

**Reacting to a Changing World: A Social Psychological Analysis of
Perceived Discrimination among Advantaged Groups**



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Abstract

Members of dominant groups increasingly perceive discrimination against their group despite objective indicators of societal advantage. The present dissertation offers theorizing on the reasons for this phenomenon, integrating findings from different literatures and presenting a theoretical model of perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups (Article 1). In two empirical papers, parts of the proposed model are tested and replicated, using correlational data from White Americans and men (Article 2); and comparing different theoretical explanations of perceived discrimination among White Americans using multilevel analysis of two waves of a nationally representative survey (Article 3). Across these two articles, findings indicate that perceived threat to the ingroup and preferences for group-based hierarchies play distinct roles in predicting perceived discrimination among White Americans and men. Furthermore, ideological beliefs and economic concerns independently predict perceived discrimination among Whites at the national level. The theorizing and empirical findings in this dissertation offer important implications for theory and research on this phenomenon, and for practitioners who work with members of advantaged groups in efforts to increase inclusion and greater equality between groups.

Keywords: perceived discrimination, status threat, moral image threat, group-based hierarchies, entitlement, system-legitimizing beliefs

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Introduction

The criticism against the social, economic, and political inequalities of the world is gaining renewed salience in the mainstream. From protest movements such as Occupy Wallstreet, Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock; to legal and normative changes in women's and gender minority rights such as same-sex marriage and #MeToo, we live in times of change where the dominant belief systems and groups are called into question. While some advantaged group members join rank in challenging the hierarchies they benefit from, many express concerns about their group's place in a changing society, expecting losses in their influence (Klein, 2018; Parker, Morin, & Menasce Horowitz, 2019). The narrative of dominant groups and dominant culture being under attack feeds an increased orientation towards authoritarianism, nativist and populist electoral success, and polarization around the world (Durrheim et al., 2018; Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018).

Social psychological research on advantaged individuals' reactions to these changes mostly focus on overt negative outcomes such as increased prejudice, dehumanization, or support for right-wing populist agendas (e.g., Knowles & Tropp, 2018; Kteily & Bruneau, 2017; Sibley et al., 2013). A smaller literature highlights less obvious reactions, such as increased salience of dominant group identity, attitudes towards discrimination claimants, denial of discrimination against disadvantaged groups, which also help to maintain existing inequities (Hideg & Wilson, 2020; Unzueta, Everly, & Gutiérrez, 2014; Jardina, 2019). In this dissertation, I examine perceived

discrimination among advantaged groups as one of these reactions, which may also have negative outcomes for members of disadvantaged groups.

According to recent polls, a majority of White Americans believe that their group is discriminated against (“Discrimination in America”, 2017). Similar claims are raised by other traditionally advantaged groups such as Christians in the U.S. (PRRI/Brookings, 2016). These groups enjoy a great amount of power in society – as apparent in statistics on the distribution of wealth, income, dominant positions in politics and business. Underscoring the seeming discrepancy between subjective claims of discrimination and objective measures, even researchers examining group differences in perceived discrimination have long considered discrimination to be of little salience and consequence to advantaged groups (Branscombe, 1998; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002; Major et al., 2002).

Other social psychologists following a critical approach argue that discrimination perceptions by the advantaged are motivated by efforts to deny and defend their privileges (e.g., Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2014; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). While scholars arguing this perspective are highly skeptical of whether perceived discrimination by the advantaged is based on real grievances, others ardently argue for the authenticity of their discrimination claims (e.g., Crawford & Jussim, 2018; Duarte et al., 2015). The existing, yet scarce, research on what motivates discrimination perceptions among the advantaged supports the critical approach. The variables found to predict perceived discrimination, such as demographic change, racial progress and diversity, and system-legitimizing beliefs, all suggest threats to advantaged group status

and the racial hierarchy as a source of perceived discrimination about advantaged groups (Craig & Richeson, 2017, 2018; Crawford, Vodapalli, Stingel, & Ruscio, 2019; Major et al., 2002). What is not fully understood in this literature is the individual differences in processing and reacting to events that could be perceived as threatening to ingroup's social status and power.

This dissertation follows predictions from the critical approach and aims to further our understanding of the influences of situational and individual-based factors in predicting perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. To the extent that socialization in advantaged groups and ideological orientation are individual differences, my conceptualization also allows for the study of within-group differences among the advantaged despite the influence of shared societal discourse and events that shape these perceptions. Moreover, while I argue for an account that primarily points to ideological motivations behind perceived discrimination, I do not necessarily dismiss the relevance of economic concerns, suggesting that its link to perceived discrimination among the advantaged might be shaped by political rhetoric (Mols & Jetten, 2016; Portice & Reicher, 2018).

I use a diverse range of theoretical frameworks to inform my theorizing, including social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), group position theory of prejudice (Blumer, 1958), and social psychological literature on privilege (e.g., Knowles et al., 2014; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). All of these literatures offer great overlap regarding advantaged groups' psychological reactions to challenges to their position. I present a theoretical review

article wherein I incorporate findings on the phenomenon derived from these frameworks. In the empirical papers, I test and replicate parts of the proposed model using correlational data from online convenience samples of Whites and men in the U.S., and test different explanations of perceived discrimination among Whites using multilevel analysis of two waves of a nationally representative survey.

Cross-sectional analyses allow for an initial examination of the relationships between variables proposed in the model prior to future experimental work. The analyses with nationally representative datasets give us a broader picture of the phenomenon, while providing insight into an important political debate about the correlates of Whites' grievance claims that goes beyond the limitations of convenience samples. Together, they provide an understanding of the specific relationships and broader patterns of the correlates of perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups in the U.S.

Overview of Articles

In Article 1, I review the disparate research and theorizing on perceived discrimination towards advantaged groups and suggest an integrative theoretical framework. The paper proposes a model in which group-status and dominance motivations (measured by social dominance orientation, SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) are key in predicting increased perceived discrimination against advantaged groups under conditions of threat. I also discuss the relevance of an under-studied predictor of discrimination perceptions, i.e., group-based entitlement. This article provides the basis for new empirical directions, some of which I test in the next two papers.

Article 2 tests a part of the model I developed in the first article among two samples of advantaged groups in the U.S, White Americans, and men, who might perceive their advantaged status to be unstable. Because I argue that perceived discrimination among advantaged groups serves a hierarchy-maintenance function, my main purpose here is to examine how group-based threat, i.e., perceived status and moral threat, increases the strength of the relationship between SDO and perceived discrimination.

While Article 3 examines the role of SDO, legitimacy beliefs and threat in convenience and stratified samples, the third article utilizes nationally representative samples to test three theoretical explanations of perceived discrimination among advantaged groups. In addition to the ideological defense explanation tested in Article 2, another explanation that is popular among the elites (politicians, experts) and lay people is the role of economic anxiety, while a third explanation points to concerns about the ingroup leading perceived discrimination. Which of these explanations is favored corresponds to partisan identifications and predicts differential policy support and electoral choices in the U.S. (Jardina, 2019; Sides, Tesler & Vavreck, 2017). Therefore, understanding the unique contribution of each is important to predict future outcomes. Furthermore, by testing the predictors in two key socio-political moments – Barack Obama’s second term, Donald Trump’s election – I aim to replicate the basic set of predictions while noting context-relevant change. Multilevel analysis also allows me to examine the predictive role of macro-level factors such as Republican candidate support and White unemployment.

Contribution

With this dissertation, I aim to expand the existing literature in four main directions. First, I examine perceptions of both status and moral threat that might predict perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups as well as proposing a novel predictor, i.e., group-based entitlement, that might explain why perceived threat would generate this particular outcome. I argue that perceived threats to existing status and power hierarchies will predict perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups as a result of increased entitlement to their group's high status. Furthermore, as I will underline throughout the dissertation, threat perceptions and their effects are a product of individual processes (e.g., SDO, system-legitimizing thinking) as well as the socio-political context that shape threat perceptions (e.g., political discourse, social justice activism).

Second, while the role of individual differences in perceived discrimination is of key practical importance, it remains under researched. Of the two studies that find a moderating role in which perceived threat increases perceived discrimination only among individuals who highly endorse system-legitimizing beliefs, one was not replicated (Crawford et al., 2019; Major et al., 2002; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Given that findings are scarce and mixed, I examine individual differences in legitimacy beliefs (including the novel variable, entitlement) as a predictor of perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. Extending the previous work, I lay out the hierarchy-maintaining logic of perceived discrimination where SDO predicts greater system/status

legitimizing, particularly for individuals who perceive threat to their ingroup, which then predicts perceived discrimination.

Third, the role of socio-economic factors is often overlooked in analyses of perceived discrimination. Because the link between economic concerns and intergroup outcomes might be ideological (Chen & Mohanty, 2018; Jacobson, 2013), examining its unique relationship to perceived discrimination is critical. I address this gap in Article 3 testing socio-economic factors along with ideological predictors in a nationally representative sample.

Fourth and finally, societal context is a big part of the inquiry in this dissertation. In Article 1, I discuss the channels through which societal changes are portrayed as threat perceptions; in Article 2, I operationalize status threat within the current sociopolitical discourse regarding the perceived insecurity of Whites' and men' societal position; and in Article 3, I enter macro-level factors such as state-level Republican candidate support and White unemployment in the analysis.

In sum, I present a model of perceived discrimination based on a theoretical integration of the existing literature, examine predictions based on this model across two different contexts as well as compare different theoretical explanations. Overall, I argue that perceived discrimination among advantaged groups is a reaction to social change and functions to maintain group-based hierarchies in society. This dissertation theoretically develops and empirically examines this argument.

Article 1: When Advantaged Groups Feel Disadvantaged: A Review of Social Psychological Processes

Perceived discrimination among advantaged groups is on the rise. According to a recent public survey, 55% of White Americans endorsed the view that there is discrimination against their group (“Discrimination in America”, 2017). Other nationally representative data from the years of Obama’s presidency and its aftermath showed even larger percentages: When asked about how much discrimination exists against Whites, 67 to 73 percent of respondents said they perceived some level of discrimination against Whites (a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little; American National Election Studies “ANES”, 2012, 2016). Some commentators connect this trend to Whites’ relative decline in status, e.g., decreased college graduation, stagnating upward mobility compared to increased mobility among minority groups, and rising mortality rates among middle-aged Whites (e.g., Case & Deaton, 2015). Other data show that White Americans continue to show a persistent advantage over racial minority groups in terms of access to health care, poverty rates, household income, homeownership (Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality, 2017). Both sides of the debate, however, agree that Whites in the U.S. and in many European countries are increasingly wary of their status in society. This phenomenon has parallels among other high-status groups such as Christians and men in the U.S. (Brown, 2012; Vedder, 2018). In this review, we delineate the relationship between threat perceptions and other relevant social psychological processes in predicting perceived discrimination among advantaged groups.

Societal changes constitute the background for increased discrimination claims among the advantaged. Discrimination claims among Whites have typically occurred as a reaction to affirmative action policies (Crosby, 2004). In fact, a 1995 poll in the U.S. shows that 64.5% of respondents endorsed the item “giving preference to Blacks results in discrimination against Whites” (CBS/NYT, 1995). Perceived discrimination among men is also linked to less support for affirmative action policies (Veilleux & Tougas, 2013). Because affirmative action policies are designed to increase the representation of previously underrepresented groups in education or employment, these perceptions can be seen as a reaction to changes in the society. Accordingly, recent studies show that status threat and system-legitimizing thinking predicts perceived discrimination among White Americans (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wellman, Liu, & Wilkins, 2015).

Another key factor that is frequently mentioned in public discussions of the phenomenon, but under researched in the literature, is entitlement. In claiming discrimination against their group, members of advantaged groups characterize other groups’ progress as undeserved, which suggests a greater sense of entitlement among members of advantaged groups (Major 1994; Crosby, 1976). In this review, we argue that *entitlement* and *threat* perceptions are key predictors of perceived discrimination among advantaged group members.

In addition to status threats, advantaged group members might also perceive threats to the legitimacy of their dominance. In today’s democratic societies, social movements focused on minority rights challenge the morality of existing social hierarchies and demand accountability and compensation for historical and present

conditions that disadvantaged their communities (Moscovici & Perez, 2009; Moscatelli, Albarello, Prati, & Rubini, 2014). According to social identity theorists, perceived challenges to the legitimacy of status differences is another form of threat generating motivations to maintain the system (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In fact, advantaged group members show discontent with being seen as agents of discrimination and inequality, and this increases their system-legitimizing views and perceived discrimination against their own group (Saguy, Chernyak-Hai, Andrighetto, & Bryson, 2013; Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, & Rothschild, 2012). Therefore, in this review, we examine the role of both moral and status threats in predicting discrimination claims among the advantaged.

This review makes several contributions to the literature. First, it integrates the research examining the threat-based sources of perceived discrimination with the literature on group differences in entitlement. While this is the first attempt to bring together the antecedent factors of perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups under a common framework, we also expand previous accounts by offering a model that delineates the conditions under which this phenomenon occurs. Furthermore, while past research and theorizing mostly discussed status threat as a predictor of advantaged groups' perceived discrimination, we argue for the relevance of moral threat at both individual and group levels. We also discuss the social context that heightens the salience of these perceptions. In sum, our conceptualization underlines the ideological aspects and functions of perceived discrimination among advantaged groups.

The Psychology of Entitlement among Advantaged Groups

Our conceptualization of entitlement is an implicit sense of deservingness one acquires through socialization in unequal systems, which might be expressed more explicitly based on individual characteristics (e.g., ideological differences, nationalism) and affordances of the context (e.g., permissive normative environment). We define entitlement in the intergroup context as *the perception that one ought to possess or attain desired states, resources or outcomes due to who one is (e.g., native citizens/early settlers, owners of land) or what one does or has done (e.g., hardworking people; builders of a nation/civilization)* (see Kim, 1999; Lerner, 1987; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013; Tawa, Suyemoto, & Tauriac, 2013). The normative underpinnings of entitlement, the feeling of “ought to”, is considered key to felt anger when a person does not get a desired outcome to which they feel entitled (Major, 1994).

Social Comparison and System Legitimizing Sources of Entitlement

In an early attempt to conceptualize the relevance of entitlement for intergroup relations, Major (1994) argued that social inequalities create different levels of entitlement among members of high- and low-status groups through processes of 1) social comparison and 2) system legitimization. Because advantaged group members tend to compare their life outcomes to their own past or to other advantaged group members (and not to disadvantaged groups), they maintain a higher reference point than those who are disadvantaged (Major, 1994). This increases the expectation to receive better outcomes than members of disadvantaged groups. Additionally, beliefs that legitimize social inequality such as meritocracy or belief in a just world – which are more strongly

endorsed by advantaged groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) – increase the tendency to make internal attributions about success (Major, 1994). Therefore, even when individuals acknowledge their advantaged status, making internal attributions about these positive outcomes increases their sense of entitlement, while those with less resources and less positive outcomes are perceived to be in this situation because of their different personal choices and characteristics (Connor & Fiske, 2018; Kantola & Kuusela, 2018).

This conceptualization of entitlement was studied in the context of gender differences in pay entitlement, i.e., women paying themselves less than men for the same work (Callahan-Levy & Messe, 1979). In a classic experiment on depressed entitlement, men on average paid themselves significantly more than women did for the same work. When given the same pay, men worked significantly shorter and did less accurate work than women (Major et al., 1984). As entitlement is closely connected to social comparison processes, when all participants were informed about how much everyone paid themselves, the elevated entitlement effect vanished, with men paying themselves less than before (Major et al., 1984; Bylsma & Major, 1992). Later work showed that men's elevated entitlement for self-pay is based on their self-esteem, not their performance (Pelham & Hetts, 2001). Furthermore, this effect among men generalizes to other advantaged group members, i.e., individuals in high-paying jobs (Pelham & Hetts, 2001, Study 2). Furthermore, in line with Major's theorizing, activation of system-justifying beliefs elevated pay entitlement among men (O'Brien, Major, & Gilbert, 2012).

Self-Concept Sources of Entitlement

The favorable view of self that lays the foundation for higher entitlement among advantaged groups has also been addressed by stereotype content researchers. Advantaged group members view themselves as competent/powerful and warm/benevolent, while members of other groups are construed in less favorable or ambivalent ways (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Leach, Minescu, Poppe, & Hagendoorn, 2008) with relevant implications for entitlement to desired outcomes such as jobs, educational opportunities, safety. While entitlement among advantaged individuals is related to positive self-stereotyping, it also aligns with a general human tendency to engage in backward reasoning of “good outcome, good person”. We tend to think people with more positive outcomes in society as deserving of their higher status (Lerner, 1987).

Positive self-stereotyping among advantaged group members is perhaps the least conscious source of entitlement, as the links between individual-level perceptions and social status are not obvious to individuals themselves. Particularly in countries like the U.S. where individualism is a founding principle, it can be hard for people to see themselves as being shaped by social structures (Jackman, 1994). While members of disadvantaged groups are often judged based on the perceived characteristics of their group that signal less deservingness on status-related dimensions, advantaged group members tend to see themselves as individuals unaffected by group membership (Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002; Pratto & Stewart, 2012); therefore, they base their sense of entitlement on their self-worth.

Group-Status Sources of Entitlement

Social identity theorizing underlined the structural factors that might lead to heightened entitlement among high-status groups. In contexts where status differences between groups are relatively stable and impermeable, members of high-status groups greatly legitimize their status and feel “magnanimous” and prosocial attitudes towards subordinate groups through feelings of guilt, sympathy or pity (Leach et al., 2002; Jetten, 2019, pp. 1106). However, researchers argue that such structural circumstances might also boost feelings of entitlement to high status, resulting in defensive, sometimes oppressive attitudes and behaviors. The latter group of outcomes are thought apply to individuals who highly legitimize group-based hierarchies (Jetten, 2019; Mols & Jetten, 2017). Apartheid in South Africa and slavery in the US are two examples where stable and impermeable oppressive systems simultaneously engendered “magnanimous” and oppressive attitudes, both of which maintained vast inequalities in status and power (Jarmon, 2007).

People’s self-definitions and categorization processes also relate to heightened entitlement among advantaged groups (Wenzel, 2001). Self-categorization theory argues that individuals categorized as members of a certain group will be seen as entitled to positive and fair outcomes more so than members of outgroups (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, feeling entitled to desired outcomes correlates with how prototypical people believe they are of the superordinate category. For example, the more East Germans identified themselves with the German category, the more entitled they felt to greater social and economic outcomes (Wenzel, 2000). Given that White Americans are considered more prototypically American than other groups, it

is plausible to think they would feel more entitled to important positions and resources (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Yogeeswaran & Dasgupta, 2010). These associations might be held implicitly, as the association of the characteristics of the dominant group – White and Christian – with the superordinate category of American, tends to be explicitly refuted (Devos & Ma, 2008). Subordinate groups, on the other hand, are marked by their differences from the norm, and therefore may be implicitly regarded as less entitled to positive outcomes (Leach et al., 2002; Pratto & Stewart, 2012).

It is important to reiterate here that because group identity tends to be less salient among dominant group members than among subordinate group members (Pratto & Stewart, 2012), or due to distancing from a privileged identity (Knowles et al., 2014), people might not always claim entitlement through explicit references to their social identity. Therefore, following accounts by Blumer and Major (1958, 1994), our conceptualization of entitlement contains an implicit and “culturally and mentally normalized” sense of deservingness for positive outcomes tied to group status (Pratto & Stewart, 2012, pp. 28). Furthermore, certain high-status identities such as national and regional identities might lend themselves more easily to entitlement claims compared to racial identities, partly a result of cultural taboos around asserting entitlement based on racial identity.

Blumer describes the implicit nature of the influence of group status on entitlement in his influential paper where he argues that individuals’ psychologies are primarily shaped by their group’s position in society (Blumer, 1958). Individuals attain this implicit sense of group position through socialization in their communities, messages

from politicians, religious leaders, and the media, etc. While Blumer focused on how this sense of group position leads to prejudice, entitlement to higher status constitutes a key psychological component in his account. He purports that members of dominant groups feel entitled to a wide variety of outcomes, ranging from private domains to materialistic and symbolic sources such as:

the ownership of property such as choice lands and sites; the right to certain jobs, occupations or professions; the claim to certain kinds of industry or lines of business; the claim to certain positions of control and decision-making as in government and law; the right to exclusive membership in given institutions such as schools, churches and recreational institutions; the claim to certain positions of social prestige and to the display of the symbols and accoutrements of these positions; and the claim to certain areas of intimacy and privacy (Blumer, 1958, pp. 4).

Inherent in Blumer's notion of entitlement is the idea that individuals' sense of self and group position are shaped in relation to subordinate groups. Similarly, the racial triangulation model (Kim, 1999; Tawa et al., 2013; see also Zou & Cheryan, 2017) argues that the relative positions of Black and Asian Americans are determined on the basis of notions of meritocracy (*hardworking Asian-Americans*) and nativity (*native African Americans*) for which Whites are the reference standard. In this alignment, White Americans are considered to be the reference meritorious and native social group, and therefore more deserving than other groups.

In sum, advantaged group members feel entitled to receive positive outcomes due to within-group social comparisons, system-legitimization, positive self-construals and normative expectations related to their group's status. While the sense of entitlement may develop and operate through more implicit processes, its manifestation likely shows a great deal of variation depending on the type of group membership (e.g., racial versus national identity), sociocultural context, and individual/ideological differences. In the current normative climate in the U.S. and many European countries (Moscovici & Perez, 2009), entitlement might not be openly expressed, and even be explicitly rejected by some members of advantaged groups (Winant, 2004). However, the subtle forms in which entitlement is experienced are important to consider because their effects would be harder to detect.

(Some) Cognitions and Behavioral Tendencies Maintaining Entitlement

While societal structures (e.g., judicial, educational and political system) and ideologies, as well as active efforts of some individuals to maintain the system, reduces awareness of privilege (Phillips & Lowery, 2018), there are behavioral orientations common to advantaged individuals that allow them to maintain their heightened sense of entitlement. Advantaged group members, on average, do not like to discuss power differences between groups, and emphasize commonalities instead (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Kteily, Saguy, Sidanius & Taylor, 2013; Saguy et al., 2013). They underestimate material inequality between their group and racial minorities (Kahn, Ho, Sidanius, 2009; Kraus, Rucker, & Richeson, 2017). Advantaged group members, on average, possess less critical historical knowledge and the conditions that contributed to today's unequal

society (Bonam, Nair Das, Coleman, & Salter, 2018; Nelson, Adams, & Salter, 2013).

These behavioral orientations allow members of advantaged groups to disregard the relevance of structural factors in shaping individual outcomes, feeding the perceived normalcy of their higher position in society, the sense that ‘this is how things should be’.

This relative lack of reflection on privilege and entitlement is key to the psychology of most advantaged individuals, rejected only by individuals with very egalitarian views (Winant, 2004). Social change and subordinate group demands may challenge this sense of entitlement among members of advantaged groups, undermining their sense of morality and competence in the world. Such challenges might then be perceived as deviations from what is considered normal workings of society and be attributed to discrimination against their group – similar to the connection between entitlement and sense of injustice on the personal level (Grubbs & Exline, 2016). In the following, we review two distinct types of threat that is related to such a reaction among members of advantaged groups.

Threat’s Relationship to Entitlement and Perceived Discrimination

Tajfel and Turner (1979) described two types of threat to advantaged groups’ sense of secure identity. They claimed that individuals may defend their group’s security if they feel threatened by “a conflict within the high-status group’s own value system and the actual foundations of its superiority” or “the activity of the low-status group” (pp. 45, also see Haslam & Reicher, 2012; Turner & Brown, 1978). Based on this conceptualization and the existing literature on responses to privilege and societal change (e.g., Knowles et al., 2014; Sullivan et al., 2012), we propose that advantaged group

members respond to threats to *morality* and *status* with various types of defenses, some of which we will describe below (e.g., decreased self-esteem, increased prejudice). A complete review of these defenses, however, is beyond the scope of this paper; our focus is on perceived discrimination.

Other typologies of threat, such as symbolic and realistic threat, can be subsumed under moral and status threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). We do not discuss the threat of permeability, which is included in prior conceptualizations of social identity threat (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; distinctiveness threat in Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). However, given that there are no studies examining permeability as a predictor of perceived discrimination, we do not include it in this review. Furthermore, moral and status threat distinction allows to capture findings on perceived discrimination among advantaged group members in a parsimonious way.

Social change may create a threat to morality at two levels, as a threat to the self or to the group, and it can be experienced as a threat to social hierarchy in general, or the ingroup's position in it. While these levels can be separated analytically in empirical research, individuals may feel threatened in more than one dimension and at different levels – ego, group, hierarchy – (see McClanahan, Ho, & Kteily, 2019). In the following, we review the research on threat perceptions and the ways in which entitlement may interact with threat to predict perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. In each section, we first describe findings that show threat's direct role in predicting defensive reactions among advantaged groups including discrimination-related

perceptions. Later, we argue for the importance of considering entitlement and related system legitimizing beliefs in this relationship.

