identity.”; “Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of how I see myself.”

Two items from the scale developed by Kay and Jost (2003) were used to assess System Justification: “In general, the New Zealand political system operates as it should”, and “In general, I find New Zealand society to be fair.” Items were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Support for Resource-Specific Policies was measured using four items, rated on a scale from 1 (strongly opposed) to 7 (strongly support): “Māori ownership of the seabed and foreshore”; “Reserving places for Māori students to study medicine.”; “Rates exemptions on Māori land.”; and “Crown (government) ownership of the seabed and foreshore.”

Support for Symbolic Policies was also measured using four items, rated on a scale from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support): “Performance of the *Haka* at international sports events.”; “Waitangi Day as a national celebration of biculturalism.”; “Teaching Māori language in New Zealand primary schools.”; “Singing the national anthem in Māori and English.”

Support for the Māori Party was measured as a single item a scale from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly support).

Finally, a range of demographic variables was included in the model. These were: political orientation (measured as self-ratings on a scale from very liberal, 1, to very conservative, 7), gender (coded as 0 female, 1 male), age, the NZDep 2006 index measure of neighborhood deprivation (proxy for socioeconomic status; see Salmond, et al., 2007), immigration status (0 born overseas, 1 born in NZ), religious status (0 not religious, 1 identifies with a religious denomination), parental status (0 no children, 1 at least one child), relationship status (0 single, 1 in a romantic relationship), employment status (0 unemployed, 1 employed), and education (highest level of education reported ranging from -2 to 2).

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between all of the variables used in the analyses including mean calculated composite variables are presented in Table 1. Within the main Structural Equation Model tested Ethnic Identification, System Justification, and Resource and Symbolic Policy Attitudes were estimated as latent variables. This factorial solution provided a reasonable fit to the data: $\chi^2(59) = 253.982$, standardized Root Mean Square Residual (sRMR) = .037, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .055.

Model estimation

Our model tested the extent to which ethnic identity centrality and system justification beliefs jointly mediated the effect of hours of contact with ingroup friends on outcomes relating to Māori political mobilization.

Contact was indexed using self-reported hours spent with friends from the ingroup and all outgroups in the previous week, scored in 10-hour units. This contact measure was designed to indicate average (latent) hours of contact overall. As such, a value of 0

represented a threshold below which scores were unreported (as sampled from the last week), rather than an absolute minimum. This is an important technical point because a value of zero may simply reflect zero hours in the last week, rather an absolute value of zero over a longer time frame in our latent variable (consider if hours per week were multiplied by 4 to estimate average hours per month). A score of 0 would still be 0 if modeled in absolute terms, which is potentially incorrect. A score of 0 thus represents a censor point or threshold which the manifest indicator does not go below, but which the latent variable it represents may extend beyond). To address this, we estimated both ingroup and outgroup contact as censored variables (also known as Tobit estimation), with censoring below zero. This is a common approach in econometrics, where an observed indicator may reflect only part of the distribution of the underlying latent variable, as is the case with our measure of contact in terms of hours (see Wooldridge, 2006, p. 595-622 for a review).

To provide a conservative test the hypothesized mediation, the structural equation model is tested as fully-saturated, that is, without constraining estimated parameters. As such the model tested the proposed mediational structure while adjusting for all possible paths between the variables of interest. We modeled multi-item scales as latent variables, as per a standard SEM. Self-reported hours of ingroup and outgroup contact were modelled as censored variables. Our tests of mediation therefore assessed the indirect effect of a censored variable on both latent and manifest outcomes, mediated by other latent variables. This required Monte-Carlo integration using Maximum Likelihood with Robust estimation of standard errors (MLR). Note that standard estimates of model fit are not available using this estimation procedure. However, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis assessing the multi-item latent variable components of the model (ethnic identity, system justification, resource and symbolic policy support) indicated that the measurement model provided a good fit.

We allowed the residual variance of the two latent mediators to correlate, thus adjusting for their joint effect on the outcomes. We also allowed the residual variance of the three outcome variables to correlate. Finally, the model also statistically adjusted for a range of demographic covariates, by regressing both the mediator and outcome variables on them. A schematic overview of our structural model is presented in Figure 1. Model parameters are necessarily unstandardized given our estimation method.

Parameter estimates

Parameter estimates for component of our model predicting the two mediators are presented in Table 2. As shown, the focal predictor, ingroup contact, predicted increased ethnic identity centrality ($b = .05$), and decreased system justification beliefs ($b = -.03$). As reported, these effects held when statistically adjusting for a wide range of demographic covariates, including net outgroup contact.