Moral Threat

Moral Threat to Self

Morality is central to how people see themselves and others (Brambilla & Leach, 2014). Therefore, being implicated in others' suffering affects individuals on a personal level. Given that on average advantaged group members do not see themselves as part of a group that is responsible for social inequalities, accusations of privilege and discrimination may take them by surprise and lead to negative psychological reactions (Gausel & Leach, 2011). For instance, reminders of privilege decrease self-esteem among White Americans and men (Branscombe, 1998; Knowles et al., 2014; Wilkins, Hirsch, Kaiser, Inkles, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Consequently, individuals may engage in defenses to ward off this ego-threat to confirm their belief that they are moral, i.e., just, and unbiased, individuals. When faced with a moral threat, White individuals distance themselves from group-based behavior ("I don't see color"; Knowles et al., 2014) and refute claims based on their perceptions of themselves ("I'm not racist"; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Wise & Case, 2013).

The decrease in self-esteem as a response to reminders of discrimination recovered when individuals were given a reason (symbolic and realistic threat justifications) for their discriminatory behavior (Pereira, Vala, & Costa-Lopes, 2010). Interestingly, justification repaired *self-esteem* only for egalitarian participants, not for

anti-egalitarians who were instead concerned about their *social image* (e.g., “I’m worried about what other people think of me”).

Moral Threat to Ingroup

In addition to triggering efforts to reinstate a higher self-worth, morality is also important for a positive group identity (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). Therefore, when reminded of their group’s wrongdoing, people react in ways that reestablish their group’s moral character. For example, when reminded of discrimination against women or racial minorities, men or White Americans respectively claimed that their ingroup is more discriminated against than the outgroup (Sullivan et al., 2012). Claiming discrimination is particularly effective because people are likely to think if one’s group is a *moral patient* (receiving bad treatment from others), they cannot also be *moral agents* (treating others’ badly) (Gray & Wegner, 2009).

While competitive discrimination claims may be used to ward off moral threat, discrimination claims need not be competitive to decrease felt responsibility for ingroup wrongdoing. Being reminded of their group’s suffering in the past, i.e., through the 9/11 and Pearl Harbor attacks, led to Americans feeling less guilty for the consequences of the Iraq War (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Remembering a past grievance eases guilt associated with ingroup wrongdoing and maintains a moral social identity. Similarly, while a high number of Whites endorse the idea that they are discriminated against, in the same polls, discrimination against minority groups is also acknowledged (ANES 2012, 2016). In fact, acknowledging discrimination against minorities when also claiming

discrimination against the (advantaged) ingroup might be seen as necessary to give these claims moral credit (McNeill & Vollhardt, 2020).

Similarly, when exposed to group-based privilege information, White Americans did not deny racial inequalities but turned to emphasizing personal hardship in their lives, which was associated with decreased support for affirmative action policies (Case, 2013; Phillips & Lowery, 2015). This response changes the focus away from group-based responsibility to personal difficulties and protects one from moral threat. If one experienced personal hardship, this might imply that they do not benefit from privilege, and therefore could not contribute to others' disadvantage.

Past research on moral identity threat found prosocial effects such as perceived collective guilt, intentions to change, or support for equity policies (Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006; McGarty et al., 2005; Swim & Miller, 1999). However, other studies, including the ones reviewed here, showed reactions that imply denial, distancing, and avoidance (Knowles et al., 2014; Saguy & Kteily, 2014). These distinct responses might be related to how individuals evaluate the content and the scope of moral threat. For instance, considering moral accusations as illegitimate and therefore denying ingroup responsibility, or perceiving increased costs to admitting collective deeds increase motivations to defend the ingroup and decrease collective guilt (Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006).

Furthermore, these differential findings might be based on individual differences between those who feel a genuine concern about their group's morality as compared to those who have image concerns. Recent research suggests a distinct subdimension of

moral threat predicting defensive reactions (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna, & Teroni, 2014). When faced with information about discrimination against LGBTIQ* people/women, heterosexual/male participants reported higher than average levels of motivation to maintain both *moral image* (i.e., need to maintain and be acknowledged as having a positive moral image) and *moral essence* – (i.e., need to be act more morally) (Hässler, Shnabel, Ullrich, Arditti-Vogel, & SimanTov-Nachlieli, 2018)¹. In a separate study using the same measures, only the need to protect the ingroup’s moral image predicted increased competitive discrimination claims among advantaged group members (Kahalon, Shnabel, Halabi, & SimanTov-Nachlieli, 2018). Taken together, these findings suggest that perceived discrimination among advantaged group members derives from a need to protect the group’s image, therefore its influence, not its moral essence.

In a similar vein, while the fairness of status differences may not be of intrinsic concern to individuals who prefer hierarchies, they may show more sensitivity to these issues when such moral accusations have implications for hierarchy maintenance (Kahalon et al., 2018). For example, in response to the growing critique of Whites’ privileged status in society, competitive claims of discrimination are raised by politicians, pundits and media personalities who are otherwise known for their indifference or hostility to subordinates’ discrimination claims (e.g., Limbaugh, 2017). The double-standards that are applied when judging discrimination claims (see Perez & Salter, 2020) are resolved when dominance-related motivations are considered. In other words,

¹ The study did not test whether moral threat increases these needs, or whether there are any resultant mean differences between moral essence vs. image needs, therefore we refer to “high levels” here.

advantaged group members who prefer hierarchies and otherwise reject discussions about discrimination that disadvantaged groups experience in society may adopt discrimination claims to repair their group's moral image.

Entitlement and Moral Threat

As discussed above, members of advantaged groups do not only feel entitled to resources but to being perceived as good and moral, which plays a key role in perceived discrimination. Entitlement here refers to advantaged group members' expectation to be free of collective moral responsibility, which has been termed as the *innocence motive* (Ross, 1995, cited in Perez & Salter, 2019; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). Based on "the norm of reciprocity" (Gouldner, 1960 cited in Lerner, 1987, pp. 108), people expect not to be associated with the inculpatory implications of being advantaged, because they believe they have been fair and unbiased to others, and worked hard to get where they are. Moral accusations violate this conviction. Members of advantaged groups might claim discrimination if they feel they are/their group is fair and good, and therefore is an unjust target of moral accusations.

Entitlement to positive moral standing might be manifested in more socially acceptable, seemingly neutral forms. Some system legitimizing beliefs such as meritocracy or individualism provide an explanation for being of high status, freeing majority groups from the moral implications of their privilege (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Major, 1994). For example, majority group members (in Italy, the USA and Israel) who thought that their ingroup was unjustly accused of bias and discrimination endorsed the idea that socioeconomic status differences were justified (Saguy et al.,

2013). This finding showed the links between entitlement to a positive moral image, system legitimizing, and perceived discrimination.

Previous research on the relationship between moral threat and perceived discrimination has not considered the potentially moderating role of entitlement, or system-legitimizing beliefs among advantaged groups. The research reviewed earlier on moral image examined system-legitimizing beliefs as a predictor, but not as a moderator (Hässler et al., 2018; Kahalon et al., 2018). We believe this is an important gap, as we would expect only those members of advantaged groups who feel entitled to a positive moral image or who endorse system-legitimizing notions that suggest it, e.g., meritocracy, to claim discrimination.

Status Threat

We argue that advantaged group members do not claim discrimination only as a way of reasserting their self-worth or the morality of their ingroup, but also to maintain power and high status in society (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2010). It is important to note here that status and power, while referring to analytically different constructs, are often correlated in real world intergroup relations (Boldry & Gaertner, 2006; Fiske, Dupree, Nicolas, & Swencionis, 2016; Pratto, Henkel, Lee, 2013). In the following examples, groups that have high levels of power (e.g., resources) are groups that also have high status (e.g., prestige), therefore the fear of losing status might engender fears about losing power vice versa. Therefore, status threat here does not strictly denote status loss but refers to perceiving group relations to change in ways that

threaten group's status, resources, or dominance (Pratto et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner 1979). In the following, we organize findings based on predicting motivations.

Group-Based Motivation

Changes in status differences trigger threat among individuals belonging to high-status groups (Scheepers, 2009; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005), and the threat of losing status predicts negative intergroup outcomes (Mols & Jetten, 2017). Loss of status in positions of authority and influence in companies, educational settings, etc. is related to concerns about losing control over resources. White undergraduates and employees tend to associate equity efforts such as multiculturalism and workplace diversity with the exclusion of their group (Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, Sanchez-Burks, & 2011), and oppose these policies in order to maintain their ingroup's resources (O'Brien, Garcia, Crandall, & Kordys, 2010). Similarly, White identity predicted negative attitudes towards affirmative action policies when the policy was framed as losses for Whites (i.e., decreased percentage of employment), but not when it was framed as benefitting minorities (Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006). The direct link between concerns about ingroup's resources and discrimination perceptions was shown in an experimental manipulation of diversity messages in the job application process. Whites in general and White men in particular experienced physiological symptoms typical of status threat and expressed heightened concerns about being discriminated against (Dover, Major, & Kaiser, 2016).

On the other hand, changes in population sizes also triggers defensive reactions for groups whose status and power are intertwined with their numerical majority (Pratto

et al., 2013). When exposed to information about a White population decline, Whites expressed heightened collective existential threat (e.g., “The physical existence of my racial group is in jeopardy”), predicting increased racial bias and conservatism (Bai & Federico, 2019; also see Craig & Richeson 2014a, 2014b). Declining population size increased concerns about prototypicality, i.e., feeling that the superordinate category will not carry characteristics of the ingroup, which predicted support for cultural assimilation (Danbold & Huo, 2015). Furthermore, across a series of studies, thinking that the society is changing fundamentally was the only factor that explained demographics shifts’ effect on perceived discrimination (Craig & Richeson, 2017). In short, perceived changes in ingroup’s resources and relative group size predict threat and anxiety among members of advantaged groups which then lead to defensive reactions including perceived discrimination.

Hierarchy-Based Motivation

While SDO is a generalized preference for group-based hierarchies, not a preference for any particular social group (Kteily et al., 2012), changes in ingroup’s status are most relevant to antiegalitarian members of advantaged groups. For these individuals (i.e., high SDO), justifying hierarchy in general is synonymous with justification of the ingroup’s higher status in society (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

Accordingly, high levels of SDO among dominant groups is positively correlated with ingroup identification and wanting more power and influence for the ingroup (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). Therefore, for advantaged group members, threats to hierarchy in general and threats to ingroup in particular may produce similar outcomes.

Based on the idea that SDO predicts ideas that legitimize the hierarchy, threats to hierarchy should increase endorsement of these beliefs. For individuals with higher levels of SDO, realistic and symbolic threat perceptions predicted greater endorsement of stereotypes about African Americans (Quist & Resendez, 2002). When perceiving threats to their group's economic opportunities or cultural values, anti-egalitarian members of high-status groups may also endorse beliefs that seem egalitarian but function to maintain hierarchies, such as colorblindness and *laïcité* – a particular ideological manifestation of secularism (Knowles, Lowery, Hogan, & Chow, 2009; Roebroeck & Guimond, 2018).

Similarly, discrimination claims, when adopted by dominant groups, might also be rooted in dominance-maintaining motivations. Preference for hierarchies predicted perceived discrimination among White students in a multicultural campus, where they may have perceived more challenges to their group's high-status, largely unquestioned in other contexts (Thomsen et al., 2010). Notably, SDO either did not predict or negatively predicted perceived discrimination among Latino students in the same university in this study, which is in line with the ideological asymmetry hypothesis of SDT that purports a stronger connection between SDO and hierarchy-enhancing beliefs for members of dominant groups (Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1996; Sidanius, Pratto, & Rabinowitz, 1994). Similarly, when threat to hierarchy was experimentally induced, individuals who expressed high levels of SDO showed positive attitudes towards discrimination claims that maintain hierarchies (Unzueta et al., 2014). Specifically, when anti-egalitarian individuals – 76% of whom were White – read information that the U.S. is losing its appeal and influence in the world (versus becoming more stable in its position), they

expressed more liking for White, as opposed to Black, individuals who claimed discrimination. Across several studies, discrimination claims helped White candidates (liked more, considered more hireable) as a function of perceivers' SDO, echoing accounts that discuss interpersonal costs and benefits of claiming discrimination for Black and White individuals, respectively (Perez & Salter, 2020).

Entitlement and Status Threat

While changing group dynamics in society may feel threatening to many advantaged group members due to their sense of group position (Blumer, 1958; Lipset, 1970; Scheepers, 2009), not all people process these changes in the same way. We posit that peoples' perceived entitlement to their group's advantaged position is a crucial individual difference. For example, White American and Portuguese participants felt more intergroup threat by a projected demographic decline in their group's majority status only if they felt entitled to higher status in society (Outten, Lee, Costa-Lopes, Schmitt, & Vala, 2018). In this study, the researchers operationalized perceived legitimacy of status with items indicating entitlement ("White Americans deserve to have a better standing in society than other racial groups in the U.S.")—thereby providing an example of the overlap between entitlement and system-justifying beliefs.

It is important to point out that not all system-legitimizing beliefs are relevant to perceived entitlement. System-legitimizing beliefs include a broad array of beliefs including support for assimilationism, militarism, and conservatism not all of which have group differences in entitlement in their core (Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 2000). In contrast, beliefs such as meritocracy, Protestant work ethic, individual mobility that

suggest equal conditions for advantaged and disadvantaged groups individualizes the problem of inequality, thereby attributing greater entitlement to advantaged groups with greater status and power. In fact, there is often an overlap between these system-legitimizing beliefs and entitlement even at the item level. For example, gender-specific system legitimization scale involves the item “society is set up so that men and women usually get what they *deserve*” (Jost & Kay, 2005), system legitimacy scale includes the item “America is a just society where differences in status between ethnic groups reflect *actual group differences*” (Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998), and modern racism scale includes the item “Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they *deserve*” (Sears & Henry, 2005).

Further evidence for this link, and the proposed importance of entitlement in explaining perceived discrimination among advantaged group members, comes from research on workplace diversity. Advantaged group members (Whites and men) who lost a desirable position to a minority group member or to a woman attributed this loss to discrimination only if they also held system-legitimizing beliefs (Major et al., 2002). Authors argued that White American and male participants with system-legitimizing views linked success in getting the desired position to their high competence, therefore losing it to a low-status group member went against their intrinsic sense of entitlement and was interpreted as discrimination (Major et al., 2002). Disadvantaged group members who endorsed system-legitimizing beliefs were less likely to attribute the loss of this position to discrimination in this study, showing that system-legitimizing is related to discrimination claims only for advantaged individuals (see also Thomsen et al., 2010).

Similarly, White Americans who endorsed system-legitimizing beliefs such as individualism and meritocracy claimed greater discrimination against their group when they read about racial progress, i.e., that racial minorities have made progress towards equality and now hold more high-status positions, (Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014; but see Crawford et al., 2019). In short, believing that the existing status differences are legitimate shapes reactions to increasing diversity and changing society among members of advantaged groups as these changes imply losing resources to which they are entitled.

For anti-egalitarian members of advantaged groups, the relationship between entitlement and perceived discrimination may follow a more essentialist reasoning. Individuals who prefer hierarchies think that hierarchies are natural, that some groups simply deserve to be at the bottom (Pratto et al., 1994). Therefore, any challenge to hierarchical systems is an attack to this view of a natural world order. High SDO individuals may perceive the advantaged group (e.g., Whites, men) to be discriminated against because they interpret challenges to the hierarchy as an illegitimate intervention to a just order.

Entitlement as an Explicit Predictor

Overall, past research provides support for the proposed model here regarding the key role of entitlement in predicting perceived discrimination among advantaged groups. However, authors of these studies did not explicitly measure entitlement and instead inferred it from the effect of system-legitimizing beliefs. A program of research that explicitly assesses entitlement examines the notion of autochthony, i.e., land-based entitlement (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). Following the assumptions of group

position theory (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999), this research addresses the relationship between threat and entitlement in predicting negative outgroup attitudes. Specifically, Europeans who were highly identified with their country expressed more prejudice against immigrants and more intention to protest against refugees through their feelings of entitlement about the land (e.g., “every country belongs primarily to its first inhabitants”, López et al., 2019; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). However, these outcomes occurred only if individuals perceived immigrants to present a threat to the ingroup (e.g., “I am worried that the refugees will pretty soon start telling the [natives] how to run this country”). In other words, entitlement interacted with threat perceptions to predict prejudice and exclusion of refugees for highly identified advantaged group members.

While research on autochthony has not examined perceived discrimination as an outcome, in their conceptually similar account Reicher and Ulusahin (2020) locate entitlement as a central component of advantaged groups’ perceived victimization². They argue that the powerful feel victimized if they (1) feel a sense of status loss, and (2) resent losing their dominance and privileges to which they feel entitled to those who are “undeserving”. This argument is also similar to the group position account, which posits that advantaged group members resent the loss of desired status and resources to which they feel entitled. As discussed above, entitlement may be related to these reactions particularly when individuals feel threatened. In fact, when status differences are stable,

² While victimization perception is distinct from perceived discrimination, the two are often used interchangeably (e.g., Brown & Craig, 2019) and we argue that similar processes are involved in both claims among dominant group members (e.g., Sullivan et al., 2012).

entitlement may also predict charitable behavior among the advantaged (Jetten, 2019; Mols & Jetten, 2017) or at least does not predict negative attitudes toward outgroups (López et al., 2019).

Summary of the Model

In this review, we offered a conceptualization of entitlement among dominant group members to positive outcomes and resources, which develops through several social psychological processes. We integrated findings from distinct research programs suggesting that perceived discrimination among advantaged group members occurs as a result of perceived threat among those who have a sense of entitlement to a positive moral image and/or a high-status position in society. We argued that integration of entitlement, and some system-legitimizing beliefs such as meritocracy and individualism, provides a more accurate picture of the social psychological sources underlying this perception than threat-only models. While threat has been studied as a source of perceived discrimination, integrating the potentially moderating role of entitlement can help us better understand important ideological differences within advantaged groups (see Figure A1).

Contextual factors in the model point to the importance of socio-cultural, political, and economic changes in society. Increased economic inequality, changing social norms, shifts in political discourse, and greater social justice activism may challenge the stability and legitimacy of the status differences. In our model, we posit that these changes affect those individuals who feel entitled and justified in their high-status positions, leading them to perceive discrimination against their group. However, the

research and theorizing reviewed here does not make it clear whether social changes increase perceived discrimination *only* among those who feel entitled, or that the effect gets stronger for these individuals.

Individuals' group membership and individual preferences for hierarchical systems are two major antecedents of system justifying and entitlement feelings. Therefore, in our model being a member of an advantaged group (high status/power), and a preference for hierarchies predicts greater likelihood of legitimizing unequal group relations in society which provides a rationale for their sense of entitlement to an advantaged group position. Our review points to a model where threat interacts with entitlement to predict discrimination, however there is reason to assume that people react to status and moral threats by increasing in their entitlement to possession of resources or a positive moral image (see Alternative Model section below). Because the research on the relationship between threat and entitlement does not yet show a clear pattern, we include both possibilities in the model – marking the less expected model with faded dotted lines. Finally, perceived discrimination predicts outcomes that help maintain existing systems of hierarchies such as support for certain policies and politicians.

Sociocultural Context of Perceived Discrimination

While perceived discrimination can be examined at the level of individual psychology as in the literature reviewed above, it is important to discuss the larger socio-cultural context shaping the salience of this perception. Leaders play a significant role in propagating particular interpretations of how people should understand societal changes in ways that signal a threat to the ingroup (Meisel, 1965; Portice & Reicher, 2019;

Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). A striking example of distinct interpretations constructed for the same phenomenon is the public view regarding immigration that has changed significantly over the last few decades in line with changes in elite discourse (Abrajano & Hajnal, 2017). While immigration was once considered an asset for Americans across the political spectrum, today it is portrayed as damaging Americans' economic and cultural interests. Similarly, debunking the long-held belief about correlations between economic conditions and lynchings in the South, researchers suggested that violence against African Americans may better correlate with politicians' scapegoating of minorities as the source of economic difficulty (Green, Glaser, & Rich, 1998). Others showed how populist right-wing politicians could win by portraying a sense of victimhood even in economically prospering nations (Mols & Jetten, 2016). Similarly, while the former Obama administration was successful in boosting a slow economy, the current Trump administration used an economic deprivation argument in his successful campaign (Cooper, 2016; Lamont, 2018).

Similarly, we argue—in line with research by discursive analysts—that claims of discrimination against advantaged groups constitute a defense against social change (Bell, 2003; Durrheim, Quayle, Whitehead, & Kriel, 2005; van Dijk, 1992). White elites raised “reverse discrimination” claims as early as the 1970’s when affirmative action policies started being implemented in the realm of employment and education to remedy past discrimination against women, African Americans, and other minorities (Crosby, 2004). Similarly, extremist groups used claims of discrimination against Whites in the 1990’s as one of the arguments replacing their former explicitly hate-ridden rhetoric

(Berbrier, 1998, 2000; Lipset, 1970; Perry, 2004). The current discourse about perceived discrimination against Whites and other advantaged groups shares similarities with these early claims, and potentially goes beyond them in its scope of application including more interpersonal and cultural domains (Craig & Richeson, 2017).

Media may also play a role in the adoption of discrimination claims among members of advantaged groups. In trying to make meaning of moral accusations against their group and ward off threats to their sense of self and group, advantaged group members may turn to media and elite messaging that address these issues in a defensive manner. For example, news channels, conservative pundits, and websites construe a wide range of events such as Christmas greetings as being linked to discrimination against Christians and White Americans (Nakamura, 2017; King, 2015). These media representations facilitate externalization of negative feelings associated with perceived status loss and provide an explanation for the increasingly vocal accusations of privilege and racism, helping members of advantaged groups to avoid negative views of the self and ingroup.

Another important contextual factor that shapes perceived discrimination among advantaged group members is the changing norms of how to express views on intergroup relations. Social norms shape how individual-level beliefs are expressed (Jackman, 1994). Recent political developments made formerly marginalized attitudes towards outgroups seem more normative (Crandall, Miller, & White, 2018, Portelinha & Elchereth, 2016). Today, members of advantaged groups who claim discrimination against their group are not necessarily extremists, but ordinary individuals who feel

concerned about societal change or progress made by subordinate groups (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Claiming discrimination against White Americans or other advantaged groups has become a mainstream talking point to explain lost opportunities in educational and job settings (Payne, 2019).

It is important to highlight here we do not argue that some members of advantaged groups do not experience hardship in their lives such as financial loss and changes to their life conditions, particularly pronounced across generational differences (Yamaguchi, 2009). Instead, we argue that the elite influence is pairing these social and economic challenges with discrimination against advantaged groups (Reicher & Ulusahin, 2020). Given the system legitimizing, group- and hierarchy-protective predictors of perceived discrimination reviewed in this paper, dominant groups' attribution of various social phenomena (e.g., desegregation, occupational and educational opportunities, cultural change) to discrimination against their group is part of a right wing, preservationist ideological package (Jackman, 1994; see Lipset, 1970).

Functions of Perceived Discrimination

Part of the puzzlement with discrimination claims by advantaged groups derives from the discrepancy between being in a high-status position and experiencing discrimination. In the U.S., median household income and earnings for Whites and men have been substantially higher than other minorities (except for Asian Americans, although country of origin creates large variations within this group) and women, respectively, between 1965-2010 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2011). The gender pay gap is a persistent social problem across the globe ("The Global Gender", 2018). In

addition to the effects of socio-cultural factors discussed above, the seeming inconsistency may be resolved when we consider discrimination claims as a rhetorical strategy with social functions (McNeill, Pehrson, & Stevenson, 2017). For example, advantaged group members might portray equivalences between groups of differing power and use past discrimination to delegitimize discrimination claims by minorities today (Gallagher, 2013; McNeill & Vollhardt, 2020; Perez & Salter, 2020).

Furthermore, discrimination claims appear more visibly in the context of social change and threat to resources, therefore, reflect ideological motivations. Jackman (1994) in her influential account of the ideological dynamics of intergroup relations talks about the use of “velvet” strategies that maintain group-based inequalities. In an attempt to avoid explicit confrontations with disadvantaged groups, dominant group members engage in claims and behaviors that justify the system or divert attention from ongoing exploitative structures. Due to normative constraints around defending group differences, advantaged group members might avoid outright racist or sexist comparisons but instead defend the system by endorsing views that seem neutral such as the American dream and meritocracy (Jackman, 1994). Discrimination claims by the advantaged could be considered as one such “velvet” response.

For example, a subtle function of discrimination claims by dominant groups is the erosion of the ground on which discrimination claims are made by members of subordinate groups. When claimed by both advantaged and disadvantaged groups, discrimination is no longer connected to power differences and becomes an all-too-general term with no egalitarian function (King, 2015; Song, 2014; Minow, 1993). The

function here is to dilute the meaning of a claim that has contributed to equality among social groups. In a society where everyone experiences discrimination, discrimination ceases to be a major issue; or if it is, a consistent moral stand requires that we attend to discrimination perceptions of dominant groups as well (Jackman, 1994, pp. 175). A sign that reads “what about Whites’ civil rights?” from a protest against the Civil Rights movement summarizes the political functions of this claim (Haun, 1966).

Perceived discrimination might serve more explicit political functions. For example, right-wing parties’ appropriation of human rights discourse dilutes and reshapes the meaning of a symbolically and politically powerful tool of disadvantaged groups (Dudai, 2017). Similarly, a major argument in many far-right parties in Europe is the pairing of multicultural and diversity policies with discrimination against majority or dominant groups (Hogan & Haltinner, 2015). Discrimination perceptions among dominant groups in turn predict support for in-group-favoring policies and electoral choices for nativist/populist politicians (Jardina, 2014; Reicher & Ulusahin, 2020; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018).

Limitations & Boundary conditions

Our review includes research regarding perceived discrimination on the basis of advantaged identities. However, people’s experiences might derive from both advantage and disadvantage (Cole, 2009; Curtin, Kende, & Kende, 2016; Nair, Okuyan, & Curtin, 2020). As we discussed above, due to moral threats in the current political context where advantaged status is increasingly being questioned, people who are exposed to information about their privileged position might turn to experiences based on their

disadvantaged identity (Brown & Craig, 2019; Wise & Case, 2013). Alternatively, experiences with a disadvantaged identity can also provide insight into privileges one experiences based on an advantaged identity (Rosette & Tost, 2013). Furthermore, there might be different pathways to claiming discrimination against one's dominant group (as it has been reviewed in this paper) compared to highlighting one's experiences with a disadvantaged identity. For example, when upper class Black Americans were reminded of their privilege in terms of class standing, they increased in their reports of discrimination related to their disadvantaged identities, e.g., race, sexuality (Brown & Craig, 2019). The same process could be at work for racially advantaged groups, e.g., White Americans, who are disadvantaged on other dimensions, such as class, religion, sexuality. Future research should examine this subtle but important difference. We suspect that entitlement might be more relevant in cases where individuals perceive discrimination related to their dominant identity, e.g., a working-class White woman claiming discrimination against her racial group, and not her class or gender identity.

Another boundary condition of our review relates to its context. The research reviewed in this paper is mostly based on the context of the U.S. society, which puts greater emphasis on societal norms of individualism and meritocracy (Lipset, 1997). In a society that perceives these notions as fundamental to its workings, discussions of societal factors that create inequity may lead to injustice feeling among members of advantaged groups, because it violates the basis of their sense of deservingness. In comparison, factors such as class and family connections as important predictors of one's status in society might not strike an offensive chord in older and more established

hierarchies of Europe. In these contexts, claims to nativity such as autochthony beliefs might be more relevant in shaping feelings of entitlement and might be more explicitly held (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). For instance, research in Germany and France shows that advantaged group members express grievances in relation to immigration, not in relation to threats to their dominant position (Simon, Mommert, & Reininger, 2018; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018). Future research should examine the potentially different meanings and processes associated with entitlement in different contexts.

Furthermore, advantaged groups that have been the focus of this review, e.g. White Americans or men, do not have a history of discrimination as a strong part of their collective narrative, whereas in other contexts discrimination claims form an important part of how members of advantaged groups perceive themselves. A few examples of dominant groups claiming discrimination or victimization today in relation to their experiences in the past are Sunni Muslims in Turkey citing their social and economic exclusion in the Republican period (Yilmaz, 2017), Hindus in India referring to their experiences of oppression under the Muslim rule during medieval times (Tripathi, Kumar, & Tripathi, 2019), Bulgarian ethnic majority reminiscing experiences under the Ottoman rule a century earlier (Green et al., 2017), Poles and Hungarians remembering the historical occupation and division of their countries (Bilewicz & Liu, 2020; Szabó, 2020), and the Flemish majority's remembering the former rule of French minority in Belgium (Van der Linden & Roets, 2017). Processes involved in such discrimination claims are likely to differ from those voiced by dominant groups for whom past discrimination does not hold a central place in their identity narrative. For instance,

members of advantaged groups with strong narratives of past disadvantage might be more sensitive to signs of threat, more exclusive in own-group disadvantage claims and punitive towards ingroup critics. Furthermore, seemingly different claims might serve functions similar to discrimination claims. While the particular history and judicial nature of discrimination in the U.S. renders the discrimination claim to be especially relevant in this context, our theorizing and model may work similarly for claims of competitive victimhood or relative deprivation in settings where these concepts are rhetorically and historically more applicable.

Implications for Theory, Future Research and Practice

Theory

The literature on consequences of perceived discrimination suggests that because discrimination experiences remain less frequent and consequential for advantaged group members, its effects are less severe (Branscombe, 1998; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). Believing that their group experiences discrimination even increased advantaged group members' self-esteem (Unzueta, Lowery, & Knowles, 2008; Wilkins et al., 2017). These differential outcomes suggest that “the meaning and implications of perceived discrimination are shaped by one's place in the social structure” (Schmitt et al., 2014, pp.15). Therefore, it is important to understand whether perceived discrimination among disadvantaged versus advantaged groups are predicted by different mechanisms.

Currently, researchers do not generally focus on the potential distinctions between discrimination claims made by advantaged and disadvantaged groups despite noting the reality constraints on the former (Sullivan et al., 2012; but see Kahalon et al., 2018). Our

review suggests that under conditions of status instability (e.g., racial progress) and illegitimacy (e.g., questioning of the group's moral image), individual members of advantaged groups who feel entitled to high-status positions or those who legitimize group-based inequalities would be more likely to perceive discrimination against their group. This suggests different pathways to discrimination than the ones that predict such claims by members of disadvantaged groups, such as the severity and frequency of discrimination experiences and low endorsement of legitimizing ideologies (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). However, the literature on mentioning this distinction does not address the argument we put forth in this review that perceived discrimination by members of advantaged groups follows a hierarchy-maintaining process. Our theorizing points to group differences in the content and process of perceived discrimination between high and low power groups.

Some researchers suggest that predictors of perceived discrimination among the advantaged change depending on context. In a failed replication of Wilkins and Kaiser's findings, i.e., threat increasing perceived discrimination only among those with high levels of system-legitimizing, the authors suggested that the levels of perceived racial progress might have decreased after Trump's election, erasing the moderation effect (Crawford et al., 2019). According to this interpretation, under conditions of lowered status threat, system-legitimizing would only have a main effect on perceived discrimination. We do not dispute this possibility. For instance, the moderating role of perceived threat in our model might be more relevant for early signs of societal change. When threat perceptions become an all-too-common part of political discourse, they may

function as system-legitimizing beliefs that predict discrimination claims. In technical terms, threat might mediate the relationships between distal predictors, identification and SDO, and perceived discrimination, instead of moderating them. Similarly, different factors might be more closely associated with perceived discrimination at different times. For example, financial insecurity experienced at the individual level might predict perceived discrimination when politicians highlight this as an explanation for economic difficulties but have no predictive power in other times.

Research

An important line of future research is about the individual differences in the adoption and rejection of discrimination claims. For instance, in the aftermath of the #MeToo, a movement against sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace and everyday life, claims of victimization against men surfaced (Livni, 2018). However, the emergence of this backlash may also have shifted some men towards distancing themselves further from such claims. Similarly, because Trump and right-wing media outlets use such tropes and fuel the discourse of discrimination against White Americans, some individuals might more consciously distance themselves from such claims. For instance, compared to Republicans, Democrats perceive less discrimination against Whites (“Discrimination in America”, 2017; Perry & Wages, 2019). Active distancers have not received the same attention as adopters of this discourse; however, they present an interesting case of not defending group interests in changing societal conditions. There have been recent calls to examine the distinct perceptual and cognitive patterns of egalitarian versus anti-egalitarian individuals (Kteily, Sheehy-Skeffington, & Ho, 2017).

We join these scholars in calling for more research into the distinct motivated reasoning processes adopted by egalitarians on issues of social inequality, including discrimination claims. Future research can examine, for instance, whether those who feel less entitled are more likely to respond to contextual changes by feeling collective guilt or giving up power.

A missing piece in this review, and in the literature, is the effect of permeability perceptions on perceived discrimination. According to social identity theory, group permeability a key “sociostructural” variable that affects individuals’ intergroup attitudes (in addition to stability and legitimacy: Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr, & Hume, 2001). While dominance motivations increase attentiveness to permeability when individuals feel status threat (Ho, Sidanius, Cuddy, & Banaji, 2013), no research to date has looked at whether heightened perceptions of permeability may also engender perceived discrimination among the advantaged. The current socio-cultural and political climate provides ample cases of increased permeability between social categories (e.g., bi-/multi-racial individuals, transgender and non-binary individuals). Future research should explore the relevance of permeability threat for perceived discrimination among advantaged groups, and whether entitlement feelings play a key role here as well.

Given the ego- and group-defensive functions of perceived discrimination reviewed above, discursive studies could examine interpersonal and intergroup functions of discrimination claims among advantaged groups (McNeill et al., 2017; Song, 2013). Recent discursive accounts show identity-performing functions of racism accusations and

how right-wing politicians mobilize audiences through a rhetoric of being unjustly accused of racism (Durrheim et al., 2018). For example, while status and power is known to shape individuals' beliefs and behaviors (DuBois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009), stating that advantaged group members are affected by their social groups' customs and perspectives is considered to be racist by advantaged group members (Zatlat, 2018). In a similar fashion, disadvantaged groups' discrimination claims and accusations of privilege are portrayed as political performances. The conversational dynamics of discrimination accusations allow for a study of identity positioning in such public discussions.

Given survey findings that most advantaged groups do not deny others' experiences of discrimination³ while also claiming their own, future research can address the effects of advantaged groups' inclusive claims of discrimination on equity-seeking efforts. Future research, for instance, can compare effects of competitive and inclusive discrimination claims ("all groups experience discrimination") by advantaged group members. Research can also examine motivational differences underlying inclusive discrimination claims among advantaged versus disadvantaged groups (Hamley, Houkamau, Osborne, Barlow, & Sibley, 2019). Another future direction is discrepancies in the consequences of claiming discrimination for members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups. For instance, in addition to negative interpersonal consequences of claiming discrimination for Black Americans (Unzueta et al., 2014), their claims are

³ According to the 2016 ANES, percentage of Whites who reported that the following groups experience discrimination: Blacks 96.7; Hispanics: 96.1; Asian Americans 88.8; Muslims 96.5.

systematically undermined through law (e.g., “discriminatory intent”) and delegitimized by ideologies such as colorblind and meritocracy that maintain group-based differences (Perez & Salter, 2020).

Alternative model

Our review of existing findings and theorization supports a model in which entitlement feelings interact with threat perceptions to predict perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups (see Figure A1). Another theoretically and empirically viable finding is perceived threat to hierarchy and high-status moderating the relationship between SDO, and system-legitimizing beliefs and entitlement (Knowles et al., 2014; Quist & Resendez, 2002). While it is possible that advantaged group members who perceive increased status and moral threat increase their claims of entitlement to a high-status position, theorizing and empirical findings on entitlement suggests that the more explicitly negative consequences of entitlement occur when the underlying sense of deservingness is threatened (Blumer, 1958; Durrheim et al., 2011; Jetten 2019; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). Furthermore, perceived discrimination among the advantaged, compared to other oft-studied outcomes such as prejudice, is more closely related to a sense of violated entitlement to advantaged positions. While our review favors an Entitlement $\times$ Threat moderation model, future research should parse out these competing predictions using experimental designs.

Practice

Our review shows that status and moral threat predict perceived discrimination through a lens of heightened entitlement. One way to counteract defensive discrimination

perceptions is by not framing social change in ways that create a false sense of shifting status, e.g., putting all minorities in one non-White category in statistics and media messaging (see Kinder & Sanders, 1990). Similarly, reporting of demographic differences across single identity categories ignores significant social and economic disparities within groups, such as in the case of Asian Americans (Ramakrishnan & Wong, 2018).

While reducing threat perceptions as one remedy for perceived discrimination among the advantaged might be an effective strategy (e.g., Wilkins et al., 2017), we also caution against its isolated use. If strategies focus only on threat without addressing entitlement, this might function to maintain current inequalities because under stable and legitimate status relations entitlement reproduces attitudinal and behavioral tendencies that promote charity rather than change (Jetten, 2019). On the other hand, social justice strategies targeting advantaged groups' feelings of entitlement should not overlook the nature of entitlement. Entitlement may work in a latent fashion and shape how advantaged individuals see the world. As such, these individuals may not be aware of their privileges, or consider them normal. Therefore, criticism of their status is experienced as an attack on how they see themselves and how they see the world, which creates defensiveness. Diversity programs should incorporate this knowledge and raise awareness about the historical, societal, and psychological underpinnings of heightened entitlement among advantaged groups.

Another implication of our review is to have a more nuanced perspective for social change. Given their positive effects on decreasing threat-induced defensive

reactions, self- and/or group-affirmation are suggested as possible solutions (Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014; Plaut et al., 2011). People who claim discrimination as motivated by their hierarchy preferences, as compared to those motivated to ward off threats to self and ingroup, may respond to information differently. Our review shows the need for different messaging to reach these different subgroups. For instance, individuals who endorse egalitarian principles but are anxious about their group's moral image and resources would more receptive to information that mitigates their sense of threat, such as differences in the content and consequences of discrimination between groups of differing power. Anti-egalitarian individuals would be resilient to such information. One such strategy in the context of diversity policies includes presenting information about recent progress in women's or minority rights made as well as past injustices, thereby evading the negative effect of social identity threat (Hidég & Wilson, 2020).

Conclusion

Advantaged group members claiming discrimination, exclusion and marginalization is a puzzling social phenomenon. History shows that such feelings among members of advantaged groups may result in negative consequences for the disadvantaged, exemplified on a wide spectrum from endorsement of stricter policies to committing massacres where perpetrators mobilize masses through claims of victimization (Bartov, 1998; Yilmaz, 2017). In today's demographically, normatively, and economically changing societies, we will likely see discrimination claims by the advantaged increase. This, in turn, may shape advantaged groups members' policy support and political choices. Therefore, antecedents and consequences of perceived

discrimination among advantaged groups are important avenues for future research that have urgent practical implications.

Social movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo that point out social inequalities trigger responses from groups that benefit from these inequalities (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). We argue that perceived discrimination among the advantaged is largely shaped by such social developments and research into this phenomenon should examine it in this sociopolitical context. This requires a shift from seeing perceived discrimination perception only as an individual phenomenon and placing it in its broader ideological context.

Dominant groups' strategies of defending their advantaged position requires a closer examination in the social psychological literature. Currently, the focus is mostly on anti-immigrant sentiment and policy attitudes as outcomes of perceived threat. We hope that this review will encourage the study of a varied set of responses of advantaged group members including subtle ones such as perceived discrimination in defending their position.

Article 2: The Role of Hierarchy Maintenance Motivations in Dominant Groups' Perceived Discrimination Claims

American society is witnessing significant social progress following decades-long mobilization efforts by racial and gender minorities and women to confront group-based discrimination. Some measures that have been taken towards greater equality are legalization of same-sex marriage, diversity initiatives and mandatory anti-bias trainings in private and public sector, and stricter anti-harassment regulations in workplaces (Greenberg, 2018). Concurrent with these changes however, a considerable number of dominant group members report that their group is being discriminated. According to a recent public survey, 55% of White Americans and 44% of men report that discrimination against their group exists in America today (“Discrimination in America,” 2018). This perception is in contrast to objective measures of continued advantage among these groups which discrimination experiences would be expected to curtail – for example, White Americans hold the highest educational attainment and wealth levels (Dettling, Hsu, Jacobs, Moore, & Thompson, 2017), and men earn 20% more than women (Graf, Brown, & Patten, 2019) and gender disparities persist across many sectors (Blau & Kahn, 2016). Given this discrepancy in perceptions and objective measures, what helps explain when and why advantaged groups perceive discrimination against their group?

We posit that threat is a key component in explaining these perceptions. Studies show that the above-mentioned societal changes trigger a sense of threat among advantaged groups, such as White Americans (Craig & Richeson, 2014a, 2014b; Dover et

al., 2016). Sources of this threat have been interpreted differently by theorists (Blumer, 1958, Bobo, 1999; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Turner & Brown, 1978), yet all agree that in response to such threat, there would be an increase in dominant groups' efforts to maintain the hierarchies from which they benefit.

These efforts do not always appear in the form of outright hostility. Jackman (1994) argued that social and economic hierarchies are attained mostly through softer ("velvet") means of ideological control, such as persuasion and paternalism as opposed to more forceful forms like intergroup conflict. Following this account, we argue that discrimination claims are subtle efforts to maintain existing group-based hierarchies. Discrimination claims by the advantaged distract attention from power differences and reduce the hierarchy-attenuating effects of subordinates' discrimination claims (Gallagher, 2013; McNeill & Vollhardt, 2020; Perez & Salter, 2019).

Studies on perceived discrimination among dominant groups focused on processes such as intergroup threat and system legitimizing beliefs, e.g., individual mobility, meritocracy (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). In the present study, we examine the role of individual differences in dominance motivation in predicting this perception. Our conceptualization is based on the tenets of SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) according to which societies are organized as group-based hierarchies that are sustained through institutional practices and ideologies that legitimize them. People differ in the extent to which they prefer group-based hierarchies, referred to as SDO (Pratto et al., 1994). Those who favor hierarchies are more likely to hold beliefs such as stereotypes, racist or sexist ideologies, and/or beliefs about individual mobility

that help maintain these hierarchies, as these beliefs provide rationale for the unequal allocation of desired resources (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Pratto, Tatar, & Conway-Lanz, 1999). We therefore expect that threat perceptions will be associated with discrimination claims more strongly among these individuals, due to their efforts to preserve group-based hierarchies.

Perceived Threat and SDO as Predictors of Perceived Discrimination

The existing (yet scarce) literature suggests that threat perceptions change SDO's relationship to hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. White Americans who scored higher on the SDO scale endorsed more stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes about African Americans if they felt that their group was threatened (Quist & Resendez, 2002). Similarly, when intergroup threat was experimentally induced, anti-egalitarian Whites endorsed a hierarchy-maintaining interpretation of colorblindness, as opposed to its egalitarian interpretation as a principle of distributive justice (Knowles et al., 2009).

The two published studies that directly examine the link between dominance motivations and discrimination claims among advantaged groups both address the role of threat perceptions. In a panel study among White college students, high SDO scores predicted perceived discrimination three years later (Thomsen et al., 2010). Notably, researchers attributed the gradual increase in discrimination claims among Whites to the highly multicultural campus environment, which dominant group members might perceive as threatening to their status. In an experimental study (Unzueta et al., 2014), threat moderated the relationship between SDO and attitudes towards discrimination claims. In a no-threat control condition, anti-egalitarian individuals expressed equal

levels of dislike for White and Black individuals claiming discrimination. However, when instability of the hierarchy was salient, anti-egalitarian individuals expressed favorable attitudes towards Whites' claiming discrimination (Unzueta et al., 2014). These studies show that discrimination claims among anti-egalitarian individuals are related to a sense of threat to the existing state of group relations.

When we consider the effects of threat on perceived discrimination or beliefs that maintain the system more generally, we need to consider different types of threats. Most studies on the role of threat in explaining perceived discrimination among Whites measured realistic threat to the group's advantaged status in economic and political domains (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). However, others showed that threats to group morality could also trigger dominance-maintenance motivations (Chow, Lowery, & Hogan, 2013) and lead to discrimination claims among dominant group members (Sullivan et al., 2012). Specifically, concerns regarding *moral image*, i.e., other groups perceiving the ingroup as moral, are more relevant to discrimination claims than concerns about maintaining its *moral essence*, i.e., moral values (Kahalon et al., 2018). Claiming discrimination on behalf of an advantaged group helps maintain the moral image of the group against accusations of discrimination through a seeming contradiction between treating others' badly and being badly treated by others (Gray & Wagner, 2009). In the present study, we operationalize threat as including both status and moral image components. While we expect a similar pattern of results for moral and status threat, we do not have predictions regarding their relative strengths in predicting perceived discrimination.

Group- versus Hierarchy-based Concerns

Because maintaining racial hierarchy is in line with maintaining the ingroup's status for members of advantaged groups (Jost & Hunyady, 2002), threats to hierarchy in general and threats to the group's status in particular might produce similar outcomes such as perceived discrimination. Still, researchers showed that distinguishing the effects of group-based motives and hierarchy-based motives is informative about the differences within advantaged groups regarding outgroup perceptions (McClanahan et al., 2019). In the present study, status and moral threat to the group should predict high levels of perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. At the same time, those with egalitarian motivations (i.e., low SDO) should claim less group-based discrimination than anti-egalitarians, given that these claims may delegitimize progress made towards social equality. Similarly, individuals with an anti-egalitarian orientation who perceive high levels of status and moral threat would be expected to claim more discrimination than those who perceive less threat. On the other hand, threat should have a weaker relationship with perceived discrimination for egalitarian members of advantaged groups because commitment to egalitarian principles is associated with less defensive reactions to ingroup threat (McClanahan et al., 2019).

Hierarchy-Maintaining Logic and Consequences of Perceived Discrimination

Perceived discrimination among members of dominant groups imply the belief that existing hierarchical systems are fair and legitimate, but that the societal developments are causing a deviation from this state. For example, belief in individual mobility predicted perceived discrimination among Whites (Major et al., 2002), and

experimentally manipulating system-legitimizing beliefs increased Whites' (Wellman et al., 2015) and men's (McCoy & Major, 2007) perceptions of group-based discrimination. Therefore, we expect beliefs that legitimize the status of advantaged groups to predict perceived discrimination among dominant group members (i.e., White Americans, men). Past research also shows that perceived discrimination among dominant groups predicts support for policies that maintain hierarchical structures that have advantaged their group. For example, Whites who perceived discrimination against their group expressed less support for affirmative action (Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Wellman et al., 2015). While discrimination claims have mostly been associated with equity policies (Crosby, 2004), perceived disadvantage among members of advantaged groups predict consequences for all groups judged as a comparison point, including opposition towards immigration, increased outgroup stereotyping and prejudice (Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, & Bialosiewicz, 2012). In light of these findings, we expect discrimination claims among advantaged groups to predict greater support for policies harming immigrant and minority communities.

While status threat increases endorsement of conservative policies (e.g., immigration, citizenship, official language; Craig & Richeson, 2014b), there are mixed findings regarding the interactive effect of SDO and threat on policy support. Individuals with high levels of SDO are more sensitive to policies that suggest giving competitive advantage to outgroups, including Muslims and immigrants. For instance, when anti-egalitarian perceived intergroup threat, they expressed less support for (empowering) assistance for immigrants (Costello & Hodson, 2011; Jackson & Esses, 2000). However,

terrorism-related threat, did not moderate the effect of SDO on support for restriction in civil liberties, which would – from the perspective of high SDO individuals – give advantage to a perceived enemy (Cohrs, Kielman, Maes, & Moschner, 2005). Due to differences in contexts and the target of policy support in these studies, we test the interactive effect of SDO and threat on policy support as an exploratory question.

In sum, across two studies we examine how perceived status and moral threat is related to dominant groups' discrimination perceptions. Previous research has examined the role of system-legitimizing beliefs in this relationship. We extend this literature by looking at the role of dominance motivations in predicting perceived discrimination and its consequences for policy support. Past research did not examine whether discrimination perceptions among members of advantaged groups are related to concerns for the ingroup's place in the hierarchy or support for hierarchy in general. By testing the role of perceived threat and SDO in the same model, we examine the respective roles of group-based and hierarchy-based concerns in perceived discrimination. Furthermore, we test our conceptual model in the context of both racial- and gender-based hierarchies in the U.S, whereas previous literature mostly focused on White Americans.

Study 1

Extending previous literature, we propose a dominance-based model of perceived discrimination among White Americans. We predict that White Americans who have a general preference for hierarchy will be likely to report greater discrimination when they feel a heightened sense of status and moral threat than when they feel less threatened. This effect will be mediated by increased perceptions of Whites' higher status as

legitimate. In line with our argument that perceived discrimination is an ideological reaction to social change that helps maintain the racial hierarchy, we expect White Americans' claims of discrimination against their group to predict support for policies that harm minorities and immigrants (see Figure B1).

Method

We conducted an online survey to test our hypotheses through a correlational design. The study is pre-registered, and data files are available through Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/9ugra/>).

Participants and Procedure

A stratified sample of White participants (not identifying as multiracial) above 18 in the U.S. were recruited through Qualtrics Panels (<https://www.qualtrics.com/panels-project/>).