Table 3 presents parameter estimates for contact, the two mediators, and all covariates predicting each of the three outcomes. As reported, ethnic identity centrality predicted increased support for resource-specific policy ($b = .84$), symbolic policy ($b = .30$), and support for The Maori Party ($b = .70$). In contrast, system justification beliefs did not significantly predict any of these three outcome measures ($z < 1.2$).

Tests of indirect effects (estimated within our model using Monte-Carlo integration with multiple starts) indicated that ethnic identity significantly partially mediated the effect of (censored) ingroup contact on all three outcome variables (indirect effect on resource-specific policy: $b = .044$, $se = .013$, $z = 3.413$, $p < .01$; indirect effect on symbolic policy: $b = .016$, $se = .005$, $z = 3.244$, $p < .01$; indirect effect on support for The Māori party: $b = .037$, $se = .010$, $z = 3.486$, $p < .01$). Ingroup contact also retained a significant direct effect on support for resource-specific policy ($b = .12$), symbolic policy ($b = .03$), and support for The Māori Party ($b = .09$) independent of both mediators.

Discussion

In this study we considered how everyday interactions with fellow disadvantaged group members might increase identification, decrease system justification, and consequently, increase political mobilization in minority groups. We argued that political change is not simply the product of large scale, environmental change, but also finds its roots in the backyards and lounge rooms of minority group members, where close friendships are developed and nurtured. Consistent with our hypothesis, we found that ingroup contact was associated with increased political mobilization among Māori. This manifested in terms of increased support for both symbolic and resource-specific reparative policies benefiting Māori, and increased support for the Māori party. These effects held, after adjusting for outgroup contact and a range of demographic covariates.

While the effects of outgroup contact on political attitudes are interesting in their own right, they are among the most widely studied in the intergroup literature (see Dixon, Levine, Reicher & Durrhiem, 2012). Thus, the most significant contribution of the current study lies in its analysis of how contact with fellow group members might change the way we operate at the intergroup level. Previous studies using the NZAVS dataset (focusing primarily on outgroup contact but including ingroup contact as another variable of interest) had already hinted at the mobilizing potential of ingroup contact. Sengupta et al. (2012) showed that Māori subscribed less strongly to an ideology that excludes their own culture from representations of the national category as a function of their contact with ingroup friends. Sengupta & Sibley (2013) found that ingroup contact among Māori increased support for one topical redistributive policy issue (Maori ownership of the foreshore and seabed), mediated by decreased Meritocracy beliefs.

While these studies are suggestive, they focus on a small number of ideological outcomes. The present analysis represents a more comprehensive test of the effects of

ingroup contact, showing that these effects generalize across a wide range of interrelated attitudes and policy preferences relevant to the political empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Moreover, the present study goes further in testing two specific, theoretically-derived mechanisms underlying the contact-mobilization relationship, drawn from SIMCA and SJT.

Analyzing simultaneous mediation by ethnic identification and system justification, we found that the effects of ingroup contact on political attitudes could partially be explained by increased strength of identification with the Māori ethnic group. While contact with Māori friends was associated with system justification as predicted, this decrease had no effect on mobilization attitudes. Our results are more consistent with the social identity perspective on collective action, than with system justification theory. They suggest that, at least in the New Zealand context, identity-related processes may be more important than system-level motives, in understanding what drives political mobilization.

These findings have important implications for SJT. Reicher (2004, 2011) argued that the underlying theoretical assumption that system justification is a fundamental human motivation is pernicious; reifying inequality in the status quo and making attempts at change seem futile. If we are all biased in favor of the system, what hope do we have of changing it? This assumption is reflected in the fact that the possibility of *variation* in the system-justification motive has received relatively little attention in the literature.

Recently however, research has begun to emerge investigating various contextual factors that might impact the degree to which people justify the system, including perceptions of system-threat, system-inescapability and system-dependence (Kay & Friesen, 2011). Our study adds to this literature by showing that for those disadvantaged by a social system, spending more time with ingroup friends can reduce extent to which they believe that system is fair. The extent to which participants did not justify the system, however, was unrelated to the extent to which they politically mobilized (over and above effects of identification).

Future research may want to look at alternative outcomes, stemming from the association between ingroup contact and system justification demonstrated in this paper.