In order to determine the sample size with adequate power to test our model, a Monte Carlo simulation was conducted using R (Version 3.3.3; R Core Team, 2017). Because no prior research has examined the particular paths in our model, path estimates were acquired from previous studies using variables conceptually similar to the ones used in our model (Knowles et al., 2009; Major et al., 2002; Rabinowitz, 1999; Thomsen et al., 2010). Power was estimated expecting a moderation effect size of .30. Using 10,000⁴ simulations, we found that a sample size of 400 has adequate power of 80% to detect these effects (Cohen, 1988) (see preregistration for the power analysis). Accordingly, our sample size included 409 participants ($M_{age} = 47.26$, $SD = 16.03$, range 18-96) with a

⁴ Due to a clerical error, preregistration document incorrectly reports 1000 simulations.

50% percent gender ratio, and the income distribution matching the most recent Census data⁵.

Measures

Measures⁶ were presented in the order they are presented below; the item order was randomized. All items were answered on an anchor from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) (see Table B1 and B2 for a full list of scale items in Study 1 and 2).

SDO

Attitudes towards hierarchy was measured using SDO₇ ($\alpha = .86$; Ho et al., 2015). Items include: “Some groups of people must be kept in their place”.

Status and Moral Threat

Perceptions of threat related to the group’s status and morality were measured with eleven items ($\alpha = .82$) adapted from the literature (Chow et al., 2013; Danbold & Huo, 2015; Outten et al., 2018; Shuman, Johnson, Saguy, & Halperin, 2018; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Example items measuring morality-related threats include “I’m concerned that discussions about White privilege make White Americans look bad”, and status-

⁵ Per company policy, participants who skipped more than 1/3 of questions were replaced. We also asked Qualtrics not to record any partial responses, including people who screened out of the survey before finishing, people who dropped out partway through etc. Therefore, we do not have information about these participants (e.g., how many, which questions they dropped out after). Additionally, we had 6 attention check questions 4 of which needed to be passed in order to count as valid data. Due to a decision made by the project manager, this rule was changed to having to pass all 6 attention checks; 110 people were screened out due to this procedure. Moreover, after 10% of the data were collected, the project operator screened out 11 participants who finished the study atypically fast (measured as one-half the median soft launch time, 6.48 minutes).

⁶ In addition to the key variables tested in this study, the online survey includes variables related to our research interests: Right-wing authoritarianism, media consumption, voting preference for the 2016 election, White privilege, White guilt, attitudes towards collective action for Whites, group relative deprivation, individual relative deprivation, attitudes towards Blacks scales. These scales were placed after the scales used for the present analysis and will not be used in the present analysis.

related threat was measured with items such as: “It is troubling to see that the US will become ‘minority White’ in 2045”.

Status Legitimacy

Perceptions related to the legitimacy of Whites’ status were measured with six items ($\alpha = .82$)—two items adapted from Outten et al. (2018) and four self-developed items based on notions of nativity and meritocracy (Tawa et al., 2013; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Example items include: “White Americans deserve to have a better standing in society as they have worked hard to earn it”.

Perceived Discrimination

Perceived discrimination against Whites was measured with three items used in public surveys ($\alpha = .90$; General Social Survey “GSS”, 2014; Public Religion Research Institute, 2011). Example items include: “Today discrimination against Whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Blacks and other minorities”.

Support for Policies Harming Immigrants and Minorities

Nine items ($\alpha = .71$) from previous literature (Craig & Richeson, 2014b; Kteily & Bruneau, 2017; Wellman et al., 2015) assessed support for policies that harm *immigrants* (e.g., “We need to stop accepting refugees into this country, period”), *racial minorities* (e.g., “Affirmative action programs are still needed today to address racial inequality”) and *Muslims* (e.g., “We should institute a database that keeps track of Muslims in this country”).

Demographics

Income was measured with 7 income brackets (< \$25,000, \$25,000-\$34,999, \$35,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, $\geq$ \$150,000). *Education* was measured by 7 categories (Less than high school diploma, High school diploma or GED, Some college but no degree, Associates Degree, 4-year college degree/Bachelor's degree, Master's Degree or Ph.D.). *Self-reported class background* was chosen from the following categories: Poor, Working class, Middle Class, Upper-Middle Class, Upper Class. *Political ideology* was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Extremely liberal, 7 = Extremely conservative).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analyses and Outliers

Prior to the main analysis, separate confirmatory factor analyses were run to determine the items for each scale. For all analyses, model fit was evaluated based on comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; Bentler, 1995). Good model fit was determined by the following: .95 or above for CFI (.90-.95 is acceptable), below 0.10 for RMSEA, below .08 for SRMR (Kline, 2016).

Using the final list of items, we checked the assumptions and removed outliers and calculated bivariate correlations. We conducted a path model testing our conceptual model, i.e., a moderated mediation in which threat moderates the relation between SDO and perceived status legitimacy, and legitimacy predicts policy support through perceived discrimination (see Figure B1). Age, gender, and income were controlled for in all analyses and their inclusion did not change the results. Scores for SDO and threat were

mean centered before entering to the analysis (Aiken & West, 1991). Predictions were tested following the steps described by Hayes (2015).

Based on the results of CFAs, items that were non-significant or had factor loadings below .40 were removed (Kline, 2016)⁷. Model fit indices and loadings of the final list of items are reported in Table B3. Threat items formed two distinct scale, one for morality and one for status threat; therefore, we decided to run two separate sets of analyses. We have the same predictions for both models.

Data cleaning and descriptive statistics were run in SPSS Version 24.0 (IBM Corp., 2016). We deleted 4 univariate outliers above ± 3.29 from the SDO scale; 4 other cases were identified through Mahalanobis distance as multivariate outliers with $p < .001$ ⁸. All outliers were deleted, 401 cases remained. Normality was assumed for all variables due to acceptable skewness and kurtosis values⁹. There were 2 missing cases on age and gender which were deleted listwise in further analyses.

Bivariate Correlations

Table B4 displays means and standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and zero-order correlations. Relationships between variables were all positive and in the expected direction. As expected, SDO and threat were related to legitimization and perceived

⁷ The exception to this rule is two items on the SDO scale (see Appendix B). Given that this scale has been validated in different context and that model fit indices showed good fit, we kept the said two items in the scale.

⁸ Three cases were higher on legitimization and lower on discrimination perceptions than the rest of the sample, and one case was higher on SDO but lower on legitimization. The current analysis may not generalize to individuals who endorse system legitimizing beliefs or dominance views at a higher degree but are less likely to claim discrimination than the average.

⁹ Formal tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) were significant for all variables except for threat. However, skewness and kurtosis values did not reach ± 1 for any of the variables.

discrimination. Thus, people who had higher preference for hierarchies and who perceived heightened levels of status threat were more likely to legitimize Whites' advantaged status in society and to perceive more discrimination against their group. Furthermore, participants who legitimized their group's advantaged status and perceived discrimination against it were more likely to support policies that harm the rights of immigrants and minorities. Those with lower income, lower subjective class standing, and less education perceived more status threat (but not moral threat). Lastly, political ideology was correlated positively with all variables: Conservative participants expressed higher levels of opposition to equality, perceived Whites' status as more legitimate, perceived greater discrimination against Whites, and expressed more support for policies harming minorities.

Conceptual Model

A bias-corrected moderated mediation analysis was conducted using 10,000 bootstrapped samples to examine indirect effects (same number of bootstraps was used for all below analyses). All models were run in R Version 1.1.463 (R Core Team, 2017) using the haven (Wickham & Miller, 2019; version 2.2.0) and lavaan packages (Rosseel et al., 2019; version 0.6-5). First, we ran a saturated model; threat was estimated to moderate all paths from SDO to endogenous variables. The saturated model showed a significant interaction between threat and SDO on policy support¹⁰. A model that did not

¹⁰ The interaction was also significant for policies that pertained to affirmative action policies (“affirmative action programs are still needed today to address racial inequality”, “businesses should increase their efforts to promote racial diversity in the workplace”), which arguably imply a more distinctly competitive policy domain, $\beta = -.08$, $p = .038$, 95% CI [-0.154, -0.004].

include the moderation effect revealed a poor fit to the data $\chi^2 (6, N = 398) = 17.784, p = .007$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .70, 90% CI [0.034, 0.109], SRMR = .03. A chi-square test comparing the two models showed that they were significantly different from each other $\Delta\chi^2 (6) = 17.78, p < .001$. Since this moderation path was tested as exploratory and there is no theoretical reason to exclude it from the model, we report findings from the saturated model.

In line with our predictions, SDO predicted increased status legitimacy perceptions and support for policies harming minorities (see Figure B2 for direct path coefficients). Status legitimacy also predicted perceived discrimination against Whites. Status threat moderated the path between SDO and policy support. However, we did not find support for our main prediction of threat moderating SDO's effect on status legitimacy and perceived discrimination ($\beta = -.01, p = .78, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.098, 0.074]$; $\beta = -.03, p = .36, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.094, 0.034]$).

A bias-corrected moderated mediation analysis was conducted for moral threat as well. After running a saturated model where threat was estimated to moderate all paths from SDO to endogenous variables, we ran a model that did *not* involve the moderation of threat on the relationship between SDO and support for policies harming minorities. This model revealed a good fit to the data $\chi^2 (3, N = 398) = 3.17, p = .367$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .01, 90% CI [0.000, 0.086], SRMR = .02. We focus on this model as it did not significantly differ from the saturated model and is more parsimonious ($\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 0.03, p = .861$). Path coefficients were in the expected directions and replicated findings from the status threat model (see Figure B3 for direct path coefficients). However, moral threat

also failed to moderate SDO's effect on status legitimacy and perceived discrimination ($\beta = -.03, p = .48, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.106, 0.050]$; $\beta = -.01, p = .74, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.079, 0.055]$).

Models for moral and status threat were similar in terms of the variance explained (see Figure B2 and B3). Because the two models used different scales for threat, they are considered non-nested therefore we used AIC values (Akaike's Information Criterion) to compare them; the model with the smaller AIC value fits the data better (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The status threat model with the smaller AIC value had better fit (status threat AIC = 12988.71; moral threat AIC = 13351.70).

Discussion

White Americans' perceptions of status and moral threat, and status legitimacy predicted perceived discrimination against their group. Perceived discrimination against Whites, in turn, predicted support for policies undermining minority and immigrant rights. These findings provide support for our argument that perceived discrimination among dominant group members is predicted by perceived deviation from the existing hierarchical systems that are seen as legitimate. However, contrary to our predictions, threat perceptions did not moderate SDO's influence on status legitimacy in predicting perceived discrimination. Instead we found that high levels of SDO and perceived threat predicted increased status legitimacy and perceived discrimination controlling for each other's effect. In other words, group-based and hierarchy-based concerns had independent effects on the perceived discrimination via increased beliefs in the legitimacy of Whites' high status. As our prediction is based on past research (Knowles et al., 2009; Quist & Resendez, 2002; Unzueta et al., 2014), and because we might expect

psychological processes to work differently in race- versus gender-based hierarchies (Cole, 2009; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), in Study 2 we tested our conceptual model in a different context, namely gender relations.

Study 2

In Study 2, we test our hypotheses in a different intergroup context currently experiencing challenges from subordinate group members. In recent years, women organized a series of wide-scale protests against policies limiting women's rights, and sexual harassment in the workplace (Women's March and #MeToo respectively) which have since had significant influence on the political process, policy making, and public discourse in the U.S and elsewhere (Beitsch, 2018; Fallert, 2019). We examine whether threat moderates the relationship between SDO and legitimization processes, which in turn predicts perceived discrimination in the context of gender hierarchy. Specifically, we expect that men who express high levels of preference for hierarchy will report greater perceived discrimination against men if they feel a higher sense of status threat to their ingroup. We expect this effect to be mediated by increased endorsement of the legitimacy of gender hierarchy. Furthermore, men's discrimination claims will predict less support for policies enhancing gender equality.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The study is pre-registered, and data files are available through OSF (<https://osf.io/6jgze/>). We used the same power analysis as in Study 1 to determine sample size.

Data were collected on two different platforms. First, a convenience sample was targeted through the first author's personal network and social media channels, e.g., Facebook, Reddit (r/SampleSize subreddit). In order to increase sample size to adequate levels determined by the power analysis and to increase the political diversity of the sample, we recruited participants through a survey company, Prolific Academic. Prolific allows for recruitment based on participants' prescreening information such as age, gender, and ideology (<https://www.prolific.co/>), and compares well to other popular crowdsourcing platforms (Peer, Brandimarte, Samat, & Acquisti, 2017).

In the first phase, while 440 participants took the survey, 160 responses that did not fulfill the recruitment criteria were deleted: Twenty participants did not indicate their gender¹¹, 15 individuals indicated their gender as female, 15 participants were not American citizens, and 2 participants reported that they were younger than 18. After the demographic questions, 74 participants did not answer any of the scales, 9 participants dropped out after the SDO items, and 7 people dropped out after the threat scale. Notably, these participants did not differ from other participants on the scales they answered or on demographic variables. Lastly, 18 participants who failed more than one attention check (out of three) were deleted.

For the second phase of the data collection via Prolific Academic, we recruited men who self-identify as conservative or moderate to increase political diversity in the sample. All participants passed more than one attention check; no participant was

¹¹ Five participants who chose the "Other" option were included in the analysis. These participants differed from the overall sample only in terms of SDO; they had lower SDO scores. Key analyses (conceptual and revised models for moral and status threat) conducted without these participants produced the same set of results.

removed from the sample.¹² The final sample included 411 participants ($M_{age} = 30.84$, $SD = 12.29$, range 18-75) 80.3% of whom identified as White with the following income distribution which is similar to the most recent Census data: 17.6% \$25,000 or less, 11.5% \$25,000-\$34,999, 11% \$35,000-\$49,999, 19.1% \$50,000-\$74,999, 13.7% \$75,000-\$99,999, 12.7% \$100,000-\$149,999, 14.2% \$150,000 or more.

Measures

Measures were presented in the order they are presented below; the item order was randomized. All items were answered from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

SDO

SDO was measured using the same scale as in Study 1 ($\alpha = .93$).

Status and Moral Threat

Perceptions of threat related to status and morality were measured by adapting items from Study 1 to the gender context ($\alpha = .83$).

System Legitimization

Perceived legitimacy of the gender hierarchy was measured with eight items ($\alpha = .93$) from the gender-specific system legitimization scale (Jost & Kay, 2005). Example items include: “In general, relations between men and women are fair”.

Perceived Discrimination

¹² As expected based on the recruitment criteria, there were mean differences between the two samples in terms of psychological and demographic variables. Prolific participants scored higher on SDO, perceived more threat, system legitimization, perceived legitimization, and scored lower on support for equality policies. They also reported higher-class standing, higher income and endorsed conservative ideology more. They did not differ in terms of education levels and age (see Table B5). We combined the two datasets for further data cleaning.

Perceived discrimination against men was measured with items adapted from Study 1 to the gender context ($\alpha = .91$).

Policy Support

Support for policies enhancing gender equality was measured with five items ($\alpha = .79$) used in public surveys (ANES, 2016; GSS, 2014). Example items include:

“Employers should be required to pay women and men the same amount for the same work”.

Demographics

Demographics variables were measures using the same questions as Study 1. Additionally, we asked about participants’ *race* using 7 categories (White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian American, Latinx/Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Other).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analyses and Outliers

As in Study 1, separate CFAs were run prior to the main analysis to determine which items to include, using the same model fit criteria. Data cleaning was conducted after the CFAs. We tested the same moderated mediation model as in Study 1. We controlled for age, race, and income in all analyses; they did not change the results. Scores for SDO and threat were mean centered before entering to the analysis. Because the two recruitment methods targeted individuals who differed in variables central to the analysis, we included recruitment method as a control variable in all below analyses.

Based on the results of the CFAs, items that were non-significant or had factor loadings below .40 were removed (Kline, 2016). The same two SDO items (item 1 and 7) as in Study 1 had lower loadings, however we kept them in the scale like in Study 1. We removed two reverse-coded items from the gender-specific system legitimizing scale (Jost & Kay, 2005) which also showed lower reliability in past research (Chapleau & Oswald, 2014; De Oliveira & Dambrun, 2007). Model fit indices and loadings of the final list of items are reported in Table B6. Like in Study 1, we ran two separate sets of analyses for status and moral threat because they formed distinct factors.

Data cleaning and descriptive statistics were run in SPSS. We deleted 4 univariate outliers above ± 3.29 from the threat scale; 2 other cases were identified through Mahalanobis distance as multivariate outliers with $p < .001$ ¹³. All outliers were deleted, 405 cases remained. Normality was assumed for all variables due to acceptable skewness and kurtosis values¹⁴.

Age had 10, race had 2, and threat had 1 missing values. Little's MCAR test was not significant for the model with status threat, $\chi^2(10) = 18.20, p = .052$, meaning that the data were missing completely at random (for moral threat model: $\chi^2(10) = 10.81, p = .373$). Missing data were handled by using full information maximum likelihood (FIML) in R Version 1.1.463 (R Core Team, 2017)¹⁵.

¹³ One case was higher on legitimization and SDO and lower on discrimination; the other case was lower on legitimization but higher on threat perceptions than the rest of the sample. Similar to Study 1, the current analysis may not generalize to men who endorse system legitimizing beliefs or dominance views at a higher degree but are less likely to claim discrimination than the average.

¹⁴ Formal tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) were significant for all variables. However, skewness and kurtosis values were acceptable.

¹⁵ Results with listwise deletion method were similar.

Bivariate Correlations

Table B7 displays means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and zero-order correlations between variables. Relationships between variables were similar to those in Study 1. There were two notable differences: Self-reported class and income were not related to status threat perceptions and political ideology was more strongly correlated with the other variables in the present study.

Conceptual Model

A bias-corrected moderated mediation analysis was conducted using 10,000 bootstrapped samples to examine indirect effects for all models reported below. After running the saturated model, we ran a model without the potentially moderating effect of threat on the SDO-policy relationship, because it was not significant. This model revealed a good fit to the data $\chi^2(2, N = 405) = 6.65, p = .04$; CFI = 0.99; RMSEA = .076, 90% CI [0.017, 0.143], SRMR = .02. We focus on this model as it did not significantly differ from the saturated model and is more parsimonious ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1.02, p = 0.31$).

In line with our predictions, SDO predicted gender-specific system justification, perceived discrimination against men, and less support for policies promoting gender equality (see Figure B4 for direct path coefficients). System justification also predicted perceived discrimination. We found support for our main prediction that status threat moderates the effect of SDO on status legitimacy beliefs and perceived discrimination against men ($\beta = -.20, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.302, -0.104]$; $\beta = -.08, p = .036, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.150, -0.007]$ (see Table B8 for the remaining effects). However, simple slope analysis showed that the effect is in the opposite direction than expected. SDO predicted system

legitimizing beliefs and perceived discrimination at *lower* levels of status threat ($-2SD$; $\beta = .77, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.574, 0.965]$; $\beta = .32, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.146, 0.492]$), while at high levels of threat SDO was no longer a significant predictor ($2SD$; $\beta = .05, p = .595, 95\% CI [-0.130, 0.227]$; $\beta = .04, p = .635, 95\% CI [-0.122, 0.199]$) (see Figure B5). Bias-corrected confidence intervals showed that the indirect effect of SDO on policy support through both system justification ($\beta = .03, p < .01, 95\% CI [0.009, 0.049]$) and discrimination perceptions (*marginally*, $\beta = .02, p = .059, 95\% CI [0.000, 0.038]$) is moderated by perceived status threat.

A bias-corrected moderated mediation analysis was conducted for moral threat as well. After running a saturated model, we ran the model without the $SDO \times$ threat interaction on policy support, which was, again, not significant. This more parsimonious model showed a good fit: $\chi^2 (2, N = 405) = 5.727, p = .057$; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [0.00, 0.136], SRMR = .02.

Relationships between variables were the same as those in status threat (see Figure B6). We found support for one of our predictions; moral threat moderated SDO's effect on system legitimizing beliefs ($\beta = -.16, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.240, -0.080]$), but not on perceived discrimination ($\beta = .00, p = .99, 95\% CI [-0.060, 0.060]$). Simple slope analysis replicated the pattern found with status threat. SDO predicted system legitimizing beliefs at lower levels of moral threat ($-2SD$; $\beta = .65, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.459, 0.836]$), while at high levels of threat SDO did not predict status legitimacy beliefs ($2SD$; $\beta = .01, p = .87, 95\% CI [-0.150, 0.178]$) (see Figure 7). Bias-corrected

confidence intervals showed that the indirect effect of SDO on policy support via system justification is moderated by threat perceptions ($\beta = .03$, $p = .009$, 95% CI [0.006, 0.044]).

Like in Study 1, models for moral and status threat were very similar in terms of the variance explained (see Figure B4 & B6). The status threat model with the smaller AIC value had better fit (status threat AIC = 12988.71; moral threat AIC = 13351.70).

General Discussion

The present study examined the role of dominance motivations in perceived discrimination among members of dominant groups in society. Based on the established role of threat perceptions in increasing perceived discrimination among dominant groups, we tested whether threat interacts with SDO to predict increased levels of perceived discrimination through greater status legitimacy. Replicating previous findings, status/system-legitimizing thinking, perceived threat, and SDO (nonsignificant only in status threat for Whites) all predicted perceived discrimination (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2010; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Extending the literature that showed only moral threat to be relevant to perceived discrimination (Sullivan et al., 2012), we showed that status threat played a similar role to moral threat in predicting perceived discrimination. Lastly, across two studies perceived discrimination among dominant groups predicted support for policies that undermine the rights of minorities, immigrants, and women.

Our main prediction regarding the moderating role of threat found mixed support. In Study 1, threat perceptions did not strengthen the relationship between SDO and

system-legitimization for White Americans. Unlike previous studies that found an SDO $\times$ threat interaction predicting great system-legitimizing (Knowles et al., 2009; Quist & Resendez, 2002; Unzueta et al., 2014), we instead found two main effects. Controlling for levels of dominance orientation, the more threatened White Americans felt about their status and the more they legitimized their group's advantaged status in society, the more discrimination they perceived against their group. This finding suggested distinct roles for group-based and hierarchy-based concerns in predicting perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups.

In Study 2, we found an interaction between SDO and threat, but in the opposite direction than predicted. Egalitarian men (i.e., low SDO) who nevertheless felt highly threatened by women's progress reported greater system-justification and perceived discrimination, at levels comparable to anti-egalitarian men. This suggests that only those men who report egalitarian views and do not express concerns about women's progress in society would reject the view that men are experiencing discrimination. It may be that the more threat men perceive, the less their egalitarian principles curb discrimination claims. This finding points to distinct cognitive processes within the group of individuals who report lower levels of SDO and is in line with recent calls to focus on the psychology of egalitarians (Kteily et al., 2017; McClanahan et al., 2019).

While most studies examine the effect of different types of threat perceptions on ideological orientations (right-wing authoritarianism, SDO), to our knowledge no study to date has examined the respective roles of group-based concerns and dominance orientations in predicting defensive reactions among members of advantaged groups. Our

first study suggests that group-based and hierarchy-based concerns have distinct roles to play in predicting perceived discrimination, and the second study suggests that if status and moral threat is sufficiently high, differences in hierarchy-based concerns might become less relevant to perceived discrimination. In other words, SDO might be more predictive of perceived discrimination when group-based concerns are low. Contextual factors might affect the relationship between SDO and various intergroup outcomes in ways that are of significance to policy making. Important to note here that the relationship between SDO and particular outcomes getting stronger or weaker as a function of the context is in line with SDT's assumptions (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Kteily, Ho, & Sidanius, 2012).

Our findings might also speak to differences between contexts of social hierarchy. Increased challenges to the dominance of men in different sectors and domains of private life might have engendered excessive levels of threat among men who hold high levels of dominance motivations. Consequently, the significant interaction in Study 2 may have resulted from restricted variance in high levels of perceived threat among anti-egalitarian men (see Figures B5 & B7). To address this speculation, future studies should manipulate perceived threat among men. Furthermore, given the high levels of moral threat observed in the present correlational study ($M_{\text{Whites}} = 4.80$, $M_{\text{men}} = 4.23$), manipulations could attempt to decrease perceived moral threat, rather than increase it.

Future Directions

We found a similar pattern of relationships of similar sizes across two groups of advantaged individuals. Among both White Americans and men, perceived

discrimination was predicted by dominance motivations, perceived threat, and status/system legitimizing beliefs, and in turn predicted support for policies that undermine the rights of minorities, immigrants, and women. These findings support our argument that advantaged group members' claims of group-based discrimination are part of their efforts to maintain existing systems of hierarchy. In this regard, it is important to highlight that the general pattern of relationships between SDO and perceived discrimination remained robust when controlling for age, gender/race, and income across both samples for both types of threat. This suggests that individuals having both advantaged and disadvantaged identities may not differ from their more advantaged group members in the psychological process of perceiving discrimination against the advantaged group. This is contrary to findings showing that in the face of moral threat individuals with both advantaged and disadvantaged identities highlight discrimination experiences related to their disadvantaged identities (Brown & Craig, 2019), which might increase potential for hierarchy-attenuating orientations, such as feeling solidarity with other disadvantaged individuals (Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016). Future research should examine the conditions under which people who hold both advantaged and disadvantaged status based on different social identities choose to protect versus undermine group-based hierarchies.

The present study examines the correlational relationships between dominance motivation and perceived discrimination. Experimental studies should further examine the process by which dominance motivations translate to perceived discrimination. The present study highlights the effect of threat to the ingroup; that leaves the effect of system

threat an open question. Given that SDO has a negative relationship with discrimination claims under low system threat conditions (Unzueta et al., 2014), we would expect anti-egalitarians to claim discrimination against their group only when they perceive systems to be unstable or illegitimate. In other words, our predicted moderation in this study might find support in an experimental design manipulating perceived system threat.

We used different operationalizations for legitimacy beliefs in the two studies. While in Study 2 we used a traditional measure of system legitimizing, in Study 1 our operationalization reflected a sense of collective entitlement among White Americans. Because heightened entitlement remains an understudied source of perceived discrimination among the advantaged, we encourage researchers to explore this pattern further. Group-based differences in entitlement is a key concept in justice theories and some approaches in intergroup relations (Blumer, 1958; Lerner, 1987; Major, 1994), however the concept has not received much empirical attention regarding the psychology of advantaged groups (for exceptions see Hogue & Yoder, 2017; Pelham & Hetts, 2011). Work on collective narcissism addresses a group-based sense of deservingness, however the focus on “exaggerated greatness” in this concept distinguishes it from our use of entitlement, implying a perception of earned legitimacy. Recent studies show entitlement to be more prevalent among highly identified members of advantaged groups (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013); however, no study to date has examined the link between SDO, group-based entitlement and perceived discrimination. We would speculate that SDO predisposes advantaged group members to feel a heightened sense of entitlement, which increases the likelihood to perceive various events as discriminatory. Popular

explanations about why Whites and men are of higher status include claims of superiority on competence dimensions. In order to manipulate entitlement, researchers can use scenarios of Whites and men's achievements in innovation, civilization etc. as opposed to highlighting the achievements of minority groups and women. Increased entitlement feelings would be expected to increase the likelihood of perceiving changes in society as unfair.

Our operationalization of perceived discrimination is general, which makes it difficult to know what specific instances people have in mind when they claim discrimination. This is not a limitation for the present study as we aimed to address a general sense of group-based discrimination among Whites, which is much higher than reports of specific instances ("Discrimination in America", 2017), however it is an noteworthy future direction. Past research found that demographic shift information increases Whites' concerns about future discrimination more in the domain of employment/education than in domains such as interpersonal interactions, cultural expression, and free speech (Craig & Richeson, 2017). Future research could tap the specific content of what White Americans perceive as discrimination and the frequency with which individuals experience these instances. A closer look at the content of these claims might reveal insights about the nature of these claims, and why they predict hierarchy-maintaining attitudes and policy support.

Limitations

The present study is correlational, therefore cannot determine any causality or directionality between variables. Therefore, future work should aim to examine the

questions in this study in an experimental design, specifically by manipulating status and moral threat. Furthermore, Given the variability of threat effects in the literature (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Sullivan et al., 2012), researchers could vary the types of threats such as moral, status, symbolic threat in a systematic fashion. Second, while we made efforts to gather representative samples, our findings do not represent national trends. To that end, researchers could utilize nationally representative samples to examine the competing roles of potential predictors such as ideology, group-based and personal concerns such as financial difficulty. Finally, the present study takes place in the U.S., a context with a fast-growing minority population which creates significant amount of concern among high-status individuals. Our results may show a different pattern in contexts where such dynamism is lacking. For example, individual differences in dominance orientation might more strongly predict perceived discrimination than status-based concerns in countries where the advantaged position of majorities is highly secure.

Despite its limitations, the current study contributes to the literature in several domains. While researchers have mostly focused on threat perceptions in predicting perceived discrimination, we showed that dominance motivations are also strong predictors of this phenomenon. The reliable and consistent effect of SDO on perceived discrimination (except for the status threat model for White Americans) underlines the importance of considering ideological orientation in advantaged groups' reactions to social change. We also showed the applicability of our model in the context of both racial and gender hierarchy, whereas the literature mostly focused on White Americans. Furthermore, we extended the studies that found perceived discrimination to be related

only to moral threat – not to status concerns – by showing the relevance of both (Sullivan et al., 2012). Therefore, the present study corroborates the findings that considers the role of power in the relationship between moral threat and perceived discrimination among advantaged groups (Kahalon et al., 2018).

The literature on how advantaged individuals defend their groups in times of instability mostly examines outcomes such as prejudice and party vote. However, there are more subtle reactions to social change with similarly negative outcomes (Jackman, 1994; Gramsci, 1980). Discrimination claims present one such subtle reaction. Advantaged group members hold powerful positions in society; therefore, their perceptions of discrimination against their group might have dire consequences for disadvantaged groups, as in the present study, by supporting policies that harm minorities, immigrants, and women. The present study shows that hierarchy and group-defensive roots of perceived discrimination by the advantaged should not be ignored. Conceptualizing perceived discrimination among advantaged groups as motivated by the preservation of their advantaged position might help explain why individuals who are critical or even hostile towards discrimination claims by disadvantaged groups might claim this experience for themselves.

Article 3: What Predicts Perceived Discrimination among White Americans?

Findings from a Nationally Representative Study

In a recent national survey, 55% of White Americans reported that there is discrimination against Whites in the U.S. today (“Discrimination in America,” 2017). A much smaller percentage reported personal experiences of racial discrimination on the job market (19%), in the workplace and education (11-13%), in their interaction with the police (10%), or in courts (7%; “Discrimination in America,” 2017). This discrepancy between perceived discrimination (PD) at the group and individual levels mirrors socio-political developments. Official statistics continue to show marked advantage of White Americans over other racial groups in important life outcomes such as employment, wealth, and housing (Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality, 2017). However, many Whites believe their race hurts their career advancement (e.g., Funk & Parker, 2018), and among the far right, claims of “White genocide” have been circulating (Moses, 2019).

Research on Whites’ discrimination claims and the conditions under which they occur has highlighted White Americans’ sense of group threat (Outten, Schmitt, Miller, & Garcia, 2012; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014) in response to social and political changes. For example, demographic projections suggest that Whites will no longer be the majority in the U.S. by 2042 (Roberts, 2008), the new generation of eligible voters is the most diverse in the country’s history (Downs, 2016), and racial minority groups’ representation in Congress has increased (Bialik & Krogstad, 2017).

Based on the burgeoning literature on PD among Whites, we focus on three predictive factors. First, the societal changes that increase dominant group members’

perceptions of threat may also increase endorsement of ideologies that legitimize the current racial hierarchy (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2014a, 2014b). We argue that system-legitimizing beliefs should predict PD because discrimination claims also protect the racial hierarchy against challenges from subordinate groups' demands (King, 2015). Second, because both objective and subjective indicators of financial distress predict negative outgroup attitudes and support for right-wing populism (Guimond & Dambrun, 2002; Mols & Jetten, 2016), we explore the role of socio-economic indicators in predicting Whites' discrimination claims. Third, people who strongly identify with their group are generally more protective of their group's interests and alert towards potential group threats such as PD (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003). Therefore, extending recent literature on the growing importance of White identity in predicting policies that benefit Whites (Jardina, 2014), we examine the role of racial identification in predicting PD among White Americans.

Notably, most of these predictions have not yet been tested directly, or if so, in separate studies. For the first time, we integrate potential predictors of PD among Whites from different literatures and test them simultaneously, using two nationally representative samples from two different periods. Additionally, we explore whether context-level effects—specifically, state-level indicators of racial and economic threat—predict discrimination claims at the individual level.

Legitimizing Ideologies

Jackman (1994) argues that discourse dominant groups use to defend the social hierarchy adapts to the given context. For example, the idea that affirmative action

policies discriminate against Whites has been a conservative talking point for decades (Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996). More recently, dominant group members have also voiced discrimination claims in response to perceived challenges to their group's status, e.g., progress by racial minority groups (Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). We argue that both claims maintain group hierarchies and expect the same factors that predict affirmative action opposition to also predict PD against Whites more generally.

A sense of injustice among Whites is an important predictor of opposition to affirmative action (Bobocel, Son Hing, Davey, & Stanley, 1998). Some researchers argue that this opposition is driven by perceived violation of conservative principles (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993), while others point to the role of dominance-related beliefs such as symbolic racism (Sidanius et al., 1996). A test of these competing explanations revealed support for the dominance perspective (Federico & Sidanius, 2002): Dominance-related beliefs predicted principled objection even after controlling for individualism and conservatism, and more strongly over time. Other research found similar relationships between symbolic racism, conservatism, and affirmative action opposition (Bobo, 1998; but see also Brandt & Reyna, 2012).

To our knowledge, no research has extended these findings on opposition to affirmative action to test whether symbolic racism predicts discrimination claims among Whites more generally. As noted above, we expect this to be the case. For conservatism, initial evidence from recent surveys shows that 74% of Republicans versus 27% of Democrats claimed discrimination against Whites ("Discrimination in America", 2017). Thus, we expect that both symbolic racism and conservatism will predict Whites'

discrimination claims. Moreover, previous research found that dominance-related beliefs such as SDO and classic racism predict affirmative action opposition more than conservatism does (Federico & Sidanius, 2002), so we expect symbolic racism to have a stronger effect on Whites' PD than conservatism.

Perceived outgroup threat can also be linked to legitimizing ideologies, as threat perceptions consistently mediate the relationship between individual differences in ideological orientations and anti-immigrant and -minority policy support (Dunwoody & McFarland, 2018; Jetten, Ryan, & Mols, 2017; Pereira et al., 2010). Therefore, similar to other legitimizing ideologies, perceiving outgroups as threatening to ingroup's resources and values might be expected to predict perceived discrimination. For example, after learning about racial progress or the potential decline of the White majority, Whites' discrimination claims increased (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Previous studies address threat perceptions about racial minorities or diversity more generally (Dover et al. 2016; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). In the current study, we test whether the effect of status threat on perceived discrimination among Whites conceptually replicates for perceived threat from immigrant communities, which we expect due to the overlap between racial/ethnic minorities and immigrant communities as well as the racialization of immigration (Sáenz & Douglas, 2015).

Socio-Economic Indicators

The perceived threat predicting perceived discrimination among Whites may also be shaped by socio-economic status. A popular explanation for the 2016 election victory of Donald Trump is that it was closely related to perceived grievances among Whites,

where working-class White Americans felt “left behind” socially and economically (Monnat, 2016) as minority groups and immigrants gain more opportunities in employment (Porter, 2016). However, researchers have demonstrated a V-shaped relationship between economic disadvantage and prejudice or support for right-wing populist parties: increased outgroup hostility is observed among both economically struggling and well-off groups via distinct mechanisms of realistic conflict and status threat (Guimond & Dambrun, 2002; Mols & Jetten, 2016). Accordingly, discrimination claims may come from both low- and high-income individuals.

Working class Whites may be receptive to political discourse that links their economic disadvantage with discrimination against their racial group. Lamont, Park, and Ayala (2017) argue that “Trump provides these workers alternative frames to make sense of their downward economic mobility and a blueprint for how to fight back against their sense of growing social marginality (as captured by the defense of ‘Merry Christmas’) in the context of a declining America.” A nationally representative survey revealed that more than half of the White working class (52%) believed “discrimination against Whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Blacks and other minorities” (Cox, Lienesch, & Jones, 2017). On the other hand, we can also expect more affluent Whites who perceive threats to their status to claim discrimination as a way of maintaining dominance (see Mutz, 2018).

No research to date has directly investigated the role of subjective financial standing in predicting PD against Whites. Indirect support for this link comes from a study on Whites’ reactions to reminders of privilege. Whites who read information about

White privilege (vs. not) claimed more hardship in their personal lives and denied personal privilege (Phillips & Lowery, 2015). Whites who do not acknowledge racial privilege might be more likely to conflate economic disadvantage with racial disadvantage. Moreover, this link might have been strengthened with the rhetorical pairing of financial struggle and marginalization claims among (White) Americans in the 2016 elections (Monnat, 2016). However, similar to the V-shaped relationship mentioned above, individuals who feel financially secure might also claim discrimination as a defense against status loss. Therefore, we have the same exploratory question for perceived financial insecurity as for objective income.

Education is another indicator of socio-economic status that might affect PD among Whites. The literature on opposition to affirmative action offers competing hypotheses for the role of education. Principled opposition researchers purport that less formally educated people oppose affirmative action based on racism, while more formally educated people do so based on conservative principles (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). Conversely, group-dominance researchers argue that while racism generally decreases with higher levels of education, dominance-related beliefs become more strongly associated with opposition to affirmative action among the highly educated (Sidanius et al., 1996). We extend this prediction to PD among Whites, as education exposes people to discourse about discrimination among disadvantaged groups that may be appropriated by Whites who endorse symbolic racism to defend their group against status threats.

White Identity

Needs for system and group justification (to maintain a positive group identity; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) overlap for White Americans as they hold a high-status position in society (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). White racial identity has regained importance in predicting Whites' policy positions in the past decade (Doane, 1997; Jardina, 2014). Because PD can help maintain a positive (e.g., moral) identity (Sullivan et al., 2012) and high identifiers are more sensitive towards threats to the ingroup, we might expect White identity to predict discrimination claims among Whites. However, previous research examining this link produced mixed findings (Major et al., 2002; Thomsen et al., 2010). This may be because the effect of identity is masked by Whites' attempts to distance themselves from race and appear color-blind (Jardina, 2014; Knowles et al., 2014). Therefore, we examine the effects of identity on PD as an exploratory question.

Context-Level Variables

Because we conceptualize PD among dominant groups as a reaction to status threat, we also examine macro-level indicators of racial and economic threat: specifically, state-level racial diversity, White unemployment, and income inequality (see Dixon, 2006; Knowles & Tropp, 2018; Oishi, Kesebir & Diener, 2011). These variables are expected to predict greater PD among Whites, as the predictions for individual level threat perceptions.

Additionally, because the datasets we analyze was collected during the Trump election campaign in 2016, we consider the possible effect of the context of his campaign. Specifically, Due to the strong emphasis in the Trump campaign on Whites' concerns about changing society. Therefore, we also predict the effect of his state-level

support on PD among Whites. Lastly, based on previous literature that found stronger effects in the presence of an outgroup population (Enos, 2016), we also explore interactions with state-level racial diversity for all our context variables.

Summary of Predictions

Based on previous literatures, we examine the potentially competing predictors of PD, and test which effects replicate and which effects are strongest when controlling for other predictors. Specifically, we hypothesized:

Legitimizing Ideologies:

1. Symbolic racism will predict greater PD among White Americans.
 - 1a. Education will interact with symbolic racism to predict greater PD.

Specifically; there will be a stronger relationship between symbolic racism and PD among more educated than among less educated participants.
2. Conservatism will predict greater PD; this effect will be weaker than that of symbolic racism.
3. Both symbolic and realistic threat perceptions will predict greater PD.

Socio-economic indicators:

4. The effect of income levels on PD is an exploratory question.
5. The effect of perceived financial insecurity on PD is an exploratory question.

White identity:

6. The effect of White identity on PD is an exploratory question.

Context (state-level) indicators:

7. – 8. Economic threat indicators (income inequality, white unemployment) will predict greater PD.
9. Trump support will predict greater PD.
10. Racial diversity will predict greater PD.
11. Racial diversity will interact with other context variables to predict PD. The relationship between context variables and PD will be stronger with higher levels of diversity.

Study 1

We use nationally representative data from the 2016 ANES to test our predictions. We chose this time because Trump's presidential campaign emphasized grievances among Americans, which many perceived to stand for Whites (Burleigh, 2019). This dataset, therefore, provides a unique opportunity to examine factors that predict PD among Whites at a time when this perception may have been particularly salient and normative (Crandall et al., 2018).

Method

Sample and Procedure

ANES includes nationally representative data from U.S. citizens, 18 age or older. We only analyzed data from participants who identified as non-Hispanic White and were not biracial. The survey was fielded before (September 7-November 7) and after (November 9-January 8) the election. Because most of our measures were in the post-election survey, we only analyzed the post-election data ($N = 2631$; 46.5% men, 52.6% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 51.17$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 17.65$).

Measures

Individual-Level Variables

All individual-level items we used to test our hypotheses are listed in Table C1, along with response scales, means, standard deviations, and scale reliabilities. Items with different response scales were standardized before calculating mean scores. As suggested by Jardina (2014), we used the centrality component of White identity.

We also included the following demographic variables in the analyses: age (in years), and gender (0 = *men*, 1 = *women*). We applied the suggested design weight to get accurate estimates.

Context-Level Variables

State was chosen as a cluster variable as discrimination claims may vary across states (see Almeida, Biello, Pedraza, Wintner, & Viruell-Fuentes, 2016). *Racial diversity* was operationalized as the percentage of racial minority group members living in a given state (range: 6.3 – 77.6, $M = 34.3$, $SD = 14.52$), for *White unemployment* we used state percentages (range 2.4 – 8.4, $M = 5.93$, $SD = 0.97$). Both were taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's (ACS) 5-year population estimates (2011-2016). *Income inequality* was measured with the Gini index (from 0, complete equality to 1, complete inequality; range 0.41 – 0.54, $M = 0.47$, $SD = 0.02$). These data are based on the 2016 estimates of the ACS. *Statewide support for Trump* was operationalized as the percentage of the vote cast for Trump at the 2016 presidential election (range 4.10 – 70.10, $M = 48.03$, $SD = 9.38$) ("2016 Election results", 2016).

Results

We analyzed the data with Mplus 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2011). There were two outliers on education, which we kept in the analysis because they represented individuals with less formal education; 15 outliers on the Gini index and 13 outliers on White unemployment were removed. We also deleted 11 multivariate outliers (4 on Level 2), leaving a sample of 2592 participants.

Values with more than 1% and less than 5.1% missing data were age, income, conservatism, symbolic threat, identity centrality, and PD. Little's MCAR test was significant, $\chi^2(234) = 218.08, p < .001$, meaning that the data were not missing completely at random. Separate variance t-tests revealed that the missing values for some variables were significantly related to outcomes on the other continuous variables. However, they did not suggest a pattern that caused the missingness in the target variable; therefore, we decided that data were missing at random (MAR). Missing data were handled by using maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR). This estimation method is robust to non-normality (we observed non-normality with many of our variables) and non-independence. To correct for the missingness on the independent variables, we included them as dependent variables by including their variances in the model. This leads us to make multivariate distributional assumptions about them (Klein, 2016). There was no missing data for the context-level variables.

The data included two levels with individuals nested in states, therefore we performed a multilevel analysis to get accurate parameter estimates ($\sigma^2 = 0.04, SE = 0.014, p = .002$; ICC = 4.3%).

Descriptive Analysis

Table C2 displays means and standard deviations and the zero-order correlations for all variables. All predictors had small to moderate positive relationships with PD. People with lower income and education also perceived more discrimination. Symbolic racism and conservatism had a moderate, positive relationship. White identity centrality was positively related to perceiving threats from immigrants, greater conservatism, and symbolic racism. Lastly, having less education, income and expressing financial insecurity was associated with perceiving immigrants as a threat.

Effects of Individual- and Contextual-Level Variables

All individual-level variables were group mean-centered at the state-level, and context-level variables were grand mean-centered.¹⁶ The results of the multilevel regression analysis are reported in Table C3.¹⁷

We found partial support for our predictions regarding ideology. As hypothesized, *symbolic racism* (H1) and *conservatism* (H2) both predicted greater PD among Whites. Also as hypothesized, symbolic racism had a larger effect than conservatism. There was also a significant interaction between symbolic racism and education (H1a) in predicting PD ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .02$, $p = .003$). Simple slope analysis (plotted at 2 SD above and below the mean; see Figure C1) revealed that symbolic racism predicted PD among highly educated people ($\beta = .25$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), but not among people with lower levels of education ($\beta = .08$, $SE = .05$, $p = .128$).

¹⁶ Centering method used means the effects at Level 1 does not control for Level 2, vice versa.

¹⁷ We checked whether slopes significantly vary at the state level. Fitting random slopes did not improve on the random intercept model.

Because we wanted to capture the two types of threat separately (for comparison to Study 2), they entered the analysis separately. Both *symbolic* and *realistic* threats predicted PD (H3), with symbolic threat having a relatively larger effect. Overall, people who perceived more threat from immigrants were more likely to perceive discrimination against Whites.

Within the socio-economic status cluster, lower levels of *income* (H4) and greater levels of perceived *financial insecurity* predicted PD (H5), while *education* did not.¹⁸

White identity centrality (H6) did not predict PD.

While participants' *age* predicted PD (not hypothesized), *gender* did not. Younger people were more likely to report discrimination against Whites. All effect sizes for individual-level variables were small.

We conducted an additional robustness check for our findings. We applied rescaling tests (Neumayer & Plumper, 2017) to income and education, examining if different operationalizations changed the results. Income was changed to a 5-category variable that denotes social class in the U.S. ("The American middle class", 2015). Education was coded as college/no college degree. The results remained the same (see Table C4).

Socio-economic threat indicators at the state-level, income inequality, racial diversity, and, marginally, White unemployment predicted PD with moderate effect sizes (H7-8, H10). Support for Trump also predicted PD, a strong effect (H9). Interestingly,

¹⁸ We tested the V-shape hypothesis for perceived financial insecurity and income. We could not find support for a curvilinear relationship (income: $\beta = .02$, $p = .42$; financial insecurity: $\beta = .05$, $p = .04$).

income inequality predicted less PD, meaning that Whites were more likely to claim discrimination in more economically equal states, controlling for White unemployment rates, racial diversity and Trump support.³ Contrary to our hypothesis, H11, racial diversity did not interact with socio-economic indicators ($\beta_{divXgini} = .17, SE = .14, p = .235$; $\beta_{divXWunm} = -.27, SE = .16, p = .098$), but significantly interacted with Trump support to predict PD ($\beta = .45, SE = .15, p = .003$). Simple slope analysis (plotted at 2 SD above and below the mean) revealed that state-level Trump support predicted PD in more racially diverse states ($\beta = 1.06, SE = .04, p < .001$) more strongly than in less racially diverse states ($\beta = -.01, SE = -.01, p = .014$).

Discussion

The present study examined predictors of PD among White Americans in a nationally representative sample right before Trump was elected as president. Building on previous literature that focused on a limited set of predictors of PD among Whites, such as status threat and system-legitimacy, we tested novel predictions in addition to testing whether previous findings replicate when considering multiple predictors simultaneously. Specifically, we tested the competing explanations of perceived discrimination among White American: Ideology, socio-economic indicators, and Whites' racial identity. Findings suggest the need to consider both ideological and socio-economic predictors of discrimination claims.

Conservatism predicted PD, replicating findings from public surveys. In line with our reasoning that discrimination claims raised by dominant group members serve to maintain social hierarchies, symbolic racism—a dominance legitimizing belief—

predicted PD even when controlling for conservatism. As predicted, and consistent with group-dominance explanations of affirmative action opposition (Federico & Sidanius, 2002), symbolic racism was only predicted PD among more educated participants. This echoes findings from the belief-system structure literature that educated and/or politically engaged members of dominant groups are more aware of the ideological implications of seemingly distinct beliefs (Converse, 1964; Federico & Sidanius, 2002), in this case increasing the relationship between symbolic racism and discrimination claims.

The effect of threat was consistent with previous research on Whites' PD as a function of status threat (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). However, Mutz (2018) argued that immigrants might not be perceived as threatening dominant groups' status in the same way as U.S.-born racial and ethnic minorities are. Nevertheless, we found significant effects of both symbolic and realistic immigration-related threat on White Americans' perceived discrimination.

Several socio-economic factors also predicted PD. Lower income predicted discrimination claims among Whites. Whites with lower income might associate financial hardship with racial disadvantage, which was a popular talking point in the recent election (Tesler, cited in Hayes, 2018). Similarly, Whites' subjective sense of financial insecurity also predicted PD. Phillips and Lowery (2015) showed that Whites increased personal hardship claims as a reaction to reminders of racial privilege. Our findings suggest that in the absence of privilege reminders, White Americans might associate personal hardship even more readily with discrimination against their group.

We did not replicate the finding that even after controlling for symbolic racism White identity predicts PD (Jardina, 2019, pp. 146). This may be due to the different operationalizations of this construct, i.e., as White consciousness used in the previous study compared to centrality of White identity used here. White identity might also be a weaker predictor when ideological and system-legitimizing beliefs are controlled for.

Interestingly, younger White Americans adopted discrimination claims more than older Whites. Greater exposure to social media where critiques of racial hierarchy are more vocal, as well as facing increased competition in education and for jobs might affect discrimination claims among younger people. The interaction between age and realistic threat, however, was not significant ($\beta = .01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .57$). This may be because of the specific target group the items focused on; racial minority groups may be viewed as more threatening (e.g., competing for education and jobs) than immigrants.