That said, it is possible that the lack of mediation by system justification is a result of the specific intergroup context in which the present study was conducted. Māori have been shown to be unique among disadvantaged groups in the extent of their system-justifying tendencies. Unlike other ethnic minorities, they do not tend to internalize inequality by showing an implicit preference for the dominant group (Harding, Sibley & Robertson, 2011 cf. Devos & Banaji, 2005). They have also been found to show the lowest levels of system-justification beliefs overall, relative to all other ethnic groups in New Zealand (Sengupta & Sibley, 2013). It is possible that this already low level of system-justification, and an established preference for reparative policies (e.g. Sibley, 2010), meant that the further reduction in SJ precipitated by ingroup contact was not large enough to push support for political mobilization any higher than it already was.

As we have noted, socio-political consciousness is a central dimension of Māori identity. Māori are acutely aware of the historical injustice faced by their group at the hands of Europeans and the continuing relevance of this injustice to contemporary intergroup relations. It is possible that the mobilizing effects of ingroup contact will only be observed in groups whose identities are similarly politicized (see Simon & Klandermans, 2001). We suspect, however, that hours spent with ingroup friends will have a generally positive effect on political mobilization in most minority groups. Groups that face prejudice and discrimination may not have the luxury of decoupling their political interests from identity. In addition, van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis showed that while politicized identity did have a stronger impact on collective action intentions ($r = .43$), general, non-politicized social identification also retained a considerable influence ($r = .34$).

Our study represents an important addition to the vast literature on collective action, which has moved away from examining mobilization in the context of identities based on membership in broad social categories like ethnicity (see Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2009). Instead, it has shifted more towards a focus on specific types of activist identities drawn from membership in social movements (e.g. Simon et al., 1998) or opinion-based groups (e.g. Thomas & McGarty, 2009). However, our findings suggest that even membership in broad social categories can galvanize collective action around shared political agendas. This is consistent with earlier research showing that identification with categories such as those defined by gender (e.g. Kelly and Breinlinger 1995) and nationality (e.g. Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Balnz, 1999) can increase political mobilization.

Such identities are highly salient aspects of the socio-political context in many nations. For example, much inequality in postcolonial societies like New Zealand exists along ethnic lines, and stems from histories of domination by members of one ethnic group over another. Under these circumstances, ethnicity becomes a salient dimension for the formation of identity, to the extent that it enables those from disadvantaged ethnic groups to establish a direct contrast to the identity shared by those in power and those who benefit from the hierarchy (see Subašić, Reynolds & Turner, 2008). Thus, taking advantage of how people are already defined in their social contexts (e.g. in terms of their ethnic heritage) can be useful for the inculcation of political preferences that challenge entrenched, group-based inequality. Our findings suggest that one way to do this is to encourage greater friendly contact among members of historically disadvantaged groups.

A further contribution this study makes to the collective action literature is that it identifies a proximal, situational antecedent to the sense of identification shown to be so vital for fomenting political change. As noted earlier, theory and research in this area often treats ingroup identification as the conceptual starting point from which collective action stems.

While the notion that this identification arises at least partly from interactions within the group is implicit in the social identity account of collective action (see for example, Haslam & Reicher, 2012), the effects of time spent with the ingroup have rarely been made explicit or studied quantitatively. By going back further in the causal sequence, our study raises concrete, practical implications for how the all-important sense of identification can be developed.

Political and social leaders looking to engender discontent among the victims of inequality might need to consider how friendships and positive social interactions between members of disadvantaged groups can be fostered (see also, Reicher, 2007). For example, Sengupta et al. (2013) showed that features of neighborhoods, such as the access to communal areas and participation in local sports teams, increase the sense of community among the neighborhood's inhabitants. Using such insights, specific practical strategies can be developed to promote social change through the political process, by facilitating the development of ingroup identification through within-group contact among the disadvantaged, thus increasing the likelihood that their policy preferences will reflect their group's interests.

Strengths, limitations and a note on effect size

The usefulness of our findings may be called into question on account of the magnitude of the effects observed (specifically the effects of ingroup contact on the ethnic identification and system justification). For example, we found that 10 hours of ingroup contact predicted an increase in ethnic identification by .05 of a unit on a 1-7 scale, and decrease in system justification by .03 of a unit. These effects are small. However, as noted by Prentice and Miller (1992), the logic of judging the importance of findings based on effect size breaks down when the variables used could have been operationalised in different ways. In such situations, effect size estimates merely reflect how good the particular

operationalization of the independent variable is at predicting variance in the dependent variable as it measured. While small effects may indicate a need to reconsider the strength of the measures, they do not undermine the importance of the independent variable or the validity of the psychological process being investigated.