Regarding racial and economic threat at the state level, findings were mixed. Greater levels of racial diversity in a given state predicted PD. However, White unemployment rates, while having a large effect size, did not. We do not have a theoretical explanation for the unexpected negative relationship between the Gini index and PD, which suggests that White individuals in more economically equal states claimed more discrimination against their group. Trump support in a given state also predicted greater PD. This is in line with research showing that populist right-wing politicians successfully reframe even prospering economic conditions as hardship and utilize victimhood narratives (Mols & Jetten, 2016). While personal economic hardship did not predict individual-level support for Trump in previous research (Mutz, 2018), Trump's

campaign rhetoric might have strengthened the association between economic hardship and PD among Whites. In line with the literature suggesting that the presence of racial outgroups affects individuals' political behavior (Enos, 2016), Trump support predicted PD more strongly in more racially diverse states. However, because this interaction was not replicated for other contextual variables, it should be interpreted with caution.

The present study is the first to test competing explanations of PD simultaneously, in a nationally representative sample. Extending previous literature, we showed that socio-economic indicators predict PD, beyond ideological factors and racial identification. However, given the emphasis on immigration in the 2016 elections and suggestions in past research that predictors of PD might change depending on the context (Crawford et al., 2019; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014), a replication of current findings is worthwhile. Furthermore, some of our findings such as the unexpected effect of age, the negative effect of income inequality, and the interaction between Trump support and racial diversity would be more confidently interpreted if they replicate. In Study 2, we therefore used data from a different time to examine whether the findings from Study 1 replicate, while expecting to see some context-dependent changes in the relationships between variables.

Study 2

We used the 2012 ANES that was conducted before and right after Barack Obama was elected for his second term as President. The contexts were similar in terms of the salience of Whites' group identity in affecting their policy positions, party identification, and voting (Jardina, 2019; Tesler, 2016). There were also similarly high levels of concern

among Whites about the changes happening in the country such as minority progress, which increases PD (Craig & Richeson, 2017). The differences lay in the emphasis given to different explanations for the country's problems: Critique of the economy was a central point in Romney's campaign. In contrast, negative views on immigration were emblematic of Trump's campaign and more relevant to the electoral outcome in 2016 than 2012, particularly among White voters (Tesler & Sears, 2010).

Despite these relative shifts in emphasis, the two contexts were temporally close and socio-politically similar; therefore, we expected to replicate our findings in Study 1. Furthermore, we predicted the relationship between perceived financial insecurity and PD to be stronger in 2012, due to the widespread criticism of Obama's economic policies by Republicans, which was largely shaped by their racial attitudes (Chen & Mohanty, 2018; Jacobson, 2013). The positive effects of state-level racial diversity and Republican candidate support was expected to replicate; the effect of state-level White unemployment and Gini index were examined as exploratory questions. All predictions, data cleaning and analysis code were preregistered on Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/xqzbf/>).

Method

Sample and Procedure

ANES 2012 was fielded before (October 13-25) and after (November 7-January 24) the national elections. Participants were U.S. citizens, 18 age or older, identified as non-Hispanic White, and not as biracial ($N = 3261$; 49.9% men, 50.1% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 51.90$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 16.66$).

Measures

Individual-Level Variables

We used the same variables as in Study 1, except for symbolic threat that was not available in the 2012 wave. Items are listed in Table C1 with means, *SDs* and reliabilities.

Context-Level Variables

For *racial diversity*, i.e., the percentage of racial minority group members living in a given state (range 5.4 – 77.1, $M = 32.36$, $SD = 14.52$), *White unemployment* (range 2.9 – 10.7, $M = 7.73$, $SD = 1.49$) we used the ACS 5-year population estimates (2008–2012). *Income inequality*, measured with the Gini index, came from the 2012 estimates of the ACS (from 0, complete equality to 1, complete inequality; range 0.42 – 0.53, $M = 0.47$, $SD = 0.02$). Statewide *support for Romney* was operationalized as the percentage of the vote cast for Romney at the 2012 presidential election (range 7 – 73, $M = 47.90$, $SD = 8.32$) (“Presidential election results”, 2012).

Results

The data were analyzed using Mplus 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2011). Prior to the analysis, there were three outliers on education, which were kept in the analysis; 2 outliers on Gini and 7 outliers on White unemployment were removed. We also deleted 4 multivariate outliers (3 on Level 2), leaving a sample of 3248 participants.

Little’s MCAR test was not significant, $\chi^2(151) = 169.13$, $p = .15$, meaning that the data were MAR; missingness was handled by using maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR). We performed a multilevel analysis to get accurate parameter estimates ($\sigma^2 = 0.02$, $SE = 0.011$, $p = .151$; ICC = 1.6%).

Descriptive Analysis

Table C5 shows means and standard deviations and the zero-order correlations for all variables. Similar to Study 1, all predictors had positive relationships with PD; people with higher income and education perceived more discrimination. White identity predicted higher symbolic racism, conservatism, and immigration-related threat. Less income, education and higher degree of financial security was related to perceived immigrants as a realistic threat.

Effects of Individual- and Contextual-Level Variables

All individual-level variables were group mean-centered at the state-level and context-level variables were grand mean-centered. The results of the multilevel regression analysis are reported in Table C6.

Replicating the pattern for legitimizing ideologies in Study 1, *symbolic racism* and *conservatism* predicted greater PD among Whites (symbolic racism having a larger effect than conservatism). However, contrary to our hypothesis, in this sample education did not interact with symbolic racism ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .02$, $p = .199$). As hypothesized, *realistic threat* perceptions regarding immigration predicted PD.

We replicated the results for the socio-economic variables. Greater perceived *financial insecurity* was associated with higher levels of PD, and lower *income* also (marginally) predicted PD; while, as hypothesized, *education* did not. As expected, financial security predicted PD more strongly in Obama's term in office than Trump's.

White identity centrality, again, did not predict PD. Unlike in Study 1, *age* was not a significant predictor in the present sample.

Among state-level socio-economic variables, only *Romney support* predicted PD among Whites. *Racial diversity* did not predict PD in 2012. Replicating 2016 findings, *White unemployment* and *income inequality* were not significant predictors.

We compared the slopes (i.e., unstandardized coefficients) for each wave. The results showed that White unemployment ($t(5.8) = 1.86, p = 0.06$) and age ($t(5.8) = 2.24, p = 0.03$) predicted PD relatively more strongly in 2016 than in 2012. Realistic threat was a marginally stronger predictor in 2012, ($t(5.8) = 1.84, p = 0.065$).

Discussion

In Study 2, we examined whether the findings from Study 1 replicate or are limited to the context of the 2016 elections, where Whites' perceived discrimination was particularly salient. Given that some researchers argued for context-dependent changes in the prediction of PD among Whites, the replication of our findings in two waves of ANES is an important contribution (albeit important context differences). We showed that economic factors reliably predict PD even when ideological factors are controlled for, and White identity centrality does not. Another significant predictor in both waves was support for the Republican candidate.

There were changes in the relative strength of realistic threat, age, and White unemployment in predicting PD. Trump's campaign largely focused on immigration and the threats it might pose to (White) Americans. Interestingly, realistic threat perceptions related to immigration more strongly predicted PD in 2012 compared to 2016. Furthermore, contrary to our prediction, the effect of financial insecurity on PD was not stronger in 2012. Potentially underlining the influence of Trump's political rhetoric,

White unemployment more strongly predicted PD in 2016, despite the overall decrease in objective levels in 2016 ($M_{2102} = 7.74$, $M_{2016} = 5.98$). Despite these interesting shifts, the overall pattern of findings remained the same.

General Discussion

The present studies are the first to examine the competing explanations for PD among White Americans. We found that *ideological factors* such as symbolic racism, conservatism, and perceived threat regarding immigrants, as well as *socio-economic factors* such as perceived financial insecurity and income predicted PD. The simultaneous testing of predictors allowed us to examine theoretically interesting questions. For example, the inclusion of symbolic racism and conservatism together showed that discrimination claims are predicted by anti-Black sentiment, separable from endorsement of conservative principles. This supports past claims that PD among Whites is ideologically motivated and is a rhetorical defense against societal changes (Green et al., 1998).

Extending the literature, we also showed the relevance of socio-economic factors, both objective and subjective, in predicting PD. While economic and ideological explanations of Whites' perceived grievances are often depicted as competing influences, they may be pointing to interlinked processes. For example, a common practice among right-wing politicians is to frame societal and economic problems as attacks on the entitlements of advantaged/majority groups (Green et al., 1998). Populist right-wing politicians portray a unified front of elites and immigrants/minorities as victimizing majority groups (Durrheim et al., 2018) even in times of economic prosperity (Mols &

Jetten, 2016). In fact, while Lamont and colleagues (2017) argued that Trump successfully framed financial concerns in the context of Whites' perceptions of marginalization, our data suggest the psychological relevance of this link for individuals supporting both Republican candidates. Future research on PD should therefore examine the ideological roots of economic concerns in predicting PD among White Americans.

We tested our predictions in nationally representative samples, which is rare in the literature on PD. The use of representative survey data allowed us to test how state-level indicators of racial and economic threat, known to trigger group defensive attitudes, relate to PD. Racial diversity at the state level predicted PD in the context of the 2016 elections, controlling for White unemployment and income inequality. Support for the Republican candidates predicted PD with large effects in both waves. Along with conservatism on the individual level, the strong relationship between Republican support and PD suggests an alignment between party identification and Whites' grievances.

The only other study we are aware of that examined the antecedent factors of PD among Whites with nationally representative samples found that perceived and objective size of racial minorities in the country, one's city, and neighborhood were correlated with PD (Craig & Richeson, 2018). In Study 1, we extend this relationship to the state level, finding that the objective size of racial/ethnic minorities predict PD. While the effect did not replicate in Study 2, the effect size was still sizable ($\beta = .31$).

Our findings suggest some context-dependent changes in the relative strength of variables. Trump's campaign focused on immigration and the realistic threats it might pose to Americans, considered by many to refer to White Americans (Klein, 2018).

However, realistic threat was a stronger predictor of PD in 2012. This might be a measurement issue since 2012 ANES study included only one item to measure realistic threat. In line with Trump's campaign emphasis on unemployment in White-majority counties, objective level of White unemployment was a stronger predictor in 2016. Contrary to our predictions, subjective financial insecurity did not have a stronger relationship to PD in 2012 when Obama's economic policies were being criticized in a racialized fashion. This suggests the link between financial hardship and Whites' concern over discrimination against their group may not show much variation across Republican candidates. Similarly, while Trump emphasized Whites' grievances more than Romney (Tesler & Sides, 2016), support for the Republican candidate similarly predicted PD. The stronger relationship between age and PD in 2016 was unexpected and warrants further exploration of PD among young White Americans.

Limitations of the present studies include that the data are correlational, which prohibits claims about causality. While we tested PD as an outcome, it is also reasonable to assume the reverse order; PD among Whites might increase perceived threat regarding outgroups and increase endorsement of beliefs that justify current unequal systems, or increased levels of PD may augment concerns about economic standing. Future experiments could disentangle some of these effects, such as by manipulating perceived different types of threat, and longitudinal studies could examine the role of predictors such as economic concern and system legitimacy beliefs on changes in PD over time. At least one longitudinal study showed that social dominance predicted increased PD among White college students (Thomsen et al., 2010).

Another limitation was that despite revealing conceptually important relationships, the effect sizes were small given the big sample sizes. Thus, future research should examine additional predictors that were not captured in the existing data, such as perceived threat regarding the ingroup's status, SDO, and right-wing authoritarianism.

Another consideration for future research using large-scale survey data is which level of clustering should be used. Craig and Richeson (2018) show relationships between racial diversity and PD at the census and zip code levels. Using states as our clustering variable, we may have assessed a diluted effect of contextual factors such as White unemployment and diversity as there might be a lot of within-state variation in these variables. The relationships we expected might be more visible at lower levels of aggregation.

In sum, our findings suggest that PD among White Americans is predicted by a combination of ideological factors and a sense of economic insecurity. These findings are in line with our conceptualization of discrimination claims as a dominant group defense against societal and political change. Studying this phenomenon is important because PD has strong mobilization potential. In fact, in many countries advantaged groups' claims of marginalization are correlated with support for far-right parties and illiberal policies (Urbanska & Guimond, 2018). Furthermore, such processes might extend to other dominant groups, such as men or Christians (Cox, Lienesch, & Jones, 2017; Mutz, 2018), who may believe that changes in society are challenging their dominant position. Social psychologists should examine the sources of this perception, which when mobilized has dire consequences for less-advantaged members of society (Reicher & Ulusahin, 2020).

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I examined the factors and outcomes that predict perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. In the empirical articles, I replicated findings in the literature showing that threat perceptions and system-legitimizing thinking predict perceived discrimination among White Americans (Craig & Richeson, 2017; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Extending this literature, I found group-based concerns (i.e., status threat) to play a more central role than hierarchy-based concerns (i.e., SDO) in predicting discrimination perceptions among Whites and men in the U.S. Furthermore, the model had parallel findings for both status and moral threat, similarly predicting support for policy that undermines the rights of disadvantaged groups. In addition to testing factors based on theory and existing findings in the social psychological literature, I tested different theoretical explanations of White's grievances in two nationally representative samples of White Americans. I found a unique role for economic factors in predicting perceived discrimination among Whites. The theoretical conceptualization and findings in this dissertation yield implications for theory, research, and practice. In the following, I outline these implications as well as limitations of the findings.

Implications for Theory and Research

In Article 1, I proposed a model in which group-based entitlement plays a critical role in predicting perceived discrimination among advantaged groups. I argued that experiences based on group membership and individual differences in ideological orientation predict perceived entitlement to high status for members of advantaged

groups, which I claimed is a major antecedent of perceived discrimination among the advantaged. Without perceived entitlement to high status, seeing other groups' progress would simply cause anxiety about one's status and hostile attitudes towards outgroups, in line with realistic conflict theorizing (Bobo, 1983; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), but not necessarily perceived discrimination. Considering the role of entitlement is an important theoretical contribution to the literature on perceived discrimination among advantaged groups, which has so far examined perceived threat as a predictor but has not adequately addressed why it triggers discrimination claims.

Given the centrality of entitlement in the proposed model, future research could expand the scarce literature on group-based entitlement. In Article 2, I operationalized status-legitimacy using items that suggest Whites' entitlement to high-status and show that it mediated the relationship between SDO and perceived discrimination against White Americans. A future direction would be to compare alternative predictions, whether threat moderates the effect of entitlement on perceived discrimination (like predicted in the model) or whether perceiving societal changes as threatening derives from group-based entitlement.

One potential barrier in the way of research on entitlement relates to its measurement. Asking Whites or other ethnic/racial majorities about their group's greater entitlement to resources may be perceived as politically incorrect, inviting socially desirable responses. However, this problem may apply less to other dominant group identities. For instance, entitlement to high status may be more easily claimed with regards to gender and class ("men are more agentic", "White collar workers are more

intelligent”; Jost, 2017; Jost & Kay, 2005), national identities (“the U.S. is the best democracy in the world”; Federico & De Zavala, 2018) or religious identities (“True Christians/Muslims deserve better treatment”; Pratto, Tatar, & Conway-Lanz, 1999). Thus, intergroup relations other than racial/ethnic groups might be more suitable for studying the relationship between entitlement and perceived discrimination, especially among more politically moderate or progressive samples.

This dissertation shows that considering context is key to theorizing and interpretation of findings. In earlier conceptualizations of perceived discrimination, researchers considered discrimination to be relatively irrelevant to advantaged group members, and usually focused on consequences for wellbeing (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002; Major et al., 2002). By highlighting the perceived (in)security of status relations in the current socio-political context, this dissertation shows the relevance of perceived discrimination for a significant number of individuals in advantaged groups, and consequences outside the domain of wellbeing, such as support for policies that harm or help disadvantaged groups in society.

Attention to context also informed the interpretation of the relative strength of predictors. Individuals’ preference for equality and the group-based need to maintain high status are competing influences for egalitarian members of advantaged groups since claiming discrimination against their group impedes efforts towards greater equality. Article 2 shows that group-based threat might be a more influential predictor of perceived discrimination than individual differences in dominance orientation. This suggests that at

a time when advantaged groups perceive their position as likely to change, egalitarian tendencies might be overshadowed by group-based concerns.

Another way in which context might inform theorizing is the distinct routes moral threat follows. Moral threat has traditionally been studied as “poisoning of the consciences of the fortunate”, predicting feelings of guilt, shame, and support for compensatory actions for the ingroup’s wrongdoings (Nietzsche, 1887, pp. 124 cited in Leach et al., 2002). While early findings pointed to a greater sense of guilt among individuals highly identified with their advantaged group (Iyer, Leach, Crosby, 2003; Knowles & Peng, 2005), more recent work focused on a defensive reaction to moral threat that is more concerned with the group’s image in the eye of observers than its implications for the group’s morality (Kahalon et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2012). In Article 2, I showed that this defensive reaction, i.e. concerns about Whites’ and men’s image as good and moral people, predicted system-legitimizing thinking, discrimination perceptions, and support for policies restricting the rights of minority groups, immigrants, and women. What explains the discrepancy between findings that show prosocial versus those that show defensive responses? Researchers warned against the possibility that “too much” collective guilt induction might cause resentful reactions (Wohl et al., 2006, pp. 26). I argue that the context of perceived insecurity of group status relations in the U.S., and the perception of exaggerated demands for collective guilt among advantaged groups such as Whites and men, might be changing how members of advantaged groups in the country react to this moral threat. Article 2 shows that even egalitarians are more likely to claim discrimination when they express greater concerns about their group’s moral

image. Future studies should experimentally manipulate perceived instability of status differences to examine changes in reactions to moral threat to the ingroup.

While the debate among elites (e.g. experts, politicians), those citing economic reasons and those pointing to ideological reasons, to explain Whites' policy and electoral choices dominates political discussions and informs political behavior in the U.S. (Sides et al., 2017) and elsewhere (Mols & Jetten, 2016; Portice & Reicher, 2018), existing research on perceived discrimination does not address the divergent roles of ideology and economic concerns. Article 3 shows that at least in the case of Whites' perceptions of discrimination, both are important. Specifically, I show the relevance of economic factors in predicting perceived discrimination among the advantaged, so far underexamined in social psychology. Given that right-wing politicians frequently pair economic struggles in society with minority progress and/or immigration, financial difficulty at the individual level should be linked to perceived discrimination among advantaged groups. Therefore, future research on the topic should include socio-economic factors as predictors, particularly relevant for individuals who are on the right of the political spectrum.

Implications for Practice

In Article 1 of this dissertation, I discuss why perceived entitlement to high status is an ordinary way of making sense of the world for members of advantaged groups. This is important for practitioners working with members of advantaged groups in equity-seeking efforts such as diversity trainings. My theorizing on entitlement in this dissertation suggests that people who endorse egalitarian principles need to reflect on the implicit and explicit ways group-based entitlement might manifest itself. For instance,

Article 2 suggests that general preference for equality between groups may not always translate to progressive stances in concrete issues. Participants in Article 2 who expressed endorsement of equality principles while expressing threat regarding outgroups' progress showed a need for reflection on the ways in which one's ingroup may implicitly feel more worthy of desired outcomes in society.

Another question of practical importance is the nature of perceived threat among the advantaged, which would inform strategies about how to communicate social change. Despite critics' emphasis on the unchanged levels of *power* among advantaged groups in terms of jobs, political positions and wealth, findings in this dissertation suggest that *status* dimensions, such as threat to the group's moral image and perceived cultural change driven by immigration, are also strong predictors of perceived discrimination among the advantaged (see Craig & Richeson, 2017). In that regard, emphasizing relatively unchanged levels of material power may not be an effective strategy because it does not address concerns in different domains. Another reason why pointing to the relative lack of change in power to ease anxieties might be problematic is because this strategy ultimately works to maintain and further justify group-based inequalities. To that end, one key suggestion of this dissertation is to break the psychological link between heightened sense of entitlement and group loss. For instance, practitioners could target the belief that individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups do not attain status or power based on talent or hard work but attain these positions through outside interference. This could be done via increased knowledge of the law that restricts such practices, e.g., quotas (Unzueta et al., 2008), and psychological biases among members of

advantaged groups that attribute more competence and deservingness to ingroup members (DiTomaso, 2013, 2015).

Limitations and Future Research

Findings in this dissertation are cross-sectional. While they provide an important first step in understanding the relationships between key variables of the proposed model, they do not provide evidence for causality or directionality. For instance, it is reasonable to argue that perceiving discrimination against one's group strengthens belief systems that legitimize existing inequalities, creates concerns about group's status and one's financial standing, and increases dominance preferences. In that regard, experimental studies are needed to test the causal direction of the findings and confirm the interaction found in Article 2. Future research could manipulate the sense of group-entitlement and threat perceptions to examine if their interaction predicts perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups.

Similarly, I present cross-sectional evidence when I discuss the influence of socio-political context on distinct types of threat perceptions in predicting perceived discrimination. Experimental manipulation of perceptions about national economy showed that individuals indeed pay attention to the link between economic conditions and immigration narratives used by politicians. Specifically, when participants were asked to write an anti-immigration speech they used more entitlement and symbolic threat language in the context of a thriving national economy, while they used more realistic threat arguments in a declining economy condition (Jetten et al., 2017). Future experimental studies could distinguish the effect of different types of threats invoked by

politicians, e.g., immigration-related versus class-based economic difficulty, on perceived discrimination among members of among advantaged groups.

Another limitation of this dissertation is the context in which it is studied.

Following the advances attained by the civil rights movement, discrimination has legal consequences in the U.S. (Hersch & Bennett Shinall, 2015). Claiming discrimination on behalf of advantaged groups happens against the backdrop of this judicial system and the general public sensitivity to discrimination (Brown, 2019). Furthermore, the U.S. is a socio-politically dynamic country with almost half of its population belonging to non-White/European backgrounds. Therefore, while studying this phenomenon in one context allowed for a more contextual analysis, it may also have limited the applicability of predictions made to countries with different socio-political conditions, e.g., a more homogenous population. Therefore, more research is needed to understand the relevance, antecedent factors, and consequences of this perception in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, in settings where discrimination concept is not central to advantaged groups' narratives of marginalization; we might find other concepts to serve similar functions. For instance, advantaged groups might claim relative deprivation (Sengupta, Osborne, & Sibley, 2018), cultural grievance (Simon et al., 2018) or competitive and non-competitive forms of victimhood (Kahalon et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2012) in response to changes happening in their country.

Concluding Remarks

This dissertation addresses perceived discrimination among members of advantaged groups. This perception has severe political social and political

consequences; however, so far research on the topic has remained limited. By proposing a theoretical account and providing empirical support for some of the proposed explanations as well as presenting some unexpected exploratory findings, I hope to encourage researchers to further examine the motivations behind this perception as well as its consequences for intergroup relations. As I aimed to show in this dissertation, perceived discrimination among advantaged groups, with its system-legitimizing, status maintaining roots, will work to maintain, if not increase, power differences between groups. As the world continues to experience major social, economic, and political changes, a clear understanding of advantaged groups' claims of discrimination and other forms of marginalization is crucial to further efforts towards greater social equality.

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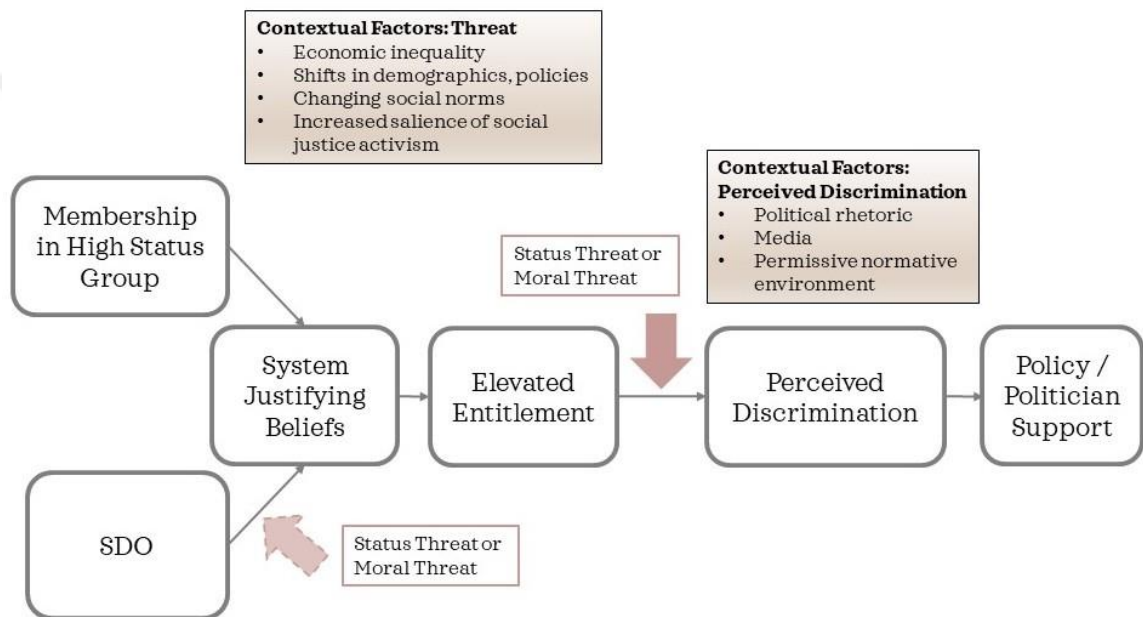
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Appendix A

Figure A1

A Theoretical Model of Perceived Discrimination among Members of Advantaged Groups



Appendix B

Table B1

A List of Items in Study 1

Social Dominance Orientation

1. Some groups of people must be kept in their place.
2. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
3. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
4. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
5. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
6. No one group should dominate in society.
7. Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.
8. Group dominance is a poor principle.
9. We should not push for group equality.
10. We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life.
11. It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
12. Group equality should not be our primary goal.
13. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.
14. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
15. No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the same chance in life.
16. Group equality should be our ideal.