This is especially true when measures are selected to minimize common-method variance, and when dependent variables are difficult to influence (Prentice & Miller, 1992) – both of which apply to the present study. In the intergroup literature, contact and political attitudes are both usually measured using Likert-scale ratings. Here, we have asked for a numerical estimate of hours spent with ingroup members and Likert-scale ratings for the mediators and outcome variables, thus reducing common-method variance. Further, global attitudes towards the ingroup and the system should be fairly stable over time, and generally resistant to change and short-term fluctuations. Thus, the fact that we observe these effects at all is potentially important. Moreover, Abelson (1985) has provided a mathematical demonstration of how very small effects of variables measured over narrow timeframes (as is the case for our contact measure) can cumulate within individuals, and across people in a group, amounting to meaningful effects in the long run. This suggests that engaging in ongoing contact can shift ideologies, over time, to a greater extent than can be interpreted from the magnitude of our observed cross-sectional effects.

Our reliance on cross-sectional data does, however, prevent a conclusive inference of causality from ingroup contact to political attitudes. It is possible that people who hold system-challenging attitudes are more likely to identify strongly with the group to which those attitudes are relevant and consequently spend more time with friends from that group. However, two of the experimental traditions of research on which this study draws, provide some evidence for the causal process hypothesized here. First, research on the impact of intragroup communication has typically manipulated the degree of communication and

measured the resulting shared cognitions (see Postmes et al., 2005). Most studies on collective action in the social identity tradition have also used similar experimental designs (see Haslam & Reicher, 2012). While this does not rule out reciprocal relationships between these variables, the experimental nature of this past work does provide an empirical basis for the directionality of our model, and the theory that underlies it. Thus, there is reason to believe communication increases shared identification, which in turn, motivates collective action.

A major strength of our study is the use of a large, nationally representative sample of disadvantaged-group members, which is novel in the literature. Indeed, past work on collective action has been criticized for relying too heavily on “experimental studies in which there is limited interaction between participants and little opportunity for the development of a sense of group history” (Haslam & Reicher, 2012; p. 158). By studying a real group, embedded in a socio-historical context marked by real intergroup inequality, our study provides a degree of ecological validity lacking in past explorations of these processes. It also answers calls to integrate insights from the vast literatures on intragroup processes and intergroup relations (Dovidio, 2013). We have shown that the mechanisms of social influence within groups, uncovered in small-group research, have implications for the intergroup context in which those groups operate.

Conclusion

Overall, our study suggests that ingroup friendships among the disadvantaged can help galvanize political support for changes to remediate intergroup inequality. Consistent with the social identity model of collective action, we showed that this effect is partly explained by increased identification with the disadvantaged social category. Contrary to system justification theory, we found that the reduced support for the status quo precipitated by contact did not predict increased political mobilization. Moreover, all effects held when

adjusting for a range of demographic covariates, including outgroup contact. Thus, our study sheds light on the processes through which interactions between individuals can influence the policy preferences that shape the distribution of resources in democratic societies. In doing so, it offers practical insights into how the disadvantaged can inculcate political attitudes that promote social change towards equality.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the variables used in the analyses including averaged composite variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.
1. Hours Ingroup																	
2. Hours Outgroup	.634*																
3. System justification	-.148*	-.102*															
4. Ethnic Identification	.192*	.114*	.048														
5. Māori Party Support	.183*	.029	.053	.444*													
6. Resource Policy Support	.276*	.086*	-.086*	.485*	.633*												
7. Symbolic Policy Support	.141*	.070*	.050	.382*	.395*	.466*											
8. Political Orientation	.023	.013	-.017	-.105*	-.085*	-.115*	-.168*										
9. Gender (0 female 1 male)	-.002	.044	.063	-.021	.015	-.038	-.105*	.015									
10. Age	-.061	-.045	.152*	.044	-.011	-.039	-.119*	.021	.089*								
11. NZDep (1 affluent to 10 deprived)	.200*	.075*	-.094*	.163*	.123*	.232*	.038	-.037	.003	.006							
12. Born in NZ (0 no 1 yes)	-.041	.051	-.002	-.008	-.061	.013	.012	-.025	.062	.034	.034						
13. Religious (0 no 1 yes)	.102*	.071*	.023	.138*	.099*	.103*	.066*	.095*	-.013	.225*	.076*	-.065*					
14. Parent (0 no 1 yes)	.009	-.015	.019	.104*	.020	.054	.017	.073*	-.053	.360*	.036	.043	.109*				
15. Partnered (0 no 1 yes)	-.082*	-.049	.035	-.003	-.077*	-.120*	-.066*	.092*	.076*	.090*	-.193*	.007	-.013	.269*			
16. Employed (0 no 1 yes)	-.018	.064	-.016	-.037	-.063	-.073*	.021	-.006	.055	-.194*	-.185*	-.008	-.044	-.087*	.145*		
17. Education (-2 to 2)	-.149*	-.102*	.023	-.025	.003	-.031	.042	-.028	-.101*	-.102*	-.194*	-.052	-.030	-.095*	.064	.256*	
Mean	2.40	3.67	4.13	4.94	4.10	4.18	5.72	3.62	.39	44.12	6.23	.99	.45	.79	.67	.76	-.72
SD	3.76	4.82	1.18	1.59	1.87	1.73	1.15	1.20	.49	13.43	2.92	.12	.50	.41	.47	.43	1.21