Status and Moral Threat

1. I'm concerned that discussions about White privilege make White Americans look bad.*

2. **It's critical, especially these days, that White Americans maintain their positive moral image in the U.S. society.***
3. Discussions about racism and discrimination against Blacks have led people to have a negative view of Whites.*
4. The image of ordinary Whites Americans as good and moral people is being chipped away.*
5. It is troubling to see that the US will become "minority White" in 2045.
6. **It is likely that the distribution of income and political power within the United States will change in favor of minorities soon.**
7. **Racial minorities occupying high-status positions traditionally held by Whites might create problems down the road.**
8. There has been too much improvement in the status of minorities in the last 10 years.
9. **Racial minorities making unprecedented progress in college enrollment and income levels is not good for White Americans.**
10. White Americans should not be worried about their place in the future of the U.S.
11. **Increasing diversity in the U.S. is beneficial for White Americans.**

Status Legitimacy

1. White Americans deserve to have a better standing in society as they have worked hard to earn it.
2. **I honestly think Whites deserve more than other racial groups in our society.**
3. Whites in the U.S. have lived in this country for so long that they are entitled to a higher social status than others.
4. **It is not fair that White Americans have better college admission rates than others.**
5. White Americans are in higher positions due to their work ethic.
6. Whites Americans do not deserve more political power than any other group in the U.S.

Perceived Discrimination

1. Today discrimination against Whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Blacks and other minorities.
2. Reverse discrimination, that is, discrimination against Whites is a critical issue facing the country.
3. It is very likely these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead.

Support for Policies Harming Immigrants and Minorities

1. The required time to be eligible for U.S. citizenship should be decreased.
2. **We should triple the number of Immigration and Customs enforcement agents.**
3. We need to stop accepting refugees into this country, period.
4. **Affirmative action programs are still needed today to address racial inequality.**
5. Businesses should increase their efforts to promote racial diversity in the workplace.
6. In order to decrease the rates of violent crime, we should bring back effective stop-and-frisk policies.
7. **We should institute a database that keeps track of Muslims in this country.**
8. **We should ban the wearing of the Islamic veil (or 'headdress').**
9. Muslims should be allowed to practice their religion with no restrictions in the U.S.

Note. Bolded items were dropped based on CFAs results. The items with asterisk formed the moral threat scale.

Table B2

A List of Items in Study 2

Social Dominance Orientation

1. Some groups of people must be kept in their place.
2. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
3. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
4. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
5. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.
6. No one group should dominate in society.
7. Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.
8. Group dominance is a poor principle.
9. We should not push for group equality.
10. We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life.
11. It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
12. Group equality should not be our primary goal.
13. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.
14. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
15. No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the same chance in life.
16. Group equality should be our ideal.

Status and Moral Threat

1. I'm concerned that discussions about the #MeToo movement make men look bad.*

2. **It's critical, especially these days, that men maintain their positive moral image in society.***
3. Accusations of wide-spread sexual harassment have led people to have a negative view of men.*
4. The image of ordinary men as good and moral is being chipped away.*
5. **It is likely that the distribution of power within the United States will change in favor of women soon.**
6. Women occupying high-status positions traditionally held by men might create problems down the road.
7. There has been too much improvement in the status of women in the last 10 years.
8. Women making unprecedented progress in science and business is not good for men.
9. **Men should not be concerned about their place in the future of the U.S. (R)**
10. Men will benefit from increasing gender equality. (R)

System Legitimacy

1. In general, relations between men and women are fair.
2. The division of labor in families generally operates as it should.
3. **Gender roles need to be radically restructured. (R)**
4. For women, the United States is the best country in the world to live in.
5. Most policies relating to gender and the sexual division of labor serve the greater good.
6. Everyone (male or female) has a fair shot at wealth and happiness.
7. **Sexism in society is getting worse every year. (R)**
8. Society is set up so that men and women usually get what they deserve.

Perceived Discrimination

1. Today discrimination against men has become as big a problem as discrimination against women.

2. Reverse sexism, that is, discrimination against men, is a critical issue facing the country.
3. I think that men will face discrimination in the future.

Support for Policies Advancing Women's Rights

1. Employers should be required to pay women and men the same amount for the same work.
 2. **Women should not be given preference in hiring and promotion.**
(R)
 3. More women should be elected to political office.
 4. The news media should pay more attention to discrimination against women.
 5. Because of past discrimination, employers should make special efforts to hire and promote qualified women.
-

Note. Bolded items were dropped based on CFAs results. The items with asterisk formed the moral threat scale.

Table B3*Standardized Factor Loadings by Confirmatory Factor Analyses and Model Fit Indices for Scales Used in the Study 1*

Scales and Items (Model Fit Indices)	Loading
SDO (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .05, 90% CI [0.039, 0.061], SRMR = .04)	
Some groups of people must be kept in their place.	.35
It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.	.52
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.	.53
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.	.42
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.	.59
No one group should dominate in society.	.67
Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.	.37
Group dominance is a poor principle.	.59
We should not push for group equality.	.65
We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life.	.66
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.	.80
Group equality should not be our primary goal.	.78
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.	.45
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.	.72

No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the same chance in life.	.56
Group equality should be our ideal.	.74
Status Threat (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .08, 90% CI [0.024, 0.148], SRMR = .03)	
It is troubling to see that the US will become "minority White" in 2045	.68
Racial minorities occupying high-status positions traditionally held by Whites might create problems down the road	.81
There has been too much improvement in the status of minorities in the last 10 years	.71
White Americans should not be worried about their place in the future of the U.S.	.41
Moral Threat (CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00, SRMR = .00)	
I'm concerned that discussions about White privilege make White Americans look bad	.57
Discussions about racism and discrimination against Blacks have led people to have a negative view of Whites	.84
The image of ordinary Whites Americans as good and moral people is being chipped away	.63
Status Legitimization (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [0.000, 0.129], SRMR = .02)	
White Americans deserve to have a better standing in society as they have worked hard to earn it	.74
Whites in the U.S. have lived in this country for so long that they are entitled to a higher social status than others	.79
White Americans are in higher positions due to their work ethic	.57
Whites Americans do not deserve more political power than any other group in the U.S.	.65
Perceived Discrimination (CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .00)	

Today discrimination against Whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against Blacks and other minorities	.87
Reverse discrimination, that is, discrimination against Whites is a critical issue facing the country	.96
It is very likely these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead	.77
Policy Support (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [0.032, 0.113], SRMR = .03)	
The required time to be eligible for U.S. citizenship should be decreased	.59
We need to stop accepting refugees into this country, period	.71
Businesses should increase their efforts to promote racial diversity in the workplace	.59
In order to decrease the rates of violent crime, we should bring back effective stop-and-frisk policies	.58
Muslims should be allowed to practice their religion with no restrictions in the U.S.	.51

Note. All loadings are significant at $p < .001$.

Table B4*Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for the Scales and Demographics Variables for Study 1 after CFA's*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. SDO	-											
2. Status Threat	.51**	-										
3. Moral Threat	.24**	.43**	-									
4. Legitimacy	.59**	.58**	.32**	-								
5. Discrimination	.39**	.60**	.59**	.53**	-							
6. Policy	.58**	.62**	.38**	.61**	.63**	-						
7. Class	.09	-.17**	-.10	-.04	-.10	-.04	-					
8. Income	.11*	-.17**	-.06	-.01	-.05	-.02	.74**	-				
9. Education	-.02	-.24**	-.07	-.04	-.10*	-.13**	.55**	.58**	-			
10. Ideology	.42**	.34**	.32**	.39**	.48**	.59**	.09	.10*	.01	-		
11. Age	.03	-.04	.08	.15**	.11*	.11*	.25**	.35**	.28**	.11*	-	
12. Gender	.11*	-.13*	.02	-.07	-.01	.01	.28**	.32**	.22**	.11*	.45**	-
M	2.74	3.27	4.80	2.89	3.97	3.59	2.66	3.96	4.25	4.14	47.27	
SD	1.03	1.28	1.36	1.21	1.74	1.25	0.91	2.02	1.89	1.66	16.07	
Range	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-5	1-7	1-7	1-7	18-96	0-1

Cronbach's alpha	.89	.73	.71	.76	.90	.71
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Note. $**p < .01$. $*p < .05$. $N = 401$, changing sample sizes result from missing variables on demographic variable

Table B5*Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics between Two Samples in Study 2*

Outcome	Platform				95% CI for Mean Difference		t	df
	Qualtrics (N = 297)		Prolific (N = 131)					
	M	SD	M	SD				
SDO	2.48	1.17	3.11	1.18	-0.88, -0.39	-5.16***	427	
Threat	3.14	1.08	3.77	0.99	-0.85, -0.42	-5.76***	427	
System Legitimization	3.65	1.24	4.59	1.01	0.11, -1.17	-8.30***	302.23	
Perceived Discrimination	3.19	1.83	4.41	1.60	0.18, -1.56	-6.94***	281.40	
Policy Support	4.64	1.30	4.03	1.02	0.12, 0.37	5.16***	310.81	
Self-reported Class	3.06	0.90	2.73	0.85	0.09, 0.15	3.59***	425	
Income	4.30	1.97	3.90	1.81	0.20, 0.02	2.06*	271.03	
Education	4.81	1.91	4.66	1.77	0.19, -0.23	0.77	263.48	
Ideology	2.97	1.67	4.40	1.25	0.15, -1.72	-9.81***	328.36	
Age	30.53	13.48	32.88	11.18	1.35, -5.00	-1.74	417	

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$

Table B6*Standardized Factor Loadings by Confirmatory Factor Analyses and Model Fit Indices for Scales Used in Study 2*

Scales and Items (Model Fit Indices)	Loading
SDO (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .06, 90% CI [0.048, 0.069], SRMR = .03)	
Some groups of people must be kept in their place.	.39
It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.	.59
An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.	.71
Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.	.45
Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.	.51
No one group should dominate in society.	.60
Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.	.29
Group dominance is a poor principle.	.52
We should not push for group equality.	.74
We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life.	.74
It is unjust to try to make groups equal.	.85
Group equality should not be our primary goal.	.80
We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.	.30
We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.	.72

No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the same chance in life.	.52
Group equality should be our ideal.	.79
Status Threat (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .08, 90% CI [0.025, 0.148], SRMR = .02)	
Women occupying high-status positions traditionally held by men might create problems down the road	.80
There has been too much improvement in the status of women in the last 10 years	.76
Women making unprecedented progress in science and business is not good for men	.78
Men will benefit from increasing gender equality (R)	.67
Moral Threat (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .05, 90% CI [0.00, 0.119], SRMR = .02)	
I'm concerned that discussions about the #MeToo movement make men look bad	.74
It's critical, especially these days, that men maintain their positive moral image in society	.56
Accusations of wide-spread sexual harassment have led people to have a negative view of men	.78
The image of ordinary men as good and moral is being chipped away	.80
System Legitimization (CFI = .96; RMSEA = .097, 90% CI [0.069, 0.126], SRMR = .04)	
In general, relations between men and women are fair	.71
The division of labor in families generally operates as it should	.73
For women, the United States is the best country in the world to live in	.66
Most policies relating to gender and the sexual division of labor serve the greater good	.47
Everyone (male or female) has a fair shot at wealth and happiness	.76

Society is set up so that men and women usually get what they deserve	.84
Perceived Discrimination (CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000, SRMR = .000)	
Today discrimination against men has become as big a problem as discrimination against women	.90
Reverse sexism, that is, discrimination against men, is a critical issue facing the country	.94
I think that men will face discrimination in the future	.82
Policy Support (CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000, 90% CI [0.00, 0.056], SRMR = .01)	
Employers should be required to pay women and men the same amount for the same work	.49
More women should be elected to political office	.77
The news media should pay more attention to discrimination against women	.87
Because of past discrimination, employers should make special efforts to hire and promote qualified women	.78

Note. All loadings are significant at $p < .001$.

Table B7*Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for the Scales and Demographics Variables for Study 2 after CFA's*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. SDO	-											
2. Status Threat	.64**	-										
3. Moral Threat	.52**	.51**	-									
4. Legitimacy	.54**	.43**	.56**	-								
5. Discrimination	.59**	.65**	.72**	.57**	-							
6. Policy	-.71**	-.59**	-.49**	-.55**	-.63**	-						
7. Class	.04	-.09	-.07	.00	-.07	.01	-					
8. Income	.06	-.08	-.07	.05	-.06	-.03	.75**	-				
9. Education	-.04	-.13*	-.06	-.09	-.10	.06	.34**	.28**	-			
10. Ideology	.62**	.51**	.55**	.64**	.61**	-.70**	-.02	.02	.10	-		
11. Age	.001	-.06	-.01	.01	-.03	-.06	.05	.14*	.33**	.08	-	
12. Race	.007	-.02	-.04	-.02	-.06	-.06	.13*	.08	.08	.05	.11	-
M	2.64	2.13	4.23	3.76	3.50	4.91	2.99	4.22	4.78	3.37	30.79	

SD	1.19	1.15	1.45	1.35	1.83	1.35	0.90	1.94	1.87	1.68	12.34	
Range	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-5	1-7	1-7	1-7	18-75	0-1
Cronbach's alpha	.93	.80	.81	.85	.91	.81						

Note. $**p < .01$. $*p < .05$. $N = 405$, changing sample sizes result from missing variables on demographic variables.

Table B8

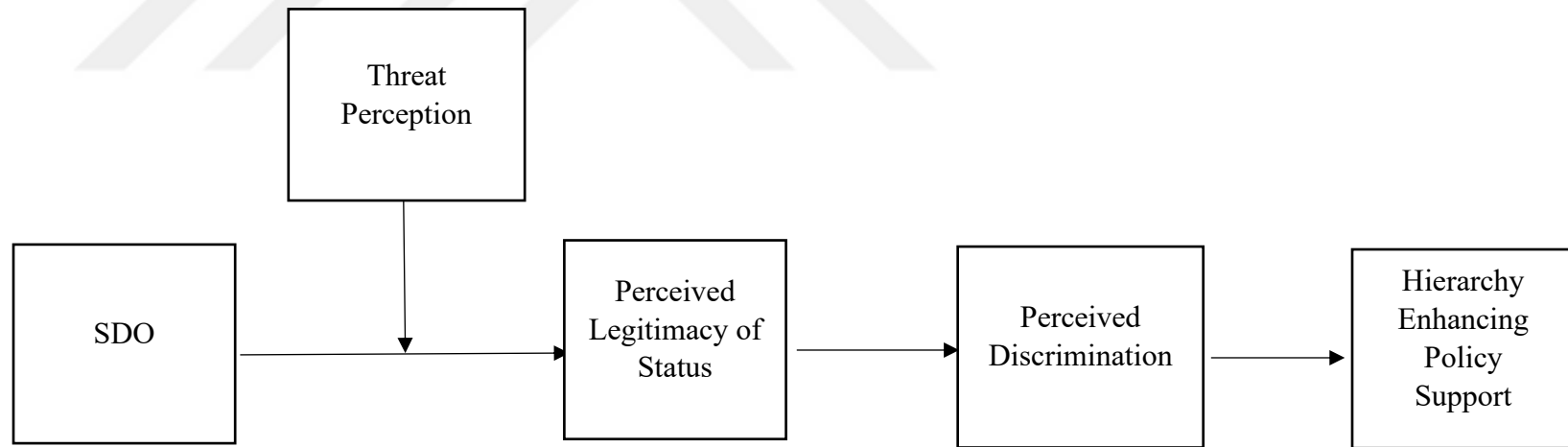
Standardized Regression Coefficients with Confidence Intervals Estimating Gender-specific System Legitimization, Perceived Discrimination and Policy Support for Gender Equality

	Gender-specific Legitimacy			Perceived Discrimination			Policy Support		
		Coeff.	95% CI		Coeff.	95% CI		Coeff.	95% CI
SDO (X)	$a_{11} \rightarrow$	.41***	0.302, 0.516	$a_{12} \rightarrow$	.18**	0.072, 0.285	$c_1 \rightarrow$	-.43***	-0.534, -0.315
Legitimacy (M_1)				$d \rightarrow$	.28***	0.182, 0.369	$b_1 \rightarrow$	-.14**	-0.236, -0.052
Discrimination (M_2)							$b_2 \rightarrow$	-.25***	-0.345, -0.145
S.Threat (W)	$a_{21} \rightarrow$	.20**	0.081, 0.321	$a_{22} \rightarrow$	.42***	0.317, 0.532		-.012*	-0.277, -0.003
$X \times W$	$a_{31} \rightarrow$	-.21***	-0.302, -0.104	$a_{32} \rightarrow$	-.08*	-0.150, -0.007			
Age (U_1)	$v_1 \rightarrow$	.03	-0.099, 0.040	$y_1 \rightarrow$	-.01	-0.081, 0.052	$z_1 \rightarrow$	-.07	-0.131, 0.002
Race (U_2)	$v_2 \rightarrow$	-.01	-0.076, 0.094	$y_2 \rightarrow$	-.03	-0.109, 0.040	$z_2 \rightarrow$	-.07*	-0.134, -0.006
Income (U_3)	$v_3 \rightarrow$	.22***	-0.011, 0.153	$y_3 \rightarrow$	-.04	-0.111, 0.035	$z_3 \rightarrow$	-.003	-0.072, 0.067
Method (U_4)	$v_4 \rightarrow$	.07	0.133, 0.309	$y_4 \rightarrow$	.06	-0.020, 0.145	$z_4 \rightarrow$	.03	-0.041, 0.109
Constant	$i_{M1} \rightarrow$	2.643***	2.276, 3.011	$i_{M2} \rightarrow$	1.345***	0.977, 1.713	$i_Y \rightarrow$	4.798***	4.323, 5.274

Note. Reported confidence intervals are bias-corrected intervals.

Figure B1

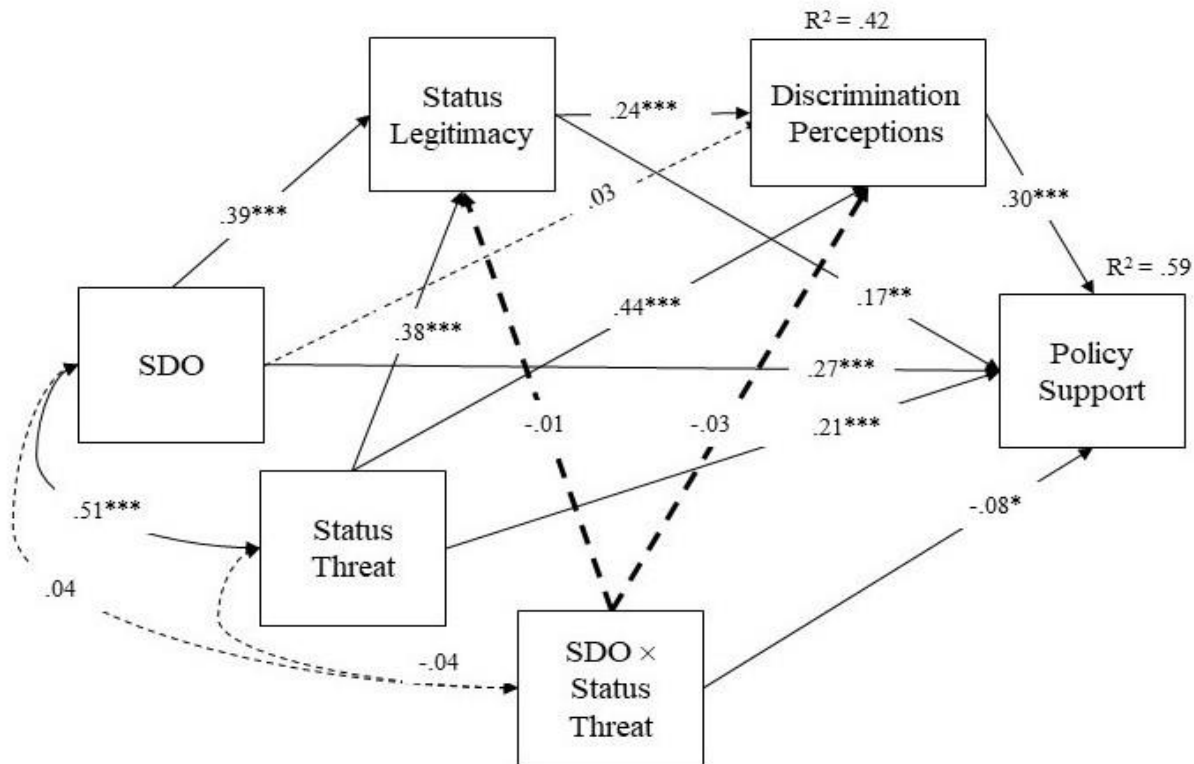
The Dominance Path of the Model of Perceived Discrimination



Note. Threat moderating the effect of SDO on policy support through status legitimacy and discrimination perceptions.