N = 940; * p < .05.

Table 2. Parameter estimates for models predicting the dual mediators, ethnic identification and system justification.

	Ethnic Identification			System Justification		
	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>
<i>Ingroup Contact</i>	.05**	.02	3.42	-.03*	.02	-1.98
Outgroup Contact	.00	.01	.17	.00	.02	-.21
Political Orientation	-.11**	.04	-2.91	-.02	.05	-.42
Gender	-.04	.08	-.52	.13	.08	1.56
Age	.00	.00	-.55	.01*	.01	2.84
NZ Deprivation	.06**	.02	4.03	-.03	.02	-1.34
Born in NZ	-.13	.33	-.40	-.07	.29	-.24
Religious Status	.32**	.08	3.85	.02	.09	.21
Parental Status	.31**	.11	2.72	-.08	.15	-.55
Relationship Status	.06	.09	.69	.02	.11	.16
Employment Status	-.02	.10	-.17	-.02	.14	-.14
Education	.04	.03	1.02	.01	.07	.94

Note. Hours of ingroup and outgroup contact were scored in 10-hour units with censoring below 0. Model was estimated using Maximum Likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and Monte-Carlo integration. *b* coefficients represent unstandardized parameters. *Z*-values reflect the ratio of the effect to the standard error of the effect. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Focal variables printed in bold.

Table 3. Parameter estimates for models predicting the three outcomes, support for resource specific policies, symbolic policies, and The Maori Party.

	Resource Policy			Symbolic Policy			Maori Party Support		
	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>z</i>
<i>Ethnic Identification</i>	.84**	.07	-12.20	.30**	.40	7.74	.70**	.06	10.89
<i>System Justification</i>	-.30	.31	-9.93	.08	.07	1.11	.16	.15	1.10
<i>Ingroup Contact</i>	.12**	.02	5.41	.03**	.01	3.10	.09**	.08	4.59
Outgroup Contact	-.06**	.02	-3.56	-.01	.01	-1.49	-.06**	.02	-2.97
Political Orientation	-.13*	.05	-2.32	-.09**	.03	-3.73	-.04	.05	-.90
Gender	.02	.12	.19	-.12*	.06	-2.17	.19	.12	1.63
Age	-.01	.01	-.96	-.01**	.00	-4.53	-.01	.01	-1.30
NZ Deprivation	.05*	.02	2.17	-.01	.01	-1.46	.01	.02	.28
Born in NZ	.62	.52	1.18	.14	.24	.58	-.52	.53	-.98
Religious Status	.07	.12	.61	.06	.05	1.25	.13	.12	1.14
Parental Status	.19	.15	1.24	.09	.07	1.36	.03	.15	.20
Relationship Status	-.36**	.13	-2.80	-.11*	.06	-2.01	-.27*	.12	-2.18
Employment Status	-.20	.15	-1.34	.01	.06	.21	-.15	.15	-1.03
Education	.05	.05	1.07	.04	.02	1.75	.06	.05	1.35

Note. Hours of ingroup and outgroup contact were scored in 10-hour units with censoring below 0. Model was estimated using Maximum Likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and Monte-Carlo integration. *b* coefficients represent unstandardized parameters. *Z*-values reflect the ratio of the effect to the standard error of the effect. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Focal variables printed in bold.

Figure 1. Schematic overview of key paths, with unstandardized parameter estimates. (Note. for simplicity, links from latent variables to manifest indicators are not shown. The model also adjusted for the full set of demographic covariates, as reported in Tables 1 and 2).