Figure B2

Study 1 Path Coefficients (Status Threat)

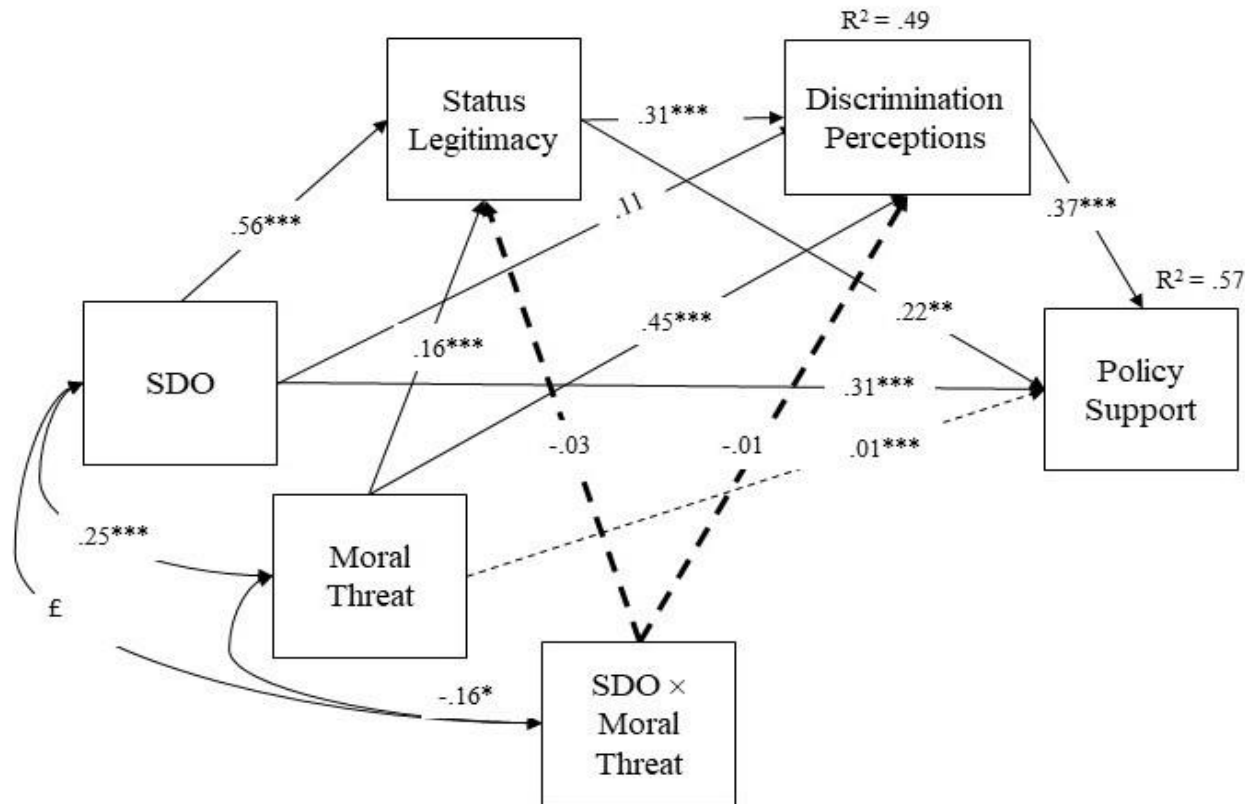


Note. Age, gender, and income are control variables. The moderation effects of interest are marked with bold arrow.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure B3

Study 1 Path Coefficients (Moral Threat)

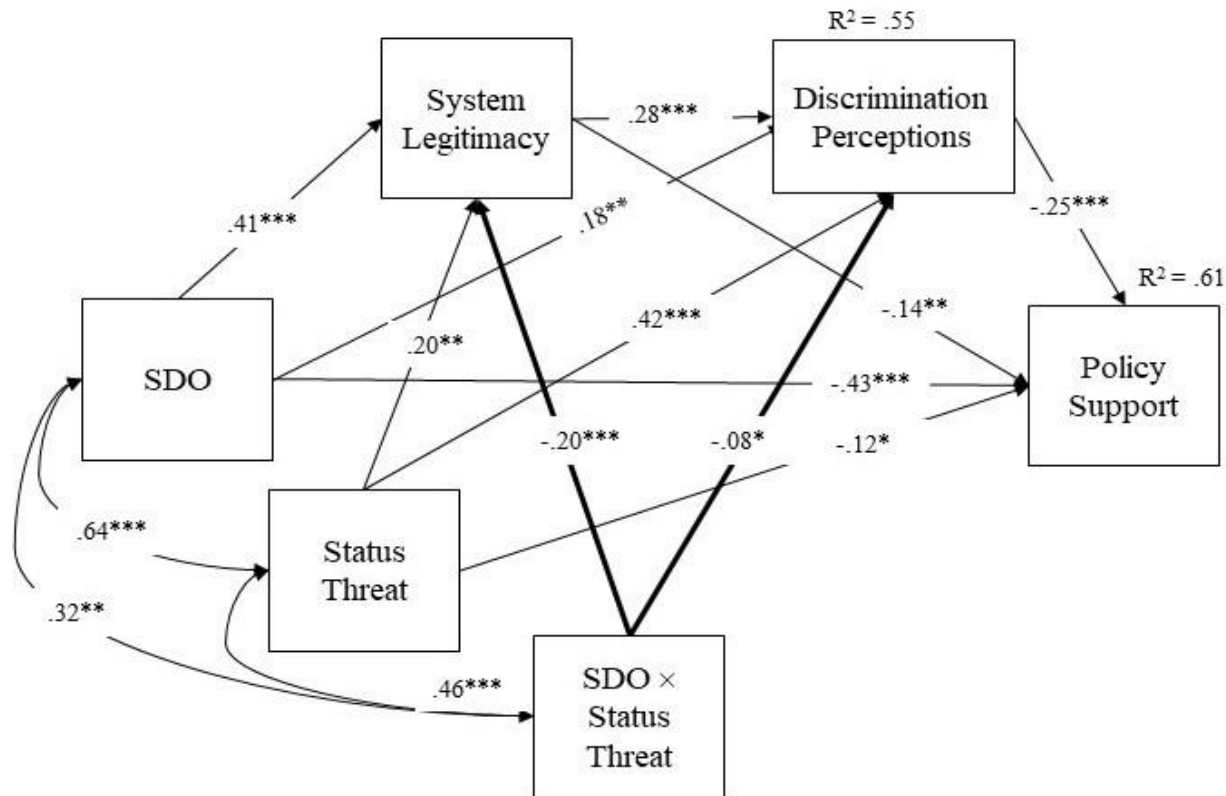


Note. Age, gender, and income are control variables. The moderation effects of interest are marked with bold arrow.

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. £ fixed to zero due to convergence problems.

Figure B4

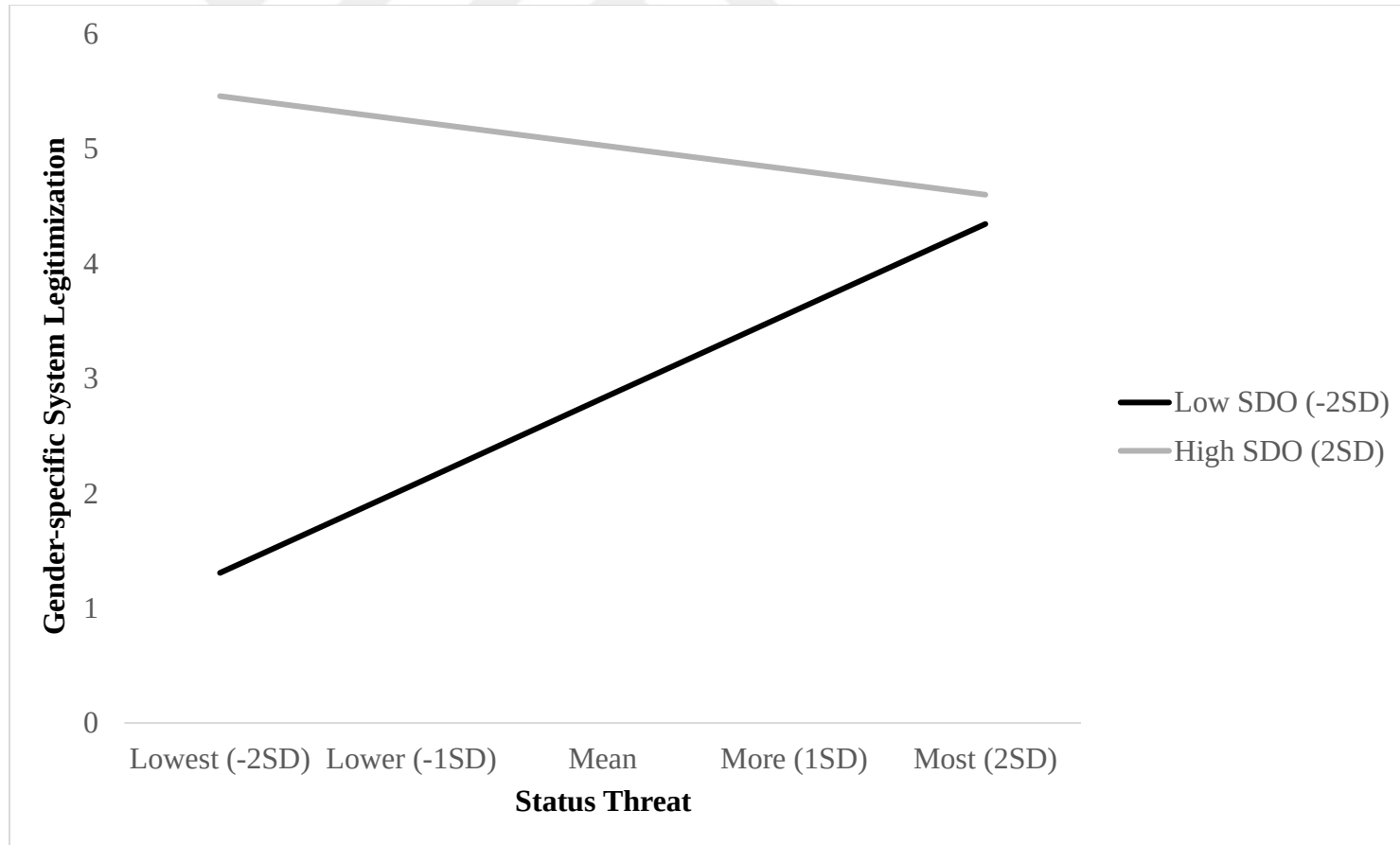
Study 2 Path Coefficients (Status Threat)



Note. Age, race, income, and method factor are control variables. The moderation effects of interest are marked with bold arrow. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Figure B5

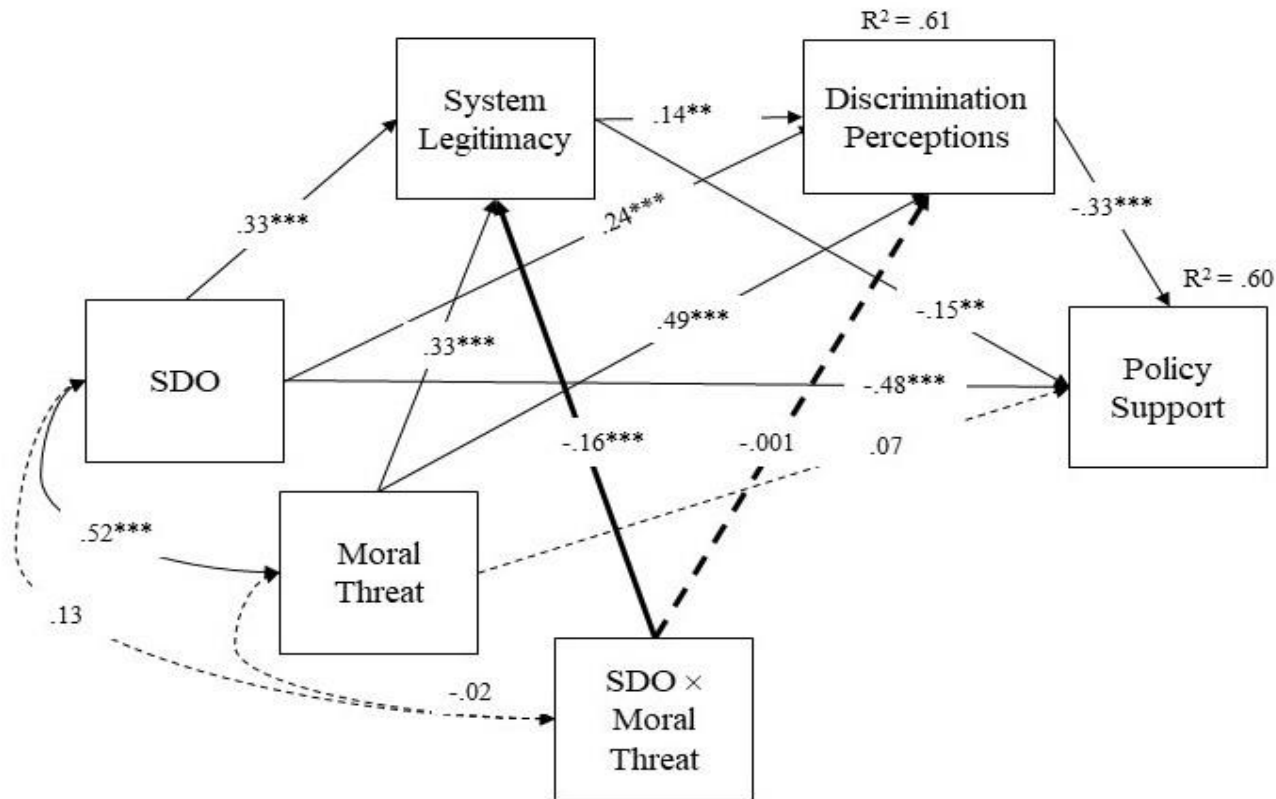
Interaction of SDO with Status Threat Perception



Note. Interaction on perceived discrimination follows a similar pattern.

Figure B6

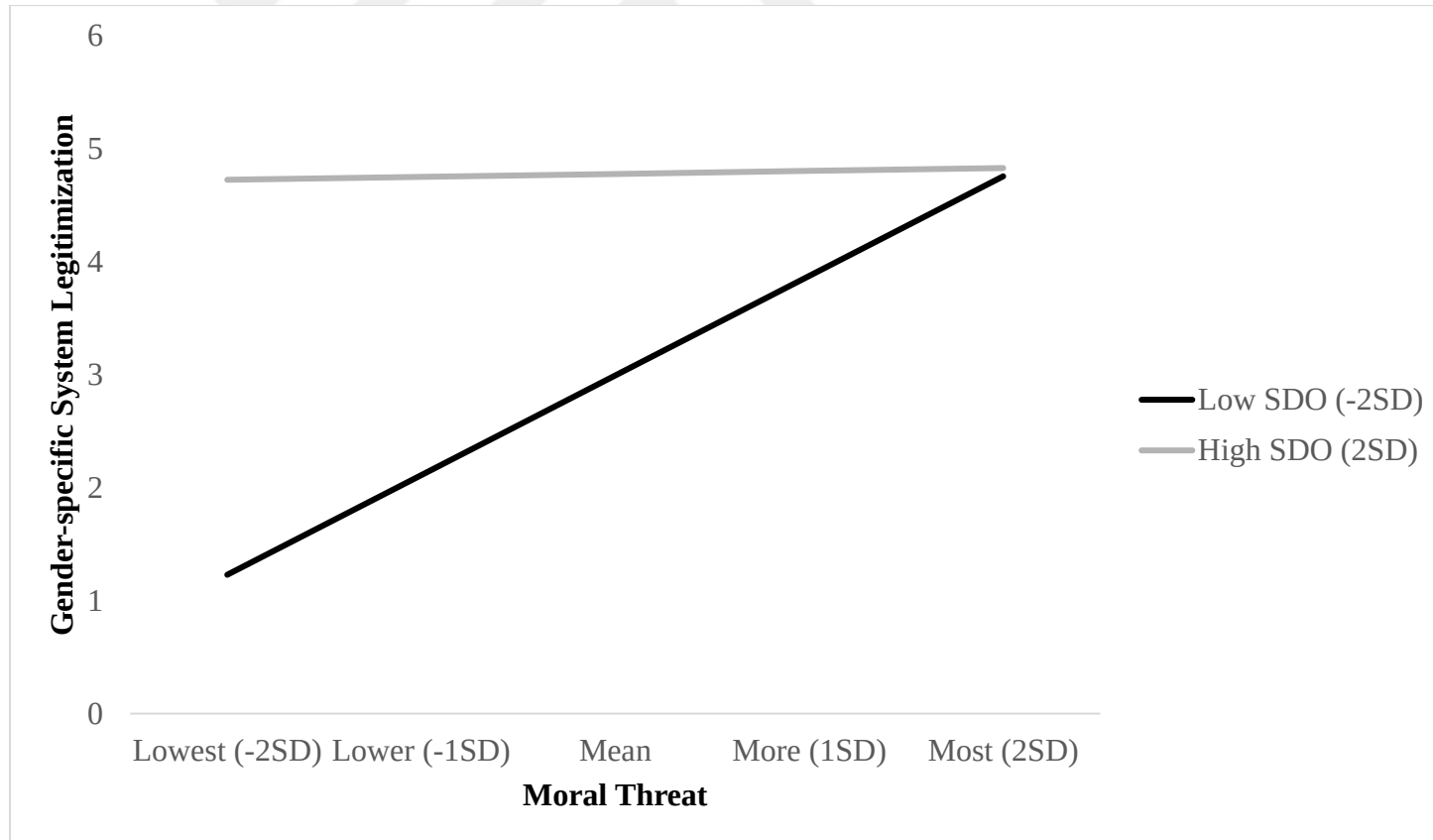
Study 2 Path Coefficients (Moral Threat)



Note. Age, race, income, and method factor are control variables. The moderation effects of interest are marked with bold arrow. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure B7

Interaction of SDO with Moral Threat Perception



Appendix C

Table C1

Scales, Items and Response Scales

Variable (pre- /post-election)	Item(s)	Response-scale	Study 1: Reliability, <i>M</i> , <i>SD</i>	Study 2: Reliability, <i>M</i> , <i>SD</i>
Symbolic racism (post) (Henry & Sears, 2002)	'Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors'	For all items:	$\alpha = .86$	$\alpha = .83$
		1 = Disagree strongly	$M = 3.33$	$M = 3.63$
		2 = Disagree somewhat	$SD = 1.12$	$SD = 0.95$
		3 = Neither agree nor disagree		
		4 = Agree somewhat		
	'Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class' (R)	5 = Agree strongly		
	'Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve' (R)			
	'It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites'			

Conservatism (pre) (see Federico & Sidanius, 2002)	‘Where would you place yourself on this scale?’	1 = Extremely liberal	$r = .74$	$r = .69$
		2 = Liberal	$M = 0.53$	$M = 0.54$
		3 = Slightly liberal	$SD = 0.25$	$SD = 0.28$
		4 = Moderate; middle of the road		
		5 = Slightly conservative		
		6 = Conservative		
		7 = Extremely conservative		
	‘Where would you place yourself on this scale?’			
		1 = Strong Democrat		
		2 = Not very strong Democrat		
		3 = Independent- Democrat		
		4 = Independent		
		5 = Independent- Republican		
		6 = Not very strong Republican		

		7 = Strong Republican		
Realistic threat (post)	‘How likely is it that recent immigration levels will take jobs away from people already here?’	1 = Extremely likely 2 = Very likely 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Not at all likely	$\alpha = .748$ $M = 0.50$ $SD = 0.15$	$M = 3.43$ $SD = 0.98$
	‘Immigrants increase crime rates in the United States’*	1 = Disagree strongly 2 = Disagree somewhat 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree somewhat 5 = Agree strongly		
	‘Immigrants are good for the economy’ (R)*	1. Disagree strongly 2 = Disagree somewhat 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree somewhat		

		5 = Agree strongly		
Symbolic threat (post)	'America's culture is generally harmed by immigrants'*	1 = Disagree strongly	<i>M</i> = 2.45	
		2 = Disagree somewhat	<i>SD</i> = 1.16	
		3 = Neither agree nor disagree		
		4 = Agree somewhat		
		5 = Agree strongly		
Racial Identification (post)	'How important is being White to your identity?'	1 = Not at all important	<i>M</i> = 2.65	<i>M</i> = 2.77
		2 = A little important	<i>SD</i> = 1.36	<i>SD</i> = 1.30
		3 = Moderately important		
		4 = Very important		
		5 = Extremely important		
Perceived Financial	'So far as you and your family are concerned, how worried are you about your current financial situation?'	1 = Not at all worried	<i>M</i> = 2.63	<i>M</i> = 2.73
		2 = A little worried	<i>SD</i> = 1.18	<i>SD</i> = 1.20

Insecurity (post)		3 = Moderately worried 4 = Very worried 5 = Extremely worried		
Income	‘Please mark the income of all members of your family living here in 2015 before taxes.’	1 = under \$5,000 to 28 = \$250,000 or more	<i>M</i> = 16.31 <i>SD</i> = 7.84	<i>M</i> = 14.93 <i>SD</i> = 8.09
Education	‘What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?’	1 = less than 1 st grade to 16 = Doctorate degree)	<i>M</i> = 11.42 <i>SD</i> = 2.22	<i>M</i> = 10.99 <i>SD</i> = 2.39
Perceived Discrimination (post)	‘How much discrimination is there in the United States today against Whites?’	1 = None at all 2 = A little 3 = A moderate amount 4 = A lot 5 = A great deal	<i>M</i> = 2.09 <i>SD</i> = 0.95	<i>M</i> = 2.21 <i>SD</i> = 0.89

Note. *signifies the item was not used in Study 2.

Table C2.*Bivariate Correlations among Variables in Study 1*

<i>Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	—										
2. Gender	.04*	—									
3. Education	.02	.04*	—								
4. Income	-.01	-.12**	.38**	—							
5. S. Racism	.12**	-.04*	-.26**	-.12**	—						
6. Conserv	.08**	-.07**	-.08**	.04	.53**	—					
7. Realistic	.06*	-.02	-.26**	-.19**	.56**	.44**	—				
8. Symbolic	.02	-.04*	-.27**	-.15**	.50**	.39**	.44**	—			
9. Identity	.09**	.03	-.12**	-.10**	.18**	.14**	.20**	.28**	—		
10. Financial	-.06**	.08**	-.17**	-.28**	.13**	-.03	.15**	.20**	.06**	—	
11. Discrim.	-.03	.02	-.14**	-.14**	.32**	.23**	.22**	.28**	.09**	.18**	—

Notes. Sample weight is applied. *N* ranges from 2333 to 2485 due to missing data. For gender, 0 = men, 1 = women. S. Racism = symbolic racism. Conserv. = conservatism. Realistic = realistic threat. Symbolic = symbolic threat. Identity = identity centrality. Financial = perceived financial insecurity. Discrim. = perceived discrimination against Whites. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table C3.*Standardized Regression Coefficients, Error Estimates and Confidence Intervals for**Individual and Context-Level Variables in Study 1*

	Coefficients (SE)	<i>p</i> value	95% CI
Intercept (γ_{00})	10.08 (1.61)	<.001	[7.010, 13.223]
Individual-level variables			
Age	-.07 (.03)	.021	[-0.130, -0.014]
Gender	.03 (.03)	.252	[-0.021, 0.078]
Education	-.02 (.02)	.416	[-0.064, 0.026]
Income	-.07 (.03)	.008	[-0.125, -0.019]
Symbolic racism	.21 (.03)	<.001	[0.153, 0.259]
Conservatism	.08 (.03)	.001	[0.034, 0.135]
Realistic threat	.08 (.03)	.022	[0.011, 0.142]
Symbolic threat [†]	.11 (.03)	.001	[0.043, 0.169]
Identification	.007 (.03)	.767	[-0.041, 0.056]
Financial insecurity	.11 (.03)	<.001	[0.053, 0.167]
Education*Symbolic racism	.04 (.02)	.043	[0.002, 0.080]
State-level variables			
Racial Diversity	.48 (.20)	.018	[0.088, 0.879]
White unemployment	.31 (.18)	.075	[-0.037, 0.663]
Income inequality	-.36 (.16)	.021	[-0.666, -0.052]
Trump support	.79 (.14)	<.001	[0.522, 1.064]

Variance components

σ_e^2 (residual)	.92 (.01)	<.001
σ_{u0}^2 (residual)	.31 (.16)	.028

Note. All values are standardized. Parameter estimate standard errors are listed in parentheses. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. †Estimates for symbolic threat are calculated without realistic threat in the model, therefore estimates for other variables might be slightly different.

Table C4.

Standardized Regression Coefficients, Error Estimates and Confidence Intervals for Two Different Operationalization of Income and Education

	β (SE)	p	95% CI
Income (28 interval)	-.07(.03)	.007	[-0.125, -0.019]
Income (5 categories)	-.05(.02)	.008	[-0.113, -0.017]
Education (16 interval)	-.02(.02)	.417	[-0.064, 0.026]
Education (2 categories)	-.03(.04)	.460	[-0.057, 0.026]

Note. All values are standardized. Parameter estimate standard errors are listed in parentheses.

Table C5.*Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables Study 2*

<i>Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	—									
2. Gender	.05**	—								
3. Education	-.07**	-.06**	—							
4. Income	-.02	-.08**	.37**	—						
5. S. Racism	.05**	-.04*	-.20**	-.05**	—					
6. Conserv.	.04*	-.07**	-.02	.04**	.44**	—				
7. Realistic	-.01	-.02	-.25**	-.12**	.34**	.20**	—			
8. Identity	.10**	.04**	-.10**	-.03*	.15**	.05**	.15**	—		
9. Financial	-.01	.08**	-.15**	-.23**	.14**	.03	.22**	.06**	—	
10. Discrim	-.02	.04*	-.11**	-.11**	.26**	.16**	.20**	.04*	.21**	—

Notes. Sample weight is applied. *N* ranges from 3741 to 3881 due to missing data. For gender, 0 = men, 1 = women. S. Racism = symbolic racism. Conser. = conservatism. Realistic = realistic threat. Identity = identity centrality. Financial = perceived financial insecurity. Discrim. = perceived discrimination against Whites.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table C6.

Standardized Regression Coefficients, Error Estimates and Confidence Intervals for Individual and Context-Level Variables in Study 2

	Coefficients (SE)	<i>p</i> value	95% CI
Intercept (γ_{00})	16.60 (5.06)	.001	[6.695, 26.509]
Individual-level variables			
Age	.01 (.02)	.601	[-0.032, 0.056]
Gender	.03 (.02)	.292	[-0.022, 0.074]
Education	-.01 (.03)	.740	[-0.057, 0.040]
Income	-.04 (.02)	.061	[-0.087, 0.002]
Symbolic racism	.17 (.02)	<.001	[0.126, 0.212]
Conservatism	.07 (.02)	<.011	[0.033, 0.098]
Realistic threat	.10 (.03)	.001	[0.040, 0.153]
Identification	-.02 (.03)	.496	[-0.052, 0.045]
Financial Insecurity	.15 (.02)	<.001	[0.110, 0.191]
Education*Symbolic racism	.03 (.02)	.199	[-0.013, 0.062]
State-level variables			
Racial Diversity	.31 (.20)	.121	[-0.083, 0.709]
White unemployment	-.08 (.18)	.631	[-0.428, 0.260]
Income inequality	.14 (.19)	.476	[-0.241, 0.517]
Romney support	.68 (.18)	<.001	[0.318, 1.041]
Variance components			

σ_e^2 (residual)	.93 (.01)	<.001
σ_{u0}^2 (residual)	.49 (.17)	.002

Note. All values are standardized. Parameter estimate standard errors are listed in parentheses. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



Figure C1

Interaction Effect between Symbolic Racism (SR) and Education

